

A Short Teaching on Holy Family
by Deacon Gerry Palermo

Greetings on the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph.

Readings: COL 3:12-17; PS 128:1-2, 3, 4-5; MT 2:13-15, 19-23

Merry Christmas! (Today is the 6th day in the Octave of Christmas).

The liturgical calendar of the Church breathes and softly guiding us through the course of time.

Some celebrations are fixed to a date (December 25th) and the day of week is always changing and some celebrations are fixed to day of week (Sunday) and the date is ever changing. Other celebrations are relational starting as an offset (+/-) to another date. The feast of the Holy Family is always celebrated between Christmas Day and the 8th day of Christmas: the Solemnity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God (January 1st). Usually the Holy Family is celebrated on a Sunday but that is not the case this year as the days are not aligned that way. Things constantly change even as they remain the same.

Today's Gospel focuses on the Flight to Egypt and the Return from Egypt. Joseph gives us some help in Knowing, Attending and Responding. Joseph Knew that scripture and history coalesce. Joseph was Attending to the inspiration of God. Joseph heard. He took his family to Egypt. Joseph was Responding to his fear of Archelaus returning to Nazareth by the inspiration of God.

A Holy Family is attentive to the voice of God. A Holy Family is attentive to the voice of each person in the family. Joseph named his fears going to and returning from Egypt. Fear is a gift from God and useful in redirecting us to better outcomes. Be attentive to the fears of your family members. Keep in mind how God inspires you then act.

The Epistle, Paul's Letter to the Colossians, provides scriptural insight on dealing with fear. "Patiently bearing with one another... encourage one another... sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs". Let the peace of Christ be the basis from which you engage your intellect. Joseph had fears but he did not face them alone but as part of a family. Angels of the Lord advised him, Mary gently consoled him with kindness and humility, Jesus reminded him of the primacy of love, which is the bond of perfection.

On this day of the Holy Family, May God bless you. May the word of Christ dwell in you. May you name all your fears and give thanks to God the Father who guides you through Jesus Christ. Amen.

Peace be with you.

Deacon Gerry