

~ *Reading Reflections* ~

Why did Jesus choose to become a baby born of a mother and father and to spend all but His last years living in an ordinary human family? In part, to reveal God's plan to make all people live as one "holy family" in His Church. In the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, God reveals our true home. We're to live as His children, "chosen ones, holy and beloved."

The family advice we hear in today's readings - for mothers, fathers and children - and the Liturgy is inviting us to see more, to see how, through our family obligations and relationships, our families become heralds of the family of God that He wants to create on earth.

Jesus shows us this in the Gospel. His obedience to His earthly parents flows directly from His obedience to the will of His heavenly Father. Joseph and Mary aren't identified by name, but three times are called "his parents" and are referred to separately as his "mother" and "father." The emphasis is all on their "familial" ties to Jesus. But these ties are emphasized only so that Jesus can point us beyond that earthly relationship to the Fatherhood of God.

In what Jesus calls "My Father's house," every family finds its true meaning and purpose. The Temple we hear about in the Gospel is God's house, His dwelling, but it's also an image of the family of God, the Church.

In our families we're to build up this household, this living temple of God until He reveals His new dwelling among us, and says of every person: "I shall be his God and he will be My son." Dr. Scott Hahn

Faith Formation

Confirmation Retreat: March 15, 1 to 7 pm
at St. Mary's Church, Oneonta

The Holy Family

By placing the newborn King in a manger, Mary and Joseph are "making do." A bed of straw may not be much, but it must suffice when there is no room at the inn. The Holy Family is quite content to find what they may to comfort their newborn Son. Perhaps they instinctively know the truth that love provides what money cannot buy and that devotion sometimes shines through more clearly.

The Gospels do not give us many images of the early life of the Holy Family, but the Christmas story makes it clear that Mary kept all her memories in her heart and carried them from Christ's cradle to His grave. No doubt fond family images filled her mind and bolstered her weary spirit as she stood at the foot of the cross.

*Jesus, Mary, and Joseph,
In you we contemplate
the splendor of true love,
to you we turn with trust.*

*Holy Family of Nazareth,
grant that our families too
may be places of communion and prayer,
authentic schools of the Gospel
and small domestic Churches.*

*Holy Family of Nazareth,
may families never again
experience violence, rejection, and division:
may all who have been hurt or scandalized
find comfort and healing. Amen*

Parenting Pointers by Susan Vogt

Christmas has come and gone. Perhaps the house is a (happy) mess. Presumably your child has received some nice gifts. Take time to enjoy them together this weekend. Play some games. Rejoice in each other's company. RELAX.