**The Holy Family**

Today we celebrate the feast of the Holy Family. The Holy Family is a model of a perfect family for all of us to imitate. It is how God intended every family to be like. God intended us to be obedient to Him all the time. While we could never measure up to Jesus and Mary’s level of holiness, we should be able to imitate how they worked together as a family.

Five days ago, we celebrated the birthday of our Lord. Our celebration of Christmas should be every day because we should remain joyful all year round. We have reasons to rejoice because the mystery of our salvation began with the word “rejoice.” That was the word angel Gabriel used to address Mary when he told her she would be the mother of the Son of God.

One thing that is common with each member of the Holy Family is, all said yes to the will of God even before they became a family. Jesus, in coming into the world as our Savior, said yes to the will of God. Again in the garden because of His human nature, Jesus asked His Father if the cup of suffering and humiliation could pass over Him. However, He surrendered His will to that of the Father by saying, may His Father’s will be done.

Mary too, said yes to the message of angel Gabriel even though she did not fully understand the message of the angel. She knew that our loving and merciful God could only have her best interest at heart. She knew that God knows what is best for her life and she knew that whatever God has in mind for her is better than whatever she could have in mind for herself. Therefore, she was ready to take up the responsibility of being the mother of the Son of God.

Joseph, the dreamer, the silent one did not audible a single word in Scripture. He too listened to God’s messages the angel told him in dreams. He did not hesitate to go ahead and marry Mary even though he was probably afraid of being the step father of the Messiah. Again, he stepped up to the plate to take up the responsibility of protecting baby Jesus and Mary.

In our first reading, Prophet Sirach pointed out to us, what constitute a good family. He said God has given honor to a father over his children and has given a mother authority over her sons. That is how God had set up the family so that all can live in the peace of God and live in peace amongst each other.

Sirach then pointed out the benefits of honoring our fathers and revering our mothers. He said, when we honor our fathers, we are not only forgiven our sins we are also protected from sin by the grace of God. And he said, all those who revere their mothers, store up riches which are graces in heaven. It is to our advantage that we honor and revere our father and mother.

In our second reading St. Paul breaks down what virtues we need to have in other to imitate the Holy Family. He mentioned ***compassion*** that comes from the heart. ***Kindness***, that removes anger, ***humility***, that is selfless kind of love, ***gentleness*** that is comforting, ***patience***, that endures all types of annoyance, and ***forgiveness***, that overlooks all types of pain.

Paul puts the virtue of ***love*** above all these other virtues because without love, everything we do, would be done out of ulterior motive or for personal gain. Paul points out that when we do everything in the name of the Lord, we would be doing them out of love because God is love and we will be imitating Him when we do everything because of Him.

In our Gospel reading, we encounter a situation that we should reflect on whenever we experience abandonment. For example, whenever we are in tribulation or trial, and we think that God has abandoned and not protected us or whenever, we think that God has not heard or listened to our prayers, we should thing about the Holy Family’s flight to Egypt.

Even though they were the holiest of all families, God did not spare them from tribulations and trials. God could have taken out all who intended to harm or kill Baby Jesus without saying a word or lifting a finger. But because God’s ways are so far above our ways, He told them to run to Egypt. He did similar thing for baby Moses in Egypt with Pharaoh.

My brethren, can you imagine for a minute how St Joseph must have felt living with the Son of God and the His mother the Immaculate Conception! Though he was a just man and righteous, he probably felt inadequate. However, he was the one called by God to protect and lead the Holy Family. Why, because that is God’s way of giving us an example of a family.

 As we joyfully come to receive Him in the Eucharist, let us remember to always imitate the Holy Family by loving God and our neighbor.