

## **Holy Christmas: Day 3 December 27**

### **Feast of the Holy Family**

Jesus, Mary and Joseph; not the slang exclamation of shock that some have used - but, the Holy Family. Today the Church remembers in the midst of 12 Days of Christmas this special family.

The Gospel reading says, ". . . an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, 'Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him'. Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the prophet (Hosea 11:1) 'Out of Egypt I have called my son.'" (Matthew 2:13-15)

The Gospel writer, Luke shared another story of this family - (Jesus in the Temple with his parents - Luke 2:41-52) and we are reminded of the reality, the love and care of parents and child: "Then (Jesus) went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to (Joseph and Mary). His mother treasured all these things in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years and in divine and human favor."

I am thankful today for my experiences of family - from my family of origin in Parkersburg, West Virginia where I was nurtured, challenged, and encouraged; to my "adopted second family" of dearest friends over the years from childhood to now who have embraced and supported; and, so grateful to God for the family we shared in co-creating with a special woman - my wife, Jane. Today, I am thankful for two daughters, Maria & Sara and their life together with their husbands - Roger & Ronnie, and three special grandchildren, Christopher, Alyssa (and her husband, Calab) and Madison. And celebrate in the midst of the pandemic, the birth of our great-grandson - Waylon (son of Alyssa & Calab).

The depth of my thankfulness is rooted in the life of The Holy Family (Jesus, Mary and Joseph) - holy, because in this human experience God was present - Emmanuel. And, God had chosen each one for a purpose that glorified God alone. And, that is important! I am thankful because I have had the humble experience to know and experience God in the midst of family. As the prayer of blessing puts it in the liturgy of marriage - "that their home may be a haven of blessing and a place of peace". And, I hurt today for those persons in relationships and families in this life that have not or are not experiencing blessing or peace.

My prayer on this Feast of the Holy Family (Jesus, Mary & Joseph) is the second reading for today: from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Colossians (3:12-17)

As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing

psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God. . .

May this be our prayer for all families and all persons in human relationships. May the presence of Christ be in the midst of those relationships. May those who are grieving loss of a loved one, the lonely, abused, addicted, oppressed and afraid be comforted and protected. May God alone be glorified in our lives.

William H. Wilson (Bill)+