

Commentary on the Gospel for Sun, Dec 27th 2015

The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph

We are in the middle of the Christmas Season as I reflect on the readings for the Feast of the Holy Family.

In the first reading, Sirach 3:2-6, 12-14, we are told of the honors bestowed upon God's children as they carry out various roles, be it mother, father, children. I am very familiar with the following passage:

My son, take care of your father when he is old;

grieve him not as long as he lives.

Even if his mind fail, be considerate of him;

revile him not all the days of his life;

kindness to a father will not be forgotten,

firmly planted against the debt of your sins

—a house raised in justice to you.

You, see, I was the daughter of a wonderful man who suffered from Alzheimer's disease. My siblings and I worked tirelessly to care for him, and to care for my mother who was his primary caregiver. It was a very difficult time, but we all continue to feel so privileged to have been able to take care of him. He went to Heaven seven years ago. We continue to work together to make sure our mother is cared for, and not lonely. Our parents raised us to care for others, and today's first reading outlines the importance of this, as well as the impact our actions have on others in the family.

The second reading, Colossians 3:12-21 has caused plenty of controversy. Many cannot get past the 'Wives, be subordinate to your husbands.' I, personally don't have much of a problem with that line. Historically, men were the head of a household — for many years, women weren't able to hold a job outside of the home if they became pregnant, and certainly shouldn't do so after having a child. That is simply the way of past times. I, treasure the commandment for Husbands to love your wives! My favorite is the directive for children to 'obey your parents in everything' — perhaps I should post this message in large bold letters on the refrigerator!

Today's gospel cannot be more appropriate for this time of year. While I try so hard to remember the very reason for the season, the birth of our Lord...it is a busy time. I look forward to gathering with family and friends. I can't wait to have all of my children back in the nest for a bit. However, all of this family time can become stressful. I was with a couple of friends last night who were sharing about

some family conflicts that would make this time difficult. We were commiserating about our college students who would be home, and surely would anticipate the freedom they have while away at school.

I have always looked to Mary, my mother, as I navigate the sometimes turbulent waters of motherhood. The gospel reading for today is very appealing to me as it shows us the humanness of Mary and Joseph... and Jesus as young boy. Let us look to the Holy Family as we reflect on our time spent with family and friends. How did we treat each other? Are we too focused on the 'little things'? Can we let go of past wrongs? I am grateful for my faith, and the presence of my spiritual mother, Mary, as I personally reflect now and through the New Year.

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