

Homily on the Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph
St. John Paul II Parish, Cedar Springs, Michigan
Mary Queen of Apostles Parish, Sand Lake, Michigan
Father Lam T. Le, Pastor
December 30, 2018

**“They Went up According to Festival Custom”
(Lk 2:42)**

This Feast of the Holy Family is a continuation of our celebration of Christmas. It specifically gives us a glimpse into the childhood of Jesus with his Mother, Mary, and his foster father, Joseph. The Eternal Word, assuming our human nature, entered into a very basic structure of society — the family. As we celebrate the Holy Family, let us reflect upon the dignity and the importance of our own family. For this we turn to an important paragraph of the Vatican II's *Lumen Gentium*:

From the wedlock of Christians there comes the family, in which new citizens of human society are born, who by the grace of the Holy Spirit received in baptism are made children of God, thus perpetuating the people of God through the centuries. The family is, so to speak, the **domestic church**. In it parents should, by their word and example, be the first preachers of the faith to their children; they should encourage them in the vocation which is proper to each of them, fostering with special care vocation to a sacred state (LG no. 11).

Each of our families is a domestic church! This is a wonderful insight that Vatican II recuperates from the teachings of the Fathers of the Church.

First of all the word “church,” from the Greek language *ekklesia*, means those who are called forth. Thus, all believers who are baptized are called forth by the Lord. To say that our family is the domestic church means that from the warmth and comfort of the home parents and children together hear the Word of God who calls forth by the Lord to bring the light and values of the Gospel to the entire world! What happens at the parish church every Sunday must unfold daily at the dining/living room of every home. The parish church is a sacred place, so is our home. It is a sacred place because it is where God comes to meet us and we encounter the Lord!

The Holy Family is a wonderful example of the “domestic church” that the Good News proclaims, and the customs and values of faith that are handed on to the members. The Gospel passage for today's celebration, from Luke, starts by telling us something about Jesus' parents: “Each year Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem for the feast of the Passover, and when he was twelve years old, they went up according to festival custom” (Lk 2:41-42). In other words, in this Family there was time set aside for God! As another way to put it, they took seriously the Stewardship of their Time. Mary and Joseph carefully observed the traditions and practices of their Jewish faith at their home and brought up their Son to do the same. They worshiped as a family and with their faith community. And they did so faithfully.

As we celebrate the Holy Family, the model for our domestic churches, we can take their example to heart by making Sunday Mass attendance a priority for our families, by making prayer with our family a priority every day, by making sure that we regularly celebrate the sacrament of reconciliation, and by observing in our family life the feasts and fasts appropriate to the liturgical calendar.

Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, assist our domestic churches in the way of holiness. Amen.

Scriptural Readings:

Reading 1 [1SM 1:20-22, 24-28](#); **Responsorial Psalm** [PS 84:2-3, 5-6, 9-10](#); **Reading 2** [1 JN 3:1-2, 21-24](#); **Alleluia** [CF. ACTS 16:14B](#); **Gospel** [LK 2:41-52](#)

