

The Holy Family (A)
(Sirach 3:2-6. 12-14 / Mt 2:13-15. 19-23)
28.12.2025

Dear brothers and sisters,

During the Christmas season, we contemplate the new-born child Jesus. Today, the liturgy invites us to widen our contemplation from Jesus to the Holy Family: Jesus with Mary and Joseph. Jesus is the Son of God, our Saviour. In Him we have everything we need. Why, then, does the Church so quickly add Mary and Joseph to our contemplation of Jesus?

This reminds us that we do not exist as isolated individuals, unrelated to anyone. We exist in relationship with our family, our community, those with whom we work or those with whom we share our free time. What is true for us is also true for Jesus.

When Jesus teaches us how to pray, he tells us to say not 'My Father' or simply 'Father' but 'Our Father'. When we pray, we do so not only as individuals, but as persons holding hands with those with whom we live, in solidarity with them.

If we want to understand and love Jesus, we must look at him in relationship with his mother and his father. Jesus is not independent, self-sufficient; he is dependent on his mother and father. He trusts them, needs them and is grateful for them.

Are we grateful for those with whom we live? Are we convinced that we cannot become who we are called to be without the help of others? It is in relationship with others that we become the person we are meant to be. Just as we contemplate Jesus in relationship with his parents, Mary and Joseph, so we must look at ourselves in relationship with those with whom we live. Are we holding their hands, or are we living as if in a bubble, isolated, closed in our own little world?

When we celebrate the Holy family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, we do not celebrate a perfect family, a family without problems. Such a family does not exist, not even the so-called Holy Family. To be honest, contemplating a perfect holy family would be of no help to us, because all families without exception are more or less dysfunctional.

Let us not idealise the scene! Let us not imagine Mary and Joseph enjoying the company of their son Jesus in a cosy home in Nazareth, in an atmosphere of constant peace and happiness.

According to today's gospel passage, Jesus' family could not live in peace. Herod wanted to kill their child – called the King of the Jews – whom he saw as a rival and a threat to his power. God spoke to Joseph in a dream: "Get up, take the child and his mother with you and flee into Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, because Herod intends to search for the child and do away with him". Joseph acted quickly. He took the child and his mother at night and fled to Egypt. The journey was hard and dangerous.

Today, migrants can understand what this family went through. The Holy Family was a migrant family. Everything was uncertain and insecure. They did not know where to go and when they

would be able to return home. It was only after Herod's death that the Holy Family was able to return to the Land of Israel.

But their worries were not over. When they returned, Archelaus was reigning in Judaea, a man known for his cruelty and tyranny. Joseph feared that it was not a safe place for Jesus. So, they moved to Galilee and settled in Nazareth, a small village in the hills that seemed less dangerous.

This is how the Holy Family lived, protecting their son Jesus, so that he might survive. They moved from place to place, in search of safety, bread and work, homeless and insecure, in a land dominated by powerful rulers such as Herod and Archelaus.

God was not born into the world in a castle. He came to share our lives, bringing hope to those who could not expect much from anyone, except God.

What then was holy in the family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph? What can help us today as we try to follow Christ?

The desire of Mary and Joseph was to do God's will. In their turbulent lives, they remained in constant dialogue with God, speaking to Him, listening to him, and doing what they were asked to do. Mary and Joseph were people of prayer, believing in the loving and caring presence of God at their side.

They were also filled with deep respect for one another and for the child Jesus. Little by little, they discovered that Jesus was special in God's eyes and they did their best to help him become who he was meant to be.

The centre of Mary's life was her Son Jesus, not herself. The centre of Joseph's life was Mary and her Son Jesus, not himself. The Child Jesus was completely dependent on Mary and Joseph.

The life of the Holy Family is a light for our own lives.

As disciples of Jesus, we are reminded by the Holy family that we should not occupy the centre of the stage.

Our lives should be centred on God with whom we should be in continual conversation, a transforming conversation: we should listen to God and strive to do his will. Our lives should be lives of trust in God's presence, trust in God's love for us, lives of unceasing prayer.

We should also honour and respect our neighbours, that is, all our brothers and sisters in humanity without exception. Each one was created in the image and likeness of God, and, by that very fact, is a small but real reflection of God's beauty offered to us.

May our contemplation of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph renew and strengthen our lives of faith!