

Holy Family 2019

Listening To The Lord
December 29, 2019
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Homily Holy Family-2019 Listening to the Lord Pope Francis once said that the “family is a great opportunity, for demonstrating God’s love”. St John Paul II was fond of saying that the family is the “building block of society”. And today the Church offers us the Feast of the Holy Family. We celebrate and remember Mary and Joseph, who, with Jesus, give hope and inspiration to every family.

One element jumps out of today’s gospel which is vital for every family. Listening to God! Pope Francis remarked that listening is an essential part of every happy family. He added that the three most important words in a family are “Please, Thank You, and I’m Sorry.” All of those words imply listening. And yet if people are going to truly listen to each other, there’s one previous step. We have to listen to God.

Today Joseph offers an example of that.

King Herod, an insane and insecure wild man, wants to kill the baby Jesus because the prophecies indicate Jesus as the long-awaited for Messiah. As if King Herod could eliminate God’s plan of salvation! <p> so="" god="" sent="" the="" angel="" gabriel="" to="" tell="" joseph="" in="" a="" dream,="" take="" jesus="" and="" mary="" go="" egypt.="" must="" have="" been="" used="" listening="" god,="" (this="" wasn’t="" first="" time="" an="" spoke="" him).="" scripture="" says="" that="" arose="" took="" away="" by="" night.="" other="" words,="" he="" didn’t="" wait!="" acted="" at="" once.="" listened="" obeyed="" immediately.=""

Then, when Herod had died, the Lord sent Gabriel again to tell Joseph that it was safe to return to Israel. Again, Joseph didn’t wait but returned to Israel.

But God wasn’t finished.

Herod's equally insane son, Archelaus was ruling in his father's place, and the region around Jerusalem was still unsafe. So, in a dream, Gabriel once again warned Joseph not to return to Judea. So Joseph took Mary and Jesus to Galilee.

Three times God changed Joseph's plans; three times Joseph listened and obeyed. He didn't argue with God. He didn't point out how difficult and inconvenient a trip to Egypt would be.

Later he didn't protest that they were just getting adjusted and comfortable in Egypt, and now God was asking him to leave Egypt and move back to Israel. Joseph listened to God, and he followed His plan.

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St. Monica is my wife's "Patron Saint". And you will see why soon! St. Monica had some major struggles in her life. She lived in the 4th century and was married to a man named "Patrice". He was a difficult man. He didn't share her Catholic faith. He ridiculed her because of her faith in Jesus.

Monica's brilliant son Augustine was living an immoral lifestyle, and things didn't seem likely to improve.

But Monica listened to what God asked of her, and so she prayed. And she prayed. And she prayed. And she prayed some more! Finally after years of praying, her husband Patrice converted to the Catholic Faith, just before his death. St. Monica continued to pray for her son, Augustine. For years she prayed fervently for Augustine.

Finally, Augustine encountered Christ and became a good and faithful Christian. He later became a priest and then a

bishop and now is one of the most famous saints in the Church today— St Augustine.

St Monica listened to God's inspiration to pray for her husband and son. She had a strong prayer life! She prayed unceasingly; as scripture tells us to do!

Parents are the ones who are called to “hand on” the faith to their children. Parents are called on by the Church to be the “primary” religious educators of their children! This is the one main message we can learn from this homily today!

It seems like most of my homilies are about strengthening our relationships with God. And we can do that by having a strong prayer life! Listening to God and praying to Him!

So, why not take one day a week to pray the Rosary together as a family? You could pray for a particular intention, such as a sick relative or the homeless person you just saw while driving down the road. Or pray for someone you know who is homebound! Or a struggling friend.

Families can only grow stronger when we listen to each other, when we treat each other with utmost respect. When we say “I’m sorry” when we have wronged someone. We need to live sacrificial lives. Serving one another! Look at the sacrificial lives of Joseph and Mary and especially Jesus!!

Right now, we are at the greatest prayer of all – the Mass. Let's pray for all families, that, like Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, they may listen to God and grow in love for him and each other.

What was the most important thing that Joseph did for his family? He listened to God and he prayed. Always.

Do we pray always?

One simple suggestion is to make your work a prayer. As soon as you wake up, say: "God, I offer you my day. I offer you all my work today, for your glory and the good of others". And then renew that throughout the day. On your way to work, say a quick prayer offering thanks to God. Before a meeting, pray to God. Pray for someone in your family who needs your prayers. Pray for your friends; pray for those who aren't your friends! And little by little, we form the habit of making everything into a prayer.

Let's pray for each other in this Mass. Let's pray for all families, that they may live in the image of the Holy Family, and grow in love for God and for each other.