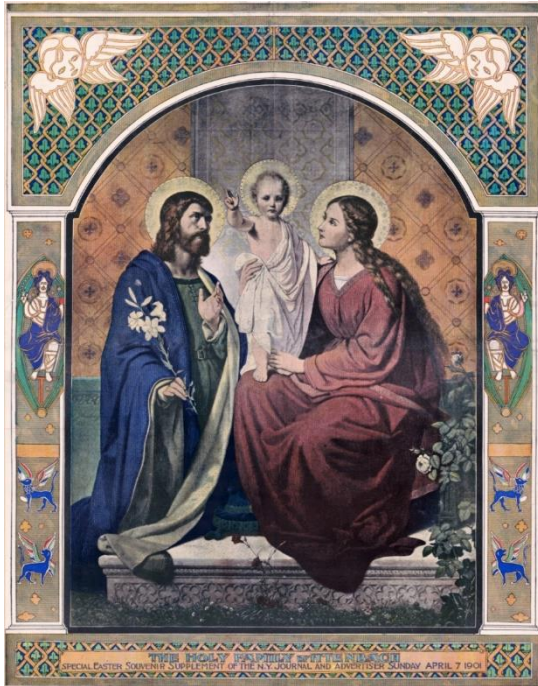


HOLY FAMILY

Sir 3:2-6,12-14; Col 3:12-21; Luke 2:41-52



A couple renews their marital vows at their wedding anniversary. At the reception after Mass, the husband is asked by the master of Ceremonies, “If you were given the chance to start life anew, would you marry the same woman?”

Caught by surprise, the husband ponders on the question in silence. The wife waits for his reply nervously. Then in front of all the guests, he says empathetically, “Yes I will.”

On hearing this, the wife bursts into tears. “These are tears of joy,” she explains. “I’m not perfect, but I try my best to be one because of his love.” Love makes them perfect.

When God the Father sent His Son into the world, He willed that His Son be born into a human family, though not perfect. God willed that the family that Jesus would embrace be a family of love because He is love. In this sense Jesus grew up in Nazareth with Mary and Joseph. They are poor but loving family, observant of the religious traditions of the Jewish people.

Today my dear friends, we are celebrating the Feast of the Holy family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph. As what I have said a while ago that God willed His Son to be born into a human family and made it to be sacred and permanent, it is the original cell of society. The Christian family is called upon to be a community of faith, hope and love that reflects the Trinitarian mystery. For this reason, “it can and should be called a domestic church” (Familiaris Consortio no. 210).

A priest had said that every time he officiates Marriage, he prays for the groom as he walks in the aisle: “God bless this man. I hope he knows what he is doing.’ When it is the turn of the bride to march, I pray for her: ‘God bless this woman. You alone know what she will go through with this man.’”

You know my dear friends, I really admire those people who decided to get married and receive the Sacrament of Marriage because it is not easy to raise a family nowadays: handling the relationships between husbands and wives, parents and children, emotional

and financial aspects and supports of their children in the midst of poverty, underemployment, sexual permissiveness, depiction of violence and pornography cause numerous crises among family members.

The increase of family breakups and that couple who enter marriages are much older than in the previous years support the claim that contemporary family faces greater hardships.

How fortunate is the person who is successful in his profession or business, but nothing compares to the blessedness of a person who succeeds in his marriage and family. For the first time and foremost vocation of a married person is his/her family.

You married men, may you have a job or profession, but no matter how important it may be to society as a whole, your principal vocation is to be a husband and a father. You, married woman, may you have a lot of activities and concerns, but your primary vocation is to be a wife and a mother. This is also true with you children, even if you are looking forward to being independent and planning to have a family of your own, your principal vocation right now is your own family.

“A family that prays together stays together. Families that pray together build eternal relations on a foundation of strength, comfort, inspiration, and love. A family that prays together brings them closer to each other and to the Savior.

AMEN: