Homily Outline

Feast of the Holy Family (Year C)

December 30
(or first Sunday within Octave of Christmas)

This homily reflection focuses on the Gospel on the Sunday within the Octave of Christmas, the Feast of the Holy Family. It is about Jesus' childhood and the other readings are about the virtues of family life (OLM 95 Ordo Lectionum Missae). The questions below are important themes for marriages and families in light of our current societal situation and in light of the rich teachings from the Catechism, that build off of the readings for this feast.

This is not a substitute for writing your homily, rather it's intended as a resource for reflection and prayer on how these themes and topics speak to your parishioners. The idea is to take this resource to prayer and ask the Holy Spirit to highlight or nudge you to topics or themes that will inspire your parish. Finally, depending on where you are in the Ministry Engagement Ladder, make sure to incorporate an clear invitation to parishioners to participate in an upcoming ministry experience or opportunity to enrich their relationships, marriages, and/or families.

- CCC: 2214-2233: Duties of family members.

Feast Day Readings:

- 1 Sm 1:20-22, 24-28 1Jn 3:1-2, 21-24 Lk 2:41-52

- Gospel Passage: Each year Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem for the feast of Passover, and when he was twelve years old, they went up according to festival custom. After they had completed its days, as they were returning, the boy Jesus remained behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it. Thinking that he was in the caravan, they journeyed for a day and looked for him among their relatives and acquaintances, but not finding him, they returned to Jerusalem to look for him. After three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions, and all who heard him were astounded at his understanding and his answers. When his parents saw him, they were astonished, and his mother said to him, "Son, why have you done this to us? Your father and I have been looking for you with great anxiety." And he said to them, "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" But they did not understand what he said to them. He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them; and his mother kept all these things in her heart. And Jesus advanced in wisdom and age and favor before God and man.

Points for Reflection:

- How is the Christian family a school of discipleship?
  - Christ, whose birth we are celebrating, came into the world to do the will of his Father, such an obedience that is docile towards the movements of the Holy Spirit has a place in the life of every Christian family.
- Going on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem for the feast of Passover, Jesus is obedient to his earthly parents, but His desire to be in his Father's presence is even greater.
  - Is our desire for a relationship with God greater than all else?
  - Is our desire as a husband and wife to maintain our marital union amidst the busyness of family life?
    - i.e. weekly check-ins, monthly date nights, speaking well of and to one another.

- Domestic Church as an image of Christ's self-sacrificial love in the Eucharist
  - Does your daily routine/way of life reflect the image of Christ's life?
- Do we see our parish/parishioners as our family/brothers and sisters in Christ?
  - "For whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother" (Mk 3:35)
- Mutual submission of husband and wife
  - "Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ" (Eph 5"21)
  - Not just for the sake of harmony in the home or good of society, but rather out of reverence for Christ.
  - Mutual submission in the family as an expression of Christian discipleship.
- The home as a manifestation of our love for God.
- Mutual forgiveness in the family:
  - CCC2227 "Children in turn contribute to the growth in holiness of their parents. Each and everyone should be generous and tireless in forgiving one another for offenses, quarrels, injustices, and neglect. Mutual affection suggests this. The charity of Christ demands it."
- How are you embodying self-sacrificial love to your parish family?
  - By virtue of the Eucharist as our "family meal"
- Do you (the priest) have any anecdotes or stories from your upbringing that relate to these themes?