

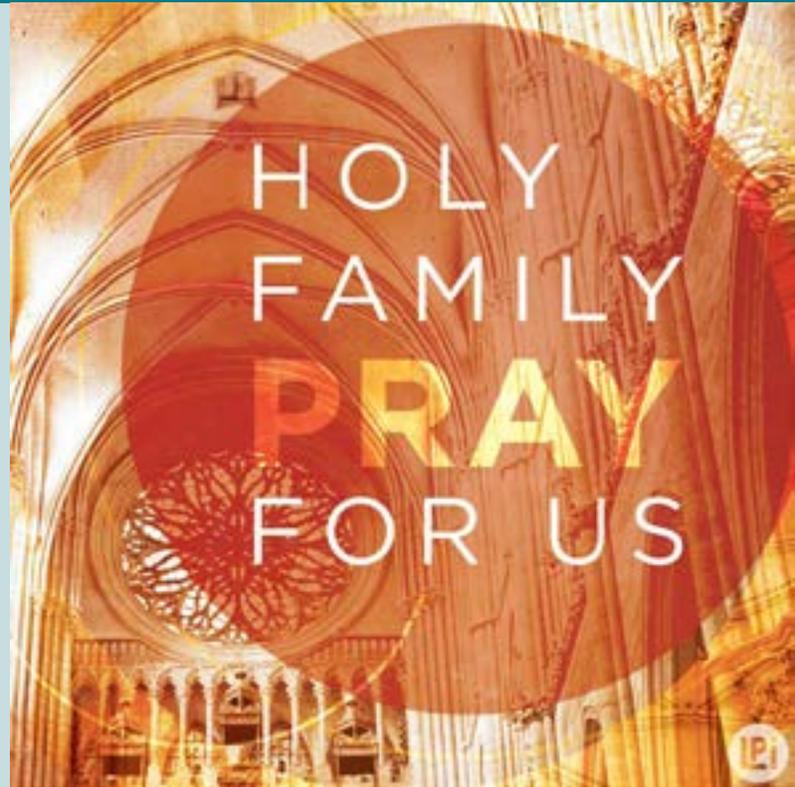
# CONNECT! SUNDAY REFLECTION

The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph | For Sunday, December 27, 2020

## A Hidden Life Of Strength, Wisdom, Grace

*Written by Douglas Sousa*

**Sirach 3:2-6, 12-14 or  
Genesis 15:1-6; 21:1-3  
Colossians 3:12-21 or  
Hebrews 11:8, 11-12, 17-19  
Luke 2:22-40**



The Holy Family have served as the model for a Christian family. Like most families, they lived ordinary and unremarkable lives. It was in this simple home, however, that Jesus, our Savior, grew into the man who would save the world. It was in the humble surroundings of his home life that this great man spent most of his life on earth.

The Holy Family teaches us that we can grow in holiness by living simple and humble lives with our families. Whether we are parents or children, we grow in age, wisdom, and grace through the joys and trials of our everyday lives. We cooperate with God's creative power whenever a new baby is born into our families. When the anxiety of paying bills or dealing with illness mounts, we grow in trust of our Heavenly Father who makes all things work out for good. By doing our chores around the house cheerfully and with love, we learn about serving others. At family gatherings, we learn to be patient and kind by biting our tongues whenever our cranky uncle starts talking about politics or our teenage cousin double dips his tortilla chip into the salsa. Each family, no matter how imperfect, is a temple where we can find Jesus present and a school where we can learn the ways of God.

It is for this reason that prayer is so important for family life. We need to acknowledge that Christ is at the center of our lives as a family and to remind ourselves that our home is a holy place. One great way to do that is by saying grace at every meal, even when we are eating in a restaurant or have guests over. It teaches us to be thankful for what we have

and to be mindful of those who have less. It also sets a tone for the meal, making the behavior and conversation more courteous and respectful. No matter how we choose to do it, prayer is vital to our families to give us the strength to deal with the pressures of modern life and to help us recognize God working in small and subtle ways in our home.

Jesus, the sinless one, obeyed his parents. As children in catechism we learn that obeying our parents is our first duty. As imperfect as they may be, our parents are the first to introduce us to our faith. For this reason, the fourth commandment — “honor thy father and mother” — is the first one which deals with our responsibilities to our neighbor. And it does not expire when we turn eighteen or move out of the house. Rather, God intends that we love and honor our parents throughout our lives, especially when they are older and most need our help. The elderly increasingly feel that they are a burden to their families and that their lives lack meaning and purpose. They need our affection in their old age more than ever. All of us have much to learn still from our parents no matter how old we are. Along with prayer, honoring our parents is one of the pillars of a strong family life.

Each of us is called to grow in strength, wisdom, and grace through our family life. There has perhaps been no other time when family life has been under so much pressure. We see the effects of our weakened moral climate and a difficult economy all around us. Divorce has touched just about every family in one way or another. Now more than ever we should turn to that model of simple faith and humility, the Holy Family, and ask for their prayers so that our homes will become schools of love and faith.

- Douglas Sousa

## PRAYER

### [THE HOLY FAMILY PRAYER](#)

Jesus, Son of God and Son of Mary, bless our family.  
Graciously inspire in us unity, peace, and mutual love.

Mary, Mother of Jesus and our Mother,  
nourish our family with your faith and your love.  
Keep us close to your Son, Jesus, in all our sorrows and joys.

Joseph, foster-father to Jesus, guardian and spouse of Mary,  
keep our family safe from harm.  
Help us in all times of discouragement and anxiety.

Holy Family of Nazareth, make our family one with you.  
Help us to be instruments of peace.  
Grant that love, strengthened by grace,  
may prove mightier than all the weaknesses and trials  
through which our families sometimes pass.  
May we always have God at the center of our hearts and homes  
until we are all one family, happy and at peace  
in our true home with you.  
Amen.