

The Presentation in the Temple

Mary and Joseph held nothing back from God. They gave Him themselves in following the confusing and frightening path He laid out for them. Through visits from angels and men, fearing for their Son, and becoming homeless refugees, they remained faithful, trusting in God's plan.

Here again, they hold nothing back. Like Abraham of old, they offer their only Son back to the Lord knowing that God's plan is often not like our own.

In the Presentation we find strength and courage for our family. We are reminded that God has a plan for our good, if only we trust in Him.

Lord, help us to offer our entire family to you. Give us the strength to be like Mary, Joseph, and even Abraham and offer to you that which is most precious to us. Give us comfort in knowing that this gift of our family to You will allow the world around us to echo the words of Simeon, "my eyes have seen the salvation which you prepared" and thus be drawn to your love.

"God's way is a better way, but not always an easier way." LIOM #23

The Finding of Jesus in the Temple

Jesus was in the Temple listening and asking questions of the learned men for three days.

In this mystery we can see elements of discerning one's vocation. It was as if Jesus was on a "come and see" retreat weekend...without telling Mary or Joseph!

Discernment of one's vocation takes time, patience, and prayer. Our family should be a place where prayerful vocational discernment is supported and encouraged. It should be a place where the entire family is open to God's will for each individual person.

This mystery should also remind us that vocational discernment is not a "one and done" event. On the contrary, discerning our vocation is a life-long "seeking of Jesus" and His will in our lives. No matter our state in life or vocation, discernment should be a daily event and one that helps us all "find Jesus".

"A vocational approach to life implies a willingness to be frank about our own desires, but, most of all to offer our life to God, to be open to the adventures and new plans that might present themselves when we say, "thy will, not mine." LIOM #78

The Joyful Mysteries of the Family



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Meditations from the book—

Rosary Meditations for the Family

The Annunciation

Mary had no real idea of what she was saying “yes” to when visited by the angel. She, of course, was saying “yes” to the joy and beauty of family life, but she was also saying “yes” to her family being homeless and on the run. She was saying “yes” to rearing the child Jesus, and she was saying “yes” to watching the crowds shout for His death. Her every action—joys, excitement, worry, sacrifice, pain, rejoicing, and anxiety were an extenuation of her “yes”.

Saying “yes” to God’s will for our family is scary because we have no real idea of what lies ahead. However, if we trust God completely, we know that He can use our family “yes” to bring about a great witness to others. In our “yes” the world will see that it is possible to be faithful to God and each other. In our “yes” they will see the small miracles of family life.

Let us imitate Mary and resolve to make every part of our family life a continual, beautiful, resounding “yes” to God. Let us ask for the grace to say “yes” to both the joys *and* sufferings of family life and thus become a beautiful heroic witness of God’s plan for families.

“When living in active readiness for God’s will as it unfolds in one’s own personal history, making Mary’s fiat one’s own, blessings can accrue. Because everyone is called to give and receive love...” LIOM (Love Is Our Mission: The Family Fully Alive) #102

The Visitation

When Mary visited Elizabeth we hear Elizabeth proclaim “*who am I that the mother of my Lord should come to me.*” Elizabeth recognized that unique dignity bestowed upon Mary. We hear Mary reply with her Magnificat, her song of praise. We could just as easily hear the words her Son would utter many years later, “*I have not come to be served but to serve.*”

Family life, as Mary & Elizabeth show, is a life of loving service. Husband and wife serve one another in the day to day activities that make up family life. Parents serve their children from the first day God places them in that family until they are no longer able to do so. Children serve their parents and siblings through their love and affection, gifts and personalities. The domestic family serves the parish family, providing for it’s needs through it’s gifts of time, talent, and treasure. The parish family serves the domestic family through the sacraments and ministries that address the varied needs of each individual family.

Family life is a life of loving service to one another. Let us go “*with haste*” to serve our family, parish family, and the world.

“...we accept our real humanity more deeply as we enter into relationships of love and service with our neighbors and in the worship of God.” LIOM #15

The Nativity

Mary and Joseph were far from the comforts of home on the night Jesus was born. They had travelled far by foot and animal. The only place for them not only to stay for the night, but to give birth was a cave used to keep livestock. They had strange visitors from far off places. Their son was sought out for annihilation by the government. They very quickly became refugees and escaped to another country with only their meager belongings.

This is certainly not the Currier & Ives scene we are accustomed to seeing on Christmas cards. Nor is it the beautiful Nativity scene found at our parish church. It is, however, reality.

From bills to addictions and from infidelity to disease, family life can be messy, painful, and dangerous. To not only survive but thrive, we must, like Mary & Joseph, keep our attention on Jesus. When God is the center of our family life, nothing can destroy us. In fact, when God is the focus of our family, the very things that seek to destroy us are the very things that allow our family to be a witness to the world.

“At it’s best, the family is a school of love, justice, compassion, forgiveness, mutual respect, patience, and humility in the midst of a world darkened by selfishness and conflict.” LIOM VII