

DECEMBER 29, 2019
Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph
Matthew 2: 13-15, 19-23

TRUST AND RELIANCE ON GOD

I suppose a lot of families are in a road trip because schools are closed, moms and dads are off to work, and they want to escape winter. This is also a great opportunity to visit grandpa and grandma, or other relatives and friends. This time of season is also a great incentive to go shopping or dinner or movie together as one family. It's really a lot of fun to go places with family, friends and other people.

Our gospel story today makes us wonder what it was like when an angel of the Lord appeared to St. Joseph in a dream instructing him to flee to Egypt. How did Joseph offer this idea to Mary? Is Mary who was with a new baby agreed to have a family trip abroad? But Mary and Joseph trusted in God and would guide them to protect the Baby Jesus even if they will travel to Egypt for several months or a year and half to two years, or have taken them several days to get to Egypt from Bethlehem which is approximately 300-350 miles or 482-563 kilometers, an extremely long trip in those days.

Trust and reliance on God are essential to our understanding on the feast that we are celebrate today, the Feast of the Holy Family. Joseph and Mary put God the center of their lives. They were people of great faith. According to Pope Francis: "In a difficult situation, St. Joseph put his whole trust in God and was obedient, an example for all Catholics to imitate. St. Joseph "does not preach, does not speak, but tries to do the will of God; and he does it in the style of the Gospel and of the Beatitudes."¹

¹ www.catholicnewsagency.com

My brothers and sisters, this faith and trust in God is exactly what made this Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph HOLY! When a child was born to them which neither one of them understood, while they were traveling to Bethlehem, when there was no room for them at any of the inns, or nice, safe, clean places to stay, or when they had to flee to Egypt and put the Baby on the road, Mary and Joseph wholeheartedly trusted, depend and relied on God to get them out of some impossible situations.

Just like every family, they had to face and overcome difficulties, for example, how misunderstood Mary and Joseph must have been when Mary conceived Jesus through the Holy Spirit, very difficult for Mary when Joseph was considering divorcing her when he found Mary's pregnancy before marriage, when Jesus was born in the most difficult circumstances as the birth took place in an animals' cave, as they had to flee to Egypt, when they lost Jesus for three days when he was twelve years old, and when Joseph, the holy family experienced the greatest pain of all families, the pain of separation through death. They are like us, who had their ups and downs as a family. They had their problems, struggles and challenges, just like your family and my family. They survived as a family, just like yours and mine. The Holy Family survived because there was enough love, acceptance and forgiveness between them, and enough trust in both God and one another. Love, patience and trust were effective during the time of Mary and Joseph as they looked upon their Baby Jesus and lived as a Holy Family. This will also be effective today. This what holds families together in times of difficulties – their love, patience, understanding and trust.

My brothers and sisters, what is the major threat to our family life nowadays? We don't spend enough time together. We are so busy working, socialising, using our electronic gadgets, iPad, cellphones, play station or watching TV, Netflix, movies that we have no time to talk to each other or even see each other in our own house. My appeal

to you, give time to your family, have a quality time and bring our family to God through prayer and attending mass together. Husband love your wife. Wife love your husband. Parents protect and shield your children. Children obey and take care of your parents especially when they are already old and weak.

My brothers and sisters, just as the Holy Family experienced and survived all its crises, difficulties and challenges through love, trust and faithfulness for each other and faith in God, let us ask our Lord Jesus Christ in this Mass that our families will conquer all these things through love and care for each other and faith in God all throughout our lives. Let us ask Jesus, Mary and Joseph the Holy Family, to protect us and give us strength to continue following the will of God amidst trials and worries. May the Holy Family bless us always!

Let this be our prayer: "Lord Jesus Christ, make me a faithful and loving wife and mother, husband and father to our children like your parents, Joseph and Mary. May I have an unquestioning trust and joyful hope to you and give us, as a family, understanding and strength to face challenges and difficulties. May I put my wholehearted faith and confidence to you like what Joseph and Mary did. Amen."