

The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph – December 29/30, 2018 – Reflection

I remember the very first sermon I ever preached was as a newly ordained deacon on the feast of the Holy Family in my home parish of the Holy Family before friends and fellow parishioners I had gone to school with and gone to church with since I was a little kid, and my own family was in the congregation that morning.

I remember looking at my Mom and thinking how she had cherished me and my brothers and sister in her heart all of our lives. I remember looking at Brian and Peter and Ann, my three siblings, and thinking how once my best friend in grade school who was an only child had told me he would give anything to have a family like mine, to have brothers and sisters. I remember looking at my Dad and making a coupla cracks about him in the talk to lighten the mood and to keep me from choking up and crying in front of all those people. But I also remembered then how great he was to go to when any of us was in trouble or had messed up and how proud he always said he was of each of us. I remember at my graduation from college, he and my Mom threw a wonderful party for all sorts a relatives and friends and my Dad got up to toast me and he said, "Two thousand years ago the heavens opened and a voice said, 'This is my Beloved Son in whom I am well-pleased,' ... Tonight I say the same." Wow!! How loved I felt!

I love my family. I even like my family! All of them are or were good, good people. But, we are not the Holy Family ... maybe just a family that tries.

I think for many of us, the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph sets the bar too high to reach in our Christian families. We fight with one another. We take one another for granted. We go our separate ways from one another. We say hurtful things to one another. We let one another down sometimes. We let long, bitter silences between us go on and on and on. We lose the holiness and forget the love.

Today's a day to take a second look at what might seem to be totally broken in our families and see if there isn't something worth saving, something worth cherishing, something worth remembering, something worth doing differently, and then, being the family member to take the first step toward that something.

Our blood families, our church families, our friend families, our work families, our neighborhood families may never be perfect or without fault or even holy but if you're the one who tries to bring Jesus into whatever family you find yourself in, you will be God's beloved child in whom He is well-pleased.