

Homily: Christmas / Holy Family 2022

***“The Help of the Holy Family on the Journey of Holiness”***

It’s good to see everyone here who was able to come to this beautiful Solemnity despite the very frigid temperatures. We pray in a special way for all the people, esp. the elderly and the frail who were not able to come to Mass because of the extreme cold. In this homily, I want to look at each person of the Holy Family who will help us spiritually in the particular challenges and temptations of the time in human history we are living in, and the age we are personally at in life, so we can truly embrace the mystery of salvation that Jesus, our Savior, came to bring each one of us – if we are open to it. Let’s place ourselves spiritually at the feet of the infant Jesus and the Virgin Mary and St. Joseph.

1. As we go through this earthly life there are particular challenges we face. When we are young starting in the teenage years, the big temptation is to settle for the passing pleasures of this life, the things that both give us temporary happiness and numb us to the pain of earthly life – *so sexual sins of various sorts, drinking to the point of numbness, and sometimes taking drugs to have the same effect*, forgetting of course there is a better way God wants us to follow, and **the Blessed Mother** shows this to us in her response to God. **Her obedience and her purity of mind and body** exemplify the higher life God calls us to live even while in this passing world. **It’s a foreshadowing of the life of Heaven.** Our Lady will help each one of us no matter our struggles are – *if starting tonight we ask here to help us live a more faithful life to God each day, and get in the holy habit of praying the Rosary.*
2. As we get into adulthood in this world **another big temptation** that can overtake us and cause us to forget the salvation we are called to in Jesus our Savior is that of pride and self-will: *to accomplish things in a worldly sense. To get people to notice us.* To counter this tendency, God gives us **St. Joseph** the foster father of Jesus as **a role model of humility**. St. Joseph was blessed by God because of how he handled things quietly without flying off the handle, esp. before he had the dream that showed him how Mary became pregnant with Jesus in a miraculous way by the power of the Holy Spirit. St. Joseph was a true Godly man – he took

care of Mary and Jesus in his childhood with humble strength and dignity and didn't go around bragging about his accomplishments, even though in reality he is the holiest human who ever lived next to the Blessed Virgin Mary. He wasn't insecure in his being, but rather had a humble confidence to do what is right and good because he found his true identity in his relationship with God the Father in taking care of Jesus and Mary. **Let's ask daily for his prayers to do the same.**

3. Finally as we get into older age the temptation is to try to find security in the things we have, *money and possessions* - a false security blanket. If the time we are living in has taught us anything it is to not trust in money and possessions to give us happiness and security. The last 15 years have been a yo-yo with the stock market and then the Covid crash and all the problems with our government in this area of life. **The lesson hopefully we have all learned:** *is that we are called to live a simpler life, a life of detachment more and more from material things and to find our true riches in God, our Catholic Faith, and the things promised to us by the virtue of Hope in eternity/Heaven.* **Jesus** is the model for us of **holy poverty** – being born in a stable/cave instead of in a royal palace. He shows us at His nativity and then throughout His life that true riches consist in growing in union with God in the depths of our heart and mind and will, i.e., our soul, and that all the good things of this life are to be used to help us and others grow in that union. The old saying is: *you can't take it with you!* So I pray as your Pastor that we all resolve in this coming year to ask Jesus, Mary, and Joseph to help us grow in holiness: *to not settle for the passing sinful pleasures of the flesh, to not be self-willed and proud and obsessed with earthly accomplishments, so others will say we are great and fill our minds with pride and vanity, and that we all become more detached from money and material things and instead use what we have to grow closer to God by helping others more in holy charity* - as I have listed in my bulletin column, some great charities to support. Obedience to God's holy will, purity of mind and body, humility, and holy detachment/poverty are the Christmas virtues that will lead us on the narrow path to Heaven – which is what Christmas is all about: the salvation of souls. Have a blessed Christmas. ☺