

Rectoría San Juan de Dios
Holy Family, Cycle B
Sir 3, 3-7.14-17; Ps 128; Col 3, 12-21; Lk 2, 22-40
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Let Us Revive Belonging

Celebrating the Holy Family today, we can take in this beautiful image of the Family of Nazareth. It is not a normal family according to our cultural categories; it seems more like an atypical family if we consider that the mother is a virgin, the father is God, Joseph is the legal and spiritual father, and the son is both divine and human. Nevertheless, this very condition through which God wanted to come into the world permits us to understand that family is manifested in endless different forms. In the center of this family and of all families in the world, we find this constant: the need of a relationship of belonging and of a place to be raised, instructed, and helped to discover our higher calling.

Even our dysfunctional families—how much richness they can achieve when they make the effort to live a life of healthy belonging and a minimal plan as a family!

Joseph and Mary were firm in their intention to raise Jesus in the tradition of those who hoped for the liberation of Israel. They took the Baby to the Temple to present Him and consecrate Him to the Lord. Not only for mere tradition, but to mark in their personal, family, and communal history the ascendancy and the belonging of Jesus to the family of Abraham and, thus, to the family of their Father God.

To us today, it would be well to take up this experiential and ritual sense of our belonging. Especially now, when we live in a time in which roots are lost in the

ideologies of relativism and secularism. A world that, in addition, is not very interested in maintaining the continuity of its institutions and the memory of its ancestors.

What a very great treasure to recover our family and religious belonging and to come alive from this experience!

Let us try three attitudes for reviving our belonging:

1-Let us maintain the bond through honor.

Our most important mentors will always be our parents and our siblings. According to the wisdom of Sirach, to honor parents enables us to reap the blessings of God, to atone for sins, and store up treasures, to find joy in our own children and in prayers that are heard, and to have a long life and consolation.

What an immense joy to have the possibility of caring for our parents in their old age and to experience the sense that our life has a measure of belonging to them.

2-Let us live family life with a sense of consecration.

In this sense, we must celebrate belonging as many times as the circumstances of our life permit. This means growing in a strong spirituality of communion and setting aside the individualistic mind-set.

The consecration to family life and love does not depend on ceremonies but on attitudes; thus we teach each other, accompany each other, and show each other magnanimity, humility, affability, and patience.

3-Let us uphold each other like living stones.

The elderly Simeon, moved by the Spirit, went to the temple and there he met the family of Nazareth. He was sure that he had seen the Savior in that Child. He took Him in his arms and blessed God for having allowed him such a great gift. Simeon revealed that Jesus would be set as the cornerstone for the rise and ruin of many.

We can uphold family life in this way, as a foundation stone on which to build the plan for the family. The belonging also implies this burden, similar to Mary's: "*...and a sword will pierce your soul,*" but in the very exercise of that burden is given the ability to allow the piercing.¹

Who am I according to my belonging to a family and religious community?

¹ The sign of contradiction that is Jesus leads us to the cross and, in that sense, a sword will pierce Mary's soul, that is, it will cut short her longings. It could be read as "*a sword will pierce your psychê*" (translated as *nephesh=ansia/longing*) to understand that the mother, or Israel, will experience death and the failure of the salvation that all were waiting for. But that will reveal the power of the cross.