

Happy Feast Day

**This is a feast day that is much needed in today's world
That is because the family is under attack on many fronts
There is the contraceptive mentality
The idea you can separate life and love
Even leading to the scourge of abortion
Individualism that leads to isolating couples from one another
The thought that marriage is all about 'me'
There is the attempt to redefine marriage as a permanent bond
One that exists between one man and one woman
No-fault divorce tearing away at the fabric of commitment
The culture promoted by movies, television and popular music
Obscuring the values that build up families
But these are nothing new
The family has been under attack since the very beginning
When Eve disregarded God's command
And Adam went along with her
Seeking their own perceived good
It is played out differently with each generation
How do we respond?
We can respond to our fears as Herod did
Reacting in anger, striking out in destruction and violence**

He had no regard for families; not even his own

He had all the power in the world

But he was a bully

He was paranoid that others were after him

He even used his own family

In his time, he killed his wife and one of his sons

Because he thought they were conspiring against him

In his desire to be mourned

He ordered that at his death

All political prisoners should be put to death

This way, there would be crying in the streets at his funeral

In his insecurity and fear

He ordered all male children

2yrs old at the time and younger, should be put to death

He did this in an attempt to get to one child

A child that was no threat to his earthly kingdom

A child he did not understand

A child he feared because he did not understand him

Or we can react as Joseph did

Trusting in God and being faithful

Joseph had accepted into his home Mary

And now they had this little baby to care for

So when he is instructed to flee to Egypt

He does not hesitate

He takes his small family and goes to a foreign land

He trusted in God and is faithful

This is a common factor in everything we know about Joseph and the Holy Family

When Mary was with child

When they trekked to Bethlehem

When they delivered their baby in a cave

When King Herod sought their child

In the flight to Egypt

Living in a foreign land

Returning home, only to find the king's son ruling

Going to Nazareth

Making a living

Raising a family

They trusted in God and were faithful

This is the lesson the Holy Family leaves for us

They lived a real life

One that was affected by sin

They survived threats, dangers and trials

Attacks on the family are nothing new

These things don't interrupt family life

They are family life

The family is where we learn responsibility and self-worth

It is where we see faith lived and practiced

It is where we see the virtues described by St Paul lived out

Heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility

Forgiving one another and being forgiven

All of these and more are the core of family

If we try to send the kids off to school

And never reinforce the values taught by living them in the family

They will be rejected

God Himself is a family

The Father, Son and Holy Spirit

Christ was born into a human family

The Holy Family of Mary and Joseph

We all have a family

And we are part of a parish family

The attacks are nothing new

Satan cannot attack the Trinity

So he attacks the image

He can do no harm to the Holy Family

So he strives to harm the image

The defense is to become a family

Having a family is easy

Being a family takes commitment

It takes courage

It takes sacrifice

It is demanding

Centering our family life around its image

Turning to the Trinity in prayer

Committing to the practice of our faith

Practicing the virtues St Paul wrote about every day

Strengthening our faith through Sunday worship

Joining with other families

Forming a parish family

Receiving the Word

Receiving the Eucharist

Building the family

It is not easy

But it has eternal rewards