



FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK  
**FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY: DECEMBER 25/26, 2021**

Dear Parishioners,

The family is “the beginning and basis of human society” — an image of the relationship between Christ and His church, and a foreshadowing of the hope that through the preaching of the Gospel “the human race might become the family of God, in which the fullness of the Law would be love.” Vatican II. - Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity.

In the twenty-first century, “family” has many cultural and moral connotations and challenges for Christians. We are all aware of those who belong to separated, divorced, blended, or single-parent families. We find it is more and more common that our classmate, neighbor, an old friend or a co-worker are part of a same-sex family or in a civil partnership.

We are also becoming more aware of the physical and verbal abuse that takes place in an otherwise seemingly “perfect” suburban home. The public, and above all, parents are horrified by the child abuse and pornography that reaches into the home via the internet, that often strangles relationships in the family.

The reading we have just listened to can seem light years away from today’s challenges. We must keep in mind that they are written in another time, which embodied a different cultural milieu, which was patriarchal.

While today we may feel we have made progress with greater equality, yet we know that we still lack many of the essential qualities of healthy family life.

Even in the patriarchal-privileged society of the first century, our second reading from Colossians underlines the Christian practice of love, gentleness and mutual respect. Perhaps, we can take up the challenge to imaginatively and practically support families and advocate appropriate policies to make that happen.

What is the most important thing we can do? Perhaps, this story from St. Teresa of Calcutta or Mother Teresa makes it perfectly clear what works the best. Mother Teresa found a little girl on the street and took her into the Missionary of Charity children's home and gave her clean clothes, good food, and a nice place to stay. The sisters tried hard to make the girl happy. After a few hours, she ran away, and it was a few days before Mother Teresa found her again.

The sisters who followed her discovered that the girl was fleeing back to her mother, who was so poor that she lived in the street under a tree and with meager food.

When asked why she ran away, the girl replied: “I could not live without my mother. She loves me.”

The whole time the child was with the missionaries, she did not smile. But with her mother, she was smiling. Why? Because they were family.

Honor, respect, forgiveness and most of all love are the hallmarks of family life. Yes, you can and must try to do this rather than judgement, hatred and division, for that only leads to further heartache and division.

*Sincerely, Father Mike Meany*