

## Our Household Church: And So, We Are Holy Family Sunday: 2021 December 26<sup>th</sup>

**All:** In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**Elders:** Creator God, you have brought us here together. **All:** We can give you thanks and praise for all the wonderful things you do with us, for us and through us for one another.

**Youngest:** We thank you for all that is beautiful in the world and for the happiness you have given us.

**Women:** We praise you for daylight and for your word which lights up our minds.

**Men:** We praise you for the earth, and all the people who live on it,

**All:** and for our life which comes from you. We Praise You! We Thank You! We Serve You!

**Youngest:** We know that you are good. **Elders:** You love us and do great things for us.

**Fathers:** Father, you are always thinking about your people; **All:** you never forget us.

**Mothers:** You sent your Son Jesus, who gave his life for us and who came to save us.

**Children:** He cured sick people; he cared for those who were poor and wept with those who were sad.

**Elders:** He forgave sinners and taught us to forgive each other.

**All:** He loves everyone and showed us how to be kind. He took children in his arms and blessed them.

God our Father, all over the world your people praise you. So now we pray with the whole Church: with (*Francis*), our pope and {N}, our bishop. We pray for {N}, our pastor, [for {N (and N) our deacon(s)}].

**Women:** In heaven Mary, Mother of the Church, the apostles, all the saints and some of our family members {name some} always sing your praise. **Men:** Now we join with them and with the angels to adore you as we say: **All:** We Praise You! We Thank You! We Serve You!

### BREAKING OPEN THE WORD

*Read each reading, 1 Samuel 1:20-22, 24-28 and 1 John 3:1-2, 21-24 and the Gospel Luke 2:41-52. While someone reads the Scripture(s), listen well. BE ATTENTIVE TO THE IMAGE BEING PAINTED, OR THE STORY BEING TOLD. DOES THE STORY OR THE IMAGE CALL TO MIND ANYTHING SIMILAR IN YOUR OWN LIFE EXPERIENCE? After the reading, share your impressions of the reading(s):*

When one's understanding of the *Holy Family* is the Greetings cards' view, or of most Medieval paintings among others it is difficult to see "my family" as Holy. "There's no way on God's Green Earth that my family can measure up with those rosy cheeks, gentle gazes, strolling heaven light, etc." But whether it be Mary, Joseph and Jesus or Hannah and Elkanah (in the 1<sup>st</sup> Reading), Ruth Naomi, King David, Abraham and Sarah, Adam and Eve, etc., their lives were anything but free of hardship and loss. Yet, these are the stories that teach us what a life of Faith is.

- ✓ Pick Mary and Joseph's domestic life apart – from what we have read, heard or came up with when ruminating over it. Easy street or loss and pain.
- ✓ So, what is it that makes a family, any family, "Holy"?
- ✓ What are the pictures which Luke and Matthew paint with their words? How does the reality they propose call us to a understand our Family Way?

Dorothy Day, founder of the Catholic Worker Movement, when she was pregnant and alone, living with the poor and organizing laborers, looked around for a model by which she could live and under which she could raise her child. She saw in the lives of the mostly East European immigrant women living often in squalor, domestic violence and so often alone a sense of Faith which bore them through.

- ✓ Take the role of Mary right now. Or take the role of Dorothy Day in “our time.” Who are your models of sticking to a moral compass despite daily drudgery and some degree of suffering?
- ✓ What is the suffering/holiness quotient needed to get through to a living Faith?
- ✓ What was Jesus’ reason to identify the Eucharist with the Crucifixion?
- ✓ Was there a way to get to the Resurrection without the Crucifixion first?
- ✓ Struggle can either make us or break us. Which of your life’s struggles are still hurtful scars? Which of your struggles help you find a way through darkness to hope?

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You might want to take this on a different point: The 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading from John’s 1<sup>st</sup> Letter helps us define who we are – the beloved of God. **See what love the Father has bestowed on us that we may be called the children of God. And so, we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God’s children now; what we shall be has not yet been revealed. We do know that when it is revealed we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.**

- ✓ Where do you look to discover the “face of God?”
- ✓ Where did King David look? Ruth look? Where did Dorothy Day look?
- ✓ How does the discussion from above impact your understanding?

**Suggested Reading:** *If you didn’t get to reading it earlier when this was suggested, it might be the time to pick it up now. Read the 3<sup>rd</sup> part of Let Us Dream, by Pope Francis, which deals with post-pandemic action in rethinking personal and societal relationships).*

### **BREAKING AND SHARING BREAD** *(some do this in the context of a meal)*

**All:** God our Father, you are most holy, and we want to show you that we are grateful.

**Eldest:** We do now what Jesus told us to do. **Youngest:** We invite you Father and Jesus to our table.

**Women:** We break and share this bread longing for the bread that gives us life. **All:** Help us share our table with the poor, refugees and people without homes. *[Pass some form of bread from person to person. After everyone has had a chance to eat the bread, continue:]*

**Men:** We also share something to drink at our table. It represents our longing for the cup that saves us. *[Pass a pitcher with a beverage. Have everyone pour for the next person. After everyone has had a chance to drink the beverage, continue:]*

**Eldest:** Jesus brings us to you. **Youngest:** Welcome us as you welcome him. **All:** Help us welcome others as you welcome us. Let us seek Peace together and follow in her way.

### **My Lord and My God.**

**Youngest:** Father, because you love us, you invite us to come to your table.

**All:** Fill us with the joy of the Holy Spirit as we share the body and blood of your Son in our actions.

**Parents:** Lord, you never forget any of your children.

**All:** Help us respond to the need of children without homes.

**Eldest:** Remember everyone who is suffering from pain or sorrow.

**All:** Inspire Christians everywhere and all other people in the world.

**Eldest:** We are filled with wonder and praise when we see what you do for us through Jesus your Son,

**All:** We Praise You! We Thank You! We Respect You!

**All:** Our Father, who art in heaven...

**All:** In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen!