

HOMILY DELIVERED BY REV. FR. JUDE EMUNEMU ON DECEMBER 28, 2025 @ ST. ANTHONY CATHOLIC CHURCH, JEAN LAFITTE LA BEING THE FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY, YEAR A

THEME: ***THE HOLY FAMILY – A MODEL FOR THE DOMESTIC CHURCH***

Beloved in Christ, today, we celebrate the Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, a powerful reminder of what it means to live as a domestic Church – a Christian family that honors God. The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph stands as the perfect model for Christian families today. They show us that authentic family life rooted in faith, love, mutual respect, and obedience to God's will can endure any trial. We know that the Holy Family had their own fair share of life's troubles and trials, as evident in today's gospel, but they persevered.

In the first reading from the book of Sirach, we are reminded of the importance of family relationships within

the domestic Church of the home. The Wisdom writer teaches: “*Whoever honors his father atones for sins... When he prays, he is heard.... Whoever reveres his father will live a long life; he who obeys his father brings comfort to his mother.*” These words, though ancient, speak directly to our time. We live in a world where disposable culture dominates—where things, and even relationships, are discarded when they are no longer convenient. Yet, Sirach challenges us to remember that honor for our parents comes with a blessing, and this honor is not just a duty but an act of love that will bring us closer to God.

In the second reading from the Letter to the Colossians, St. Paul admonishes Christian families to live in harmony. He highlighted the importance of living out

the Christian virtues and making the foundation of every Christian family — “*...heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience, bearing with one another and forgiving one another... And over all these put on love, that is the bond of perfection.*” The Holy Family exemplifies these virtues—Mary, in her humble obedience to God; Joseph, in his loving protection and care; and Jesus, who as a child was obedient to both his earthly parents and his Heavenly Father. St. Paul also admonishes wives to be subject to their husbands and for husbands to love their wives. He also enjoined children to obey their parents in everything. In this beautiful passage, St. Paul teaches us that mutual respect and love are the foundation of any Christian family.

In the Gospel, we encounter the courage and trust of Joseph – the Guardian of the Holy Family. When an angel warns him in a dream to flee to Egypt to protect Jesus, he immediately obeys without hesitation. Joseph’s example teaches us to always be docile to God’s will, even when the road ahead seems difficult and complex. As Christian families – the domestic Church of the home, we are called to seek God’s guidance in every moment of our lives through prayerful discernment—especially when faced with challenges.

But what might be some of the pastoral implications of today’s feast for us today and our Christian families? Today’s feast of the Holy Family invites us to take for our model the Holy Father, to learn to always turn to prayer in

difficult times, knowing that the family that prays together, stays together. Today's feast also reminds us that we can embrace the sacrament of marriage because of its enduring values and recognize the sacredness of family life. Just as the Holy Family lived in trust, humility, and obedience, so too must we in our families. We must nurture our relationships with each other—loving and respecting one another as Christ has taught us. And let us not forget the call to honor our parents, to care for them in their old age, and to treasure the wisdom they offer us. May the Holy Family be our guide, showing us how to live lives of faith, love, and obedience. And may we, too, become a family that reflects God's presence in our world. Amen.