Homily for the Feast of the Holy Family(12/29/2019)

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There is a story: A little boy greets his father as he returns from work with a question, “Daddy, how much money do you make for an hour?”

The father is surprised and says, “Look, son, not even your mother knows. Don’t bother me now, I’m tired.” “But, Daddy, just tell me please! How much money do you make for an hour?” the boy insists.

The father finally gives up and replies, “Twenty dollars.” “Okay, Daddy,” the boy continues, “Could you lend me ten dollars?” The father yells at him, “So, that was the reason you asked how much money I earn? Now, go to sleep and don’t bother me anymore!”

At night the father thinks over what he said and starts feeling guilty. Maybe his son needed to buy something. Finally, he goes to his son’s room. “Are you asleep, son?” asks the father. “No, Daddy. Why?” replies the boy. “Here’s the money you asked for earlier,” the father said.

“Thanks, Daddy!” replies the boy and receives the money. Then, he reaches under his pillow and brings out some more money. “Now I have enough! Now I have twenty dollars!” says the boy to his father, “Daddy, could you sell me one hour of your time?”

Today’s Gospel has a message for this man and for all of us, and the message is that we need to invest more of our time in our family life.

Today, we celebrate the feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, which is the model for all Christian families. It is a time when we can reflect on the quality of our own family life in the light of the Church’s First Holy Family.

Pope Francis said about family life, “How precious is the family as the privileged place for transmitting the faith. How important grandparents are for family life, for passing on the human and religious heritage which is so essential for each and every society. How important it is to have intergenerational exchanges and dialogue, especially within the context of the family.”

For a large part of His life, Jesus was part of a family. The humanity of Jesus was real. Jesus did not pretend to be human. The baby Jesus became an adult within a human family and through a human family. Jesus spent thirty years in family life, so we can understand the importance and priority of family life for Child Jesus.

We often tend to imagine that the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph must have been an extremely happy family. But, like every other family, it also had from time to time its ups and downs, its joys and sorrows, its problems and difficulties.

In fact, challenges faced them from the very beginning. Imagine! The mother was a virgin, and the father was not the biological father of the Child. They had to escape from the King, Herod, then, they wandered from place to place in Egypt to fine safety as refugees. And, they were not a rich family.

But, this family freely accepted God’s plan, and they always said “yes” for God’s calling. Even when they didn’t understand what would happen, they always trusted in God, and followed His will. They showed heartfelt compassion, respect, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, and love each other.

They prayed together and stayed together and had fun together as one family. God chose a human family for His divine Child, that Jesus might know the love, concern, and discipline of real, flesh, and blood parents.

The family is God’s holy ground. The home is the first school of Christian life and a school for human enrichment. As Jesus grew up within the family in God’s plan, God has a plan for each and every family. Each and every Family is the domestic Church.

We also have to remember in prayer and try to support those families, which are struggling with difficulties. Our care, concern, service, and working for justice for others must reach beyond our family to include all. We are one family in one God. Our parish community is one family in Christ.

Families, big or small, in struggle or pain, are all places where love can be shared. The family, even one with problems, is our Nazareth where through all the dynamics of family life, good and bad, people can still grow in wisdom, age, and grace.

Remember: when the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph fled to Egypt to protect the life of the baby Jesus, God was always with them.

With our families, God is also with us in our good times and in bad, in our joys and in sorrows, in times of plenty and in times of need. The Holy Family, Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, pray for us!