



Bringing Home the Word

The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph (A)

December 28, 2025

Practicing Family Values

Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

"Do we have to go to Grandma's?" Children aren't the only ones who sometimes dread the family Christmas gathering. Adults might, too. Why is that? Our family is the cradle that embraced us at birth, nourished us, and helped us grow. At least that's what it was supposed to be. Perhaps we didn't come from such a family. Still, when our time comes, it is within our power to form such a family. How are we to do it?

In today's readings, we have two quite different descriptions of family

dynamics. The first, from Sirach, focuses on children's respect for and support of parents. Then, the gospel recounts parents' protection of a vulnerable child. Together, these readings tell us that every family member, regardless of age or position within the family, owes all the other members concern and care. Paul provides a short list of what I like to think of as genuine family values: "heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, bearing with one another and forgiving one another" (Colossians 3:12-13). Are such values asking too much of us?

It's not by accident that we celebrate the feast of the Holy Family during Christmastime. Some think that this is a season for children. It's actually a season for family, a time when generations—three, sometimes four or five—at least contact each other. It's a time for us to decide whether or not Paul's list of virtues reflects our own family portrait. How authentic are our smiles? How deep are our family values? †

***Every family member,
regardless of age or
position within the family,
owes all the other members
concern and care.***

A Word from Pope Leo XIV

Young people of our time, like those of every age, are a volcano of life, energy, sentiments, and ideas. It can be seen from the wonderful things they are able to do, in so many fields. However, they also need help in order for this great wealth to grow in harmony and to overcome what...can still hinder their healthy development.

ADDRESS, ROME, MAY 15, 2025



Sunday Readings

Sirach 3:2-6, 12-14

Those who respect their father will live a long life; those who obey the Lord honor their mother.

Colossians 3:12-21 or 3:12-17

Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.

Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23

The angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Rise, take the child and his mother, flee to Egypt."

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

QUESTIONS REFLECTION

- What do you love about your family?
- What is one family goal for the coming year?



Vision of What Family Can Be

Mark G. Boyer

Holy Jesus, ev'ry day / Keep us in the narrow way;
And when earthly things are past, / Bring our ransomed souls at last
Where they need no star to guide, / Where no clouds thy glory hide.
"As With Gladness Men of Old," Verse 4

**Families need
guidelines for living
together in peace.**

Ancient household codes of conduct are found in the Book of Sirach and the Letter to the Colossians, each stipulating the appropriate behavior of family members. Sirach states that children are to honor their parents, especially their father, in a patriarchal culture. Colossians presents the virtues—compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, love—that are required for community family life. In either case, the codes are meant to keep people on the narrow way to eternal life.

Unique to Matthew's Gospel is the account of the trip of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph to Egypt to escape King Herod's wrath. Joseph receives directions from God through dreams. After the Magi, who have been guided by a star, depart Bethlehem, the Holy Family moves to Egypt. Because Matthew understands Jesus as a new Moses, Jesus' parents must take him to Egypt, from which he returns, as his name suggests, to save his people from their sins, like Moses saved his people from slavery.

Both household codes of conduct and dream revelations are biblical framers of family life. While household codes have changed, family members still need guidelines for living together in peace. These codes may be as detailed as curfews for teenagers and bedtimes for children. Likewise, family members still need to practice the virtues of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, and love to ensure peace in the household. All this can be held together by a vision, a dream, of what the family can be; this vision guides decisions concerning household codes and the practice of virtues. ‡

From *Caroling Through Advent and Christmas* by Mark G. Boyer (825248). © 2014, Mark G. Boyer. To order, call 800-325-9521 or visit Liguori.org.

Wisdom from Catholic Update

From "In the Words of Henri Nouwen: How to Live a Happier, More Fulfilled Life"

If you want to be a better friend, spouse, or parent, practice the discipline of generosity. The word "generosity," from the Latin *genus* and the Greek *genos*, refers to our being of one kind. Generosity is giving that comes from the knowledge of that intimate bond. True generosity is acting on the truth—not the feeling—that those I am asked to forgive are "kinfolk" and belong to my family. And allow yourself to be forgiven. In forgiving, we are still in control: "I forgive you," we say. But to seek forgiveness is to put yourself in a vulnerable position. You have to say, "I am sorry I failed you. I am sorry that I wasn't the kind of mother or father or friend or brother or sister or neighbor that I wanted to be. Can you forgive me?"

Catholic Update—a subscription newsletter published eleven times a year—explores Church tradition and teaching on contemporary topics. For more information, call 800-325-9521 or visit Liguori.org.



Lord Jesus, so that our
families may be signs of
your kingdom, we pray—
Be born in us,
be born in our world.

The Redemptorists

WEEKDAY READINGS

December 29—
January 3

Monday, Octave of Christmas:
1 Jn 2:3–11 / Lk 2:22–35

Tuesday, Octave of Christmas:
1 Jn 2:12–17 / Lk 2:36–40

Wednesday, Octave of Christmas:
1 Jn 2:18–21 / Jn 1:1–18

Thursday, Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God:
Nm 6:22–27 / Gal 4:4–7 / Lk 2:16–21

Friday, Sts. Basil the Great and Gregory Nazianzen:
1 Jn 2:22–28 / Jn 1:19–28

Saturday, Christmas Weekday:
1 Jn 2:29–3:6 / Jn 1:29–34

Bringing Home
the Word 
December 28, 2025

© 2025 Liguori Publications, a ministry of the Redemptorists. Scripture quotations in this publication are from *The New American Bible, Revised Edition*, © 2010, 1991, 1986, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Washington, DC. The Pope Leo XIV quotation is used with permission and copyright © 2025 *Libreria Editrice Vaticana*. All rights reserved. 1-800-325-9521. Liguori.org.