

Sacrifice for Our Family



I. A LOOK AT THE THREE READINGS

FIRST READING (Sir 3:2-6,12-14)

²For the Lord sets a father in **honor** over his children/ and confirms a mother's authority over her sons./ ³Those who **honor** their father atone for sins;/ ⁴the children,/ and **when they pray they are heard**./ ⁶Those who **respect** their father will live a long life;/ those who **obey** the LORD honor their mother./ ¹²My son, be **steadfast in honoring** your father;/ do not grieve him as long as he lives. ^{c/} ¹³Even if his mind fails, be considerate of him;/ do not revile him because you are in your prime./ ¹⁴Kindness to a father will not be forgotten;/ it will serve as a sin offering—it will take lasting root.

THE FOCUS: Respect for our Parents

COMMENTARY

- The text comes from the group of Deuterocanonical books of the OT.
- Honor, and its related concept or idea, is repeated six times. It is God who gives honors to our parents.
- The text exhorts us to respect our father even if his mind fails (v. 13).
- V. 14 says even if they are old and we are in our prime years, and sometimes due to generations gap, their judgments fall short, still the Wisdom Teacher tells us our kindness to them will serve something like a sin-offering of the foolishness of our youth
- Wisdom says we may never feel the effect now, but surely the kindness and understanding we show to them will have lasting effects.

REFLECTIONS

Ben Sirach says parenting is a privilege and an honor. But it is also a responsibility. There is

of course expected roles for parents.

But even if parents, in their limited knowledge and exposure or experience, fall short in living up to their duties as parents, we have to respect them. And communicating properly with them, leveling out our feelings and point of view may be part of the respect and kindness we have to extend to them.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM (Ps 128)

BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO FEAR THE LORD AND WALK IN HIS WAYS.

SECOND READING (Col 3:12-21)

Relationship with one another

¹²Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, heartfelt **compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience**, ¹³**bearing** with one another and **forgiving** one another, if one has a grievance against another; as the Lord has forgiven you, so must you also do. ^{14k}And over all these put on **love**, that is, the bond of perfection.

Relationship with Christ / God

^{15l}And let the **peace** of Christ **control** your hearts, the peace into which you were also called in one body. And be thankful. ^{16m}Let **the word of Christ dwell** in you richly, as in all wisdom you **teach and admonish one another, singing** psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. ¹⁷ⁿAnd whatever you do, in word or in deed, **do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father** through him.

Familial relationships

^{18*} Wives, **be subordinate** to your husbands, as is proper in the Lord. ¹⁹Husbands, **love** your wives, and **avoid** any **bitterness** toward them. ^{20p}Children, **obey** your parents in everything, for this is pleasing to the Lord. ^{21q}Fathers, **do not provoke** your children, so they may not become discouraged.

THE FOCUS: How We should be Related to One Another

COMMENTARY

- The text talks about relationships on all levels: with one another; with Christ / God and with other members of the family. Take note: men are mentioned twice: as husbands and fathers.
- Taking cue from the author (the Christian identity), each Christian must be compassionate, kind and considerate (v.12).
- The Christian must be patient (bearing with one another) and forgiving (part of being patient).
- Human relationships always carry with it misunderstandings and brokenness.
- In relation to God, the author exhorts Christians to be controlled by the peace of Christ; be animated by the word of God; to teach and admonish others; to do everything in the name of God, etc. (v.16).
- The secret of familial relationships is submission to one another (vv.18-21).
- There should be no domination or provocations or insubordinations.
- Each member must seek to establish relationships with the other members of the family.

GOSPEL READING (Lk 2:22-40)

Law-abiding Joseph and Mary

²²When the days were completed for their purification according to the **law** of Moses, they took him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord, ²³just as it is written in the **law** of the Lord, “Every male that opens the womb shall be consecrated to the Lord,” ²⁴and to offer the sacrifice of “a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons,” in accordance with the dictate in the **law** of the Lord.

Simeon

²⁵Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon. This man was righteous and devout, awaiting the consolation of Israel, and the holy Spirit was upon him. ²⁶It had been revealed to him by the holy Spirit that he should not see death before he had seen the Messiah of the Lord. ²⁷He came in the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus to perform the **custom of the law** in regard to him, ²⁸he took him into his arms and blessed God, saying: ²⁹“Now, Master, you may let your servant go in peace, according to your word, ³⁰for my eyes have seen your salvation, ³¹which you prepared in sight of all the peoples, ³²a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and glory for your people Israel.” ³³The child’s father and mother were amazed at what was said about him; ³⁴and Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, “Behold, this child is destined for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be contradicted ³⁵(and you yourself a sword will pierce) so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.”

Prophetess Anna

³⁶There was also a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years, having lived seven years with her husband after her marriage, ³⁷and then as a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple, but worshiped night and day with fasting and prayer. ³⁸And coming forward at that very time, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were awaiting the redemption of Jerusalem.

After fulfilling the Law

³⁹When **they had fulfilled all the prescriptions of the law of the Lord**, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. ⁴⁰The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.

THE FOCUS: Following the Law

COMMENTARY

- Joseph and Mary fulfilled the Mosaic law (vv.22-24).
- To present the first born son to the Lord
- To offer two turtledoves to redeem the child.

FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY (B) • December 31, 2017

- Joseph and Mary lived under the Mosaic law.
- Simeon is not described as prophet (but maybe a prophet in relation to Anna, the prophetess), but as righteous and just, who received a revelation from the Holy Spirit; with the HS.
- Vv.29-32 Canticle of Simeon “Nunc Dimittis”
- V.33 describes parents’ reaction.
- V.34 indicates the destiny of the child, also the destiny of Israel, and the many hearts (v.35).
- Here the law is mentioned 4 times (vv.22,23,24 and 27). This goes to show the importance of the law in the life of pious Israelites.
- The Holy Spirit is mentioned 4 times (vv.25,25, 26, and 27
- Vv.36-37a talk about her being old.
- Vv.37b-38 talk about her prayer life and her knowledge about the child (redeemer of Jerusalem). The gospel of Luke has been acclaimed as the gospel of prayer (here is one of the reasons).
- V.39 brings us back to the setting (intro). Again the idea of the law comes back.
- V.40 gives information on the child Jesus (grew, strong, filled with wisdom, favor of God upon him). Luke is skillful in announcing who the child is. The attentive Christian must prepare to encounter him later

II. TYING THE THREE READINGS TO DEVELOP YOUR SHARING/HOMILY

The First Reading talks about the need to be patient.

The Second Reading instructs us to establish good relationships in the family.

The Gospel Reading tells the importance of following God’s laws.

How to develop your homily

Today is the feast day of the Holy Family.

The preacher must focus on the importance of certain ingredients to build a sound, normal,

and happy family.

The First Reading teaches patience and perseverance especially in times of conflicts and contradictions. The Second Reading teaches submission to one another, submission in good faith, granting that the others (husband, wife, children) have good will. The Gospel teaches obedience to the Father and to parents.

What happens to a family if even just one member has no patience, does not know how to obey one’s parents? Chaos, conflicts, etc.

Each member of the family must develop a sense of belongingness by being patient to the idiosyncrasies (*katok*) of each one.

Each family member must act properly as husband, wife, father, and children. No one should pretend to be the other. Each one should admit one’s dependence on the other; cooperation among themselves must be promoted.

In the family, that “*kanya-kanya*” (selfish) attitude should not be tolerated. Each one should recognize one’s own poverty. Only others can fill it.

Each one in the family (parent, child) should remember that one is a child of God. Therefore, one is obliged to obey God. Obedience to God and to parents is an important ingredient to maintain the integrity of the family. You express your trust through obedience.

The cause of family breakdown is impatience and inability to obey parents. Here we talk about normal parents who know parenting, who are responsible, who fear the Lord, etc.

Too bad today, many become parents without knowing how to become good parents; many children listen more to the *yayas* and *barkadas*, TV and Internet than their “busy” parents. Members of the family: If you want to live a normal and happy life, build your family. Make sacrifices. Obey God and parents.

-Prepared by Fr. Cielo Almazan, OFM

III. OUR CONTEXT

1. What do you think are new developments that help in the build up of family relationships?

2. A Blessed and Fruit-filled New Year to One and All! (HM).