

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Today the Church celebrates the Feast of the Holy Family, pausing during this season to reflect upon the nature and dignity of family life. The first reading from Sirach expresses the spirit of mutuality, respect, and care which are essential elements of healthy family life. There is an interdependence among the community of family members, each doing his or her part to build up the strength and unity of the whole. Key words spoken by Sirach are the building blocks to a strong, healthy family: honor, prayer, reverence, obedience, comfort and care, consideration and kindness. When family members strive to incorporate these elements into their lives, truly “a house (is raised) in justice to you.”

The Church rightly refers to the family as the “domestic church,” whereby children learn the ways and practices of the Church from their parents; where children witness the unconditional and sacrificial love of parents; where children first bear witness to charity, love, forgiveness and reconciliation. In the Rite of Baptism, the celebrant offers the following prayer: “God is the giver of all life, human and divine. May he bless the father of this child. He and his wife will be the first teachers of their child in the ways of faith. May they also be the best of teachers, bearing witness to the faith by what they say and do, in Christ Jesus our Lord.” This beautiful recognition of the sacred role of parents in the spiritual formation of their children is an indispensable value to the Church.

When Father Paul was pastor, he expressed the desire to provide a special ministry to the young families of our parish. St. Pius will be starting a “Young Families Group” in January. I am grateful to the following families who have generously offered to help build this ministry: Mendez, McCormack, Trester and Myers. Father Kyle and I met with them before Christmas and Father Kyle will serve as moderator and chaplain for this group. In the near future, more information will be provided. We know there are many challenges and demands to family life today; we have a sincere desire to accompany and support our families in any way possible. The Holy Family, which itself experienced hardship and difficulties, is a perfect role model of fidelity, perseverance and love for us as we strive to support and build up family life. Imagine what was going through the mind of Joseph when the angel appeared to him. “Rise, take the child and his mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I tell you. Herod is going to search for the child and destroy him.” “Herod” takes many shapes and forms in our own culture and generation; in a profound way, Mary and Joseph unite their suffering and flight to that experienced by all families.

As we begin this new year of 2020, may we ask the Lord for the courage to grow in faith, hope, and love. May the words of St. Paul to the Colossians resonate in our hearts and inform our actions: “Put on, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, bearing with one another and forgiving one another...” On behalf of Fathers Coleman, Rodriguez, Faller and myself, may every grace and blessing be yours this new year!

Fr. Tom