

**Fr. Rudy's Reflections**  
**Feast of the Holy Family**  
**December 29, 2024**

### **Our Holy Family**

My Brothers and Sisters in the Risen Lord,

In today's world, the family remains as essential to a child's formation as it was in Jesus's time. "Children learn what they live," as the saying goes, and no example illustrates this better than the Holy Family. Jesus, Mary, and Joseph serve as the ideal model of love, faith, and unity—a template for every family across time. In their household, Jesus learned the values of compassion, strength, humility, and, above all, a deep sense of faith. The Feast of the Holy Family invites us to consider how our own homes can reflect this divine example, shaping young hearts to grow in wisdom and virtue.

This feast highlights a pivotal moment in Jesus's childhood, recorded in the Gospel of Luke, where we see both his divine and human natures in perfect balance. When Mary and Joseph find Jesus in the Temple after three days of searching, he is sitting among the teachers, amazing them with his understanding. Upon being questioned by his parents, Jesus responds with the profound statement, "Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" Here, Jesus reveals an awareness of his divine identity and mission. Yet, he also returns home with Mary and Joseph, living in obedience and growing in wisdom and favor with God and others.

This episode is rich with meaning for us. Mary, witnessing this moment, treasures it in her heart, reflecting a mother's love and her role in nurturing Jesus's faith journey. Even with the knowledge of his unique mission, she ponders and cherishes each step of his growth. Likewise, in our families, we nurture faith by gradual, continual instruction, leading children to grow in understanding over time. This patient, loving instruction helps children—and all of us—to develop a heart aligned with God's will, nurturing both wisdom and love.

As we reflect on Jesus's words and actions in the Temple, we see an early glimpse of his purpose, calling, and sense of identity. Just as Jesus grew in wisdom and understanding within his family, we, too, are invited to grow in faith and deepen our understanding of who we are in God's eyes. Each of us has a calling, a purpose, and a unique identity to discover, fostered within the "vital environment" of a loving family.

St. Pope John Paul II said it beautifully: "All this shows how urgent it is to rediscover the value of the family and to help it in every way to be, as God wanted it, the vital environment where every child who comes into the world is welcomed with tenderness and gratitude from the moment of his conception; a place marked by a serene atmosphere that encourages the harmonious human and spiritual development of all its members." As we celebrate the Holy Family, may we be inspired to create homes that reflect this divine blueprint, fostering wisdom, faith, and love in each heart.

Yours in Christ,  
Fr. Rudy