

HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH [A]

DECEMBER 30, 2017

QUEEN OF PEACE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

GAINESVILLE, FLORIDA

Rev. Jeff McGowan

1ST READING: GENESIS 15:1-6, 21:1-3

Abram put his faith in the Lord

PSALM 105

The Lord remembers his covenant forever

2ND READING: COLOSSIANS 3:12-17

And over all these put on love, that is the bond of perfection

GOSPEL: LUKE 2:22, 39-40

The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of the Lord was upon him.

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On Christmas morning, I was enjoying a conversation with two little sisters and their little brother. They were telling me how they got the things they wanted most for Christmas. I peeked up at mom and dad and asked the children if their mom got what she wanted for Christmas. They were quiet for a moment, then the little boy said: "Mommy just wants to go back to bed."

I also got to converse with Bill and Clair. A few years back Bill's favorite uncle retired after a lifetime on the sea. He had never married and at 70 had nowhere to go, so Bill and Clair were happy to welcome him to live with them. Uncle George died just after Thanksgiving. But for those few years that he lived with them, he delighted Bill and Claire and their three children with tales about his life traveling all over the world as a sailor. One of Uncle George's stories involved a hidden treasure that he claimed to have a map for. Bill said he had to confess that over those few years sometimes he'd imagine finding that treasure and going on adventures of his own. He'd get tired of work, or family life would get boring and he'd sort of envy his adventurous uncle. When George died, Bill was going thru his uncles few belongings and found an envelope with Bill's name on it. He discovered the treasure map. It was all in longitudes and latitudes as you might think a sailor would have. So Bill got on the computer to figure it out. What he discovered was the map led to Bill and Claire's home. Uncle George left another note of thanks and told the family their home and the love he found there was the greatest treasure.

Many view commitment in a loving family as giving up or lessening personal freedom. This may or may not be true, depending upon how one views personal freedom.

Love in a family does assure certain freedoms:

- The freedom to become angry now and then without fear of leaving a permanent scar.
- The freedom to be imperfect, even act like a fool, without losing being rejected.
- The freedom to change and thrive and succeed; but also
- The freedom to fail or falter without the fear we will be abandoned in time of need.

Like most freedoms we have, these things may be taken for granted. But unlike other freedoms, they deserve more than an annual observance. They should be guarded each and every day.

Today, we celebrate the Feast of the Holy Family. I pray you enjoy the love within your own family. No family is perfect, of course, sometimes I feel sorry when I think of St. Joseph. How would you like a wife thought her son *was God*? Not even Irish moms go that far! I pray you enjoy some time together and have all good news in 2018.

Robert Frost said: "Home is where when you go there they have to take you in."