

Feast of the Holy Family 2018 – Luke 2:41-52

During the course of the year we celebrate many feast days: Christmas, Easter, Christ the King, different saints. But today is **your** feast day, the feast of the Holy Family. As a parent or child of whatever age, this is **your** feast.

In the Church we make use of the special term, “Vocation.” Usually when we hear this word, “vocation,” we think of the priesthood or consecrated life.

But that is a narrow use of the word. You, parents and children, have a vocation too, the vocation to family life. Vocation simply means God’s plan for you, and His plan for the vast majority of people is family life.

You fathers must have a job. It is your duty to support your family. Your job naturally takes a lot of your time, your talent and your thought.

But whatever your job is, no matter how important that job may be to the welfare of others or even of society as a whole, your principal vocation is to be a husband and father.

You mothers these days are often engaged in a lot of activities that take you out of the home. You may even have an outside job or a career. But for you too, your principal vocation is to be a wife and mother.

You children and young adults look forward to becoming independent, going out on your own, getting a job, and eventually starting your own family, but right now your principal vocation is within your present family.

Today there is a special need for this feast of family vocation. We all know that the family is under attack because of divorce, and the relativism of our age which tends to separate sex from marriage and true love.

The teaching of the Church is, of course, that marriage and the family are of divine institution. They are God's idea, not ours. And as such, they are sacred and permanent.

Family life is a full time job, and a difficult one. That is why the Vatican Council stated that the family will fulfill its mission, not only "through the mutual affection of its members," but also through "the common prayer they offer to God."

Prayer is necessary and absolutely indispensable, both in the home and together here in church at the Mass.

Only from prayer and the Mass can a family derive the strength and help needed to fulfill its important vocation in our society.

Parents, I challenge you, never hesitate to insist on prayer in your home. And remember that you must do more than "hear" the prayers of your children. Try to come to Mass together.

Oh I know there are problems, especially if you have little ones. But all the trouble involved is worth the benefit of praying together here at Mass every Sunday.

But Fr. John, you may say, babies crying during Mass are a disruption to the celebration. No, babies NOT crying during Mass indicate a disruption and a dying community. We have a Cry Room, use it.

All of us must pray for the success of family life, even if we are living alone. Upon the success of family life depends the welfare of our whole society and of the Church as well.

And so all of us here in this Mass today must join together in praying for God's blessings upon family life.

Today, the feast of the Holy Family, could well be called "Family Vocation Sunday," because today God wishes to emphasize the importance of **your** vocation to family life.

AMEN.