

HOLY FAMILY - C 2018
1 Samuel 1.20-22, 24-28///1 John 3.1-2,21-24///Luke 2.41-52

→there is an ancient legend about the flight of the Holy Family into Egypt that happened soon after the birth of Jesus.....that goes something like this

→at one point along the journey a band of outlaws stopped and surrounded Mary and Joseph

→just as they were about to rob the couple...one of the outlaws, named Dismas happened to see the child in Mary's arms

→Dismas was so struck by the face of Jesus that he persuaded the other outlaws to let Mary and Joseph pass unharmed.

→and just before the outlaws departed, Dismas leaned over the child Jesus and said..."remember me...and never forget this hour."

→now the legend goes on to say....that the outlaw turned out to be the good thief who was crucified along with Jesus years later....

→it was to him that Jesus said... "today you will be with me in paradise."

→now that story makes two important points

---first...that the flight into Egypt was a dangerous journey

---and second ...perhaps more importantly....is the protection and care that God gives to this family....and the care and protection that God continues to give to all families...to you and me

Today....we celebrate the feast of the Holy Family...on this...the first Sunday after Christmas /// \\ after the biggest family day of the year.....and in many ways it is one of the most important feasts of the year.....

→if you were around in the 70's you surely remember the television show "All in the Family."

→week after week Archie and Edith Bunker showed up in our home along with the Bunker's daughter Gloria and her husband Mike....Archie called him "meathead"

→Edgy for its time, "All in the Family" was iconic because the Bunkers often said out loud what so many people felt...not always politically correct mind you....but All in the Family was a running commentary, often very funny, about how families work or fail in a world that is always changing

→likewise our readings today from Samuel and Luke, also give us a glimpse of family in two very different ways...in a world that was also changing

→first the story of the birth of Samuel and his dedication to the Lord by his mother Hannah took place more than 1000 years before the birth of our Lord.

It tells us of the faith and trust that this family had in God...the same kind of faith and trust that you and I should have in God as well as we live the challenges and struggles that all our families face.

--it is a lesson about being aware of the presence of God in our lives...and in the lives of our families...and making that presence even more alive when we face struggles and hardships...disappointments and failures.....

→and then we hear about an episode with Jesus and his mother and father when he is 12 years old on a trip to and from Jerusalem

----there's J. w/his parents at the temple and before you know it they are separated

→ [I am sure] many of you experience this same type of situation as well...go to the mall and before you know it, someone is lost or missing.....

And sometimes...members of our families are also lost...maybe not in a physical sense but spiritually or emotionally they may seemed lost.

→and it is then...that we...just like Mary and Joseph need to go searching for them with our patience and understanding, our love and acceptance so that they can come back home to where they belong.

→sadly beyond this event /////we really don't have much more information about the family life of Joseph, Mary and Jesus

→this is all that is written ...

----and when you think about it...that is kind of ironic...because of every institution, every piece of history, through wars and tragedies, comings and goings, beginnings and endings in the history of the world....throughout everything and everyone who has ever existed in the universe the "family"...and the concept of family as always been present

----it has always been alive

→it has been a part of everyone...and everyone has been a part it....we are “All in the Family” of God and one another

PAUSE

and today...we are being reminded of just that...that all of us are members of a holy family on many levels.....

---I am sure, all of us got lots of presents over the past couple of days, but when you think about it...

the greatest gift, the greatest present and the greatest possession we have is **our family**

→and so perhaps God is inviting us today....on this Holy Family feast...to see ourselves as part our own family...and also as a part God's family...to look around and see how truly blest we are to have people who care for us....who watch out for us and who love us

To realize that together we are All in the Family.....and that our family

...our family at home...here in Church...and God's family

.....is truly a gift that has Christmas written all over it.