

2026-08-17: My Holy Family - St Mary Revival (Delray Beach, FL)

Introduction

They are called the "Holy Family"

Holy means "set apart" - the Holy Family is the one that is set apart for God, to glorify God. A family that leads each other to salvation. A family that cares about each other's salvation.

Nowadays, it's more common in the family to worry about:

- Success in the Career
- Financial Security
- Education
- Public Image
- Happiness

We will ask two questions, and each one will have three points:

1. What is a Holy Family?
2. What are the fruits of the Holy Family?

What Is A Holy Family?

Three points: My relationship with God, my relationship with others, my relationship with myself.

A holy family is one where each members submits to God, serves each other, and denies himself. We see this in the Holy Family. This is the opposite of a self-centered family. In a self-centered family, each member is concerned about what they need, what they feel, and what they want. This is not the Christian model for a family. This is not God's intention for a family.

A holy family is one where each members submits to God, serves each other, and denies himself.

1. Submits to God

- "But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." (Joshua 24:15)
- A Family that Submits to God's Commandments
 - St Mary's humility "Behold the maidservant..."
 - Three times, Joseph receives a command from God and acts immediately
 - When Christ was circumcised
 - When they offered sacrifices in the Temple

- The Family makes decisions based on God's commandment
 - When all of the families are watching a specific show or movie and it's not appropriate for me as a Christian, or it's just not edifying, the holy family will say "this does not belong in our home"
 - <More Examples>
- A Family that Worships Together
 - "His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover." (Luke 2:41)
 - The Holy Family would go to Jerusalem every year at Passover
 - The family calendar was based on God's calendar first
 - When all of the families are coming together for a birthday party or a celebration or to watch a game on Saturday evening... the holy family says, sorry we have Vespers and we have liturgy tomorrow. It's not the right time.
 - Sometimes if something comes up for Sunday morning, I have to weight whether or not I will go... no! No weighing necessary! My calendar is already booked on Sunday mornings!
 - When all the families are coming together to go on a cruise during the Great Fast or the Apostles Fast... the holy family says, sorry we are fasting. It's not the right time.
 - And not just my liturgical worship as a family, but how about the family prayer life?
 - Pray before meals?
 - Pray before bed?
 - Pray when someone is sick or struggling?
 - Pray before a major decision?
 - Pray for each other by name?
 - Open the Scripture together?
 - If my children only see me pray when I'm at church, then prayer is something that belongs to church. But if they see and hear me pray at home, then prayer belongs to the home and belongs to the family!
- Family's Language
 - God willing? (Different from "Inshallah" which means no)
 - May God be with you on your exam
 - Let's put this on the altar
 - Let's take Abouna's advice

2. Serve One Another

- "Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others." (Philippians 2:4)
- St Mary and St Joseph, the whole point of their relationship was to serve each other. St Mary was dedicated to the Temple and when she got older and could no longer stay in the Temple, she was given to Joseph in order to serve him, and for him to serve her. He was an old man, he needed someone to take care of his house, etc. and she was a very young woman, so she needed someone to provide for her with shelter and necessities. So they betrothed in order to live with each other without marriage, and lived to serve each other.

- St Mary, when she knew that St Elizabeth was pregnant, rushed to Judea to go and serve her. She is a perfect model of service
- Christ's humility in obeying His parents
 - "Then He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them," (Luke 2:51)
 - John 2: The Lord fulfills his Mother's request at the wedding of Cana out of obedience to her
 - He is God! He is King of Kings! And still, He obeys his mother!
- Christ leaves His mother in the care of St John because of His sense of responsibility for her
- Spend Time with Your Parents
 - Many youth spend a lot of time in the Church, which is good!
 - A lot of time in service... which is good!
 - And then the parents say "we never see our children"
 - Give time to your parents, sit with them, talk to them, ask them about their life and experiences, share your life with them, ask their advice, put your phone down and look at them
- Be Present for Your Children
 - Listen to them when you would rather be doing something else
 - Go on a walk with them - no phones
 - Take them to a park
 - Try and learn their hobbies and be involved with them
 - Know the names of their friends, their teachers, what classes they are taking
- Cover for Your Spouse
 - It is not a 50-50 relationship. Sometimes she will be at 10% which means I have to be at 90%. Sometimes he will be at 20%, so I have to step up to 80%.
 -

3. Deny Myself

- "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me." (Matthew 16:24)
- The Holy Family
 - St Mary denies herself when accepting God's plan for the sake of humanity
 - St Joseph denies himself by repeatedly abandoning his own plans and obeying God for the sake of His family
 - Christ gives the ultimate self-denial when He dies on the Cross, for the salvation of all
- When you have a family, you will have to make some sacrifices to your time and to the things you want to do. You have to grow. You have to have hard conversations. You have to take difficult actions. You have to sacrifice from your money and your time and your hobbies and your own enjoyment for the sake of your kids.
 - Spiritual Enabler
 - Read the Bible with your child
 - Stand in prayer with your child
 - Follow-up with their spiritual education - what are they learning in Sunday School? What are they learning in Bible Study?

- Ask about their hymns class, and learn the hymn with them
- Bring your child EARLY for the Liturgical Services and stay until the end (i.e. of the Praises)
- Bring your child on the day of Confession and remind them with the sacrament of repentance and confession
- Make vegan food at home during the fasts of the church including Wednesday and Friday
- Give them an allowance to use for alms and tithing
- Needs wisdom
 - If the kid is addicted to his phone, and the parents are getting the latest upgrades and newer phones for him
 - If the kid is struggling to wake up for the liturgy, and the parents say "well I can't wake him up" - so what? Will we leave him to perish? Are you expecting someone else to come and wake him up? This is the time to build good habits!
 - If the kid doesn't want to fast... make vegan food! And make GOOD vegan food! A middle schooler will not survive on salt and water during Lent, they are not an ascetic! Build the habit of fasting and when they get older, they will find the ascetic part of it
 - If the kid has some friends that are negatively influencing him... why do you let them hang out with those friends? And we do sleepovers for them and go to the park or whatever and they miss liturgy or Vespers with their friend... why enable the bad habits?
- Modeling Behavior
 - And not just to tell your kids to do it, but you do it too!
 - Let them see you pray
 - Let them see you read the Scripture
 - Let them see you sit down for confession
 - Let them see you attending the liturgy from the beginning - not dropping them off and going home
 - Let them see you fasting! It's not enough to make vegan food for them, and you are eating something else... actually this will have the opposite effect
 - Sometimes we even model the wrong behavior
 - They hear you on the phone with your friend or your sister or your mom - are you gossiping? Criticizing?
 - They hear the kind of music you listen to in your car and in the house
 - They see the kind of TV Shows and Movies you are watching
 - One of the things we were seeing in the Middle School boys and girls was they were "shipping" each other - "shipping" comes from "relationship" - "Oh flan and flanna look good with each other" - and they start to develop inappropriate relationships with each other... and when we tried to address it with them they said "no no our moms agree! My mom was telling the other mom" - Excuse me?
- Guarding and Protecting
 - Know how they are using their phone and their social media

- What kind of language are they using? What kind of language are the friends using?
- If they have social media, what is coming up on their social media? What photos and videos and pages are they being exposed to? What apps are they using the most?
- You might have to learn how to use these apps!
- Get to know their friends... when they are in the next room, your ear is with them
- Protect them from the evil of nighttime
- Teach them about boundaries
- Don't be afraid to "lose the friendship" with your child, but instead cultivate trust and respect and an understanding that you can be their friend sometimes but you will ALWAYS be their parent
- Correction and Reproof
 - Correct by encouragement
 - Use punishments that fit the crime
 - Discipline that is befitting of YOU as a Christian, and THEM as your beloved son or daughter

The Fruit of A Holy Family

1. Faithful Through Trials

The Holy Family suffered many trials:

- Unexplained pregnancy of the Virgin Mary
- Uncertainty
- Poverty
- Persecution
- Fleeing to Egypt
- Living as Foreigners
- Losing Jesus for three days
- Christ is rejected in Nazareth
 - Is this not the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary? And His brothers James, Joses, Simon, and Judas? ⁵⁶ And His sisters, are they not all with us? Where then did this *Man* get all these things?" ⁵⁷ So they were offended at Him. But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his own country and in his own house." ⁵⁸ Now He did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief." (Matthew 13:55-58)
- Ultimately, the Cross

My Holy Family may also suffer many trials:

- Sickness
- Persecution
- Poverty (Losing a job, losing a home)

- Losing Popularity

When I work to establish my family as holy, by God's grace, then WHEN the trials come (they WILL come), we will be able to overcome, to come out stronger.

2. Children Learn from Parents & Grow

- The Lord Christ in this family, was obedient to His parents... and He grew!
 - "Then He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them, but His mother kept all these things in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men." (Luke 2:51-52)
- There is no greater joy than to see your children growing, successful, married, giving grandchildren, and raising their family in the fear of God. It is a message from the Lord that says "Well done good and faithful parent"
- And the Scripture gave us four categories of growth
 - Wisdom - Intellectual, Knowledge
 - Stature - Physical growth (your children will get bigger over time, but also your family will get bigger... more and more children and grandchildren!)
 - Favor with God - Spiritual Growth and Spiritual Relationship
 - Favor with Men - Relational and Social Growth
- St Timothy
 - "... when I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also." (2 Timothy 1:5)
 - "But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned *them*, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." (2 Timothy 3:14-15)

3. Salvation

- "For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?" (Matthew 16:26)
- This is the final result of the Holy Family... the salvation of all her members.
 - "My child becomes a doctor" - but if becomes a doctor and perishes... it's nothing.
 - "My child becomes wealthy" - but if he becomes wealthy and perishes... it's nothing.
- Like the Phillippian Jailer
- Like St Rebekah and her 5 children

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