



The Holy See

FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY OF NAZARETH

POPE FRANCIS

ANGELUS

Saint Peter's Square
Sunday, 26 December 2021

[[Multimedia](#)]

Dear brothers and sisters, *buongiorno!*

Today we celebrate the Feast of the Holy Family of Nazareth. God chose a humble and simple family by which to come into our midst. Let us contemplate in amazement the beauty of this mystery, also highlighting two concrete aspects for our families.

The first: *the family is the story from which we originate*. Each of us has our own story. None of us was born magically, with a magic wand. Each of us has our own story and the family is the story from which we originate. The Gospel of today's liturgy reminds us that Jesus too is the son of a family story. We see him travelling to Jerusalem with Mary and Joseph for the Passover; then he makes his Mum and Dad worry when they cannot find him; found again, he returns home with them (cf. *Lk 2:41-51*). It is beautiful to see Jesus inserted into the fabric of familial affections, which were born and grew in the caresses and concerns of his parents. This is important for us as well: we come from a story that was woven with bonds of love, and the person we are today was born not so much out of the material goods that we enjoyed, but from the love that we received, from the love in the heart of the family. We may not have been born into an exceptional family without problems, but this is our story — everyone must think: this is my story — these are our roots: if we cut them off, life dries up! God did not create us to be lone rangers, but to walk together. Let us thank him and pray to him for our families. God thinks about us and wants us to be together:

grateful, united, capable of preserving our roots. And we have to think about this, about our own story.

The second aspect: *we learn how to be a family*, each day. In the Gospel, we see that even in the Holy Family things did not all go well: there were unexpected problems, anxiety, suffering. The Holy Family of holy cards does not exist. Mary and Joseph lose Jesus and search for him anxiously, only to find him three days later. And when, seated among the teachers in the Temple, he responds that he had to be about his Father's business, they do not understand. They need time to learn to know their son. So it is with us too: Every day, families have to learn to listen and understand one another, to walk together, to face conflicts and difficulties. It is a daily challenge and it is overcome with the right attitude, through simple actions, simple gestures, caring for the details of our relationships. And this too helps us a lot in order to talk within the family, talk at table, dialogue between parents and children, dialogue among siblings. It helps us experience our family roots that come from our grandparents. Dialogue with the grandparents!

And how is this done? Let us look to Mary, who in today's Gospel says to Jesus: "Your father and I have been searching for you" (v. 48). *Your* father and I; it does not say, *I* and *your* father. Before the "I", comes "you"! Let us learn this: before the "I", there's "you". In my language, there is an adjective for people who put the "I" before the "you": "Me, myself and I, for myself and my own good". People who are like this — first "I" and then "you". No, in the Holy Family, first "you" and then "I". In order to protect harmony in the family, *the dictatorship of the "I"* has to be fought — when the "I" inflates. It is dangerous when, rather than listening to one another, we blame one another for mistakes; when, rather than showing care for each other, we become fixated on our own needs; when, instead of dialoguing, we isolate ourselves with our mobile phones. It is sad to see a family at dinner, with everyone on their mobile phone, not speaking to each other; everyone speaking on their own phones; when we mutually accuse each other, always repeating the same phrases, restaging an old scene in which each person wants to be right and that always ends in cold silence, that sharp, cold silence, after a family discussion. This is horrible, really horrible! I repeat a piece of advice: in the evening, when everything is over, always make peace. Never go to bed without making peace, otherwise there will be a "cold war" the next day! And this is dangerous because it initiates a series of scoldings, a series of resentments. How often, unfortunately, do conflicts originate and grow within the domestic walls due to prolonged periods of silence and unchecked selfishness! Sometimes it even ends up in physical and moral violence. This lacerates harmony and kills the family. Let us convert ourselves from "I" to "you". What must be most important in a family is "you". And please, each day, let us pray a little bit together — if you can make the effort — to ask God for the gift of peace in the family. And let us all commit ourselves — parents, children, Church, civil society — to sustain, defend and safeguard the family which is our treasure!

May the Virgin Mary, the spouse of Joseph, the mother of Jesus, protect our families.

After the Angelus, the Holy Father continued:

Dear brothers and sisters, I now turn to married couples throughout the world. Today, on the Feast of the Holy Family, a Letter I wrote thinking of you is being published. It is my Christmas gift to you, married couples — an encouragement, a sign of my nearness, and also an opportunity for meditation. It is important to reflect and experience the goodness and tenderness of God, who with his fatherly hand, guides the footsteps of spouses along the path of goodness. May the Lord grant all married couples the strength to continue the journey undertaken. I also want to remind you that we are approaching the World Meeting of Families. I invite all of you to prepare yourselves for this event, especially through prayer, and to live it in your dioceses together with other families.

And speaking of families, I have a concern, a real concern, at least here in Italy: the demographic winter. It seems that many couples have lost the inspiration to have children and many couples prefer not to have children or to have only one child. Think about this. It is a tragedy. A few minutes ago, I saw they were speaking about this serious problem, the demographic winter on the [television] programme “*A Sua Immagine*”. Let us do everything possible to regain an awareness, to overcome this demographic winter that goes against our families, against our country, even against our future.

I greet all of you, pilgrims from Rome and from different countries. I see Poles here, Brazilians, and I see Colombians there... families, parish groups, associations. I renew my hope that the contemplation of Baby Jesus, the heart and centre of the Christmas festivities, may spur fraternal attitudes and sharing in families and communities. And to celebrate Christmas a bit, it will be good to visit the Nativity scene here in the square, and the 100 Nativity scenes under the colonnade. This will help us too.

Over these days, I have received Christmas messages from Rome and other parts of the world. Unfortunately, it is not possible for me to reply to all of them, but I pray for everyone and I am especially grateful for the prayers that many of you have promised to say. Pray for me! Do not forget this! Thank you very much, and Happy Feast of the Holy Family! Enjoy your lunch.

Arrivederci!