**READINGS:** Sirach 3:2-6, 12-14/ Col. 3:12-21/ Luke 2:41-52
**Theme:** BEATITUDES OF FAMILY LIFE
Feast of Holy Family

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Today the Church celebrates the solemn feast of the Holy Family of the child Jesus, Mother Mary and Blessed Joseph. The Holy Family is a model for all families. From their life together, we can glean some BEATITUDES FOR FAMILY LIFE.

1. **Blessed is the family that prays together, it shall always stay together**. Jesus, Mother Mary and Blessed Joseph prayed and worshipped together (*cf*. Luke 2:41), and therefore always stayed together. Indeed, even death could not separate them, for they are eternally together in the bliss of heaven.
2. **Blessed is the family whose members work hard, for they shall not want**. Though prayer is paramount to family life, prayer alone may not be able to put food on the family dining table. Members of the family, especially the parents like the carpenter St. Joseph, should work hard to ensure their sustenance.
3. **Blessed is the family whose members face challenges together, for they shall overcome them**. Blessed Joseph and Mother Mary were united in facing the danger of King Herod killing the child Jesus, and so they thwarted the king’s murderous plan. When Blessed Joseph received the angel’s message that he should take the child and his mother to Egypt, he did not respond by saying the One who was responsible for the conception is mighty enough to fight King Herod and so He should deal with the problem. Rather, Blessed Joseph obediently acted as the angel said. Therefore, when a challenge arises in a family, it is not the time to resort to a blame game, but to face it together.
4. **Blessed is the family whose members communicate well with one another, they shall enjoy mutual trust and support**. A study done in England in the 1970s revealed that 85% of divorce cases were due to the lack of Communication. Communication is, therefore, key to the success of a marriage. In the above biblical story, for instance, Blessed Joseph communicated to Mother Mary about the angel’s message of fleeing to Egypt.
5. **Blessed is the family whose spouses do not seek divorce, they shall fulfill their God**-**given destiny**. Imagine that Blessed Joseph had followed through with his initial intention of divorcing Mother Mary when he found that the latter was with a child. Probably, then, God’s plan for the birth of our Saviour might have been thwarted, as among the Jews a woman with child outside wedlock was stoned to death. Happily, as it came to pass, Blessed Joseph accepted the message of the angel, and the God-given destiny of the child was fulfilled for our salvation. Therefore, spouses should not consider divorce as a solution to their problems, otherwise they might thwart God’s plans, especially, for their children.
6. **Blessed are the children of responsible parents, for they shall have a good future**. Like Blessed Joseph and Mother Mary, parents have the responsibility of investing in the emotional, psychological, socio-cultural, academic, spiritual and moral developments of their children. Today, many parents invest a lot in the academic, emotional, psychological and socio-cultural developments of their children. However, they seem to invest less in their moral and spiritual developments. We encourage such parents to begin to invest more in these two aspects as well.
7. **Blessed are obedient children, for they shall enjoy the goodness of their own children**. Though divine, once He became a human child, Jesus obeyed his parents (Luke 2:51). While parents do their best for their children, the latter should in turn obey them. Children shall then be blessed according to the fourth commandment. In addition, today’s first reading mentions other blessings that such children shall receive (Sirach 3:2-6, 12-14).
8. **Blessed are responsible parents, they shall be appreciated by both God and their Children**. As Jesus has eternally rewarded Mother Mary and Blessed Joseph, so children should express gratitude to their parents for the time, treasures, toils and tears invested in them. And adults whose parents are still alive should continue to demonstrate their appreciation in concrete ways: frequent calls, visits, provision of upkeep and healthcare, birthday celebration, etc.

Finally, it is my prayer that in the year 2016, you and your families shall experience all of the above beatitudes. Amen!