A family consecration to the Holy Family

Have you ever thought of consecrating your family to the Holy Family—to Jesus, Mary, and Joseph in their vocation together as a family?

Jesus spent most of his life not on his public mission, but quietly living life with Joseph, Mary, and others in his community, a testimony to the importance of the "silent" witness that every family is called to offer.

When we think of the Holy Family, it would be a mistake to think of *holy* as being the equivalent of "perfect" or a life without trouble. The Gospel of Matthew describes how the family had to flee to Egypt, living as refugees in a strange land with strange customs. And the Gospel of Luke recalls Simeon's prophecy that sorrow as sharp as a sword would mark her life.

What about contention? "Child, why have you treated us like this? Look, your father and I have been searching for you in great anxiety" (Luke 2:48, NRSVCE). That's Mary speaking to Jesus after he stayed behind at the Jerusalem Temple without informing his parents. Read Mary's tone of voice as you will, but I suspect that Luke was going for a mix of annoyance, anger, and relief that most parents would recognize.

As Pope Francis frequently reminds us, a holy family isn't one that is free from conflict and problems.

Rather, a holy family is one that is devoted to serving God, both in family relationships and in the world.

A holy family knows and acknowledges its conflicts and problems…but then brings them to God.

A holy family is one in which the members help one another on the path of holiness…and recognize the challenges of family life as opportunities for holiness.

A family consecration

To help your family grow in holiness (without expecting perfection!), say this prayer of consecration together. You may wish to place an image of the Holy Family on your prayer table (or computer screen!) as you do so. Renew your family consecration at the beginning of the year (on the Feast of the Holy Family) or on the "birthday" of your family—your wedding anniversary.

Prayer of Consecration to the Holy Family

Jesus, Mary, and Joseph,
we place our family under your care
and at your service.

Jesus,
you taught that all those
who do the will of your Father in heaven
are your family.
Strengthen us to do your Father's will
so we might become a true family
to one another,
and to all people of good will.

Mary,
you said "yes" to God
with all your heart, all your soul,
all your mind, and all your strength;
and by your "yes,"
you gave birth to the Son of God.
Help us to say "yes" to God every day
so that we, too, might bring Jesus
into the world.

Joseph,
you listened to God’s voice
in your work, in your prayer,
and in your dreams;
help us to discern God’s voice
so that, like you, we might
rise from our sleep
to do the will of God.

Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, pray for our family,
and send down upon us the help of the Holy Spirit:
give us wisdom and knowledge,
strength and self-control,
hope and humility,
mercy and forgiveness,
patience and generosity;
and most of all, give us your love,
that we might share it with one another,
and the whole world.
Amen.

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