

Month of the Holy Family



There is no doubt that in the last 100 plus years the family has come under unprecedented attack along with the effects of two World Wars that took many women out of the home and into the work force. The Great Depression and collapse of the economy meant more pressure on two parents working outside the home. The struggle of women for voting rights and equal rights culminated in the feminist movement for women's increased independence and ability to make money and spend money equal to men's ability to do so. These changes led to a growing divorce rate, more homes with single mothers needing to be the breadwinner, and less reliance on men as heads of households. Women's growing independence often brought a minimizing of the importance of fathers in the family. The advances of science and approval of methods of reproduction not in line with Church teaching, the acceptance of abortion as though it were an intrinsic or constitutional right, and the growing number of homosexual marriages and adoption of children into families without a natural father or a natural mother, has affected the whole culture and moral fiber of society itself. The very idea of the traditional family in line with God's design as the most fundamental unit of society has been gravely altered and the effects, particularly of fatherless families, is showing its ugly head in the level of addictions, imprisonments, and loss of Faith in our times.

Is it any wonder that Our dear Lord spoke to His little white dove, the secretary of His Heart, Sister Mildred (Mary Ephrem) Neuzil about His concern for the renewal of the family, especially the Christian family, not unscarred by these changes? In the messages of Our Lady of America, we will ponder the words of all three persons of the earthly trinity, the Holy Family, in regard to the family.

Our Lord: Our Lord often spoke to me in the past, and already in the early 1940's it was made known to me interiorly that my mission was to converge toward the sanctification of the family.

(Sister Mildred (Mary Ephrem) Neuzil, Diary, OUR LADY OF AMERICA, Page 4.)

Our Lady: It is the wish of my Son that fathers and mothers strive to imitate me and my chaste spouse in our holy life at Nazareth. We practiced the simple virtues of family life, Jesus our Son being the center of all our love and activity. The Holy Trinity dwelt with us in a manner far surpassing anything that can ever be imagined. For ours was the earthly paradise where once again God walked among men. As in our

little home no sin was to be found, so it is the wish of the Heart of my Son and my Immaculate Heart that sin should, as far as possible, be unheard of in the homes of our children. (Diary, Pg. 8.)

In 1964, St. Paul VI, in his *Reflections at Nazareth*, called Nazareth the “school of the Gospel” where we begin to understand the life of Jesus and ponder the profound mysteries of His life in those humble beginnings. He defined the lesson of Nazareth’s domestic life in these words:

...may Nazareth teach us the meaning of family life, its harmony of love, its simplicity and austere beauty, its sacred and inviolable character; may it teach us how sweet and irreplaceable is its training, how fundamental and incomparable its role on the social plane.

On May 1, 1991, feast of St. Joseph the Worker, St. John Paul II issued his encyclical *Centesimus Annus* and said it was necessary to go back to seeing the family as the “sanctuary of life.”



The family is indeed sacred: it is the place in which life — the gift of God — can be properly welcomed and protected against the many attacks to which it is exposed and can develop in accordance with what constitutes authentic human growth. In the face of the so-called culture of death, the family is the heart of the culture of life.
#39

In *Familiaris Consortio*, St. John Paul II said that at this time in history when so many forces seek to **destroy or deform** the family, it is important to see that the well-being of society is intimately connected to the good of the family. The Church must proclaim to all people God’s plan for marriage and the family as “the first and vital cell of society” for the renewal of society and the people of God. He refers to the family as the “domestic church,” the “Church’s sanctuary in the home.” (November 22, 1981.)

A June 5, 1957 letter records Our Lady’s words to Sister about her mission.

Our Lady: Your mission is vast, my child. It reaches to the ends of the earth. It will continue until time is no more because there will always be the need for the sanctification of the family and of souls. ... Fear not, small one, for it is through the most unlikely of instruments that God works His wonders. He chooses where the world would not. He makes that possible what the world deems impossible. He stops, where the world would pass on. God has no need of anyone, yet He chooses the smallest of the small for His glory.

In a May 1961 plan of action sent to Bishop Leibold, point 2 in the outline states:

“To do all that is in my power to spread the knowledge and love of the Divine Indwelling Presence. Particularly essential is, that Christians families live this doctrine in imitation of the Holy Family, etc. This is my mission.”

St. Joseph, head of the Holy Family, also addressed the renewal of the family.

St. Joseph: The Divine Trinity has placed into our keeping the peace of the world. The imitation of the Holy Family, my child, of the virtues we practiced in our little home at Nazareth is the way for all souls to that peace which comes from God alone and which none other can give. (Diary, Pg. 29.) Our Lady exhorts us to practice the virtues of their life at Nazareth and our homes will become another paradise on earth and God will again walk among us and we will have peace, His peace! (Diary, Pg. 8.)

Our Lady: The Divine Trinity will dwell in your midst only if you are faithful in practicing the virtues of our life at Nazareth. Then, you also, my children, you also will become another paradise. God will then walk among you and you will have peace. (Diary, Pg. 8.)

On February 2, we celebrated the feast of the Presentation and had the blessing of candles, which in Poland is commemorated as the **“Our Lady of the Thunder Candle.”** These sacramentals are used in the home during storms and to protect against evil and to remind us Our Lady can lead us through all forms of darkness. **The devil hates light as it reminds him of Jesus, her divine Son, the Light of the World.** In the message of Our Lady of America, Our Lady promises protection for our homes if we would enthrone a photo or statue of her as Our Lady of America in a place of honor in our homes. The statue, inscribed with the title **“Our Lady of America, the Immaculate Virgin,”** with which she wishes to be enthroned in our patronal church, the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C., recalls the feast February 11th of Our Lady of Lourdes where Our Lady gave us her title of the Immaculate Conception by which we honor her as our Patroness. It is also World Day of the Sick; kindly pray for them.

May the Virgin Mary, who is the Mother of the Church, also be the Mother of “the Church of the home.” Thanks to her motherly aid, may each Christian family really become a “little Church” in which the mystery of the Church of Christ is mirrored and given new life. May she, the Handmaid of the Lord, be an example of humble and generous acceptance of the will of God. May she, the Sorrowful Mother at the foot of the Cross, comfort the sufferings and dry the tears of those in distress because of the difficulties of their families.

Heavenly Father, we ask You to bless our family.

Open our hearts to receive Your love.

May our home be another Nazareth, so that our family may be a place where Your peace and love abides.

Open our eyes to recognize the gift and beauty of life, so that we may find joy in Your presence among us.

Grant us pure hearts seeking holiness, generous hearts full of Your love, merciful hearts ready to forgive and tender hearts full of kindness.

May our family be a sanctuary of life and love, a beacon of hope drawing others to your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Jesus, Mary and Joseph, Holy Family of Nazareth, pray for us.

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