



Daily Reflections

FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY

By Sr. Katherine “Kit” Gray, CSJ

Reflection

- What does “family” mean to you?
- Is your primary family biological or chosen?
- How is your understanding and experience of family shaped by your cultural background?

Background

In the Roman Catholic liturgical calendar, today is the Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, one of several feasts during the Christmas season that help us to reflect on the humanity of Jesus. The Feast of the Holy Family was established in 1893 as an optional celebration and became a feast for the universal Church in 1931. At that time, it was a call to remember and preserve the holiness of family life amid the immense social changes of the 20th

century.

Thoughts About Family

The dictionary defines a family as a group of one or more parents and their children living together as a unit and also as all the descendants of a common ancestor.

In sociology, a family is a group of people who are related by birth, marriage, adoption, or cohabitation, and who live together and form emotional connections. Families are socially recognized groups that serve as economic units of society. They are the most basic social unit in human society. Family today can be described as nuclear, extended, blended, chosen.

At the time of Jesus, “The organizing principle of Mediterranean society was belonging, structured primarily by means of the family.” (*Windows on the World of Jesus*, Bruce J. Malina)

Pope Benedict says, “The family is also a school which enables men and women to grow to the full measure of their humanity. The experience of being loved by their parents helps children to become aware of their dignity as children.” (Fifth World Meeting of Families, July 8, 2006)

“I sustain myself with the love of family.” (Maya Angelou, *Letter to My Daughter*, 2008)

The Holy Family in Scripture

The genealogy of Jesus--“Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary. Of her was born Jesus who is called the Messiah.” Mathew 1:16

After Joseph’s dream—“When Joseph awoke, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took his wife into his home. He had no relations with her until she bore a son, and he named him Jesus.” Matthew 1:24-25

After the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple—“When Joseph and Mary had fulfilled all the prescriptions of the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.” Luke 2:39-40

During his public life, about Jesus--“Is this not the carpenter, the son of Mary?” Mark 6:3

Jesus says--“Who is my mother? Who are my brothers?...Here are my mother and my brothers. For whoever does the will of my heavenly Father is my



Further Reflection

- Who is your family? How has your family shaped you? How does it support you?
 - How can reflecting on the family of Jesus offer further insights into what family means?
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Poem

A Family is Like a Circle

*A family is like a circle.
The connection never ends,
and even if at times it breaks,
in time it always mends.*

*A family is like the stars.
Somehow they're always there.
Families are those who help,
who support and always care.*

*A family is like a book.
The ending's never clear,
but through the pages of the book,
their love is always near.*

*A family is many things.
With endless words that show
who they are and what they do
and how they teach you so you know.*

*But don't be weary if it's broken
or if through time it's been so worn.*

*Families are like that -
they're split up and always torn.*

*But even if this happens,
your family will always be.
They help define just who you are*

and will be a part of you eternally.

NICOLE M. O'NEIL. "A FAMILY IS LIKE A CIRCLE." FAMILY FRIEND POEMS, JULY 18, 2006.

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