A Peace-filled
New Year to all!

Reflection for the Feast of the Holy Family
by Fr. James Doran, OMV

Did you ever notice how problematic the families in the Bible were? The first couple sinned and then Adam blamed Eve. She blamed the serpent. Neither assuming the responsibility of their actions. Their sons can’t get along and Cane kills his own brother. One of Noah’s sons was very disrespectful of his father. Remember how Sara was jealous of her polygamist husband, Abraham. (Polygamy caused a lot of problems). Remember the envy among Jacob’s sons and how they sold Joseph into slavery. Moses was at times despised by his brother and sister, Aaron and Miriam. David disgraced his family committing adultery and homicide. Tobit and Job suffered in their relationships with their wives. Why are all these found in the Holy Book? They certainly show us that family life is not easy and that our actions have consequences. We have heard a lot about the dysfunctional family; the family that does not function well.

What is the function of the family? What is the family supposed to do? You know that Saint John Paul II wrote a letter to families some years ago, and he says the mission or function of the family to create an environment in which each member may develop his talents and pursue his vocation. God gave each person a vocation. The family should help each one to discover and realize that vocation. Not only the children and youth but the adults and the aged also should have the opportunity to develop their potential. The family should provide conditions for each member to develop physically, intellectually and spiritually. Not just children but also the grownups need to continue to realize their potential as God will. The Holy Father has written eloquently on the dignity and the mission of the elderly. They have an important role to play. Their experience of life and their wisdom will help the other members of the family. Let’s look again at the reading from Sirach 3:15. In time of tribulation it will be called to your advantage, like warmth upon frost it will melt away your sins. St. Paul shows us how to make the family work by being compassionate, kind, humble, gentle and patient, bearing with one another, singing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. It seems to me if the Word of God is to dwell in us richly, we need to read it more than once a week.

Pope Francis says; Today our gaze on the Holy Family lets us also be drawn into the simplicity of the life they led in Nazareth. It is an example that does our families great good... Let us remember the three key words for living in peace and joy in the family: “may I”, “thank you” and “sorry”. In our family, when we are not intrusive and ask “may I”, in our family when we are not selfish and learn to say “thank you”, and when in a family one realizes he has done something wrong and knows how to say “sorry”, in that family there is peace and joy. Let us remember these three words... I would also like to encourage families to become aware of the importance they have in the Church and in society. The proclamation of the Gospel, in fact, first passes through the family to reach the various spheres of daily life. Let us fervently call upon Mary Most Holy, the Mother of Jesus and our Mother, and St Joseph her spouse. Let us ask them to enlighten, comfort and guide every family in the world, so that they may fulfill with dignity and peace the mission which God has entrusted to them.
NEWS

March for Life Expo
January 22 - 24, 2020, Washington, D.C.
2020 THEME: LIFE EMPOWERS: Pro-Life is Pro-Woman
TOGETHER, WE GATHER TO CELEBRATE LIFE. We celebrate each and every life, from the moment of conception. We envision a world where every life is celebrated, valued, and protected.

Visit marchforlife.org

Overcoming Spiritual Discouragement:
The Power and Spiritual Wisdom of Venerable Bruno Lanteri
A Seminar by Fr. Timothy Gallagher, OMV
February 8 - 9, 2020
at St. Clement Eucharistic Shrine, 1105 Boylston St.
To register, email OMVUSA@gmail.com or call (617) 982-7264
(Please include the spelling of your name and phone number)
Weekend Fee: $50 – Students/Seminarians: $30
Lunch will be provided (however we cannot accommodate food restrictions; if you have special requirements feel welcome to bring your own lunch.)

The Friends of God: Pope St. Sylvester I
Feast Day: December 31
Sylvester’s papacy was marked by some very momentous events that had lasting impact on the Church and the world. He was pope from 314 to 335. In that time the Church emerged from the catacombs to become publicly accepted in the Roman Empire. His was the time of the rise of the powerful and consequential Emperor Constantine and the Edict of Milan that recognized the legality of Christianity. The building of the great papal basilicas of St. Peter’s and St. John Lateran came about during his reign as did the first ecumenical council of Nicaea in 325 AD. All of these events happened during his papacy but not necessarily by his initiative. Sylvester thus proves that responsible leadership never means unnecessary micro-management. Sylvester had the humility and the desire for the growth of the Church, and he allowed other actors to utilize their skills for the common good. The humble wisdom of Sylvester had a lasting impact on God’s Church.

Mass Intentions This Week
Sunday, Dec. 29
8:00 AM + Francisco Xavier Mascarenhas
9:15 AM Memorial Tree Enrollees
10:30 AM + Edward O’ Keefe
11:45 AM + Tom White
1:15 PM (esp.) + Miguel Angel Gonzalez Santiago
4:00 PM Fr. G. Bradford Wolcott, MFJ
5:30 PM Poor Souls in Purgatory

Monday, Dec. 30
8:00 AM + Paul Rimmele
12:05 PM + Josephine & Biagio DeSesa
4:45 PM + Leon Aranas

Tuesday, Dec. 31
8:00 AM + Medora & Edgar Guilbert
12:05 PM + Marilyn Birnie
4:00 PM Tom Parnin — healing
5:30 PM Andy LaVallee

Wednesday, Jan. 1 Mary, Mother of God
8:00 AM Edith & Edward Forster
9:15 AM + Michael Kallal
10:30 AM Benefactors of St. Francis Chapel
11:45 AM + John J. Flaherty, Jr.
1:15 PM (esp.) Las Almas del Purgatorio
4:00 PM John Valletti — health
5:30 PM Special Intention

Thursday, Jan. 2 St. Basil the Great & St. Gregory Nazianzen
8:00 AM + Barbara Vasconculos
12:05 PM + Priests in Purgatory
4:45 PM + Fr. Philip O’ Shea, OFM

Friday, Jan. 3 Holy Name of Jesus
8:00 AM Sr. Sheila Callaghan
12:05 PM + Br. Paschal & + Fr. Jeff, SSP
4:45 PM + John A. Lomartra

Saturday, Jan. 4 St. Elizabeth Ann Seton
9:00 AM Sophia Feitelson
12:00 PM + Timothy & + Anne Murphy Callahan
4:00 PM + Anthony & + Helen Lupi
5:30 PM + John Higgins
7:00 PM (esp.) Marianna Novellino

Prayer Before Mass
by Ven. Bruno Lanteri
Founder of the Oblates of the Virgin Mary

My God, I offer you this holy sacrifice to recognize, honor and glorify your infinite greatness and the supreme dominion which, as the first principle and last end, you have above all created things. I give you this homage for all those who still do not know you or do not want to recognize you.

I offer this too in thanksgiving for the benefits that I and all the world have received and will receive from your infinite goodness; in satisfaction for my sins and those of the whole world; to implore the graces that are necessary for my eternal salvation and for all mankind. Oh, my God, I offer to you the merits of Jesus Christ; grant me at this Holy Mass a profound adoration.

My God, my Creator, I implore you to grant me the grace of final perseverance, I know by faith that I do not deserve it, nor can I deserve it, but your Divine Son deserves it for me with so many praises, with so many wounds he shows you in His Most Holy Body, on behalf of my wounded love. Amen.
It has been sometimes asked whether we can say that Mary and Joseph truly had a marriage due to the fact that Our Lady remained a virgin. Even St. Jerome speculated that it may be more fitting to call Joseph the guardian of Mary rather than her husband. St. Thomas Aquinas answered this question in his estimable treatise the *Summa Theologiae* (Part III, Question 29).

Though Mary and Joseph never had conjugal relations, they did give their complete consent to the Divine Will by entering into the bond of matrimony in a very unique way as the family of the Son of God. Their union with each other was secured not conjugally but by a perfect acceptance of God’s will. Secondly, every true marriage has for it’s perfection not just the union of man and woman for each other’s sake but for the sake of children. Mary and Joseph were perfectly united in fulfilling the needs of Jesus who was conceived not through human conjugal activity but by the miraculous intervention of the Holy Spirit. Their full cooperation with God and with each other achieved the end of rearing Jesus and in firmly establishing him for his mission to the world.

I rejoice highly to know that you are in Jesus full of good will, nor shall I neglect to ask insistently of the Holy Family for you have a holy perseverance in these more special days of blessing and grace; do not neglect in the meanwhile to nourish your piety with the usual daily exercises of prayer, of reading, and of frequenting the holy Sacraments.

Thank the Lord for the stillness of your heart, which I hope you have enjoyed for a long time, nor could you choose a more efficacious means to conserve this peace than frequenting the holy Sacraments; add to this also in a stable manner every day a bit of meditation and of spiritual reading; and have no fear that the Lord will accord you all else that you desire. Rest assured that the difficulty of continuing with such a system is more in the apprehension than in the reality. Think that God deserves all effort, nor does he let himself be outdone in generosity.