

Holy Family (A)
December 28, 2025
“Advice, Lists, Example”

Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis was an intensely private person who rarely gave personal interviews. On one rare occasion when she did give an interview, she remarked, “If you bungle raising your children, I don’t think whatever else you do well matters very much” (quoted in *Good Housekeeping*, July 1994). Mrs. Kennedy was a woman of wealth, education, background, and connections who also understood that family is the most important element in life.

The family, rooted in marriage between man and woman, is a domestic church, a community of faith, hope, and charity, and a communion of persons symbolizing the communion of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (CCC 2204).

Pope Francis used to say: “In a world that changes, the family remains the place where we learn to love.” How can the Church help our families “learn to love” better?

Today’s Scripture readings can lend a hand. In them, we find advice, a list, and an example. First, **advice** in Sirach. Sirach was a wise teacher and author in the second century before Christ who understood that the roots of family are a gift from God and he advised his students to value it as such. He understood that as our parents grow old, children must take on more responsibility for them. Often this role-reversal is compounded by Alzheimer’s, dementia, cancer, and other illnesses. Those who gently and lovingly care for elders are remembered by God.

His advice: “Honor your father, revere your father, take care of your father, be considerate of him, be kind to him.” In other words, show respect, live rightly,

and value highly the person who raised you, and know that God smiles on those who honor their elders.

Saint Paul demonstrates how to love with a **list** of virtues, including humility, gentleness, and patience. He calls love “*the bond of perfection*” because it binds Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in perfect love. These virtues are Christian clothing, a new wardrobe, a fancy dress that comes from our baptism, when we were clothed in little white garments, and told to “*put on*” Christ Jesus. This list of virtues would be helpful to review every day, and so would be a great item for the refrigerator as a reminder of our Christian dignity and calling as members of God’s family.

The Gospel provides an **example** for us. After the magi visitors left, an angel warns Joseph to flee the country with his wife and newborn Baby. He departs immediately for neighboring Egypt, and remains there until summoned to the land of Israel. They eventually return to Israel and end up in Nazareth.

Joseph was humble and obedient. He knew that he didn’t know everything, and he was willing to be led by God. You will notice he acts. He doesn’t argue, question, or defy God. He is informed through subconscious dreams, wakes up, and does as God directs. How much better would our world be if ALL our fathers did the same? The answer: a lot better off!

There you have it: (1) wise advice to care for our elders in Sirach, (2) a list of virtues to imitate in Colossians, and (3) a practical example of humility and obedience for all of us to follow.

As we prepare to end one year and begin another, may the Holy Family inspire us to follow the guidance of our heavenly Father and our spiritual Mother. God bless you.