

From the Pastor

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This weekend in the Octave of Christmas we celebrate our families. Each family is a bedrock of love. We count on each other. We can always count on the love of God as well.

A family is a gift, and our family is our family no matter what they do, or don't do, on our behalf. We feel that all too well when we don't respond to the love shown by our family, or lose a member of our family unexpectedly. We count on our family, and that reliance reflects the reliance we should have on God. When we can't count on our family, it's hard for us to count on anything else, even God.

We all know of truly tragic and heart-breaking family situations – divorce, children lost to drugs, squabbles over inheritances, misunderstandings, even betrayals – but even in those situations we don't lose sight of the ideal: a father and mother set in honor and authority over their children, children revering and praying for their parents, obeying them and caring for them when they grow old, and the blessings God showers on children who do so.

This model of mutual respect, help, and reliance is meant to be reflected in our society as well, so when it's not lived in the family, it's no surprise that society suffers as a result. Our family is more than what they do or don't do for us, and more than what they mean or don't mean to us: they are our family. God has given them to us, and us to them.

As believers we are all brothers and sisters in the great family of Our Father, thanks to Jesus, and our virtues should show the same love and respect we experience in our own family. We're made holy by sharing in the life of God, through our Baptism, and we are "beloved" because we have received the gift of life itself, no strings attached. We build our love on that bedrock of divine love by bearing with one another and forgiving each other when grievances come, just as the Lord has forgiven us for all those times we haven't shown him the love he deserved.

With a spirit of gratitude to God for the gift of life and the gift of his Son, we serve and love each other in our family, avoiding bitterness and provocations and disobedience. "Obedience" grates on ears today in a world that's so obsessed with autonomy and self-reliance, but in a family, it means acknowledging the gift God has given us of someone we can rely on. We show gratitude by obeying, and it reminds us that being someone relied on can be a big sacrifice and responsibility as well.

The Holy Family is centered on Christ. He's the ultimate bedrock of our love. May we always remember this when it comes to understand our roles in our own families.

As we approach the New Year 2018, I would like to wish you and your families all the blessings that come from our generous God. He is our fortress of sure hope in any kind of life's trial.

Happy New Year 2018.

+ Father Roger