

Hom 10 B 2018

Every one thinks the Holy Family made up at its core with Jesus, Mary and Joseph was a perfect family. No problems. No drama. Perfect people leading the perfect life. No way.

We just read a bible passage where members of Jesus' family hear that his ministry has brought him home to their own area. They find out where Jesus is and show up not to listen to his words of wisdom, but, rather to bring him home. Why does Jesus' family want to bring him home? They thought and let me quote the bible here, they thought "He is out of his mind" Mk 3.

The very next sentence tells us that things were getting out of control. Jesus is making headlines. Scribes had arrived in their area because the religious authorities had gotten wind of Jesus' activities way off in Jerusalem. Even the institutional Jewish authorities were concerned. They thought and I quote again. They thought "He is possessed by Beelzebul" and "by the prince of demons he drives out demons."

What I have said so far is simply what St. Mark tells us in our Gospel today, but, there are other Gospels that suggest that everything was not so perfect in Jesus' family. John 7:5 "For even his own brothers did not believe in him"

There are no perfect families. "The Bible is very open and direct about the difficulties of family life. Think of the stories that grace it's pages—Cain and Abel, Jacob and Esau, Joseph and his brothers. Think of the troubled marriages---Abraham and Sarah, Hosea and Gomer, David and his many wives. It is very difficult to find an example of an ideal family in the pages of the Bible.

Yes, families have problems. Jesus own family had problems. The Jewish families whose stories are told in the bible had problems. And no doubt most of us here today, good people to be sure experience issues in our families which can cause us some great distress.

So where is this talk going? Having acknowledged that just about every family has problems I could make any number of points. This little talk could go in a million different directions. Given the fact that families including the family of Jesus had problems what do I have to say about it? Let me make one small point today.

A psychologist at Emory University published some interesting research on families. He and a coauthor "asked children to answer 20 questions about their families, questions such as 'Do you know where your grandparents grew up?' Do you know where your mom and dad went to high school? Do you know about an illness or something really terrible that happened in your family? They then compared the children's results with a battery of psychological tests the children had taken and reached an overwhelming conclusion: The more children knew about their families' histories the stronger their sense of control over their own lives, the higher their self-esteem, and the more successfully they believed their families functioned." Sermons.com King Duncan "A Divided Family" He is quoting Readers Digest.

Our Christian family is in trouble today. One thing that used to hold families together was their faith in Jesus Christ. Churches of every denomination all across the country are seeing decreases in the number of younger people who express an open and life giving relationship with Jesus Christ. Atheism and Agnosticism are growing fast among our young. Our family identity as a people who believe in Jesus is not being passed on.

There are books written about this issue and the contributing factors are many. The point I would like to make today is simply that our family history, the story of Jesus, is not being passed on to the next generation.

The lives of our young are diminished without Jesus. If you want your children to know your family history they don't get it by eating off grandma's old china. They get it by talking about grandma, remembering her personality, her struggles, her sacrifices. You need to bring grandma out of the picture that hangs in the living room and give her a place in your conversation. If Jesus is the most important person in your family life then he has to have a place at your dinner table. You have to talk about him. You have to remember his stories and help others realize how he has shaped your life. Having a picture of Jesus in your home is not enough. You have to talk about Jesus and not be embarrassed to mention his name every chance you get. If Jesus is truly a member of your family, an important part of your life why be embarrassed to mention his name.

You don't need DNA in common to make a family. Jesus makes that point in today's Gospel. You don't need children in the home to make a family. You don't need a marriage to make a family. Barbara Bush is quoted as saying that a family is "putting your arms around someone and being there." Jesus defined a family as those who "hear the word of God and keep it."

Jesus' definition trumps all others---faith in Him

You and I are members of the Christian family. Our faith in Jesus unites us. WE need to talk about Jesus all the time. This is not just important for passing on a relationship with Jesus to our children. This is about keeping our own faith alive.

Think about Jesus every day.

Speak of Him often, every chance you get. We need to do this to remain healthy members of the Christian family.