

## HOMILY HOLY FAMILY YRA 2019

It is just a few days since we celebrated Christmas and over the past several days I have heard two points of view. I have heard: "Thank God the holidays are over. I could not take much more of that." I also heard: "I love Christmas. I think we should celebrate Christmas all year long." Different points of view and I can understand both of them. I think we need to decide what parts of Christmas we want to let go of, and what parts of Christmas we want to hang on to. First of all, if you got carried away with all of the busyness and the excesses of Christmas, you would want to leave that behind. We need to let go of the extravagant gift giving, the eating of party food and the drinking. If we would hang on to that we would all end up obese diabetic alcoholics in bankruptcy. And we will have to put away the decorations after the Baptism of the Lord. They are particularly beautiful at Christmas time because we do not have them out all year. If we had them out all year we would not even notice them. But what do we want to hang on to? If you had your 15 minutes of quiet prayer every day you probably did not get all caught up in the busyness and the excesses because you would have been able to work that out with God. If you had your 15 minutes of quiet prayer every day and try to stop, you will probably miss it. If you had your 15 minutes of quiet prayer every day my guess if you may want to extend the time. If you did not have your 15 minutes of quiet prayer during Advent, I suggest that you start now. You will have more time. We want to hang on to the daily prayer time because you will still have many things to discern as the year goes on.

We heard about Joseph in the Gospel reading today. I think Joseph must have been very connected to God. He must have spent time in quiet prayer every day, otherwise how would he have identified his dream as coming from God. Think about what the dream was calling him to do. Take his wife and son. Go to Egypt, a foreign country where he did not know anyone and

did not speak the language and stay there for an extended period of time separated from extended family and friends. Become refugees in a foreign land. And this happened when the Magi departed, before Herod had ordered the killing of the young male children. I think if I had that dream I would have said: “Mary, you will never believe the crazy dream I had last night.” I probably would have waited around until I got some verification that Jesus was in danger, and it may have been too late by then. And then, three years later when you are all settled he was called to go back to Israel, but to a new place in Israel, Nazareth, and start over again? I think many times we do not identify the messages from God because we are never quiet enough to figure it out. So the prayer, I would hold on to.

I would also hold on to the time spent with family and friends. Has Christmas become the only time you make a point of spending special time with family and friends? I think we should make that effort all year long. It is within the family that we first learn about faith and morals. Are we really purposeful about teaching our children, or grandchildren, our nieces and nephews? Do we give them a good example? If they do not learn it in the family they are not going to learn it. And as we get older we need the support of family and friends to continue to do the right thing. And when we are no longer able to take care of ourselves we will need family to take care of us. Maybe we need to nurture those relationships all year long.

And during Advent I saw an increase in Mass attendance. I would hang on to that as well. Gathering weekly to give praise and glory to God strengthens us spiritually. And the more time you spend at church the more connected you become with the Parish community. The more people who are connected with the Parish community the more we will be able to build a loving and supportive community and we all need that. So what do you want to keep of Christmas and what do you want to let go of?