

THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURES

December 27, 2020

Feast of the Holy Family

Genesis 15:1–6; 21:1–3 † Colossians 3:12–17 † Luke 2:22–40



Reflection by: Sister Eileen Ivory, OP

Today's Feast of the Holy Family comes at a time when, due to the coronavirus pandemic, many are missing the joy of being together. The holy feast of Christmas, the joy of welcoming a New Year, are for many best celebrated together with extended family. While this year may of necessity be different, it may also serve as a reminder that God never intended that family be understood as limited to the nuclear family that was Jesus, Mary and Joseph. The presence of Simeon and Anna broadened the concept of family. By bringing Jesus to the Temple to enter into the same ritual as so many before and after him, Mary and Joseph knew innately that family life was bigger than just themselves. The words spoken by Simeon and Anna suggest a future in which Jesus' "extended family" would offer friendship, challenge, rejection, love, and ultimately suffering, death and resurrection...the full gamut of life.

While reading a commentary on the *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, I came upon an insight that has meaning for this preaching: "God's goal is that the human race may be one family and one people of God."

In the midst of the horror that has been 2020, we have also had glimpses of family writ large...the medical workers at the bedside of dying patients being their family substitutes, teachers going the extra mile to bring some normalcy back into the lives of their students, food lines staffed by generous volunteers. And for all good people, good "family," we are grateful!

However, as we approach the New Year, we know that we need to be even better family. Family with those who look different, believe differently, think differently.

May Paul's words to the Colossians become our 2021 New Year's resolution: We will become a family of "heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience, bearing with one another and forgiving one another."