

DECEMBER 28, 2025 DEACON MIKE WALSH

I've often thought if the Daily TV Mass community was to have a feast day, it might well be the Feast of the Holy Family.

Because in many ways, all of us who join together, however you're here, however you're watching, wherever you live, we are part of this family of faith, a family that comes together around this holiest of families.

And I just wanted to take a moment to express our deep gratitude here for all of us at the National Catholic Broadcasting Council for your sponsorship, your monthly donations, your donations, and most importantly, your prayers in our ministry so that we can stay connected.

And when I was thinking about family, you know, I'm a family—I'm a child of the '60s, shall we say. And if you grew up in North America in the '60s, one of your models of family was probably "Leave It to Beaver." You know, this perfect family of the mother, the father, their two boys.

Or it might be a painting by Norman Rockwell. Again, a famous North American artist who always had these beautiful paintings of the family around the Thanksgiving or Christmas dinner.

But you quickly realize that those are not very realistic in real life, and it came through to me when I was ministering. Started 20 years ago, ministering to ex-prisoners. And after you would gain their trust, if you were lucky, they would sit and they would tell you about their family story, and you would see it would be anything but ideal.

And it's occurred to me that every family is quite unique. They're like snowflakes in a sense. You know, in an average snowstorm, there might be a billion snowflakes on the ground looking like this one common

blanket of snow. But each flake is different, just like each individual in a family is different, and each and every family is quite unique.

One of the unique things about the Holy Family is the role that angels play in it. Now, you might say angels play a big role in your life, but probably not as strongly as in this story. You know this story starts with Mary betrothed to be married. Her family life is about to begin, and the angel comes to her and says, “You will conceive a child by the Holy Spirit.” Everything she thought was going to happen was going to be completely different.

Joseph, a righteous man, was about to dismiss her quietly until an angel comes to him in a dream and says, “Joseph...” These are key words. “...do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife.” And then, of course, we just celebrated Christmas, and we heard about the multitude of angels in the sky singing, “Glory to God in the highest.”

Now, maybe the angels haven't been that big in our life, but when you look at the Holy Family, you will see that we share a lot in common with them. And the reason Jesus came, I think, to be part of this small, really in many ways, quite insignificant family, was to show that he shares in all of the trials and tribulations that we have.

This Holy Family is not idealized, because it had great fears. We heard about that today. Dangers that it had to face, uncertainty and even sufferings. One of the places we learn about that is through the Sorrows of Mary. We've been spending some time on that over this past year at the Daily TV Mass, and you'll see the first three of these Sorrows deal with the Holy Family.

The first is the prophecy of Simeon, where they bring Jesus to the temple and Mary is told that a sword will pierce her own heart. How

many parents out there have not lived with uncertainty about what the world might hold for their children?

Our Gospel today is the flight into Egypt. Joseph is warned, and he has to take his family now and get up and take them to safety. How many families have faced that in their times, whether it just be because they had to move for whatever reason or they are in fact refugees?

And then, losing Jesus in the temple. Perhaps one of the most terrifying moments in my life when I lost my daughter at Disney World. That was only for 20 minutes, but you can imagine the pain of not knowing where your child was for three whole days. And then this family, which in a sense had been broken, when they find Jesus, is reunited through Christ.

And there's one sorrow that's not written. I wish there was more on this, because they must have shared this as a family. This is the sorrow, when they go back to Nazareth, that we hear the next time after the—Jesus gets lost in the temple. He's 12 years old. We hear from him when he's fully grown. In between that time, Joseph dies. And so, Mary and Jesus must have cared for him and mourned for him.

And we hear in our first reading today that kindness to parents is never forgotten. This is one great lesson I think we learn from both Mary and Jesus, but Jesus in a way, the way he cared for his parents.

So, you see, these same sorrows that touched the Holy Family touch our families today. And God remains present to us in every form of suffering. This is the lesson. Whether it be in exile, confusion, in caregiving, in grief, whatever burden it is we have to carry, when love dwells, God dwells, transforming that sorrow. Not taking it away. Transforming that sorrow into grace.

You see, true holiness is shaped through trust, love and obedience. And we are called to truly go in peace, glorifying our God in our families, even when the road is difficult.

God bless.