Feast of the Holy Family — December 29, 2024

From the Desk of Fr. Leo

The family photo-album is not produced very often especially in this present period of cell phones, I-pads and computers, and even then only on very special occasions and only for very special people. Our past is a very intimate part of us. We would not like strangers to "burgle" our bank of youth." When the daughter of the house becomes engaged, it is customary to invite her fiance' to peruse the family album. Here, he will meet his future partner at all the important moments of her past. There will be snap-shots of her as a baby in her mother's arms, sleeping in her cot, playing on the nursery floor, Baptism, birthdays, First Communion, Confirmation, holidays, school outings, graduation, etc. The record seems virtually complete. And yet, in most cases, what is missing from the album is far more important than what it contains. For one thing, the camera catches only the smiles and they were both fleeting and false. There is not a single shot of baby's tantrums and they were far more frequent and furious. The events recorded are all special. Our past has no roving camera to catch us unawares, doing what we did everyday. There is no film of our sickness and setbacks. There are no tears framed here, no pain, no sorrow.

Strangely, in the infancy narrative, St. Luke put in the album, a different set of pictures of the Holy Family. He does not shy away from the sordid or the sad. The animal eating-through where Mary cradled her baby is included. There is a dark side to each of the events pictured here. The inn keeper's refusal, Herod's death threat, exile in Egypt, Simeon's warning, lost in Jerusalem. The annals that trace the early years of that family between Bethlehem and Nazareth, with its stint as emigrants in a foreign country, fairly reek of poverty and deprivation.

Few would dispute that the family today is a threatened institution. In most developed countries, it is ravaged by divorce. The break-down rate hovers around the fifty percent mark. Parental authority is seriously undermined. Television has replaced the hearth as the focal point in the living rooms. Commercials, beamed into the sanctuary of the home, raise expectations which many budgets can never hope to satisfy. Even the very young are targeted as potential consumers. While poverty can sometimes be benign, debt often proves malignant. For marriage it can prove terminal. Adversity, on the other hand, only serves to strengthen family ties. Such was the experience of the Holy Family.

If marriage today is in crisis, it may be because we are following the wrong models. Perhaps we have traded the Holy Family for our favorite soap-operas. We should peruse again that family album. Family solidarity comes through in each incident recorded, in bold relief. Mary's concern and care for her child is transparent. Joseph hovers in the background protectively. The danger, the poverty that overshadowed their early marriage, bonded them more closely together.

Fr. Leo Alban Asuncion

Mass Intentions for the Week

Tues.	**December 31**	**4:30PM**
Thanksgiving		Lacsina Family
Wed.	**January 1**	**9:00AM**
People of the Parish		
Thur.	**January 2**	**11:00AM**
Special Intentions		
Fri.	**January 3**	**11:00AM**
Thanksgiving		Ed & Mae
Sat.	**January 4**	**4:30PM**
Virgilio Junio †		Buenaflor -Roth Family
Sun.	**January 5**	**9:00AM**
Special Intentions		
Port Costa		**11:00AM**
People of the Parish		

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