

30th December 2018 (Feast of the Holy Family, Year C)

Ecclesiasticus 3:3-7,14-17; Psalm 83(84):2-3,5-6,9-10; 1 John 3:1-2,21-24; Luke 2:41-52.

Children of God.

Today we celebrate the feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph. The gospel tells us about a strange incident that happened when Jesus was twelve years old. As usual he went with his parents for their annual Passover pilgrimage to the temple in Jerusalem, but this time, when they started on their way back home, Jesus decided to stay behind with the scribes in the temple. Even the holy family had difficulties it had to deal with!

The second reading from the first letter of John the apostle, talks about another family: the family of God. Through God's great love we are invited to be part of God's family, we are children of God! We form part of God's family through creation; God creates us in his own image and likeness. We carry within ourselves the very life of God. Moreover, we are invited to believe, share and journey in the life of the Son of God made human.

The event of God born in Bethlehem is a very important moment as now God's revelation of himself to his creation has reached its fulfilment. Throughout his life Jesus invites us to participate in the life of God.

John reminds us that God is love. The very essence of God is Love, and every time we reach beyond ourselves in love, we are living the very life of God. This is the new commandment given to us by Jesus: to love, to be the love of God of our sisters and brothers around us. If we love, then we know that we already live the life of God.

All this is shrouded in mystery. Once again John tells us that we do not really know what it means to be in God. We do not know what we will look like in the future, when we die and are united in God. What we do know is that by loving we are already living the life of God. When I love I am already sharing in the life of heaven.

Love is such an important element in the makeup of every family. It is love that brings families together. Love, modelled on the love of God, that gives of itself and knows no limits. We also form part of the human family, and there too we are invited to love and to reach out to others in need.

Through our love we already start living the life of heaven here on earth. Heaven is the fullness of love in God who is pure love. By our poor attempts to love our neighbours, we make God present in our world around us.

John tells us that if our conscience does not condemn us, then we have nothing to fear in God's presence. If love becomes for us the source of everything we do, then God becomes the very being of all our works and hence we rest assured of our relationship with God.

We do not know exactly how heaven looks like, but we know that heaven is based in God's infinite love.

Fr Mario