

Holy Family '18 ('09)

**"Son, your father and I have been looking for you.
Why have you done this to us."**

Did you not know I must be about my Father's business

Biblical historian John P. Pilch says that in the ancient Mediterranean culture, women were considered untrustworthy. So to avoid suspicion that a boy wasn't his, the father would have the boy circumcised and name him as early as eight days, making a public declaration formally accepting this child as his son. Given the unusual circumstances of Jesus' conception and birth, one can only imagine what suspicions Joseph must have faced in his village.

We are celebrating the Feast of the Holy Family. Mary and Joseph faced difficult situations they weren't prepared for - beginning with their son remaining behind in the temple without their knowing, but they didn't complain, blame, fret, or lose heart. They were s Holy Family.

So what made them a Holy Family? An enduring trust in God knowing that they were about the Father's business, and it changed the world. That same enduring trust in God is being offered to us right here and right now, and it will change our world - right here, right now!

You may have seen the article in the current issue of the Catholic Sentinel titled, "*Western Jesuits release names of priests credibly accused of abuse.*" I want to review it with you. This will inevitably bring up pain and hurt I know, and I am sorry for this. But it is only through honesty and transparency that any betrayal or abuse of any kind can find healing and forgiveness - in our world, in our church and in ourselves. These are some quotes from it.

"The Jesuits of the western United States on December 7, 2018, released the names of priests and brothers who have been credibly accused of sexual abuse of minors since 1950. There were 27 names on the list having Western Oregon links. Provincial Fr. Scott Santarosa said he released the names because the people of God demand and deserve transparency. He also said he hopes the release helps the victims and their families in the healing process. He adds that no Jesuit who has a credible allegation of sexually abusing a minor is allowed to remain in public ministry. Most cases go back decades. Scott said the Jesuits will conduct an even deeper investigation of its files. Anyone who has felt victimized by a Jesuit is encouraged to contact the Jesuit Office plus appropriate law enforcement and child protective agencies.

"St. Ignatius Loyola, founder of the Jesuits, said that love is shown more in deeds than in words. Fr. Scott said in releasing names of these credibly accused of sexual abuse of a minor, we ask for God's forgiveness and the forgiveness of the people of God. We pray for victims and pray for our church remembering that God's love is a powerful transformative force for good."

I want to add my voice to what Fr. Scott and so many other Jesuits are saying - I'm sorry. I'm sorry for having to bring this up with you again. But if we are to be about our Father's business, this is what we must do. Several dioceses by the way have started publicly releasing names of priests credibly accused of such abuse, with most allegations being decades old.

This is the Feast of the Holy Family. What made them holy? What makes our world, our Church and ourselves holy today? Being about the Father's business! And what is the Father's business?

† Extending Mercy: *"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy."* Mt. 5:7

† Showing Compassion: *"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God."* 2 Cor. 1:3

† Offering Forgiveness: *"When they came to a place called the Skull, there they crucified him, along with the criminals – one on his right, the other on his left. Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do'."* Luke 23:33-34

Showing mercy, compassion and forgiveness, including to us clergy who have sinned. is being about the Father's business; this is what makes our world, our Church and ourselves holy. The Father's business is not saying, *"Get over it! Forget it! It's all their fault! They betrayed you, just leave!"* The Father's business is about something more, something deeper; it's about lifting up what we crucify. Let us live who we already are - a Holy Family, a Holy Church and a Holy World.

**Today we are celebrating the Feast of the Holy Family.
We are that Family. This feast is about us.**

Happy Feast Day, Everyone!