

Holy Family C.19.BPK; Option C: 1Sam 220-28; John 3:1-24; Luke 2:41-52

Merry Christmas! Feliz Navidad! Joyeux Noel! Buon Natale! ... again, on this 6th Day of Christmas

Today we celebrate the “*Holy*” Family. A few years ago a parish priest greeted the mother a young couple with a number of children, “*What a beautiful family you have.*” Catching a flying cookie, she responded, “*I don’t know how beautiful*

... we are, or how holy we are, but we’re here!”

That just seems to me to capture perfectly what this celebration can mean for us.

Holy or not we all have a family of some kind!!

Now the, a story is told

An old woman knew she was dying, so she asked for a priest because she had a story to tell. “*When I was just a little girl,*” she said, “my parents went to Europe for several months every year, and always left me with the housekeeper. One year, when I was only 7, the housekeeper quit suddenly, and they hurried to find a replacement so they could leave on schedule. *My mother wrapped up all the silver and jewelry & locked them in a safe.* This had never happened before so I asked her why. **'Because we can't trust this new person**

... with our family valuables,' she replied.”

“*I thought about this a long time,*” said the old woman. “*They were leaving me with the new person. Wasn't I ... a family valuable?*”

It seemed that I wasn't, and I never forgot it.”

(Source: *Sunday Morning 2, D. Clark, Holy Family C)

Have we identified our family valuables correctly?

The real ones?

Would the members of our family agree that we have?

Here another story from another time

There is a city in Germany named *Weinsberg*. Overlooking the city, perched atop a high hill, stands an ancient fortress. The townspeople of *Weinsberg* are proud

... to tell about an interesting legend concerning the fortress.

According to the legend, in the 15th century, in the days of chivalry and honor, enemy troops laid siege to the fortress and sealed all the townsfolk inside. The enemy commander sent word up to the fortress announcing that he would allow the women and children to leave and go free before he launched a devastating attack. After some negotiations, the enemy commander also agreed, on his word of honor, to let each woman take with her the most valuable,

... personal treasure she possessed, provided she could carry it out herself.

You can imagine the enemy commander's consternation and surprise when the women began marching out of the fortress each one carrying

... her husband on her back! (*Sower's Seeds of Virtue*, Anon., p.79)

Hmmmmmm indeed, what are our “true & real” treasures?

2 Actually, there's one way to discover the truth: *Find the big patterns of our yeses and no's. Here are a few yeses ... that have value power:*

-Yes, of course I have time for you. Sit right down.

-Yes, I know you're having a hard time remembering. Just take your time.

-Yes, I'll walk with you as long as you need, as long as it hurts.

- Yes, you can have this, and let me know if you need more.

Of course, not every *yes* has real value power. For example, “Yes, we must do lunch,” or “Yes, the check's in the mail.” Those are no's masquerading as yeses.

On the other hand, there are lots of no's that are full of value power:

-No, that would be hurtful. I can't do it and you mustn't either.

-No, you don't need that crutch any more. You can let it go.

-No, that's not your best. -No, I won't break my word. I'll never leave you.

Even the hardest of no's, when rooted in love, can reveal a great depth of valuing: *“Son, why have you done this to us? Your father and I have been looking for you with great anxiety?”* (i.e) “No! You young man can't run-off without permission!”

On the other hand, some no's are as lethal as poison darts: No, I don't love you and I never did. No, you're not welcome here. No, I'm not sorry, and I'd do it again.

Our yeses & no's can be said aloud ... or with the silence of a raised eyebrow.

They can give life, & they can take it away. *The patterns of life-giving or life-taking* are thoroughly visible in each of us. **Ask your family.** They know what your yeses and no's add up to, and if you let them and they're feeling courageous, ... they may even tell you.

And there's more! We are part of a much larger ... *Holy Family.*

God, our Heavenly Father, values each of us as if we were the only person in the whole universe. All *the Father* asks in return in that we take one another into our hearts, as he does, and value each other as he does - not just in words, but in deeds: *“Beloved....And his commandment is this: we should believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another just as he commanded us.”*

First Letter of John

At this Liturgy of a Holy & Human Family, our God promises the one thing we desire more deeply than anything else in the world – a community, *the Big Family,* with God at the center. If we value one another, *here and now,* as God values us, that BIG family will come to be, and it will stretch all the way to Eternity.

**Just remember, our Family, God's Family, has always been
... a bit of a mess & a bit of a miracle.**