

February - Month of the Holy Family

“The Holy Family is truly the prototype of every Christian family that, united in the sacrament of marriage and nourished by the Word and the Eucharist, is called to carry out the marvellous vocation and mission of being a living cell not only of society but of the Church, sign and instrument of unity for the whole human race.”
(Pope Benedict XVI, Feast of the Holy Family 2006)

The Feast of the Holy Family was instituted by Pope Leo XIII in 1893. Following the revision of the Roman Calendar it is now celebrated during the Octave of Christmas. However, since the seventeenth century Catholic devotion has dedicated the entire month of February to contemplating the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph as the model of virtue for families.

Pope Leo XIII exhorted Christian families to meditate upon the example of the Holy Family as embodying perfectly all domestic virtues. The family of Nazareth was characterized by faithful love and devoted attachment which should serve as the exemplar of all Christian families.

Successive pontiffs have emphasised the importance of the family and warned against impulses that threaten the basis of the family institution. In particular, contemporary efforts to redefine marriage strike at the foundation of God’s plan for mankind. It is therefore urgent that Christians turn again to the family of Nazareth where they will discover the example of a life of harmony and prayer.

God willed to be born and to grow up in a human family. It is there that children first connect with Him. The family is a school of virtue for children and parents alike and should be characterised by love, prayer, charity and forgiveness. In this way it becomes a living image of the love of God.

Links

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