

Dear Padre,

I've been trying to teach my children about the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. Any advice?

It's easy to teach young children about the works of mercy if you keep it simple and call their attention to what they're doing.

When they set the table and pour drinks, tell them they're feeding the hungry and giving drink to the thirsty. When they bring homework to a sick classmate, they're visiting the sick. If they go to a funeral, they're helping bury the dead. When they make up with their siblings after a fight, they bear wrongs patiently and forgive all injuries. Siblings who help each other with their homework are instructing the "ignorant."



FIZKES/SHUTTERSTOCK

A child who soothes someone who's been hurt is comforting the sorrowful. Praying for anyone, living or dead, is a spiritual work of mercy. Listening when someone confides in them is counseling the doubtful. Talking a friend or sibling out of doing something wrong is admonishing the sinner.

As your children get older, volunteer as a family with organizations that build homes for low-income families and help the children of prisoners.

Performing the corporal and spiritual works of mercy, whether for each other or with each other, will bring you closer as a family as well as closer to God.

Fr. Rick Potts, CSsR / Sundaybulletin@Liguori.org

Do you have a question for the Padre?

Go to DearPadre.org to send your question and to learn more about Dear Padre.



A WORD FROM Pope Francis

The works of mercy reawaken in us the need, and the ability, to make the faith alive and active with charity. I am convinced that, through these simple, daily actions, we can achieve a true cultural revolution....If every one of us, every day, does one of these, this will be a revolution in the world!

GENERAL AUDIENCE, OCTOBER 12, 2016



Our Parish Community

December 26, 2021

Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph (C)
Sir 3:2–6, 12–14 or 1 Sm 1:20–22, 24–28
Col 3:12–21 or 3:12–17 or 1 Jn 3:1–2, 21–24
Lk 2:41–52



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[Jesus] went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them; and his mother kept all these things in her heart.
LUKE 2:51

All in the Family

So many family-oriented television programs today feature the antics of dysfunctional families. They're often so well produced that we laugh at the blundering exploits, thus giving them credibility. The readings for today's feast show us what a real family looks like. Parents worry about the security of their children (Luke); brothers and sisters are told to be compassionate, kind, humble, gentle, and patient (Colossians); elders are respected and cared for in their need (Sirach). Even the psalm response sketches the profile of a flourishing family as understood at that time.

We can only guess what the Holy Family must have been like. There is no indication that their neighbors saw them as anything more than an average family. Jesus learned Joseph's trade and, most likely, would take over the business after he died. Instead, he launched out as an itinerant preacher. Even that does not seem to have been so exceptional for that time. Nor was Mary's widowhood reason for him to stay home. The Gospels indicate that she was part of a protective family unit. This did not appear to be an exceptional family. But how exceptional it was!

The lesson is that even an average family has the potential to be a holy family. What we should do is pattern our lives after Paul's exhortation to the Colossians. If we live like this, we will discover that holiness is all in the family.

Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

FOR Reflection

- ★ What might you do to make family life easier for those with whom you live?
- ★ Do you show gratitude to your family for their respect and care of you?