

Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph

December 28, 2025

Virtuosity.

Honor father and mother.

A Nazorean.

rvb.

In pursuit of being a holy, healthy, and functional Family --- A challenge given the complexity of society today. The following are the findings of research by sociologists in Sociology, 17th edition, John J. Macionis, Chapter 10, pp. 494 ff.

Changing Transformation and Family Life

- 1. Family life is intertwined with other social institutions.**
- 2. These global shifts affect families directly and indirectly.**
- 3. Economic changes have affected white-collar workers facing downward mobility, loss of individual self-esteem and bruised family honor.**
- 4. Downward mobility also occurs within the stable working class and causes them to seek coping strategies to deal with adverse situations.**
- 5. Blue-collar workers have been hardest hit by the economic transformation.**
- 6. The modern family was disrupted by the destabilizing effects of globalization.**
- 7. Households now expand and contract as adult children leave and then return home only to leave again.**
- 8. The vast majority of postmodern families have dual earners.**

9. These postmodern family forms are new to the working-class and middle-class, but they are not new to the poor.

Single Parents and Their Children

- 1. More than one-fourth of all US children lived with one parent in 2000, up from 12% in 1970. About 85% of single-parent families are headed by women.**
- 2. The disproportionate number of single-parent families are headed by women is a consequence of (1) high divorce rates and the strong tendency of women gaining custody of their children in divorce cases, and (2) the high rate of never-married mothers.**
- 3. Although teen birth rates have diminished, the US has high rates of teenage childbearing compared to other countries.**
- 4. What are the effects on children of living in mother-only families?**
 - a. They have poor academic achievement.**
 - b. They are more likely to have higher absentee rates at school.**
 - c. They are more likely to drop out of school.**
 - d. They are more likely to marry early and have children early.**
 - e. If they marry, they are more likely to divorce.**
 - f. They are more likely to commit delinquent acts and engage in drug and alcohol use.**
- 5. Coping is difficult for any single parent—male or female—because of:**
 - a. responsibility overload where single parents make all the decisions and provide for all their family's needs.**

- b. task overload where the demands of work, housekeeping, and parenting can be overwhelming for one person; and**
- c. emotional overload where single parents must always be on call to provide the necessary emotional support.**

6. There are numerous reasons for the disproportionate number of mother-headed families that are poor.

- a. Many single mothers are young, never married, have little education and poorly paid jobs.**
- b. Many divorced or separated women have not been employed for years and have difficulty reentering the job market.**
- c. Jobs for women center at the bottom of the segmented job market and are poorly paid.**
- d. Women often do not receive the child support owed them or if they do the amount covers less than half the actual cost.**

7. The economic plight of single-parent families is much worse for families of color.

Children of Divorce

- 1. About 65% of divorcing couples have minor children.**
- 2. One-third of White children and two-thirds of Black children by age sixteen will experience the divorce of their parents.**
- 3. What are the effects of divorce on children?**
 - a. Many children of divorce effectively lose their father.**
 - b. Female-headed single-parent families have much lower incomes.**
 - c. Children of divorce score lower on measures of academic success, conduct, psychological adjustment, self-concept, and social competence.**

- d. The long-term effects of divorce are difficult to measure.
 - e. Most children with divorce do not experience severe or long-term problems.
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“It is in Jesus that we live, move, and have our being.” Acts 17:28.

Blessings upon you and your loved ones, Roger J. Vanden Busch

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Reading I

[Sirach 3:2-6, 12-14](#)

**God sets a father in honor over his children;
a mother's authority he confirms over her sons.**

Whoever honors his father atones for sins,
and preserves himself from them.

When he prays, he is heard;
he stores up riches who reveres his mother.

Whoever honors his father is gladdened by children,
and, when he prays, is heard.

Whoever reveres his father will live a long life;
he who obeys his father brings comfort to his mother.

My son, take care of your father when he is old;
grieve him not as long as he lives.

Even if his mind fail, be considerate of him;
revile him not all the days of his life;

kindness to a **father** will not be forgotten,
firmly planted against the debt of your sins
—a house raised in justice to you.

A reflection, exegesis, and commentary on the scriptures.

In this reading from Sirach, the author is highlighting and emphasizing the duties and obligations children have toward their parents, keeping in mind the author's words are conditioned by time and culture, noting that the word "father" is mentioned 5 times while the mother is mentioned once. Children were a reality, rarely seen and never heard. The father is the head of the household and is to be revered by his children. They are to take care of him in his golden years. As it says, "**Even if his mind fails, take care of him.**" When I read this line, immediately I thought of my sister who is now in the throes of Dementia, knowing in today's world I have resources to turn to such as the following:

A new lifeline for your Dementia Care Journey---

"A new online learning experience created by Sheri Fairman, owner of Dementia Care Solutions and Current of Care, designed to help family and friend care partners understand dementia in a way that finally *makes sense*. If you have ever felt overwhelmed, unprepared, exhausted, or unsure how to respond to the changes you are seeing,

this Academy was built for you. It translates decades of clinical expertise and real-world caregiving guidance into simple, visual, practical lessons you can use immediately.” -Internet

Nevertheless, respect, reverence, and love are timeless values that are to be cherished and consciously practiced and lived by each member of the family. Historically, in Sirach, the mother played a lesser but still very influential role in the family. She was the power behind the throne, but she would still say, “Wait till your father gets home!” The children are to honor their parents. They will be given rewards in this life, no, not a car, stereo, television set, or a private phone, but success, happiness, good fortune, children, and a long life.

Responsorial Psalm

[Psalm 128:1-2, 3, 4-5.](#)

R. (cf. 1) Blessed are those who fear the Lord and walk in his ways.

**Blessed is everyone who fears the LORD,
who walks in his ways!**

**For you shall eat the fruit of your handiwork;
blessed shall you be, and favored.**

R. Blessed are those who fear the Lord and walk in his ways.

**Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine
in the recesses of your home;
your children like olive plants
around your table.**

R. Blessed are those who fear the Lord and walk in his ways.

**Behold, thus is the man blessed
who fears the LORD.**

The LORD bless you from Zion:

may you see the prosperity of Jerusalem
all the days of your life.

R. Blessed are those who fear the Lord and walk in his ways.

Reading II

Colossians 3:12-21 or 3:12-17 – Note - using the shorter version.

Concerning the longer version, 3:12-21 part of the reading, some women and men may react to the words, “Wives, be submissive to your husbands.” Paul is saying that husbands and wives are to love one another as Jesus loves them. Respect your children, love them, and be a model of Jesus for them.

Brothers and sisters:

Put on, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved,
heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience,
bearing with one another and forgiving one another,
if one has a grievance against another;
as the Lord has forgiven you, so must you also do.

And over all these put on love,
that is, the bond of perfection.

And let the peace of Christ control your hearts,
the peace into which you were also called in one body.
And be thankful.

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly,
as in all wisdom you teach and admonish one another,
singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs
with gratitude in your hearts to God.

And whatever you do, in word or in deed,
do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus,
giving thanks to God the Father through him.

A reflection, exegesis, and commentary on the scriptures.

Wow, what a recipe for living the Christian life as an individual and a family. What can be added, the entire condensed version says it all and speaks for itself. In living the virtuous life, we are given a litany of the ABC's essential for a healthy, happy, and holy family life. Would we post this reading to the refrigerator and recite it individually and as a family.

Here is another ABC listing which complements this magnificent, powerful, and practical recipe for good parenting of Colossians;

A=Accountability=hold your children accountable for their behavior;

B=Boundaries = set specific limits with clear consequences;

C=Consistency=hold to the same principles and practices;

D=Discipline=be fair and do not discipline while angry;

E=Example=children need models; F=Forgiveness=guide your children in helping them forgive; G=Giving=teach the joy of giving; I=Imagination – be creative; J=Justice/fairness; K=Knowing your children's friends; L=Listen to your children; M=Morals – standard of conduct; N=No=use and mean it; O=Outdoors – outdoor activity; P=Pressure=support your children; Q=Questions-close attention to their questions; R=Respect; S=Source of strength; T=Togetherness = family times; U=Uniqueness of each child; V=Voice and your tone; W=Words – keep your word; X=eXamine=be aware;

Y=You = take care of yourself; Z=Zany=happy and funny. -Jo Frisbie von Tiehl.

Alleluia

Colossians 3:15a, 16a

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

Let the peace of Christ control your hearts;

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel

Mt 2:13-15, 19-23

**When the magi had departed, behold,
the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said,
“Rise, take the child and his mother, flee to Egypt,
and stay there until I tell you.**

Herod is going to search for the child to destroy him.”

**Joseph rose and took the child and his mother by night
and departed for Egypt.**

**He stayed there until the death of Herod,
that what the Lord had said through the prophet might be fulfilled,
Out.of.Egypt.I.called.my.son;**

**When Herod had died, behold,
the angel of the Lord appeared in a dream
to Joseph in Egypt and said,**

**“Rise, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel,
for those who sought the child’s life are dead.”**

**He rose, took the child and his mother,
and went to the land of Israel.**

**But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling over Judea
in place of his father Herod,
he was afraid to go back there.**

And because he had been warned in a dream,
he departed for the region of Galilee.
He went and dwelt in a town called Nazareth,
so that what had been spoken through the prophets
might be fulfilled,
He shall be called a Nazorean;

A reflection, exegesis, and commentary on the scriptures.

In the Gospel of Luke which overflows with signs and symbols, the message is that the parents and child return to their Galilean home and Jesus is obedient to them. The author draws inspiration from the Old Testament with the intention of presenting Jesus as summing up in himself the history of Israel. Jesus is the second Moses and the true Israel; God has chosen one. As the holy family journeyed together, families today are not static but are in the process of working together, changing, and maturing. It is important for families to rethink and discuss their dynamics to meet the challenges of change. What are some of these challenges parents and single parents encounter – according to recent surveys by sociologists they offer the following findings of their research:

Today's Diverse Family Forms

1. Census Bureau defines a household as all persons who occupy a housing unit.

- 2. A family is two or more persons related by birth, marriage, or adoption who reside together.**
- 3. All families comprise households, but not all households are families.**
- 4. US households have changed, become smaller and more diverse.**
- 5. A dramatic shift in household composition was the decline in percentage of households with children.**
- 6. This trend reflects the postponement of marriage and children and the shift toward smaller families.**
- 7. No household arrangement is typical. Instead, a very diverse world of households has emerged.**

C. Balancing Work and Family with Few Social Supports

- 1. One of the greatest changes has been the increased participation of women in the labor force.**
- 2. The rise in dual-worker families has both positive and negative consequences for family life.**
- 3. The traditional organization of work makes it difficult to cope with family problems or conflicting schedules.**
- 4. More than two-thirds of all children under age 5 are in child-care arrangement on a regular basis.**
- 5. The US has no comprehensive childcare system unlike other industrialized nations.**
- 6. The government's less-than-adequate childcare programs are flawed because (1) they are underfunded and (2) they rely on the states to implement the programs.**

On this feast of the Holy Family, one wonders if we think families of the past were better than families of the present. However, family historians have found that there is no golden age of the family. What do you think?

1. Does society shape the family or vice versa, or a combination of the two?
2. Do you think there was a more stable time for families than there is now? If so, were all families more stable or just some (e.g., were poor families or families of color stable)?
3. What are the purposes of a family? What purpose does your family serve?
4. Would the U.S. be better off having one breadwinner and one homemaker per household? If so, how? If not, why not?
5. How are dual-earner families and single-parent families affecting the way children in the U.S. are being raised? Are there advantages to these family arrangements?

The following are the findings of research by sociologists in Sociology, 17th edition, John J. Macionis, Chapter 10, pp. 494 ff.

Final prayer: God, your son Jesus and his parents, Joseph and Mary are the foundation for and model for families. Bless and gift families with the grace, qualities, gifts, and values necessary for a healthy, happy, and holistic family. Amen.

Blessings upon you and your loved ones. Roger J. Vanden Busch