

YOU SEE THIS CHILD: HE IS DESTINED...

Have you ever seen a PERFECT FAMILY? A family we all looked up to and admired so much that we want to be like them? Let me take us down the memory lane.

While growing up, I used to think that every wealthy family was a perfect family and that they had no troubles at all. I remember the many discussions I had with my dad regarding wealthy people, and he would always say – “Big Man, Big Trouble.” I never understood that statement of my dad nor his mentality. However, as I grew up, my life experiences have shown me that all families have issues of their own, and we should be careful what we wish for. One film that summed up my life experiences on family life is **DESPERATE HOUSEWIVES** produced by ABC Studios and aired from October 2004 to May 2012.

In *Desperate Housewives*, we encounter 4 Key families. **There was Lynette Scavo's Family**, with Lynette being a highflyer in the Corporate Business World but had to settle down to being a housewife and raise up 5 children, plus the 6th child her husband had through a one-night stand. **There was Gabrielle Solis' family**, with Gabrielle being a top-model in New York, until she married Carlos who worked in Finance. Although she was well provided for by her husband, she was so lonely that she started an affair with their teenage gardener. **There was Susan Delfino's Family**, with Susan who had little self-confidence and ended up having 2 children from 2 different men. **Then there was Bree Van De Kamp's family**, a perfect family on the outside with so many imperfections on the inside. Bree was the perfect wife and kept the perfect family despite all the many struggles she faced. She was a perfectionist with a bit of OCD who mentally destabilised her husband and children. She kept the perfect lawn, prepared the best meals, dressed immaculately, smiled effortlessly, a card-carrying member of the Republican party, a staunch member of the Presbyterian Church, who refused divorce from her husband and could not accept her son when he came out to her as gay. After watching *Desperate Housewives* and coupled with my own personal experiences, it dawned on me that all families have their own imperfections and struggles, and there is no need to be ashamed of them. In fact, Christ's lineage was not perfect at all. In the lineage of Christ, we meet some people that in our human reckoning should not be there, but they are. We meet **Tamar**, who seduced her father-in-law Judah and had a child with him; we meet **Rahab** who was a prostitute in Canaan, but helped the spies sent by Joshua and was included in Christ's lineage. We meet **Ruth** who was a gentile from Moab but seduced Boaz and married him; then we meet **Bathsheba** the adulteress who married David an adulterer and they had King Solomon. Yes, the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph was not spared these imperfections and struggles; they were part and parcel of them, and they lived through them as we encounter in our readings of this Sunday.

In today's First Reading from Genesis Chapters 15 and 21, we encounter Abraham and Sarah who although were God-fearing people, were nonetheless barren; however, they believed the word of the Lord till the end and were blessed with Isaac. It is this same faith they had in the Lord that was praised in today's Second Reading from Hebrews Chapter 11. Yes, they believed that that He who made the promise to them would be

faithful to it and so it was. In today's Gospel pericope from Luke Chapter 2, we encounter Mary and Joseph who were ordinary law-abiding Jews. In obedience to the Jewish law of Purification, they went to Jerusalem and fulfilled the law. Although the circumstance surrounding the conception and birth of Christ were surprising to them, their surprise was taken to another level today – They stood and wondered at the things that were being said about their child. They did not know what they signed up for nor were they prepared for it. Before they knew what was happening, they would search for Christ for 3 days, and Mary would witness His Passion, Death, and Burial.

My friends, have you seen a Perfect Family? We might be here wondering why God did you make us members of so and so family in the world where things seem a lot easier. Like my dad told me, if only we know what those families are going through, we would be thankful for the families we have got.

No family is perfect, mine included. Although I am a priest with the expectation that my family out to be perfect, I can assure you that my family is not perfect at all. One of my junior brothers has gone through divorce after few years of marriage. It was a terrible time for my family trying to reconcile the Church's Teaching on 'No Divorce' with the reality on ground. One of my brothers was introduced to hard drugs at an earlier age and it almost destroyed my parents and all of us. Yet, we all came together, supported my parents, and each other through it. Instead of these two things tearing us apart, they brought us closer. Although my parents and siblings still drive me mad, I love them, I thank God for my imperfect family, and would not want to be without them nor change them for another family no matter how wealthy that family is.

My friends, have you seen a Perfect Family? No and Yes! There is nothing like a perfect family, it does not exist here on earth. Who would like to belong to such a family by the way? However, our families are perfect as they are. Yes, we are pretty though unpretty. Today, let us thank God for our families, our parents, grand-parents, great grandparents, siblings, cousins, nieces, nephews, friends, and our parish family. Even though they do drive us mad many times, think of how boring and uneventful our lives would be without them. Let us present them before God and thank Him for each of them.

Like the Holy Family who navigated through their imperfections and struggles without falling out of love with each other, let us remember that our families are all we have got, and we should treasure them now and always. Lisa Weed summarised this thus: **"Being a family means you are a part of something very wonderful. It means you will love and be loved for the rest of your life."** Let us not forget that there are so many people in the world who have nowhere and nobody to call FAMILY. We are blessed to have both a biological and a spiritual family. Let us be grateful for our families.

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Homily for the Feast of Holy Family, Year B (31/12/2023)