

## *Holy Family 2015*

### *The Mystery of Family Life*

It may seem strange to you that on this day after Christmas we are celebrating the Feast of the Holy Family. This feast, however, provides us with another way to understand the mystery of Christmas, the mystery of the incarnation, the mystery of the Word made flesh. It reminds us that the eternal Son of God, the one through whom God created the universe, lived and grew within a family. Like all of us, the Son of God was nurtured by family life. Like all of us, the Son of God was obedient to mother and father. Like all of us the Son of God learned from his parents. And so this Feast of the Holy Family proclaims the mystery of Christmas by reminding us, in a concrete way, that the eternal Word of God became flesh. In Jesus, God became like us so that we might become like God.

In addition to reminding us of the mystery of Christmas, this Feast of the Holy Family reminds us of the profound mystery of family life. It reminds us that our family life—past and present—belongs to the mystery of God's plan for our salvation.

Consider today's first reading in which Hannah dedicates her child Samuel to the service of God. Although she and her husband do not know it, this child will be one of the great the prophets in God's plan of salvation. Or consider Mary and

Joseph, who find their child in the temple. They are distraught and puzzled because they have lost their Son, but this child, their child, will play the decisive role in God's plan of salvation. You see, each of our families is a mystery because every family is destined to play a role in God's plan of salvation.

As you look at your children this Christmas, and as you look at the children around you, consider the role they are destined to play in God's plan of salvation—a role that is hidden from your eyes now. Like Samuel, like Jesus, each child is precious and destined to play a role in God's work of salvation. That is why your family is so important. That is why we celebrate this Feast of the Holy Family. For, in and through the family the plan of God begins to unfold. In the family we grow in love and respect for each other.

The next time you think your family is ordinary or annoying, consider the role your family is called to play in God's plan of salvation, and give thanks for your family life.