Feast of The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph (A)

Gospel text (*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.”

“Rise, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel”

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Today, we contemplate the mystery of the Holy Family. The Son of God begins His path through men in the midst of a plain family. It is the Father's design. The family will always be the irreplaceable human habitat. Jesus has a legal father that “carries” Him and a Mother that is always by His side. God always used St. Joseph, a just man, faithful husband and responsible father, to protect the Family of Nazareth: “Rise, take the child and his mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I tell you” (Mt 2:13).

Today, more than ever before, the Church is expected to proclaim the good news of the Gospel of the Family and of life. Today, more than ever before, a deep inhuman culture trumpets, while trying to inflict it upon us, their anti-gospel of confusion and death. In the Apostolic Exhortation “Ecclesia in Europa”, Saint John Paul II reminded us: “The Church… must faithfully proclaim anew the truth about marriage and

the family. She sees this as a burning need, for she knows that this task is integral to the mission of evangelization entrusted to her by her Bridegroom and Lord, and imposes itself today with unusual force. Many cultural, social and political factors are in fact conspiring to create an increasingly evident crisis of the family. In varying ways they jeopardize the truth and dignity of the human person, and call into question, often misrepresenting it, the notion of the family itself. The value of marital indissolubility is increasingly denied; demands are made for the legal recognition of de facto relationships as if they were comparable to legitimate marriages...!"

"Herod is going to search for the child to destroy him." (Mt 2:13). Once again, Herod is striking, but we are not to be afraid, for God's help is not lacking in our life. Let us go to Nazareth. Let us rediscover the truth about the family and about life. Let us live joyfully and let us proclaim it to our brothers thirsty for light and hope. Saint John Paul II calls us to it: "It is necessary to reaffirm that marriage and family are institutions and realities grounded in the will of God. Furthermore, it is necessary to serve the Gospel of life."

And, again, "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'" (Mt 2:19-20). The return from Egypt is imminent!

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- "When the Wise men tell Herod of one who is born a king, he is disturbed. To save his kingdom he resolves to kill him, though if he would have faith in the child, he himself would reign in peace in this life and for ever in the life to come" (Saint Quodvultdeus)

- "How important it is that every child coming into the world be welcomed by the warmth of a family! External comforts do not matter: Jesus was born in a stable and had a manger as his first cradle, but the love of Mary and of Joseph made him feel the tenderness and beauty of being loved" (Benedict XVI)

- "The flight into Egypt and the massacre of the innocents make manifest the opposition of darkness to the light: 'He came to his own home, and his own people received him not' (Jn 1:11)" (Catechism Of The Catholic Church, Nº 530)