

The Holy Family

■ The 118th Sharing of the Word

●First Reading: Sirach 3:2-6, 12-14

This passage teaches the wisdom that devotion to one's parents is devotion to God, and that by living in accordance with God's will, the heart is put in order and blessings flow into one's life. Honoring one's parents is an act of obedience to God, and God never forgets love shown toward parents but repays it in due time. God has entrusted parents with the responsibility to protect, educate, and guide their children, and children have the duty to listen and respond to this guidance.

There are reasons to follow the judgment of parents:

Parents possess rich life experience and pass on wisdom.

Parents love their children and sincerely desire their happiness.

In the Old Testament, one's relationship with God is restored by obeying the Law; however, forgiveness remains temporary and incomplete. In contrast, the atonement accomplished through the death of Jesus brings complete forgiveness. By inheriting wisdom from parents, children gain trust and respect, and by following God's will, blessings are received naturally.

To act and speak in ways that honor parents, one should consider what one would desire if one were a parent, and refrain from doing what one would not wish to receive. This spirit is in harmony with Matthew 7:12. From a heart that honors parents, love grows, peace is born, happiness is experienced, prayers reach the Lord, and the heart is brought into order.

The teaching "Care for your father" is a practical application of the commandment "Honor your father and mother." Love for parents is a concrete expression of love for God and forms the foundation of love for one's neighbor. Humility leads to obedience to God, and compassion helps believers grow into those who follow Jesus. God sees those who honor their parents, exalts them, cleanses them from sin, and blesses them. Even after one's parents have passed away, honoring them continues through prayer and remembrance.

●Second Reading: Colossians 3:12-21

The Letter to the Colossians proclaims the greatness of Jesus and the grace of salvation, warns against false teachings, and, after urging believers to "put off the old self and put on the new self" (Colossians 3:9-10), leads into this passage. We have been "chosen" by God and, through baptism, made "holy ones" who belong to Christ. God's love means that He always regards you as His own child.

Compassion (standing alongside those who suffer), kindness (being helpful to others), humility (respecting others), gentleness (an attitude that does not wound), and patience (accepting others) these virtues are to be "put on." To do so, we entrust ourselves to the Holy Spirit, encounter God's Word daily, meditate upon it, and examine ourselves.

"Bearing with one another" means walking patiently without condemning the faults of others. Since Scripture says, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay" (Romans 12:19), we entrust anger and slander to the Lord, lighten our hearts, and walk without wasting unnecessary energy. To forgive others, we must first know that we ourselves have been forgiven and accepted by the Lord.

Love is the "bond" that unites people. When we practice m ko-kita forgetting ourselves and seeking the joy of others and do our best, we truly "put on love." By shifting from self-centeredness to placing peace with God first, we come to live a life in which "the peace of Christ rules in our hearts."

We must not forget to be "always thankful" for the grace by which we have been saved and made members of the Lord's family, the Church. To "let the word of Christ dwell richly within you," making use of resources such as MyBible: Treasures of the Word (Practical Edition) allows Scripture to be stored and recalled easily. The songs sung in worship "psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs" are expressions of praise.

Before speaking or acting, asking “What would the Lord do” and then acting accordingly is how we live “in the name of the Lord.” Wives respect their husbands and build the household together in mutual support, while husbands show consideration and kindness toward their wives. Children obey their parents, and parents do not provoke their children but raise them according to the spirit of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4), never forgetting to say “thank you” and “I’m sorry.”

●Gospel Reading: Matthew 2:13?15, 19-23

King Herod, upon hearing from the Magi that the “King of the Jews” had been born, plotted to kill the child Jesus out of fear and insecurity. The Magi, having been warned in a dream, departed by another way, leading to this episode. At that time, the Magi were not fortune-tellers but scholars scientists and researchers versed in astronomy and philosophy.

Joseph fled to Egypt with his family in fulfillment of the prophecy, “Out of Egypt I have called my son” (Hosea 11:1). Like Abraham, Joseph was a man of faith who obeyed God’s word immediately. Having been told by an angel that the child would be the Savior, he made the decision to go to Egypt without hesitation and acted at once.

God continually watched over Joseph’s family and guided them through dreams at precisely the right moments “Flee to Egypt” and “Return to Israel” to protect them from danger. Joseph’s fear of returning to Judea was also the work of the Holy Spirit. Once again guided by a dream, he was led to Galilee.

Thus the prophecy, “In Galilee of the Gentiles a great light has dawned” (Isaiah 8:23-9:1), was fulfilled, together with the prophecy that the Messiah would be “despised and rejected” (Isaiah 53:3-12). In the New Testament, Nazareth is described as a despised town (John 1:45?46). Through the convergence of these prophecies, Jesus came to be called “Jesus of Nazareth.”

Author: Akinori Kamachi Translation: AI