

CONNECT! SUNDAY REFLECTION

27th Sunday in Ordinary Time | For Sunday, October 7th, 2018

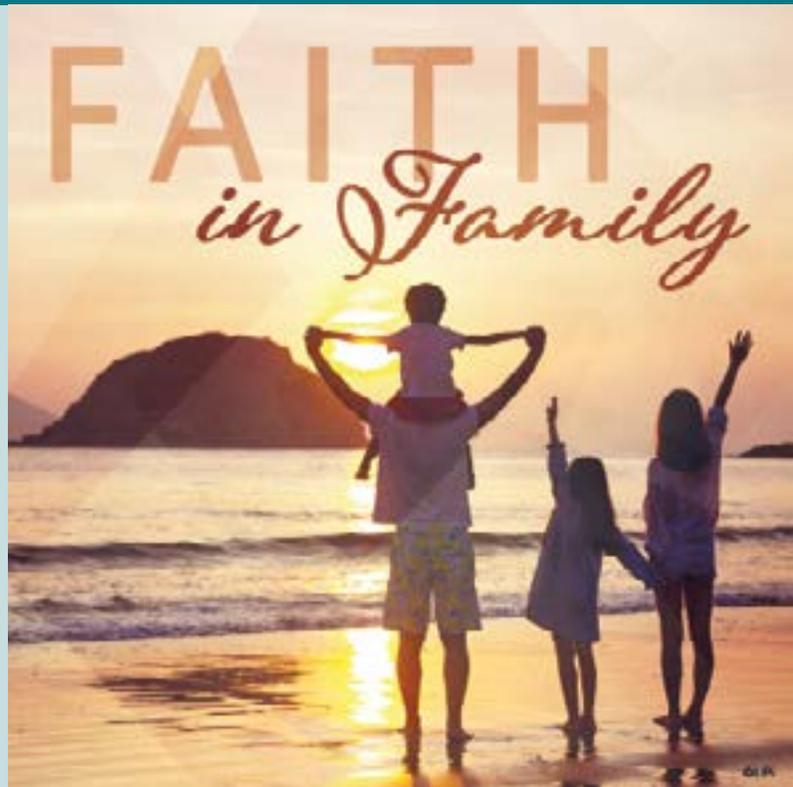
God Is Present in Families

Written by Angie Windnagle

Genesis 2:18-24

Hebrews 2:9-11

Mark 10:2-16



Last weekend, my family and I headed to the beach to meet up with some friends and their children. In the backdrop of sand castles and sandy toes, my friend and I were chatting about food budgets, meals, and typical parent chores. In other words, the ordinary, drab, monotonous details of living that are necessary yet at times burdensome. She made a powerful remark about Satan delighting in causing chaos within families. We both marveled at how it seems we feel tempted nearly weekly to look outward to the glamour of a life beyond our four walls at home. The temptation begins with an unsettled feeling of perhaps not feeling appreciated or noticed, and morphs into ideas of all the many things we could do if only we didn't have these demands of life our vocation places on us. Fashion design, exploring Africa, pursuing more degrees ... the list goes on.

Yet we both noticed how those particular desires bore bad fruit. They make us agitated, impatient, and grumpy. But the fruit of accepting God's will in the present moment, of finishing the meal plan or taking the kids on a walk, reorients our hearts again, and joy slowly begins to infiltrate the day. The temptation to scrap what God is asking us to do in the present moment leaves us unfulfilled, proving that imagining a life elsewhere, maybe with more fame and recognition, is rooted in pride.

The readings this weekend at Mass are filled with confirmation of this truth — one of God's great glories and revelations is that family is necessary and inherently good and worthy of fighting for and protecting. In the first reading, we hear the creation account of the first man and woman. After talking with my friend, what I find most striking is that God took man's need into consideration and gave him a partner. It wasn't for God's pleasure or need or lack of anything that woman was created, but for man, so that he wouldn't feel the pain of being alone. What's revealed is the heart of our Triune God, who is a community of persons, showing us that dominion over the entire earth wasn't enough for man but familial love was.

How often do I yearn to have dominion over my entire life and seek to feel powerful or important? I seek to feel like Adam, who had all of that, but forget he was empty even with that power. He named the animals and tended to all of creation. Yet he wasn't complete until he encountered flesh of his flesh. The beauty and power of family is revealed from the first moments of creation when we witness that marriage,

the foundation of the family, makes us more like God. When Adam embraces Eve, he tastes the divine communion. None of the power he has over the garden can compare with that love.

The second reading affirms it even more. God married humanity when He sent His only Son. He was “made lower than the angels” so that “he might taste death for everyone.” Where Adam gave a rib for his bride, Christ gave His entire life for His bride, the Church. The ultimate love story is that God isn’t impressed by our fanfare, gold stars, and impressive resumes. The God of the mighty cosmos is also the God of little details, including our hearts and need for community and love. Satan wants me to look out of my vocation for the world’s recognition and praise, but God invites me to look in and find Him already there, meek and lowly.

In the Gospel, Christ institutes the sacrament of holy Matrimony, calling out the Pharisees for being hard of heart. And their hardness of heart isn’t too different from our own hardness of heart today. How many times do people try to find a loophole to something that makes them uncomfortable? All around us, we have our own kind of Pharisees trying to mince words for their own sake — politicians looking for power, Church leaders remaining unjustly silent, and husbands and wives searching for affirmation from the world rather than God. But Christ calls us on to transparency and simplicity. The way of the Gospel is the way of the family — hidden, yet faithful, building up hearts by living in community and love.

The small things matter to God, probably much more than they matter to us, and it’s my challenge this week to start intentionally living the small simple way in front of me the best and most faithfully I can with [St. Pope John Paul II’s homily](#) in my mind: “This is the call that I repeat to you. Watch! Do not let the precious values of faithful married love and family life be taken away from you. Do not reject them, or think that there is some other better prospect for happiness and fulfillment . . . True love in the family is forever!”

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