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**Feast of the Holy Family  
December 27, 2009**

I have always thought it is a bit ironic to celebrate the feast of the Holy Family so close to Christmas. For some, perhaps it continues the warm glow of being with one's own family for the holidays. For others, it might challenge one to be more forgiving and understanding after spending the holiday with one's own family. Either way, it is an opportunity to make our prayer more concrete and real.

The Gospel passage today is a wonderful reminder that all families, even Jesus, Mary and Joseph, have moments of tension and misunderstanding. It seems that intimacy and love always involve some worry, occasional disappointment, and a lot of compromise and correction. Luke highlights the humanity of Jesus by pointing out that He was not an exception, and had to grow in His ability to love and be shaped by love, as well as advance in wisdom, just like all of us.

I find great comfort in the fact that Jesus took on our humanity and limitations. Without succumbing to sin Himself, He got to know our weaknesses first hand. We are blessed to have a God so near to us, so knowledgeable of our frailty. We have so much to learn from His humility and compassion.

Whatever our current relationship to our family, today's feast encourages us to imitate the humility of Jesus, open our hearts to those God has given us to love, and advance in wisdom, age and favor before God and each other.

God bless you.

Fr. Pat