

## **The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph**

When I was sixteen I read the works of Jesuit Fr John Powell. In one of his books he wrote, “We should never leave this world not having the people that we love know that we love them.” Now, I don’t come from a particularly demonstrative family. We do not make regular declarations of our love accompanied by long hugs. So I took John Powell’s line as a personal challenge.

Today’s feast of the Holy Family is about faithful love that looks after the most important people in our lives. We all know that fights and bitterness can wreck families for generations. If today’s feast means anything it is not about romanticizing how difficult family life can be these days. It is about naming that forgiveness, compassion, and kindness are the blocks upon which Christian family life is built. Without these virtues family life crumbles.

The best way to honor today’s feast is to do something about the faithful love it celebrates. I have often been with people on their deathbed when they speak about things they have left undone and would have liked to have achieved in their life. No one ever says that they wish they had spent more time at work. No one says they wish they had made more money. But many people say that they wish they had told those that they love, that they loved them. We shouldn’t assume that our families know about our love for them if we haven’t said it. If we show it, we should be able to say it. So write a letter, make a call, or go and see them, but let’s pluck up our courage and tell our families that we love them. It’s too late once we’re dead.

And the best news is that when we profess our love to our families we’ll see that today’s celebration is in fact a moveable feast.

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