

## Family - Good, Sacred and Holy!!

Have you ever been asked to find something for someone...an article of clothing tucked in the back of a closet or a notebook desperately needed for a class and found the search difficult because you didn't know exactly what the thing looked like? Sometimes our search for God is like that. Since we have never seen God face to face we don't know exactly what He looks like or sometimes where to begin looking for Him. Church might be an obvious place we think of finding God but think again...

Many people find Him in nature, a brilliant sunset, in the beautiful colors of the leaves on a crisp Fall day. But did you know He's even closer than that - in our own families, in the every day concerns of our lives, in the midst of laundry, dirty dishes, busy careers, overcrowded schedules, commitments to church, school, sports, music lessons and endless pressures. God's abiding love can be found in all of this, refreshing and renewing us in the wonder and chaos of daily living.

What exactly is a family? According to Mitch Finley in *Your Family in Focus* families come in various sizes, shapes and descriptions. There are families with and without children, single and two parent families, young couples who have no children, older couples whose children have grown and gone, and blended families - families made up of parts of other families divided by divorce or death. Single people continue to belong to the family they grew up in, and widowed people are not without family. Whatever your family looks like, it is a genuine family.

Keep in mind, family holiness is not necessarily based on how many activities the family is involved with in the parish or how often your family prays formally together. Your family is *already* holy. A family prays together to recognize and celebrate the holiness that's there but we are often too busy to see. What makes family life sacred is the fact that to live with people is to live with God. It is in our life together as family that we discover both God and ourselves.

Some of the most important times in a family's life are the times of "sacred play", times when they pause, even momentarily, to remember that there is more going on in the kitchen, the living room, the bedroom and the backyard than just what meets the eye. At such times, families know that the God of the family is thick in the air. Your family is holy! The simple fact of gathering all the family members around the table in and of itself is holy! A lighted candle stands in the center of the table, the family joins hands (or doesn't). Traditional and/or spontaneous prayers hover over the mashed potatoes and the cries of a cranky infant or child. The family meal may be the scene of chaos but it is good - it is sacred - it is holy.

Take time to be family and remember that the little things add up. Often grown children recall things done as a family that were nearly forgotten. We never know what moment or memory of us a child will take and hide away in his heart forever. Give your family good memories and celebrate often!

*(Ruth Viens, Family Ministry Coordinator - St. George's Church Worcester MA)*