

Scripture Reflection:

February: The Church's Month of the Family



May our homes become places where the Gospel is lived each day and where the light of Christ is passed on to the next generation.

"The family is the salt of the earth and the light of the world; it is the leaven of society." **Pope Francis.**

The Scriptures we hear during the month of February speak to us about everyday holiness. From the Beatitudes, to being salt and light, to the call to repentance as Lent begins, God's word reminds us that faith is not only lived in church but first and most deeply in the home.

The first Sunday in the month's Gospel, Jesus proclaims the Beatitudes: Blessed are the merciful... blessed are the peacemakers". These words take on real meaning in family life. At home we learn patience, forgiveness and humility - often the hard way. Being merciful may mean forgiving a hurtful word. Being a peacemaker may mean letting go of the need to be right. In families love becomes concrete, and holiness is formed in ordinary moments.

Jesus tells us, "You are the salt of the earth... you are the light of the world". The family is what the church calls the *domestic church*. Before faith is shared with the world it is lived at home. Children often learn what faith is by watching their parents and caregivers. When families pray together, attend mass, speak with kindness, and trust in God in difficult moments, the light of Christ shines quietly but powerfully.

On February 2, we celebrate the "Presentation of the Lord". Mary and Joseph bring Jesus to the temple, placing him in God's hands. They do not fully understand what the future holds, yet they trust. This feast reminds us that children are gifts entrusted to us by God. Our role is not to control their lives, but to guide them towards God with love, example and prayer.

As February leads towards Ash Wednesday, we hear God's call: "Return to me with your whole heart". This invitation is not only personal, but for families. Lent may be a time to heal relationships, renew prayer in the home, and simplify our lives so that God comes first. Small sacrifices - less distraction, more listening, more love - can bring more grace.

The readings in February remind us that God works through ordinary families. When love is practiced, forgiveness is offered and faith is lived, Christ is present.

Pope Francis: "The perfect family doesn't exist. Nor is there a perfect husband or a perfect wife. And let's not talk about the perfect mother-in-law! It's just us sinners. A healthy family life requires frequent use of three phrases, "May I? "Thank you" and "I'm sorry."