

**Homily – Holy Family, C 2018
By Rev. Bob Schramm, OSFS**

**We're all in the holy family.
Some of you might be saying to yourself, "Not my looney family."
It is about all of us, this crazy group called the human race,
We are the holy family.**

**Let's consider today's first reading:
It uses some churchy phrases like "offering sacrifice,"
"according to custom," "to fulfill . . . vows."
Hannah leaves her newborn son, Samuel, as a perpetual offering.
That's what "nazarite" means,
it simply means Hannah has vowed something to God.
She vows to leave Samuel there – forever!
Today that sounds crazy and cruel to most people,
especially parents.**

**This past week, I had a long talk after Christmas with
a very close friend, Lee.
He's a Catholic who many years ago stopped practicing.
He claims that he's no longer a believer.
Oddly, in that conversation Lee asked how my Advent was.
We were on the phone so he didn't see my double-take.
I said Advent for me became a profound experience
in how life (or you could say God)
is schooling us
in things like patience, about waiting
and about expecting joyfully.
We're being schooled in hope,
in trusting that everything will work out
. . . in the big picture.**

**Lee said, "I reject that! I think that's preposterous!
I no longer have hope for our world.
Look at what's going-on in this country, in our world."
He said, "you believing that stuff seems pie-in-the-sky to me."**

**You know, I can identify with his thinking pretty regularly.
I think back to my Dad saying one time,
"Sometimes I think the whole world's gone mad
but your mother and me,
and sometimes I wonder about her."**

I don't think of Lee as a lapsed Catholic.

I think of Lee as a good friend
and a member of this Holy family called the human race.
Like any family, we sometimes have some pretty heated arguments,
but we are still a Holy family.

Let me return to some thoughts on today's readings.
The reason Christians celebrate Christmas every year
is to let life, i.e. God, school us a little more deeply
in hope, waiting, patience and
in expectation that is full of joy.

We didn't leave advent behind a week ago.

We're never finished being schooled.

We never really get our act together.

That's one of the joys in life. We're always on the way.

The name given the early Christian movement was "the way."

ALL of us Christians,

whether you're a nun, a pope, a lay person or a priest

have some part of us that is quite far along on the journey.

But each of us has others aspects of ourselves

that are nearly at the beginning of the journey.

As a country, we're on the way.

Some parts are quite far down the road.

Other parts of us are like children throwing a temper tantrum.

A couple days ago, a friend and I went to a Harlem Globe Trotters game
at the Huntington Center in Toledo.

In one way, it was a beautiful experience of the Holy Family:

parents and children having a glorious time;

for others it was a clever way to fleece people.

For all those who might ponder it,

that experience provides some schooling.

I thought of my sister and brother-in-law taking me into their home
for two weeks after surgery.

It reminds me of being the Holy family.

Today's Gospel reading says, "Not finding the child among their relatives
and acquaintances they returned to Jerusalem to look for Him."

What parent doesn't have the memory of not knowing where

a young child is or worrying about a teenager who is out after curfew?

I remember the panic of being lost in a department store

when I must have been about 12.

So our schooling goes on and schooling is about paying attention to life.