**January Chaplain’s Report**

***Enrolling at the “School of Nazareth”***

This past Sunday was the Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph wherein we were encouraged to reflect upon they who have been given us as a “shining example” of the virtues of family life. As we prepare this Sunday to make our Act of Consecration to the Holy Family, seeking their prayer and intercession in the new year, let’s consider what can we do as Knights to lead the way in imitating that example in our own lives.

A little over fifty years ago, in 1964, St. Paul VI became the first pope to visit the Holy Land since St. Peter himself two millennia before. On the occasion Paul VI offered a reflection on the lessons that might be learned in the humble home of Jesus, Mary and Joseph at Nazareth. In the pope’s own words:

***“Nazareth is the school in which we begin to understand the life of Jesus. It is the school of the Gospel. Here we learn to observe, to listen, to meditate, and to penetrate the profound and mysterious meaning of that simple, humble, and lovely manifestation of the Son of God. And perhaps we learn almost imperceptibly to imitate Him.”[[1]](#footnote-1)***

The Holy Father went on to describe that here in this “school of the Gospel” we first come into contact with the “letter” that is those outward observable characteristics of Our Lord’s life. From our reflection on the ***letter***, we encounter the ***spirit*** behind that life and by extension that of the Holy Family. Three particular lessons the pope focused on considered especially: ***silence, the domestic life and human labor.***

Silence, the pope, described as the ***“stupendous and indispensable spiritual condition”*** of a fruitful spiritual life. In the midst of so much noise and tumult without, the Christian ought to develop a deep interior silence from which he might peacefully encounter God and his neighbor; bringing order where disorder dominates. Such silence creates space for true recollection, and eagerness to heed the teachings of true teachers as opposed to those “experts” of the world.

The years spent by our Lord in Nazareth are considered to be ***“hidden.”*** Hidden doesn’t mean fruitless or lacking merit. The pope’s reflection moves on to those on domestic life. By and large such a life is by its nature, ***“hidden.”*** Consider the countless tasks that are taken up in providing a home for one’s loved ones. It is well-documented that material well-being isn’t the only characteristic that matters in human flourishing but that undergirded by love; and more importantly the unconditional love that ought to be apparent first in the home, among the family.

In those hidden years too, given what we know of Middle Eastern culture and custom, we can say with some certainty that Jesus likely worked in the same trade as his father on earth, St. Joseph. How many hours were spent by our Lord mastering his trade, and plying that trade for the support of himself and his family. Work play an important role in any family’s life. It is an ennobling gift of God to man, though not an end in itself.

Our Lord in his humanity came to learn the things required of manhood from his father on earth as much as from His Father in heaven. As men we are called, regardless of our particular vocation, to be fathers in the community. When we live this well, the community grows stronger, when lived poorly, the community is hurt. Prayer is our foundation and upon that foundation we are called to each day be about the work of building a culture of life in which our families might grow in security and love. Beginning at home, with our own hearts, may we imitate the Holy Family providing a home for our Lord ourselves, and in our families too.

**Practical Tips:**

***1) Make a New Year’s Spiritual Resolution***

* ***Take a few moments to prayerfully consider the way by which you will grow spiritually with our Lord this year. Suggestions:***
  + ***Confession once a month, or bi-monthly***
  + ***20 Minutes of Daily Prayer (Rosary, Meditation etc.)***
  + ***Regular Spiritual Reading (Bible, Lives of the Saints, a Spiritual Classic, Knights of Columbus Booklets)***

***2) Read the suggestions found in “The Family Fully Alive”***

***3) Invite a friend to join the Knights of Columbus, or a Men’s Prayer Group; or join/start one yourself.***

**Coming Up:**

***January***

* Christmas Season (cont’d)
  + Epiphany (Sunday, January 6, 2019)
    - At all masses we are making the:

***“Act of Consecration to the Holy Family”***

* National March for Life (Friday, January 18, 2019)
  + Please try and attend; especially if you have never been
* National Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children (Wednesday, January 22, 2019)
  + Rosary Novena, Fasting and Self-denial in preparation for this day are highly recommended

1. English Translation of Pope Paul VI’s “Reflections at Nazareth” offered in the Basilica of the Annunciation at Nazareth in 1964. <http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Paul06/p6reflect.htm> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)