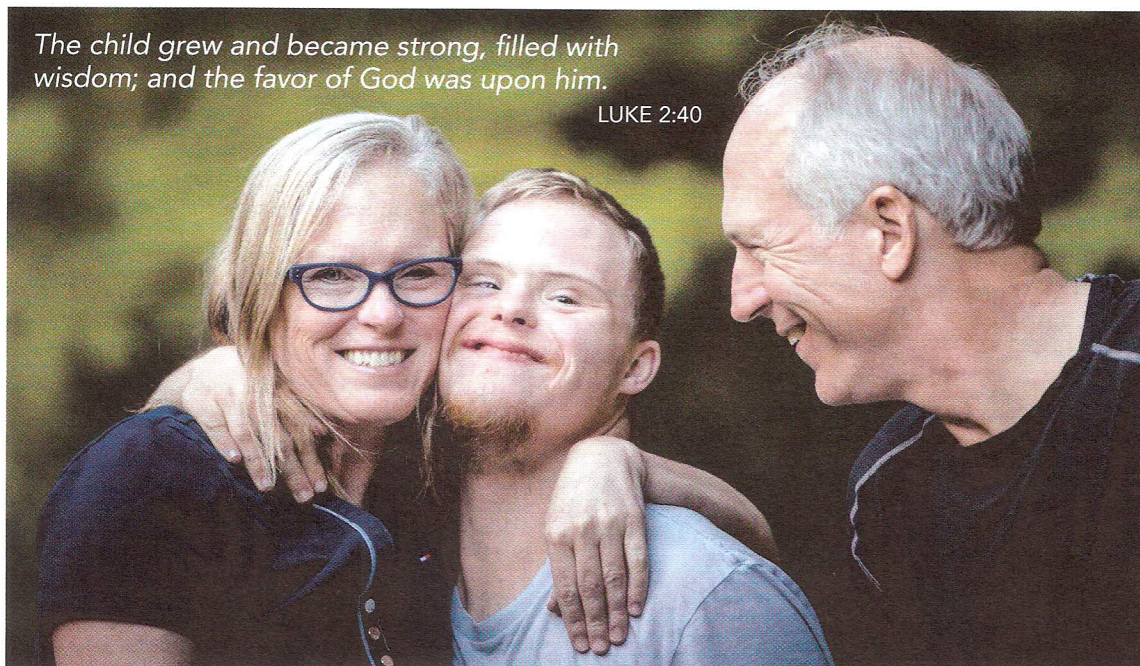


The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.

LUKE 2:40



NATHAN ANDERSON / LUST-FASH

Family Values

Some of the most popular television programs depict family interactions. Unfortunately, many of these families are dysfunctional, and those that are not often appear to be vapid, boring, even unrealistic. Today's readings offer examples of genuine family values and the kind of relationships for which most people yearn.

Sirach describes the tender care that bonds parents and children. First it is the parents who care for the children. Over the years the roles reverse and adult children care for elderly parents. The family is the basic community, where one first learns the hard lessons of unselfishness and forgiveness. The psalm response also describes a model family. The husband will experience success in his work and enjoy the blessings of family life with his wife and their children. Paul provides a list of values to which family members should

commit themselves: "compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, bearing with one another and forgiving one another" (Colossians 3:12-13). Finally, the Gospel reading provides a glimpse into the lives of the Holy Family. Here they are: a refugee family with Joseph as the protector.

In a way, these are all "holy families." Prayer is important in the first reading; fear of the Lord is rewarded in the psalm; Paul calls the people "God's chosen ones" (Colossians 3:12). This feast is not meant to be only a look into the past at the Holy Family. It is an opportunity for us to look into the present and do our part to make our own families holy.

—Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

FOR Reflection

- ★ *What already makes your family holy?*
- ★ *What might make it holier?*

