

## Scripture Reading

### A Reading of the Book of Exodus (*Exodus 20:12*)

Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord, your God is giving you. The Word of the Lord. R. Thanks be to God.

## Reflection – The Order of Divine Authority in the Family

**The family is a precious, sacred gift of God.** The family unit is important to God. God started the human race by first creating a man and a woman to form the first family. God did not create a population of individuals. God blessed our first parents and said to them, *“Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”* (*Genesis 1:28*). When God called Abraham out of Haran, his whole family was called (Cf. *Genesis 12:4-5*). In God’s covenant with Abraham, the sign of the covenant (circumcision) was to be applied to all males within his household including servants (cf. *Genesis 17:12-13*). When God saved Noah from the flood, He also saved Noah’s whole family (cf. *Genesis 6:18*). God’s only begotten Son, Jesus Christ was borne incarnate into a human family. God, the Holy Trinity exists in a community of mutual love.

**To preserve the familial unit God gives His order of divine authority to the family.** As Christ is head of His Church, so is the husband the head of his family. *Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the Church, His Body, of which He is the Savior* (*Ephesians 5:22-23*). *Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the Church and gave Himself up for her* (*Ephesians 5:25*). The door is open to evil when the order of divine authority was not respected. In the Old Testament the wilful Jezebel’s domination of her weak-willed husband, King Ahab led the whole of Israel falling into the sin of idolatry as she encouraged the king to worship idols. The whole nation suffered a famine caused by the lack of rain, bearing the brunt of God’s judgement on them (cf. *1 Kings 17*).

**Children have to obey their parents.** *Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you* (*Exodus 20:12*). Parents are accountable to God to teach, train and guide their children not just in temporal matters but more importantly on the spiritual level, besides the basic duty of nourishing and protecting the child. Divine authority is conferred on parents over their children so that their children can be trained in righteousness and in the knowledge of God. However, how many parents are willing to exercise this divine authority of God? To appear more in tune with the times, misguided parents especially those of teenaged children would rather prefer to be seen “friends” than being real parents to their children. Consequently, children are not taught to base all their thoughts, words and actions on holy love – the divine overriding rule that should be followed in every family unit. Rebellion of children against parents is growing common in our times, especially in broken families. It is seen tolerantly as part of growing up, yet rebellion is a serious sin in the eyes of God. Rebellion in families give seed to rebellion in society. In the Old Testament, those who were rebellious were put to death! (Cf. *Joshua 1:18*). Scripture tells us that rebellion is a sin which is so great that it falls into the category of witchcraft! (*1 Samuel 15:23*).

**True authority is rooted in holy love.** Out of divine love, God confers divine authority on the family. Those conferred with authority over others must never forget that they are acting on behalf of the Lord. True authority is rooted in holy love. It has as its motive the highest good and welfare of the persons under their charge. However, when authority is misguided or abused, the moral obligation to obey no longer applies. *Peter and the other apostles replied: “We must obey God rather than human beings!”* (*Acts 5:29*). St Peter and the other apostles had to defy the order of the Jewish leaders who instructed them not to teach in the name of Jesus. To comply with abused authority would be to cooperate with evil.

## Conversation with Jesus

Precious Lord, thank You for Your gift of my family to me. In Your heart You greatly desire to see each family a reflection of the Holy Family at Nazareth and the loving Community of the Blessed Trinity. You showed us how to live in the family when on earth You willingly submitted to the authority of Mary and Joseph who are Your earthly parents. By this, You greatly glorified God the Father through Your obedience to Him who is represented by Mary and Joseph. Heal all marriages and broken homes through the power of the Holy Spirit. Fill all homes with holy love, wisdom, patience, obedience and sacrificial spirit. Confer on parents and elders wisdom and patience. Teach all children filial obedience. Thus, may each home become a domestic church where divine truths are proclaimed, taught, loved and practised. Mary, our Mother of Salvation, intercede for us. Thank You, Jesus. Praise You, Jesus. [www.twohearts.hk](http://www.twohearts.hk)