

Wednesday of the 22nd Week in Ordinary Time
Homily of Bishop Barres
St. Agnes Cathedral
August 31, 2022

Pope Francis has a way of synthesizing gospel passages that give powerful insight. A good example of this is his synthesis of Our Lord's presence to a variety of families in the Gospel.

In his Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia/The Joy of Love* (2016), Pope Francis writes: "Jesus himself was born into a modest family that soon had to fall to a foreign land. He visits the home of Peter, whose mother-in-law is ill (cf. Mk 1:30-31) and shows sympathy upon hearing of deaths in the homes of Jairus and Lazarus (cf. Mk 5:22-24, 35-43; Jn 11:1-44). He hears the desperate wailing of the widow of Nain for her dead son (cf. Lk 7:11-15) and heeds the plea of the father of an epileptic child in a small country town (cf. Mk 9:17-27). He goes to the homes of tax collectors like Matthew and Zacchaeus (cf. Mt 9:9-13; Lk 19:1-10), and speaks to sinners like the woman in the house of Simon the Pharisee (cf. Lk 7:36-50). Jesus knows the anxieties and tensions experienced by families and he weaves them into his parables: children who leave home to seek adventure (cf. Lk 15:11-23), or who prove troublesome (Mt 21:28-31) or fall prey to violence (Mk 12:1-9). He is also sensitive to the embarrassment caused by the lack of wine at a wedding feast (Jn 2:1-10), the failure of guests to come to a banquet (Mt 22:1-10), and the anxiety of a poor family over the loss of a coin (Lk 15:8-10). In this brief review, we can see that the word of God is not a series of abstract ideas but rather a source of comfort and companionship for every family that experiences difficulties or suffering. For it shows them the goal of their journey, when God 'will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain any more' (Rev 21:4)." (21-22)

We sometimes forget the power of our Lord's presence to families in the Gospels. Pope Francis' litany of Our Lord's Gospel presence to families reminds us that He is deeply and powerfully present to our families today – in every dimension of our joys, ecstasies, sorrows and crosses.

Let's renew our confidence in Christ's presence to our families.