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## Blue Waters of the Atlantic, Watch Hill, RI, July 2008

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vided by those who are single? Do we remind them or single parents of the likeness these hard-working men and women share with Mary? Those who provide pillars of love and faith to this community and others, single-handedly?

I will admit, this was a revelation for me!

Have you ever seen the Holy Family this way; through the phases of their lives as Jesus' parents?

I am convinced that the ebb and flow in the lives of the members of the family we honor today model a much broader and more human family than we might give them credit for at first glance, certainly more than the census statistics. All at once we see:

- that at the same time Mary might celebrate the joy of motherhood through childbirth, Joseph may celebrate with you in the seamlessness and joy of adoption
- that they might ache with you and your spouse who cannot conceive
- that Mary could relate to the despair of losing a child to injustice—be that terminal illness,

gang violence, drunk driving, war, or fetal loss - that Mary was likely both widow and single mother

By the Lord's wisdom and intricate design, Jesus was welcomed into the world in a way that every person can relate to. What seemed like one specific model is actually multidimensional and very close to home.

It is understandable that for the many of us who do not fit into this "average family," or cannot relate to the traditional story of the Nativity, these times of family gatherings where dreaded questions of children and family inevitably arise can be painful. In the spirit of Luke's gospel, and at this time when family and friends gather together with nostalgia over Monopoly and eggnog or, in true Griswold fashion, snowy roads and delayed flights, it seemed a particularly fitting time to look for and acknowledge the "holy families" in our lives, including our own.



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