

The teaser on the back of the book titled “Where’s My Jetpack: A Guide to the Amazing Science Fiction that Never Arrived” reads:

*It's the twenty-first century and let's be honest — things are a little disappointing. Despite every World's Fair prediction, every futuristic ride at Disneyland, and the advertisements on the last page of every comic book, we are not living the future we were promised. By now, life was supposed to be a fully automated, atomic-powered, germ-free Utopia, a place where a grown man could wear a velvet spandex unitard and not be laughed at. Where are the ray guns, the flying cars, and the hoverboards that we expected? What happened to our promised moon colonies? Our servant robots?*

Popular culture, while captivating, leaves something to be desired.

The same can be said about the representations of the family within popular culture.

If only we all lived like the Brady Bunch, where the most intense of life issues can be solved in 30 minutes – or actually less when you put in commercials.

We’ve been sold a bill of goods ... ripped off ... robbed ... in effect lied to ... by the popular culture images of what life should be.

Today we celebrate the Feast of the Holy Family – Jesus, Mary, and Joseph.

The Gospel reading tells us about Joseph being warned by an angel about the coming slaughter of the innocents by King Herod. He’s told to pack up and head for Egypt. And then when Herod dies, we hear that he’s given the direction to return to Nazareth.

I’m pretty sure that there was never an episode of the Brady Bunch where they had to flee from blood-thirsty troops set on the slaughter of innocents.

The fallen world can be a nasty place. Nastier, still, if we get too wrapped up in the world’s drama, and make it our own.

Saint Paul gives us the answer when he outlines Christ-like behaviors for his listeners ... and for us as well:

*... compassion ... kindness ... humility ... gentleness ... patience ...  
[forbearance] ... forgiveness ... gratitude ...*

At the end of that description he says:

*And over all these put on love,  
that is, the bond of perfection.*

Saint Paul's litany flies in the face of popular culture's description of success and happiness. Yet where the reality of pop culture is disappointment, the outcome of living as a Christian is to:

*let the peace of Christ control your hearts,  
the peace into which you were also called in one body.*

There are two things Saint Paul is talking about.

First, in letting the peace of Christ control your heart ... that means you put your own emotions, feelings, and desires IN SECOND PLACE ... and God's love, mercy, and holy will in FIRST PLACE.

And secondly, you aren't baptized into a life as a solitary loner. We are called to be members of the Body of Christ – the Church.

Our Baptism calls us to live the life of the Trinity – here on earth. Not by our own power ... rather, by the power of God through the Holy Spirit. Not alone, but in community – a spiritual family that is modeled on the only perfect family unit: the Holy Trinity. Even the Holy Family had it's ups and downs - we hear it today where they have to run away from a maniacal despot.

Today as we approach this altar to receive the Sacred Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ ... let us be open to receive the graces poured out on us by our Baptism, and all the other Sacraments we have received. And let us strive to live within the family of God – the Church. Recognizing that the perfection of community exists only in the Triune Godhead – the Divine Life we are called to share through our Baptism within the communion of the Church ... in which we are called to be sons and daughters of God the Father, redeemed through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, and filled with the grace and power of the Holy Spirit.