

THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH

December 29, 2024

Gospel: (Luke 2:41-52)

The parents of Jesus used to go every year to Jerusalem for the feast of Passover... and as they were returning at the end of the feast, the child Jesus remained behind unknown to his parents. Thinking he was in the party, they continued their journey for a day, looking for him among their relatives. Not finding him, they returned to Jerusalem in search of him. On the third day they came upon him in the temple sitting in the midst of the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. All who heard him were amazed at his intelligence and his answers. His Mother said to him "Son, why have you done this to us? You see that your father and I have been searching for you in sorrow." He said to them: "*Why did you search for me? Did you not know I had to be in my Father's house?*" But they did not grasp what he said to them.

Reflection:

Parenting is a great entry into the paschal mystery! Good parents spend their children's growing up years emptying themselves of their own desires for the sake of the well-being of their children, endlessly and willingly sacrificing for them. Then, when the children are adults, parents must be willing to "let go" so that the children can be about their own business. By letting go, parents can help their children know their true identity is that they really belong to God. Thus can they find their real place in the world. Family is about relationships. A holy family is one in which their relationships include God at the center. (Living Liturgy, p.30)

Vincenzian Meditation:

In his great joy Frederic wrote about his first-born, Marie, his observations proclaiming the unconscious apostolate of children, which, in God's providence is to make parents richer and stronger spiritually. "We will begin her education early," wrote Frederic, "and at the same time, she will begin ours; for I perceive that Heaven has sent her to us to teach us a great deal, and to make us better. I cannot look upon that face, so full of innocence and purity, without seeing the sacred impression of the Creator...How could I dare teach her lessons that I did not practice? Could God have found a kinder way of instructing me, of correcting me, of setting my feet on the road to heaven?" (Frederic Ozanam: *Derum, Apostle in a Top Hat*, p.186)

Discussion: (*Share your thoughts on the readings after a moment of silence*)

How have you found that children do "teach us a great deal and make us better?"

Closing Prayer:

Jesus, thank you for the children who have touched our lives,

-may they grow in age, wisdom and grace.

Jesus, thank you especially for grandchildren,

-may they grow in age, wisdom and grace.

Jesus, thank you for "instructing and correcting us" through children,

-may we all grow in age, wisdom and grace. Amen

