

Second Sunday After Christmas

Luke 2:41-52

At this time, I would like to wish all of our parishioners a Happy and Healthy New Year. My sources say it is going to be a great year, full of profits, prosperity and luck. Some have said this is the beginning of a new roaring twenties decade.

This morning's reading gives us a human insight into the Holy Family. The human element makes it much easier to relate to them and their struggles and issues. They really were just like most families of their day and probably today. They had to deal with a teenage Son as He grows up. They are dealing with the issue this morning of trying to keep Him close to the family and His need for space. The maturing of the boy Jesus seems to have taken its toll mostly on His mother. She is the one who engages Him in the Temple. Raising teenagers is stressful enough. Add to that the stress and anticipation of how the prophecies about Him will play out.

Mary's need to keep her Son close to her and the family really comes out in the reading. I wondered if Mary really knows and understands the prophecies about her boy? Most likely she is just being a good mother. After this morning's encounter in the Temple, it states in verse 51, "Then He went down with them and came to Nazareth and was subject to them." This verse tells me the young Messiah got His wings clipped for taking off for three days!

Mary is dealing with her Son maturing and the divine mission of the prophecies about him that are in the background. Jesus is growing into the fullness of His human nature but also exploring and discovering His divine nature. Mary's little Boy is growing up and His thinking is shifting to doing His Father's business. Mary may wish to delay her Son's involvement in His Father's business. Simeon said it would be the sword that pierces her heart and takes the life of her Son.

I can certainly understand Mary's dilemma. There is a difficulty in watching your child grow up and go off into the world. My mother reminds me constantly that I am still her baby. She knows that I am an adult, but in her mind's eye, I am still her baby. I suspect that this is more common than many are willing to admit. My mother did not have to deal with a Messianic mission as Mary did?

The humanness of the Holy Family is in Luke's gospel if you look hard enough to find it. He presents the human wonder and search for answers in the boy Jesus as He sits among the elders and teachers. That is what drew Him to the Temple. The scriptures said that Jesus was learning and asking questions. He was accumulating knowledge and wisdom. The boy Jesus was not teaching the elders, but they were amazed at the answers He gave them. Here we see Jesus the student. The Gnostic Gospel of Thomas wanted to portray the humanity of Jesus when it told the same story. However, Thomas portrays the boy Jesus as a bit of a smarkach or a smart Alec amongst the elders. They wanted to portray Jesus as a typical twelve year old boy. Luke and Thomas portray the humanity of the young Messiah but in different ways.

When Mary finds her Son and speaks to Him it sounds like she is talking to an adult. The boy Jesus's priorities have changed greatly. To those

of a man with a mission. Mary's boy has grown up before our eyes on the pages of scripture. Jesus's primary concerns seem to not be the will of His earthly parents. That is why He went AWOL for three days. The priority seems to be the will of His Heavenly Father and that is why He is in the Temple. This is the first time in scripture that Jesus calls God His Father. There is a huge shift in this family of three.

Luke truly illustrates the humanness of the Holy Family. The struggles and emotions of Mary as she watches her boy grow up. Many of us can relate to her issues and struggles. Then there is Jesus growing into the fullness of His humanity while discovering His divinity. Dealing with human hormones in a twelve year old boy doesn't seem as complex. IN all of this Mary is the anchor and guiding force in the life of the young Messiah. I can somehow hear her saying, "You may be the Son of God, but I am your mother and you will do what I say while You are under my roof? That is why He ends up in Nazareth and not still in the Temple. This is a beautiful story of how the human and divine interact and weave a wonderful story of salvation. Mary will remain in the life of her Son during His earthly ministry. She has been a constant grounding force in His life. Over the years I think she came to understand her Son's role as the Messiah and her place in it.

God Bless and stay safe, seems like the restrictions may be loosened soon. That would be a great Christmas gift. Hope to see you all soon,
Pastor D