

In the Name of the Father, and of the ✕ Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

Today we celebrate the Feast known as Holy Family. But like all the Feasts of the Church, this day is not about Mary and Joseph. It is about your Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and what He has done for you.

When His years numbered that of the sons of Israel, when His age prophesied the number of His Apostles, Wisdom was found teaching in the House built for His Name. It was a gracious teaching, teaching of love, not of angry command or demanding interrogation, but of listening and asking questions.

How compassionate the God that places Himself at the feet of men and accommodates their mad imaginations! But so is our God. He humbled Himself to be born a Man. For you He became a Man of sorrows acquainted with grief. The eternal God subjected Himself to the awkward stages of adolescent human growth.

Yet He did not cease being God. So those who heard the Boy were astonished at His understanding and answers. For His understanding surpasses that of men. His understanding is heavenly. His answers are life. This Boy is Wisdom Incarnate. He had to be about His Father's Things.

Remaining in the Temple was a perfect keeping of the Fourth Commandment. As Son of God, He honored His Father. So as He kept the Fourth Commandment, so did He keep the whole First Table of the Law.

As Son of Man, He that alone gives faith honored His fathers in the faith, the teachers. He honored them by listening to them.

And they were astonished, for He came not to learn from them, but by His questions to teach them. For whether in manger or the house in Bethlehem, whether in the Temple or on His heavenly throne, He is always the Christ.

And so the same Christ teaches us the importance of honoring the faith of our fathers in the Church, and of honoring the One God and Father of all. And then He honored his earthly mother and stepfather by submitting to them, and following them back to Nazareth, also a keeping of the Fourth Commandment.

We call them the Holy Family. In their defense, although Mary treasured up the Mysteries in her heart, they could not have fully known the implications of the Divinity of Mary's Son.

But for whatever the reason, there in Jerusalem, there, traveling with their family and their tribe, their minds were full of the world, rather than of the Christ. The busy-ness and worries of this world eclipsed the presence of the Messiah. They neglected the one thing needful. As they turned their backs on Jerusalem, they turned their backs on Him.

And so it has been in your life. For the busy-ness of your life has led you to fill your mind, and your heart, with worldly cares and concerns. Economic stringencies, caring for children, spouse and parents, illness, family disagreements, hobbies, vacations, all these temporal things have worked to distract you from the things of eternity.

Through them the devil can entice you to fill up your days and hours with worry and distractions, leaving no room for God.

By so doing, you have failed to honor your fathers in the faith, and you have failed to honor God, the Father of all.

Mary and Joseph assumed that Jesus would follow them. They were wrong. The Scripture never promises that the Savior would follow any man. God has never promised to be the God of those who only remember Him when it suits them. In fact, quite the opposite is true. The Lord commanded His Disciples to follow Him. He invited them to leave their lives, their occupations, and their families to turn and go the other way, to leave the way of death and go in the Way of Life.

For His Way is not the way of the world. His Way is not the way of large caravans, it is the Narrow Path, the Way of the Remnant, the Path that leads through the eye of the needle. To go His Way is to be among the things of God.

Mary and Joseph repented. They turned around completely and returned to Jesus. So our Lord bids you do. Repent. Turn away from the things of the world for the things of God. Leave the great caravan of those who have turned their backs on Christ and have followed the world's wide paths. Come out from among them. Be separate. Leave your sinful ways and go the Way of Wisdom: the Way of forgiveness, the Way of righteousness, the Way of life. Repent, and return to the Lord of Life. For He is always where He has promised to be.

Being left in the Temple in Jerusalem as a Boy was not the last time He would be forsaken. For on a cross not far from that Temple, the Life of the World suffered torture and death at the hands of those He amazed as a Boy. Mary learned the lesson that twelve-year-old Boy taught – she remained by His side while He died on the cross. She did not leave Him.

Although a faithful few did watch in horror, on Calvary He was forsaken by men and by His Father. The whole world turned its back on Him as He hung, covered in their sins, covered in your sins, nailed to the cross.

There His Blood flowed freely for the free forgiveness of all your sins. He died and was buried, out of sight, forgotten. But then, just as after three days Mary and Joseph found Him in the Temple –so it was that on the third day the women found Him on bright Easter morn, having risen from the dead. He was where He had promised to be - alive.

But you do not need to search for Him. Your Lord Jesus Christ comes to you. He is found today as He was found as a Boy: where He has promised to be. He is among the Holy Things, where His Word is preached in its purity and His Sacraments are rightly administered. Where two or three of His faithful are gathered, there He is among them. He is here, this day, here, in this place, among us, with us, for us.

Here, in God's house, heaven touches earth in Holy Baptism, where forgiveness and life and faith are given by the Spirit that proceeds from the Father and the Son. And the same Christ is here, today, among us, where His Body and Blood are freely given to you, His saints, for the forgiveness of your sins.

Believing in Christ, His Father is your dear Father, and you are declared a holy, pure, and sinless child of God. In mercy, in love, He makes you His Holy Family. And He will never forget you. He will never leave you nor forsake you.

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