

MAY 22, 2022: SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER



When I was in sixth grade, I decided that I wanted to go to Boston College and get a degree in history, just like my father did. My dad was **the** person I desired to emulate. I will never say that my dad was perfect, but growing up I truly admired him. Hence, what was important to my dad was also important to me. I wanted my life to reflect the person that I perceived my dad to be, and I worked hard to make that happen. I read a lot of history so that we could talk about it. I studied hard and got good grades to ensure that I would be able to attend Boston College. In other words, by the time I was twelve years old I had a plan for my life, and my dad played a big part in my plan.

We also have a story about Jesus when He was twelve years old. Each year his parents went up to Jerusalem for the feast of Passover, and when He was twelve years old they went according to festival custom. After the festival days were completed and they were returning home, the boy Jesus remained behind in Jerusalem unbeknownst to his parents. Thinking that He was in the caravan, they journeyed for a day and then started to look for Him among their relatives and acquaintances. Not finding Jesus, they returned to Jerusalem in search of Him. After three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions, and all who heard Him were astounded at his understanding and his answers. When his parents saw Him, they were astonished and his mother said to Him, "Son, why have you done this to us? Your father and I have been looking for you with great anxiety." And He said to them, "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" But they did not understand what He said to them. He went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them, and his mother kept all these things in her heart. And Jesus advanced [in] wisdom and age and favor before God and man.

Jesus had only one concern and that was to do the will of his Father. The whole purpose of the incarnation was to allow God's plan of salvation to find its culmination in a human person. In order for us to recognize the truth of God's plan and that as human beings we could also live out that plan, God wanted to show us the way. In the life of Christ and through his ministry, God paved the way for the fulfillment of his promise of salvation through the death and resurrection of Christ.

Jesus' life was not easy or simple. It started with his being born to parents who were poor. But they had far more important gifts to share with Christ than material advantage. Mary and Joseph lived lives that Christ would seek to emulate. They embraced the most important of virtues: humility, faith, obedience, and love. These virtues prepared them to give the best possible example of the life that God would want for Him. Jesus would experience many difficulties even from an early age, such as when King Herod wanted to kill Him and He had to go into exile. He lived the life of an immigrant enduring all the perils and difficulties that go with it. But, through it all He learned the most important lesson: to seek and follow the will of God. Every decision that both Mary and Joseph made was based on the direction that God was leading them. They desired nothing more than to be servants of the Lord.

At the moment of his conception, Mary humbled herself to accept God's will where the life of her child was concerned. Joseph, when he discovered that Mary was pregnant, sought at first to protect her by divorcing her quietly. He wanted no shame to be attached to her. But when God intervened, Joseph took Mary as his wife, and they lived together and raised the child Jesus. Joseph did all that God commanded him, to ensure that Jesus and Mary were kept safe. He took them to Egypt and then eventually to Nazareth to keep them from those who would harm them. He worked hard and provided for their needs. As Jesus grew in wisdom, there is no doubt that He did so in his humanity by watching his parents. Like any child, Jesus would grow in his faith by observing and mirroring the faith his parents lived out. It is through their faith life that Jesus would discover his own faith. As He grew in understanding the scriptures and the stories Mary and Joseph shared with Him, He would come to comprehend just who He was. It would take time to put the pieces together, but when the time was right He would be open to the truth of his role as the Messiah.

Jesus' early life teaches us the importance of parental faith in the life of children. The only way any human being can truly discover their true nature and the person God created them to be is through a real relationship with God.

In the humanity of Christ, God showed us that this is possible for us. Though his early years remain mostly hidden, what Jesus shared with us is enough to give us a picture of what is both possible and necessary. Also, his life of ministry did not come out of thin air: rather, it was built upon the greatest gift Mary and Joseph could pass on to Him—the example of their faith lived out. Jesus sought to mirror their faith life in his own life. Therefore, He was truly prepared for what would be coming in his life as part of God's plan for Him. We really must follow the example of Jesus, Mary and Joseph in our own lives and be an example for those who follow after us.

If you have any questions about anything, please do not hesitate to ask me directly, or send your questions to me at fr.brian@theholyrood.org , or if easier please call me at 978-254-0560.

Please keep me in your prayers.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read "Fr. Brian".

Fr. Brian