

**Correction, Guidance, Direction**     **St. Joseph**, Spouse of the BVM     Wednesday, March 19, 2014     8:15 AM     2 Sm 7:4-5a, 12-14a, 16; **Lk 2:41-51a**     ASCA     (You are going to have to learn through all your ordinary experiences how to be a holy child of God.)

Well, good morning, boys and girls, and happy spring; it's coming tomorrow. You are happy—right? Yes, I'm sure you are.

Today we celebrate the feast of **St. Joseph**, and with a wonderful story from **Luke's Gospel**. We have to keep in mind that Jesus was in one way just like you, in other ways different, but in one way just like you. He had to grow up. He had the same feelings as all children do, and he had the same needs that all children do, but he was unusual. **He was quite unusual**. This story is about how unusual he was and yet how similar.

So he stayed behind when the family went up to Jerusalem; he didn't go back with them. **He was in the Temple**. People were amazed at what he was asking. Actually this translation doesn't say, but he was asking questions, but that's what another translation says. He was asking many questions and **people were amazed at his questions and at his wisdom**. That's unusual.

Finally **his mother and father are looking for**—how many days?—**three days**. That's a long time, isn't it? Have you ever been gone for three days without telling your parents where you were? How old is he? Twelve! How many people here are twelve years old? Any of you ever leave home for three days without mentioning anything? Would that go over too well with your folks? Would they be pleased? They would be rather upset, wouldn't they?

So **Mary was upset**. She said, "Why have you done this to us?" Mary knew that he was very special. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit. He was going to be called Son of the Most High. But what's he doing? Actually, he was being relatively thoughtless. Well, sometimes, maybe not you, but very often twelve-year-olds are thoughtless. It's hard to believe, isn't it? But, yeah, I've heard of it. And here is an example of **Jesus, who is on one hand unusual, full of wisdom that most twelve-year-olds couldn't possibly have, and at the same time somewhat thoughtless**.

So his mother says to him, "Why have you done this?" And he says, "Why were you looking for me?" Duh—why were you looking for me? That's not a great question, is it? No. And he says, "**Well, didn't you know I'd have to be in my Father's house?**" Now that is a profound insight that he felt that God was his Father, that he knew at twelve years old that God was his Father. Now we believe that **Jesus was human completely and therefore had to grow and develop the way we all have to grow and develop, but at twelve he already knows God in this very unusual way**, so that's a very special aspect of his life. So here you see **a combination of extraordinary prodigy**, if you want to call it that, supernatural prodigy, if you want to call it that, **and ordinary, everyday adolescent immaturity**. The two go hand-in-hand. Yes, yes, hand-in-hand! That is the incarnation, the coming into human life of the Word of God. It has to grow and mature. It has to develop and it has to be instructed and it has to be nurtured. It has to be cared for. It's not already made and perfect.

And that's why **when you were baptized you are really given the new life of Christ**; you are incorporated into his body. But you still have to mature. You are still a child. You are still five years old, ten years old, twelve years old, fifteen years old, and you are still going to have all the natural tendencies of five-year-olds, ten-year-olds, fifteen-year-olds, and **you are going to have to learn through all your ordinary experiences how to be a holy child of God.**

I think, personally, Mary probably took Jesus aside after this and said, "You know, Son, what you did was rather hurtful and inconsiderate and we expect you to do a little better next time." So when **you are corrected by wise adults**, by guardians and parents, by teachers, well, take that as something that you need, and even Jesus did. Jesus, Son of God, needed it, so you need it. **We all need correction, guidance, direction.** It's not an insult to your intelligence—it's not. There is no insult intended when you are corrected—you understand? It's **to help you be who you are called to be, who you are baptized to be.** And if Jesus needed it, you cannot possibly claim to be exempt. That would be preposterous.

So that means that every baptized one-year-old is supposed to be holy, but according to the nature of a one-year-old, not more than that. And every baptized two-year-old is supposed to act like a two-year-old, not a five-year-old. And every baptized five-year-old is supposed to be a five-year-old saint, but that means still five years old, not ten. And every twelve-year-old saint is supposed to act like a twelve-year-old, not something more. You understand? **Holiness comes on every possible level. And holiness involves our need to grow and develop and our need to be corrected and our need to be instructed and our need to learn how to be sensitive to other people.**

That's what we are celebrating today, St. Joseph, who was a very mysterious figure. Here he is in the gospels: what's he doing? Well, not much. We don't know. We know he is there. He is helping Mary. He is helping Jesus. We don't know what really he is doing. And that also is very similar to your role. Most people will never know you; the world won't know you by name. **Most of you will never become famous. That doesn't mean what you do is not very important.** You are all called to a very important role in serving God, even though it will be unknown to everybody else. That is why Joseph is a very important patron for us. **He is the patron of our anonymous donations to the work of God.** You know what anonymous means? You don't know who it is. So nobody knows who you are, but in a certain way you are still called to be important in the kingdom of God. Not famous, but important—get the difference?