

December 30, 2018

Year C

Luke 2:41-52

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**In the Name of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit Amen**

In this morning's gospel Luke moves us from the birth of Jesus as a wee tiny baby born in a manger on Christmas night.... to Jesus as a pre teen who doesn't seem to be listening to his parents.

The Gospel story catches our attention since many of us can relate to the challenges of raising children and particularly, to the many ways they can hurt and surprise us.

I recall a family skiing holiday where our young son leaves us to join up with a school friend, who was to meet him at the bottom of the ski run. Hesitantly, we sent him on his way while following at some distance. The two boys were to find each other in a parking lot before going on to the friend's condo. When we caught up with where they were supposed to be, we discovered no one at the condo and our son, no where to be found. I was paralyzed with fear, imagining what could have happened and anxious to know if he was safe. Within minutes, he appeared in the parking lot, happy and oblivious there was any cause for concern. How come he isn't upset I wondered? I discovered that a friend of mine living in a neighboring condo had found our son wandering the parking lot. I was relieved instantly and very thankful for her act of kindness. The care of this small community surrounding the parking lot, sounds a lot like the community of friendships that Mary and Joseph travelled with to Jerusalem each season, for the Passover festival.

So....I can sense Mary's relief at finding Jesus unharmed and her surprise at Jesus unawareness of her worry. It reminds me of what I experienced on the ski hill that day.

In this passage, Luke makes the point that Mary and Joseph are surprised to find Jesus doing perfectly well, sitting and talking with the teachers in the Temple. Jesus is not scared because he knows that he is not lost; he knows who he is, where he belongs and that he needs to fulfill his Father's work in all of creation. Jesus does not question his call or his vocation.

Mary on the other hand is puzzled about what is happening with Jesus and about what God is doing. She does not understand Jesus reply to her but she takes in all of what she sees and hears and quietly ponders everything in her heart.

The teachers in the Temple are surprised at hearing what the young Jesus has to say. His need to be in the Temple and his singularly focused motivation to do his Father's work reveal his divine nature to them, while his full humanity shows in his

separating from his parents (as any teen does) to assert his independence of mind and vocation.

God is a God of surprises, who is drawing us constantly to God's self. Like Jesus being drawn to the Temple, to be with his Father, doing his Father's work each of you is being drawn to God. God who loves, redeems, knows, cares, and is longing for you in the company of all of creation, to be whole. What God is doing is bringing to the world, a new awareness of life. An awareness of life lived in God and with God. Just as Mary is learning and pondering in her heart a new life with her son, so too is all creation being swept up by God's call to live into the messy moments of life, confident that in God, Christ has entered and redeems us in our humanity from within us.

In the words of NT Wright 'if and when we sense the lack of God's presence, we must be prepared to hunt for God, to search for God in the scriptures, the sacraments and in prayer and not to give up until we find God again.'

When we do meet God.... we must expect to be surprised, as Mary was ....not fully understanding what God is up to.

Jesus did not say or do what Mary expected and that will be the same for us.

We are called to be faithful and to be busy with God's work in all of creation and in so doing..... to be surprised!

Amen