



SAINT LOUIS ABBEY



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HOM. Holy Family C
ABBHEY 9 am
12/27/09

On the Sunday after the Birth of Our Lord and his coming into the world for our salvation, the Church celebrates the feast of the Holy Family to underline the humanity of Jesus. Let us call to mind our failure to recognize the dignity of the human nature that we share with the Son of God.

It's not easy being an adolescent today, neither for the teenager nor for parents. And the gospel story suggests that it never was easy. The story reports an incident from the boyhood of Jesus. All the elements of a family disagreement are here: breakdown in communication, unmet expectations, mutual recrimination, adult astonishment and incomprehension, adolescent independence. The Holy Family was a very human family. When his parents realize that Jesus is missing, they are sick with worry. After much effort they find him. In the public confrontation that follows, relief at finding the missing child is mingled with parental outrage: "How could you do this to us!" The outcome of the incident is a bit better than sometimes happens in a family quarrel: "Jesus went down with them to Nazareth ... and was obedient to them."

Like most twelve-year-olds, Jesus, in his humanity, was searching for himself, trying to understand who he was and what he should do with his life. His parents found him in the temple. The temple in Jerusalem is where he was first dedicated to God. "When the days were completed for their purification according to the law of Moses, they took him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord ... and to offer the sacrifice in accordance with the dictate of the law of the Lord." The temple was the house of the God of Israel. It was the house of prayer. It was in the temple that Jesus could discover himself. "Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?"

By the incarnation, God became man so that man might become God.



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The Son of God came on earth to share our human nature so that we might share in his divine nature. In our second reading, St. John says: “Beloved, we are God's children now; what we shall be has not yet been revealed. ... When it is revealed, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.” We shall attain this by keeping his commandment. “And his commandment is this: we should believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another.”

While the holy family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph is held up as a model for our family life, it is helpful to hear this very human story of a family disagreement or conflict put before us. The family, with its ups and downs, is the place where love is learnt - love of God and love of our neighbor. As the Catholic Catechism says: *Family life is an initiation into the life in society. The relationships within the family bring an affinity of feelings, affections and interests, arising above all from the members' respect for one another.* When we have learnt this love in our family, we can extend it to the wider world. +