

LOOKING TO SUNDAY®
Sunday, December 30, 2018
The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph

GROWING IN UNDERSTANDING

I don't understand my kids. They sometimes make such stupid decisions.

I can't figure out my parents. I'm 16 years old and they treat me like I'm still a child.

I don't understand my husband. Every evening he comes home angry from work and when I ask him what's the matter, he says everything is OK.

I can't figure out my wife. Just because I tell her that I want to relax and watch a football game rather than visit her mother on Sunday afternoon, she gets mad at me.

We sometimes find it hard to understand people, that includes the people in our own families. We should not find that surprising, even the members of the Holy Family had difficulty understanding one another.

As we read in this Sunday's Gospel (Luke 2:41-52), Mary and Joseph take their son Jesus to Jerusalem for the yearly celebration of Passover. But this time, rather than leaving with his parents, Jesus stays behind.

When Mary and Joseph realize that Jesus is not with their group of fellow travelers, they return to Jerusalem looking for him. There they find him in the temple having a discussion with religious experts who are "astounded at his understanding and his answers"

Mary and Joseph are upset that Jesus had stayed behind. As Mary asks, "Son, why have you done this to us? Your father and I have been looking for you with great anxiety." Mary and Joseph could not comprehend the behavior of Jesus.

Jesus for his part could not understand why his parents were upset. "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?"

Here we have parents who could not understand the behavior of their son, and a son who could not understand the reason for his parent's concern.

The Gospel passage ends with the words, "And Jesus advanced in wisdom and age and favor before God and man."

We might say that Jesus grew in his understanding of himself and obviously in his understanding of his obligations as a son. As we are told "he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them."

Mary for her part, grew in her understanding of her son. We certainly have evidence of that at the marriage feast of Cana. There Mary sees the dilemma of a newly married couple and she asks Jesus to handle the situation. Mary had obviously come to an appreciation of the power of her son.

This Sunday's reading reminds us that growing in our understanding and appreciation of the members of our family is a continuing and a challenging process. One that takes patience and love.

This Sunday's Gospel also reminds us that just as Mary and Joseph had to grow in their understanding of Jesus, so do we. It takes time, prayer, study and effort to truly understand Jesus, the Son of Mary and the Son of God, and to appreciate the implications that come with having a relationship with him.

If, as we know, it takes deliberate time and effort to understand the members of our own families, the same is true when it comes to understanding Jesus, our brother. It takes dedicated time and effort

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***May the Lord bless you this Christmas Season
and throughout the New Year of 2019!***