

CONNECT! SUNDAY REFLECTION

Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph | For Sunday, December 26, 2021

When We Ask Why

Written by Colleen Jurkiewicz Dorman

**Sirach 3:2-6, 12-14 or
1 Samuel 1:20-22, 24-28
Colossians 3:12-21 or 3:12-17
or 1 John 3:1-2, 21-24
Luke 2:41-52**



“Whenever I think I’m a bad mom, it makes me feel better to remember that Mary lost Jesus for a whole three days.”

My mother said this a lot while I was growing up. So, it is no surprise that whenever I find myself feeling defeated and hopeless, I reflect on today’s Gospel and the fifth Joyful Mystery of the rosary. I come to this Gospel in moments of confusion, because to me, this is the most confusing passage in all of divine revelation. I cannot understand why Jesus would commit an action that he knew would bring pain and fear to the hearts of his parents.

God is all-powerful, so His hand is never forced. Even in situations that are not of His own devising, like the fall of Adam, He remains in control. God is also all-good, so we know that when He does make a decision, like the decision to remain in the temple, it is with the well-being of mankind in His heart. So why did Jesus stay behind in Jerusalem, knowing it would put his parents through three days of hell?

I don’t have the perfect answer; I do not speak for God. But I suspect that I know other questions that have the same answer as this one. Questions like: Why is there so much pain in the world? Why is there so much death? Why is there so much despair? Why does God allow bad things to happen to those who love and serve Him?

I am sure that this passage was selected as the Gospel reading for today, the Feast of the Holy Family, because it is the only Biblical account of interaction between the three members of that family. In that way, it is not the perfect Gospel for this feast, but rather the only Gospel for it.

But I contend that it is also the perfect Gospel for this feast — that there could be no better passage in all of Scripture to convey the complexity of life and love.

Today is the feast, after all, that reminds us that God could use any mechanism in the whole world to communicate His message — but He chooses to do so, mainly, through the stories of family relationships. Complicated ones, no less. Families who experience poverty, pain, and exile. Families who betray one another and forgive one another. Families that fall apart and are put back together.

Today is the feast that reminds us that love is not only a choice (Joseph did not have to accept Jesus as his son, at the outset of Mary's pregnancy) but it is also a risk. If Joseph had walked away from the pregnant Mary, he never would have been in this position — out of his mind with worry, combing Jerusalem for any sign of the boy he now loved as his own and could not live without. Love has a price. That price, so often, is pain.

Today is the feast that reminds us that even Mary, who had perfect faith, once asked God: "Why have you done this?"

Today is the feast that reminds us that so often when we stare at God, our eyes blurry with tears, and ask "Why?" we are, in fact, asking Him: "Where?"

Where were You? Why couldn't we find You in this mess? We were looking so hard.

And finally, today is the feast that reminds us He is here. In the midst of the confusion and the despair and the anxiety. He is always here, waiting.

Colleen Jurkiewicz Dorman

PRAYER

Lord, when we seek answers,
When we seek assurances,
When we seek closure,
Help us to remember
that we are seeking Your face.