

Feast of the Holy Family

Sirach 3:2-6,12-14
 or Genesis 15:1-6; 21:1-3
 Ps 128:1-5
 or Ps 105:1-6, 8-9
 Colossians 3:12-21
 or Heb 11:8,11-12,17-19
 Luke 2:22-40

Monday December 28
Holy Innocents
 1 John 1:5--2:2
 Ps 124:2-5,7b-8
 Matthew 2:13-18

Tuesday December 29
 1 John 2:3-11
 Ps 96:1-3,5b-6
 Luke 2:22-35

Wednesday December 30
 1 John 2:12-17
 Ps 96:7-10
 Luke 2:36-40

Thursday December 31
 1 John 2:18-21
 Ps 96:1-2,11-13
 John 1:1-18

Friday January 1
Mother of God Solemnity
 Numbers 6:22-27
 Ps 67:2-3, 5-6, 8
 Galatians 4:4-7
 Luke 2:16-21

Saturday January 2
Sts. Basil the Great
& Gregory Nazianzen
 1 John 2: 22-28
 Ps 98: 1-4
 John 1: 19-28

"Joy mixed with drama marks the fifth [joyful] mystery, the finding of the twelve-year-old Jesus in the Temple." Saint John Paul the Great wrote this in *Rosarium Virginis Mariae*, his interesting encyclical about the Rosary.

He continued: "Here he appears in his divine wisdom as he listens and raises questions, already in effect one who 'teaches'. The revelation of his mystery as the Son wholly dedicated to his Father's affairs proclaims the radical nature of the Gospel, in which even the closest of human relationships are challenged by the absolute demands of the Kingdom. Mary and Joseph, fearful and anxious, 'did not understand' his words."

We, too, often fail to understand the words of Jesus. His teachings challenge us to accept a more difficult life, a life of doing good to our enemies, turning the cheek and going the extra mile, a life of courageously standing up for the truth and adhering to high moral standards that are

counter-cultural.

Our preference, when living this way is inconvenient or unpleasant, is to rationalize and make excuses for our worldly behavior. But once we truly understand the de-



mands of the Kingdom of God, we see their benefits and we obey gladly.

Without this understanding, we have to simply trust that the words of Jesus are right and true. Like Mary and Joseph, we need to ponder in our hearts what we don't understand, while moving forward and doing what Jesus wants us to do.

As challenging as this is, that's when we discover how amazing God is.

Reflect & Discuss:

1. What teaching of the Church have you rationalized away so that you don't have to obey it? Or what teaching of Christ in the Sermon on the Mount (see Matt. 5,6,7) or elsewhere in the Gospels do you excuse yourself from?
2. How much is your disobedience due to not understanding what is really being taught?
3. What will you do to seek and gain a better understanding?
4. How meaningful is the Holy Family to you? What is it about the relationships between Jesus, Mary and Joseph that appeals to you?
5. What has this taught you about God's Kingdom?