

I EPIPHANY 2015
SERMON – SAINT JOSEPH PARISH
FATHER CRAIG LOONEY
ROM. 12.1 ST. LUKE 2.41

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Kids Say the Darndest Things... was a segment in the popular television series *Art Linkletter's House Party* that aired from 1952-1969. Kids can also *DO* the darndest things.

When I was six years old I fell in some mud in the schoolyard after one of those Texas thunderstorms that dumps about a foot of rain in twenty minutes. I was afraid I would have to face God...or even worse Sister Mary Margaret...for getting my clothes all muddy. So I did the darndest kid thing...I left school and ran home.

Mother gave me one of those sympathetic looks only a mother can give...which only made me feel worse. And then later the phone rang...it was Sister Mary Margaret. Uh-oh! Her words still ring loud and clear in my ears to this day..."Do not ever do that again...you scared us all to death." I never did do that again.

The Epiphany Season is about appearances Jesus makes that show us who he is...God's son. Today's Gospel is the only record we have in Holy Scripture of Jesus the adolescent boy. It's hard for us to imagine Jesus doing anything to upset his parents. But that is exactly what he did...he did one of those darndest things.

The Holy Family lived in Nazareth. Every year they traveled to Jerusalem...a distance of about 65 miles...to celebrate the Passover. They traveled with other family members and friends...it was safer to travel in a group than by themselves. But this year something happened on the return trip...Jesus went missing.

The Gospel tells us Mary and Joseph had traveled a day's journey...about 10 miles...before they realized their son was missing. It is not hard to imagine what was going through their minds as they started back to Jerusalem. What had happened to their son? It was their worst nightmare.

For the next three days Mary and Joseph frantically searched for Jesus. Imagine their surprise and relief when they found him in the Temple, calmly having a discussion with the teachers, who were themselves amazed at how intelligent his answers were.

We learn much about Mary when she asks Jesus to explain why he had done this to his father and her...why he had caused them so much worry. She was probably angry with Jesus...with good reason. But her anger was tempered by her deep love for him. We also learn something about Joseph...through his profound silence...as he listens and watches.

Jesus tells Mary and Joseph they should not have been concerned about his welfare. These are the first words Holy Scripture records Jesus saying...and they are an epiphany...they are a showing...for the benefit of the teachers in the Temple...for the benefit of Mary and Joseph...for our benefit.

There is no question Mary and Joseph had a profound affect on Jesus during his childhood. Jesus knew he had to be doing his Father's work, but he also knew he still had some growing up to do. And so he went home and was obedient to Mary and Joseph. We would like to know more about what Jesus did for the next 18 years. What other kid things did he do? We don't know. What we do know is what Holy Scripture tells us...he grew up.

The Epiphany Season gives us an opportunity to figure out what God our Father wants us to do with our own lives and then act accordingly. Our own words and signs and actions, shown with the same kind of humility Jesus showed, can be epiphanies, appearances, of the Light that is Jesus and can lead others to him.

And we should not forget those people who have been and continue to be epiphanies...all of those people who have appeared in our lives. We should thank God for our parents, teachers, friends, priests...and all others who have helped shape our lives and made us who we are today.

We should especially thank God for those whose love and support for us has never wavered...who continue to direct and guide us into doing what is right and good...and who forgive us...even when we say and do the darndest things.

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