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WEEKLY LETTER

SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS - 26 DECEMBER 2021

Luke 2.41-52

With this reflection, I thought I would focus on Mary and Joseph, because what they experience is in many way what you and I live through.

On the journey home from the Temple the parents of Jesus discover that he is absent. They search for him for three days which if you have travelled from Nazareth to Jerusalem is perfectly plausible. But, it is also equally probable that Luke is making reference to the three days between the cross and resurrection. These are days spent suffering from the absence of Jesus, days of darkness, whose heaviness can be sensed in Mary's words: "son, why have you treated us so? Behold, your father and I have been anxiously looking for you". You sense that Jesus' parents are deeply mystified by their son – something perhaps you have also experienced.

When Jesus replies to Mary and Joseph's concern, they once again are faced with another challenging truth about 'their son', for Jesus corrects her: "I am with my father". In other words Joseph is not my father – there is another – God himself. It is to him that I belong, and here in this Temple I am with him. Jesus could not have been more clear about his divine relationship to God His Father.

Not surprisingly, Luke tells us, "They did not understand the saying which he spoke to them", but, "his mother kept all these things in her heart (2.50, 51)". As with you a "journeying" faith is often far from clear, but if we are to keep Jesus words in our hearts, we can, step by step, mature by persevering through the darkness.

If at times Jesus' words exceed your understanding you are in very good company with all the saints! Believing means carrying the difficult truths in our hearts and slowly growing into them.

May the love of the truth and the daily thirst for God that marked Mary and Joseph's lives be an incentive to you, and so continue to seek tirelessly an evermore intimate union with Christ, the Way, the Truth and the life.

Stephen