

**Readings 1 Samuel 1: 20-22, 24-28; 1 John 3: 1-2' 21-24; Luke 2: 41-52**



**Fr Michael says:**

### **The Finding in the Temple**

Today we look at the teenager Jesus, who would be coming up for his Bar Mitzvah, in the not too distant future, his transition from boyhood to manhood in the Hebrew Tradition. Just as He was consecrated to God at His Birth, like Samuel, so now is He being called to live a new form of life, as the letter of John invites us to do, so as to be able to reveal Himself as to who He is. Pentecost, the Feast for which He had come to Jerusalem celebrates the barley harvest and the giving of the 10 Commandments as the basic Covenant for the people of God to live and discover the richness of who they are called to become from the Traditions that are handed on to Him.

When Mary and Joseph discover Jesus is not with the caravan on the return journey, naturally they are concerned; they had assumed He would be with friends – how easily misunderstandings occur! It is easy to love children when they are small, it can be more of a challenge when they become teenagers, as they start to assert their own will! At least Jesus is not always with them at all times!! He is not insecure. Jesus is having an adventure, as He is secure in His love for His parents – He was where He wanted to be, in the House of God.

Jesus is secure, He does not need to stay near His parents, so He can explore and discover His world – the Temple and His life in God! The reaction of His parents to this reality, once their initial fears had been allayed was good, as it allowed Jesus to savour the richness of what he acquired in the time He spent with the Teachers and Doctors of the Law – it is not always easy to encourage children to pursue laudable aims. Again Mary is our model of Faith – her stepping back, her reflection and seeing the way through this challenging situation – she searches for the real reasons for what inspired Jesus to do what He did, rather than ticking Him off! A painful moment but one which brought them closer together! Mary and Joseph are beginning to see the reality of the angel's promises.

Mary and Joseph are learning what all parents need to learn on a daily basis as their children grow up – everyday the child is becoming less theirs and more His own person: birth is the beginning of the great separation which will ultimately take place when Jesus starts His Mission of service to us His People. Possessiveness is a form of selfishness and inhibits the normal development of the child. We often hear a child being described as “good”, when we mean docile and obedient – which makes of obedience a virtue of greater importance than other virtues which would enable the child to become more fully the person he or she is called to become. So Jesus did not get lost in the Temple, He began to find Himself and to realise more fully His identity as Son of God but also Son of Mary and Joseph!

We are all blessed if can do this ourselves, becoming more fully human – but also divine in our Baptismal calling! Our family is of fundamental importance in this respect. General MacArthur, the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War leader, wrote this prayer concerning his own family: “Grant us, Lord, children who will be strong enough to know they are weak; whose wishes will not take the place of their deeds. Give them paths in life with difficulties and challenges, to grow and mature well, with mind and heart focussed on love and service. After all this, Grant Lord, a sense of humour, so they do not take themselves too seriously. With such children, we their parents, will dare whisper, we have not lived in vain.”