

In the Name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

The anxiety in Mary's voice is palpable: "Son, why have you done this to us?" Imagine her fear and concern after traveling north for an entire day, and then discovering her 12 year-old Son was not with them. In the original language, Mary says to Jesus "Child, why did you do thus to us? Behold, your father and I in agony were seeking you!"

Although blessed among women, her speech reveals that she was undergoing one of the several sorrows the Mother of God would suffer. In this she is like unto the Holy Church, which has all the blessings of Christ, but still in this world must suffer until that suffering is complete.

Like a mother separated from her young child in a shopping mall, Mary feels relief and anxiety, and perhaps even anger upon finding Him. Her question is forceful, her recounting of their anxiety heart-felt. In honor of His mother, the 12 year-old who is from eternity gives answer. The Lord's answer to Mary is respectful, and yet carries a double correction: "Why were you seeking me? Had you not known that it is necessary that I be among my Father's Things?"

In this answer the wisdom of the Child is manifest, wisdom in which He would grow as His Human Nature was informed by His Divine Nature. In His answer to His mother, He keeps the Fourth Commandment in honoring her, and in giving her full answer to her question. Had she known who He truly is, no seeking would have been necessary.

The Temple was built as a house for Him, the place where His Name would dwell. He was where He had promised of old to be, no searching needed to be undertaken. God had told Israel a 1000 years before where He could be found. God is always where He has promised to be.

Having satisfied perfectly the Fourth Commandment, He keeps the First Commandment by honoring His True Father. Mary had said "...your father and I in agony were seeking you!" So the sinless Son must correct her. Rightly He is called "Teacher".

In His answer, He makes it clear that Joseph is not His Father. And just as Joseph had things by which to accomplish his vocation, so too the True Father of the Young Messiah had "things." And as a faithful Son, perfect in active and passive obedience, the Divine Boy had to be among His Father's Things. He had to be where the sacrifices that pointed to Him were made. He had to be where He had dwelt before His Incarnation – in the Holy of Holies, between the Cherubim.

He had to be where the Temple lamps, the Showbread, the Altar of Incense, the Altar of Sacrifice, and the bronze Laver were, where Aaron's staff and the two Tables of Stone and the jar of Manna and the Ark of the Covenant once were. For all these are His Father's Things, Things that point to this young Boy that now teaches Israel's teachers.

So both His mother and earthly step-father should have known where He must be. Not that they sinned, they sought Him earnestly. But Moses and the Prophets should have taught them. The pilgrim feasts of the Jews should have taught them. The Passover and the Weeks and the Booths and the Ingathering should have taught them. The announcement of the archangel should have taught them. The angelic choirs and the testimony of the shepherds should have taught them. The preaching of Simeon and Anna should have taught them. The worship of the Magi should

have taught them. The daily readings in Synagogue and the sacrifices of the Temple should have taught them. The Son of God must be among His Father's Things. To keep the Fourth Commandment, He would honor Joseph and Mary by being subject to them, but first God the Son honored God the Father, keeping both the Fourth and First Commandments perfectly. It is He that is of the Father's love Begotten, ere the worlds began to be; He Whom the Scriptures of the Prophets promised in their faithful word.

Those Ten Commands He kept perfectly. But in their keeping you have fallen short. Those Two Tables, Love for God and Love for Neighbor, record God's will for you. But the things of the world have come between you and God. You have not always feared, loved and trusted in Him before all things. You have put yourself first.

You have not always called upon His Holy Name in trouble, and you have at times failed to pray, praise and give thanks. And you have not always held preaching and His Word as sacred, nor have you always gladly heard and learned it. And what of parent and neighbor? You have not been perfect in your treatment of them either. With them, just as with God, you have put yourself first.

But for you, you who have sinned, you who have fallen short, you who feel crushed by those two Tablets of Stone, for you there is hope. There is hope for you where God has promised hope may be found. "...I must be among My Father's Things", the Young Lord taught. He could do no other because of who He is – He is I AM. In His response is revealed to us the greatest Mystery of time and eternity – that God became Man, that Mary's Son is the Son of God.

And His separation from Mary and Joseph for three days was prophetic of the greater separation required by His Messianic Work: His separation from His Mother at Calvary, and His forsaking by His Father on that same bloody mound, His separation from life by His three days in the tomb. He was where the Scriptures said He would be: crucified, dead and buried. And He was there for the reason the Scriptures teach: the forgiveness of all your sins, the forgiveness of the sins of the world.

But in that separation, He would win for you the right to be called God's child. And just as the Scriptures promised, He crushed death and hell. He was found where He promised to be: After three days, outside the tomb, alive. By His perfect obedience, His fulfillment of the Law is declared to be yours. By His resurrection, you are reunited to the God and Father of heaven and earth.

By His reconciliation of fallen men to God He earned for you the right to call God Father, and the right to call the Lord Christ your Brother, that you be declared to be His Holy Family by grace through faith in Him.

And just as once He had to be among His Father's things, so too today you find the same Christ where He has promised to be: with Water and Word, with Bread and Wine, Christ for you, Christ washed into you, Christ placed into you. And by His Means of Grace, by the power of His Holy Spirit, it is you, dear Christian, who increase in the wisdom and stature of sanctification, and in favor with God in Christ, and with His Holy Church. And so believing you

do as the Apostle writes: you are transformed by the renewing of your mind, presenting your body a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God.

And so for you the promise is true – you will be found where God has promised: Here on earth in His Holy Church, His Holy Ones among His Holy Things; and in heaven forever with Him for eternity.

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