**SUNDAY DECEMBER 26 – HOLY FAMILY [C]**

**When his parents saw him, they were astonished, and his mother said to him, "Son, why have you done this to us? Your father and I have been looking for you with great anxiety." And he said to them, "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?"**

**Going to Jerusalem to celebrate some festivals was a disposition contained in the Law of the Lord. The holy book says to us that men alone had to take the long path to celebrate the Passover in Jerusalem. Women were exempted from the long journey. However, it was a tradition that men and women and the entire family went to Jerusalem for the holy journey. For boys, this obligation started at the age of twelve.**

**Every year Mary and Joseph went to Jerusalem for the feast of the Passover. When Jesus was twelve, for Him too there was the obligation to go to Jerusalem and He goes there together with Mary and Joseph. Once again, the faithful observance of the Law of the Lord from the family of Nazareth arises in all clarity. Their observance of the Law was fruit of love for the Lord, though. Their love for the Lord became and turned into most pure obedience. Whoever loves always obeys. Not always, but whoever obeys loves. Jesus, Mary and Joseph love and this is why they obey. Theirs is inner and not just outer adhesion, as their adhesion is most pure love.**

**At those times, one did not leave alone. Dangers were too many. One left in a caravan or in a group. One gathered in the agreed place and then everyone left all together. Generally, men used to walk with men and women with women. Children at their own choice either with men or with women and, usually, children with children going back and forth through the caravan, without never getting far from it, though. The Virgin Mary thinks that Jesus is with Joseph. Joseph, instead, thinks that He is with the Virgin Mary and both of them think He is in the caravan. In the evening, the family gathered. This is the moment in which they realise that Jesus is not with them. They look for Him in the caravan among relatives and acquaintances. But Jesus is not with them, either. All that remains is coming back to Jerusalem. Jesus must surely have remained in the great town. They journeyed for another day. So much time was needed to reach Jerusalem. They wait until morning. Once the day breaks – it is the third day – they find Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, or teachers of the Law, listening to them and asking them questions. Jesus is God and man, He is true God and true man. As God, He is the Author of the Law. As man, He is the true Observant of it. Jesus knows the will of the Father as He lives it entirely. He lives to do the will of the Father. The will of the Father is his only bread, his only water. Jesus lives feeding himself with the will of his Father.**

**Let us read the text of Lk 2,41-52**

**Each year his parents went to Jerusalem for the feast of Passover, and when he was twelve years old, they went up according to festival custom. After they had completed its days, as they were returning, the boy Jesus remained behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it. Thinking that he was in the caravan, they journeyed for a day and looked for him among their relatives and acquaintances, but not finding him, they returned to Jerusalem to look for him. After three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions, and all who heard him were astounded at his understanding and his answers. When his parents saw him, they were astonished, and his mother said to him, "Son, why have you done this to us? Your father and I have been looking for you with great anxiety." And he said to them, "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" But they did not understand what he said to them. He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them; and his mother kept all these things in her heart. And Jesus advanced (in) wisdom and age and favor before God and man.**

**Jesus is acknowledged as a clever, wise, profound connoisseur of the Law of the Lord. This is why those who listened to Him were astonished. They had never met in their life as teachers such a wise, clever boy, so able to answer each of their question. Jesus advanced in age and fortifies himself filled with wisdom. The grace of God was above Him. The answers and the questions are fruit of the wisdom and of the grace in which He dwelled. In the temple, Jesus attests his diversity compared to every other child of this world. Jesus really appears to all as a wonder, a great, wonderful boy, filled with wisdom and truth. Jesus really advanced in age and in wisdom.**

**In seeing Him among the teachers of the temple, even the Virgin Mary and Joseph are astonished. To them, too, Jesus has appeared as a mighty deed of God among that assembly of teachers and learned of the Law of the Lord. The Virgin Mary asks why He stopped in Jerusalem without advising them, without informing them. She shows Jesus her anxiety, as well, and that of Joseph in coming back seeking Him. The heart of the Mother is speaking. Her great love for the Son prompts Her to say these words.**

**Jesus replies to his Mother relying on the will of his Father. His Father is God. He has come onto earth to be in his Father’s house. If his Father says to Him to remain in Jerusalem, He must remain in Jerusalem. If He says to alert Mary and Joseph, He alerts Mary and Joseph. If He says not to alert, He does not alert. Jesus’s Lord is God and the obedience to his will his unique and only Law. When Jesus is in a place, it is never for his will. It is always for the will of the One who has sent Him. Jesus is not the one who has to alert. They are the ones who have to feel free before Him. Their duty is to love, serve Him. Their duty is also that of allowing Him that He may always obey His Father.**

**Mary and Joseph do not understand Jesus’s reply. One does not always understand the teaching of Jesus immediately. One does not understand for it requires the total change of our life. What was before no longer exists. The new must be lived according to the new truth of our being and of our new relation with God. A man who changes his relation with God obliges every other man to change his relation with him. However, we know that the Virgin Mary kept each thing in her heart, meditating them. The time for understanding will come.**

**Once again, the true humanity of Jesus is affirmed. The development, the growth, the walking from truth to truth and from knowledge to knowledge, as well as from grace to grace is proper to true humanity. Jesus has a true body: he advances in age. The body develops. From body of Child, He becomes body of adult. Jesus has a true spirit: He grows in wisdom. He proceeds from wisdom to wisdom. In Him, wisdom reaches his highest and his perfection on the cross, when He gives his spirit to the Lord. Jesus has a true soul: the soul is nourished with grace to grow. Every day, Jesus nourished his soul with grace and it grew, it became strong, irresistible, able to win every evil. Jesus teaches us that the true growth of a person is that of his entire true humanity that is soul, body, spirit. Today we have an erroneous growth. Many grow as only body. Not even the spirit grows in harmony as it advances in knowledge but not in wisdom. Wisdom is the knowledge of good and of evil and it is the fortitude in overcoming evil and in fulfilling good. Wisdom gives us the righteous relation with God and men, with time and eternity. Today, the soul is forgotten. One lives as if the soul did not exist. Today we are building the monster man. There is an exaggerate development of man’s body, with a spirit that grows in half and with a soul that lives a miserable existence, as it is deprived of every nourishment of grace and of Holy Spirit. May the Virgin Mary teach every disciple of Jesus the science of meditation today.**