

Holy Family Sunday Homily Notes 2018

Gospel reading: Two ways of interpreting the story of the teenage Jesus and his parents.

1st way: Jesus is the typical young teen boy and we are viewing the challenges of growing up in even the best of families.

- A teen seeking independence
- He seems to have a mind of his own
- His parents really don't understand his actions at the time
- He goes back and is obedient to them

2nd way: Most scripture scholars believe the story has another, maybe deeper meaning. They would say that all the stories of Jesus' early life are really **preludes** of Jesus' adult public life.

(Explain what a prelude is.)

In today's story we see:

- Jesus comes to Jerusalem for Passover
- He teaches in the temple
- His followers don't understand why he is doing this; it is very dangerous
- Jesus must be about his father's business.
- They do not understand his actions at the time until his resurrection and the coming of the Spirit.

As with scripture, life we often can live our lives on two levels, the human level and the level of the Spirit.

Take what we have happening in front of us today.

Three couples are before us today, they all fell in love and got married, one couple 42 years ago, one 37 years ago and 4 years ago. Yes, they went off and got married.

They are not any different from many couples. Sometimes couples in love with one another go on destination weddings; others simply go to the local Justice of the Peace.

On a human level, they grow in love with each other, get married civilly and live their lives.

Yet we in the Catholic Christian community believe that something else is going on at another level of their lives, on the level of the Spirit. We believe that civil marriage is a prelude to a whole different dimension of life.

Couples come to realize they have been given a very special portion of God's love... one that binds them together. It is lasting and enduring... a gift of the Spirit ... a gift given so that they can give witness to the Spirit of the risen Lord in their married life together.

And so, that is why about four months ago Corpus Christi Parish put out an invitation for any couples who had not had their marriages blessed in the Church to participate in special reflection sessions in which they could focus on, and become more aware of the special love which God had poured into their hearts, a gift from God, a gift for each other a gift for their families, a gift for our community and a gift for the world.

Would they be willing to make a commitment to publicly witness to the love God had given them. Would they enter into the sacrament of marriage? Three couples responded to this invitation.

Troy and Doris Anderson responded.

Al and Anita Stephens responded.

Darius and Aleta Gordon responded.

You said “Yes, we will come forward on the great Feast of the Holy Family and witness to the love poured out on us in the Spirit.” And so today you are choosing to publicly profess your love in the Lord before this community.

Just as Fr. Patrick and I came forward to give public witness to the power of the Spirit working in us when we chose to serve the community as ordained priests, so you three couples today come forward today to commit yourselves to Christian marriage and make even a deeper pledge to radiate the love of Christ to each other, your family, our faith family and the world. (Address the community.) Yes, may today's celebration be but a prelude of the good things waiting for those who, in the sacrament of marriage, publicly choose to be living witnesses of the Lord's compassion in our world.