

A CHILD IS BORN

CELEBRATING THE BIRTH OF CHRIST



SAINT PHILIP THE APOSTLE PARISH
CLIFTON, NEW JERSEY

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

My Dear Parishioners,

Today's gospel is the only place in the New Testament where we see Jesus as a teenager. It should not surprise us, then, that in this passage we find the holy family in turmoil. Now, I am not picking on teenagers. Teenagers deserve our respect. It is hard being a teenager. So many things are changing. There are new expectations, new fears, new feelings, and oh so many hormones! Many of us here wish that we were younger, but few of us wish that we were fifteen. It is hard being a teenager, and that is why the teenagers in our community deserve our support and our love. Now having said that, living in a house with a teenager can be challenging—challenging for both parent and child. On both sides it is difficult to communicate. It is difficult to understand. On both sides emotions can explode and feelings can be hurt. All of this is reflected in today's gospel, as Mary and Joseph attempt to relate to their teenage son. There is poor communication. Mary and Joseph do not even know that Jesus was staying in Jerusalem. There is hurt and anxiety. Mary says to her son, "How could you have done this to us?" And, of course, there is the confident belief that it is never my fault. Jesus says, "Why were you looking for me. I was in my father's house." It's not my problem.



We see in this passage something particularly important: the stresses in family life should not be considered sinful. How can they be? Jesus was the Son of God. Mary was born without sin. Yet they still misunderstood one another and ended up hurting one another. This Gospel is telling us it does us no good to tear ourselves apart because of family stress. Our failure to connect with one another is less a sin and more the price we pay for living with one another.

Having said that, all of us want to hurt one another less. How do we do that? Today's first reading from the book of Sirach shows us a way. Sirach says that families need to relate to one another with honor and kindness. This is especially true when things become difficult. The Babemba tribe in South Africa has a special custom when it comes to dealing with challenging people. When someone did something wrong or was antisocial, the tribe would place that member in the middle of the village and form a circle around him or her. Then one by one each member of the tribe would shout out something that was good about the person, some way in which the person brought honor to the tribe. Each person took their turn, and no one said anything negative or even referred to the negative behavior. This process would take several hours. But, when everyone had spoken their piece, they considered the person in the middle of the circle to be "corrected," and they began a celebration. The African tribe was convinced that when someone is out of order, it is more useful to treat that person with honor and kindness than with anger and criticism. There must be some truth to this practice because it is said that they needed to use this "correction" very seldom.

Now I do not know if we could take this ritual from Africa and apply it to twenty-first century New Jersey. But if we tried, it might look something like this. Your teenage son has been sitting in front of the computer screen for two hours. You've asked him four times to take out the garbage and yet there is no movement. Now you could go into his room and explode. Or you could go into his room and say this, "Dominic, here are a few things I know to be true about you. You are a good student. You work hard for your grades. You are a good athlete. Other people look up to you. You are a loyal friend, generous and caring. I remember last month when your friend Mary's uncle died how you found the time to be with her and to support her. You bring honor to this family, and I am proud of you." You could say that and then walk out.

Now, would this work? Is it practical? I am not sure. But I am sure of this. What holds a family together is love and respect. Therefore, we should not abandon those qualities when things become difficult. We cannot go far wrong by telling the other members of our family what is best about them. It is always good to speak to one another with honor and with kindness. And—if we are lucky—it might even move someone to take out the garbage.

Peace,

Fr. Monteleone

PARISH SCHEDULE

CELEBRATION OF THE EUCHARIST

Saturday Evening 5:30 PM
 Sunday....8:00 AM, 10:00 AM (Broadcast) and 12:00 PM
 Mondays thru Saturdays.....9:00 AM

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

Every Saturday 4:30 to 5:00 PM

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ST. PHILIP PREPARATORY SCHOOL

The students and staff of SPPS have spent the last four weeks of Advent in anticipation of this most Blessed Holiday. The children learned about and participated in the tradition of the Advent Wreath in our classrooms.

The Student Council has concluded their Christmas Bell fundraiser.

Thanks to the generosity of our students and their families, we raised over \$4k for the Fr. English community center that services the Diocese of Paterson.



The students and staff of SPPS is wishing everyone a Merry Christmas! The SPPS family is grateful for our health, family, and most of all for the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. May the Light of the Lord shine brightly in your hearts and in your lives!



GIVING TREE 2021

Thank you to all who participated in our annual parish Christmas Giving Tree, whether by selecting a tag from our in-person tree, or by donating online to benefit one of the organizations we are supporting. Your goodness is an inspiring response to the challenge Pope Francis gave us to answer God's call for us to *"show loving concern for each and every person, especially children, the elderly, those in need, who are often the last we think about."*

Let us continue to give thanks for our blessings, by sharing them with others. In the words of Pope Francis, *"To change the world, we must be good to those who cannot repay us."*



KIDS KORNER

< KID'S > KORNER

Gospel Today
 The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph | Luke 2:41-52

THE BOY JESUS IN THE TEMPLE

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>1) <i>Jesus went to the temple with his parents in this town.</i>
 a) Jericho b) Jerusalem c) Bethlehem</p> <p>2) <i>They were there for _____.</i>
 a) Christmas b) Easter c) Passover</p> <p>3) <i>How old was Jesus?</i>
 a) Two b) Twelve c) Twenty</p> <p>4) <i>When the caravan left, where was Jesus?</i>
 a) With the caravan b) He rode ahead c) Left behind</p> <p>5) <i>Mary and Joseph found Jesus after _____.</i>
 a) 3 hours b) 3 days c) 3 weeks</p> | <p>6) <i>What did the temple teachers think about Jesus?</i>
 a) Angry b) Annoyed c) Amazed/astounded</p> <p>7) <i>When Mary and Joseph saw Jesus they were _____.</i>
 a) Anxious b) Angry c) Astonished</p> <p>8) <i>When Jesus said to his parents "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" Who is Jesus calling his Father?</i>
 a) God b) Joseph c) David</p> |
|---|--|

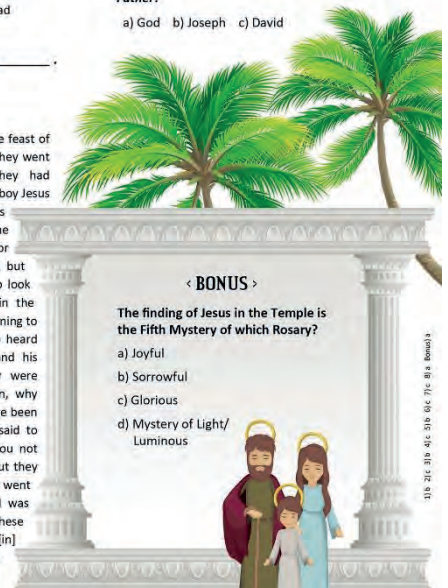
Each year his parents went to Jerusalem for the feast of Passover, and when he was twelve years old, they went up according to festival custom. After they had completed its days, as they were returning, the boy Jesus remained behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it. Thinking that he was 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.

- Luke 2: 41-52

< BONUS >

The finding of Jesus in the Temple is the Fifth Mystery of which Rosary?

- a) Joyful
 b) Sorrowful
 c) Glorious
 d) Mystery of Light/Luminous



WEDDING BANNES

The following couples will be exchanging wedding vows:



II. Patrick Ferrara and Gina LoBue

WE PRAY FOR...

THE DECEASED: Julia Howanice, Louise Zanetti,
Richard Kilcomons

THE SICK: Luca Ataide, Jennifer Rascher, Mary Grace Henrich,
Debbie Werthmann, Susan Stierlen, John Riccardi



PRIESTS' SCHEDULE

SATURDAY, JANUARY 1, 2022

11:00 AM Fr. Monteleone
Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God
(New Year's Day Mass)

5:30 PM Fr. Jared

SUNDAY, JANUARY 2, 2022

8:00 AM Fr. Kevin
10:00 AM Fr. Nico
12:00 PM Fr. Monteleone

MASS INTENTIONS

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 26, 2021

10:00 Mary Shashaty
John Michal
Steven Amato
Giovanna Caradonna
12:00 Patricia Hassert - 1st Anniversary
All the People of the Parish

MONDAY, DECEMBER 27, 2021

9:00 Beatriz Jumao - As

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 28, 2021

9:00 Helaine Pohle

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 29, 2021

9:00 James Elbert
Thomas Reck

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 30, 2021

9:00 Frank Sardo
Don Muller

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 31, 2021

9:00 Emy Ronquillo
5:00 Peter Durso

SATURDAY, JANUARY 1, 2022

11:00 All the People of the Parish
Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God
(New Year's Day Mass)

5:30 Richard Kilcomons

SUNDAY, JANUARY 2, 2022

8:00 All the People of the Parish
10:00 Joth Victor Schepis
Richard Scucci
Karen Lanza
Eugene DeBellis
12:00 Bridget Ganger

CANDLE THE WEEK OF DECEMBER 26th

In Memory of Liliana Sciangolepore
- From Nicola and Anna Caradonna



OFFERTORY GIFTS THE WEEK OF DECEMBER 26th

In Memory of Patricia Hassert
-From Nick, Barbara and family

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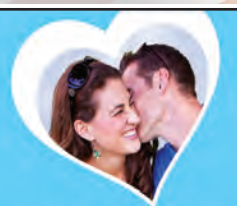
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