

St Pius & St Anthony Homily Holy Family Year C

When I was young, my brothers and I all played sports, and often we might play different sports and of course we were different ages, so that often meant that on Saturday mornings, we might be dispatched off to different areas for either practices or games. I recall once when my younger brother and I had gone off to watch my older brother play in a basketball tournament, my dad had gone early with Jeff to the game, and my younger brother and I came along with my mom later to actually watch the game. It was in the gym and community rec center at Chautauqua Park in Owensboro. The game went alright, I know as a kid, if we got bored we often went off to the rec center area, where the concessions were, but also where the foosball tables were and a couple of arcade games. So I am sure that I slipped off a time or two, but the drama happens later. After the game, there is always the meeting of the coach and players and the huddling of parents about what plays should or shouldn't have been made, and how the refs called so badly again, but somehow in the post game conferencing I went to cruise the rec center area, to see if any excitement was there, and then I walked back into the gym to catch up with the family..... and there were janitors pushing dust mops across the floors and just a couple of people sitting on bleachers still talking, but no mom, dad or brothers, so they are waiting out in the cars, so out to the parking lot I go, and there was no silver impala and there was no yellow Toyota pickup, so a wave of panic hit me....."They left me.....they are gone... I am not sure I even know the roads to walk to get home....." But I thought quick enough 'Don't stand out' go back in the building, so I did, all the while thinking "I can't believe they left me." Now what? I went to the game room thinking 'buy some time, surely they will notice and come back, but in the day before cell phones, that meant them getting all the way back home and realizing I am not in either car....then driving back and it is across town." So I stood and watched some guys play games, thinking it was about an hour and now they would be outside waiting for me to walk out.... and I go out (it was probably 5mins), and nobody I know.... I walked down the sidewalk (acting like everything was planned, and as I stood by a light pole, this guy said, "did they go off and leave you?" And trying to play it off being cool (but nervous as anything) I said, "they had an errand, someone drop off before picking me up..." I hope.....? Long story short, I never felt more relieved to see my dad pull back in the lot..... that never happened again

But hey, my family is in good company, because Joseph and Mary lose Jesus after their customary trip to Jerusalem for Passover. And do not find him for three more days. Yet, we have to ask ‘who was really lost’ considering how it all turned out? Reminds me of the bumper sticker that reads, ‘Can’t find Jesus? Well, Guess who is lost?’ Not him, but me, us. We can all drift and suddenly find that Jesus who was right with us, is suddenly not with us..... and we need to be big enough to realize we have wandered off... God is faithful, and God is with us, yet we lose focus, we are the ones who turn away..... and so we go looking again.... Seeking him.... So, As we begin this new year, we and everyone are going to be talking about New year resolutions, that is about finding God, call it by other names, but everyone is going to be looking to improve, how can this year be better than last,... what kind of goal should I set to work on this coming year.... Everyone will do this, looking back over the past year, and learning from it, and looking into the new year for challenges or bettering ourselves and others around us, and making resolutions..... reminds me of the Jesuit good (best) practices regarding the spiritual life..... of what’s called ‘Review of Life’ and ‘Daily Examen’. These are spiritual growth practices, meant to keep us focused and intentional about caring for our souls, and working on spiritual relationship with God and others (like family). That periodically we should review our manner of living, taking honest stock of it, and changing what needs adjusting/eliminating for good, and reinforcing what needs continuing. That is the big one. and then daily examen is simply reviewing one’s day (every day) at the end of it, being grateful to God for what is blessed, and seeking help/correction and asking forgiveness for what we regret (like missed opportunities, hurt relationships, or outright offenses). These spiritual practices are like asking for directions and taking inventory of who is with us along the way, most importantly that we are with God. Performing these practices ensures that we never lose Jesus.... because we will be daily improving our conscious contact with him. It starts with that: keeping time in each day, giving God the space for conversation with us. Our daily prayer... And likely, following that, we will know where he is, and we will be ourselves where we should be. I like that especially about this story of Jesus, I wonder (three days on his own at 12)-he is getting by pretty well, he is in the Temple, impressing the teachers of the law (his answers, his preparedness, his presentation). He was doing okay. And we will too, always keeping focused on him, staying with him.