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This morning we are again confronted with the joy and humility of the meaning of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ. From the Book of Proverbs, we hear *The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was, and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him; rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men.* The Incarnation of Jesus Christ, that God came down from heaven and was made man and has been manifested to us for our salvation is indeed a mystery of joy. It is also a mystery of humility. We are reminded in this morning's Gospel that Jesus was not a perpetual thirty-year-old, but was at one time a newborn baby, who grew into childhood, just as we were children. He grew into adolescence and adulthood just as we do. He had to be taught, just as we are taught, for the Gospel says *He increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favor with God and man.* It is hard to understand that Jesus who we know is the Word and Wisdom of God, who St. John refers to as *and the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us,* is born needing to be taught and educated just as we are.

It is also hard to understand, how the birth of Jesus was heralded by angels and a special star in the heavens, drawing shepherds and wealthy eastern sages to see the Holy Child, and yet not much of His childhood was recorded. All we know after Jesus' birth is that He was presented in the Temple at the proper time, He was taken to Egypt by the Holy Family before Herod could kill him, and then they returned to Nazareth sometime after King Herod's death. There is a long gap on either side of His Childhood, with one episode in the middle. At twelve years old the St. Mary and St. Joseph lost the most precious child in the world and searched for three days, until they found Him in the Temple among the great doctors and experts of Theology of His day. He was not just sitting idly by until His earthly parents found Him. He was actively participating in the discussion, *both hearing them and asking them questions.* He was not giving cute, Sunday-school answers, He was holding His own and engaging the great scholars of the Temple. Our Incarnate Lord, at twelve years old, who had to grow in learning and stature just as we do, was showing these doctors and professors the wisdom of God, *and all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and his answers.*

The rest of the passage is rather humiliating. Jesus was not paraded around, no one fell to the ground and worshiped Him as Divine Wisdom in the flesh, and He was not proclaimed a young protégé or genius. Instead, people were simply astonished and probably just as baffled as His parents were. The Gospel gives us the impression that St. Mary and St. Joseph burst into the scene and are awestruck at finding the child Jesus in the middle of such learned and sophisticated men. And we can only imagine in what manner of tone, either publicly or privately, the Blessed Virgin Mary asked Jesus *Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? Behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing.* Jesus replied meekly, *How is it that ye sought me? Did ye not know I must be about my Father's business?* He must be about His Father's business, in His Father's House, concerned with all the things of the Heavenly Father, because they were all rightly His as well. And so, Jesus leaves the Temple, the House that was truly His, which belonged to Him as much as He belonged to it and dwelt with St. Mary and St. Joseph in their little humble home in Nazareth, *and was subject unto them...and Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.* And for at least eighteen years, nothing more was heard or recorded of Jesus, other than He lived in Nazareth and was obedient to His parents, learning as all adolescents learn, and very likely learning the trade of a simple carpenter from St. Joseph.

These details do not quite follow logic, or the world's logic. How do we answer these paradoxes or mysteries? The Church prescribes this answer, *Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.* To the world none of this makes sense, but to the Scriptures it makes perfect sense, because there is a certain humility in the Incarnation. God almost playfully challenges our expectations. It sounds so odd that Jesus turns to His Mother, who has just said, *we were searching everywhere for you broken hearted,* and says *how did you seek me?* We might also ask, how did the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Joseph, the archetypes for Motherhood and Fatherhood, the Holy Family, which every family should aspire to be like, lose the Christ Child for three days? This is also a paradox, but a paradox that we will each experience at some point or other in our lives. At some point we will each lose sight of Christ, either because of distraction, the cares of this life, illness, disappointment, or sin, our faith will grow cold or stale, and in our concern to rekindle our zeal we will go sorrowing looking for Him. And when we find Him we too will say, *Lord we have sought thee*

*sorrowing. And He will say to us, How was it that ye sought me? Did you not know I must be about my Father's business?*

Given that the tendency of our age, the wisdom of this world, and the temptation of the Church, is towards such mindless and vain activity, towards expediency, towards faddish and fashionable innovation, it is not hard to lose sight of Christ. In this midst of all of this, whether we realize it or not, we are each searching for Jesus. We each long for the transforming and fulfilling wisdom that only He can give us, for His light along our paths. This is what the season of the Epiphany is all about, the joy that Christ has manifested forth His glory to all people. He comes seeking us just as we seek Him. He desires to make us all into His chosen people, by manifesting Himself to, in, and through us. That is to say, the divine wisdom, manifest in Christ, is to be manifest also in us, as the new basis of our life, not only as individuals, but as members of one another in the body of Christ, *according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith*. He desires that we seek Him, and in finding Him here in this temple of His Body and Blood, to sit at His feet in astonishment and joy at His wisdom. *Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.*