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The word "Epiphany" means "manifestation," "appearance," or "showing up." Jesus shows up in this morning's gospel at the temple in Jerusalem. He is supposed to be in a caravan of people heading home to Nazareth after Passover. His disappearance has frightened his parents into a frantic search. After searching for three days, they find him finally in the temple where he is debating theology with the chief theologians of Israel. Jesus doesn't seem to have much sympathy with his earthly parent's distress. The boy Jesus responds to Mary's admonishment, *behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing, with How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?*

Today's gospel describes a moment in the life of the Holy Family that is similar to a moment most parents have to experience with their children. It is that turning point at which parents begin to realize that their child is becoming independent, that for better or for worse the child is starting to be able to make decisions for himself, or at least to believe that he can. Whatever might have happened before, and we have no idea what happened before, at this point Joseph and Mary can have no doubt that Jesus knows exactly who he really is. Even more to the point, he knows who his real father is and who has the final authority in his life. St. Luke says that St. Mary and St. Joseph did not understand what he told them, but he cannot mean that they didn't know what his words meant. What they could not understand was what all this was going to mean for their future together.

Today one might expect Jesus to have said, *I am going to stay here to study the Bible with some real intellectuals* or might he say, *You two can't even keep track of me while we're on a trip -- you're not competent to be in charge of the Son of God -- you've clearly outlived your usefulness.* Or would he just utter the adolescent's annoying cry, *"I know what's best for me -- I'm going to be my own person and make my own decisions now?"* Instead, St. Luke reports, *He went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them.* It is clear that Jesus did

not see any conflict between being about his heavenly Father's business on the one hand and sticking with his earthly parents and obeying them on the other. What united the Holy Family, and what can unite any other family which really wants this sort of union, is if every member of the family agrees that the most important thing in life is finding out the will of God as it is revealed in the Bible and in the teachings of the church and then trying to do it. This is how Christian families show Jesus Christ to the world.

This is the lesson of the Epiphany season; Christ has manifested himself to the world to help us figure out how we can show him to the world. Today's epistle goes along with the gospel in suggesting that the most obvious way we manifest Christ to the world is by leading lives that are committed to doing what he wants done. We reaffirm our commitment to do the Father's business also during the Mass. There is a moment fairly late in the consecration prayer when the priest says, *And here we offer and present unto thee, O Lord, our selves, our souls and bodies to be a reasonable, holy, and living sacrifice unto thee.* The priest says these words for all of us in response to St. Paul's command in today's epistle. He tells us to *present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is our reasonable service,* what we are obliged to do. In effect, after we have represented Jesus' sacrifice on Calvary under the forms of bread and wine, we climb up onto the altar and sacrifice ourselves -- we offer our whole being to God just as Jesus did.

We are ask God to use us to do his will just as he used Jesus to do his will. The first step in that direction is to get a proper view of things. That means to start looking at everything from God's perspective. It is what St. Paul means when he writes, *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.* Our goal, as one late Bishop puts it, *is to epiphanize Jesus -- to show Jesus to other people so he can save them as he has saved us.* It is all about doing God's will, becoming through God's gracious help what Jesus was by his nature,

subject in all things to the divine authority, and always about our Father's business.