

Sunday, December 27, 2015

Fifteen Minutes in a Target

The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph
<http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/122715.cfm>

1 Samuel 1:20-22, 24-28 or Sirach 3:2-6, 12-14

1 John 3:1-2, 21-24 or Colossians 3:12-21

Luke 2:41-52

We were in Target, shopping for something I have long since forgotten. We often find ourselves in stores long after the intentionality of buying something has past, now aimlessly encountering things that promise to make our lives better or more exciting. On this day, it didn't matter what I was looking for at all, because I forgot all about the reason we went into the store before we even left. That's because after what seemed like only a few seconds, I looked toward my very young son and saw no one there. He was missing.



Surely, he was simply around the corner! No, he was not. Surely, when I call his name he will answer me! No, he did not. The panic on my face was evident.

Can you imagine the distress of Mary and Joseph when they realized that Jesus was not in their caravan leaving Jerusalem? Then they looked for Jesus for a day amongst relatives and those they knew, but still nothing. After their search produced no results, they returned to Jerusalem. They had to have wondered if he was hurt, suffering, or in pain. They might have worried that somehow they didn't take the care needed to keep him safe with them. Perhaps, there was even something or someone sinister at work.

Running through Target, I am sure I experienced some of the same fears. Especially after five, then ten, then even more minutes having passed. Your fears change quite often, because your mind is showing you all the possible scenarios that could be happening at that very moment. Then the worst fear hits you: what if I never see my child again?

Mary and Joseph searched for three days, and then in Jerusalem they found him, teaching in the Temple and seemingly without any concern for their fears and anxiety. They questioned him, "Son, why have you done this to us?" Of course, he honestly expressed that he hadn't done anything to them. He simply was preaching in his heavenly Father's house and that seemed to be an adequate reason. He really just wanted them to trust him.

A strong family is built on trust: trust in each other and trust in God. Mary and Joseph had already shown how much they trusted each other and God by their willingness to give themselves over to the events from the Annunciation through the birth of Jesus in less than fine accommodations. Now, they were being asked to trust once more. Their relationship would continue to grow and even when Jesus had reached adulthood, the events at the wedding in Cana would show that he trusted his mother as well.

Every family finds bumps in the road as they grow and live in this world. The Holy Family was no exception. Families today need to trust in God and each other more than ever. At the recent World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia, the struggles of families were highlighted several times. However, having been there and witnessed so many families committed to the process of building more loving and trusting households, I felt encouraged for the future. And as I look into our world I see so many beacons of hope in the midst of tragic stories of loss and betrayal. We are many years removed from the beginnings of Father Patrick Peyton's Family Rosary Crusade in the 1940s, but it is still here in the form of [Holy Cross Family Ministries](#). The slogan of "the family that prays together stays together" still has meaning today. Families now have new programs and aids to help them grow and stand strong, like the [Families of Character](#) program or media programming brought into your home through the online catechetical service [Formed](#). At times it may seem harder today to raise a family, but God provides assistance in so many ways; hope needs to be the emotion of the day, not despair.

The Holy Family will always serve as an example of how to love, how to adapt to circumstances beyond our control, and how to trust one another. We need to never give up, even if we find ourselves in search of our lost loved ones for days at a time. Love never gives up.

And even though it seemed like days in that Target, it was only about fifteen minutes. That still is a very long time. But we found my son. He found his way to the front of the store. He knew we would be there soon, so he arrived at the other end of the cashiers and trusted all would be well. Yes, something much worse could have happened, and sometimes it does to people who love their kids as much as we do. But if it had been fifteen minutes, three days, or years, just as God will always do for us, we would have continued to look and continued to hope. We love each other too much to ever give up or compromise. To this day we remain unwilling to compromise. And no power shall come between us. We are family.

May the love of God that never gives up find you and your family, whether it be big or small, and provide you all with many blessings this Christmas season.

Tracy Earl Welliver, MTS

PRAYER

Hail, Holy Queen, Mother of Mercy,
our life, our sweetness, and our hope!
To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve.
To thee do we send up our sighs, mourning, and
weeping
in this valley of tears!
Turn, then, O most gracious Advocate,
thine eyes of mercy toward us,

and after this, our exile,
show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus.
O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary.

—*Traditional prayer said when praying the rosary
with your family. (Thanks Fr. Peyton!)*

NOTICES

SOLIDARITY FUND FOR THE CHURCH IN AFRICA

The Solidarity Fund for the Church in Africa, which has no set national date, gives much needed aid to the Church in Africa while expressing the gratitude of the Church in the United States for the warm and generous assistance of the African priests and sisters in our parishes. The USCCB has resources available for this national collection on its website at <http://www.usccb.org/catholic-giving/opportunities-for-giving/solidarity-fund-for-africa/collection/index.cfm>. LPI customers can also find the resources on Art & Media Portal by searching keyword “[SFCA](#).”

NATIONAL MIGRATION WEEK, JANUARY 3–9, 2016

The theme for the 2015 National Migration Week, taking place January 3–9, 2016, is “A Stranger and You Welcomed Me.” National Migration Week 2016 picks up on the theme of welcome and, in doing so, calls on each of us to welcome the stranger among us. For more information and resources from the USCCB visit: <http://www.usccb.org/about/migration-and-refugee-services/national-migration-week/index.cfm>.

HOLY YEAR COVER FOR THE FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY

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