

*Holy Family: The Hidden Life, Part 1*

January 6, 2019

“He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and He was subject to them.” Luke 2:51

These words refer to the 18 years of Our Lord’s life of obscurity from the finding of the Child Jesus in the temple until His public life. Our Lord came to convert the whole world and to accomplish this, 30 of His 33 years are lived in obscurity. This life of retirement is the principle of spiritual activity. We must each endeavor to have the spirit of it in our lives, no matter what our position in life is.

From a human perspective, one would think that the more power, riches and influence one has, the greater likelihood of success at converting the world. Or, that one should be a great orator, philosopher or a poet to convert the world. But though our Lord was God, He chose to live without such helps to accomplish His task. He certainly was a great orator, poet and philosopher, being Truth Itself and the Author of Sacred Scriptures, but He chose to live 30 of His 33 years hidden from the world to teach us the importance of effacing ourselves.

He went down to Nazareth, an obscure little town that is not even mentioned in the Old Testament, a little town outside of Jerusalem. He did not choose Rome, the center of the civilized world where honors and might could have awaited Him. He did not live in Jerusalem, where He could have influenced Jewish rulers. Rather, He lived in a town that was despised by the Jews.

In Nazareth, He chose subjection to His own creatures, He labored with His hands, even though He was the Creator of heaven and earth. “For the sea is His and He made it: and His hands formed the dry land.” (Ps 94:5) He chose poverty and suffered real want and insufficiency. St. Joseph worked with his hands to supply the daily needs and Jesus helped him. After St. Joseph died, He worked for the needs of His Mother. He chose solitude away from the notice and applause of the world: “Is not this the carpenter’s Son?” (Matt 13:55)

These are conditions that our Lord chose and we can imitate for our own sanctification. We can subject ourselves to others, since we will always have someone above us as a superior, but even if that were not the case, we still have to answer to God Himself. We should see superiors as a means to practice obedience and humility. If we want to be perfect, obedience of some sort will be necessary. Doing our own will all the time will not get us to heaven.

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