

# Catholic Candle

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## Marylike Neckline Modesty

*A Brief Consideration of One Requirement for Marylike Modesty*

Here is one requirement of modesty for women and girls:

Marylike dress requires full coverage for the bodice, chest, shoulders and back; except for a cut-out about the neck not exceeding two fingers' breadth below the neckline in front and in back and a corresponding two fingers' breadth on the shoulders.

Quoted from the Decree of Pope Pius XI, 12 January 1930, through his *Sacred Congregation of the Council*.

**Catholic Candle note:** Here we focus on one aspect of proper clothing for the upper body – which is only one of many conditions required for fulfilling the Catholic standard of Marylike modesty for women and girls. *Catholic Candle* will write about the Catholic standard for skirts/dresses and other aspects of modesty in future articles.

Please note the following nine consequences that flow directly from the above Catholic requirement of Marylike modesty:

1. This standard is not declared to be the ideal, but rather is the ***minimum to avoid sin***. It is certainly a spirit contrary to the love of God and to the love of virtue for a Catholic to try to “get as close to sin as possible without crossing the line into sin”. Thus, a Marylike spirit of modesty would not aim merely at the minimum modesty requirement as if it were the ideal.
2. This neckline standard applies all the way around a woman’s or girl’s neck, not only in front.
3. This standard requires clothes that stay in place so that they do not exceed this neckline condition. Clothes are immodest if a woman or girl must “constantly fix”

them because they keep slipping in one direction or another and thereby reveal more than is modest.

4. This standard requires clothes that maintain this minimum neckline modesty and do not reveal more even when she is bending or leaning forward.
5. This standard also applies to photographs, paintings, and statues, whether the woman or girl who is depicted is known or unknown. It would obviously be illogical for a woman to carefully dress modestly herself but also to promote or display scandalous art on her wall (or scandalous pictures of her relatives hung with magnets on her refrigerator, *etc.*). For the very same reason that she is forbidden to dress this way, a Catholic is forbidden to promote or display such immodest images.
6. This standard is not dependent upon the weather, because hot weather does not justify the sin of immodesty.
7. This standard does not change based on the activities in which the woman or girl is engaged. Catholic modesty does not have an exception for swimming or athletic pursuits.
8. Parents, especially fathers, have a duty to guide the women and girls under their care and enforce this Catholic standard of modesty.
9. Parents, especially mothers, have a duty to guide their daughters not only to comply with this Marylike neckline standard (and other aspects of modesty), but to ***love modesty***.

One final consideration: We live in pagan times. Let us beware of rationalizing immodesty by saying that this standard of Marylike modesty is old fashioned and that we live in modern times where the requirements of modesty are weaker. Here is Pope Pius XII's warning against this excuse:

The most insidious of sophisms, which are usually repeated to justify immodesty, seems to be the same everywhere. One of these resurrects the ancient saying "let there be no argument about things we are accustomed to", in order to brand as old fashioned the rebellion of honest people against fashions which are too bold...

Pope Pius XII, *Address to the Latin Union of High Fashion*, November 8, 1957.

## **Conclusion**

Let women and girls love to always dress with Marylike modesty!

Let men and boys appreciate, admire, and defend women and girls who dress modestly!



## ***Words to Live by – from Catholic Tradition***

### *The Great Value of Withstanding Temptations*

Fire tempers iron and temptation steels the just. Often, we do not know what we can stand, but temptation shows us what we are. Above all, we must be especially alert against the beginnings of temptation, for the enemy is more easily conquered if he is refused admittance to the mind and is met beyond the threshold when he knocks.

*Imitation of Christ*, Thomas à Kempis; Book I, Ch. 13.



**Catholic Candle Note:** The article below is one wife’s account of the early days of her family’s fight for Catholic Tradition after Vatican II.

## **Recollections of the Earliest Days of the “Changes”**

### *When We First Began to Suspect Big Trouble Was Brewing in the Human Element of the Church (Early ‘60s)*

Early in our marriage and “babies” stage, my husband and I used to take turns going to Mass every weekday. With five children under the age of six, one of us had to stay home, of course. We were in St. Edward’s parish on the southside of Racine, Wisconsin, and we began to find that the church was not always open when we arrived for early Mass. Or sometimes the correct side door was still locked. Or one of the young priests was late, not exactly conducive to encouraging Mass attendance. Eventually, the early Mass was canceled “due to poor attendance,” they explained.

Meanwhile, minor, and seemingly unimportant changes were creeping into the Mass, *e.g.*, St. Joseph was now mentioned in the immemorial Canon of the Mass. But it was said: “who could object to good St. Joseph being honored like that?” I distinctly remember thinking, “Well, I don’t like [this or that], but if that’s the way it has to be, I’d better get used to it.” (However, we soon learned to be more vigilant and not so ready to accept changes.)

At this time, we had a venerable monsignor for our pastor, with two young assistant priests, who were the same ones who dragged their feet providing the early Mass. The old monsignor was to celebrate his silver jubilee, and the parish was giving him the gift of a trip to Hawaii. The way it worked was that while he was gone on his trip, a certain cabal of parish liberals went to the bishop and convinced him to retire the monsignor. Thus, one of the younger priests replaced him.

We invited this new pastor to dinner to get an idea in what direction he would be leading the parish, and it became very clear, he wouldn't be. He was planning to let the newly-installed nuns run things. And this was in the day when radical nuns were first leveraging their power in order to take control.

So, we had to leave St. Edward's, where innovations to the Mass started increasing, and it was announced that a new mass would be coming. It was evident that this new mass would not be Catholic but that it would be an implementation of the modernism that had been implanted at Vatican II. Therefore, we saw that we could have nothing to do with this new mass.

The new mass was promulgated for use beginning the First Sunday of Advent, 1969. In late November 1969, the parish priest at St. Edward's announced that the following Sunday, he would begin using the new mass, instead of the Traditional Latin Mass.

That was Providence's sign for our family to make its move. When we returned home after this announcement, my husband called a "family meeting" and explained to our children that there was a protestantized service which was going to be used at St. Edward's starting the following Sunday. He explained that, for the love of God and in order to keep the true Catholic Faith, we would not be attending it nor would the family return again to St. Edward's.

We learned somehow that a small ethnic parish near downtown Racine was still allowing the Latin Mass, so we began the next Sunday to attend St. Casimir's regularly. Before too long, there were a few dozen other new faces in the congregation, as word got around that this parish had the Traditional Mass.

St. Casimir's was a Lithuanian parish in an older part of town. This is the church that my husband had discovered to be the place to which we could "flee". It was a beautiful old structure, with towering dark woodwork making up a large altar backdrop. In this woodwork there were little niches in which were placed about a dozen statues of saints.

At St. Casimir's, the parish priest saw that the new mass was a bad thing and he resisted its implementation. For the moment, things were good.

Probably "too good". St. Casimir's pastor was not as "strong as steel", although for a while he made excuses for not using the new mass. The months went by. But it became

evident that the pastor of St. Casimir's was not strong enough to continue withstanding the pressure of the bishop to use the new mass.

The tiny parish was suddenly being visited by younger priests, to "help out", at the bishop's direction, one of whom sticks in my mind. On a feast of our Blessed Mother, he gave a sermon comparing her in a worldly way to a popular actress(!), Raquel Welch, and I remember we were sitting there outraged at this insult to Our Lady, and very nearly walked out of church. Well, that was the beginning of the end for St. Casimir's.

Very soon, the unwanted attention from the archbishop of our diocese spelled the end of the Latin Mass at this small Lithuanian hold-out parish. We tried talking the little Lithuanian priest into hanging on to it, and though he surely agreed silently, he must have been pressed hard by the diocese to give it up.

Then on Passion Sunday 1970, he announced that the following Sunday the parish would start using the new mass.

Because St. Casimir's was apparently wavering in the weeks before that, my husband and I planned where our family would have to "flee" next. On Palm Sunday 1970, we did not return to St. Casimir's but drove to Milwaukee and attended St. Michael's, which was a Byzantine (Eastern Catholic rite) Catholic church. We, especially our children, found the Byzantine Mass surprising and strange. Although it was Palm Sunday, there were no palms. Instead, the Mass included the blessing of pussy willow branches, which had no leaves but only the grey fuzzy oblong "balls" at the tips.

Also, strange to our children, the priest distributed Holy Communion under both Species. The Blessed Sacrament which the priest took from his ciborium was leavened cube Hosts, soaked in the Precious Blood. The priest used a little gold spoon to carefully pour the precious Species into the uplifted mouth of each communicant.

Our children trusted us, their parents, and "took it all in" as something strange but which was part of our life now. Ever after this day – even decades later – our children refer to this Palm Sunday as "Pussy Willow Sunday".

After Mass, we were talking with the parishioners of St. Michael's. My husband was discussing with the men of the parish what was going on at the Roman rite parishes. The men from St. Michael's seemed uninterested in the on-going conciliar revolution. If the positions had been reversed, and if these men had come to our original parish (St. Edward's) telling my husband about the on-going revolution coming to our parish, he would have "hung on every word" they said. But no. These men were as uninterested and as unalarmed as the average parishioner at St. Edward's had been.

In any event, one of them remarked that a few miles away there was a Roman rite parish, St. Lawrence's, with a conservative pastor who continued to offer the Traditional

Mass every Sunday. My husband got directions and we went there beginning the following Sunday.

The good Lord had provided us with this wonderful next step.

When we were at St. Lawrence's, we did "have it all": the true Mass, a beautiful church, magnificent organ, wonderful choir, and strong sermons. Sigh! This fortuitous situation continued for some years, enough time that we were able to see all of our five children make their First Communions.

However, at some point, my husband began to have a nagging doubt whether it was the right thing to do to attend the Mass of a priest who said the (sacrilegious) novus ordo mass once a month because the bishop insisted. No amount of wishing could rationalize away that compromise. And so, in 1976, we left St. Lawrence and all of our traditional friends, for the love of God and His Holy Faith.

In the following years, we found ourselves tracking down the good Traditional Masses whenever and wherever we could find them without compromise: a hotel ballroom, a priest's basement, an empty dancehall, a country church, a veterans' home, a priest's lakeside cottage, a nursing home, *etc.* We reminded ourselves when we were hearing Mass in humble surroundings, that the setting wasn't the most important consideration; the Mass itself was.

In those periods, sometimes we had no Mass to go to, and our family read the Mass prayers at home, all of us dressed in our Sunday best to train the children to dress as traditional Catholics should. My husband fulfilled the father's duty of giving a short talk in lieu of a sermon. While sanctifying the Sunday in this way seemed less satisfactory to us, it was clearly God's Will for us.

Eventually, after having been without Mass for about 3-4 months, we heard that the priest who had been at St. Lawrence (Fr. Hugh Wish) had left that parish and was now offering exclusively the Tradition Mass, at various other venues. This is when Fr. Wish began offering Mass in the large room of a dancehall near Oconomowoc, WI, more than an hour's drive from our home. But we were happy to travel so that we could again attend Mass!

Shortly after that, we heard that Fr. Wish had become pastor of St. Pius V's church at Mukwonago, a town west of Milwaukee. This church had been owned by the diocese and was for sale. The diocese refused to sell it to Catholics for fear that it would be used for the Old Mass. So, some Traditional Catholics, guided by Fr. Wish, paid a black protestant minister to buy the church building and then transfer title to them. It was so good to have a parish again!

But, as we were learning, earthly things are transitory, and Father Wish's death in 1979 eventually brought the Mukwonago chapel under the auspices of the Society of St. Pius X.

Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre had begun this priestly society in Switzerland in 1970, and it eventually came to the United States. It was a godsend, and we were so fortunate to benefit from the Archbishop's good work.

Under his wary eye, the SSPX fought the good fight opposing modernist Rome, which was trying to gain control of the Society. He was a magnificent non-compromiser and kept the SSPX firmly on the right track. That is, until he died.

Before his death, however, Archbishop Lefebvre consecrated four bishops in 1988. They made no abrupt, jarring changes, and life went on.

It wasn't, probably, until we were in the new century that an occasional SSPX news release or action began to raise a few eyebrows. However, midway through the second decade we began to notice troublesome statements from the Society coming more frequently and getting harder to explain. By 2015 we could no longer remain with the Society and were forced to leave.

We now have no Mass or priest, out of love for Our Dear Lord. This will not change until He wills it to change. We wait patiently, dear Lord, content with Thy Holy Will.



## What We Hold

### *Striving for Complete Trust in God*

If our doctor tells us to take a cancer-screening test and we are even slightly anxious that the test results might show we have cancer, then we don't trust enough in God, that whatever the test's result, it is for our good.



***Catholic Candle Note:*** The article below is one man's account of his fight for Catholic Tradition throughout the decades, as this fight was punctuated by periods (including the present) when he had no priest because of his refusal to compromise.

## Life's Spiritual Road Without a Priest

My family and I have carried the cross of having no priest on multiple occasions throughout the decades as we strive for salvation.

We were without a priest the first time after the Second Vatican Council in the 1960s. Mercifully, it didn't last too long as we found a few uncompromising "independent" priests and then, later, the *Society of St. Pius X* came to America.

Before Archbishop Lefebvre brought his fledgling Society, we had what we called family "meetings" with our children, to explain why we didn't attend the local church but why we still dressed in our Sunday best to read the Mass prayers at home. It was all part of training them to know and retain traditional Catholic morals and virtue.

However, many others accepted the Liberalism and Modernism and said Our Lord will understand if they went along to get along. (No, Our Lord will *not* understand!) He expects us to cherish our Faith and do our best to keep it perfect as Our Lord intended. He knows what we need and will always provide it. But we have to understand and use what He provides for happiness on earth, and greater happiness in Heaven.

But sadly, after the Archbishop died, the SSPX gradually became more and more liberal and we had to leave the "new" SSPX in September of 2015. We were still able to find uncompromised Masses for another three years, although not every Sunday. Thus, we have been without a priest for the past five years.

The question is how are we managing to stay on track and profit in the spiritual life for our salvation? Well, I'll tell you.

As you know, only saints go to heaven. So, we must become saints to go there. We must love God and ***not sin***. Plus, we must live our life preparing for our personal judgment by Christ, during which every one of our thoughts and actions will be judged. We **must develop such a great love of God** that any sacrifice we must endure is a joy, and to sin is unthinkable.

To increase our love for God, we should study the life of Christ and increase our understanding of what He has done for us. He created us. He *keeps us in existence*. He came to earth and suffered and died for us. He now gives us both actual grace and sanctifying grace in order to make us happy on earth, and after death, happy with Him in Heaven forever. Wow! What a gift!

So, we must not sin – not even a venial sin. This is not as hard as it sounds when a person loves God greatly. We feel the responsibility for our salvation much more keenly now. We wouldn't even *want* to fall back on our previous sluggish practice of our Faith, such as misusing the old "Saturday afternoon Confessions." My impression living back then, is that the Saturday Confession was taken advantage of – many "Sunday Catholics" had a "good time" amidst the voluntary occasions of sin, thinking that they would just go to Confession Saturday, and that "would take care of" what they chose to do the evening before. "No problem", they thought.



But now we begin to understand that this newer, closer relationship with God cannot depend upon going through a priest and receiving the Sacraments. We now understand better that our salvation hinges about us and what we do.

This is not the first time that large numbers of souls have been without a priest and the Sacraments. Japanese Catholics suffered through 300 years of spiritual aridity, without the sacraments.

We are being tested to prepare for Eternity. We must refuse to accept Liberalism and Modernism although “everyone else” accepts them.

The longer I live, the more I realize that the “misfortune” God sends us turns out to be a “life saver” toward our goal of salvation. He knows best.

We must use Advent and Lent for the spiritual strength we need in the fight against evil.

Hang a picture of Our Lord in your home and foster devotion to His Sacred Heart in order to obtain the promises of Our Lord. (Although these Promises were published in *Catholic Candle* recently, they are so important that we should remind ourselves about them again now)

**The Promises of Our Lord  
To St. Margaret Mary for Souls Devoted to His Sacred Heart**

1. I will give them all the graces necessary for their state of life.
2. I will establish peace in their families.
3. I will console them in all their difficulties.
4. I will be their secure refuge during life, and more especially at the hour of death.
5. I will shower down abundant blessings on all their undertakings.
6. Sinners shall find in My Heart a Source and boundless ocean of Mercy.
7. Tepid souls shall become fervent.
8. Fervent souls shall rise speedily to great perfection.
9. I will bless every place in which the picture of My Sacred Heart shall be exposed and honored.

10. I will give to priests the power of touching the most hardened hearts.

11. Persons who propagate this devotion shall have their names written in My Heart, and they shall never be effaced therefrom.

12. I will grant the grace of final repentance to all those who shall communicate on the first Friday nine months consecutively. They shall not die in mortal sin, nor without having received the last Sacraments, for My Divine Heart will become their secure refuge at that last moment.

What else should we do? Start reading each night a religious book such as Lives of the Saints, or *Trustful Surrender to Divine Providence, etc.*

Of course, praying the 15 decades of the Rosary daily is a great way of becoming closer to Our Lord and His Blessed Mother.

You will learn to talk to Jesus many times during the day as you would with a good friend Who always has the wise answer to your daily problems. You should seek uncompromising Traditional Catholic friends when possible.

Don't forget our Guardian Angels who are given to us by God to preserve us from the many serious dangers in life. We should converse with our angels; ask for their help. They want to help us to fulfill God's plan for us.

Finally, we can receive great strength by frequently and devoutly reciting three prayers: 1) the *Our Father*; 2) the *Apostles Creed*; and 3) the *Spiritual Communion*. St. Augustine stated that praying devoutly the *Our Father* will gain forgiveness for venial sins.

**A final word:** Be Patient. The Sacraments will be provided when God wills it. Meanwhile, we must stay strong and fight for Christ the King!



## Mary's School of Sanctity

### ***Lesson #22 – The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius – SECOND WEEK – THE 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> CONTEMPLATIONS – THE TRIALS OF THE HOLY FAMILY***

St. Ignatius has the exercitant study Our Lord's life in detail. He tells us to repeat the first and second contemplation and use these as our third and fourth contemplation. However, in his fifth contemplation/meditation, he wants the exercitant to put as much of his five senses into the imagining of the circumstances and scenes as possible. St.

Ignatius tells us that just as we use our imagination to **see** and **hear** the subjects of our contemplation, we should now try to use our sense of **smell**, **taste** and **touch** as well. How do we do this in our imagination? He tells us to smell the infinite fragrance and taste the sweetness of the Divinity, and the virtues of the persons of whom we are contemplating. Also, he suggests to us to use our sense of touch by ‘walking’ in the places of the persons we are contemplating about and likewise to embrace and kiss the venerable places we are visiting in our imagination during these contemplations. In this way, St. Ignatius wants us to draw more and more fruit out of each meditation. He wants us to make many considerations from pondering Our Lord’s Life so we can come to conclusions and thereby imitate Our Lord better.

For our purposes here, we will endeavor to set up the contemplations in the similar manner that we used in the first two contemplations of the **Incarnation** and the **Nativity**. We encourage the reader to include his other senses by applying his imagination as St. Ignatius suggests above. Then the *Spiritual Exercises* become our personal pilgrimage into the Life of Our Lord as we follow in His Footsteps and make our study of His Virtues in His Hidden Life and then later on in these *Exercises* for His Public Life.

We must keep in mind that St. Ignatius has set out the *Spiritual Exercises* to be done over a period of a month with the different meditations to be done in various times during the day and some of them to be actually done during the night. However, for our treatment of the *Exercises* here, we intend to give the substance of the various meditations and the reader, being the exercitant, can plan his schedule to do the *Exercises* when he sees fit.

So, in the second week of the *Spiritual Exercises* we can see how St. Ignatius has us go through several scenes of Our Lord’s Life. We can take topics from the Gospel of Our Lord’s Life before He began His Public Life. For this particular lesson we will set out the contemplation/meditation of the Trials of the Holy Family. Of course, a separate meditation could be done on each of the Trials. We will consider **the Flight into Egypt**, **the Return from Egypt** and **the Finding of the Child Jesus in the Temple**. First, we will set out the topics in the same manner St. Ignatius gave us for the **Incarnation** and **Nativity**. Then we will give the actual Scriptural accounts of these three trials and lastly, we will give some possible considerations one could use when meditating on these trials. Thus, this lesson will be basically the substance of **three separate meditations** given one after another.

## The Flight into Egypt

The **preparatory prayer** is the same as usual, ***I ask God Our Lord the grace that all my intentions, actions, and works may be directed purely to the service and praise of the Divine Majesty.***

***The FIRST PRELUDE:*** I will recall to mind the history of the subject I am about to contemplate. Here it will be how the Holy Family had to flee to Egypt in order to save the Life of Our Lord who was threatened at the hands of Herod.

***The SECOND PRELUDE:*** I will ask for the grace that I desire. Here I will ask for an intimate knowledge of Our Lord, Who wants me to imitate Him, that I may love and follow Him better. I also will ask for the grace that I may follow the holy examples of Our Infant Lord, Our Blessed Mother, and St. Joseph, the foster father of Our Lord.

***The FIRST POINT:*** First, I will SEE the three kings making inquiries about the birth of Our Lord, the King of the Jews. I will likewise SEE Herod's reaction and the events surrounding the visit of the three kings to the King of kings. Then I will SEE how, after being warned in sleep, the kings took a different route back to their native lands. I will SEE the angel warning St. Joseph in his sleep to flee. Immediately following this, I will SEE St. Joseph awaking Mary and the Holy Family fleeing immediately. I will SEE how Herod is incensed with anger when he perceived that he was fooled by the holy kings. Further I will SEE the results of Herod's rage. I will SEE the Holy Family all during their exile in Egypt, their journey there being sorrowful while they know many innocent little ones will be murdered as substitutes for the Infant King, *etc.*

***The SECOND POINT:*** I will HEAR the excited and troubled crowds witnessing the coming of the foreign kings. I will HEAR the hurried confusion of the people as the soldiers hunt down the infant boys two years old and younger. Especially I will LISTEN to the wailing and lamenting as Herod's soldiers butcher all of the Holy Innocents.

***The THIRD POINT:*** I will CONSIDER the actions of St. Joseph and Our Lady. I will consider the angel telling St. Joseph in his sleep what God's will is for him and the Holy Family.

***The COLLOQUY:*** I will now think of what I should say to the Infant Jesus, St. Joseph, and Our Lady. I will ask help according to the need that I feel within myself, so that I may more closely follow and imitate Our Lord Who as an Infant is already suffering the malice of His creatures and has just fled into Egypt as an exile from His homeland. I will close with the "Our Father"

Let us begin by reviewing the Scriptural Text regarding this event. [These verses are from St. Matthew 2:1-18]

*When Jesus therefore was born in Bethlehem of Judah, in the days of king Herod, behold, there came wise men from the East to Jerusalem, saying: Where is he that is born king of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the East, and are come to adore him.*

*And king Herod hearing this, was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And assembling together all the chief priests and the scribes of the people, he inquired of them where Christ should be born. But they said to him: In Bethlehem of Judah. For so it is written by the prophet: And thou Bethlehem the land of Judah art not the least among the princes of Judah: for out of thee shall come forth the captain that shall rule my people Israel.*

*Then Herod, privately calling the wise men learned diligently of them the time of the star which appeared to them; And sending them into Bethlehem, said: Go and diligently inquire after the child, and when you have found him, bring me word again, that I also may come and adore him.*

*Who having heard the king, went their way; and behold the star which they had seen in the East, went before them, until it came and stood over where the child was. And seeing the star they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And entering into the house, they found the child with Mary his mother, and falling down they adored him: and opening their treasures, they offered him gifts; gold, frankincense, and myrrh.*

*And having received an answer in sleep that they should not return to Herod, they went back another way into their country. And after they were departed, behold an angel of the Lord appeared in sleep to Joseph, saying: Arise, and take the child and his mother, and fly into Egypt: and be there until I shall tell thee. For it will come to pass that Herod will seek the child to destroy him.*

*Who arose, and took the child and his mother by night, and retired into Egypt: and he was there until the death of Herod: That it might be fulfilled which the Lord spoke by the prophet, saying: Out of Egypt have I called my son.*

*Then Herod perceiving that he was deluded by the wise men, was exceeding angry: and sending, killed all the men children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the borders thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men.*

*Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremias the prophet, saying: A voice in Rama was heard, lamentation and great mourning; Rachel bewailing her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.*

### **Considerations for the FIRST POINT: to use the sense of sight:**

- **SEE all of Jerusalem being disturbed because of the entourage of the three kings. They do not know what to do about these kings.**
- **SEE how upset Herod is. He cannot rest until he has removed all perceived ‘threats’ to his throne.**

Let us set out some background facts and briefly see the events. Then we will add more details as we describe what we would hear and the actions we should consider.

We must keep in mind that Herod is not a Jew and he was the first foreigner to be appointed king of the Jewish nation.<sup>1</sup> With fallen human nature it is easy to see why Herod was anxious not to lose his position which was given him by the Romans.

Also, it is sad to consider that the people were not enthused to have their Savior born. Scripture says that all Jerusalem was troubled along with Herod. We must not forget that these poor people were not informed properly by their leaders and were not given good examples of piously awaiting the Messiah.

The three kings came with their train of servants and camels. They had been studying the heavens and had been following a very unusual star. Providence had the circumstances be such that the kings who had been following this star for such a long distance, now lost the star and therefore believed that they needed to make inquiries of the local king. Providence knew that Herod would get upset by their news of what they had seen and were now seeking. Indeed, God wanted Herod to know this information because God knew that Herod would become enraged in his jealousy and ruthlessly seek to kill the first Martyrs in the New Testament – the Holy Innocents.

The star then appeared again and pointed the kings to the house where the Infant King was. Of course, the three kings did not hesitate to pay homage to the Messiah of mankind.

We can imagine the kings adoring Our Infant Lord and giving His parents gold, frankincense, and myrrh. The Blessed Mother and St. Joseph know the significance of three precious gifts: Gold to honor the Divine Royalty of Our Lord; frankincense to adore Him as their God made Man; and myrrh to prepare Him for His redemptive Sacrifice.

Upon leaving to return to their respective native countries the three kings were warned in a dream not to return to give Herod any information regarding this Holy Infant. Also, St. Joseph was awakened by an angel and told to flee at once in order to rescue Jesus from the hands of a jealous earthly king, namely, Herod.

We watch in our imagination as St. Joseph meekly awakens Mary to tell her they must depart at once. We can observe them gathering what few possessions they have and leaving quickly.

Imagine the scene as the Holy Innocents are butchered. See the bloody swords of Herod's

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<sup>1</sup> This information is taken from *The History of the Church, Book I* written in 324 A.D. by the Church historian Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea.

henchmen, his soldiers, carrying out his attempted Deicide.

**Considerations for the SECOND POINT: HEAR the people conversing in excitement about the kings being in town. They are disturbed about the rumor that these kings are seeking the King of the Jews who has now been born. These people are not interested in the King of kings. Hear also what the angel is telling St. Joseph. Then try to imagine what St. Joseph is telling Mary.**

Imagine the hubbub and noise in the small town where gossip spreads quickly. The crowds were naturally curious about the foreign kings that arrived. When they heard the three kings were seeking a new king of the Jews, they were bewildered as to what this could mean.

Contrast in your imagination this confusion with the sweet and respectful visit the three kings made to Our Infant King. Perhaps there was not much conversation but surely devout reverence was paid to Our Dear Lord, for Scripture tells us that they fell down and adored Him.

Imagine the angel giving St. Joseph the urgent warning about the threat to the life of the Divine Infant.

Imagine St. Joseph gently waking Mary and telling her of the warning of the angel. They do not speak much but make all haste to get away.

As the Scripture tells us, after the three kings were informed by the angel to not revisit Herod, they decided to return to their native lands by a different way. Herod, because he was a vicious man, began to suspect that the three kings deceived him. He was in a fury!

Imagine his angry outburst to his court and soldiers as he ordered that all the male children two years old and younger should be killed in Bethlehem and in all the surrounding areas. He wanted to take precautions because he wanted absolutely no rivals for his throne.

We can also imagine the great lamentations that occurred in all those homes where this massacre of the Holy Innocents occurred. The soldiers grabbed the little ones out of the arms of their wailing mothers. What must it have been like for all those women when they heard what was happening all over town and the countryside and then knowing and anticipating what awaited their own infant sons? Imagine all those grieving mothers and fathers witnessing the horrifying death of their little ones. Imagine their grief was made so much worse because they didn't understand why Herod had commanded this dastardly thing to be done.

**Considerations for the THIRD POINT: Consider of the Holy Family’s flight into a foreign land full of pagans. Consider the Holy Family imagining the fury of Herod and murdering so many male infants in his blood-thirsty attempt to kill the Babe he perceived to be the rival to his throne.**

Now we must put our scene together and consider all the actions of all of those involved. Since we have painted the sights and sounds about Herod and the townsfolk so graphically above, we leave it to the exercitant to fill in the details in his imagination. We now turn our thoughts more particularly to the Holy Family.

First, let us think about the terrifying escape in the night. Then we will reflect upon some other aspects of the sufferings of the Holy Family.

While he was sleeping, St. Joseph received the command to leave. He arose at once and was prompt in his obedience to the angel. As Fr. Hurter puts it, “Yet in that very night St. Joseph rises at once and with a heavy heart wakes Mary who needed sleep. God calls; that was enough for him to obey at once.”<sup>2</sup>

Fr. Hurter points out four basic, poignant aspects.

But what consoled them, what comforted them?

- a. The thought—it is *the will of God*; and that will they esteemed above everything.
- b. The thought—our *heavenly Father watches* over us, guides and directs us.
- c. The thought—it is *done for Jesus* to save His life; and for doing that no sacrifice was too great for them, no effort too much, no suffering too severe.
- d. The thought – *Jesus is with us*. The consciousness of this sweetened everything for them. One look at the dear little infant Jesus and fatigue vanished and hardships were forgotten. With this fourfold thought we also should try to console ourselves in our sufferings and little crosses.<sup>3</sup>

Yes, the danger was real and great. If they tarry the Infant would be destroyed by Herod’s command.

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<sup>2</sup> Considerations from *Sketches for the Exercises of An Eight Days’ Retreat* by Hugo Hurter, S.J., Ph.D., D.D., Professor Emeritus of Theology in the Catholic University of Innsbruck, copyright 1918; third edition, 1926, St. Louis, MO and London, Page 153.

<sup>3</sup> Considerations from *Sketches for the Exercises of An Eight Days’ Retreat* by Hugo Hurter, S.J., Ph.D., D.D., Professor Emeritus of Theology in the Catholic University of Innsbruck, copyright 1918; third edition, 1926, St. Louis, MO and London, Page 154.



This hasty departure into exile leads us to ponder another aspect in the fact that God wanted the Holy Family to suffer privations. We can consider why Our Lord wanted to suffer still more and to practice poverty more strictly—to have to go to a foreign land and suffer still greater wants. Oh, how Our Lord loves poverty!

We must remember that St. Joseph left his carpentry work in Nazareth in order to obey the decree to go back to the city of David. Hence, Our Lord was forced to be born in dire poverty in a stable. And now the command comes for the Holy Family to leave their homeland and go into exile. What an additional bitter cross!

Yet, Our Lord chose this cross for Himself and His parents so they could be an example for us of being completely detached from things of this world. Plus, the Holy Family's suffering is meant to teach us to trust in God's loving Paternal care of us. We must not complain but accept God's Will no matter what comes. We must work and do what we can but must also know that God will provide for us when we do His Will.

Therefore, St. Joseph did not murmur but accepted this cross which was a heavier one due to the fact that the future was unknown. How should he get to Egypt? He had never been there before. It was the dark of night and very dangerous to be travelling to an unknown place and over dark, potentially thief-infested, roads.

Also, St. Joseph was a prudent planner for the future needs of his family. He must have pondered what kind of carpentry prospects he would have in Egypt, as they hastily left Bethlehem to go there.

We must bear in mind, too, that Egypt is a pagan country. No doubt Our Lady and St. Joseph were considering the spiritual heartache that awaited them where Satan was worshipped in the form of idols. This land of Egypt was full of foolish superstition and massive confusion. Indeed, it is a land and people hostile to the descendants of the Israelites.

Although St. Joseph and Mary must have wondered what they will do in such a pagan land, they humbly submit to God's Will. What heroic obedience! What humble trust in God!

One additional heartache both Mary and St. Joseph must have suffered was the thought that Herod, being such a wicked man, would stop at nothing to get what he desired. The angel did say, "*For it will come to pass that Herod will seek the child to destroy him.*" In fact, Herod was truly capable of any sort of malice. Most likely they knew Scripture predicted that there would be a mass murder of children in Rama. Hence, Mary and St. Joseph would feel such compassion on all those families who would be afflicted by Herod's malice. They knew that those children were killed in the place of Christ. They prayed for those families.

## **Concluding thoughts:**

So, carrying their precious Bundle, Our Infant Savior, they flee as quickly as they can on the dark obscure road which leads to the foreign pagan land. They are ready to accept whatever God has in store for them. They cling to Jesus, knowing that they are rescuing Him, but also that He, as God, is holding them safely in His Hands.

***The COLLOQUY:*** Dearest Infant being swept away from Herod's danger by Thy dear Parents, I thank Thee for such marvelous examples of charity, humility, and long-suffering. Please assist me to imitate Thy virtues for I am so weak.

Dear St. Joseph, I thank thee for thine example of calmly doing thy duties. Thou art such a model of leadership. I want to follow thy example of complete resignation to the will of God. Please intercede for me and guide me.

Oh, tender Mother Mary, I thank thee for thine example of complete submission to God through thy humble submission to St. Joseph. I admire your patience in all the hardships that thou hast endured. Please teach me patience in suffering.

Oh, Holy Family, help me work out my salvation. Guide and protect me.

Oh, dear sweet innocent victims of Herod's jealousy, you have spilled your blood as victims in substitution for Him Who in thirty-three years will shed His innocent blood for your Redemption. How precious it is to me to ponder all of you waiting in the Limbo of the Fathers until the day when Our Savior brings you into heaven with Him. Your precious martyrdoms are a hope for me. Pray for me, oh Holy Innocents, for I am still a sojourner in this confusing world.

## **The Return from Egypt**

The *preparatory prayer* is the same as usual, ***I ask God Our Lord the grace that all my intentions, actions, and works may be directed purely to the service and praise of the Divine Majesty.***

***The FIRST PRELUDE:*** I will recall to mind the history of the subject I am about to contemplate. Here it will be how the Holy Family finding out that Herod was dead and St. Joseph being informed in a dream to settle in Nazareth.

***The SECOND PRELUDE:*** I will ask for the grace that I desire. Here I will ask for an intimate knowledge of Our Lord, Who wants me to imitate Him, that I may love and follow Him better. I also will ask for the grace that I may follow the holy examples of Our Blessed Mother and St. Joseph, the foster father of Our Lord.

***The FIRST POINT:*** First, I will SEE the Holy Family returning to their native country after having been in exile for some considerable length of time.

***The SECOND POINT:*** I will HEAR what St. Joseph and Our Lady may be saying to one another.

***The THIRD POINT:*** I will CONSIDER all of the hardships of this move back to Israel and settling anew in their native country.

***The COLLOQUY:*** I will now think of what I should say to the Child Jesus, St. Joseph, and Our Lady. I will ask help according to the need that I feel within myself, so that I may more closely follow and imitate Our Lord Who has just returned from the sad exile in Egypt. I will close with the “Our Father”

Let us review the Scriptural Text for this next trial of the Holy Family. [These verses are from St. Matthew 2:19-23]

*But when Herod was dead, behold an angel of the Lord appeared in sleep to Joseph in Egypt, saying: Arise, and take the child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel. For they are dead that sought the life of the child. Who arose, and took the child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel.*

*But hearing that Archelaus reigned in Judea in the room of Herod his father, he was afraid to go thither: and being warned in sleep retired into the quarters of Galilee. And coming he dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was said by the prophets: That he shall be called a Nazarene.*

## **Considerations for the FIRST POINT: to use the sense of sight**

**SEE St. Joseph being informed in a dream again to return back to his homeland.**

Fr. Hurter informs us that, “Despite all precaution, death soon put an end to the reign of Herod. He promised himself decades of years, but the vengeance of God soon overtook him.”<sup>4</sup>

The Church historian Bishop Eusebius tells us how Herod was struck by a sickness which consumed him. He had a mild fever which corrupted his innards and gave him an overpowering desire for food, ulcers in his intestines and gangrene to his male organs

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<sup>4</sup> Considerations from *Sketches for the Exercises of An Eight Days' Retreat* by Hugo Hurter, S.J., Ph.D., D.D., Professor Emeritus of Theology in the Catholic University of Innsbruck, copyright 1918; third edition, 1926, St. Louis, MO and London, Page 155.

which produced worms. He eventually stabbed himself and, as he lay dying, he ordered the death of his third son, Antipater. Upon giving this dreadful command he died instantly in agonizing pains.<sup>5</sup> Truly a fitting end for such a vicious man!

St. Joseph was then informed again by the angel to make a journey – this time, back to Israel. Imagine St. Joseph once again obeying the command of God, without murmuring and with promptitude. He and Mary and the young Child Jesus gathered their few belongings and began their track back. This meant that once more, despite any home they were able to make or carpentry business that Joseph had established, they leave all of that behind and start back to Israel.

They trusted in God when they left Israel, trusted Him the whole time they were in exile, and now they do not hesitate to trust in Him as they return.

St. Joseph being always cautious and prudent deliberated about where he should take his family to live. He had heard that Archelaus, the son of Herod, was now ruling. This made him wonder if living in Bethlehem would be safe. The angel now instructed St. Joseph to settle in Galilee.

Now that we have painted the rough sketch of events, let us try to reflect on what was said.

### **Considerations for the SECOND POINT: HEAR what St. Joseph and Mary might say during their journey back with the young Child Jesus.**

St. Joseph tells Mary what he has learned from the angel of God. She does not doubt St. Joseph and docilely prepares for their departure back to Israel. They no-doubt would say prayers of thanksgiving that the danger from Herod is past. So, they make their journey back in much quiet prayer and reflection.

Fr. Hurter gives us these words to reflect upon:

Mary and Joseph waited with patience and resignation in a strange land, until the angel came with the glad tidings: “Arise and take the child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel.”

Let us persevere in patience and resignation under the crosses which the Lord sends us, because he wills it, as long as He will it, and as he wills it. May the dear little infant Jesus breathe His spirit into us that after His example we must

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<sup>5</sup> This information is taken from *The History of the Church, Book I* written in 324 A.D. by the Church historian Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea.

submit to trials, practice patience, and persevere for as long as He wishes.<sup>6</sup>

**Considerations for the THIRD POINT: CONSIDER THE ACTIONS of the Holy Family as they fulfill God's Will in returning to Israel, namely, settling in Nazareth in order to fulfill Scripture.**

Let us now penetrate deeper into the hardship of having to move again. St. Joseph, as the head of a family, knew how difficult it would be to basically have to start his business afresh. It has been a long period of time since he and Mary departed Nazareth to travel to the town of David. What would the people back in Nazareth think of the Holy Family? Would they wonder why this couple never returned after the census? This couple abandoned their tiny house and no one has heard anything about them. The carpentry shop was abandoned too. This was indeed very strange.

Then, suddenly, this couple returns with a young Child. What would the townspeople think of this event?

And yet, St. Joseph and Mary accept all of the perhaps cruel gossip that had been told about them. They do not try to explain what has happened. They would quietly set about picking up their former life in Nazareth.

**Concluding thoughts:**

What great admiration do we not owe to the Holy Family, for their fortitude and patience in all that God had sent to them! We frail humans are so far from such resignation and virtue! Instead, we wretched humans complain, so often, at least internally when inconveniences come our way. So many lessons we can learn from the dear Holy Family! They were extremely blest and also extremely tried. God wanted them to grow in virtue and be a model for all of us. How truly edifying they are!

They lived in want and poverty and strict obedience to the commandments of God. It is as if we cannot have enough esteem for them!

**COLLOQUY:** With what an overflowing heart do I now address Thee, O Holy Child! I see with what Providence Thy Heavenly Father has cared for Thee! Help me O Divine Child to trust in God always.

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<sup>6</sup> Considerations from *Sketches for the Exercises of An Eight Days' Retreat* by Hugo Hurter, S.J., Ph.D., D.D., Professor Emeritus of Theology in the Catholic University of Innsbruck, copyright 1918; third edition, 1926, St. Louis, MO and London, Page 155

Dear Holy Parents, teach me how to imitate thy trust in God and thy fortitude. When my life is full of trials, I will reflect how mine are nothing in comparison with yours. Guide me and teach me in all things.

## **The Finding of the Child Jesus in the Temple**

The *preparatory prayer* is the same as usual, *I ask God Our Lord the grace that all my intentions, actions, and works may be directed purely to the service and praise of the Divine Majesty.*

*The FIRST PRELUDE:* I will recall to mind the history of the subject I am about to contemplate. Here it will be how Our Lord's Parents found Him in the Temple when He was twelve years old.

*The SECOND PRELUDE:* I will ask for the grace that I desire. Here I will ask for an intimate knowledge of Our Lord, Who wants me to imitate Him, that I may love and follow Him better. I also will ask for the grace that I may follow the holy examples of Our Blessed Mother and St. Joseph, the foster father of Our Lord.

*The FIRST POINT:* First, I will SEE St. Joseph and the Blessed Mother bewildered when they discover that the Boy Jesus had stayed behind in Jerusalem. I will accompany them as they return in their anguish to look for Him.

*The SECOND POINT:* I will HEAR what they may be saying and what the doctors in the Temple are possibly discussing with the Boy Jesus in the Temple.

*The THIRD POINT:* I will OBSERVE and CONSIDER what the Holy Parents are doing, suffering and their joy in finding their Divine Son in the midst of the Doctors.

*The COLLOQUY:* I will now think of what I should say to each to the members of the Holy Family, starting with Our Lord, the boy Jesus, St. Joseph, the head of the Holy Family, and Our Dear Blessed Mother, the refuge of sorrowing parents who seek the salvation of their children. I will ask help according to the need that I feel within myself, so that I may more closely follow and imitate Our Lord. I will close with the "Our Father"

Let us review the Scriptural Text for this third trial of the Holy Family that we are studying in this lesson. [These verses are from St. Luke 2:41-52]

St. Luke ch.2: 41-52

*And the child grew and waxed strong, full of wisdom: and the grace of God was in him. And his parents went every year to Jerusalem, at the solemn day of the Pasch. And when he was twelve years old, they going up into Jerusalem, according to the custom of the feast, and having fulfilled the days, when they returned, the child Jesus remained in Jerusalem. And his parents knew it not.*

*And thinking that he was in the company, they came a day's journey and sought him among their kinsfolks and acquaintance. And not finding him, they returned into Jerusalem, seeking him.*

*And it came to pass, that, after three days, they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, hearing them and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his wisdom and his answers.*

*And seeing him, they wondered. And his mother said to him: Son, why hast thou done so to us? Behold thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. And he said to them: How is it that you sought me? Did you not know that I must be about my father's business?*

*And they understood not the word that he spoke unto them. And he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was subject to them. And his mother kept all these words in her heart. And Jesus advanced in wisdom and age and grace with God and men.*

**Considerations for the FIRST POINT: I will SEE St. Joseph and Blessed Mary on their journey home and discovering that the Child Jesus is not among their kinfolk. Also SEE them returning back to Jerusalem in haste to look for the Child Jesus. SEE them entering the Temple and witnessing their dear Son discoursing with the wise ancients. SEE Our Lord meekly returning home with His parents.**

Before delving into the details of this trial of the Holy Family, there is some important background information to understand. We will allow Fr. Hurter to help us paint the scene. Fr. Hurter tells us, “The hidden life of Our Lord was simple and uniform. He passed His time in prayer and work.”<sup>7</sup>

The only change to their routine was the yearly visit to Jerusalem for the great holy days. In fact, this yearly journey was a big sacrifice for the Holy Family. We must be mindful that St. Joseph was faithful in keeping the law. It should make a deep impression on us

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<sup>7</sup> Considerations from *Sketches for the Exercises of An Eight Days' Retreat* by Hugo Hurter, S.J., Ph.D., D.D., Professor Emeritus of Theology in the Catholic University of Innsbruck, copyright 1918; third edition, 1926, St. Louis, MO and London, Page 166.

to remember how Our Lord did not exempt Himself from the law. Furthermore, we see how Mary also was zealous for the honor of God.

Fr. Hurter has the following moving description of the Holy Family:

[This was] a real pilgrimage of prayer, silence and many privations. Observe with what reverence they enter the temple, with what fervor they pray, with what heartfelt *devotion* they make the prescribed offerings. Consider the *sentiments* which filled our Divine Savior, Mary and Joseph at their appearance before the Most High, and how long they persevered there in prayer until finally the time came for them to return. Let us dwell on this touching sight for our edification.<sup>8</sup>

An interesting comment that Fr. Hurter makes is that when the feast days were over, Blessed Mary and St. Joseph returned home with heavy hearts because they did not have the temple in Nazareth, and they loved this holy place so much. This was how intensely they loved the service to God!

And so this heartache was with them yet another time. However, this time they depart from Jerusalem, and without knowing it, they leave the source of all their love, the Child Jesus Himself, behind.

We see them travel “a day’s journey” (as Sacred Scripture says) and only then do they come to realize that the Child Jesus is not in the travelling group. Of course, they hurry back to Jerusalem.

Then three days of anguish are their portion as they hunt for Him everywhere. It is only after these days pass that they find Him in the Temple amidst the doctors. Imagine their delight at seeing Him **and** their amazement in hearing Him discoursing with these wise men.

His Mother speaks with Him briefly. Then we see the Holy Family quietly withdraw and leave Jerusalem to head for home. The Holy Son is subservient to His Mother and Foster Father. We see Him ever meek and humble of heart.

**Considerations for the SECOND POINT: HEAR what St. Joseph and Blessed Mary might say as they inquire everywhere concerning their dear Son. HEAR the fascinating questions and answers that the ancients are discussing with the Divine Child.**

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<sup>8</sup> Considerations from *Sketches for the Exercises of An Eight Days’ Retreat* by Hugo Hurter, S.J., Ph.D., D.D., Professor Emeritus of Theology in the Catholic University of Innsbruck, copyright 1918; third edition, 1926, St. Louis, MO and London, Page 166.



Having set the scenes of this great trial of St. Joseph and Our Lady, let us spend some moments pondering the words spoken. What did the holy parents say to each other when at the end of the first day's journey they met and realized that the Holy Child was neither of them? They did not rebuke each other or blame each other for this mishap. They soberly resolved to go back to Jerusalem.

They spend three days looking longingly for Our Lord. We can well imagine them asking many people if they had seen a boy of Our Lord's description. Their sorrow grew with each answer in the negative.

Finally, they search one last time at the Temple, and this time they hear a Voice that they recognize—it is the Lord! Imagine their surprise when they heard the doctors of the Law asking questions of Someone and the response of their young Son is heard in the room. They look in the direction of the Voice and see the Child Jesus speaking in succinct answers explaining the Law and Scriptures to the group of learned men. Imagine their delight at finding Our Lord safe. They knew the Scriptures that the Son of Man must be put to death and yet they did not know when this would happen. Recalling the horrific malice of Herod, perhaps they thought while they searched, that now might be the time that someone would try to kill the Child Jesus. How very relieved they are that they found Him!

Listen to Our Blessed Mother as she asks, “Son, why hast Thou done so to us? Behold thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing?”

This is not to be thought of as a complaint, but merely the anguish of her Immaculate Heart. The words of Simeon have been echoing in her heart these three days, “And thy own soul a sword shall pierce, that, out of many hearts, thoughts may be revealed.”<sup>9</sup> Yes, God wanted her to feel this intense sorrow of having lost her Son so that parents who lament the loss of a wayward child would be all the more willing to fly to Holy Mary's heart, begging the assistance of one who knew well this exquisite spiritual suffering.

Then His reply to her question was not meant as a disrespectful rebuke to His Mother, but a statement of a fact about Providence. “How is it that you sought Me; did you not know I must be about My Father's business?”

This mysterious answer shows that God's Providence is often hidden from us but the faithful Mother will keep and treasure His Words in her heart, pondering them again and again. She is not angry. He is Divine and she is not. His Father's business must have been urgent and she humbly submits to the Divine Will.

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<sup>9</sup> St. Luke 1:35

**Considerations for the THIRD POINT: CONSIDER THE ACTIONS of the Holy Family as they fulfill God's Will in returning to Jerusalem to do their part to look for the Child Jesus. Consider the surprise of St. Joseph and Blessed Mary when they find Our Lord in the Temple. Consider their relief to find Him alive and unharmed. Consider the humility in which they heard the solemn words of the Child Jesus stating that He was doing His Father's business.**

At this point we will strive to appreciate the depths of Providence's mysterious Plans. By reviewing the events of this momentous trial, we can get a better view of this most distinguished couple of all human history. Let us look at their actions and the actions of Our Lord to get a better understanding of the virtues possessed and which were augmented in this trial. Not only did Providence send this suffering to St. Joseph and Blessed Mary, but He wanted us to study them and learn how to suffer the most grievous crosses humbly and virtuously.

Now is a fitting time to share some piquant points from Fr. Hurter.

In investigating why God manifested His Will in this way, we see clearly that God wanted St. Joseph and Blessed Mary to have these sufferings to teach us the following lessons as Fr. Hurter says:

But our Divine Savior, at the bidding of His Heavenly Father, remained in the temple without letting His mother and foster father know, although He foresaw their sorrow. But when God calls, human consideration must be set aside, and we must not consult flesh and blood; we must make sacrifices.<sup>10</sup>

We can also believe that Our Lord did not concern Himself with either food or shelter on these three days.

And yet another lesson about how Providence sometimes acts:

Consider furthermore how our Divine Savior withdraws even from good and pious souls without a fault of theirs, to their great sorrow. He withdraws sometimes in *punishment* for venial sins, because of *sloth* that has crept in, because of too great *attachment* to creatures, with whom He does not wish to divide His rule. And sometimes He withdraws, but for no fault whatever, as in the present case. Neither Mary nor Joseph was to blame that the Child remained behind. Why does the Lord withdraw even from holy souls so that they do not perceive His presence

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<sup>10</sup> Considerations from *Sketches for the Exercises of An Eight Days' Retreat* by Hugo Hurter, S.J., Ph.D., D.D., Professor Emeritus of Theology in the Catholic University of Innsbruck, copyright 1918; third edition, 1926, St. Louis, MO and London, Page 168.

and feel entirely abandoned and disconsolate? It is to try them; to give them opportunities for many good works, and to ground them more and more in virtue.<sup>11</sup>

Another lesson which applies to how we poor sinners should react to Providence:

When Mary and Joseph realize that Our Lord is not with them, “they search for Him among relatives and acquaintances, but they do not find Him.” So too, if the Lord withdraws from us and takes away His consolation, we shall not find Him among creatures, among flesh and blood, and in entertainments. We must go back to Jerusalem, to the temple, have recourse to the tabernacle; there in prayer we shall find Jesus the Lord, our lost consolation.<sup>12</sup>

A further lesson showing Our Lord’s humility:

“What *modesty* does not our Divine Savior manifest? He could have put the Scribes to confusion and made His superiority felt, but He did not step out of the role of a boy and only asked and answered questions. Let us take to heart the significant words He spoke to Mary: “Did you not know that I must be about My Father’s business?” That should be the program of the priest. He should be intent on the honor of God, which he should try to promote everywhere.<sup>13</sup>

After Our Lord had complied with the extraordinary command of His Heavenly Father, He returned to the quite-hidden life of Nazareth.

We too must do Our Heavenly Father’s business. Let us ask our Divine Savior for light, grace, and the strength to follow God’s Will faithfully and to make it effective in our lives.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Considerations from *Sketches for the Exercises of An Eight Days’ Retreat* by Hugo Hurter, S.J., Ph.D., D.D., Professor Emeritus of Theology in the Catholic University of Innsbruck, copyright 1918; third edition, 1926, St. Louis, MO and London, Page 168.

<sup>12</sup> Considerations from *Sketches for the Exercises of An Eight Days’ Retreat* by Hugo Hurter, S.J., Ph.D., D.D., Professor Emeritus of Theology in the Catholic University of Innsbruck, copyright 1918; third edition, 1926, St. Louis, MO and London, Page 169.

<sup>13</sup> Considerations from *Sketches for the Exercises of An Eight Days’ Retreat* by Hugo Hurter, S.J., Ph.D., D.D., Professor Emeritus of Theology in the Catholic University of Innsbruck, copyright 1918; third edition, 1926, St. Louis, MO and London, Page 169.

<sup>14</sup> Considerations from *Sketches for the Exercises of An Eight Days’ Retreat* by Hugo Hurter, S.J., Ph.D., D.D., Professor Emeritus of Theology in the Catholic University of Innsbruck, copyright 1918; third edition, 1926, St. Louis, MO and London, Page 170.

## Concluding thoughts:

Yes, indeed, God chastises those He loves. We see that He loved St. Joseph and Blessed Mary intensely because He gave them the unspeakable dignity of being the parents of the Incarnate Word, and still, He gave them most painful crosses. He wanted to not only give us valuable examples and models of Catholic marriage and parenting, but He also wanted St. Joseph and Blessed Mary to have more merits. Therefore, He gave them the choicest crosses!

**COLLOQUY:** Sweet Child Jesus, I thank Thee for Thy wonderful examples of humility and obedience to Thy Heavenly Father and to Thy earthly parents. Help me to lovingly obey Thy commandments.

O St. Joseph, model of husbands and fathers, I thank God for giving you to me. Help guide us all, especially in imitating thy complete surrender to God's holy will and trust in His Paternal solicitude for His children.

O my Mother Mary, thy heart pierced with the sword of sorrow lies open for me to see, and I cannot help being overwhelmed with thy tender mercy for thy children. Keep filling our hearts with confidence in thy gentle care for us and God's never-failing love for us. Keep us faithful to Him and never allow us to abandon Him.

With the contemplations we have set forth above, there is plenty of material for the exercitant to do three separate Ignatian contemplations/meditations on these trials of the Holy Family. In this important manner we can increase our knowledge of Our Lord and His virtues. In our next lesson we will apply what we have learned about Our Lord when we set out to do the well-known *Spiritual Exercise* called the ***Meditation on the Two Standards***.

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