Memorial of the Immaculate Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Gospel text (*Lk* 2:41-51): Each year Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem for the feast of Passover, and when he was twelve years old, they went up according to festival custom. After they had completed its days, as they were returning, the boy Jesus remained behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it. Thinking that he was in the caravan, they journeyed for a day and looked for him among their relatives and acquaintances, but not finding him, they returned to Jerusalem to look for him.

After three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions, and all who heard him were astounded at his understanding and his answers. When his parents saw him, they were astonished, and his mother said to him, "Son, why have you done this to us? Your father and I have been looking for you with great anxiety." And he said to them, "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" But they did not understand what he said to them. He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them; and his mother kept all these things in her heart.

«His mother kept all these things in her heart»

Fr. Jordi PASCUAL i Bancells
(Salt, Girona, Spain)

Today, we celebrate the memory of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. A spotless Heart, full of God, totally willing to listen to him and obey him. In Bible's language, the heart refers to a person's deepest essence, where all thoughts, words and deeds emanate from. What does emanate from the Virgin Mary's heart? Faith, obedience, tenderness, availability, spirit of service, fortitude, humility, simplicity, gratitude, and a countless rosary of virtues.

Why? We find the answer in Jesus' words: «For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also» (Mt 6:21). Mary's treasure is her Son, and in him she has set her heart; Mary's thoughts, words and deeds have their beginning and their end in the contemplation and satisfaction of the Lord.

Today's Gospel offers us a good sample. After narrating the scene of Jesus lost and found in the temple, it tells us: «His mother kept all these things in her heart» (Lk 2:51). St. Gregory of Nyssa comments: «God allows to be seen by those who have a pure heart». What does Mary keep in her heart? From the Incarnation to Jesus' Ascension to Heaven, through the bitter hours of the Calvary, there are so very many meditated and profound remembrances: the joy of Angel Gabriel's visit announcing Mary God's designs for her, the first kiss and the first embrace to the newly born child, the first steps of her Son on earth, contemplating him growing in wisdom and grace, her “involvement” in the wedding of Cana, Jesus' teachings during his preaching, the savior pains of the Cross, her hopes in the triumph of Resurrection...

Let us beg God to give us the joy of loving him more perfectly every day, with all our heart, as the good sons of the Virgin Mary that we are.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “The knot of Eve's disobedience was untied by Mary's obedience” (St. Irenaeus of Lyon)

- “Devotion to the Heart of Mary is of capital importance, because loving her Son to all humanity, Mary intervenes singularly as an instrument that leads us to Him.” (St. John Paul II)

- “The finding of Jesus in the temple is the only event that breaks the silence of the Gospels about the hidden years of Jesus. Here Jesus lets us catch a glimpse of the mystery of his total consecration to a mission that flows from his divine sonship: ‘Did you not know that I must be about my Father's work?’ Mary and Joseph did not understand these words, but they accepted them in faith. Mary ‘kept all these things in her heart’ during the years Jesus remained hidden in the silence of an ordinary life. (Catechism of the Catholic Church, No. 534)