

**DAY 25: Meditation****CHRIST'S HIDDEN LIFE**

This is a continuation of the exercises proper to the second week, coming again from the extra subjects for spiritual exercises in a part titled "The Mysteries of the Life of Our Lord." **It is found in #71 of the Spiritual Exercises**, and the scripture passage proper to this meditation is Luke chapter 2 verses 51-52.

**1. Act of the Presence of God****2. Preparatory Prayer, as in #46**

*Lord, I ask that all my intentions, actions, and operations may be directed purely to the praise and service of Your Divine Majesty. Amen.*

**3. Prelude 1: Composition of Place**

See the house where the holy family lived in Nazareth. They were not rich, but they were upright and industrious; we can envision a simple and humble house, unadorned and free of luxury, but beautifully kept, clean, peaceful. We can imagine Joseph's workshop, the tools, the wood shavings and projects partly under way- set up alongside the house, or not far from it.

**4. Prelude 2: Petition**

our petition will be the one proper to the second week, in which we ask "for an **intimate knowledge of Christ**, who has become man for me, that I may love Him more and follow Him more closely."

**5. Main Points for Meditation**

**First point:** "He was obedient to his parents."

**Second point:** "Jesus advanced in wisdom and age and grace."

**Third point:** "He appears to have practiced the trade of a carpenter, as St. Mark seems to show in chapter six: 'Is not this the carpenter?'"

**6. Developing the Main Points**

One of the most striking things about Jesus' life is that the vast majority of His time on earth is described by just two sentences in Luke's Gospel. The Catechism of the Catholic Church, number 531, notes that Jesus spent most of His life sharing the condition of the vast majority of human beings without evident greatness.

This gigantic gap in the historical record, when compared with all that the Gospels give us about His birth or His public life, could almost seem like a deficiency in revelation. However, what the Catechism highlights is that His silence is not an absence of revelation; it is actually a profound statement that God makes quietly. He is speaking by action during these years. This is an intentional and eloquent silence, full of significance if we are willing to stop and consider it. Specifically, we can identify two precious pearls within Luke's description.

#### The First Pearl: The Value of Obedience

The first pearl is the value of obedience. The God of the Universe made Himself subject to two of His lowly creatures, living in obedience to them for decades. From all eternity God lives a sovereign life, yet He desired to lay this down to live subject to the natural structure of a human family. Even when we briefly glimpse His sovereignty in the Temple as He speaks of His Father's business, He immediately lays it down again to embrace simplicity and humble obedience. Jesus shows us that the surest way to know and remain in God's will is to be obedient.

Let us consider that He was "subject" to Joseph and Mary. In modern estimation, submission often carries a negative connotation of weak passivity or forced imposition. Yet, Jesus submitted to the holiest woman who ever lived and her gentle husband. Compared to God Himself, their human will implies an infinite constraint. We can imagine the Divine Word, who knows and retains all things in being, peacefully cooperating with Joseph's plan in a dusty workshop; His human intellect being constrained to focus on blocks of wood.

He demonstrates the value of not relying solely on our own judgment, as obeying a legitimate authority prevents us from being mistaken. The Christian law of obedience dictates that a truth stands above personal preference, serving as the sure path to discovering God's will. This law is enshrined in the Fourth Commandment, allowing us to participate in God's sovereignty.

#### The Second Pearl: Glorified in Growth

The second precious pearl is how God is glorified in growth. The Gospel calls attention to the way God is glorified when we grow and mature, echoing Jesus' words in John chapter 10 verse 10 that He came so we may have life abundantly. We glorify God through growth in three specific areas:

In stature: We glorify God by caring for our natural faculties and health, avoiding vices that cause moral depravity and physical harm.

In wisdom: We glorify Him by growing in experience, appreciating human culture, and seeking knowledge through art and study.

In grace: As the crown and purpose of the other two, our spiritual life should be a continuous crescendo. God is infinite, and He desires us to participate increasingly in His inexhaustible goodness.

There is an important nuance here. Human growth is subject to natural decline; our physical and psychological capacities eventually wane. On the spiritual plane, however, there exists no predetermined natural decline. We are called to grow continuously closer to Him. We glorify God by accepting natural human decline while resisting any supernatural decline, allowing our spirit to remain enamored of God and hope in the resurrection.

We have considered these two precious pearls hidden in Christ's obscure years: the law of obedience and the law of supernatural growth. Finally, we can reflect on His daily actions during that time.

He obeyed His mother and father and served them in all simplicity. He carried water, swept the house alongside Mary, worked the saw and hammer, and worshiped in the synagogue alongside His neighbors. A God sweeping; a God serving. This is impossible and unthinkable without the infinite love and condescension of the Divine Word. Let us pause and adore these simple human acts of Jesus, which were at the same time Divine actions.

### **7. Colloquy**

After meditating on these points we come to our colloquy- enter into a dialogue with Jesus, the way that you see Him there in Nazareth, asking that He give you the grace to know Him more, so as to love Him more and follow Him more. May he help us to know that in the duties of our state of life, in each day's pleasures and difficulties and works, when they are carried out with love- there is our sanctification and salvation. Finally we can close with an **Our Father**.