

*HOLY FAMILY SUNDAY, DECEMBER 30, 2017 - B*

*LET ME BEGIN BY READING THIS BRIEF REFLECTION ON THIS SUNDAY'S  
READINGS BY CAROLINE PIGNAT, A MIDDLE AGE MOTHER....*

*SHE REFLECTS BACK ON HER EXPERIENCE OF BECOMING A MOTHER....*

*I HAD READ ALL THE "WHAT TO EXPECT" BOOKS.*

*YET NOTHING PREPARED ME FOR HOW UTTERLY UNPREPARED I FELT AS  
OUR FAMILY-OF-NOW THREE WALKED OUT OF THE MATERNITY WARD  
OF THE HOSPITAL.*

*I DID EVENTUALLY FIGURE OUT THINGS LIKE DIAPERING AND FEEDING.  
HOWEVER, I NEVER FELT READY AS A PARENT.*

*I WAS NOT READY FOR THE RUSH OF LOVE AT MY SON'S FIRST SMILE,  
THE GRIPPING FEAR I EXPERIENCED DURING A LATE-NITE HOSPITAL  
VISIT*

*OR THE OVERWHELMING EMOTION WASHING OVER ME AS I SAW HIM  
CLIMB ONTO THE YELLOW BUS ON HIS FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL.*

*THAT'S THE FUNNY THING ABOUT PARENTING.*

*ONCE YOU THINK YOU HAVE IT FIGURED OUT, THE KIDS ARE ALREADY  
ONTO THE NEXT STAGE:*

*CRAWLING, WALKING, RUNNING, DRIVING, DATING.*

*IMPORTANT STATEMENT - I WOULD SAY -*

*"I NEVER FELT READY AS A PARENT" .....*

*I REMEMBER MY MOM WISHING THAT THERE WAS*

*MANUAL OR CLASSES TO PREPARE HER AND DAD TO BE PARENTS*

*MY GUESS IS THAT MARY AND JOSEPH DID NOT FEEL READY TO BE PARENTS EITHER*

*MAYBE THAT WAS ONE OF THE REASONS THEY WENT TO THE TEMPLE ... WHY THE PRESENTED JESUS IN THE TEMPLE...*

*MARY AND JOSEPH WERE LOOKING FOR SUPPORT FROM THE LARGER RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY - AND THEY FOUND IT DIDN'T THEY?*

*THEY MUST HAVE BELIEVED WHAT WE SAY:*

*"IT TAKES A VILLAGE TO RAISE A CHILD'*

*MARY AND JOSEPH, MOM AND DAD CAN'T DO IT ALONE....*

*THEY FOUND SOME WISDOM IN BOTH SIMEON AND ANNA.....*

*SIMEON AND ANNA WERE TRUE ELDERS....*

*THEY SAW SOMETHING IN THIS CHILD THAT NOT EVEN MARY AND JOSEPH WERE ABLE TO SEE....*

*THAT IS SO IMPORTANT ISN'T IT?*

*FOR ELDERS TO SEE SOMETHING IN A CHILD THAT NOT EVEN THE PARENTS CAN SEE - THEY ARE SO CLOSE TO THE CHILD*

*"THE CHILD'S FATHER AND MOTHER WERE AMAZED AT WHAT WAS SAID ABOUT HIM....."*

*NOTICE SIMEON TOOK JESUS INTO HIS ARMS AND BLESSED GOD WHAT A LOVING AND AFFIRMING GESTURE.....*

*I NOTICE IT PROBABLY BECAUSE I DON'T HAVE A LOT OF CONFIDENCE IN THAT AREA -- I CERTAINLY DON'T HAVE A LOT OF PRACTICE EITHER - I NOTICE I'M HESITANT - BUT I REALIZE HOW IMPORTANT IT IS....*

***TO HOLD, TO BE HELD, TO TOUCH AND TO BE TOUCHED, TO BE ROCKED -  
AT THAT AGE ESPECIALLY -***

***WE DON'T DEVELOP WITHOUT IT, WE KNOW THAT EMPIRICALLY NOW  
AND IT IS ALSO IMPORTANT TO BE HELD BY OTHERS, ISN'T IT -***

***BESIDES JUST YOUR OWN PARENTS - AND TO TRUST THAT  
NOTICE TOO SIMEON BESIDES BLESSING THE CHILD ALSO BLESSES THE  
MOTHER.....***

***SIMEON AND ANNA ARE TRUE ELDERS....***

***THEY BOTH RECOGNIZE THE SPECIAL AND UNIQUE GIFTEDNESS OF THE  
YOUNGER GENERATION - BOTH THE CHILD AND HIS PARENTS***

***THAT HAPPENS IN THIS COMMUNITY ALSO DOESN'T IT? HAVE YOU  
NOTICED?***

***I REMEMBER DREW NANDA SAYING WAY BACK IN THE SPRING ABOUT HIS  
CONFIRMATION SPONSOR HOW IMPORTANT HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH  
ERIC GROFF.....HAS BEEN FOR HIM***

***BESIDES THE MENTORING WE RECEIVE FROM OUR PARENTS WE ALSO  
NEED THAT CONTACT WITH TRUE ELDERS OUTSIDE OF OUR FAMILY TO  
HELP US DEVELOP AND GROW IN WISDOM AND GRACE...***

***I LOVE WATCHING TIM CONNAIR WALK JOHN PAUL BACK TO HIS PEW  
AFTER THE FAMILY COMES UP FOR COMMUNION....***

***IT'S LITTLE THINGS LIKE THAT - THAT ARE HUGE REALLY....***

***BOTH THE YOUNGER GENERATION AND THE OLDER GENERATION NEED  
THAT INTERACTION AND CONNECTION....***

***THE MUTUAL GIFT WE GIVE TO ONE ANOTHER....***

***HOPEFULLY, ONE OF THE PLACES THAT WE CAN GET THAT IS HERE AT THE TEMPLE....***

***THERE ARE CERTAINLY OTHER PLACES TOO -***

***THE UNIQUENESS OF THIS PLACE IS THE FAITH PERSPECTIVE WE BRING TO IT...***

***AT CONFIRMATION TIME LAST SPRING I ALSO REMEMBER VIOLETTE SAYING HOW MUCH SHE RECEIVED FROM THE TEENS SINCE SHE HAS BEEN WORKING WITH THEM....***

***IN OUR GOSPEL READING TODAY WE HAVE THAT INTERACTION BETWEEN THREE GENERATIONS -***

***THE CHILD - THE PARENTS -***

***AND THE ELDERS - SIMEON AND ANNA***

***MUTUALLY BENEFICAL FOR EVERYONE***

***I THINK THAT IS ALSO TRUE OF OUR COMMUNITY -***

***WE PRAY THAT WILL CONTINUE....IT IS SO IMPORTANT***

***IT IS VERY EVIDENT IN THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM***

***NOTICE THAT SIMEON NOT ONLY ACKNOWLEDGES THE GIFTS, THE***

***WONDER OF THE CHILD BEFORE HIM BUT HE ALSO SPEAKS HONESTLY***

***AND, I WOULD SAY, INTIMATELY TO MARY, FROM A FAITH PERSPECTIVE,***

***ABOUT HER MOTHERHOOD AND THE COSTS OF HER LOVE FOR THIS***

***CHILD.....***

***IN MY MIND, HE IS BASICALLY SAYING, WHAT RICHARD ROHR SAYS, IS***

***TRUE FOR ALL OF US.***

***WHERE THERE IS LOVE YOU WILL ALSO ALWAYS FIND SUFFERING....***

***YOU CAN'T HAVE ONE WITHOUT THE OTHER -***

***SUFFERING BEING DEFINED AS WHAT YOU CANNOT CONTROL....***

***BASICALLY, THEY ARE TWO SIDES OF THE SAME COIN***

***SIMEON IS TELLING MARY THAT WITH HER LOVE FOR THIS CHILD WILL***

***COME SUFFERING - BUT IT HAS A PURPOSE - A DIVINE PURPOSE***

***I.E. "...THE RISE AND FALL OF MANY IN ISRAEL, AND TO BE A SIGN THAT***

***WILL BE CONTRADICTED ---AND THE THOUGHTS OF MANY HEARTS MAY***

***BE REVEALED"***

***YOUR LOVE, YOUR SUFFERING IS NOT WITHOUT PURPOSE...***

***SO WE COME TOGETHER AS A LARGER FAMILY IN FAITH TO GIVE***

***SUPPORT TO THE SMALLER UNITS AMONG US -***

***IN SOME CASES - AN INDIVIDUAL - IN MOST CASES A FAMILY UNIT***

***LET US PRAY THAT WE WILL GIVE THE SUPPORT THAT IS NEEDED -***

***WHETHER INDIVIDUALS OR FAMILIES....ENABLING EACH OTHER TO***

***GROW AND BECOME STRONG, FILLED WITH WISDOM AND THE FAVOR OF***

***GOD***