



(Affiliated To The Worldwide Traditional Anglican Communion)

Memorial Church Anglican - Whitefield

Consecrated 1886

Main Road, Whitefield, Bangalore 560 066

SERMON 1st. SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY 09.01.2011

St. Luke introduces us to the presence of the Holy family in the Gospel portion read to us this morning. This Sunday is set apart for a remembrance of the Holy family.

The Holy family lived in a small town of Nazareth which lay in a hollow among the hills of southern Galilee. The hills above the town were bare and rocky and the soil was only deep enough to allow grass and certain brilliantly coloured flowers to grow. There was only one spring at Nazareth – up in the hills – this water was conducted to a basin, in the centre of the town, known as the virgins well, and was the only source of water for the entire town. This well still exists today.

Josephus, the famous Jewish historian, records that Joseph was a carpenter who had his carpentry unit outside the town that produced wooden tools used for agricultural purposes. Jesus worked in this unit. Mary tended to the one room house and looked after the dome shaped oven that kept the house warm at night, and enabled her to cook food for the family during the day. During the morning hours Jesus studied in a local synagogue. The Shema was put on the door post of the house - written on a parchment. Each time the family members went in or out it was touched and the name of God was venerated. In their living Josephus portrays the family as a close knit unit.

The gospel portion also shows that this family is a close knit unit, when, on their journey to Jerusalem to fulfil regulations for the Passover, Mary and Joseph become very anxious when they find Jesus is missing. When they do find him – the first words of Jesus are being made known to the world in verse 49 of the Gospel portion read today, ‘How is it that ye sought me, whist ye not that I must be about my father’s business?’ This underlines a hidden life of Jesus while participating in the every day life of his family in an unimaginably narrow and primitive environment of the small town. In these words we find the prophesy by Simeon being fulfilled – the sword of discrimination between child and parents is now starting to work. In our lives of commitment –

- Where lies the level of our heavenly father’s business?
 - How close knit a unit is our family living?
 - Are we as a family enabled to venerate the name of God on a moment by moment basis?
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