

## HOMILY PRESENTATION OF THE LORD YRA 2020

There are really three aspects to our faith. They interact with one another but you can separate them conceptually. First we have our spirituality. I equate this with your feelings. It is what you feel is most important in your life. When push comes to shove, this is going to have an effect on your actions. You may not have consciously thought this through. For example, if money is the most important thing in your life, if there is a conflict between what is best for your family and spending more time at work you will tend to spend more time at work. If you need to do things that are not quite right to gain more money, you are more likely to do it. If being a Christian, or being a disciple of Jesus Christ is the most important, this is going to have a positive effect on all areas of your life. The second aspect of our faith is our theology. It is what you believe in your heart about God. Most people believe at least in some type of higher power, I would guess that most of us here believe in God, believe in Jesus. If you believe in God, Jesus that means that you believe that they exist. My question for you today is do you believe God, do you believe Jesus? Do you believe that they will do what they promised? Do you believe that Jesus Christ has saved us? Do you believe that God loves us unconditionally? Do you believe that God will never abandon us? Do you believe that God will always care for us and even when things do not happen the way we think they should that everything will be OK? What do you believe in your heart? The third aspect of faith is our religion, how we live out our spirituality and our beliefs. Until we practice what we feel and what we believe in our hearts, it just stays inside of us. Here is an example spiritually and beliefs without action. If I see a hungry, homeless person, I may feel sorry for them. I may feel lucky that is not me. I may believe that no one in the United States should go hungry, but until I do something to help them, it remains inside of me.

Today we celebrate the feast of the Presentation of the Lord, and we encounter the Holy Family, which is a good example of having these three areas of faith in line. The angel Gabriel appeared to

Mary and God came to Joseph in a dream and they both turned their lives totally upside down. They must have felt God was the most important thing in their lives because they immediately did what God was asking. They did not weigh the pros and cons. They did not take a month to decide. They responded immediately. And they must have believed all of the Jewish laws because they followed them. They observed the period of purification and they brought Jesus to the Temple. They recognized the importance of acting upon their feelings and their beliefs in their hearts and connecting with the Jewish community. And in the process they got the benefit of the spiritual insights of Simeon and Anna.

If we feel that God, Jesus is most important in our lives and we believe God, Jesus in our hearts, we have to let this effect what we do and a big part of that is joining with our Catholic Community. Coming together in a Catholic Community assures us that we are not alone in an uncertain world. By coming together as a Catholic Community we evoke the feeling that God is in our midst. When we come to church we find other worshipers looking for what we are looking for and finding it together. We become something greater than our solitary selves. We need to celebrate our joys together. There is an incredible spirit here at Mass on Christmas and Easter. There is a reason why people are drawn in great numbers on those Holy Days. We also have to share our sorrows. The most effective way of easing the loss of a loved one is to be surrounded by people holding your hand, drying your tears and grieving with you. There is a reason why people who have been away from the church for a period of time come back when they have the loss of a loved one. And you also gain the insights of other people on the spiritual journey with you.

Do you feel that God, Jesus is most important in your life? Do you believe in God, Jesus in your heart? Do you believe that God, Jesus will do what he promised? Are you going to let that effect what you do? Are you going to practice your religion?