



LIVING THE GOSPEL

The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph December 28th 2025

Theme: "Out of Egypt I called my son."

Gathering Prayer

All: O God, who were pleased to give us the shining example of the Holy Family, graciously grant that we may imitate them in practicing the virtues of family life and in the bonds of charity, and so, in the joy of your house, delight one day in eternal rewards. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reign with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Exploring the Word

Gospel Reading: Matt 2: 13-15, 19-23

¹³ After they had left, the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, 'Get up, take the child and his mother with you, and escape into Egypt, and stay there until I tell you, because Herod intends to search for the child and do away with him'.

¹⁴ So Joseph got up and, taking the child and his mother with him, left that night for Egypt, ¹⁵ where he stayed until Herod was dead. This was to fulfil what the Lord had spoken through the prophet: I called my son out of Egypt.

¹⁹ After Herod's death, the angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt

²⁰ and said, 'Get up, take the child and his mother with you and go back to the land of Israel, for those who wanted to kill the child are dead'.

²¹ So Joseph got up and, taking the child and his mother with him, went back to the land of Israel. ²² But when he learnt that Archelaus had succeeded his father Herod as ruler of Judaea he was afraid to go there, and being warned in a dream he left for the region of Galilee. ²³ There he settled in a town called Nazareth. In this way the words spoken through the prophets were to be fulfilled: 'He will be called a Nazarene.'

Gospel Focus

Parenthood is a tough task and maybe especially at Mass, where the expectations for behavior are the exact opposite of a toddler's usual mode of being. Conversely, proclaiming the word of God to a cacophony of crying children and preoccupied parents can also be a daunting task-you might find yourself asking, "Is anyone listening?" Today's readings are a reminder of the important role that parents play, modeling in their own families God's loving care for his children. Joseph in particular is shown as taking decisive action to look after his family, even in the face of fear. If your parish is typically well attended by young families, give thanks to God for their presence! Perhaps you are a parent yourself and know the struggle of caring for children at Mass. Take the time to pray for all parents of your parish, and these young families especially, that God's word of encouragement might console them as they live their vocation.

Gospel Reflection

Today's gospel tells of Joseph's dream, in which a divine messenger relay's Herod's intent to kill the infant Jesus. The angel instructs Joseph to flee with Mary and the child to Egypt, a traditional place of refuge for Israelites (e.g., Gen 42-48; 1 Kings 11:40; Jer 26:21). They too faced a treacherous journey through the desert, though the gospel tells none of those details. We can only imagine Mary and Joseph's fear as they stole away under the cover of darkness and all the hardships they endured. Matthew says nothing about what happened when they arrived in a strange place, having to navigate in an unfamiliar language and culture. Who helped them along the way? How did Joseph find work? What did Mary think about Joseph's dreams? The evangelist skips ahead to the Holy Family's departure from Egypt, quoting Hosea 11:1, "Out of Egypt I called my son." As he so often does, Matthew interprets all that happens in the life of Jesus as fulfillment of the Scripture. By identifying Jesus with Moses and the exodus, he introduces the theme that Jesus is the new authoritative teacher of the law.

Just as Moses received a divine command to return home after the death of those who sought his life (Exod 4:19), so Joseph follows the angel's command to return home after the death of Herod the Great. Herod's sons, however, still posed a threat. Archelaus, the eldest, was no less cruel than his father, so Joseph is fearful of returning to Judea. Once again, he is directed by an angel in a dream, and he settles his family in the more peaceful Galilee. Again, Matthew interprets this move as a fulfillment of Scripture. Matthew's meaning is puzzling, however, since there is no text in the Scriptures that says, "He shall be called a Nazorean." It is likely that he intends an allusion to Isaiah 11:1, which speaks of a shoot (*netzer*) that will sprout from the stump of Jesse, thus highlighting Jesus' royal Davidic lineage.

The experience of the Holy Family of having to flee for their lives into a foreign land gives strength and courage to millions of today's migrants. Those living in their countries of destination are challenged by the gospel to consider what kind of welcome they would want to offer to newcomers if they were none other than Jesus' own family.

Old and New Testament links

First Reading — Eccles 3:2-6, 12-14

² The Lord honors the father in his children, and upholds the rights of a mother over her sons. ³ Whoever respects his father is atoning for his sins, ⁴ he who honors his mother is like someone amassing a fortune.

⁵ Whoever respects his father will be happy with children of his own, he shall be heard on the day when he prays. ⁶ Long life comes to him who honors his father, he who sets his mother at ease is showing obedience to the Lord.

¹² My son, support your father in his old age, do not grieve him during his life. ¹³ Even if his mind should fail, show him sympathy, do not despise him in your health and strength; ¹⁴ for kindness to a father shall not be forgotten but will serve as reparation for your sins.

Responsorial Reading — Psalms 128: 1-2, 3, 4-5

R: Happy, all those who fear Yahweh and follow in his paths.

Happy, all those who fear Yahweh and follow in his paths.

You will eat what your hands have worked for, happiness and prosperity will be yours.

(R)

Your wife: a fruitful vine on the inner walls of your house. Your sons: round your table like shoots round an olive tree. **(R)**

Such are the blessings that fall on the man who fears Yahweh. May Yahweh bless you from Zion, may you see Jerusalem prosperous all the days of your life! **(R)**

Second Reading — Col 3: 12-21

¹⁴ You are God's chosen race, his saints; he loves you, and you should be clothed in sincere compassion, in kindness and humility, gentleness and patience.

¹³ Bear with one another; forgive each other as soon as a quarrel begins. The Lord has forgiven you; now you must do the same.

¹⁴ Over all these clothes, to keep them together and complete them, put on love.

¹⁵ And may the peace of Christ reign in your hearts, because it is for this that you were called together as parts of one body. Always be thankful.

¹⁶ Let the message of Christ, in all its richness, find a home with you. Teach each other, and advise each other, in all wisdom. With gratitude in your hearts sing psalms and hymns and inspired songs to God; ¹⁷ and never say or do anything except in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

¹⁸ Wives, give way to your husbands, as you should in the Lord.

¹⁹ Husbands, love your wives and treat them with gentleness.

²⁰ Children, be obedient to your parents always, because that is what will please the Lord. ²¹ Parents, never drive your children to resentment or you will make them feel frustrated.

Catechism of The Catholic Church

333. From the Incarnation to the Ascension, the life of the Word incarnate is surrounded by the adoration and service of angels. When God "brings the firstborn into the world, he says: 'Let all God's angels worship him.'" Their song of praise at the birth of Christ has not ceased resounding in the Church's praise: "Glory to God in the highest!" They protect Jesus in his infancy, serve him in the desert, and strengthen him in his agony in the garden, when he could have been saved by them from the hands of his enemies as Israel had been. Again, it is the angels who "evangelize" by proclaiming the Good News of Christ's Incarnation and Resurrection. They will be present at Christ's return, which they will announce, to serve at his judgment

530. The flight into Egypt and the massacre of the innocents make manifest the opposition of darkness to the light: "He came to his own home, and his own people received him not." Christ's whole life was lived under the sign of persecution. His own share it with him. Jesus' departure from Egypt recalls the exodus and presents him as the definitive liberator of God's people

Sharing and Discussion

1. "Clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience." Does the peace of Christ truly rule your heart? In which areas of your life do you hesitate to let Him take the lead?"

2. How does Joseph's willingness to obey God, even at great personal sacrifice, challenge the way you respond to God's call?

3. When God calls you into uncertainty or challenge, how do you usually respond—resistance, hesitation, or with trust? What helps you surrender more fully to His guidance in your daily life?

Closing Prayer

Leader: Loving God, hear the prayers we raised today through the intercession of the Holy Family and answer them according to your will. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Leader: May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil and bring us to everlasting life.

All: Amen