

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

The shepherds went in haste,
and found Mary and Joseph and the Infant
lying in a manger.

GLORIA

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you,
we bless you,
we adore you,
we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

COLLECT

O God, who were pleased to give us
the shining example of the Holy Family,
graciously grant that we may imitate them
in practising 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 reigns with you in the unity of the
Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever. Amen.

FIRST READING 1 Sam 1:20-22,24-28

A reading from the first book of Samuel
Hannah conceived and gave birth to a son, and
called him Samuel 'since' she said 'I asked the
Lord for him.'

When a year had gone by, the husband
Elkanah went up again with all his family to offer
the annual sacrifice to the Lord and to fulfil his
vow. Hannah, however, did not go up, having
said to her husband, 'Not before the child is
weaned. Then I will bring him and present him
before the Lord and he shall stay there for ever.'

When she had weaned him, she took him up
with her together with a three-year-old bull,
an ephah of flour and a skin of wine, and she
brought him to the temple of the Lord at Shiloh;
and the child was with them. They slaughtered
the bull and the child's mother came to Eli. She
said, 'If you please, my lord. As you live, my lord,
I am the woman who stood here beside you,
praying to the Lord. This is the child I prayed for,
and the Lord granted me what I asked him. Now
I make him over to the Lord for the whole of his
life. He is made over to the Lord.'

There she left him, for the Lord.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM Ps 83:2-3, 5-6, 9-10

Response:

They are happy who dwell in your house,
O Lord.

- How lovely is your dwelling place,
Lord, God of hosts.
My soul is longing and yearning,

is yearning for the courts of the Lord.
My heart and my soul ring out their joy
to God, the living God. (R.)

- They are happy, who dwell in your house,
for ever singing your praise.
They are happy, whose strength is in you;
they walk with ever growing strength (R.)

- O Lord God of hosts, hear my prayer,
give ear, O God of Jacob.
Turn your eyes, O God, our shield,
look on the face of your anointed. (R.)

SECOND READING 1 Jn 3:1-2, 21-24

A reading from the first letter of St John
Think of the love that the Father has lavished
on us,
by letting us be called God's children;
and that is what we are.
Because the world refused to acknowledge him,
therefore it does not acknowledge us.
My dear people, we are already the children of
God
but what we are to be in the future has not yet
been revealed;
all we know is, that when it is revealed
we shall be like him
because we shall see him as he really is.
My dear people,
if we cannot be condemned by our own
conscience,
we need not be afraid in God's presence,
and whatever we ask him,
we shall receive,
because we keep his commandments
and live the kind of life that he wants.
His commandments are these:
that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus
Christ
and that we love one another
as he told us to.
Whoever keeps his commandments
lives in God and God lives in him.
We know that he lives in us
by the Spirit that he has given us.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia! Open our heart, O lord, to
accept the words of your Son. Alleluia!

GOSPEL Lk 2:41-52

A reading from the holy Gospel according to
Luke

Every year the parents of Jesus used to go
to Jerusalem for the feast of the Passover.
When he was twelve years old, they went up
for the feast as usual. When they were on
their way home after the feast, the boy Jesus
stayed behind in Jerusalem without his parents
knowing it. They assumed he was with the
caravan, and it was only after a day's journey
that they went to look for him among their
relations and acquaintances. When they failed
to find him they went back to Jerusalem looking
for him everywhere.

Three days later, they found him in the
Temple, sitting among the doctors, listening
to them, and asking them questions; and
all those who heard him were astounded at
his intelligence and his replies. They were
overcome when they saw him, and his mother
said to him, 'My child, why have you done this
to us? See how worried your father and I have
been, looking for you.'

'Why were you looking for me?' he replied.
'Did you not know that I must be busy with my

Father's affairs?' But they did not understand
what he meant.

He then went down with them and came to
Nazareth and lived under their authority.

His mother stored up all these things in
her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom, in
stature, and in favour with God and men.

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial with
the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,

(all bow during the next three lines)

and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the
Virgin Mary,
and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under
Pontius Pilate,
he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord,
the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is adored
and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and
apostolic Church.
I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness
of sins
and I look forward to the resurrection of the
dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

We offer you, Lord, the sacrifice of conciliation,
humbly asking that,
through the intercession of the Virgin Mother of
God and Saint Joseph,
you may establish our families firmly in your
grace and your peace.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Our God has appeared on the earth and lived
among us.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Bring those you refresh with this heavenly
Sacrament,
most merciful Father,
to imitate constantly the example of the Holy
Family,
so that, after the trials of this world,
we may share their company for ever.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Sunday Message

The Holy Family Of Jesus, Mary And Joseph

THE WORD

Year C • 29 December 2024 • Colour: White • Psalter Week 1



GONE MISSING

LK 2:41-52

It is less than a week since Christmas and already the Gospel reading has jumped twelve years to when Jesus is on the cusp of becoming a teenager. Mary and Joseph have gone to Jerusalem for the feast of Passover.

Three times a year the Jewish people celebrate major festivals - Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles - and it was customary in the time of Jesus for Jewish males to visit the temple for these feasts.

Mary and Joseph, as devout Jews, would have considered it important to take their son along with them. It is a happy occasion, but then Jesus goes missing. His parents think he is with one of the other families in the group and when they realise that he isn't, they are distraught. They rush back to Jerusalem and eventually find him sitting in the temple answering questions and talking to the adults, oblivious to their distress. Mary and Joseph are puzzled and hurt when they find him, and they question him as to why he had left them. He tells them that he has been about his heavenly Father's business. They remain puzzled. They do not fully understand the mission of Jesus, and they must ponder the mystery of it all.

Jesus returns with them to Nazareth and grows in stature and wisdom, learning about life and about faith from his parents. ■

DO

Take time today to tell your family members, wherever they may be, how much you love them.

SAY

"Lord, bless my family and all families. Help us to grow rich in what matters most of all - love, unity and joy."

LEARN

The feast of the Holy Family was instituted in 1921, and has been celebrated on the first Sunday after Christmas since 1969. The Holy Family is seen as the model for the human family, the religious community and the Church itself. It is a celebration not only of the Holy Family itself but of the ideal of the Christian family on which the Church has always placed great emphasis.

PRAY

Pray for families who are divided and broken and for all who have family members who are missing, that they will have the courage to remain hopeful.

REFLECT

Earlier this year when the Princess of Wales disappeared from public view for some time, there was intense speculation as to the reason for her absence. Had something happened to her? Was a cover up under way to prevent the true story from coming out? Was something sinister going on? Social media especially was full of wild speculation and conspiracy theories, which ended only when the Palace revealed that she was being treated for cancer.

Most of us enjoy a bit of gossip and speculation. Discretion is hard, especially if we've received a juicy piece of news. We promise to keep it a secret, but it spills out. We can't help it. We get a buzz from passing it on, especially if it's salacious. This impulse to share is part of the human condition. Even though we know how harmful gossip and idle speculation can be, still we end up engaging in it, as if we've been compelled to do so by some inner force we can't control.

And all gossip is harmful. It almost always does damage to an individual or a relationship. Even if there is some basis to it, it is still harmful, because it hurts a family or a good name. It is never innocent because there is always a victim.

And once a story spreads, it starts to get embellished, becoming ever more detailed and colourful along the way.

Humans enjoy scandal. Being purveyors of embarrassing information seems to make us feel better about ourselves. "Did you hear about so and so? The wife is after walking out on him. Sure, it's no surprise. They say things have been bad in that house for a long time."

We can imagine what was being said about Mary and Joseph's parenting skills after Jesus went missing in Jerusalem. "Did you hear about Joseph and Mary's young fellow? He's after running away. I wonder what that's all about?" And so the gossip begins.

Pope Francis is a frequent critic of gossip, which, he says, "is not a work of the Holy Spirit, it is not a work of the unity of the Church. Gossip destroys the work of God."

He points to its disruptive nature. Peace is a gift that can easily be destroyed through petty gossip and speaking ill of others, he says. "There is no such thing as innocent gossip."

If you've ever been its victim, you will know how spot on Pope Francis is about gossip. God's word is constructive. It creates, not destroys. It builds up, never tears down. So it must be with our words too.

The start of a new year is a good time to reflect on how we use words, and whether and to what extent we spread gossip or speak ill of others. In an era when it's easier to disseminate fake news than ever before, when disinformation and misinformation are rife, we need to take Pope Francis' words of admonition to heart. We can never hurt somebody by not gossiping about them. ■