

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON (or a hymn) The shepherds went in haste, and found Mary and Joseph and the Infant lying in a manger.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM (Ps 83)

ANTIPHON: How happy they who dwell in your house, O Lord.

RESPONSE: How happy they who dwell in your house, O Lord.

LECTOR: 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.**

LECTOR: 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.**

LECTOR: 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.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION Alleluia, alleluia! Open our heart, O Lord, to listen to the words of your Son. Alleluia!

COMMUNION ANTIPHON (or a hymn) Our God has appeared on the earth, and lived among us.

TODAY'S READINGS 1 Samuel 1:20-22, 24-28; 1 John 3:1-2, 21-24; Luke 2:41-52

NEXT WEEK (The Epiphany of the Lord) Isaiah 60:1-6; Psalm 71; Ephesians 3:2-3, 5-6; Matthew 2:1-12

Merry
Christmas
from
Majellan

Christmas Greetings

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Jesus and His family



Image: David Yonatan González Aburto from Pixabay 29 December 2024 Holy Family Year C

We are indebted to St Luke for giving us some insight into the life of Jesus some forty days after his birth and then at the age of twelve. On both occasions, Jesus is depicted being with his parents, Joseph and Mary, on a hundred-mile round trip from Nazareth to visit the Jerusalem temple. At best, their “caravan” would have consisted of mules and donkeys along with lots of Nazarenes travelling together to protect themselves from being robbed.

On the first occasion, Jesus as the first-born son is presented to the Lord in the temple as Mosaic custom required. On the second occasion, which we heard in today’s Gospel, the parents take the twelve-year old Jesus to the temple in celebration of the feast of Passover. This is the holiest feast on the Israelite calendar commemorating Jewish freedom from slavery in Egypt and the beginning of their journey towards the Promised Land.

Luke, himself a Gentile (non-Jew), demonstrates strong links between the Holy Family, Jewish traditions and the God of Israel. However, the narrative of Jesus being lost on the homebound journey, only to be discovered “three days later” teaching in the temple, is a remarkable story! How are we to interpret this strange and somewhat challenging turn of events?

In some ways this is the common story known to all parents as children approach adolescence and begin to express their independence. Moreover, on finding that Jesus is not among their “relatives and acquaintances” in the returning caravan, you can imagine the fear and anguish that Joseph and

Mary experienced. Then on finding him, their relief and joy are evident. But, so too, is their incomprehension of Jesus’ actions evident in the encounter between Jesus and Mary.

First of all, we note it is Mary rather than Joseph who confronts Jesus asking him directly: “Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been so worried looking for you.” Jesus’ response – “Why were you searching for me?” – carries a hint of annoyance that his parents understood him so poorly. So, he asks them: “Didn’t you know I had to be in my Father’s house?”

Here, the tension between Jesus and his parents is palpable with Luke telling us directly: “They did not understand what he was saying to them.” Quite evidently we are witnessing a poignant moment in the life of the Jewish village boy, Jesus, discovering his vocation in the service of God takes priority over family ties. Nonetheless, we are told, Jesus returned to the family home in Nazareth where he grew to maturity as an obedient and faithful son.

This is the last we hear of Jesus until he begins his public ministry around the age of thirty. We may well surmise that, in the meantime, Jesus took up Joseph’s carpentry trade while he continued to develop his knowledge of the Jewish Scriptures. Yet, this temple incident reminds us that Jesus’ messiahship comes to birth in the context of family life and relationships.

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