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Holy Family - 29 December 2024

Andrew Doohan

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29 December 2024

The Holy Family

Reflection by Andrew Doohan

Introduction

Today's solemnity of the Holy Family reminds us of the complexities that can arise when human relationships encounter the mission of Christians to proclaim the reign of God to the world.

Penitential Act

Use one of the *Roman Missal* texts or this optional litany form:

Lord Jesus, you humbly came into the world as a child. Lord, have mercy.

You showed us how to love through our own lives. Christ, have mercy.

You came so we could become children of the light. Lord, have mercy.

First Reading

1 Samuel 1:20–22, 24–28

Hannah's long-prayed-for son, whom she named Samuel for that reason, is 'made over to the Lord' in recognition of God's answering of Hannah's prayers. This act, on Hannah's part, gives back to God what God gave her.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 83:2–3. 5–6. 9–10. R v5

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

The Psalmist sings of the desire to live within God's Temple, and there participate in the worship of God.

Second Reading

1 John 3:1–2, 21–24

John's first letter reminds those who hear it that those who believe in Jesus Christ and keep his command—especially the command to love one another—are already the children of God alongside Christ.

Gospel Reading

Luke 2:41–52

In Jerusalem, to fulfil their religious duty at Passover, the child-man Jesus goes missing from the presence of Mary and Joseph. Concerned for his safety, they search for him for three days and then find him in the Temple.

Reflection

It was three days.

Three long, excruciating days. Filled no doubt with fear and apprehension in a way that any parent has experienced or can potentially imagine.

Three days during which Mary and Joseph could not find Jesus. Three days during which their fears would only grow. Three days when Jesus was missing, absent from the presence of those who loved him.

The obvious overtones of the three days Jesus would spend in a tomb at the end of his earthly existence, separated from those who had come to love him, are hard to miss. As is the eventual place where Jesus is found: the Temple, his Father's house, just as he would return to the Father's heavenly abode at the Ascension.

In recounting this event, Luke's Gospel provides a rare scriptural glimpse into the young years of Jesus, a time between his birth and the beginning of his public ministry to which we do not often refer. And in so doing, we see that even as a young adolescent he is about his Father's work.

Just before the excerpt from Luke's Gospel we hear today, we are told how Mary and Joseph had taken the newborn Jesus to the Temple and presented him to the Lord as the Law of Moses commanded. There in the Temple, Simeon and Anna foretold that this child—their child—was to be the means by which the People of God would be redeemed.

The command that each firstborn male was to be dedicated to the Lord was honoured by Mary and Joseph, and the echoes of Hannah's actions heard in today's first reading are hard to miss.

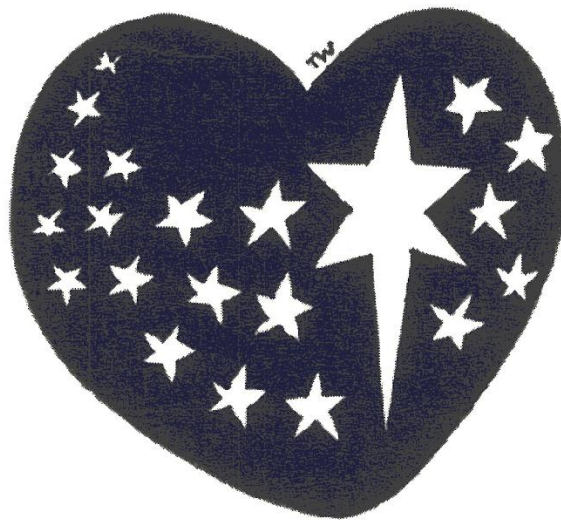
So perhaps it should have been no surprise to Mary and Joseph that twelve years later, Jesus, on the very cusp of becoming a man according to the Law, was discovered in the Temple listening to the teachers of the Law, asking questions, and amazing all those who heard him. Perhaps it should have been no surprise that Jesus would respond to the apparent concern of Mary and Joseph in a way that parents of teenagers might recognise all too well.

'Did you not know that I must be busy with my Father's affairs?'

This single-minded focus on what he needed to be about is a foretaste of what we will see during his public ministry: a driving passion to proclaim the coming of God's kingdom just as he was sent by the Father to do. This single-mindedness to be about

the task entrusted to him would eventually take Jesus to the cross and the resurrection, despite pleas from others for Jesus to take a different path.

The seemingly dismissive response to the concerns of Mary and Joseph that we hear in today's Gospel is one more foretaste from the early chapters of Luke that reminds us that this child would have a singular place in the history of God's People.



Open our hearts
to receive
Christ's light.

Prayer of the Faithful

Introduction

As we gather here today as your people to honour the Holy Family of Nazareth, we turn to you with confidence that our needs will be heard.

Petitions

We pray for Pope Francis and all our Church leaders that through your strength they will guide their flock in peace and integrity.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for all the leaders of our world. May they be very conscious of the needs of all families, especially those in developing countries.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for those who are sick and suffering in this world, particularly those suffering from homelessness and family violence. May they see God's compassion and mercy through those who care for them.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for all families who are victims of violence and abuse. May they find safety, peace and a place to heal their bodies, minds and souls and may those who are violent find a way towards loving relationships.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for all families travelling during this holiday period. May they find courtesy and generosity on the roads and hospitality wherever they go.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for those who grieve for loved ones. May they find gentleness and compassion in those who care for them.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for elderly people in care facilities who no longer receive visits from family and friends. May those whom they long for find the strength and compassion to visit them and patiently hold on to the person they knew and the person they see now.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

Conclusion

Loving Father, you welcomed the children that came to you through the love of your Son and so we have confidence that you listen to our prayer, which we make through the guiding presence of the Spirit in the name of Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Music selections by Alessio Loiacono and Chris deSilva

The Holy Family, Year C (29 December 2024)

Title	AOV	AOV2	AOVK	CWB	CWBII	GA
Angels we have heard on high		140		622	255	286
At last, all-pow'rful Master					225	
Away in a manger					256	289
Baby lying in a manger			63			
Canticle of Simeon				636		301
For the beauty of the earth	123			678	487	427
Hail Mary: gentle woman						544
In the temple now behold him					427	
Joy to the world	170			728	265	295
Lord God, you now have set your servant free					226	
My master, see, the time has come				636	227	
Once in royal David's city				782	269	297
Sing of Mary, pure and lowly				808		
There is nothing told					418	548
What child is this?	165				275	

Title	AOVNG	S&S2
Among all	8	
Hail Mary: gentle woman		336

Psalms Selected by Chris deSilva and Angela McCarthy

Psalm 83: *How happy they who dwell in your house, O Lord.*

	CWB	GA	JOBC	LPC
Psalm 83	194	48	pg. 20	pg. 18

Music selections by Michael Mangan

Glory to God (TT/SYJ) [Gathering, Recessional]

Glory, gloria (STAR) [CHILDREN, Gathering, Recessional]

Sing new songs of joy (FWS/CWB II) *based on Ps 97 (98)*

This little boy (TT/SYJ) [Non-Scriptural Reflection - Gifts]