

# The Holy Family

The Feast of the Holy Family of  
Jesus, Mary, and Joseph  
Cycle C | December 29, 2024

## WISDOM FROM THE CELLS

I remember a time I have felt I let someone close to me down... I remember, personally, when I let my mother and father down in so many ways. I have been in prison since the age of 18, I've been involved with gangs since the age of 12, and I never finished school. So there are so many occasions where I've let both of my parents down.

It would be nice to be able to go back in time and change all of that. But at that point in time, I was a young kid thinking that I knew everything, living day by day and not caring about my future. I was strong at my personal belief that I was Mr. Know-it-all superman.

Now knowing this, I now realize it's not too late to finish school and get out of gangs, and best of all "out of prison." God is good and I know with Him leading my life I will accomplish all of this. And in doing so, I can reverse all of my wrongdoings and try to make it up to my mother and father. I've apologized to them for putting them through all of this and for all the bad things that I've done.

It took a while to realize this but God works in mysterious ways and thanks to Him, I'm making a change for the best.

- Ismael, who is in California State Prison.



Drawing by T. Larimer

## PENITENTIAL RITE

**Lord, have mercy.**

**Christ, have mercy.**

**Lord, have mercy.**

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins and bring us to everlasting life.

**R. Amen.**

## OPENING PRAYER

Let us pray:

God,  
You blessed us with people who love us. We thank you for those you put into our lives. Help us learn and accept one another as members of one family.

We ask this through Christ, our Lord. **R. Amen.**



# LITURGY OF THE WORD

## First Reading: Sirach 3: 2-6, 12-14

God sets a father in honor over his children; a mother's authority he confirms over her sons. Whoever honors his father atones for sins, and preserves himself from them. When he prays, he is heard; he stores up riches who reveres his mother. Whoever honors his father is gladdened by children, and, when he prays, is heard. Whoever reveres his father will live a long life; he who obeys his father brings comfort to his mother. My son, take care of your father when he is old; grieve him not as long as he lives. Even if his mind fail, be considerate of him; revile him not all the days of his life; kindness to a father will not be forgotten, firmly planted against the debt of your sins—a house raised in justice to you.

The Word of the Lord.

**R. Thanks be to God.**

## Second Reading: Colossians 3:12-17

Brothers and sisters: Put on, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, bearing with one another and forgiving one another, if one has a grievance against another; as the Lord has forgiven you, so must you also do. And over all these put on love, that is, the bond of perfection. And let the peace of Christ control your hearts, the peace into which you were also called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, as in all wisdom you teach and admonish one another, singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or in deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

The Word of the Lord.

**R. Thanks be to God.**

## Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 128: 1-2, 3, 4-5

**R. Blessed are those who fear the Lord and walk in his ways.**

Blessed is everyone who fears the LORD,  
who walks in his ways!

For you shall eat the fruit of your handiwork;  
blessed shall you be, and favored.

**R. Blessed are those who fear the Lord and walk in his ways.**

Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine  
in the recesses of your home;  
your children like olive plants  
around your table.

**R. Blessed are those who fear the Lord and walk in his ways.**

Behold, thus is the man blessed  
who fears the LORD.

The LORD bless you from Zion:  
may you see the prosperity of Jerusalem  
all the days of your life.

**R. Blessed are those who fear the Lord and walk in his ways.**

## Gospel: Luke 2:41-52

Each year Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem for the feast of Passover, and when he was twelve years old, they went up according to festival custom. After they had completed its days, as they were returning, the boy Jesus remained behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it. Thinking that he was in the caravan, they journeyed for a day and looked for him among their relatives and acquaintances, but not finding him, they returned to Jerusalem to look for him. After three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions, and all who heard him were astounded at his understanding and his answers. When his parents saw him, they were astonished, and his mother said to him, "Son, why have you done this to us? Your father and I have been looking for you with great anxiety." And he said to them, "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" But they did not understand what he said to them. He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them; and his mother kept all these things in her heart. And Jesus advanced in wisdom and age and favor before God and man.

The Gospel of the Lord.

**R. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**



# MEDITATION: JESUS AS A YOUNGSTER

*from the eyes of benjamin*

we were twelve years old  
i watched jesus  
on this pilgrimage and  
there was something  
moving him at twelve  
so many of his friends  
had set the direction  
of their lives  
they had chosen a path  
that was leading them  
to their destiny  
they were too young  
to understand  
where the path  
would lead them  
but old enough  
to choose a path

when jesus asked me  
if i wanted to stay  
behind in the temple  
i could not refuse

i asked jesus  
where are your parents?  
what are they going to think?  
would they be worried?

twelve years old

and yet  
something important  
was happening within us

in the silence  
of the temple  
i sat next to jesus

twelve years old

i could hear the word abba  
flow into this space  
the deep relationship  
jesus had prayed  
with his abba  
we stayed there  
till the sun appeared  
behind the pillars

then we walked back  
to the courtyard  
and began to speak  
about our friends  
everyone thinks that

to be twelve years old  
is so young  
we spoke about our friends  
who were now working  
for the zealots  
we spoke about our friends  
who had already been killed  
in the armed resistance  
we spoke about our friends  
who had already moved  
to a bigger city  
we spoke about our dreams

it was good to  
be with jesus

we had studied together  
we had played games  
in the village  
there was a wisdom  
a quality about him  
i didn't find in  
other youngsters

in the afternoon  
there was a  
general discussion  
with the rabbis  
there were many youth  
our age that would  
comment on the scripture  
they would ask questions  
but with jesus  
it was different  
he was not afraid

i remember the time  
he asked the rabbis  
why there was so much  
violence in our country

jesus spoke about  
the despair that  
so many youth have  
how difficult  
the environment is  
living like slaves  
under the romans  
being taxed to death  
by the religious leaders  
which leads them  
to a crazy life

how do we grow  
closer to god  
when it seems that

our lives are being pulled  
in a certain direction?

the masters were amazed  
at the wisdom of jesus

the next morning  
jesus spoke about  
what he felt  
during his prayer

sitting there with his abba  
he could see the direction  
that twelve year olds  
would take in the future

jesus turned to me  
and said  
benjamin  
i am so glad  
we stayed here  
i would never have felt  
the presence of  
so many others  
during the future centuries  
who will have to battle  
all kinds of struggles

i started to speak  
about what he saw  
during each time period  
in the future  
he stopped when  
he came to los angeles

jesus spoke with josé  
about the names of  
many other youth  
how they were twelve  
and what happened  
to them

to be twelve  
just like we are benjamin  
and take a direction in life  
that will determine  
your whole life

i saw them in prayer today  
in this temple  
and i felt the same anger  
i feel with the romans  
when i hear what  
they are doing to our youth  
i wanted those locked up  
to know that i once

was twelve  
i once saw what it is like  
to have to make choices  
without knowing  
what is going to happen

jesus stopped  
the warm tears  
falling down his face  
spoke of what he saw  
of what he felt  
what i saw was so cruel  
i saw so much blood  
so much suffering  
for so many  
i prayed for each person  
that would pass through  
that barbed wire  
the roman compound  
i prayed for them by name  
i told them as a youngster  
i know what it means  
to be young

i asked my abba  
to be with them  
not to give up hope  
that one day  
they would be free

i can see that some  
have committed crimes  
that have caused much  
suffering to others

i can see  
the consequences  
of following  
that path of darkness

i want youngsters  
to know  
that i too was young  
i saw so many  
of my friends  
make choices  
that cost them their lives  
they let the hate  
of the romans  
enter into their hearts  
take over and  
destroy them



**REFLECTION:** I remember when I was going through a difficult situation and found comfort in my family... I remember... I remember...

### OUR FATHER

Let us pray with confidence to the Father in the words our Savior gave us:  
**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.**

**R. For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours, now and for ever. Amen.**

### SIGN OF PEACE

Jesus, you said to your apostles: "I leave you peace, my peace I give you. Look not on our sins, but on the faith of your Church, and grant us the peace and unity of your kingdom where you live forever and ever. **Amen.**

The peace of the Lord be with you always.  
**R. And with your spirit.**

### LAMB OF GOD

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: **have mercy on us.**  
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: **have mercy on us.**  
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: **grant us peace.**

This is Jesus, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world. Happy are we who are called to his supper.

**Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.**

### COMMUNION

#### CLOSING PRAYER

Let us pray:  
Lord God,  
As we celebrate the Holy Family, we ask you to bless our families. Through the prayers and example of Mary and Joseph, may we too learn to make room for Jesus in our life, that he may grow up in us day after day and make us more like him.

We ask this through Christ, our Lord. **R. Amen.**

