

Our Faith on Sunday

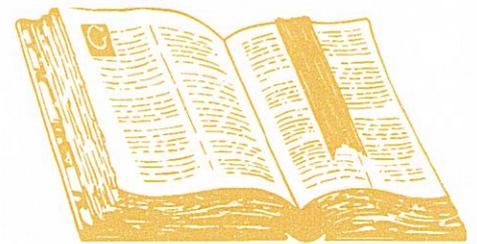
GOSPEL REFLECTION



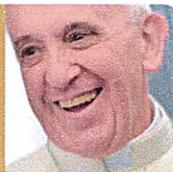
In today's gospel reading we see the Holy Family fleeing to Egypt to escape persecution. Unfortunately, it is a scene that has been repeated throughout

human history. Even today, for one reason or another in all parts of the globe families have to leave their native soil and seek refuge in a foreign land. For those of us who live comfortable lives Christmas is often a time of family and friends, warm fires and presents, tables overflowing with food and drink. Of course, the birth of Jesus is a time for celebration, but we can be sure that the stable which housed the Holy Family was a far cry from such abundance. And on their flight to Egypt what could they have taken except the bare essentials? This too is Christmas and it is the reality for all those who find themselves in refugee camps, homeless and abandoned, taking shelter from missiles in an underground basement. A secularised Christmas is not just about collective amnesia regarding what took place in Bethlehem two

thousand years ago. It is also the largely unintended consequences of our increasingly hedonistic culture: a massive desensitisation towards those who find themselves at the mercy of war and famine, poverty and disease. As we celebrate the Feast of the Holy Family let's keep in mind why Jesus came among us: to make us all brothers and sisters, children of the one Father in heaven. It was this vision which inspired the first Christian community where everything was shared and no one was in need (Acts 4, 32-35).



POPE FRANCIS' ENCYCLICAL
FRATELLI TUTTI
BROTHERS AND SISTERS ALL



Pope Francis'
Encyclical Letter
DILEXIT NOS

THE DEATH PENALTY

264. In the New Testament, while individuals are asked not to take justice into their own hands (cf. Rom 12:17,19), there is also a recognition of the need for authorities to impose penalties on evildoers (cf. Rom 13:4; 1 Pet 2:14). Indeed, "civic life, structured around an organized community, needs rules of coexistence, the wilful violation of which demands appropriate redress".²⁴⁹ This means that legitimate public authority can and must "inflict punishments according to the seriousness of the crimes"²⁵⁰ and that judicial power be guaranteed a "necessary independence in the realm of law".²⁵¹

²⁴⁹. Address to Delegates of the International Association of Penal Law (23 October 2014): AAS 106 (2014), 840.
²⁵⁰. PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE, Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, 402.
²⁵¹. SAINT JOHN PAUL II, Address to the National Association of Magistrates (31 March 2000), 4: AAS 92 (2000), 633.

The Christian message is attractive when experienced and expressed in its totality: not simply as a refuge for pious thoughts or an occasion for impressive ceremonies. What kind of worship would we give to Christ if we were to rest content with an individual relationship with him and show no interest in relieving the sufferings of others or helping them to live a better life? Would it please the heart that so loved us, if we were to bask in a private religious experience while ignoring its implications for the society in which we live? Let us be honest and accept the word of God in its fullness. On the other hand, our work as Christians for the betterment of society should not obscure its religious inspiration, for that, in the end, would be to seek less for our brothers and sisters than what God desires to give them.



ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

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

Lk 2:16

God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

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,
Amen.

Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them. Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.**FIRST READING**

A reading from the Book of Sirach. Sirach 3:2–6, 12–14

The Lord honoured the father above the children, and he confirmed the judgement of the mother over her sons. Whoever honours his father atones for sins, and whoever glorifies his mother is like one who lays up treasure. Whoever honours his father will be gladdened by his own children, and when he prays he will be heard. Whoever glorifies his father will have long life, and whoever obeys the Lord will refresh his mother.

O son, help your father in his old age and do not grieve him as long as he lives; even if he is lacking in understanding, show indulgence; in all your strength do not despise him. For kindness to a father will not be forgotten, and against your sins it will be credited to you.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.**ACCLAMATION BEFORE THE GOSPEL**

Alleluia, alleluia. Colossians 3:15a, 16a

**Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts;
let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.
Alleluia.**

GOSPEL

Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23

The Lord be with you.

And with your spirit.

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

When the Magi had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, 'Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.' And he rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed to Egypt and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfil what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: 'Out of Egypt I called my son.'

But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, 'Rise, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child's life are dead.' And he rose and took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there, and being warned in a dream he withdrew to the district of Galilee. And he went and lived in a city called Nazareth, so that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled, that he would be called a Nazarene.

R.

R.

The Gospel of the Lord.

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

R.

PSALM

Psalm 128(127):1-2. 3. 4-5. R.cf. 1

R. Blessed are all who fear the LORD, and walk in his ways.

Blessed are all who fear the LORD,
and walk in his ways!
By the labour of your hands you shall eat.
You will be blessed and prosper.

Your wife like a fruitful vine
in the heart of your house;
your children like shoots of the olive
around your table.

Indeed thus shall be blessed
the husband who fears the LORD.
May the LORD bless you from Sion.
May you see Jerusalem prosper
all the days of your life!

SECOND READING

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Colossians.
Colossians 3:12-21

Brothers and sisters: Put on, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Bar 3:38

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.