

## Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph – December 30, 2018 – Good Shepherd Parish

### Scripture Reading: 1 Samuel 1:20-22, 24-28

In those days Hannah conceived, and at the end of her term bore a son whom she called Samuel, since she had asked the LORD for him. The next time her husband Elkanah was going up with the rest of his household to offer the customary sacrifice to the LORD and to fulfill his vows, Hannah did not go, explaining to her husband, "Once the child is weaned, I will take him to appear before the LORD and to remain there forever; I will offer him as a perpetual nazirite."

Once Samuel was weaned, Hannah brought him up with her, along with a three-year-old bull, an ephah of flour, and a skin of wine, and presented him at the temple of the LORD in Shiloh. After the boy's father had sacrificed the young bull, Hannah, his mother, approached Eli and said: "Pardon, my lord! As you live, my lord, I am the woman who stood near you here, praying to the LORD. I prayed for this child, and the LORD granted my request. Now I, in turn, give him to the LORD; as long as he lives, he shall be dedicated to the LORD." Hannah left Samuel there.

### Psalm: Ps 84:2-3, 5-6, 9-10

R. Blessed are they who dwell in your house, O Lord.

How lovely is your dwelling place, O LORD of hosts!

My soul yearns and pines for the courts of the LORD.  
My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God

R. Blessed are they who dwell in your house, O Lord.

Happy they who dwell in your house!

Continually they praise you.

Happy the men whose strength you are!  
Their hearts are set upon the pilgrimage.

R. Blessed are they who dwell in your house, O Lord.

O LORD of hosts, hear our prayer;

hearken, O God of Jacob!

O God, behold our shield,  
and look upon the face of your anointed.

R. Blessed are they who dwell in your house, O Lord..

### Second Reading: 1 John 3:1-2, 21-24

Beloved: See what love the Father has bestowed on us that we may be called the children of God. And so we are.

The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God's children now; what we shall be has not yet been revealed. We do know that when it is revealed we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence in God and receive from him whatever we ask, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him. And his commandment is this: we should believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another just as he commanded us. Those who keep his commandments remain in him, and he in them, and the way we know that he remains in us is from the Spirit he gave us.

### 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.



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### Prayer to St. Michael

St. Michael the Archangel,  
defend us in battle.

Be our defense against the wickedness and  
snares of the Devil.

May God rebuke him, we humbly pray,  
and do thou, O Prince  
of the heavenly hosts,  
by the power of God, thrust into hell Satan, and  
all the evil spirits,  
who prowl about the world  
seeking the ruin of souls. Amen.

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### INVITATION TO PRAY

*Pause for a few moments of silence and enter more deeply into the presence of God.*

#### **Proclaim the Scriptures out loud.**

As you listen to the gospel be attentive to a word, a phrase, a question, an image, or a feeling that emerges. Reflect on this quietly or share it aloud.

### INVITATION TO REFLECT

At the time of Sunday's Gospel, Jesus is twelve years old. His family had gone up to Jerusalem for the feast of Passover, which, with the constituent celebrations, lasted eight days. There was a great procession to Jerusalem, with many villages represented. They all watched out for each other's children. Joseph, Mary, and Jesus, traveling along with the others, surely must have enjoyed the big holy days—the reading of the Haggadah, and especially the Seder and its special foods, songs, and customs. These were the focal point of the Passover celebration. As expected, Jesus, obedient, stayed with his parents. Savory sights and pungent odors were natural to them, even mixed with human and animal fragrances. And with the dust of Jerusalem, which was ancient even then. Finally it was concluded, and those who had arrived now must depart. Imagine reassembling the convoy and putting everything in order. But it was like a huge family, so you knew your child would be with friends or relatives when he was not by your side. Road dust, camel sniffables, etc., now dominated. But it was a happy time. Friends retold the stories, remembering the earliest acts of God on behalf of his people.

The sun began to sink and discrete families came together for sleep. Mary surely said, "Joseph, I think we should look for Jesus. He is probably talking with his friends as usual." Little did she know. But no relative or friend had seen him anywhere. He was last sighted the day before. In Jerusalem. Mary's heart must have broke in two. What mother on earth cannot imagine it? Missing child. My child. Gone. Mary and Joseph left the caravan, went back, and scoured the cramped city. Day One, looking everywhere, no sign of him. They sleep an hour or so. Day Two, searching every place, asking everyone, following every trail. He was simply not there. Images of accidents, kidnapping, slavery, and so many more hovered just beneath their consciousness. Day Three. They returned to the temple, this time finally daring in their panic to enter directly into the utterly private rooms where teachers and Rabbis debated major and minor points of scripture. No regular people were allowed there, especially poor travelers. But there he sat. Perfectly at home for these three eternal days, the twelve-year-old, questioning teachers and answering them. "Son, how could you? *How could you?*" His answer was odd and we are told that Mary pondered it in her heart for years to come. Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house? Obviously he needed a good spanking if he supposed that desertion of his parents was perfectly fine. Yet think about it. He did not come to earth in order to be Mary and Joseph's child but just the opposite. Mary and Joseph came into earthly existence to prepare this boy for his role as the son of the Father of all things. And of course, every family's duty is to send their children out from home when they have become adults. A learning experience for this family, painful, good, and pointing toward the future Easter, when loss would turn out to be the ultimate gain.

### INVITATION TO GROUP SHARING

1. 1 Samuel: Sunday's feast celebrates not only the Holy Family—Jesus, Mary and Joseph—but also the Christmas family of God that we all become. Explain.
2. 1 John: What does the term "children of God" imply about God? St. John says we can have confidence in God and receive from him whatever we ask. What kinds of things do you ask for?
3. "Imagine Mary's and Joseph's anxiety as they searched for Jesus for three whole days. And imagine the long-term anxiety his answer gave them: "Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" How do you think Mary reacted? How would you have reacted?"

### INVITATION TO ACT

Determine a specific action (individual or group) that flows from your sharing. When choosing an individual action, determine what you will do and share it with the group. When choosing a group action, determine who will take responsibility for different aspects of the action. These should be your primary considerations.

### CLOSING INVITATION TO PRAY

Give thanks to God (aloud or silently) for new insights, for desires awakened, for directions clarified, for the gift of one another's openness and sensitivity. Conclude with the following:

O God, who were pleased to give us the shining example of the Holy Family, graciously grant that we may imitate them in practicing 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, one God, for ever and ever. Amen