

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 127)

ANTIPHON: Happy are those who fear the Lord and walk in his ways.

RESPONSE: Happy are those who fear the Lord and walk in his ways.

LECTOR: O blessed are those who fear the Lord and walk in his ways! By the labour of your hands you shall eat. You will be happy and prosper. **R.**

LECTOR: Your wife like a fruitful vine in the heart of your house; your children like shoots of the olive, around your table. **R.**

LECTOR: Indeed thus shall be blessed the man who fears the Lord. May the Lord bless you from Zion all the days of your life! **R.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION Alleluia, alleluia! May the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, and the fullness of his message live within you. Alleluia!

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

TODAY'S READINGS Sirach 3:2-6. 12-14: Colossians 3:12-21; Matthew 2:13-15. 19-23

NEXT WEEK (Epiphany, Year A) Isaiah 60:1-6; Ps 71; Ephesians 3:2-3. 5-6; Matthew 2:1-12

*Majellan
Christmas cards*

Majellan Media closure

Majellan Media will be closed from Friday December 19 until Wednesday January 14 2026. In the meantime, why not take a look at the products on our website. There are prayers, podcasts, magazine articles ... and much more.



**majellan.media/product/the-
majellan-magazine/**

majellan

*Forced to
flee their
homeland*



28 December 2025 Holy Family Year A

The story of the Holy Family's flight into Egypt following the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem is only told in the Gospel of Matthew which also tells us of the visit of the Magi or wise men from the East.

In fact, it is the visit of the Magi following a star that alerts the paranoid King Herod to suspect a future rebellion against his authority.

He therefore orders the death of all male children under two in his jurisdiction of Judea, which included Bethlehem and Jerusalem. Joseph learns about this confronting situation from an angel in a dream telling him to escape into Egypt with Mary and the child Jesus. Egypt was a logical place of refuge. Although part of the Roman empire, it was of outside Herod's control. More than likely, the family would have travelled through current-day Gaza and the northern Sinai coast to relative safety – noting that some cities and towns along the way and in Egypt had had significant Jewish communities.

Joseph had the distinct advantage of being a tradesman which meant he could pick up work in many places. Although we are not given a timeframe of the Holy Family's stay in Egypt, some early Coptic Christian writers suggest they may have been there for several years. Then, as told by Matthew, Joseph receives another dream message telling him to return to Israel in view of Herod's death.

In Matthew's account, there is no evidence of Joseph and Mary living in Nazareth prior to the birth of Jesus. However, on finding that Herod's

son Archelaus had replaced his father Herod as ruler of Judea, Joseph decided they should settle elsewhere, namely a town called Nazareth in Galilee. As Nazareth was also within walking distance to nearby Sepphoris – a town being rebuilt at the time – this provided Joseph, and most likely Jesus later on, with carpentry work.

The significance of Egypt in the Jesus' story is stark. After all, it was in Egypt where Jews were made slaves prior to the time of Moses who led them out of slavery to the Promised Land of Israel. Then we note in Matthew's story the prophecy of Hosea 11:1 which states: "Out of Egypt I have called my Son". We also note the significant role Matthew attributes to Joseph as a descendant of King David. As the legal father of Jesus, Joseph provided the Davidic royal line, fulfilling Old Testament prophecies that the promised Messiah would be from the House of David.

In celebrating the Holy Family's flight into Egypt, we are reminded of the many refugee families throughout history and in our world today who seek safety in foreign lands. We also live in a time when there appears to be a growing negativity to immigrants, whatever their reasons for migrating. No doubt Joseph, Mary and Jesus also suffered negativity in view of their Jewish faith and culture.

So, let us pray today for all families and peoples forced from their homelands.

Gerard Hall SM

© Majellan Media 2025