

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

cf. Acts 16:14

Alleluia, alleluia! Open our heart, O Lord, to listen to the words of your Son. Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Lk 2:41-52

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

His parents found him in the temple, sitting among the learned men listening to them.

Every year the parents of Jesus used to go to Jerusalem for the feast of the Passover. When he was twelve years old, they went up for the feast as usual. When they were on their way home after the feast, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem without his parents knowing it. They assumed he was with the caravan, and it was only after a day's journey that they went to look for him among their relations and acquaintances. When they failed to find him they went back to Jerusalem looking for him everywhere.

Three days later, they found him in the Temple, sitting among the doctors, listening to them and asking them questions; and all those who heard him were astounded at his intelligence and his replies. They were overcome when they saw him, and his mother said to him, 'My child, why have you done this to us? See how worried your father and I have been, looking for you.' 'Why were you looking for me?' he replied. 'Did you not know that I must be busy with my Father's affairs?' But they did not understand what he meant.

He then went down with them and came to Nazareth and lived under their authority. His mother stored up all these things in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom, in stature, and in favour with God and men.

■ **The Gospel of the Lord.**

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Breaking Open the Word



THE SAVING WORD

THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH / C

26 DECEMBER 2021

HOW LOVELY IS YOUR DWELLING PLACE!

Have you ever felt a yearning to visit some special place? Perhaps the place of your childhood that you have not seen for many years. Or perhaps some country that has always fascinated you. Imagine how excited you would feel if you were about to set out on a journey to this place. Or perhaps you have been longing to meet some special person, and the opportunity will soon happen. What joy you would feel.

These are the kinds of emotions the Jewish pilgrims experienced as they journeyed to Jerusalem to visit the great temple. As they made their pilgrimage to Jerusalem filled with longing and joy they sang hymns to God including today's responsorial psalm.

The temple was very special for the people because it signified that God was dwelling in their midst, that God was among them. Our churches and cathedrals have a similar role: they are signs that God is with us in our towns, communities and countryside.

God does not dwell in sacred buildings only. The boy Jesus did not remain in his Father's house in Jerusalem but returned with Mary and Joseph to their humble home in Nazareth, and Jesus continues to dwell with us in our homes. With all their struggles and imperfections our homes are indeed dwelling places of God.

We can sometimes search everywhere for Jesus only to find that he has been with us, in our homes and communities, all the time.

Fr Michael Goonan SSP

FIRST READING

1 Sam 1:20-22, 24-28

A reading from the first book of Samuel.

For the whole of his life, Samuel shall be lent to the Lord.

Hannah conceived and gave birth to a son, and called him Samuel 'since' she said 'I asked the Lord for him.'

When a year had gone by, the husband Elkanah went up again with all his family to offer the annual sacrifice to the Lord and to fulfil his vow. Hannah, however, did not go up, having said to her husband, 'Not before the child is weaned. Then I will bring him and present him before the Lord and he shall stay there for ever.'

When she had weaned him, she took him up with her together with a three-year-old bull, an ephah of flour and a skin of wine, and she brought him to the temple of the Lord at Shiloh; and the child was with them. They slaughtered the bull and the child's mother came to Eli. She said, 'If you please, my Lord. As you live, my Lord, I am the woman who stood here beside you, praying to the Lord. This is the child I prayed for, and the Lord granted me what I asked him. Now I make him over to the Lord for the whole of his life. He is made over to the Lord.'

There she left him, for the Lord.

■ **The word of the Lord.**

RESP PSALM

Ps 83:2-3, 5-6, 9-10. R. v. 5

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

1. How lovely is your dwelling place, / Lord, God of hosts. / My soul is longing and yearning, / is yearning for the courts of the Lord. / My heart and my soul ring out their joy / to God, the living God. **R.**

2. They are happy, who dwell in your house, / for ever singing your praise. / They are happy, whose strength is in you; / they walk with ever growing strength. **R.**



3. O Lord, God of hosts, hear my prayer, / give ear, O God of Jacob. / Turn your eyes, O God, our shield, / look on the face of your anointed. **R.**

SECOND READING

1 Jn 3:1-2, 21-24

A reading from the first letter of St John.

He calls you his own children, and that is what you are.

Think of the love that the Father has lavished on us, by letting us be called God's children; and that is what we are. Because the world refused to acknowledge him, therefore it does not acknowledge us. My dear people, we are already the children of God but what we are to be in the future has not yet been revealed, all we know is, that when it is revealed we shall be like him because we shall see him as he really is. My dear people, if we cannot be condemned by our own conscience, we need not be afraid in God's presence, and whatever we ask him, we shall receive, because we keep his commandments and live the kind of life that he wants. His commandments are these: that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and that we love one another as he told us to. Whoever keeps his commandments lives in God and God lives in him. We know that he lives in us by the Spirit that he has given us.

■ **The word of the Lord.**