



THE NATIVITY THROUGH JOSEPH'S EYES

Editor's Note: The following was written by Matt Charbonneau for Ascension Press Media. Charbonneau is a high school religious education teacher and writer for Ascension Press among others. The meditation is Joseph speaking to us. It illustrates what he might have been thinking when Jesus Christ was born and the days after.

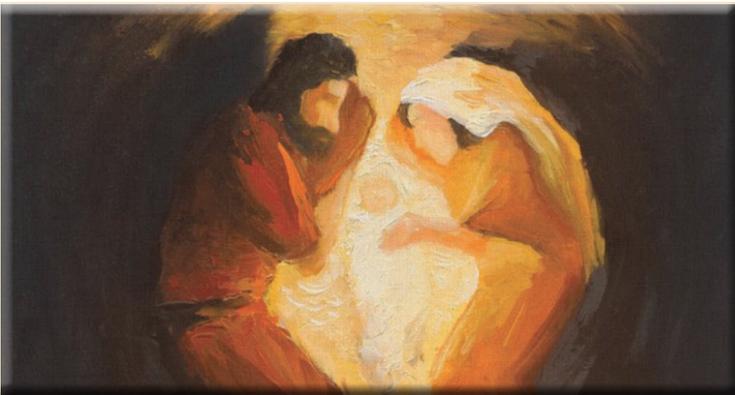
IMAGINING JOSEPH'S THOUGHTS ON THE FIRST CHRISTMAS

Wow! What a night!

As I sit here with Mary under the stars with angels singing from up above, I am in awe.

Can this really be happening?

Here we are after such a long and tiring journey, in a stable surrounded by animals. Try as we may, we were unable to secure better accommodations. I would have liked to have found a much more ideal place, but, evidently, the simplest spot has become the best one—a perfect setting for this blessed baby that has come into our life.



Yes, this most beautiful babe proves all of the travel and challenging conditions we faced to get here have all been worth it.

Watching Jesus in Mary's arms, I am captivated by his gaze, the twinkle in his eye as he looks at us adoringly. There is such a peace about him. Truly, Emmanuel, you have come. Indeed, God is with us.

Seeing the shepherds gather around and the Magi approach us with gifts for our child, I feel both humbled and honored.

The Son of God has arrived, and the Lord has chosen me along with my wife Mary to raise him and to teach him. Oh, how I am not worthy!

A noble carpenter, I am now charged with the enormous responsibility of being guardian of the Messiah. What a role to play in the history of this world!

I must admit I was somewhat leery when I first was visited by the angel Gabriel. I was still processing Mary's news of her pregnancy and this revelation of a baby outside of our union really had me concerned. But as Gabriel assured me, it has all been part of God's plan.

So, just as God has placed his trust in me as deserving of this momentous life, I will place my trust in him that he will lead me along the right path regardless of my nerves and fears. As my ever-so-wise and beloved Mary reminds me, I am the servant of the Lord—may this be done to me according to his word.

Thankfully (but not surprisingly), God has stayed with me—with us—and we can now all enjoy this silent and most holy night together as a family.

As I look at Mary and admire her for both her purity and strength, I cannot help but also think of my ancestors and wonder how proud they must be of this moment—Abraham, our people's patriarch, and his son Isaac, David, and his son Solomon.

How fitting I come from a line of distinction and royalty, for this blessed treasure my wife has borne is truly the King of kings.

There are many people who are now gradually trickling in, eager to meet baby Jesus. Mary and I both feel such a gift of life ought to be shared with all others, and we are happy to present God's Chosen One to all who wish to know him.

O God, let them come—let them all come, so all people may know and adore this Christ, our Lord.

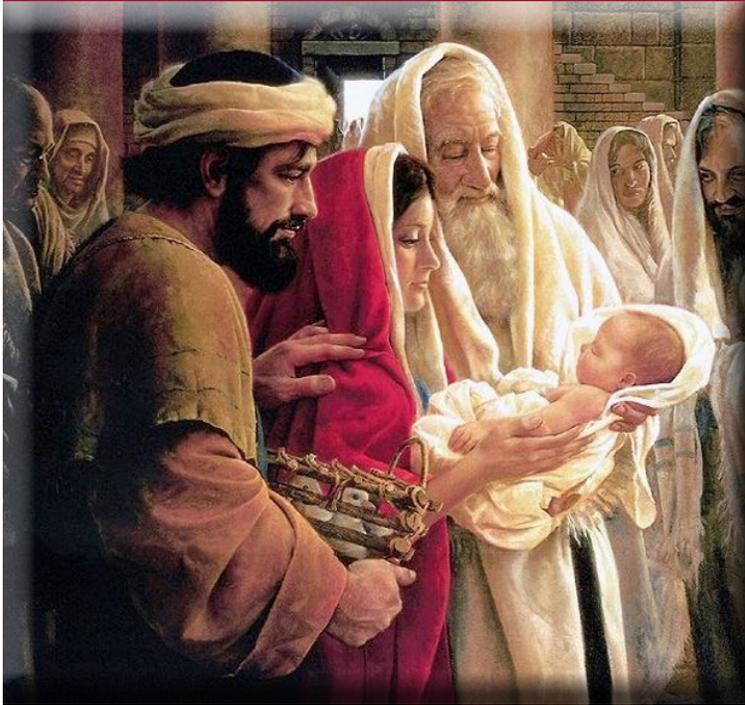
WE CAN BE THAT CLOSE TOO

Certainly, one can conceive many different interpretations or ideas of what must have been running through Joseph's head that blessed night in Bethlehem.

Whatever the thought, I gather exhilaration would be among the sentiments and experiences.

So, may the joy of that night be renewed in our society today, as we journey this Christmas season ever closer to [JESUS](#). - Matt Charbonneau

THE OCTAVE OF CHRISTMAS



THE OCTAVE OF CHRISTMAS is the eight days of prolongation of Christmas – the Solemnity of Christmas (the Feast of the Nativity of the Lord) through Jan. 1, the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God. Four days within this time are the feasts of St. Stephen, St. John the Evangelist, the Holy Innocents, and the Holy Family.

THE FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY (THE FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS) – DEC. 27TH

This is the day we can focus on family. In Luke’s Gospel we learn of Mary and Joseph’s anxiety when they lost Jesus in the Temple. We can relate to the worry that flashed through their minds. Let’s take this story and celebrate the relationships we have with our families and those we deeply care for in this life.

We are all called to be holy families. We can find comfort in asking St. Joseph and our Blessed Mother to interceded for us, because they know all the emotions and trials of being a family. Let us call upon the Holy Family to strengthen us to encourage those in our life to become all that God has created them to be. Through Mary we know, “Nothing is impossible for God.”

THE FEAST OF THE HOLY INNOCENTS – DEC. 28TH

This day reminds us of the ugly truth that King Herod had all children under the age of two killed out of fear that one of them was Jesus, the newborn king. He was furious when the wisemen did not return to him to tell him where Jesus was. Our faith teaches us these innocent victims will wear the crown of martyrs in heaven forever honored by the angels and saints as the first witnesses to the newborn King.

Let the truths of this feast turn our hearts and minds to a present-day sadness, committing ourselves to pray for all those who were aborted, their parents, and those considering abortion.

THE SOLEMNITY OF MARY, MOTHER OF GOD – JAN. 1ST

A day to honor the Mary for saying yes to God to be the Blessed Mother of Jesus. It is fitting the Octave of Christmas concludes by showing our love and respect for Mary the Blessed Virgin and Mother of God. She is the ultimate example for every mother and those who live, love, and serve like mothers even when they don’t have children of their own.

It is overwhelming to think about the relationship she must have had with her son our Lord and Savior. She nurtured Him through every stage of life. She taught Him to walk, speak, sing, dance, and clap His hands. She worried for Him through life’s routine struggles and those that were overwhelming. She cried for Him, laughed with Him, and lived fully in faith for Him. On this solemnity we honor her. Blessed Mother, pray for us.

God,

Thank you for helping us this difficult year.

Thank you that you’ve carried us through the uncertainty of deep waters, through the flames of trials, and through the pain of hard losses. We are constantly aware of how much we need you, your grace, your strength, your power working through even the toughest days.

Help us to keep our focus first on you.

Thank you that you came to give new life, peace, hope, and joy.

Thank you that your power is made perfect in our weakness.

Help us to remember that the gift of Christ, Immanuel, is our greatest treasure, not just at Christmas, but for the whole year through. Fill us with your joy and the peace of your Spirit. Direct our hearts and minds towards you.

Without you we would surely fail, but with you, there is great hope. We look forward to all that You still have in store.

In Jesus’ name, Amen.

- Adapted from *Crosswalk.com*

THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD (CHRISTMAS) ~ MASS DURING THE DAY

For additional Mass readings for vigil and dawn go [CLICK HERE](#).

First Reading Isaiah 52:7-10

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings glad tidings, announcing peace, bearing good news, announcing salvation, and saying to Zion, "Your God is King!" Hark! Your sentinels raise a cry, together they shout for joy, for they see directly, before their eyes, the LORD restoring Zion. Break out together in song, O ruins of Jerusalem! For the LORD comforts his people, he redeems Jerusalem. The LORD has bared his holy arm in the sight of all the nations; all the ends of the earth will behold the salvation of our God.

Responsorial Psalms 98:1, 2-3, 3-4, 5-6

R. (3c) All the ends of the earth have seen the saving power of God.

Sing to the LORD a new song, for he has done wondrous deeds; his right hand has won victory for him, his holy arm.

R. All the ends of the earth have seen the saving power of God.

The LORD has made his salvation known: in the sight of the nations he has revealed his justice. He has remembered his kindness and his faithfulness toward the house of Israel.

R. All the ends of the earth have seen the saving power of God.

All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation by our God. Sing joyfully to the LORD, all you lands; break into song; sing praise.

R. All the ends of the earth have seen the saving power of God.

Sing praise to the LORD with the harp, with the harp and melodious song. With trumpets and the sound of the horn sing joyfully before the King, the LORD.

R. All the ends of the earth have seen the saving power of God.

Second Reading Hebrews 1:1-6

Brothers and sisters:

In times past, God spoke in partial and various ways to our ancestors through the prophets; in these last days, he has spoken to us through the Son, whom he made heir of all things and through whom he created the universe, who is the refulgence of his glory, the very imprint of his being, and who sustains all things by his mighty word. When he had accomplished purification from sins, he took his seat at the right hand of the Majesty on high, as far superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs. For to which of the angels did God ever say: *You are my son; this day I have begotten you?* Or again: *I will be a father to him, and he shall be a son to me?* And again, when he leads the firstborn into the world, he says: *Let all the angels of God worship him.*

Alleluia

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

A holy day has dawned upon us. Come, you nations, and adore the Lord. For today a great light has come upon the earth.

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel John 1:1-18 (or Jn 1:1-5, 9-14)

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came to be through him, and without him nothing came to be. What came to be through him was life, and this life was the light of the human race; the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. A man named John was sent from God. He came for testimony, to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came to be through him, but the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, but his own people did not accept him. But to those who did accept him he gave power to become children of God, to those who believe in his name, who were born not by natural generation nor by human choice nor by a man's decision but of God. And the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us, and we saw his glory, the glory as of the Father's only Son, full of grace and truth. John testified to him and cried out, saying, "This was he of whom I said, 'The one who is coming after me ranks ahead of me because he existed before me.'" From his fullness we have all received, grace in place of grace, because while the law was given through Moses, grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. The only Son, God, who is at the Father's side, has revealed him.

PRAYER INTENTIONS

For the Church, that we may be a visible sign of God's great love for humanity and in the continuing presence of Christ in our midst, let us pray to the Lord. . .

That the promise of peace and justice for all peoples may be realized, especially for those who live in nations at war or in conditions of oppression, let us pray to the Lord. . .

For expectant mothers, that they may receive the health care they need and be kept safe from harm as they prepare to bring new life into the world, let us pray to the Lord. . .

That all of us in this Christian community may share in the joy of this blessed day and bring that joy to share with our families, friends, and all our loved ones, let us pray to the Lord. . .

Lord hear our prayer



THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH

First Reading SIRACH 3:2-6, 12-14 (or *Genesis 15:1-6; 21:1-3*)

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.

Responsorial PSALMS 128:1-2, 3, 4-5. (or Ps 105:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 8-9)

R. (cf. 1) **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.

Second Reading COLOSSIANS 3:12-21 (or *Col 3:12-17* or *Heb 11:8, 11-12, 17-19*)

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. Wives, be subordinate to your husbands, as is proper in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and avoid any bitterness toward them. Children, obey

your parents in everything, for this is pleasing to the Lord.

Fathers, do not provoke your children, so they may not become discouraged.

Alleluia COLOSSIANS 3:15A, 16A (or *Heb 1:1-2*)

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

Let the peace of Christ control your hearts; let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel LUKE 2:22-40 (or *Lk 2:22, 39-40*)

When the days were completed for their purification according to the law of Moses, They took him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord, just as it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that opens the womb shall be consecrated to the Lord, and to offer the sacrifice of a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons, in accordance with the dictate in the law of the Lord. Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon. This man was righteous and devout, awaiting the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he should not see death before he had seen the Christ of the Lord. He came in the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus to perform the custom of the law in regard to him, He took him into his arms and blessed God, saying: "Now, Master, you may let your servant go in peace, according to your word, for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you prepared in sight of all the peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and glory for your people Israel." The child's father and mother were amazed at what was said about him; and Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, "Behold, this child is destined for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be contradicted —and you yourself a sword will pierce— so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed." There was also a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years, having lived seven years with her husband after her marriage, and then as a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple, but worshiped night and day with fasting and prayer. And coming forward at that very time, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were awaiting the redemption of Jerusalem. When they had fulfilled all the prescriptions of the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.

Continue to Prayer Intentions...

PRAYER INTENTIONS

For the Church, that we treat our sisters and brothers with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience as we strive to build God's kingdom throughout the entire human family, let us pray to the Lord. . .

For leaders of nations, that they may respect the bond of individual families as well as foster the unity of the human family across nations and cultures, let us pray to the Lord. . .

For healing and hope for parents who have lost a child, let us pray to the Lord. . .

That members of this community may reach out to those without immediate family and offer their love and time and give witness to the bond we share in Christ, let us pray to the Lord. . .

Lord hear our prayer



SOLEMNITY OF MARY, MOTHER OF GOD, JAN. 1ST

First Reading NUMBERS 6:22-27

The LORD said to Moses: "Speak to Aaron and his sons and tell them: This is how you shall bless the Israelites. Say to them: The LORD bless you and keep you! The LORD let his face shine upon you, and be gracious to you! The LORD look upon you kindly and give you peace! So shall they invoke my name upon the Israelites, and I will bless them."

Responsorial Psalms 67:2-3, 5, 6, 8

R. (2a) May God bless us in his mercy.

May God have pity on us and bless us; may he let his face shine upon us. So may your way be known upon earth; among all nations, your salvation.

R. May God bless us in his mercy.

May the nations be glad and exult because you rule the peoples in equity; the nations on the earth you guide.

R. May God bless us in his mercy.

May the peoples praise you, O God; may all the peoples praise you! May God bless us, and may all the ends of the earth fear him!

R. May God bless us in his mercy.

Second Reading GALATIANS 4:4-7

Brothers and sisters:

When the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to ransom those under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. As proof that you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!" So you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son then also an heir, through God.

Alleluia HEBREWS 1:1-2

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets; in these last days, he has spoken to us through the Son.

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel LUKE 2:16-21

The shepherds went in haste to Bethlehem and found Mary and Joseph, and the infant lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known the message that had been told them about this child. All who heard it were amazed by what had been told them by the shepherds. And Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart. Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, just as it had been told to them. When eight days were completed for his circumcision, he was named Jesus, the name given him by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

PRAYER INTENTIONS

For the Church, that we may invoke God's blessings on those most in need: the poor, the vulnerable, the outcast, the forgotten, let us pray to the Lord. . .

On this World Day of Peace, that all people may search their hearts and find a way to reject hate, resentment, and division and embrace peace, so that violence is never again used against a fellow child of God, let us pray to the Lord. . .

For those without family, whether through death or estrangement, that they may realize their inclusion in God's family and find comfort in the Father's constant care, let us pray to the Lord. . .

For all of us, that we may choose to show mercy to those in need of forgiveness, those in need of support, and those in need of kindness, even when we find it challenging, especially when we find it challenging, let us pray to the Lord. . .

Lord hear our prayer



SPIRITUAL COMMUNION PRAYER

My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament. I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.

LET US GO *Rejoicing* TO THE HOUSE OF THE LORD.

PSALM 122



UPDATED GUIDELINES RELEASED

Bishop Mark E. Brennan released updated guidelines for our churches and facilities.

- New Norms for Reopening Parish Facilities for Meetings and Gatherings
- Updated Liturgical Guidelines
- Music Protocols for Liturgical Celebrations

These are available online at www.dwc.org.

Liturgy of the Hours

LITURGY OF THE HOURS

Pray the prayer for this day, this hour!

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MASS ONLINE

Saturday 6pm Masses will continue to be livestreamed from the Cathedral of St. Joseph, and will be available on our website each Sunday at DWC.ORG.

Below are four options for enriching your spirit through daily Mass online.

- EWTN airs daily Mass from Our Lady of Angels Chapel, in Irondale, Alabama, at 8am, noon, and 7pm: [HTTPS://WWW.EWTN.COM/TV/WATCH-LIVE](https://www.ewtn.com/tv/watch-live)
- St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York has daily Mass live streamed at 7am: [HTTPS://SAINTPATRICKSCATHEDRAL.ORG/LIVE](https://saintpatrickscathedral.org/live)
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