

Daily Reflections



LOVE IN THREE

By Sister Bernie Inocencio, CSJ

Centering

*Oh loving Father, make our home
At Nazareth where you may reign
A holy family of love
Where Jesus' manger lays*

*Help us to stay together, Lord
In joy and sorrow as we pray
Teach us to see Christ in disguise
Upon each other's face
Upon each other's face*

***Where two or more are gathered, you reside
Mary, be our mother
Joseph, be our guide
To make your son the center of our lives
Jesus, may your name be glorified!***

Today's Gospel

*When the magi had departed, behold,
the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said,
“Rise, take the child and his mother, flee to Egypt,
and stay there until I tell you.*

Herod is going to search for the child to destroy him.

*Joseph rose and took the child and his mother by night
and departed for Egypt.*

*He stayed there until the death of Herod,
that what the Lord had said through the prophet might be fulfilled,
Out of Egypt I called my son.*

*When Herod had died, behold,
the angel of the Lord appeared in a dream
to Joseph in Egypt and said,
“Rise, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel,
for those who sought the child’s life are dead.”*

*He rose, took the child and his mother,
and went to the land of Israel.*

*But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling over Judea
in place of his father Herod,
he was afraid to go back there.*

*And because he had been warned in a dream,
he departed for the region of Galilee.*

*He went and dwelt in a town called Nazareth,
so that what had been spoken through the prophets
might be fulfilled,
He shall be called a Nazorean.*

MATTHEW 2:13-15, 19-23

Reflection

Jesus was born into a messy, unsanitized, and chaotic world—a beautiful yet wounded place where evil, cruelty, and fear dominated. Herod’s selfishness, hunger for power, and fear of losing control drove him to order the killing of Jesus and the massacre of innocent children.

Tragically, this story echoes in our world today. Different time and space, yet the same narrative. The world faces its highest level of conflict since World War II, with over half a billion children living in active war zones. In 2024 alone, the UN verified 41,370 grave violations against children, including 11,967 who were killed or maimed.

Wars in Ukraine, Gaza, Sudan, Congo, Myanmar, and beyond are fueled by power struggles and domination. Tyrannical leaders want to build walls of power or pillars of wealth as if these walls or pillars will protect their bodies from decaying or will keep them immortal.

While writing this reflection, I watched NHK-World Japan's documentary *Fading Homeland* about Ukraine. Nearly four years into Russia's aggression, countless lives, resources, and cultural treasures have been lost. Over 3,000 children have been killed or injured by explosive weapons. The film focused on Pokrovsk, a town in the Donetsk Oblast region near Russia, showing residents' daily struggle as homes are destroyed, lives are lost, their ways of life are changed, and their history is trampled underfoot. It followed Vitalii, a power grid worker, and his team as they risk their lives repairing infrastructure near combat zones to keep homes heated and families alive. Russia weaponizes winter by targeting energy supplies, yet these workers fight for survival and normalcy.

Vitalii, his wife and three children left their house at Pokrovsk and moved to Kyiv, 5 hours from Pokrovsk, because the situation was getting dangerous. His youngest daughter, 4 years old, was injured in one of the recent Russian bombings.

About 1,300 civilians still remain in Pokrovsk. Vitalii still goes back to the borders at the beginning of the week to work with his team. He still enjoys the gorgeous sunsets at Pokrovsk. He said: "We worry but we believe in God. They may have destroyed our lives, our homes, our culture but deep within, we are strong."

Herod's shadow stretches across today's broken landscapes, where children cry in ruins and families wander in search of shelter. *The flight to Egypt whispers of a love stronger than fear—a love that turns exile into a sacred path and suffering into a silent hymn of hope. Mary, Joseph, and the Child, fragile yet radiant, teach us that life is not secured by power but by trust, not by violence but by love.* Their journey, tender and perilous, becomes a mirror for every refugee, every orphan, every soul longing for sanctuary. In their story, we hear God's heartbeat, calling us to find Christ in the weeping child, the fleeing family, and the shattered streets of our world.

The **hope of Bethlehem lives on when we protect the vulnerable, offer refuge, and affirm life**—just as Mary did in her song of praise, challenging the powers that oppress.



Image created by Sister Bernie Inocencio, CSJ

For Pondering

- How does reflecting on the Holy Family's flight and today's suffering in Gaza, Ukraine, Syria, Congo, Myanmar, and Nigeria challenge us to move from passive sorrow to active solidarity and justice?
- Both the Nativity story and modern conflicts are part of a larger narrative of liberation; where do we see signs of God's redeeming love and humanity's resilience against oppression in modern conflicts?
- What traces of Herod's fear, ambition, or indifference exist in our societies or personal choices that cause suffering, and how can we instead embody Joseph and Mary's protective care?

For Prayer

*O Holy One, we recall the fear and flight,
Herod's cruelty and the Family's night.
Shield all who suffer in war's cruel snare—
In Gaza, Ukraine, and others, bring peace through care.
Let love that saved them guide hearts today,
To guard the innocent and show the way.
Amen.*

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