



Embracing a Spirituality of Listening

ANN M. GARRIDO

The most treasured prayer of Jesus' people has long been and remains the Shema: "Hear O Israel, the Lord is God. The Lord is One." Jewish spirituality is grounded not in seeing or touching or tasting, but in hearing. No one exemplifies fidelity to this way of being in the world more than Joseph, as evidenced in today's gospel. Joseph is one who listens to what God's messenger says to him and immediately acts on it. He responds to the call to flee with Mary and Jesus to Egypt. Then, he responds to the call to return home with his family to Israel. As many have noted, Joseph never speaks in Scripture, but he certainly listens, and he certainly acts on what he hears.

Christmas is perhaps the noisiest season of the year. At gatherings of family and friends with festive music in the background, it often feels as if we are shouting over one another to be heard. It is a season when it can be hard to have deep conversations, even with God. Indeed, it can be such a busy season that sometimes our regular prayer practices fall by the wayside. But, if we do not make space in our daily lives to listen, might we miss messages that are important, even urgent, for us to hear, as in the case of today's gospel? Messages that require immediate response? What would it look like to carve out a bit of silence in this holiday season, to be like Joseph and regroup yourself in a spirituality of listening? ●



SCAN TO
LEARN ABOUT
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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.

COLOSSIANS 3:16

Reflect

*Do I allow myself enough
silence, or am I tempted to fill
the silence with noise?*

Dear Padre,

A friend of mine took his life. He was a very staunch Catholic. His wife wanted to know if he could be buried or have a Mass in the Catholic Church.

Yes, your friend should most certainly receive a Catholic funeral and burial. “We should not despair of the eternal salvation of persons who have taken their own lives. By ways known to him alone, God can provide the opportunity for salutary repentance. The Church prays for persons who have taken their own lives” (*The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2283).

A person who is suffering with a mental illness or disorder, certainly a prerequisite for suicide, may not have the necessary mental freedom to choose something that is understood as grave or mortal. In other words, he or she does not have the necessary requirements for full and free consent of the will.

Not that long ago, suicide was often misunderstood. Thankfully, today we understand the havoc and suffering of mental illness, and that a person can be a victim, even if it might look like he or she is not. The great suffering of those who take their own lives must not be dismissed or discarded. The family members and friends of a person who suffers suicide should also not be judged but should only receive compassion and understanding. They, too, are victims, in the fullest sense of the word and in the truest understanding of what it means to be a fragile human being. ●

Fr. Thomas M. Santa, CSsR / DearPadre.org



AMY STOUT / CATHOLICA

A WORD FROM POPE LEO XIV



Young people of our time, like those of every age, are a volcano of life, energy, sentiments, and ideas. It can be seen from the wonderful things they are able to do, in so

many fields. However, they also need help in order for this great wealth to grow in harmony and to overcome what...can still hinder their healthy development.

ADDRESS, ROME, MAY 15, 2025

Do you have a question for the Padre?

Go to DearPadre.org to send your question and to learn more about **Dear Padre**.

Monday

December 29
Octave of Christmas
1 Jn 2:3–11
Lk 2:22–35

Tuesday

December 30
Octave of Christmas
1 Jn 2:12–17
Lk 2:36–40

Wednesday

December 31
Octave of Christmas
1 Jn 2:18–21
Jn 1:1–18

Thursday

January 1
Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God
Nm 6:22–27
Gal 4:4–7
Lk 2:16–21

Friday

January 2
Sts. Basil the Great and Gregory Nazianzen, Bishops and Doctors of the Church
1 Jn 2:22–28
Jn 1:19–28

Saturday

January 3
Christmas Weekday
1 Jn 2:29–3:6
Jn 1:29–34

Sunday

January 4
The Epiphany of the Lord
Is 60:1–6
Eph 3:2–3a, 5–6
Mt 2:1–12