

Mother by night and retired into Egypt." In centuries to come the land of Egypt both in city and desert will teem with religious life, which perhaps had never been lived if Mary's Child had not sanctified that soil so fruitful later on in saints. Joseph however, could not peer into the future, nor did he need to do so. For him it was enough that God had spoken and he was sure that He who fed the swallows of the air and clothed the lilies of the field, would watch over His own beloved Son.

Before following the Holy Family down through the hill country of Judea and over Hebron on out into the desert, we can pause awhile and ponder on the lesson already hinted at in this beautiful mystery. No call of God ever found in holiest seraph such prompt obedience as Joseph gave that night to the angel's voice in Bethlehem.

As at times we kneel under the light of the sanctuary lamp, do we not hear the voice of Mary's Child calling to us in various ways? Sometimes He bids us fly from danger, from some occasion of sin. He is in our hearts and He entreats us to take Him away from an enemy more cruel than the wicked Herod who sought His life among the hills of Judea. Often with outstretched hands the fugitive Babe of Bethlehem begs us to take Him in our arms by nobler lives of purer motives, higher aims, braver deeds. And we look at the difficulties and perhaps refuse. Joseph did not look out into the darkness and weigh the obstacles in his path and tarry till the dawn.

Again how often before the Tabernacle have we not heard in our souls the command given to Abraham: "Go out of thy country and from thy kindred, and out of thy father's house, and come into the land which I shall show thee"? To many hearts these words are spoken, into many lives this blessed invitation comes. He pleads with them so piteously; He promises them a hundredfold in this life and eternal joy in the next. He yearns to be taken by their efforts away from persecutions fiercer than Jerusalem's blood-stained king and brought into an Egypt of ten thousand hearts and souls; but those who receive the call, hesitate, find excuses