

OUR LADY FLIGHT INTO EGYPT



**PATRONAL FEAST
OF THE
DIOCESE OF PORT ELIZABETH**

With the passage of time, the celebration of the patronal feast of the diocese has somehow been neglected or even fallen by the wayside. Our patronal feast is that of Our Lady of the Flight into Egypt and is celebrated on the 4th February each year. From now on it is to be elevated to a Special Feast in our diocese and celebrated on the nearest Sunday on or following the 4th February. Special readings and proper prayers are enclosed and the request is that everybody concerned will give it special prominence in their parishes and communities.

This celebration will provide an opportunity to reflect on the Gift of our local Church:

- The clergy, religious and laity who have built up and sustained our local church.
- To remember our benefactors, both local and overseas who have funded and sustained us.
- The need for local people to take up their vocations (this is part of the pastoral goal to become a self-sustaining Church).
- The call inspired by the Holy Spirit reflected in the Synod of Africa and our Holy Father to have authentic inculturation in our local Church.
- To make us and our communities conscious of the millions of people who, like the Holy Family, are refugees in Africa. In what way can we, should we, be more responsive to the refugee people and to the people in our own diocese who have no housing.

Please cooperate to make this a meaningful Feast for our local Church.

MASS OF THE SOLEMNITY OF OUR LADY OF THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT

Entrance Antiphon: The angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said: 'Get up, take the child and his mother with you, and escape into Egypt and stay there until I tell you, because Herod intends to search for the child and do away with him...'

Opening Prayer: O God, our strength and our hope you led your only begotten Son our Redeemer to safety from the sword of Herod. Grant that through the intercession of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary we may be delivered from every evil and so come to serve you in justice and holiness of life. This we ask through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever. Amen.

FIRST READING: GENESIS 46: 1-7

RESPONSORIAL PSALM:

Response: The salvation of the just comes from the Lord. (cf Ps 37; v36)

Trust in the Lord and do what is good, make your home in the land and live in peace; make the Lord your only joy and he will give you what your heart desires.

The Lord takes care of good men's lives, and their heritage will last forever; they will not be at a loss when bad times come, in time of famine they will have more than they need.

Never yield to evil, practice good and you will have an everlasting home, for the Lord loves what is right.

The salvation of the virtuous comes from the Lord, he is their shelter when trouble comes; the Lord helps and rescues them, he saves them because they take shelter in him.

SECOND READING: Ephesians 1:3-14

ALLELUIA: Alleluia, alleluia. Joseph got up and took the child and his mother and left that night for Egypt. Alleluia.

GOSPEL READING: Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL:

Priest:

On this patronal feast of our diocese
We approach God with faith and in all humility.
Let us ask the Lord to answer our prayers
Which we make in the name of and for the sake of the Church.

Almighty and eternal God, the Blessed Virgin Mary
Glorious Mother of your Son,
Helps and defends all those who call her;
By her intercession may we be strong in faith,
Steady in hope, and persevere in your love.
Through Christ our Lord.

Or

Priest:

My brothers and sisters in Christ, on this Patronal Feast of the Church of our diocese of Port Elizabeth, let us bring before God all our needs and desires.

Reader:

1. We pray for our Bishop Michael Coleman, that God will continue to give him the grace, strength, love and compassion that he brings to his duties as our leader in the faith.

LORD HEAR US.

2. For all Priests, for Deacons and their wives, for religious brothers and sisters; that they may continue to labour in God's Vineyard in this part of the world.

LORD HEAR US.

3. For all in lay ministries and for everyone who serves the Church in any way; that what they do will bear fruit that will last.

LORD HEAR US.

4. For all who served the Church of our diocese of Port Elizabeth in the past and have died. May God reward their labours and give them eternal rest with Him in heaven.

LORD HEAR US.

5. For all refugees, who like Mary our Mother are seeking a safe haven; that with our help and intervention they may find safe refuge among us.

5. Let us pray in silence for the things we cannot put into words. (*pause*)

LORD HEAR US.

6. We ask Mary our Patroness, to protect us with her prayers and to help us to grow in holiness. HAIL MARY...

Priest: Almighty God, we praise and thank You for Your Church in our diocese. Hear all our prayers and help us to continue our efforts on Your behalf, and lead us to Your Kingdom. Through Christ our Lord, AMEN.

Prayer over the gifts: Almighty Father, look graciously upon these gifts and through the prayers of the Blessed Virgin lead all people to the love and peace of your kingdom. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Communion Antiphon:

He stayed there until Herod was dead to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophets: "I called my Son out of Egypt."

Post Communion Prayer: O Lord, we have celebrated these mysteries in honour of Our Lady of the flight into Egypt and you have nourished us with the Body and Blood of your Son. May we who honour the memory of the Virgin Mary, share one day in your banquet of eternal life. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.