

Every year St. Joseph made a special journey with Mary and Jesus. He made a pilgrimage. Do you know what a pilgrimage is? A pilgrimage is when you travel to a holy place. A pilgrimage is not a vacation. It's not like a trip to the zoo or a fun park. Instead, a pilgrimage is a trip that helps you get closer to God.



Joseph and his family went on a pilgrimage every year. They went to the Temple in Jerusalem for the Feast of Passover. This was a very special time. It was a joyful time. It's like when we go to church for Mass on Christmas or Easter.



Joseph and Mary and Jesus lived a long way from Jerusalem. They were poor so they walked on foot. Mary and Jesus might have taken turns riding on a donkey while Joseph walked.

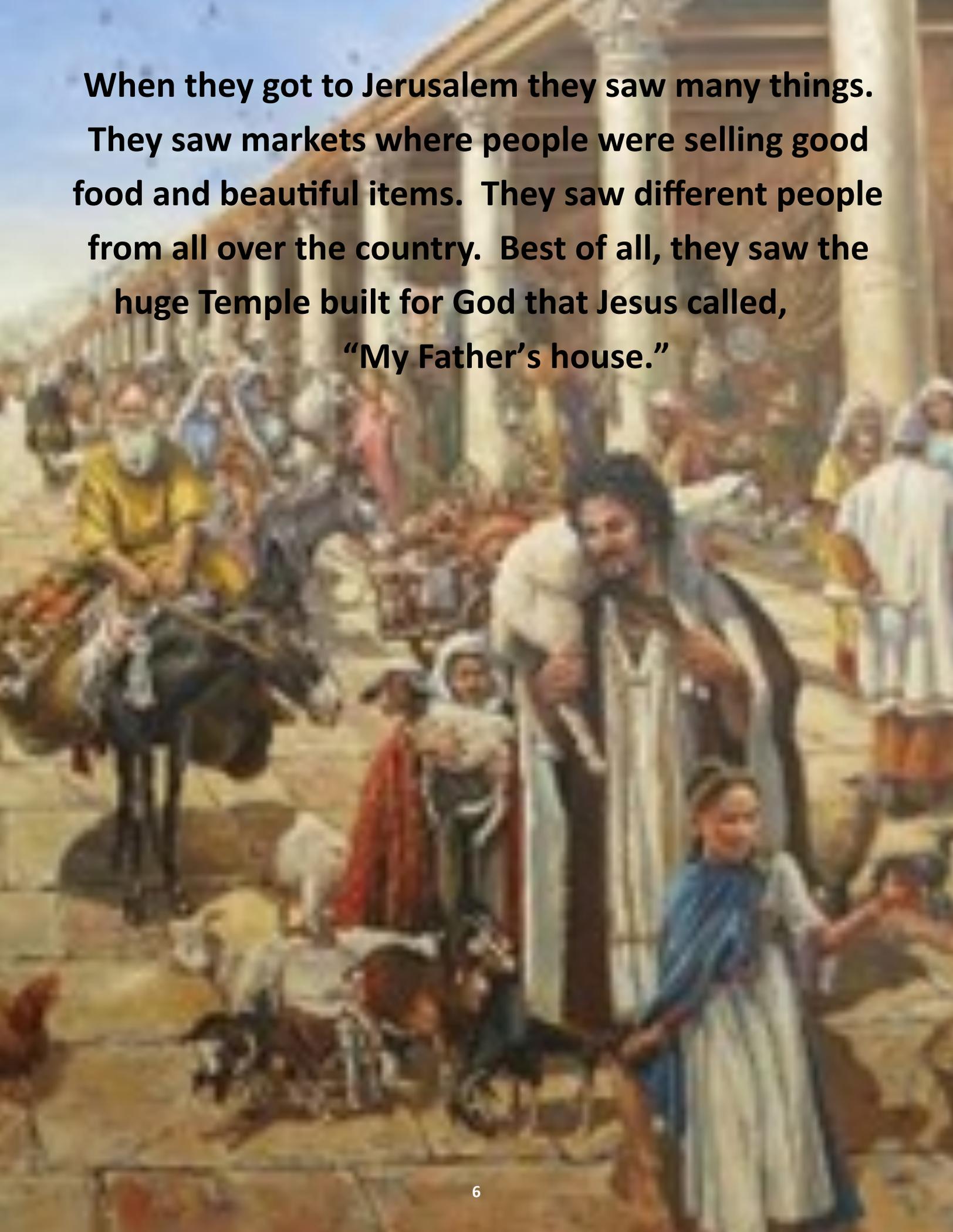
On their pilgrimage they prayed many prayers called Psalms. They praised God for being so good. They told God they were sorry for all the sins in the world.

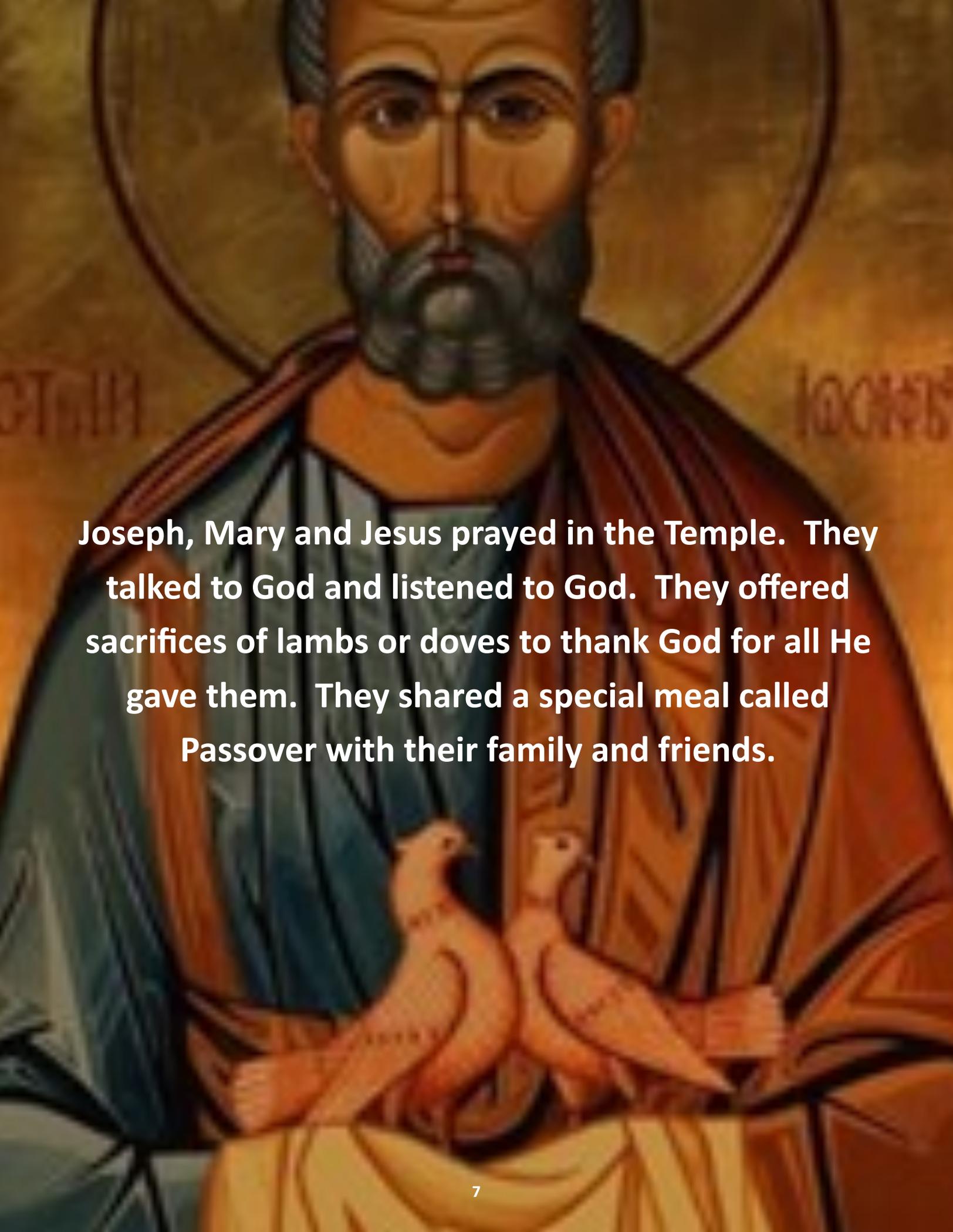
They thanked God for giving them gifts of life and health and family. They asked God for things they needed like food and good weather and to heal friends who were sick.



On their pilgrimage they made many sacrifices. They shared food with their neighbors. They didn't complain when they got tired. They gave money to poor beggars. They slept on the hard ground for a bed.

When they got to Jerusalem they saw many things. They saw markets where people were selling good food and beautiful items. They saw different people from all over the country. Best of all, they saw the huge Temple built for God that Jesus called, “My Father’s house.”





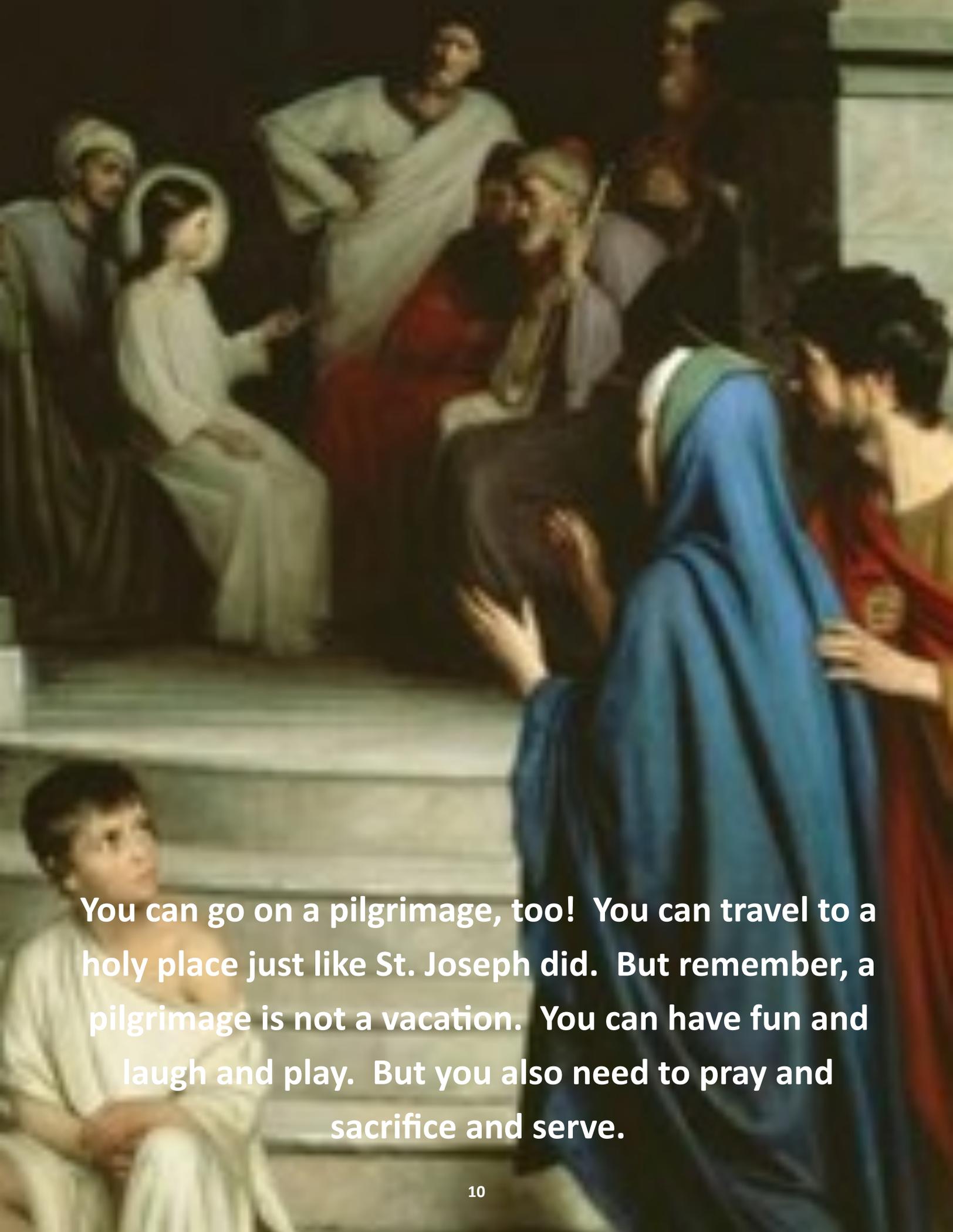
Joseph, Mary and Jesus prayed in the Temple. They talked to God and listened to God. They offered sacrifices of lambs or doves to thank God for all He gave them. They shared a special meal called Passover with their family and friends.



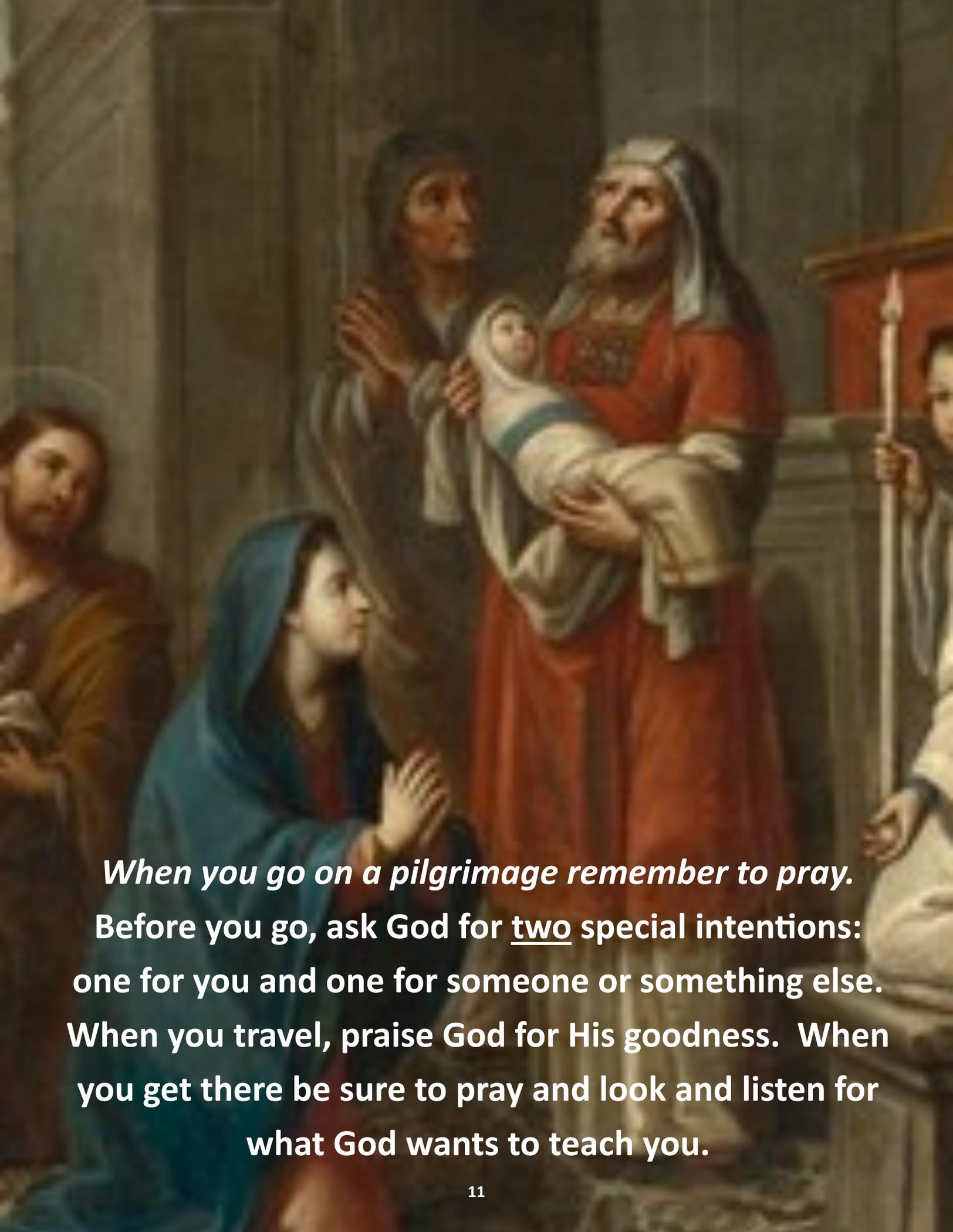
Finally, Joseph brought Mary and Jesus back home to Nazareth. They talked and laughed with friends as they walked. They prayed and sang to God. They sacrificed and served others as they journeyed.



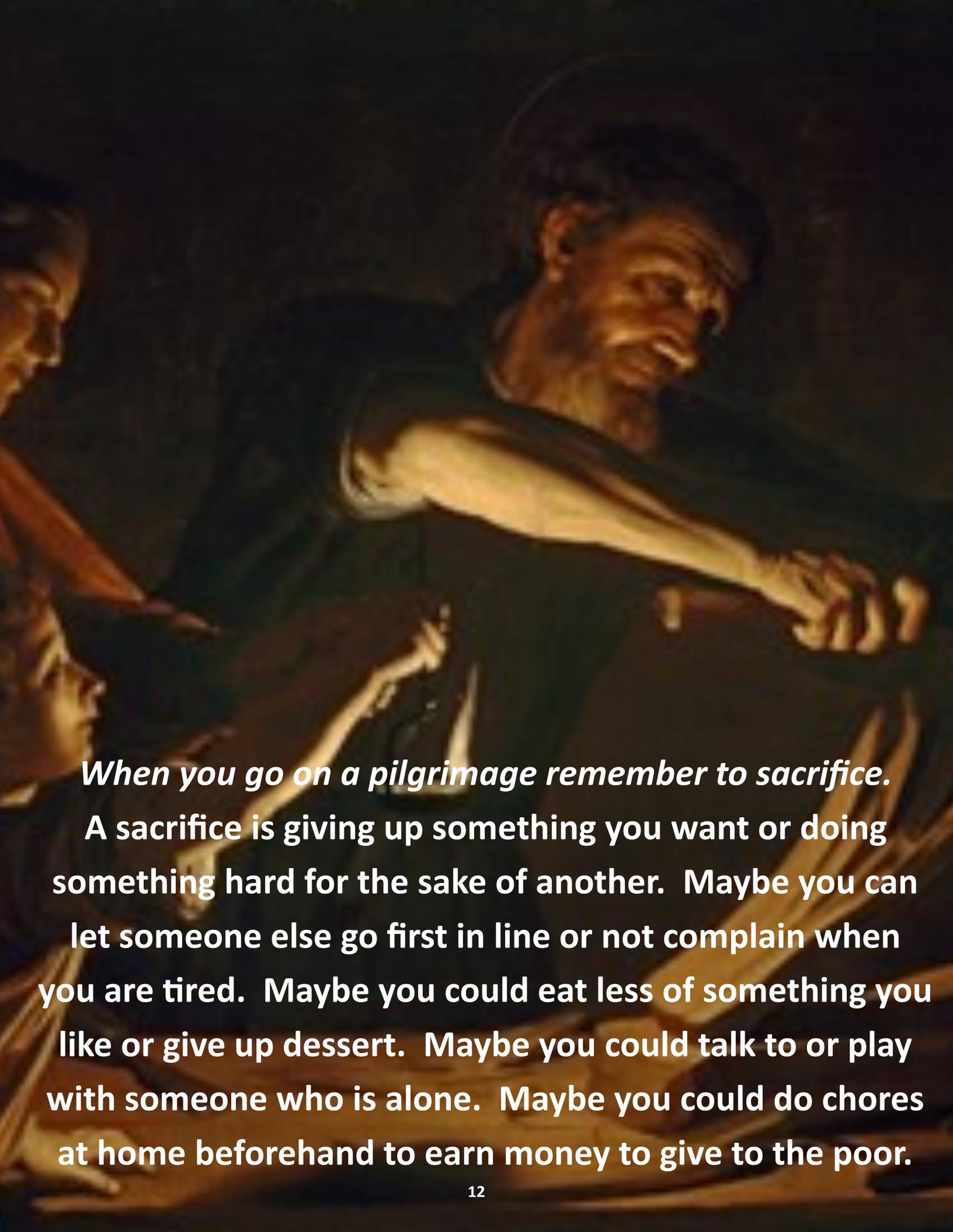
At home, St. Joseph thanked God for a safe pilgrimage. He thanked God for loving him. He thanked God for trusting him to care for Mary and Jesus.



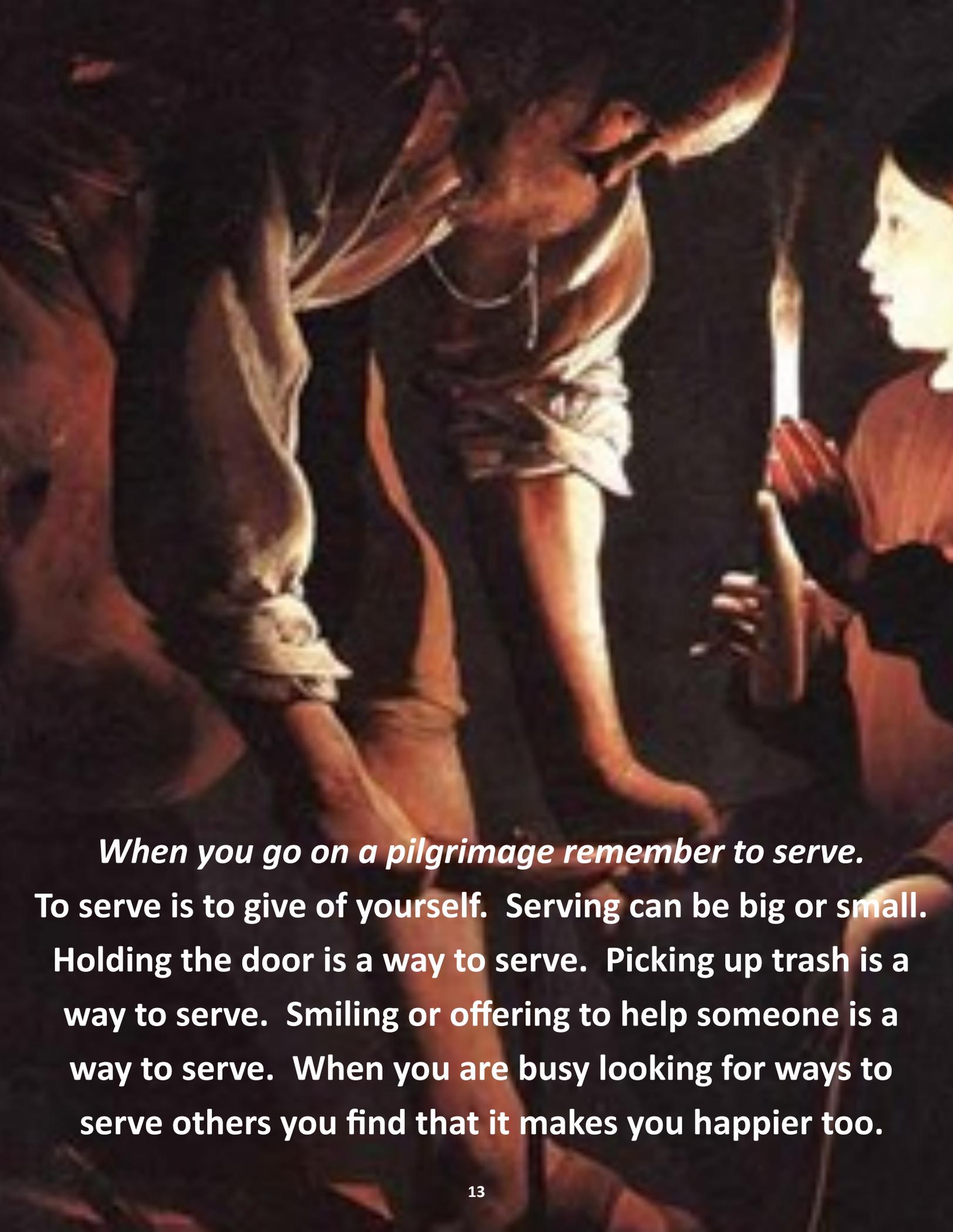
You can go on a pilgrimage, too! You can travel to a holy place just like St. Joseph did. But remember, a pilgrimage is not a vacation. You can have fun and laugh and play. But you also need to pray and sacrifice and serve.



When you go on a pilgrimage remember to pray.
Before you go, ask God for two special intentions:
one for you and one for someone or something else.
When you travel, praise God for His goodness. When
you get there be sure to pray and look and listen for
what God wants to teach you.



When you go on a pilgrimage remember to sacrifice.
A sacrifice is giving up something you want or doing something hard for the sake of another. Maybe you can let someone else go first in line or not complain when you are tired. Maybe you could eat less of something you like or give up dessert. Maybe you could talk to or play with someone who is alone. Maybe you could do chores at home beforehand to earn money to give to the poor.



When you go on a pilgrimage remember to serve.

To serve is to give of yourself. Serving can be big or small. Holding the door is a way to serve. Picking up trash is a way to serve. Smiling or offering to help someone is a way to serve. When you are busy looking for ways to serve others you find that it makes you happier too.



When you come back from a pilgrimage remember to thank God. He will give you many graces and blessings when you make a holy trip like this. He will share His love in special ways. Make sure you remember to tell Him, “Thank You!”



But there's one more secret to learn about a pilgrimage. Our whole life is a pilgrimage! That's right, every day we are all on a journey getting closer and closer to the holiest place you can imagine. Every day we pray, we sacrifice and we serve. Every day we thank God for His gifts. Until one day, after many years, we get to the end of our journey on earth. And then we are ready to go to the best place of all...



HEAVEN!

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