

SUNDAY PLUS

Families of hope

Every family has its own dynamic: in Nazareth, one could imagine, Joseph the carpenter's family would be well-known and respected. But nothing special is recorded of them by the Evangelist, apart from this dramatic story of their beloved son Jesus getting lost for three days on the annual Passover trip to Jerusalem.

If you've ever lost a child for even a few minutes you will know how desperate a feeling that is. No doubt Mary and Joseph had been lulled into a false sense of security by the habits of preceding years: he was obviously in the company of friends and neighbours.

People travelled in caravans for safety through this Roman-occupied territory with its possible dangers from robbers or wild beasts. Jerusalem, also, was a crowded city, full of visitors for the Passover. Mary and Joseph must have been sick at heart.

Except that when they eventually found him, intelligently discussing

Family dynamics

By Mary Bell



the Scriptures with the learned doctors in the Temple, he did not immediately show remorse but, with the recognisable confidence of a teenager, asked why they were looking for him, as if they should know his mission.

If anyone ever doubted the humanity of Jesus this incident confirms it. Although he feels the pressure of his calling, he is not yet a mature adult. However, he returns with them obediently to Nazareth and is obviously a good and diligent son.

And Mary waits in hope, storing away all that she knows about her son, Jesus the Messiah, as he grows to manhood

Following many years in the classroom, retired teacher and Head of RE, Mary Bell now has time to enjoy the beauties of the natural world around her.

Rooted in love

By Natalie Claveria

The coming together of families at Christmas can bring both delight and despair. Of course, families are made up of all different characters and personalities, some that gel like wine and cheese and others like oil and water. But each of these experiences provides us with the rich tapestry of family life. As St Teresa of Calcutta commented, "If you want to bring happiness to the whole world, go home and love your family." Eloquently, Mother Teresa reminds us of the importance of our family and that this

coming together is a smaller version of our church, our local community, our world. To love our family truly and sincerely is an act we can all make today, and one that can change the world. All families are rooted in love, a divine love that ties us together through life's up and downs. We are all reminded today we are children of God. We belong to God's family, alongside Mary, Joseph and Jesus. As we grow together with our own family and in God's, we become, like Jesus, filled with wisdom and understanding.

In addition to being a busy mum and active in her parish, Natalie Claveria is also the Head of Sales, Distribution & Customer Experience for Redemptorist Publications.

The family remains the basic unit of society and the first school in which children learn the human, spiritual and moral values which enable them to be a beacon of goodness, integrity and justice in our communities."

Pope Francis

May our house shelter our life.
When we come home here,
May all the weight of the world
Fall from our shoulders.
May our hearts be tranquil here,
Blessed by peace the world cannot give.

John O'Donohue

Jubilee 2025

Jubilees in history

In ancient Judaism, the Jubilee Year was celebrated every fifty years, and was a time of particular religious devotion and rest. The Mosaic Law prescribed that slaves should be freed and land returned to its former owners. The first Christian Jubilee was instigated by Pope Boniface VIII in 1300. Since then, the frequency of jubilee celebrations has ranged from every 100 years to today's practice of every 25.

Jubilee 2025 is the twenty-seventh Holy Year and the second jubilee to be declared by Pope Francis. The first celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the end of Vatican II and was dedicated to mercy.

"For the first time a 'door of mercy' was opened in the world's cathedrals, sanctuaries, hospitals and prisons. For the occasion, the Pope established a group of priests known as Missionaries of Mercy to whom he entrusted the power to forgive sins usually reserved to the Holy Father."

(www.iubilaeum2025.va)



Today:
1 Samuel 1: 20-22, 24-28
1 John 3: 1-2, 21-24
Luke 2: 41-52

Monday:
1 John 2:12-17
Luke 2:36-40

Tuesday:
1 John 2:18-21
John 1: 1-18

Wednesday:
Numbers 6:22-27
Galatians 4:4-7
Luke 2:16-21

Thursday:
1 John 2:29 - 3:6
John 1:29-34

Friday:
1 John 3:7-10
John 1:35-42

Saturday:
1 John 3:11-21
John 1:43-51

Next Sunday:
Isaiah 60:1-6
Ephesians 3:2-3, 5-6