



## MARFAM FAMILY YEAR PLANNER 2024.

THEME: OUR WORLD, A FAMILY OF FAMILIES

### THOUGHTS FOR THE DAY: JUNE – CHILDREN BELONG IN FAMILIES



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**Abbreviations:** Pope Francis: LS = Laudato Si. AL = Amoris Laetitia. FT = Fratelli Tutti. LD = Laudate Deum. DI = Dignitas Infinita

**Overview. Children belong in Families.** Birth, childhood and growth into adolescence are the most vibrant stages in all of creation, human, animal and plant. Growth and regrowth can often be stressful and conflict-filled. However, ideally in any family, the young need conscious protection, love, care and support to monitor and direct their youthful energy towards full and responsible maturity. **Pope Francis:** *It is true that the difficulties the youth experience in their own family can lead the young to ask whether it is worthwhile to start a new family, to be faithful and to be generous. I say that it is worth your every effort to invest in the family, there you will find the best incentives to mature and the greatest joys to experience and share. Letter to youth Pope Francis. Children once born begin to receive along with nourishment and care the spiritual gift of knowing with certainty that they are loved. This is shown to them through the gift of their personal name, the sharing of language, looks of love and the brightness of a smile. They learn that the beauty of human relationships touches our soul, seeks our freedom, accepts the difference of others, recognises and respects them as a partner in dialogue. Such is love, and it contains a spark of God's love. AL 172. Pope Francis recently celebrated the 1<sup>st</sup> World Day for Children on Trinity Sunday. He asked them to pray for peace and for other children around the world suffering because of war.*

**Setting the scene.** The reflections for this month are around children and youth with a family focus that was adopted by an imaginary PPC in a parish. Deacon Samuel took the programme under his wing to ensure that youth and parent relationships were uppermost throughout parish programmes as too often they are kept separate or addressed in isolation. Families, ideally as a unit, are encouraged to reflect and pray about God's message to them at this time, using the new synodal method of Conversations in the Spirit, with attentive listening and open sharing. Scripture passages given are from the readings of the day with quotations from Pope Francis added. The Beatitudes form the basis on a number of the weekdays and can also be explored more deeply. *We should involve young people directly in the life of society and of the Church so that they do not fall prey to feelings of frustration and rejection in the face of their inability to shape their own future, especially where they are vulnerable due to lack of education, unemployment, political exploitation and various kinds of addiction. Pope Benedict - Africa Munus 62.*

**June 1. Global Parents' Day.** Deacon Samuel discussed with the youth, "Authority is a very important thing that needs to be respected. The way some MPs have been behaving in Parliament shows disrespect for the structures and for the authority of the President. MPs can debate but the President alone has the authority to sign into law and law-enforcers have the authority to make people obey. However authority nowadays is quite widely undermined. Many laws are challenged, disregarded or broken at will. Just look at the traffic on our roads. Undermining of authority at such levels also undermines authority in families. When parents give an instruction children may think they can question or disobey. Punishment may follow but discipline and learning self-discipline is not possible if rightful authority is not respected.

**Reflect, share, scripture:** *The scribes and elders came to Jesus and asked him, "By whose authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority to do them?" Jesus then asked them a question. Mark 11:27-33. Pope Francis. Moral education entails asking only those things that do not involve a disproportionate sacrifice and demand only a degree of effort that will not lead to resentment or coercion. By demanding too much we gain nothing. Once a child is free of our authority he or she may possibly cease to do good. AL 271. ACTION.* Discuss and share on the issue of authority and discipline with children.

**June 2. Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ B.** Fr Joseph preached this sermon every year hoping they would remember. "This is one of the most important feasts in the Church because it teaches us about the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist. I want to ask you whether you really do believe that as Catholics, or whether it is something you don't really think about and take for granted. As a priest it challenges me too. It helps me when I remind myself that God can also be present in the sacramental love relationship of marriage, which we should reverence much more than we do. To strengthen people's faith there have been recognised miracles over the centuries of the bread and wine physically being changed in appearance to human flesh and blood. Science, when called to testify, confirmed what we have believed in faith. What the Catholic Church has taught for the last 2,000 years repeats the words of Jesus."

**Reflect, share, scripture:** *As they were eating he took bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them and said, "Take, this is my body." And he took a chalice and when he had given thanks he gave it to them and they all drank of it. And he said to them, "this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many." Mark 14:12-26. Pope Francis: Jesus knocks on the door of families to share with them a Eucharistic supper. The Eucharist is the sacrament of the new covenant where Christ's redemptive work is carried out. The close bond between married life and the Eucharist becomes all the more clear. AL 318. It is in the Eucharist that all that has been created finds its greatest exaltation. God himself became man and gave himself as food for his creatures. He comes not from above but from within, that we might find him in this world of ours. LS 236. ACTION and prayer.* Discuss and share on the meaning of the true presence in the Eucharist.

**June 3. UGANDA MARTYRS.** Some of the families in the parish knew of the 22 Uganda Martyrs, including St Charles Lwanga and St Kizito as well as some Anglican youth. They told the stories of the horrific and cruel ways in which these men had died in the 1880s at the command of the king. They were laid on mats, rolled up, tied and burned to death. Some were young boys, the youngest being Kizito, one was the ruler's own son and others were officials at the court who disagreed with the ruler and protected some of the young pages from his homosexual demands. St Kizito, the youngest was 13 years old and is a patron saint for children. He was brave and joyful and sang as they were put on the pyre.

**Reflect, share, scripture:** *Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things, present, nor things to come, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Rom 8:39. ACTION AND PRAYER.* Share with children on stories of young saints and martyrs and their strong love of God. Pray for courage to do right.

**June 4.** "Hurricanes, floods, extremes in hot and cold weather, earthquakes and volcanoes, there is certainly much going on in the world around us. Is this a sign of end times?" Portia asked. "Some people young and not so young believe "the end is nigh! Others don't agree and claim that we still have much to learn and achieve." "That isn't the only issue really," Mark said, "it is the challenge we face to manage and respond effectively to all these events now and until the end does come, whenever that will be. Our South African vision of *ubuntu* clearly does have much to do with that, for all of us old and young."

**Reflect, share, scripture:** *According to his promise we wait for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. 2 Peter 3:12-15. Pope Francis. The media can help us to feel closer to one another, creating a sense of the unity of the human family, which in turn can inspire solidarity and serious efforts to ensure a more dignified life for all, while we cannot accept a digital world designed to exploit our weaknesses and bring out the worst in people. FT 20 ACTION AND PRAYER.* Share on the issue of the end times.

**June 5. World Environment Day.** "I can remember being part of this commemoration of World Environment Day a long time ago when care of creation was something quite strange and new and often people would laugh at us and call "bunny-huggers" or "tree-huggers." We did persist because we believed in the cause and now we do feel justified.

**Reflect, share, scripture:** *God did not give us a spirit of timidity but a spirit of power and love and self-control. Do not be ashamed of testifying to our Lord, not of me his prisoner, but take your share of suffering for the gospel in the power of God. 2 Tim 1-12. Pope Francis: Ethics leads to a God who calls for a committed response which is outside of the categories of the marketplace. EG57. True statecraft is manifest when in difficult times we uphold high principles and think of the long-term common good. Thinking of those who come after us does not serve electoral purposes yet it is what authentic justice demands. FT 178. ACTION AND PRAYER.* How difficult is it to stand up for something you believe in?

**June 6.** Sometimes families, or parents and children just talk about their own things and even end up arguing, but after their parish meeting they decided that it would be much better to work together as a family on a project. “That way we can enjoy doing something meaningful together and also help a cause, like water conservation, child abuse or joining a clean-up project in their community.

**Reflect, share, scripture:** *Charge them before the Lord to avoid disputing about words, which does no good, but only ruins the hearers. Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who has no need to be ashamed. 2 Tim 2:14-15* **Pope Francis:** *Jesus expects us to stop looking for those personal or communal niches which shelter us from the maelstrom of human misfortune and instead to enter into the reality of other people’s lives and to know the power of tenderness. Whenever we do so, our lives become wonderfully complicated. AL 308.* **ACTION AND PRAYER.** Taking up a project together is even better when as a family they pray together about their cause.

**June 7. Sacred Heart.** In apparitions to St Margaret Mary Alacoque Jesus showed her the depth of his love and begged her to promote greater love of him in the particular form of the Sacred Heart. This has become a very well-known image – an earlier version of the Divine Mercy. Consecrating a home, going to Mass and receiving communion on 9 consecutive 1<sup>st</sup> Fridays of the month were some of the requests for which in return Jesus promised his own greater love and support. “I promise you in the excessive mercy of my Heart that my all-powerful love will grant to all those who hold to this devotion the grace of final penitence. They will not die in my disgrace, nor without receiving the Sacraments. My Divine Heart shall be their safe refuge in this last moment.” [www.sacredheartdevotion.com](http://www.sacredheartdevotion.com). A number of religious congregations, schools and the popular Sacred Heart sodality also have this image of Jesus as their patron.

**Reflect, share, scripture:** *All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction and for training in righteousness that God’s people may be complete, equipped for every good work. 2 Tim 3:16.* **Pope Francis:** *The various expressions of popular piety are a treasure of spirituality for many families. AL 318. At times we are called to gaze even more attentively on mercy so that we may become a more effective sign of the Father’s action in our lives. FM3* **ACTION AND PRAYER.** Share with one another about a devotion to the Sacred Heart and what it has meant to you.

**June 8.** Over some years Bruce had experienced a sense of calling to the permanent diaconate. He didn’t say too much when their children were still young but as they grew older he shared this sense with Pat his wife and their teens. “It’s something from deep inside of me. I can’t help myself and just want to study and share my faith, teach others and build the Kingdom of God.” He laughed and added, “Here I am preaching to you already! How would you feel if I applied to become a deacon?” The others thought for a while. “I could see it coming,” May said. “I can understand and there is a sense of pride, even if it might feel a bit silly at times for me to have you up there on the altar. Maybe it will help to keep us all on the straight and narrow” she added.

**Reflect, share, scripture:** *I charge you preach the word, be urgent in season and out of season, convince, rebuke and exhort, be unfailing in patience and in teaching. The time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching but, having itching ears, they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own liking. They will turn away from listening to the truth and wander into myths. 2 Tim 4;1-8.* **Pope Francis:** *Those who have deep spiritual aspirations should not feel that the family detracts from their growth in the life of the Spirit, but rather see it as a path which the Lord is using. AL 316.* **ACTION AND PRAYER.** Share with family on how to express one’s love of God.

**June 9. 10th Sunday of Ordinary Time.** Fr Joseph spoke directly to the families. “Most of you have made your 1<sup>st</sup> communion and some of young people have been confirmed and showed real commitment to your faith. I know many of you prayed together in your families and some also took on faith sharing and “family night” as the parent group had suggested. Paul told me how that had brought his family closer. I hardly see Teresa these days, but when I bumped into her she told me how she had become unhappy and left home. She had become very closely involved with another church group. “We’re like a family,” she told me. On the one hand I felt sad for her own family but on the other hand I could see that she was happy and spiritually fulfilled. It is really quite a complex issue. What do you families think and could you discuss this at home?”

**Reflect, share, scripture:** *Jesus said, here are my mother and my brothers. Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother. Mark 3:20-35.* **Pope Francis:** *Parents have a serious responsibility for children’s education. Children are called to accept and practice the commandment, “Honour your father and your mother. AL 17. However,*

children are not the property of a family but have their own lives to lead. AL 18. **ACTION AND PRAYER.** Communicate as families how best to keep the faith alive and growing.

**June 10. Beatitudes.** While some lucky young people had gone to the World Youth Day last year the rest of the youth group had also been asked to reflect and share, ideally at home with their families. The youth leader suggested, "The eight beatitudes are a really good place to start. You can choose your favourite one even before you start but listen carefully to the point each beatitude makes. We call them the Spirit of the Kingdom. Patrick and his mom decided to do just that over the next few weeks.

**Reflect, share, scripture:** *Jesus went up on the mountain and his disciples came to him. He sat down and he opened his mouth and taught them saying, "Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ...."* Matthew 5:1-12. **Pope Francis:** *Today we have to realise that a true ecological approach becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment so as to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.* LS 49. **ACTION AND PRAYER.** Communicate as families on the idea and meaning today of the kingdom of God.

**June 11.** Do you think those old ladies in the church are 'salt of the earth' people? Mary asked her son Patrick. "Maybe, but when I hear them complaining it makes me wonder if they've lost the saltiness. I prefer to look at the SVP who you don't see in church all the time but are out there doing stuff for others." "Maybe the light of the world people are those who lead the organisations helping others, or teaching. I also think bishop William is one of those."

**Reflect, share, scripture:** *"You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste how shall its saltiness be restored? You are the light of the world, a city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Matt 5:13-16. Pope Francis. St Therese of Lisieux invites us to practise the little way of love, not to miss out on a kind word, a smile or any small gesture which sows peace and friendship. An integral ecology is also made up of simple daily gestures which break with the logic of violence, exploitation and selfishness. A world of exacerbated consumption is at the same time a world which mistreats life in all its forms. LS 230. ACTION.* How well are we dealing with our own consumerism?

**June 12. Beatitudes.** Patrick and May his mom often discussed the lawlessness in society today. She said, "I think it started with taxis not obeying traffic laws and then came load shedding and many robots were out of order. Now anyone seems to think we can stop and go as we like." "I agree it is just a small example but it certainly is right there in your face and very annoying too." "Except when you are the guilty one, right?"

**Reflect, share, scripture:** *Do not think that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets. I have come not to abolish them but to fulfil them. Whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches men so shall be called last in the kingdom of heaven. Mat 5:17-19. Pope Francis: Whether in administration of the state, the various levels of civil society or relationships between individuals themselves lack of respect for the law is becoming more common. Laws may be well framed yet remain a dead letter. LS 166. If we can overcome individualism we will truly be able to develop a different lifestyle and bring about significant changes in society. LS 208 ACTION and prayer.* Is obeying traffic laws a good example of care for the common good?

**June 13. St Anthony of Padua.** Giving names to children is a very cultural thing. They might be names of relatives or just any name that sounds nice. In some cultures the name has significance related to the time of the birth. At baptism the Church expects babies to have a Christian or saint's name. Children might explore who their name saint is. That was what Sibusiso Anthony Moloi did and he studied the life of St Anthony of Padua, remembering a childhood prayer, "St. Anthony, please look around; something is lost and must be found." The prayer came from an incident when St Anthony himself prayed intensely for an important book he needed that was lost. As a child he was drawn to the religious life and wanted to be a missionary but his health was not good enough. He was shipwrecked and ended up in Italy as a humble Franciscan brother until by chance his preaching skill was discovered and became his life's work turning many people from their sins. A fellow monk found him one night in his room miraculously holding the baby Jesus. That is the image we see quite often. This intense love for Jesus, like that of St Francis can be a real model for all the Anthonys and Antonettes.

**Reflect, share, scripture:** *"The harvest is great but the labourers are few. Luke 10:1-9. Pope Francis: Expressions of popular piety are a treasure of spirituality for many families. AL 318. The joy of the Gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus. Those who accept his offer of salvation are set free from sin, sorrow, inner emptiness and loneliness.*

*With Christ joy is constantly born anew.” EG 1* **ACTION and prayer.** Consider the devotion to St Anthony for his love of Jesus as well as his power to find lost things.

**June 14.** Once again Mary and Patrick considered the Church’s laws, this time on divorce and remarriage but they spoke of adultery too. “I know this is a painful subject for both of us but I believe you are old enough to be able to understand. I divorced your father because of his adultery, not once but many times. I felt very betrayed but chose never to remarry. Many others do, some that were innocent and others not. Should we be excluded from the sacraments forever? That was the type of discussion the bishops held at the Family Synod too.

**Reflect, share, scripture:** *Mat 5:27-32. I say to you that whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.* **Pope Francis:** *I understand those who prefer a more rigorous pastoral care which leaves no room for confusion. But I sincerely believe that Jesus wants a Church attentive to the goodness which the Holy Spirit sows in the midst of human weakness, a Mother who while clearly expressing her objective teaching always does what good she can even if her shoes get soiled by the mud of the street.* **AL 308 ACTION AND PRAYER.** When families can discuss issues of divorce and their impact on spouses and children it can be a healing experience.

**15 June.** Every year around the day of commemoration of the 1976 Youth uprising the different youth groups, altar servers, choirs, Children of Mary, young adults, and confirmation candidates organised an event and invited the rest of the parish youth who were not actively involved to join them. There had to be music and dancing of course but because of a number of problems that had been experienced in the area they decided to have a workshop too on Youth and the Law to be presented by one of the dads, a prosecutor in the High Court. They had already prepared for this through discussion in their groups and families that made it more exciting because the youth and the parents wanted to know and understand the law and how the spirit of the kingdom would come across. “Do people always tell the truth in court?” That was a relevant question in the light of all the corruption cases that have come before the law.

**Reflect, share, scripture:** *Do not swear at all. Let what you say be simply, yes or no. Matt 5:33-37* **Pope Francis:** *Pastoral care for families needs to make it clear that the Gospel of the Family responds to the deepest expectations of the human person, a response to each one’s dignity and fulfilment in reciprocity, communion and fruitfulness. This consists not merely in presenting a set of rules, but in proposing values.* **AL 201 ACTION AND PRAYER.** Share and pray for the youth of our world, that their future will be secure.

**16 June. YOUTH DAY AND FATHERS DAY. Sunday 11B.** Today’s fathers and at times grandfathers were the youth of 1976 who stood up for justice when their parents did not. Today are those men still taking responsibility? Research has shown that more than half of the children in our families are growing up without their own biological father present in their lives, although most often these men are alive, somewhere. Is that not a sadness for the fathers as well as the children, as it has also been well researched that fathers are important and can play a positive role in their children’s growth as they through their teen years. The sad reality is that we cannot just reverse this situation overnight and unite fathers and children because of many complicating factors. But much can be done to prevent such situations in the future if men and boys, but also the women and girls act responsibly and are aware of the consequences of their actions.

**Reflect, share, scripture:** *The kingdom of God is like a grain of mustard seed which when sown is the smallest of all the seeds yet when it grows up it becomes the greatest of all shrubs. Mark 4:26-34.* **Pope Francis:** *God sets the father in the family so that by the gifts of his masculinity he can be close to his wife and share everything, joy and sorrow, hope and hardship. And to be close to his children as they grow, when they play and when they work, when they are carefree and when they are distressed. When they are daring and when they are afraid, when they stray and when they get back on the right path. To be a father who is always present. It is not good for children to lack a father and to grow up before they are ready.* **AL 177. ACTION AND PRAYER.** Share and pray for our families, especially for fathers and the youth of our world, that their future will be secure.

**June 17.** “Why did Jesus make such difficult statements,” Maysie asked her mother. “Surely if someone hurts me I’ve got a right to defend myself or fight back?” Mom sighed and replied, “I agree, Jesus made many difficult statements in this “blueprint” for a new kingdom. Remember he is proposing the “Spirit of the Kingdom,” an ideal society to aim for, but nevertheless we do find them difficult.”

**Reflect, share, scripture:** *An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. I say "Do not resist one who is evil. If anyone strikes you on the right cheek turn to him the other also and if anyone would see you and take your coat, let him have your cloak as well."* Matt 5:38-42. **Pope Francis:** *The Church wishes with humility and compassion to reach out to families and to help each family to discover the best way to overcome any obstacles it encounters. AL200. I think of what our world would be like without the patient dialogue of the many generous persons who keep families and communities together. Unlike disagreement and conflict, persistent and courageous dialogue does not make headlines, but quietly helps the world to live much better than we imagine. FT 198.* **ACTION AND PRAYER.** Discuss if dialogue as promoted by Pope Francis today can address the difficult questions in the Beatitudes.

**June 18.** Preston had been a gang member since his early teens. He had felt abandoned by his alcoholic mother, didn't know his father and his sister who had been looking after the younger siblings had run away. Patrick and his mom had heard about the case and been praying for this boy for some time when Patrick decided to invite him to come to a mission for young people at their church. During the mission just one sentence: *"Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you"* had touched Preston as he shared with Patrick. "I think I will be able to change my ways, but please carry on praying for me and please be my friend."

**Reflect, share, scripture:** *Read Matt 5:43-48.* **Pope Francis:** *The real question is not where our children are physically or whom they are with but rather where they are existentially, where they stand in terms of their convictions, goals, desires and dreams. AL 261.* **ACTION AND PRAYER.** How good are we at intercessory prayer?

**June 19.** Deacon Samuel still enjoyed meeting with the youth. "Now girls, no showing off any more." The boys teased the girls mostly about how they looked but the girls challenged the guys on how they acted. "Remember the singer Jub-Jub, he was a real show-off and where did that get him; jail for killing innocent schoolchildren with his street drag racing." "It's the same in church. Some people go to show how holy they are but are they really? Let's take this really seriously because it also concerns an eternal reward."

**Reflect, share, scripture:** *Beware of practising your piety before men in order to be seen by them. For then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven. Matthew 6:1-6.* **Pope Francis:** *When people become self-centred and self-enclosed their greed increases. The emptier a person's heart is, the more he or she needs things to buy, own and consume. Obsession with a consumerist lifestyle, above all, when few people are capable of maintaining it, can only lead to violence and mutual destruction. LS 204.* **ACTION AND PRAYER.** Should dress code be an issue in church?

**June 20.** This way of praying is becoming one of my pet hates," Georgina declared, "empty phrases, words that have lost their meaning. We seem to just babble on. I think we've fallen into the same trap that Jesus warned us about. It does worry me but when some of my friends from the Pentecostal church pray they seem to talk about real things." "I have discovered that if I slow down and think about the phrases they're not nearly as empty as all that, and I can apply them to my situation. But the one about forgiving others is one that catches me every time I stop to think about it."

**Reflect, share, scripture:** *When you pray do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do for they think they will be heard for their many words." Say 'Our Father.....' Matthew 6:7-15.* **Pope Francis:** *A few minutes can be found each day to come together before the living God, to tell him our worries, to ask for the needs of our family, to pray for someone experiencing difficulties, to ask for help in showing love, to give thanks for life and its blessings and ask Our Lady to protect us beneath her maternal mantle. AL 318.* **ACTION AND PRAYER.** *O Lord, seize us with your power and light, help us to protect all life, to prepare for a better future, for the coming of your Kingdom of justice, peace, love and beauty. Praise be to you! Amen. LS.*

**June 21.** The YCS group to which Patrick belonged had members who came from rich families as well as poor families, with most of them in between. Deacon Samuel led a meditation on the topic of "treasure." "It's really hard to imagine but Jesus is using a real *ubuntu* concept when he is asking us not to be attached to our worldly belongings, a cellphone, xbox, motorbike or computer. Maybe you have had to work hard for them. Consider that it might have taken you away from going to church or to your group. What in the end will be most important for you?"

**Reflect, share, scripture:** *Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven. Where your treasure is there will your heart be also. Matt 6:19-23.* **Pope Francis:** *Since the market tends to promote extreme consumerism in an effort to sell its products,*

people can easily get caught up in a whirlwind of needless buying and spending. The gadgets and technics forced upon him by the patterns of machine production and of abstract planning mass man accepts quite simply. To a greater or lesser degree mass man is convinced that his conformity is reasonable and just and leads people to believe that they are free as long as they have the supposed freedom to consume. But those really free are the minority who wield economic and financial power. LS 203. **ACTION AND PRAYER.** What are my real treasures?

**June 22.** Which girl, or boy, for that matter, hasn't stood in front of their cupboard before a party and said, "I've got nothing to wear?" It's funny that Jesus chose such practical examples, but maybe in an exaggerated way, to make his point. Nowadays clothes have become so much part of one's identity it is hard to be able to detach oneself from spending all one's money and energy on appearances and neglect the things of God's kingdom, like helping someone who really needs clothes or food or money for school books or remembering that parents have worked hard to be able to afford what young people take for granted. Have you ever looked at a new outfit in a shop and said "No, I won't spend my money on that. It's not right."

**Reflect, share, scripture: Pope Francis:** *Do not be anxious saying, what shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or what shall we wear?: The Gentiles seek all these things and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom and his righteousness and all these things shall be yours as well. Matt 6:24–34. Pope Francis:* *The emptier a person's heart is, the more he or she needs things to buy, own and consume. Obsession with a consumerist lifestyle above all when few people are capable of maintaining it, can only lead to violence and mutual destruction. LS204. ACTION AND PRAYER.* Discuss what it means to "live simply so that others may simply live."

**June 23. Sunday 12B.** Fr Kgomoitso posed a question. "Why do you think so many natural disasters seem to be happening around the world? Why not go and discuss it with your families." The Masons did and it became quite a heated discussion. "People don't believe enough that God can control the elements if he wants to." "But God has created nature and its laws and operates within those laws himself." "What about faith the size of a mustard seed?" That is a tricky question for me too. I say I do believe but often struggle to do so."

**Reflect, share, scripture:** *Master do you not care, we are going down!" Jesus woke up and rebuked the wind and the sea and the wind dropped. He said to them, why are you so frightened? How is it that you have no faith?" Mark 4:35-41. Pope Francis:* *All of us can cooperate as instruments of God for the care of creation, each according to his own culture, experience, involvements and talents. The Creator does not abandon us, he never forsakes his loving plan. LS 13 ACTION AND PRAYER.* Many of the storms in life are weather-related but not all are. Where is my faith strongest?

**June 24. Birth Of John the Baptist.** "JB is one of my favourite saints, Alan said. "He was a specially chosen person but he chose to respond to what he had to do, preached a message of repentance and conversion. Why are so many of our young people so aimless in their lives? Do they need better guidance from their parents, teachers or mentors?" "Where does a sense of direction and hope for the future come from?" Those were some of the questions that the electorate faced before casting their vote a month ago. Who would be willing or able to address these very real needs of the youth? "Is someone willing to take the bull by the horns and call the youth to rise up, not to protest and make demands, but to become more self-motivated and take positive action towards their future? Which party has that kind of vision? Does the Church?

**Reflect, share, scripture** *He (Jesus) will turn many of the sons of israel to the Lord their God and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children. Luke 1:16-17. Pope Francis:* *The primary reason for evangelising is the love of Jesus which we have received. If we do not feel an intense desire to share this love we need to pray insistently that he will once more touch our cold hearts and shake up our lukewarm and superficial existence. EG264 If there is no transcendent truth, then there is no sure principle for guaranteeing just relations between people. Their self-interest as a class, group or nation would inevitably set them in opposition to one another, The force of power takes over and each person tends to make full use of the means at his disposal to impose his own interests or own opinion with no regard for the rights of others. FT273. ACTION AND PRAYER.* What kind of model is John the Baptist for any of us?

**June 25.** Bernadette thought to herself, “Much of what the church is teaching us seems to be kind of negative, “don't do this, or look at the problem side.” When I was confirmed I decided to put this message on my wall in my room, and also on my facebook wall. The Golden Rule is, **WHATEVER YOU WISH THAT PEOPLE WOULD DO TO YOU, BE THE FIRST TO DO IT FOR THEM.**” It has been my motto for 5 years now. Once in matric when I was with a group who wanted to go drinking during break, George stopped me. He knew I wasn't that kind of girl but was just trying to keep up with the rest. I got the message.

**Reflect, share, scripture:** *Whatever you wish that people would do to you, do so for them, for this is the law and the prophets. Enter by the narrow gate for the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. The gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life and those who find it are few. Matt 7:12-14.*

**Pope Francis:** *A change in lifestyle is possible. We are always capable of going out of ourselves towards the other. Unless we do this, other creatures will not be recognised for their true worth; we are unconcerned about caring for things for the sake of others; we fail to set limits on ourselves in order avoid the suffering of others or the deterioration of our surroundings. LS 208. **ACTION AND PRAYER.** What slogans, quotes or sayings are a standby for you?*

**June 26.** Mary and her son Patrick really tried to tease out this statement that Jesus made. “*Beware of false prophets. You will know them by their fruits.*” From Matt 7:15-20. “Why do so many, young people especially, go to some of the new churches?” “Their services are more fun, with more singing and dancing and they really make us feel welcome. Is there something wrong with that?” “Maybe not, but maybe they are more concerned about themselves and enjoyment and even about prosperity, rather than about caring for others as Jesus asked of us.” “And we Catholics have the Mass, the real presence of Jesus with us.” “I know that but it is still hard to understand what is happening, and probably too early to see the fruits we should look for,” Patrick stated.

**Pope Francis:** *In union with Jesus, we seek what he seeks and we love what he loves. In the end what we are seeking is the glory of the Father. This is our definitive, deepest and greatest motivation. We need to leave behind every other motivation. EG 267 **ACTION AND PRAYER.** How can your love for God grow?*

**June 27.** “We used to sing a song about the wise man and the rock at home in the olden days when you kids were young and when we did pray and read the Bible together at home,” Neal said. “It was nice then, but I don't know if that kind of thing would work now. Apart from that we're all so busy with work, homework, working out at the gym and, ironically, attending self-development workshops. I hardly have any idea what each of our family members think. Do you think our house is built on rock or sand or can it be partly on rock?”

**Reflect, share, scripture:** *Everyone who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house upon the rock. From Matt 7:21-29. **Pope Francis:** Pope Francis: *If a family is centred on Christ he will unify and illumine its entire life. Moments of pain and difficulty will be experienced in union with the Lord's cross. AL317. The external deserts in the world are growing, because the internal deserts have become so vast. We all need an ecological conversion where the effects of our encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in the relationship with the world around us. LS 217. **ACTION AND PRAYER.** Try to engage family members in sharing on this topic.**

**June 28.** “Talk about putting your money where your mouth is,” Patrick commented. “The very first thing Jesus did after finishing his big sermon, or as you say his vision statement, was put it into practice by healing a leper, an untouchable. Pope Francis asks us to touch the wounds of those who suffer. I wouldn't really mind touching some sick people, though I don't think I would be a good doctor or paramedic, and I've always been afraid to touch someone with AIDS, and leprosy is even worse. I am doing my best to understand the ways of St Francis and how he was joyful in his ministry to the lepers in his day. There is a definite challenge to go that extra mile. I hope God will give me the strength and courage that I need for whatever way lies ahead for me.”

**Reflect, share, scripture:** *When Jesus came down from the mountain great crowds followed him and behold, a leper came and knelt before him and said, “Lord If you will you can make me clean.” Matt 8:1-4. **Pope Francis:** Francis helped us to see that an integral ecology calls for openness to categories which take us to the heart of what it is to be human. He felt called to care for all that exists and was particularly concerned for God's creation and for the poor and outcast. LS 10. In each of these little ones Christ himself is present. His flesh becomes visible in the flesh of the crushed, the malnourished and the exiled, to be acknowledged, touched and cared for by us. FM15, **ACTION AND PRAYER.** Share on miracles and your beliefs.*

**June 29. St Peter and Paul.** It's hard for us with internet and cell phones to imagine how it was 2000 years ago in the very early days of the Church. Peter had been with Jesus from the beginning, and here was this upstart Paul, who had been persecuting the followers of "the Way" and was now preaching with such a loud voice what he believed and was inspired to say. It took some time for the two men to meet and discuss their differences and reach an amicable solution. In our different leadership crises at any level do we try to reach a consensus, or start a war? The Reformation in the 1500s started over a serious difference and since then 1000s of break-away churches have started up. Christian unity has now again become an important goal.

**Reflect, share, scripture:** *I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas and remained with him fifteen days. Gal 1:19-20. Pope Francis: The word of God constantly testifies to that sombre dimension already present at the beginning, when through sin, the relationship of love and purity between man and woman turns into domination. We read of disputes between sons and wives of patriarchs, the tragedies and violence in the family of David and more. AL 19-20. In working towards a new lifestyle we recognise that no system can completely suppress our openness to what is good, true and beautiful, or our God-given ability to respond to his grace at work deep in our hearts. LS 205. ACTION AND PRAYER.* Consider how families deal with differences within and between them even with young children.

**June 30. 13<sup>th</sup> Sunday Year B.** On this last Sunday of Youth Month Fr Alexis spoke to the youth and to their families. "When young people are discerning about their future and many people come to explain their different organisations or types of work, there will be some who may be considering a calling to the priesthood or religious life, not as a job but as a ministry of care for others. Do parents welcome this, show interest and discuss the matter openly? Are we, or the young, the ones to make excuses about possible problems? Parents might think who will support us in our old age? Youth might worry about this too as this is sometimes a tradition, or they might worry about not being able to marry or have money. What does Jesus expect from his followers in whatever way they are called even if it not to a fulltime commitment? Are not all his followers called to be lifegiving in their own particular ways?"

**Reflect, share, scripture:** *As a matter of equality your abundance at the present time should supply their want, so that their abundance may supply your want that there may be equality. 2 Cor 8:7-15. Pope Francis: Being Church means being God's people, in accordance with the great plan of fatherly love. We are to be God's leaven in humanity. It means proclaiming and bringing God's salvation into our world, which often goes astray and needs to be encouraged, given hope and strengthening on the way. The Church must be a place of mercy freely given where everyone can feel welcomed, loved, forgiven and encouraged to live the good life of the Gospel. EG 114. ACTION AND PRAYER.* Consider how families deal with the question of careers and especially a vocation to religious life.