



2024 OUR WORLD, FAMILY OF FAMILIES –

MARFAM THOUGHTS FOR THE DAY

OCTOBER – FAMILY ON MISSION

SEASON OF CREATION – 1 SEPTEMBER – 4 OCTOBER

SYNOD ON SYNODALITY – 2 -27 OCTOBER.



**TO HOPE AND ACT
WITH CREATION**
SEASON OF CREATION 2024

The firstfruits of hope
(Rom 8:19-25)

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Pope Francis: LS = Laudato Si. LD – Laudate Deum AL = Amoris Laetitia FT = Fratelli Tutti. EG =Evangellii Gaudium
MV= The Face of Mery.



OCTOBER Overview. Family on Mission. Every single family of any description, human, plant or animal has a role to play to sustain our world, as a family of families. As the human family, we have the power to deliberately choose our sense of mission. As Catholic Christians we are “baptized and sent.” We cannot afford selfish greed, or hurtful violence, but are called to adopt God's mission of love, love of creation and of all its creatures. St Francis, the patron saint of ecology is our inspiration on our mission. **Pope Francis:** *The family is an agent of pastoral activity through the explicit proclamation of the Gospel, their witness, solidarity with the poor, openness to diversity of people, protection of creation, moral and material solidarity with other families and commitment to the common good.* AL 290

MARRIAGE SEASON. Weeks 21-27 Year B. MARFAM has been focusing on marriage since 1997 during this time. The THOUGHTS FOR THE DAY end with MARRIAGE DAY on 6 October. Commitment to one's marriage is the core of the mission of couples with Marriage as our Sacrament as lay people. It is a gift for personal wellbeing, for the procreation of children and growing the family of God from the domestic church to the larger church as a “family of families.” An essential part of the mission of the Church is to support and promote healthy families whatever their present reality.

THE SEASON OF CREATION ends on the feastday of St Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of ecology on 4 October.

www.seasonofcreation.org

SYNOD ON SYNODALITY 2021-2024. October 2 – 27. This important event taking place in Rome is likely to have an impact on the future of the Church. Synodality is described as “JOURNEYING TOGETHER.” A synod is an assembly of Church leaders who address and make recommendations regarding a situation or a matter of great importance. It is not a deliberative body with decision-making powers. Leaders meet to engage in a structured conversation surrounding an issue, with the goal of making recommendations for the final decision-maker. A synod of priests and lay people in a diocese takes place to advise the bishop. A synod of bishops takes place to advise the pope. The current synod involves clergy and lay people, both men and women.

Pope Francis has brought the theme of synodality to the forefront of the Church. He convened a synod of bishops in 2021 which continues in various stages until this session in 2024. The goal of the synodal process is to renew the Church and collectively discern a future for it. The overall theme for the Synod is COMMUNION, PARTICIPATION, MISSION.

The synodal process takes time and effort. The goal is not efficiency, but effectiveness and engagement—a way of enabling members of the Body of Christ to influence how the Body will proceed. It is a Spirit-led, formational process to shape the People of God. It can be explained in terms of a “conversation in the Spirit” with three basic steps. 1. A person prayerfully speaking about his or her experience. 2. “Building bonds” by expressing what touched them most deeply and when, having “cultivated familiarity with the Lord,” they felt the Holy Spirit made their voice resound. 3. “again under the guidance of the Holy Spirit,” this is letting key points emerge from conversing with the Spirit, points that can lead to action.

It is hoped that “Conversation in the Spirit” could be used regularly in future activities at all levels of church life, for all the baptised, as a way of managing decision-making and consensus building that builds trust and fosters an exercise of authority appropriate to a synodal Church.

SYNOD PRAYER. We stand before You, Holy Spirit, as we gather together in Your name.

With You alone to guide us, make Yourself at home in our hearts; Teach us the way we must go and how we are to pursue it. We are weak and sinful; do not let us promote disorder. Do not let ignorance lead us down the wrong path nor partiality influence our actions. Let us find in You our unity so that we may journey together to eternal life and not stray from the way of truth and what is right. All this we ask of You, who are at work in every place and time, in the communion of the Father and the Son, forever and ever. Amen.

A simple family Synod Prayer. Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in us the fire of your love, so that walking together we may renew the face of the earth.

Setting the scene for the MARFAM DAILY THOUGHTS October. Instead of a preached mission the parish had decided to promote daily reflection on the theme of “Missionaries in the Family” using resources provided. The synodal dialogue process in some ways also resembles the process used in these MARFAM THOUGHTS FOR THE DAY, which are based on the SEE-JUDGE-ACT or PASTORAL CYCLE approach. A 4 step format is used: 1. A look at life, anecdote. 2. Scripture from readings of the day. 3. Pope Francis writings, particularly *Laudato Si’*. 4. Action and prayer. **Pray:** *Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful, and kindle in us the fire of your love, so that walking together we may renew the face of the earth.*

October 1. St Therese of Lisieux. Season of Creation. The families in the parish were invited to read her story. Therese grew up as a pampered girl and when she felt the calling to become a Carmelite her family didn’t think she would be strong enough. She persisted and entered the convent at age 15. Ill-health did prevent her from going to a mission country which is what she wanted but she kept her love for the missions. She spent the last 9 years of her life aiming at perfection through what she called “the little way” and through prayer and meditation. Her little sacrifices of ordinary events in her daily life were seen as flowers and this simple spirituality earned her the title “the Little Flower.” After hearing the story little Lizzy said, “I think I can be a missionary like St Therese too, doing all my chores as best I can.” Pauline added, “Why don’t we use the idea of a flower for the sacrifices we make too. Then we can take those flowers to someone who is sick, in the parish or community.”

Reflect, share, act. Scripture: *Jesus said, “unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me. Mat 18:1-5.* **Pope Francis:** *St Therese 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. Our prayers also extend to the saints and blessed ones who made divine mercy their mission in life. MV24.* **Eco-tip and prayer:** Share how St Therese can be a model for each family member. **Pray:** *Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful, and kindle in us the fire of your love, so that walking together we may renew the face of the earth.*

October 2. Guardian angels. There is a very long tradition in the church of devotion to our guardian angels. In recent years this seems to have faded with a greater interest in angels in general. We often see pictures of cute cuddly little creatures with wings and sometimes they are portrayed as avengers at the gates of heaven or hell. All angels are messengers from God, but our guardian angels bring the message of God’s care and love to a specific person. This can be a real source of comfort to children especially. Families can use the prayer with the young and you might find that as the kids grow up they will use the prayers they learned as children. **Prayer:** *Angel of God, my guardian dear, to whom God’s love commits me here, ever this day be at my side to light and guard, to rule and guide. Amen.*

Reflect, share, act. Scripture: *Jesus said, “see that you do not despise these little ones; I tell you that in heaven their angels always behold the face of my Father who is in heaven. Matt 18:10.* **Pope Francis:** *Each of us has a Guardian Angel, who acting on behalf of God, advises us and protects us from evil, if we only listen to him. 2015 message to families. Once we start to think about the kind of world we are leaving to future generations, we look at things differently; we realize that the world is a gift which we have freely received and must share with others. LS 159* **Eco-tip and prayer:** Examine your prayer life as Eco-friendly families. How can it be enriched? Get MARFAM’S booklet *BECOMING ECO-FRIENDLY FAMILIES* to use for sharing and prayer. **Pray** *Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful, and kindle in us the fire of your love, so that walking together we may renew the face of the earth.*

October 3. Friends. A group of young married couples at their monthly meetings discussed practical issues as well as spiritual matters. One month when they talked about friends it became quite heated. His friends, her friends, their friends, old and new friends are an important part of a marriage because marriage can’t just be for the couple alone. However they were well aware that some of their pre-marriage friends and their expectations were no longer acceptable. “I can’t go and play soccer or golf every weekend any more, much as I would like to. That is one of the sacrifices I have had to make”, Ben shared. “But we can do a lot together as a couple too, to support and help our friends and others, even if they are not Catholics by our example and friendship.” Theresa said.

Reflect, share, act. Scripture: *At that time Jesus appointed seventy others, and sent them on ahead of him, two by two, into every town and place where he himself was about to come. He said to them. The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few, pray therefore that the Lord of the harvest will send out labourers into his harvest. Luke 10:1-12.* **Pope Francis.** *Christ the Lord “comes into the lives of married Christians through the Sacrament of Matrimony. Through his Spirit, he enables them to make their love permeate every part of their lives of faith, hope and charity. A bride and groom are consecrated and through his grace they build up the Body of Christ and are a domestic Church. The Church looks to the Christian family, which manifests her in a real way. God has given the family the job of “domesticating the world and helping each person to see fellow human beings as brothers and sisters. AL 183.* **Eco-tip and prayer:** Examine your relationship with friends and your prayer life as a couple. How

can it be enriched? What can you share with others? Pray *Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful, and kindle in us the fire of your love, so that walking together we may renew the face of the earth.*

October 4. St Francis. End of Season of Creation. Michael shared with his fellow confirmation candidates. “Just like there are many Theresa’s there are also many Francises in parishes and families. Quite often children choose these as their confirmation patrons and to be their role models.” “How much do you know about St Francis, so that he can really be a model for you?” Tracy asked. Michael shared, “He lived 1000 years ago. He was a playboy, came from a wealthy family but in a conversion experience Jesus appeared to him and said, ‘Go and rebuild my church.’ At first he thought he had to go and rebuild a broken down old building but what Jesus meant was to go and build up the people, including himself, to love Jesus, the poor and all of creation, animals and plants too. Although his later life was not easy as he suffered much from nearly going blind and the pain of the stigmata – the five wounds of Jesus on his body – he was filled with the joy of love.” Michael then added, “We, in our family, have discovered St Francis and try to follow his example. Our parents really are witnesses to us and in the world, as we say, Our world is a Family of Families.”

Reflect, share, act. Scripture: *Come to me all who labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me. For I am gentle and lowly in heart and you will find rest for your souls Matt 11: 28-29. Pope Francis:* to Youth at World Youth Day 2023 and often repeated, *The youth and elderly need one another. The elderly are their roots and wisdom and the youth the source of joy and hope. In calling to mind the figure of St Francis of Assisi, we come to realise that a healthy relationship with creation is one dimension of overall personal conversion, which entails the recognition of our errors, sins, faults and failures and leads to heartfelt repentance and desire to change. LS 218. St Francis faithful to scripture invites us to see nature as a magnificent book in which God speaks to us and grants us a glimpse of his infinite beauty and goodness. Eco-tip and prayer:* Young people could do more to make St Francis a true model of an eco-family-friendly caring way of life. Why not begin together with a prayer and a special blessing of all animals, pets, domestic and wild? Pray with **St Francis Cantic of the Creatures or the Peace Prayer of St Francis.**

Most High, all-powerful, good Lord, Yours are the praises, the glory, and the honor, and all blessing,
To You alone, Most High, do they belong, and no human is worthy to mention Your name.

Praised be You, my Lord, with all Your creatures,

especially Sir Brother Sun, who is the day and through whom You give us light.

And he is beautiful and radiant with great splendor; and bears a likeness of You, Most High One.

Praised be You, my Lord, through Sister Moon and the stars, in heaven You formed them clear and precious and beautiful.

Praised be You, my Lord, through Brother Wind, and through the air, cloudy and serene, and every kind of weather,
through whom You give sustenance to Your creatures.

Praised be You, my Lord, through Sister Water, who is very useful and humble and precious and chaste.

Praised be You, my Lord, through Brother Fire, through whom You light the night, and he is beautiful and playful and robust and strong.

Praised be You, my Lord, through our Sister Mother Earth, who sustains and governs us, and who produces various fruit with colored flowers and herbs.

Praised be You, my Lord, through those who give pardon for Your love, and bear infirmity and tribulation.

Blessed are those who endure in peace, for by You, Most High, shall they be crowned.

Praised be You, my Lord, through our Sister Bodily Death, from whom no one living can escape. Woe to those who die in mortal sin.

Blessed are those whom death will find in Your most holy will, for the second death shall do them no harm.

Praise and bless my Lord and give Him thanks and serve Him with great humility.

Peace Prayer of St Francis

Lord make me an instrument of Your peace
Where there is hatred let me sow love.
Where there is injury, pardon.
Where there is doubt, faith.
Where there is despair, hope.
Where there is darkness, light.
Where there is sadness joy.

O Divine master grant that I may
Not so much seek to be consoled as to console
To be understood, as to understand.
To be loved. as to love
For it's in giving that we receive
And it's in pardoning that we are pardoned
And it's in dying that we are born...
To eternal life. Amen.

October 5. A New Evangelisation. The extended Jackson family had undergone quite tough times with the family business, which had caused tension between the members so some of the younger ones wanted to break away and do their own thing. Joe and Vanessa were sad as they felt as if the family was falling apart. Two of the sons and their wives made a concerted effort to get the whole tribe together for a special celebration Mass for the parents 50th wedding anniversary. It took some doing, some painful discussions and some healing but eventually the special day arrived. Afterwards Ruby shared, "This has been quite a mission and now maybe it is our family's mission to keep some of our closeness alive and even share it with other families. Isn't that something to celebrate?"

Reflect, share, act. Scripture : *The seventy returned with joy, saying, Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!" Jesus said to them, Behold I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions and over the power of the enemy and nothing shall hurt you. But do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."* Luke 10:17-24. **Pope Francis.** *How I long to find the right words to stir up enthusiasm for a new chapter of evangelisation full of fervour, joy, generosity, courage, boundless love and attraction. No words of encouragement will be enough unless the fire of the Holy Spirit burns in our hearts. EG261* **Action and prayer.** "The SYNOD methodology "Conversation in the Spirit" is aimed at deterring polemical debate on controversial subjects. The method "opens up 'spaces' in which to address even controversial issues together." These issues, which are debated in society and in the Church, can often lead to "clashes" in person or on social media rather than considered discussion." **Pray:** *Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful, and kindle in us the fire of your love, so that walking together we may renew the face of the earth.*

October 6. 27th Sunday B. Marriage Day. God created them male and female to become one. Gen 2: 18-24. Mk 10:2-16. Fr Peter said, "On this particular Sunday, especially if you have prepared for it through a time of reflection and reconciliation it is good to celebrate the special and unique gift that marriage is for couples and for the Church. So I have asked this couple, appropriately called Adam and Eva to share this homily time with us all." They started a little nervously but as they continued they spoke with warmth and conviction. "Both the first reading and the gospel speak of man and woman being created male and female and called to become one body. Marriage is a sexual sacrament, celebrating most deeply and most uniquely God's gift of sexuality. Through our sexual expression we, as spouses, are the sacramental sign of Jesus to each other and the world. This is true as we celebrate the complete self-giving in our own relationship and in our co-creation with God of our children as the fruit of our love. Sexuality is common to everyone but we have come to appreciate the ultimate expression of sex that belongs in marriage and makes marriage essentially different from every other human relationship. We thank God for this gift and that we are able to celebrate his love for us in this way."

Pope Francis: *God himself created sexuality which is a marvellous gift to his creatures to be cultivated and sexual desire is not to be looked down upon. AL:150* **Action and prayer.** Take some time to reflect and ideally to share on the special gift of sexuality in marriage. **Pray:** *Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful, and kindle in us the fire of your love, so that walking together we may renew the face of the earth.*

October 7. Our Lady of the Rosary. As October is the month of the Rosary Anna asked her mom, "Do those people selling rosaries on street corners really know what it is and what to do with it?" "Do you?" was mom's reply. "Yes well....." "Some families do pray the rosary at home, some in church and many pray as individuals. 'The family that prays together stays together' was the slogan of the Rosary campaign of the 1950s. We still need to pray and stay, but also to play together, don't you think? The Rosary is not only a recitation of prayers but a reflection on events in the life of Jesus and Mary, dedicated to God and at Mary's request offered for peace in the world. Why not teach that to the street sellers and, of course let's pray it at home too, even a decade a day during this month. We all certainly need to work for peace and what is needed for peace."

Reflect, share, act. Scripture. *The disciples asked, "Lord teach us to pray." Jesus replied and taught them, "Our Father..". From Luke 11: 1-4 . The most diverse messages and the most unpredictable experiences rapidly make their way into the lives of children and*

adolescents, and parents can become quite anxious about the dangers their children face. Parents suffer acute disappointment at the failure of their children to resist the seductions of the drug culture, the lure of an unbridled hedonism, the temptation to violence, and the manifold expressions of meaninglessness and despair. To pray the Rosary for children, and with children, training them from their earliest years to experience this daily "pause for prayer" with the family, is not the solution to every problem, but it is a spiritual aid which should not be underestimated. John Paul II. **Pray:** Holy Mary, Mother of God, be our mother too. Pray for us and with us in all that we do.

October 8. Discipleship. It's interesting that we still most often hear of the husband being the head of the wife, although greater equality is growing. In Luke's story of the family of Mary and Martha there appears to be no husband or children. As woman friends of Jesus, Mary and Martha gave him a welcome in different ways: listening to and serving him. Home life in Jesus' day was well ordered: Martha probably was head of the household, a manager providing well. Mary welcomed Jesus as a disciple and follower. We welcome our guests too - as best we can, by giving food as well as by listening.

Reflect, share, act. Scripture. *At that time Jesus entered a village, and a woman named Martha received him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching. Luke 10:38-42* **Pope Francis:** *it is not enough to show generic concern for the family in pastoral planning. Enabling families to take up their role as active agents of the family apostolate calls for an effort at evangelisation and catechesis inside the family. AL 200. In the family we first learn how to show love and respect for life; we are taught the proper of things, order and cleanliness, respect for the local ecosystem and care for all creatures. We receive an integral education which enables us to grow harmoniously in personal maturity. LS 213* **Prayer and Action.** Reflect on family roles and tasks and pray for a healthy balance in your way of living. **Pray:** *Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful, and kindle in us the fire of your love, so that walking together we may renew the face of the earth.*

October 9. Mrs Paulson had been contributing to a soup kitchen for some time for people coming to their parish once a week. Joan, her daughter, suggested "Why don't we go together to visit St Therese, our twin parish, to see how things for the poor are there and how they are able to cater for all the people that come to them. Maybe we can learn and contribute something there as a family.

Reflect, share, act. Scripture: *"When you pray say, "Our Father, give us today our daily bread." From Luke 11:1-4. Pope Francis:* *The mercy of God is his loving concern for each one of us. He feels responsible. As the Father loves, so do his children. Just as he is merciful so we are called to be merciful to each other. MV9. In the present condition of global society, where injustices abound and growing numbers of people are deprived of basic human rights and considered expendable, the principle of the common good becomes, a summons to solidarity and a preferential option for the poorest of our brothers and sisters. LS 158. Action and Prayer.* What do the words, "give us this day our daily bread," mean for you? **Pray:** *Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful, and kindle in us the fire of your love, so that walking together we may renew the face of the earth.*

October 10. A Father's Care. They discussed, "Pope Francis' continually challenges us to help others and share with the poor. But we're inclined to get sceptical about the beggars at traffic lights and those rather wildly enthusiastic traffic controllers who seem to have taken over directing the traffic when robots don't work." "However we should say that the protests and demonstrations about land, service delivery and jobs are the kind of thing that Luke could also have been talking about." "When we are in need our real friends will make God present for us in particular ways. Knocking on doors and asking is a risk but can eventually get results. Snakes and stones and scorpions will not be the gift of the Father,"

Reflect, share, act. Scripture: *What father among you if his son asks for a fish will give him a serpent? If you who are evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him. From Luke 11:5-13. 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. AL 201* **Action and Prayer.** How generous in spirit are you? Do you give freely or grudgingly? **Pray:** *Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful, and kindle in us the fire of your love, so that walking together we may renew the face of the earth.*

October 11. Casting out demons. Their RCIA catechist told the group, "There has been a lot of talk about false prophets, healing and casting out demons recently. How can we really know who is on God's side or just out for himself as has been found with some pastors? Actual possession and casting out of evil spirits is a specialist ministry, but are some of our "demons" not also evils such as greed, selfishness and deliberate harm to the environment." She left them to debate and invited them too to take the issue home to

their teenagers as well. "Remember, we must always be on guard against evil in any form rebounding in our hearts & homes, if we let things be it could become seven times as bad, as Jesus also said!"

Reflect, share, act. Scripture: *If it is by the finger of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. He who is not with me is against me. From Luke 11:15-26* **Pope Francis:** *The natural environment has been gravely damaged by our irresponsible behaviour. The social environment has also suffered damage. Both are ultimately due to the same evil: the notion that there are no indisputable truths to guide our lives, and hence human freedom is limitless. LS 6.* **Action and Prayer.** What are the demons in your life? **Pray:** *Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful, and kindle in us the fire of your love, so that walking together we may renew the face of the earth.*

October 12 . Openness to others. A family discussion raised quite some points. "I have been fascinated how in African families goods and money are shared more readily than in white families. I don't know if my brother would pay my children's school fees." "It is called "black tax" and not always done with good grace." "But do we not also have to look beyond our own families? Should I offer to pay school fees for those refugee children or donate regularly to the orphan programme?" "Many of us give to charity in a general way but would it be good to make it more personal, possibly with our twin parish or within a sodality group?"

Reflect, share, act. Scripture: *A woman said to him, "Blessed is the womb that bore you." Jesus said, "blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!" Luke 11:27-28.* **Pope Francis:** *Led by the Spirit the family circle is not only open to life by generating it within itself, but also by going forth and spreading life by caring for others and seeking their happiness. This openness finds particular expression in hospitality. The family lives its spirituality precisely by being at one and at the same time a domestic church and a vital cell for transforming the world. AL 324.* **Action and Prayer.** Am I open to the needs of others, especially the poor? **Pray:** *Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful, and kindle in us the fire of your love, so that walking together we may renew the face of the earth.*

October 13 Sunday 28B. Vocation to the priesthood and religious life. Fr Peter asked all the young people to give some serious thought to the question of vocations in general but especially to religious life. Maurice had already been asking himself if God was calling him to give up everything and become a religious. The priests were always going on about how necessary and important vocations are. He discussed it too with his grandmother, as his parents didn't seem very supportive. She told him, "We all have a mission to follow Jesus, but there are many ways of doing this, and whatever way God is asking of you, don't forget that you will still be called to care for families, because they are the foundation blocks of the Church." "So I would even have 100 + children to love?" he thought.

Reflect, share, act. Scripture: *Jesus said, "There is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters, or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the Gospel, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time with persecutions and in the age to come eternal life. Mark 10:17-30.* **Pope Francis:** *The value in virginity lies in its symbolising a love that has no need to possess the other; in this way it reflects the freedom of the Kingdom of Heaven. AL 161* *Many people who are unmarried are not only devoted to their own family but often render great service in their group of friends, in the Church community and in their professional lives. Sometimes their presence and contributions are overlooked causing in them a sense of isolation. Many put their talents at the service of the Christian community through charity and volunteer work. AL 158.* **Action and Prayer.** What is your attitude towards a family member choosing to join a religious congregation? **Pray:** *Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful, and kindle in us the fire of your love, so that walking together we may renew the face of the earth.*

October 14. Jonah's story. When she sat down and thought about it Antonette realised that there is a bit of Jonah in all of us. "The story tells of a Jew sent by God to people to call them to repent. He didn't want them to repent, but to be punished. Yes, after running away from God he was punished by being swallowed by a whale. After that he did eventually go and preach to the wicked and brutal people of Nineveh and they did repent, but his initial response was, "No way, these wicked people should be punished." How often have we heard people say things like, "He should rot in hell for what he has done to that innocent child." The brutal reality of Al Qaeda terrorism today in a number of countries and the wars being waged are very much like the time of Nineveh and in the same part of the world. But God loves all people & wants them to be saved. Jonah eventually agreed that God can forgive and show mercy to anyone who repents.

Reflect, share, act. Scripture: *The men of Nineveh will arise at the judgement with this generation and condemn it for they repented at the preaching of Jonah and behold something greater than Jonah is here. Jonah became a sign to the men of Nineveh, so will the Son of Man be to this generation. Luke 11:29-32.* **Pope Francis:** *Mercy is not only the working of the Father; it becomes a criterion for knowing who his true children are. AL 310.* *Human beings, while capable of the worst, are also capable of rising above*

themselves choosing again what is good and making a new start. 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. **LS205 Action and Prayer.** Are there things in my relationship I need to forgive? **Pray:** Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful, and kindle in us the fire of your love, so that walking together we may renew the face of the earth.

October 15. Hypocrisy. “Putting your money where your mouth is” was the topic of the J&P talk to the youth. “How hypocritical are we?” the speaker asked. “Do we say we can for the environment but don’t save on electricity by switching off lights and cutting cellphone time, use of air-conditioning and changing our whole mindset.” “When we come to meals, we must purify our hearts as well as our hands if we are to share food & wisdom well. God knows our inner thoughts and almsgiving should not be just for show.”

Reflect, share, act. Scripture: You Pharisees cleanse the outside of the cup and the dish, but inside you are full of extortion and wickedness. Give for alms those things which are within, and behold everything is clean for you. Luke 11: 37-41. **Pope Francis:** People may well have a growing ecological sensitivity but it has not succeeded in changing their harmful habits of consumption which appear to be growing. A simple example is the increasing use and power of air-conditioning stimulated by sales and the market. **LS 55 Action and Prayer.** Do I put my money where my mouth is? **Pray:** Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful, and kindle in us the fire of your love, so that walking together we may renew the face of the earth.

October 16. Jesus' condemnation. There is a story about a farmer who wanted to give his farm animals a nice breakfast of bacon and eggs as a reward. The hen was quite happy to provide the eggs, but the poor pig sure wasn't. “You give from excess,” he said, “I give from substance.” Giving to God and the Church demands balance and discernment. Wisdom is knowing what is what. Some modern-day churches that demand that their members tithe to be in God's good books manipulate people's commitment for their own benefit and show little care for the needs of their own flock.

Reflect, share, act. Scripture: Woe to you, Pharisees, lawyers also, you load men with burdens hard to bear, and you yourselves do not touch the burdens with one of your fingers. Luke 11:42-46. **Pope Francis:** The worship of the ancient golden calf (Ex 32:1-35) has returned in a new and ruthless guise in the idolatry of money and the dictatorship of an impersonal economy lacking a truly human purpose. **EG 55.** The mindset which leaves no room for since concern for the environment is the same mindset which lacks concern for the inclusion of the most vulnerable members of society. The current model with its emphasis on success and self-reliance does not appear to favour an investment in efforts to help the slow, the weak or the less talented to find opportunities in life. **LS196. Action and Prayer.** Do I literally put my money where my mouth is? **Pray:** Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful, and kindle in us the fire of your love, so that walking together we may renew the face of the earth.

October 17. Prophets. Mission month reminds us that everyone is called to be a prophet, to explore the signs of the times and to speak the truth that comes from God and is written on their hearts. A Pharisee is someone who does not do the good they speak of. Sadly too, they can demand false religion from others they have power over and can kill the Spirit of God given to people. Do our churches and pastors speak the truth or take the easier road that suits them or lets people off the hook. Do those in leadership lead by example to and walk together with us in the Synodal journey?

Reflect, share, act. Scripture: Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. Eph 1:1-10 **Pope Francis:** Let us be spurred on by the signs of holiness that the Lord shows us through the humblest members of that people which shares also in Christ's prophetic office, spreading abroad a living witness to him, especially by means of a life of faith and charity”. **GE8 Gaudete et Exultate. Action and Prayer.** Reflect on your Synodal journey together with local church leaders. **Pray:** Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful, and kindle in us the fire of your love, so that walking together we may renew the face of the earth.

October 18. The missionary asked, “Why do people go to some churches and not others? Is it the quality of the preaching, the personality of the preacher, the type of worship with praise and worship, song and dance, the healing that they are seeking, or the message that speaks to them in their hearts?” This kind of debate is being held all over as new churches are blossoming and more traditional churches are finding they are losing members. “You could ask what attracted people to Jesus, because his message wasn't easy. People crowded round Jesus to hear his wisdom. The leaders then were jealous of him because he was popular and

spoke in a way easy to understand about serious things that helped them think, like telling them how valuable and loved they were to God. Where and how do we still feel like that?"

Reflect, share, act. Scripture: *Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? And not one of them is forgotten before God. Why, even the hairs of your head are numbered. You are of more value than many sparrows. Luke 12:1-7* **Pope Francis:** *A positive experience of family communion is a true path to daily sanctification and mystical growth, a means of deeper union with God. The fraternal and communal demands of family life are an incentive to growth in openness of heart and thus to an ever fuller encounter with the LORD. Al 316 I invite all Christians everywhere to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ or at least an openness to letting him encounter them. No one is excluded from the joy brought by the Lord. EG3.* **Action and Prayer.** Consider the possibility or experience of a personal encounter with Jesus. **Pray:** *Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful, and kindle in us the fire of your love, so that walking together we may renew the face of the earth*

October 19. Standing up for God. In 2015 here in South Africa our first martyr was recognised and beatified. Benedict Daswa, a family man and teacher, was proud to be a Christian and speak up for Christian values in public. He rejected the use of witchcraft and was killed by fellow villagers. Such courage will win us favour in God's sight. There is much persecution of Christians in the world today. Some people are afraid to speak up for him in public: they can be forgiven because the danger can be real. At the same time people should recognize the Spirit of God active in the world slowly leading us closer to God and filling us with joy.

Reflect, share, act. Scripture: *The Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say. Luke 12: 8-12.* **Pope Francis:** *The gospel radiant with the glory of Christ's cross, constantly invites us to rejoice. Even amid persecution the disciples continued to be filled with joy. Why should we not also enter into this great stream of joy. EG 5. The call and the demands of the Spirit resound in the events of history and through these the Church can also be guided to a more profound understanding of the inexhaustible mystery of marriage and the family. AL31.* **Action and Prayer.** Share some thoughts on Bl Benedict Daswa with the family. **Pray:** *Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful, and kindle in us the fire of your love, so that walking together we may renew the face of the earth.*

October 20. 29th Sunday B. World Mission Day. One Sunday for the whole world with the theme, "Go and Invite Everyone to the Banquet" Matthew 22:9. Extracts and summary of the 2024 World Mission message of Pope Francis. The Holy Father presents an unusual image. "Today's drama in the Church is that Jesus keeps knocking on the door, but from within, so that we will let him out! Often we end up being an 'imprisoning' Church which does not let the Lord out, which keeps him as 'its own', whereas the Lord came for mission and wants us to be missionaries"

The message calls us not only to "go", but also to "invite. Missionary disciples should do so with joy, magnanimity and benevolence that are the fruits of the Holy Spirit within them (cf. Gal 5:22). Not by pressuring, coercing or proselytizing, but with closeness, compassion and tenderness, and in this way reflecting God's own way of being and acting. The banquet is the *marriage feast*". *The eschatological and Eucharistic dimension of the mission of Christ and the Church.* It is an image of ultimate salvation in the Kingdom of God, fulfilled even now by the coming of Jesus, the Messiah and Son of God, who has given us life in abundance (cf. Jn 10:10), symbolized by the table set with succulent food and with fine wines, when God will destroy death forever (cf. Is 25:6-8).

Christ's mission has to do with the fullness of time as he declared. "In this year devoted to prayer in preparation for the Jubilee of 2025, I wish to encourage all to deepen their commitment above all to take part in the celebration of Mass and to pray for the Church's mission of evangelization. Daily prayer and the Eucharist in particular make us pilgrims and missionaries of hope, journeying towards everlasting life in God, towards the nuptial banquet that God has prepared for all his children."

In our missionary activities we are asked to preach the Gospel to all: "Instead of seeming to impose new obligations, [we] should appear as people who wish to share their joy, who point to a horizon of beauty and who invite others to a delicious banquet" (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 14). The mission for all requires the commitment of all. We need to continue our journey towards a fully synodal and missionary Church in the service of the Gospel. Synodality is essentially missionary and, vice versa, mission is always synodal. Close missionary cooperation is today all the more urgent and necessary, both in the universal and in the particular Churches.

With the joy and loving concern of Mary, our Mother, with the strength born of tenderness and affection (cf. *Evangelii Gaudium*, 288), let us go forth to bring to everyone the invitation of the King, our Saviour. Holy Mary, Star of Evangelization, pray for us! Taken from www.vatican.va **Action and Prayer.** Do I put my money where my mouth is this Mission Sunday? **Pray:** *Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful, and kindle in us the fire of your love, so that walking together we may renew the face of the earth.*

October 21 . Covetousness. Morris wondered, "Would people still today go to a priest to say, 'Father, tell my brother to divide and share our father's inheritance with me?' Would they rather go to a lawyer and take the matter to court? What message would someone expect to hear from the Church? Would it be the words of Jesus," take heed and beware of all covetousness, for a man's

life is much more than what you own." Luke's Jesus speaks against envy and greed which are so rife today and challenges the rich to share. But Luke also warns, "Don't be trapped into legal disputes with family and friends."

Reflect, share, act. Scripture: "Fool, this night your soul is required from you and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?" Luke 12:13-21 **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. It becomes almost impossible to accept the limits imposed by reality. LS204. Each individual Christian and every community is called to be an instrument of God for the liberation and promotion of the poor and the enabling them to be fully a part of society. EG187 **Action and Prayer.** How attached am I to my possessions or what I believe is owed to me? **Pray:** Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful, and kindle in us the fire of your love, so that walking together we may renew the face of the earth.

October 22. "Be ready." This is the Scouts motto drilled into them from their earliest days in the Scouting pack. "Be properly dressed, have your equipment prepared." The Scouts prepare for an outing or an activity practising a new skill to earn, what we sometimes call, "Brownie points." But it isn't only the skill but the whole idea of action, of planning, creating, developing our talents and learning to do all this in relationship too. Our overall task is to prepare for a journey to the Father with Jesus, his Holy Spirit and in the company of the Church.

Reflect, share, act. Scripture: Let your loins be girded and your lamps burning and be like men who are waiting for the master to come home from the marriage feast. Luke 12:35-38: **Pope Francis:** it is clear from the first pages of the Bible that work is an essential part of human dignity. Man is presented as a labourer who works the earth, harnesses the forces of nature and produces the bread of arduous toil in addition to cultivating his own talents. AL23. Underlying every form of work is a concept of the relationship which we can and must have with what is other than ourselves. LS 125 **Action and Prayer.** Do I take my work seriously as a value? **Pray:** Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful, and kindle in us the fire of your love, so that walking together we may renew the face of the earth.

October 23. Security. The community reflected, "We are certainly living in violent times in our day. How many security features are needed to even make us feel a little bit safer behind high walls with guards and panic buttons at the ready? How much impact does that have on our quality of life too?" "Are we afraid to open our windows and doors and so become isolated and distrustful of others?" "Well I don't worry too much, but my children tell me I should protect myself and my belongings more." "Ultimately what will we be held accountable for. Who can be blamed or punished for breaches of security?"

Reflect, share, act. Scripture: To everyone to whom much is given, of him will much be required, and of him to whom men commit much they will demand the more. Luke 12:39-48. **Pope Francis:** Civic life, structured around an organised community, needs rules of coexistence, the wilful violation of which demands appropriate redress. This means that legitimate public authority can and must inflict punishment according to the seriousness of the crimes. FT 264 Rendering justice does not mean seeking punishment for its own sake but ensuring that the basic purpose is the rehabilitation of the offender. April 2018 statement. **Action and Prayer. What are my thoughts about punishment?** **Pray:** Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful, and kindle in us the fire of your love, so that walking together we may renew the face of the earth.

October 24. Religious conflict. "Do you ever feel as if there is too much to achieve and not enough time?" "I'm sure we all do, but what is really important to achieve?" "I feel passionate about my church commitments but I do also think I have neglected my family because of my church work. Where is the balance?" Jesus himself knew that his time was limited and that his teaching, even of the fire of love, would cause division in families or communities. Today Christian fire, joy and enthusiasm of some is disliked by others. In spite of that we should reflect carefully how to respond to our own calling.

Reflect, share, act. Scripture: "I came to cast fire upon the earth and would that it were already kindled. Do you think I have come to give peace on earth? No I tell you, but rather division. Luke 12:49-53: **Pope Francis:** if there is no transcendent truth, of the dignity of the human person as the visible image of the invisible God, then there is no sure principle for guaranteeing just relationships 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 impose his own interests or his own opinion with no regard for the rights of others. FT 273. **Action and Prayer.** Do I experience peace or division in my personal life? **Pray:** Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful, and kindle in us the fire of your love, so that walking together we may renew the face of the earth.

October 25. Reading the Signs of the Times. The speaker addressed the meeting. "It isn't only economists, politicians and people like the Public Protector or investigative journalists who are engaged in reading the Signs of the Times, but it is just as well that they do bring matters to our attention. Certainly in all kinds of groups, including families, there are serious discussions about the state of the nation, of society, the church, of family life and the world. It is interesting however that most of the time we pass the buck and blame someone else, the government, the police, the church, teachers, etc. When and how will I personally take responsibility?"

Reflect, share, act. Scripture: *Jesus says: We know when it will rain or be hot, and yet can't judge more important things well. Prayerful thought will reveal the best way and hidden meanings in our lives today. You hypocrites, you know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky but why do you not know how to interpret the present time?" Luke 12: 54-59: Pope Francis: Faced as we are with global environmental deterioration, I wish to address every person living on this planet, I would like to enter into dialogue with all people about our common home. LS 3. Pope Benedict asked us to recognise that the natural environment has been gravely damaged by our irresponsible behaviour. The social environment has also suffered damage. Both are ultimately due to the same evil: the notion that there are no indisputable truths to guide our lives and hence our human freedom appears limitless. LS 6. Action and Prayer.* From a family perspective reflect and share on the signs of the times. What action can be taken. **Pray:** *Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful, and kindle in us the fire of your love, so that walking together we may renew the face of the earth.*

October 26. Patience and tolerance. Every year from the end of winter and the beginning of spring gardeners go out in force, pruning, digging up, tidying, replanting and fertilising and then patiently wait to see how fruitful their efforts have been and whether their garden will win a prize or bear the best fruit. Severe weather, a hail storm, snow or severe drought could threaten it all but nevertheless we keep hoping and trying. How long can patience hold out? Jesus said: God is like a gardener who will spend time and care on his fruit trees; however is there a limit to his patience and effort? Are we not warned constantly of the urgency of addressing climate change, and are we responding?

Reflect, share, act. Scripture: *Cut the fig tree down. Why should it use up the ground? And the gardener replied, "Let it alone, sir this year also, till I dig about and put on manure. If it bears fruit next year, well and good, but if not, you can cut it down." Luke 13:1-9. Pope Francis: The Creator does not abandon us; he never forsakes his loving plan or repents of having created. Humanity still has the ability to work together in building our common home. LS13. Patience takes root when I recognise that other people also have a right to live in this world, just as they are. It does not matter if they hold me back, unsettle my plans or annoy me by the way they act or think. AL 92. Action and Prayer.* Are patience and tolerance virtues I need to nurture. **Pray:** *Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful, and kindle in us the fire of your love, so that walking together we may renew the face of the earth.*

October 27. 30th Sunday B. Lightshedding. Fr Joseph came to Mass wearing his dark glasses. He began his homily with the words, "The Mission of all the baptised is to spread the light of Christ. Loadshedding as has been all too common in our country in recent years has taught us some lessons. Without light productivity is greatly reduced, security too becomes a problem and crime increases. Poor lighting can be harmful to the eyes. Light is a source of energy for all living organisms and helps to make plants grow. We begin to appreciate the plight of the blind who live in permanent darkness. On a figurative and spiritual note there is physical blindness and darkness where there is no faith or hope. The mission of families to bring the light of Christ is that of every parent and grandparent to their children. The light of Christ empowers, consoles and guides our way."

Reflect, share, act. Scripture: *Go your way, your faith has made you well." An immediately he received his sight and followed him on the way. Mark 10:46-52. Pope Francis: If a family is centred on Christ he will unite and illumine its entire life. Moments of pain and difficulty will be experienced in union with the Lord's cross and his closeness will make it possible to surmount them. AL 317 Action and Prayer.* Does the song "You light up my life" have any special meaning for you and your family? **Pray:** *Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful, and kindle in us the fire of your love, so that walking together we may renew the face of the earth.*

October 28. "The Sabbath. Be honest", the group leader said, "What does the Sabbath day mean to us nowadays?" "I sleep late." "I enjoy going to my sodality meeting." "I love the atmosphere in church even if it takes long." "I feel guilty if I don't go to Mass." "We still go to church together and then go out for breakfast afterwards. It is one of the joys of my week." "I have to work, no choice." "Is there really a choice about what we could do on Sundays? Do we talk about it as a family, or use it as a time to get away from one another?" Jesus' healing the woman on the Sabbath was a choice, a decision and an act of genuine compassion.

Reflect, share, act. Scripture: *At that time Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. And there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity. Luke 13:10-17. Pope Francis: . "We are not exempt from pain and suffering: the whole creation groans (cf. Rom 8:19-22), we Christians groan (cf. vv. 23-25) and the Spirit himself groans (cf. vv. 26-27). This expresses apprehension and suffering, together with longing and desire. It speaks of our trust in God and our reliance on his loving yet demanding presence as we*

look forward to the fulfilment of his plan, which is joy, love and peace in the Holy Spirit. From Message on Day of Prayer for Creation 2024. The family's communal journey of prayer culminates by sharing together in the Eucharist, especially in the context of the Sunday rest. Jesus knocks on the door to share with the Eucharistic supper. There spouses can always seal anew the paschal covenant which united them and which ought to reflect the covenant which God sealed with mankind on the cross. AL318 **Action and Prayer.** Is Sunday an occasion for Sabbath rest or just another day of the week for my family? **Pray:** Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful, and kindle in us the fire of your love, so that walking together we may renew the face of the earth.

October 29. Government and values. In today's society kings and kingdoms are largely out of fashion although some remain and are actively supported by their people. Kingship is hereditary and so can be a setting for national and/or family values to be planted or instilled and built upon. However there is also the possibility of abuse of power. When it comes to comparisons, as in the gospel, do forms of government other than democracy have an equally strong possibility of upholding positive values in such matters as the ownership and appropriation of land? That was the subject of a debate amongst three schools' matric classes. The outcome? Undecided. Kingdoms of man like the kingdom of God are a mystery.

Reflect, share, act. Scripture: The kingdom of God is like a mustard seed, it is like leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal. Luke 13:18-21 SACBC Statement on Land August 2018. Based on Biblical teaching and developed by the Social Teaching of the Church we affirm that the land is meant for all the peoples of the earth and is held by us in sacred trust. There is no absolute ownership of land. Human beings are always at the centre of our social and economic life. We affirm the need for respect for human life and human dignity, a democracy at the service of the common good, transparent and incorruptible leadership, responsible dialogue, non-violence, respect for the Constitution, practical wisdom and rejection of populism. **Action and Prayer.** Where do I stand on the issue of land? **Pray:** Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful, and kindle in us the fire of your love, so that walking together we may renew the face of the earth.

October 30. The Narrow Door. The matrics continued their discussion after the debate about governance and land. "I don't think that Luke is very "merciful" in this gospel about the narrow door. If you don't buy into the values of this Kingdom of God, you're out in the cold." "Plus the only way in is through a narrow door. Is that because only a few would wish to enter or to make it difficult for people?" Their teacher shared a personal insight. "The small door into the church in Bethlehem's Manger Square is like that narrow door and I was told it was like that because the big main entrance was bricked up to prevent soldiers on horseback from riding in. Makes one think." Mr Bozzoli summed up, "Jesus taught that the Wedding feast of Life or of the Kingdom, presided over by the Master of the House, is open to all peoples of all nations. We must work diligently however, to be able to enter by the narrow door.

Reflect, share, act. Scripture: Strive to enter by the narrow door, for many I tell you, you will seek to enter and will not be able. Luke 13:22-30. **Pope Francis:** Whether believers or not, we agree that the earth is essentially a shared inheritance, whose fruits are meant to benefit everyone. For believers this becomes a question of fidelity to the Creator, since God created the world for everyone. Every ecological approach needs to incorporate rights for the poor and the underprivileged. LS93. **Action and Prayer.** Am I working diligently enough for the Kingdom of God? What step can I take today? **Pray:** Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful, and kindle in us the fire of your love, so that walking together we may renew the face of the earth.

October 31. One of the catechists had started a parish group for young children, the Masolenyana, or "The Little Soldiers of Christ. They loved their colourful uniform especially when the leader suggested it was like their armour for God. "If the devil sees you dressed like that he will surely run away," she told them. Simphiwe's mom laughed about that but realised it was a good way of teaching about good and evil to the children, apart from what they tried to do at home. "Maybe you should wear your uniform here too," she suggested. "I do wear my rosary and you wear your cross too," Simphiwe said.

Reflect, share, act. Scripture: Put on the whole armour of God; that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil Ephesians 6:10-20. **Pope Francis:** Education in the faith has to adapt to each child. Children need symbols, actions and stories. Parents who wish to nurture the faith of their children are sensitive to their patterns of growth, for they know that spiritual experience is not imposed but freely proposed. Moments of family prayer and acts of devotion can be more powerful for evangelisation than any catechism class or sermon. AI 288. **Action and Prayer.** Has "Family on Mission" been a help on your spiritual journey this month? **Pray:** Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful, and kindle in us the fire of your love, so that walking together we may renew the face of the earth.