



2025 MARFAM JUBILEE YEAR FAMILY YEAR PLANNER

Theme: OUR WORLD, A FAMILY OF FAMILIES -

MARCH THEME: HUMAN RIGHTS ARE FAMILY RIGHTS.

APRIL THEME: GOD AND FAMILY.

THOUGHTS FOR THE DAY: MARCH, LENT and APRIL.

FAMILIES - PILGRIMS OF HOPE, SIGNS OF HOPE

Family, Lent and Jubilee of Hope 2025



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Abbreviations: Pope Francis: LS = Laudato Si. AL = Amoris Laetitia FT = Fratelli Tutti. EG = Evangelii Gaudium. MV= Face of Mercy. Spes – non confundit- Hope does not disappoint. Dilexit Nos – We are Loved.

Introduction. These Thoughts for the Day include the two months, March and April as well as a section for LENT 5 MARCH – 20 APRIL. March Thoughts for the Day are loosely connected with the Family Year Planner themes of family rights and the April ones with God and Family. The Lenten focus is on Families as Pilgrims of Hope and Signs of Hope. Extracts from the Jubilee document and the document on the Sacred Heart of Jesus are included daily. Other lists of suggestions for Lent are attached or downloadable from <https://marfam.org.za/2025-lent-jubilee-and-families/>

MARCH overview. Human Rights and Family Rights. Lent. In this Jubilee year of hope the right to life should be recognized. It is contained in the UN Declaration of Human Rights and the Catholic Charter of Family Rights and many other constitutions. Human life, as individuals, and as family units, is precious from the first moment of existence until natural death. Rights extend to safety and protection from harm for all. In addition to human rights concern for biodiversity, animal and plant life is growing, we are aware that “Extinction means forever”. A “culture of life” approach uses perspectives of justice, love, hope, positive relationships and the common good for all of creation. Such an eco-friendly family focus is built into the reflections for families as Pilgrims of Hope creating and supporting Signs of Hope.

Pope Francis: *Hope does not disappoint, founded on faith and nurtured by charity, it enables us to press forward in life. Everyone knows what it is to hope. In the heart of each person, hope dwells as the desire and expectation of good things to come, despite our not knowing what the future may bring. Hope is born of love and based on the love springing from the pierced heart of Jesus upon the cross: SNC 2-3. Families and homes go together. We insist on the rights of the family and not only of individuals. Families have the right to count on an adequate family policy from public authorities. LS 44. The rights to free enterprise and market freedom cannot supersede the rights of peoples, dignity of the poor & respect for the natural environment, for to make something our own, it is only to administer it for the good of all. FT 122*

Setting the scene. For the March focus on family rights and Lent with the special Jubilee focus of Families as Pilgrims of Hope and Signs of Hope families are invited to begin a process of stock-taking, conversion and revisiting their relationships. The three Catholic practices of Lent are prayer, fasting and almsgiving. Prayer, personal or communal, makes room for God in our lives. Fasting can mean denying ourselves, possibly something we particularly like, to share with others in need, or just as self-denial. Almsgiving is sharing with others some of our gifts, time, talents, money or other possessions. Resources are attached or downloadable from <https://marfam.org.za/2025-lent-jubilee-and-families/>

1. Thoughts of the Day with the monthly focus on rights and the Jubilee theme of hope.
2. Acts of Love and Sacrifice from list of 40 suggestions to choose as individuals or together.
3. Hold a Family Prayer Meal and a Family Reconciliation Service. Text available.
4. Use Family Year Planner as reference.
5. Use images and symbols and create a Lenten family prayer shrine. Sacred Heart, Luce - the Jubilee mascot as a symbol for Pilgrims of Hope, a Bible, crucifix, palm leaves etc.
6. Study and act on Laudato si’ Action Platform goals for eco-family friendly ideas.

April overview. God and Family. Lent, Holy Week, Easter and Eastertime. God, as Trinity is family, the perfect community of love and as such is present in the whole Lenten and Easter Season of sacrifice and also with the Jubilee focus of hope and the particular emphasis on Jesus, the Son, crucified and risen. Every human family, as individuals and a unit, is an image of God, called to mirror the relationship of the Trinity. St Francis, recognizing the family of creation, in his Canticle of the Creatures praises God: “We praise you Lord for all your creatures, brother sun, sister moon, brother

fire, sister water, mother earth and all creation. To you O Lord do they belong, you created them and they bear your likeness." How has that image of the Trinity been disfigured, as fire, water and wind are today such destructive forces? Humankind too disfigures God's image while we are gifted with power of understanding, to love to hurt and to forgive, because of love. Hope of salvation underlies the whole Lenten journey with the virtue of patience closely linked with hope.

Pope Francis: *The ultimate destiny of the universe is in the fulness of God already attained by the risen Christ. All creatures are moving forward with us and through us towards a common point of arrival which is God. LS83. In the family, called a domestic church individuals enter upon an ecclesial experience of communion among persons which reflects, through grace, the mystery of the Holy Trinity. AL86. Hope is born of love and based on the love springing from the pierced heart of Jesus upon the cross: "For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more surely, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life" (Rom 5:19). That life becomes manifest in our own life of faith, which begins with Baptism, develops in openness to God's grace and is enlivened by a hope constantly renewed and confirmed by the working of the Holy Spirit. SNC 3*

Setting the scene. As in the days of Lent during March. Eastertime is for many also holiday time, but as families let this season of autumn be a special blessing on our relationship with God through the moments of togetherness and sharing.

The THOUGHTS FOR THE DAY for faith sharing with a family focus use a modified SEE-JUDGE-ACT method.

1. A look at a life situation, built on the daily scripture passage and the monthly theme.
2. Read from scripture of the day and Church teaching (extracts from Pope Francis writings)
3. Reflect, share, pray, act.

The primary intention is to promote a spirituality of family life, as the normal way of living for most people in their various family forms, and with the different experiences. The THOUGHTS can be used by individuals or together.

Signs of Hope in and by the community, signs that exist and signs to create. From the Jubilee document *Spes Non Confundit*

- The **desire for peace** in the world. Peacemakers are called "children of God." Mt 5:9.
- **Enthusiasm for life;** "a social covenant to support and foster hope that is inclusive and not ideological, working for future filled with the laughter of babies and children."
- **Recovering the joy of living.** Created in God's image we cannot be content with getting along one day at a time and seeking fulfilment in material realities alone.
- Tangible signs of hope are needed for **prisoners**, deprived of their freedom and feeling the harshness of detention, restrictions, lack of affection and respect.
- **The Sick** at home or hospital. Works of mercy, affection and closeness to them, gratitude offered to their carers and inclusive attention to those with **disabilities** are signs of hope and respect for human dignity.
- **Young people** volunteering help is a sign of hope, but all our efforts to reach out and draw close to them are essential for them as the joy and hope for the future.
- **Migrants, exiles, refugees and displaced persons.** A spirit of welcome and respect for their dignity by everyone and practical needs addressed by authorities.
- **The elderly, lonely and grandparents** deserve the esteem and gratitude shown for their contributions, wisdom and the treasure they are for families and society.
- **The poor** who are often forgotten need recognition and awareness from everyone all as signs of hope in their daily needs.
- May the Christian community always be prepared to defend the rights of **those who are most vulnerable**, opening wide its doors to welcome them.

Dilexit Nos 21. Love and the Sacred Heart of Jesus. "Everything finds its unity in the heart, which can be the dwelling-place of love in all its spiritual, psychic and even physical dimensions. In a word, if love reigns in our heart, we become, in a complete way, the persons we are meant to be, for every human being is created above all else for love."

Underlying the principle of the common good is respect for the human person endowed with basic and inalienable rights. It has also to do with the overall welfare of society and the development of a variety of intermediate groups, especially the family as the basic cell of society. It calls for the welfare of society, social peace, stability and security provided by a certain order. Society as a whole, and the state in particular are obliged to defend and promote the common good. LS 157.

A JUBILEE PRAYER FOR FAMILIES.

May the FAITH you have given us in your son, Jesus Christ, our brother,
and the flame of LOVE enkindled in our hearts by the Holy Spirit,
awaken in us the HOPE for the coming of your KINGDOM of love, peace and beauty.
As PILGRIMS OF HOPE and SIGNS OF HOPE in our families
help us to plant the seeds of the gospel, to care for and nurture them
and so transform the Church, the world and all of creation. Amen

A PRAYER FOR OUR EARTH for families.

God of Love, creator of all, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
You are a family, a community of love, our model and inspiration.
To us you have given the task of caring for our common home
And all the families of creation, human, animal and plant.
We praise and thank you and pledge our care. Amen

PRAYER FOR OUR EARTH. *Pope Francis, Laudato Si', 2015.*

All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe and in the smallest of your creatures.
You embrace with your tenderness all that exists. Pour out upon us the power of your love, that we may protect life and beauty. Fill us with peace, that we may live as brothers and sisters, harming no one.
O God of the poor, help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth, so precious in your eyes.
Bring healing to our lives, that we may protect the world and not prey on it,
that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction.
Touch the hearts of those who look only for gain at the expense of the poor and the earth.
Teach us to discover the worth of each thing, to be filled with awe and contemplation,
to recognize that we are profoundly united with every creature as we journey towards your infinite light.
We thank you for being with us each day. Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle for justice, love and peace.

March 1. *“Let the children come to me for to such belongs the kingdom of God.”* After a discussion on divorce members of a parish family sharing group went home feeling quite challenged. Quite a few had experience of divorce in their families. Jack asked himself, “could we have done more to work on our marriage for the sake of our children? We both knew that the bitterness and fighting didn’t do them any good before we separated.. Little Andrew used to hide away, but now that we are divorced is it really better for them? I think there should be more programmes to help families like us dealing with the effects of divorce, mediation about mutual acceptance arrangements and the rights of the children.” Moyra’s response was different. “I’m thinking about being more eco-friendly, so I’m going to look after any young creatures abandoned by their families. Lots of them are just left to die.”

Reflect, share and act. Scripture: *“Let the children come to me, do not hinder them for to such belongs the kingdom of God.” MK 10:13-16. Pope Francis:* *Do we feel the immense psychological burden borne by children in families where the members mistreat and hurt one another, to the point of breaking the bonds of marital fidelity? AL246. Because all creatures are connected, each must be cherished with love and respect, for all of us living creatures are dependent on one another. LS42. JUBILEE.* *“God has in some way sought to limit himself in such a way that many of the things we think of as evils, dangers or sources of suffering, are in reality part of the pains of childbirth which he uses to draw us into the act of cooperation with the Creator”. This can allow the power and the love of God to expand in our lives and in the world, whereas our refusal or indifference can prevent it. The Lord cries out, “If only you would return to me, O Israel!” (cf. Jer 4:1). DN 190. Prayer and action.* Pray for children that suffer violence or abandonment. Choose appropriate action for children and young.

March 2. Sunday 8C. *In the Lord your labour is not in vain.* Some Justice and Peace groups had begun to focus on environmental issues and some to combine that with a family focus. “It makes sense to ask ourselves, ‘How clean is our backyard?’ As a family we have a right to services like water, electricity and shelter, but also have to take responsibility to care for our own immediate environment. Brian may be involved in the bigger municipal issues beyond our own walls but we can’t neglect our own yard.” Fr Oliver was pleased that his J&P and Family teams were working together. He suggested, “Apart from keeping your yards tidy you families could start a little vegetable patch and encourage the children to take responsibility for that. That is how all our work can bear fruit.

Reflect, share and act. Scripture: *My beloved brethren be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labour is not in vain. 1 Cor 15:54-58. Pope Francis:* *Some committed and prayerful Christians ridicule expressions of concern for the environment. Others are passive. What they all need is an ecological conversion. LS 217. JUBILEE.* *We should indeed prepare ourselves consciously and soberly for the moment when our lives will be judged from the standpoint of hope. The judgement of God, who is love (cf. 1 Jn 4:8.16), will surely be based on love, and on all that we have done or failed to do with regard to those in need, in whose midst Christ, the Judge himself, is present (cf. Mt 25:31-46). SNC 22. Prayer and action.* Pray that your labour will be eco-friendly and fruitful. Choose appropriate action

March 3. *“Go sell what you have and give to the poor.”* Patrick and Patience were a wealthy couple. They blessed God for their successful business plans, achieved through their hard work and some wise investments. As committed Catholics at the same time they felt sad that Jesus always seemed to condemn “the rich.” Together they addressed a Justice and Peace meeting saying, “Let us acknowledge that things are much more complicated in our day and we, as the Church in the home,

need good economists, honest politicians with a well-formed spirituality. We should all focus on the common good to chart the path forward towards greater economic wellbeing for all the families in our country as well as the environment." As a result of this presentation a Catholic business forum study group was initiated.

Reflect, share and act. Scripture: *Go sell what you have and give to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven and come follow me. His countenance fell and he went away sorrowful for he had great possessions. Jesus said to his disciples, "How hard it will be for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!" MK 10:17-27. Pope Francis:* *Recognising that all people are our brothers and sisters and seeking forms of social friendship that include everyone demands a commitment to devise effective means to this end. Individuals can help others in need. When they join together in initiating social processes of fraternity and justice for all they enter the field of charity, at its most vast, working for a social and political order whose soul is social charity. FT 180. JUBILEE. Whenever a person thinks, questions and reflects on his or her true identity, strives to understand the deeper questions of life and to seek God, or experiences the thrill of catching a glimpse of truth, it leads to the realization that our fulfilment as human beings is found in love. In loving, we sense that we come to know the purpose and goal of our existence in this world. In contemplating the meaning of our lives, perhaps the most decisive question we can ask is, "Do I have a heart?" DN 22.*

Prayer and action. Explore the importance of ecological economics and social charity.

March 4. Shrove Tuesday. *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.* The new bishop In his Lenten pastoral letter wrote, "This month in SA is Human Rights month, but we, in our Church, can make it FAMILY RIGHTS FOR PILGRIMS OF HOPE AND SIGNS OF HOPE. I recommend that parishes and their PPCs and different desks combine for Lenten reflections on this. That is one way to promote the Jubilee of Hope too with the topic of rights and justice, day by day."

Reflect, share and act. Scripture: *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, house and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life. Mark 10:28-31: Charter of Family Rights Article 4e: The rights of the person, even though they are expressed as rights of the individual have a fundamental social dimension which finds an innate and vital expression in the family. Pope Francis: JUBILEE. As the Second Vatican Council observed: "In every age, the Church has the responsibility of reading the signs of the times and interpreting them in the light of the Gospel. In this way, in language adapted to every generation, she can respond to people's persistent questions about the meaning of this present life and of the life to come, and how one is related to the other". SNC 7. Prayer and action. Pray for a right and just balance in life. Choose appropriate action. As this is Shrove Tuesday commemorate as Pancake Tuesday in the family.*

2025 LENT and JUBILEE OF HOPE

FAMILIES - PILGRIMS OF HOPE AND SIGNS OF HOPE.

2025 MARFAM THOUGHTS FOR THE DAY for

Published on www.marfam.org.za. daily and in full. Downloadable for printing.

Introduction. Pope Francis established 2025 as a Holy Jubilee Year of Hope with the theme “Hope does not disappoint.” Its aims are renewal, experiencing God’s mercy, rebuilding of our relationship with God with others, and all of creation. Jubilee is a special biblical concept with a number of special beliefs, activities relating to repentance, forgiveness and hope for eternal life, which are highlighted during the Lenten season in the parish and also in our own homes and families.

The Lenten theme built into MARFAM’s THOUGHTS FOR THE DAY is adapted from the March theme Human Rights are Family Rights, Pope Francis’ Jubilee document *Spes non Confundit*, and his encyclical on the Sacred Heart of Jesus, *Dilexit Nos*. They are aimed at deepening family spirituality and an eco-spirituality. These can be done through performing acts of Love and Sacrifice around the three Catholic practices of Lent prayer, fasting and almsgiving. Prayer, personal or communal, makes room for God in our lives. Fasting is denying ourselves, possibly something we like, give to others in need, or just as self-denial. Almsgiving is sharing with others some of our gifts, time, talents, money or other possessions.

MARFAM LENTEN FAMILY “ACTS OF LOVE AND SACRIFICE.” 40 suggestions to choose from daily or as appropriate to do individually or together. Relevant in many different contexts of families. Download and print

1. BE conscious of God in a stranger.
2. BE a good neighbour helping when needed.
3. BE a peacemaker or a peacekeeper
4. BE generous with someone in need.
5. BE patient with an old person or a child
6. BE eco-conscious, plant a tree for nature.
7. BE willing to forgive even when it hurts to do so.
8. BE eco-conscious start a vegetable patch
9. BE frugal. Have a meatless meal.
10. BE waterwise. Save, don’t waste water
11. BE present with someone who is lonely.
12. BE generous with a beggar. Look in his or her face.
13. BE health-conscious. Give up fizzy drinks for Lent.
14. BE polite to everyone, even people you don’t like.
15. BE prayerful with Jesus at home or in church.
16. BE punctual and not make other people late or wait.
17. BE eco-conscious. Recycle what you can.
18. BE willing to share your belongings with others.
19. BE animal and nature conscious.
20. BE caring, give food and drink to a hungry person.
21. Don’t BE rude or cheeky to a parent or other adult.
22. Don’t BE a bully to someone weaker than you.
23. Don’t BE greedy when others are hungry.
24. Don’t BE lazy, clean up your neighbourhood
25. Don’t BE violent, hitting or hurting someone.
26. Don’t BE wasteful, save electricity where you can.
27. Don’t BE selfish and refuse to help others.
28. Don’t BE dishonest in thought, word or deed .
29. Don’t BE angry or sulk if you don’t get your way
30. Don’t BE judgemental about differences in others.
31. Don’t BE a substance abuser.
32. Don’t BE ungrateful for what you have received.
33. Don’t BE unforgiving.
34. Don’t BE a couch-potato. Go do some exercise.
35. Don’t BE neglectful. Think of other’s needs
36. Don’t BE argumentative, listen and share sensitively.
37. Don’t BE impatient.
38. Don’t BE mean. Be willing to sacrifice for others.
39. Don’t BE unaware of the problems in society.
40. Don’t BE self-centred and refuse to help others.

Signs of Hope in and by the community, signs that exist and signs to create. From the Jubilee document *Spes Non Confundit*

- The **desire for peace** in the world. Peacemakers are called “children of God.” Mt 5:9.
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- May the Christian community always be prepared to defend the rights of **those who are most vulnerable**, opening wide its doors to welcome them.

Suggested LENTEN PRACTICES FOR THE HOME for Becoming an Eco-Friendly Family as Pilgrims of Hope.

Study and Read:

Study and use Laudato si Action Platform goals.

Subscribe to eco-friendly newsletters on-line. Select topics of interest to study further on climate, biodiversity and living a simpler lifestyle. Read up on biomimicry, water saving, electricity saving, carbon footprints, healthy diets. Watch TV series and programmes on climate action and protection of creation around the world. Read up St Francis life and way of life and study Pope Francis writings especially *Laudato Si’* and *Fratelli Tutti*.

Do: Do a family project on becoming eco-friendly: pray privately and together, do faith sharing ideally together. Hold a Family Reconciliation service and if possible Confession. Have a Family Prayer Meal. Pray STATIONS OF THE CROSS for Families from MARFAM in various languages. Check your family carbon footprint and make adjustments to reduce it. Save energy and water, grow herbs, vegetables, trees, eat more healthily – less meat, more vegetables. Support conservation projects for wild life, birds, bees, insects. Lobby about chosen issues – plastic pollution, environmental clean-up. Donate unused items to charity. Knit, sew, make items to donate to charity. Family fast days (Friday fast) to save money and donate to feeding projects. Exercise to keep fit.

Save money: Cut down on alcohol, smoking, fizzy drinks, junk food, bottled water, car use. Think twice before you spend, do clothes-swap rather than buy, buy in bulk and share. Have a meatless day. Donate money to Bishops’ Lenten Appeal. ,

Waste reduction: Recycle. Avoid single use plastics, styrofoam, avoid wasting food, compost food wastage.

Energy Saving: Do energy use check, switch off unnecessary and unused lights, TV and plugs. Use solar power, solar lights and rechargeable batteries. Cut time on TV, computer and cellphone to save energy and data.

Water saving: Use “grey” water from bath, shower and washing for toilets and garden. Don’t run taps when not needed. Collect rain water, use drip irrigation in garden or veggie patch.

Recycle: Join in recycling projects, plastic, paper, glass, make ecobricks out of plastic 2l bottles stuffed with plastic.

General: clean up environment, plant trees, support ecological campaigns in church, school and society. Make time for relationships and relaxation by cutting time on-line or cellphone.

Care for others: Befriend, share, give to poor and beggars, give away unused items, show care for sick and lonely

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;

and where there is sadness, joy.

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 is in giving that we receive;

it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;

and it is in dying (to self) that we are born to eternal life.

Amen

THOUGHTS FOR THE DAY.

March 5. Ash Wednesday. *Even now return to me with all your heart,* All the learners from St Pius XII school, whether they were Catholic or not went to get their ashes on their foreheads. “Why do you do this?” the RE teacher asked the class. “Dunno.” “We just do it every year.” “It’s tradition and then we all give up something during Lent. But we’re not really supposed to tell what,” one Grade 6 girl said. Josh called out the three tasks of Lent: prayer, fasting, almsgiving. “There is the penance part, but we can also take up some extra sacrifice to challenge one’s willpower.” “In our family at home we often do things together during Lent. Ashes remind us it is time to pull up our socks as we’re all just made of the dust of the earth.”

Reflect, share and act. Scripture: *Even now return to me with all your heart, with fasting with weeping and mourning and tear your hearts and not your garments” says the Lord. Joel 2:12 .* **Pope Francis:** *The life of the spirit is not dissociated from the body or from nature or from worldly realities but lived in and with them in communion with all that surrounds us.* LS 216. **JUBILEE.** *Hope is born of love and based on the love springing from the pierced heart of Jesus upon the cross.* SNC.2-3
Choose an act of love and sacrifice from the list, also published at www.marfam.org.za/lent

March 6. “I have set before you this day life and good, death and evil.” Melanie said, “Road rage is a horrible thing and must be a sin, but surely it is so often brought on by someone breaking the law, or being selfish in the traffic,” Gordon added, “Like some oldies who have forgotten how to drive! Or are taxis the worst.” Mohale said, “Load shedding and robots out of order have messed up the traffic flow, multiplied our anger and frustration and the accident rate on the roads no end. Where exactly is the evil in all that? I ask myself how can I deal with this situation in the most “life-giving” way?”

Reflect, share and act. Scripture: *Moses said, “see I have set before you this day life and good, death and evil. If you obey the commandments, by loving the Lord your God, by walking in his ways, and keeping his commandments then you shall live. Deut 30:15-20* **Pope Francis:** *Let us say to the Lord, “I am angry with this person. I pray for him. To pray for a person with whom I am irritated is a beautiful step forward in love. EG 101. JUBILEE. Uncertainty about the future may give rise to conflicting feelings, from confident trust to apprehensiveness, from serenity to anxiety, from firm conviction to hesitation and doubt. Often we come across people who are discouraged, pessimistic and cynical about the future, as if nothing could possibly bring them happiness. May the Jubilee be an opportunity to be renewed in hope. God’s word helps us find reasons for that hope. SNC1. The elderly, who frequently feel lonely and abandoned, also deserve signs of hope. Esteem for the treasure that they are, their life experiences, their accumulated wisdom and the contribution that they can still make, is incumbent on the Christian community and civil society, which are called to cooperate in strengthening the covenant between generations. SNC14* **Choose an act of love and sacrifice from the list, also published at www.marfam.org.za/lent**

March 7. “Is it not to share your bread with the hungry?” The Nkosis sat together at the beginning of Lent to discuss how they could fast and choose their acts of love and sacrifice. “Let us have a family fast day once a week, just have one full meal, ideally together, and no snacks and cold drinks in between,” Amy suggested. “But we should really also give the food we would have eaten, or the money saved to a poor or homeless family, together with some clothes.” “And on other days?” Busi asked. Mom said, “For suggestions check the list on the fridge door.”

Reflect, share and act. Scripture: *Is it not to share your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into your house, when you see the naked to cover him and not to hide yourself from your own flesh? Isaiah 58:1-9.* **Pope Francis:** *I ask with all my heart that hope be granted to the billions of the poor, who often lack the essentials of life. Before the constant tide of new forms of impoverishment, we can easily grow insensitive even resigned. We must not close our eyes to the dramatic situations all around us. Each day we meet people who are poor or impoverished; maybe even our next-door neighbours. The poor may be homeless or lack sufficient food for the day and suffer from exclusion and indifference on the part of many. It is scandalous that in a world possessed of immense resources, destined largely to producing weapons, the poor continue to be the majority of the planet’s population, billions of people who frequently remain at the bottom of the pile”. SNC JUB 15. .*
Choose an act of love and sacrifice from the list, also published at www.marfam.org.za/lent

March 8. “Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?” Bongi, as usual, was argumentative. “I don’t see why tax collectors should be sinners. Don’t they have a right to work for SARS or whatever form it took in those days. Surely that doesn’t make them sinners.” Refilwe explained, “in those days tax collectors worked for the oppressors, and were often dishonest and cheated people. But it wasn’t just them. There were inspectors checking up on people’s documentation. It was like that here in the apartheid days, before we thought of human rights and family rights like being able to live together as a family in one place.”

Reflect, share and act. Scripture: “Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?” Jesus answered, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick do; I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.” Luke 5:32 **Pope Francis:** *Free and heartfelt forgiveness is something noble, a reflection of God’s own infinite ability to forgive. It can be shown even to someone who resists repentance and is unable to beg pardon. Those who truly forgive do not forget. FT250-1. Prayer: “Lord, grant us your peace! This is my prayer to God as I now offer my good wishes to*

the Heads of State and Government, to the leaders of International Organizations, to the leaders of the various religions and to every person of good will. "Forgive us our trespasses, Lord, as we forgive those who trespass against us. In this cycle of forgiveness, grant us the peace that you alone can give to those who let themselves be disarmed in heart, to those who choose in hope to forgive the debts of their brothers and sisters, to those who are unafraid to confess their debt to you, and to those who do not close their ears to the cry of the poor. Prayer from Message for World Day of Peace January 1. **Choose an act of love and sacrifice from the list, also published at www.marfam.org.za/lent**

March 9. Sunday Lent 1C. Temptation. *The devil showed him all the kingdoms of the world.* Fr Oliver asked the altar servers, "I know you have been studying about temptation. What was Jesus being tempted to do? Mpumi knew the three temptations, "turn stones into bread, worship the devil and test God to see if God would protect him." "Yes, but what is behind those and how do they apply to us?" Fr continued. "Could there be temptations to choose power, material, political or religious power, even making them into idols? That is worshipping the devil too? I think you need to go and discuss this more at home and think about our own reality with all the bribery and corruption we keep hearing about."

Reflect, share and act. Scripture: *The devil showed him all the kingdoms of the world and said, I will give you all this authority and glory to you if you will worship me."* Luke 4:1-13. **Pope Francis:** *The worship of the ancient golden calf has returned in a new and ruthless guise in the idolatry of money. Man is reduced to one of his needs alone, consumption. EG 56. Jubilee will thus be a Holy Year marked by the hope that does not fade, our hope in God. May it help us to recover the confident trust that we require, in the Church and in society, in our interpersonal relationships, in international relations, and in our task of promoting the dignity of all persons and respect for God's gift of creation. May the witness of believers be for our world a leaven of authentic hope, a harbinger of new heavens and a new earth (cf. 2 Pet 3:13), where men and women will dwell in justice and harmony, in joyful expectation of the fulfilment of the Lord's promises. SNC25. Choose an act of love and sacrifice from the list, also published at www.marfam.org.za/lent*

March 10. *You shall not take vengeance or bear any grudge against the sons of your own people.* Therese was thinking, "There is a lot about laws and rules in the Old Testament isn't there, especially the book of Leviticus? But maybe that is suitable for Lent to get us to do some looking into our own sins. How many grudges do I bear and how many grudges are against those close to me? Sometimes recognising their rights when I don't agree is the hardest thing of all. I wonder why? Sometimes it seems easier to go and love your neighbour then to make peace with your own family. Most of us wouldn't treat other people the way we treat our own family. Why is there more domestic violence, abuse and incest within a family? Why can't we be responsible where it matters most?"

Reflect, share and act. Scripture: *You shall not take vengeance or bear any grudge against the sons of your own people but you shall love your neighbour as yourself. Lev 19:11-18. Pope Francis:* *We cannot forget that mercy is not only the working of the Father, it becomes a criterion for knowing who his true children are. We are called to show mercy because mercy was first shown to us. AL 310. 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, fulfilment in reciprocity, communion and fruitfulness. AL200-1. JUBILEE. Looking to the future with hope entails having enthusiasm for life and a readiness to share it. Sadly, in many situations this is lacking. A number of countries are experiencing an alarming decline in the birthrate as a result of today's frenetic pace fears about the future, the lack of job security and adequate social policies, rather than concern for relationships. The tendency "to blame population growth, instead of extreme and selective consumerism on the part of some, is one way of refusing to face the [real] issues". SNC 9. **Choose an act of love and sacrifice from the list, also published at www.marfam.org.za/lent***

March 11. *My word shall not return to me empty but accomplish that which I intend.* "Graham had made a serious commitment to read the daily scripture passages during Lent. He noted that often in these Old Testament readings it was God speaking, "The Lord says..." and he realized that God speaks through people, like the prophet Isaiah and others. "I think God is speaking to me too to encourage others around me to listen to His word and follow what it is telling us. Now I must pray that they will listen to me." **Reflect, share and act. Scripture:** *Thus says the Lord, "As the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word not return to me empty but accomplish that which I intend."* Isa 55:10-11. **Pope Francis:** *The family is called to join in daily prayer, to read the word of God and to share in Eucharistic communion and so to grow in love and become ever more fully a temple in which the Spirit dwells. AL29. JUBILEE. The Jubilee Year will also coincide with a significant date for all Christians, namely, the 1700th anniversary of the celebration of the first great Ecumenical Council of Nicaea. From apostolic times, bishops have gathered on various occasions to discuss doctrinal questions and disciplinary matters. In the first centuries of Christianity, synods frequently took place in both East and West, showing the importance of unity of God's People and the faithful proclamation of the Gospel. The Jubilee can serve as an important occasion for giving concrete expression to this form of synodality, which the Christian community today*

considers increasingly necessary for responding to the urgent need for evangelization. All the baptized, with their respective charisms and ministries, are co-responsible for ensuring that manifold signs of hope bear witness to God's presence in the world. SNC 17. **Choose an act of love and sacrifice from the list, also published at www.marfam.org.za/lent**

March 12. *Let them be covered with sackcloth and let them cry mightily to God.* Paula remarked "I've never seen anyone putting on sackcloth. It must feel horrible. But that is not the point is it? It is about repentance. I like the word metanoia. It is turning back from times when we have abused our own rights and ignored rights of others, person and all of creation too. I think it is also about responsibility, the opposite of rights. Our family did an exercise on family rights; the right to life, to a house, and lots of stuff that doesn't all apply to me yet now, but I do have to be responsible for how to use my time and my money."

Reflect, share and act. Scripture: *The king made a proclamation: "let neither man nor beast taste anything, let them not feed or drink but let them be covered with sackcloth and let them cry mightily to God: let him turn from his evil way and from the violence which is in his hands. Who knows God may yet repent and turn from his fierce anger." God saw what they did and did not do what he said he would do to them. Jonah 3:1-10* **Pope Francis:** *Together with our obligation to use the earth's goods responsibly we are called to recognize that other living beings have a value of their own in God's eyes as they bless him and give him glory.' By virtue of our unique dignity and our gift of intelligence, we are called to respect creation and its inherent laws, for the Lord by wisdom founded the earth. LS 69. JUBILEE. In our Journey as Pilgrims of Hope let us return to Scripture that speaks to us in these words: "May we who have taken refuge in him be strongly encouraged to seize the hope set before us, a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters the inner shrine behind the curtain, where Jesus, a forerunner on our behalf, has entered" (Heb 6:18- 20). The image of the anchor is eloquent; it helps us to recognize the stability and security that is ours amid the troubled waters of this life, provided we entrust ourselves to the Lord Jesus. SNC 25. **Choose an act of love and sacrifice from the list, also published at www.marfam.org.za/lent***

March 13. *Queen Esther seized with deathly anxiety fled to the Lord.* Lucie was the one who opened the sharing. "The ways of society globally right now are frightening. Leaders and rulers have rights as well as their responsibilities to act in the best interests of their people not just for their own interests. There is always jealousy, scheming and plotting against the good, honest leaders, while others are willing to cosy up to the bad leaders. For us too, in a small way we are all like the leaders, having responsibilities and rights, but do we always do what is just and fair?"

Reflect, share and act. Scripture: *Queen Esther seized with deathly anxiety fled to the Lord. Save us from the hand of our enemies. Esther 14. Jesus said, "Ask and you will receive." Mat 7:7. Pope Francis. Ethics has come to be viewed with a certain scornful derision. It is seen as counterproductive, too human. It is felt to be a threat since it condemns the manipulation and debasement of the person. EG 56. JUBILEE. A reality to do with eternal life is God's judgement, both at the end of our individual lives and at the end of history. Artists have often attempted to portray it in accordance with the theological vision of their times and with the aim of inspiring a sense of awe in the viewer. We should prepare ourselves consciously and soberly for the moment when our lives will be judged, but we must always do this from the standpoint of hope, the theological virtue that sustains our lives and shields them from groundless fear. The judgement of God, who is love (cf. 1 Jn 4:8.16), will surely be based on love, and in particular on all that we have done or failed to do with regard to those in need. we are speaking of a judgement unlike any handed down by human, earthly tribunals; it should be understood as a rapport of truth with the God who is love and with oneself, within the unfathomable mystery of divine mercy. SNC 22. **Choose an act of love and sacrifice from the list, also published at www.marfam.org.za/lent***

March 14. *"Go first to be reconciled to your brother."* Martha was careful about the point she wanted to make. "Conflict in extended families is not uncommon. They may all have grown up together but one sibling may be more or less successful than another, cleverer, have more children or, in some cultures, more wives, all of which may lead to jealousy and resentment. Expectations about rights and duties in traditional families are quite complex as there is also an expectation of helping other family members financially or materially. Modern day young adults sometimes challenge traditions of patriarchy or the rights of a mother-in-law and may want to do away with them. What are their reasons for wanting this?"

Reflect, share and act. Scripture: *"Everyone who is angry with his brother shall be liable to judgement. If you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there and go first to be reconciled to your brother and then come and offer your gift. 5:20-26* **Pope Francis: JUBILEE.** *It is only by starting from the heart that our communities will succeed in uniting and reconciling differing minds and wills, so that the Spirit can guide us in unity as brothers and sisters. Reconciliation and peace are also born of the heart. The heart of Christ is "ecstasy", openness, gift and encounter. In that heart, we learn to relate to one another in wholesome and happy ways, and to build up in this world God's kingdom of love and justice. Our hearts, united with the heart of Christ, are capable of working this social miracle. DN29. **Choose an act of love and sacrifice from the list, also published at www.marfam.org.za/lent***

March 15. *“Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.”* Nicholas came up with some awkward questions. “Should prisoners have rights, or soldiers on each side in a war? Do rights only apply to good people, or also to those who have done something wrong, or if we disagree with someone? I think that can be difficult in a family too. After all rights come from being created in the image of God, which we all are.” Mrs Meyer thought to herself of her son and others, even priests, in prison for sexually abusing a child. She found it hard to forgive her son for the abuse and thinking about the family of the child made her wonder even more how they could be forgiving.

Reflect, share and act. Scripture: *“Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.” Matthew 5:43-48. Catholic Charter of Family Rights 9d. The rights and necessities of the family, and especially the value of family unity, must be taken into consideration in penal legislation and policy, in such a way that a detainee remains in contact with his or her family and that the family is adequately sustained during the period of detention. Pope Francis: JUBILEE. The first sign of hope should be the desire for peace in our world, which once more finds itself immersed in the tragedy of war. Heedless of the horrors of the past, humanity is confronting yet another ordeal, as many peoples are prey to brutality and violence. What does the future hold for those who have already endured so much? How is it possible that their desperate plea for help is not motivating world leaders to resolve the numerous regional conflicts in view of their possible consequences at the global level? Is it too much to dream that arms can fall silent and cease to rain down destruction and death? May the Jubilee remind us that those who are peacemakers will be called “children of God” (Mt 5:9). The need for peace challenges us all, and demands that concrete steps be taken. May diplomacy be tireless in its commitment to seek, with courage and creativity, every opportunity to undertake negotiations aimed at a lasting peace. SNC 8. I propose that in this Jubilee Year governments undertake initiatives aimed at restoring hope; forms of amnesty or pardon meant to help individual (offenders) regain confidence in themselves and in society; and programmes of reintegration in the community, including a concrete commitment to respect for law. Choose an act of love and sacrifice from the list, also published at www.marfam.org.za/lent*

March 16. Sunday Lent 2C. Transfiguration. *As he was praying the appearance of his countenance was altered.* Fr Sylvester wondered if South Africans live with fear more than other peoples. “Security is one of the biggest industries in the country. He explained to the congregation that the Transfiguration story of Jesus being seen in a new glorious way was giving courage to the disciples. It is always read during Lent because Jesus wanted to prepare his apostles for the time when he would be handed over to his enemies, suffer and be put to death. We all have fears and anxieties that we can bring and share with Jesus knowing that we can put our trust in him. I invite you to reflect on this issue of fear and courage and share with one another in your families.”

Reflect, share and act. Scripture: *Jesus took Peter and John and James and went up on the mountain to pray. As he was praying the appearance of his countenance was altered and his clothing became dazzling white. Moses and Elijah, talked with him about his exodus. Peter said to Jesus, “Master it is well that we are here.” A cloud came and overshadowed them and they were afraid. And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, “This is my Son, my Chosen, listen to him!” Luke 9:28-36. Pope Francis: Our contemplations of the fulfilment yet to come allows us to put the historical journey we make as families in perspective. In this way we stop demanding of our interpersonal relationships a perfection which we will only encounter in the Kingdom to come. AL 325. Vatican News 17 February. In an interview with Italian newspaper the Vatican Secretary of State reiterates the urgent need for a multilateral ‘diplomacy of hope’. ‘Echoing Pope Francis’ and Pope St. John Paul II words Cardinal Parolin emphasized that peace requires courage, justice, and forgiveness, three values that seem increasingly absent in modern society. “Today the courage to negotiate is often mistaken for weakness, while military power and demonstrations of force continue to be privileged as conflict resolution tools. “Only when courage, justice, and forgiveness are once again lived as fundamental values, will it be possible to embark on a genuine path to peace.” Choose an act of love and sacrifice from the list, also published at www.marfam.org.za/lent*

March 17. *To us Oh Lord, belongs confusion of face because we have sinned against you.* Moses spoke as a parent. “Is living with justice and mercy a right, a responsibility, or even a duty born of love, something we learn from the example of God? We parents struggle with discipline and finding suitable punishments these days for kids of all ages. Self-discipline is important and enforcing discipline, teaching moral values and right behaviour is both a right and a responsibility that I don't think we parents are well enough equipped for. Maybe we should run that parenting course after Easter.”

Reflect, share and act. Scripture: *To us Oh Lord, belongs confusion of face because we have sinned against you. To the Lord our God belong mercy and forgiveness, because we have rebelled against him. Dan 9:4-10. Pope Francis: It is essential to help children realise misbehaviour has consequences. It is important that discipline not lead to discouragement but to be instead a stimulus to further progress. AL 268-270 Pope Francis: JUBILEE. The men and women of our time often find themselves confused and torn apart, almost bereft of an inner principle that can create unity and harmony in their lives and actions. Models of behaviour that, sadly, are now widespread exaggerate our rational-technological dimension or, on the contrary, that of our instincts”. No room is left for the heart. DN 9. In the words of Benedict XVI: “At the moment of*

judgement we experience and we absorb the overwhelming power of his love over all the evil in the world and in ourselves. The pain of love becomes our salvation and our joy”m SNC 22. **Choose an act of love and sacrifice from the list, also published at www.marfam.org.za/lent**

March 18. *Practise and observe whatever they tell you, but not do what they do, for they preach but do not practice.* Mike was the parish Justice and Peace contact and spoke to the confirmation class too. “As you begin to move to adulthood understand that we all have a right and a responsibility to judge for ourselves who and what is right and wrong. Who to vote for, whether to take drugs or what action to take with regard to climate change and economic justice. Then we also have to stand up for what we believe. It's no good complaining about the school, and the government and then still take no action against injustice or even give them our vote.”

Reflect, share and act. Scripture: *The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat, so practise and observe whatever they tell you, but not do what they do, for they preach but do not practise. Matt 23:1-2. Pope Francis:* *Freedom is something magnificent, yet it can also be dissipated and lost. Moral education has to do with cultivating freedom through ideas, incentives, practical applications, rewards, examples and more. AL 267. JUBILEE Signs of hope are also needed by the young. Sadly, they often see their dreams and aspirations frustrated. We must not disappoint them, for the future depends on their enthusiasm. It is gratifying to see the energy they demonstrate, by rolling up their sleeves and volunteering to help when disasters strike. Yet it is sad to see young people who are without hope, who face an uncertain and unpromising future, who lack employment or job security, or realistic prospects after finishing school. Without the hope that their dreams can come true, they will inevitably grow discouraged and listless. Escaping into drugs, risk-taking and the pursuit of momentary pleasure does greater harm to them in particular, since it closes them to life's beauty and richness, and can lead to depression and self-destructive actions. For this reason, the Jubilee should inspire them for they are the joy and hope of the Church and the world. SNC 12. Choose an act of love and sacrifice from the list, also published at www.marfam.org.za/lent*

March 19. St Joseph. *Mary's husband being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame resolved to send her away quietly.* Fr Brian explained, “Pope Francis gave us a Year for St Joseph in 2021 with his letter *Patris Corde*, i.e. “A father's heart.” He continues to reflect on Joseph, describing him from the perspective of fatherhood in various beautiful ways; a beloved father, tender and loving father, obedient, accepting, creatively courageous, working, but finally he refers to “a father in the shadows.” 2021, the time of Covid-19 helped us see more clearly the importance of “ordinary” people who, far from the limelight, exercise patience and offer hope every day. “Joseph set aside his own ideas so as to accept the course of events God had in mind for him, to embrace them, and make them part of his own history. Unless we are reconciled with our own history, we will be unable to move forward for we will remain hostage to our expectations and the disappointments that follow. The spiritual path that Joseph shows us does not *explain*, but *accepts*. Only then can we begin to glimpse the broader history and deeper meaning.” How committed and responsible are most men as fathers, and also foster- or stepfathers in caring for those in their homes? Are they offered help in managing this task?

Reflect, share and act. Scripture: *Her husband being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to send her away quietly. But as he considered this an angel of the LORD appeared to him in a dream. Matt 1:16-24. Pope Francis: Prayer to St Joseph from Patris Corde.* *Hail, Guardian of the Redeemer, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary, to you God entrusted his only Son; in you Mary placed her trust; with you Christ became man. Blessed Joseph, to us too, show yourself a father and guide us in the path of life. Obtain for us grace, mercy and courage, and defend us from every evil. Amen. JUBILEE. God has in some way sought to limit himself in such a way that many of the things we think of as evils, dangers or sources of suffering, are in reality part of the pains of childbirth which he uses to draw us into the act of cooperation with the Creator. This cooperation can allow the power and the love of God to expand in our lives and in the world, whereas our refusal or indifference can prevent it. DN190. Choose an act of love and sacrifice from the list published at www.marfam.org.za/lent.*

March 20. *Cursed is the man who trusts in people. Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord.* Mike and his son Jerry discussed the prophet Jeremiah, after whom Jerry was named. He had started his ministry as a young man but as he had grown old and tired he became disillusioned as it seemed people weren't listening to his preaching. His ministry was speaking out on behalf of God, judging right from wrong and recognizing human weakness. At times in his dialogue with God Jeremiah even said he just wanted to sit down and die. “So, my son, be warned, it's not easy in life to keep on standing up for what you believe.”

Reflect, share and act. Scripture: *Cursed is the man who trusts in people. Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord. The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately corrupt. I, the Lord search the mind and try the heart, to give to every man according to his ways, according to the fruits of his doings. Jer 17:5-10. Pope Francis:* *Doing what is right means more than judging what seems best or knowing clearly what needs to be done. We have to arrive at the point where the good that the intellect grasps can take root in us as a thirst for the good that outweighs other attractions. AL 265. JUBILEE In addition to*

finding hope in God's grace, we discover hope in the signs of the times that the Lord gives us. The Second Vatican Council observed: "In every age, the Church has the responsibility of reading the signs of the times and interpreting them in the light of the Gospel. In this way, in language adapted to every generation, she can respond to people's persistent questions about the meaning of this present life and of the life to come, and how one is related to the other". 1. We need to recognize the immense goodness present in our world, lest we be tempted to think ourselves overwhelmed by evil and violence. 2. The signs of the times, which include the yearning of human hearts in need of God's saving presence, ought to become signs of hope. SNC 7. **Choose an act of love and sacrifice from the list, also published at www.marfam.org.za/lent**

March 21. Human Rights Day. Favouritism, discrimination and envy. Human Rights Month and Day in South Africa commemorate the Sharpeville killings by police of innocent people protesting over serious social justice issues. In today's bible account Joseph, the favourite son of his father, Jacob, was also an innocent victim. He was abused by his brothers as they were jealous when his father gave Joseph a multi-coloured coat. His brothers tried to get rid of him by throwing him in a pit but fortunately he was rescued. He was taken to Egypt, a foreign country, where he had to fend for himself and eventually became successful as Pharaoh's right hand man. How do we treat the foreigners amongst us. do we respect their dignity and rights?

Reflect, share and act. Scripture: Genesis 37 tells the long story of Joseph and his brothers. **Pope Francis:** Envy is a form of sadness provoked by another's prosperity; it shows that we are not concerned for the happiness of others but only with our own well-being. Love makes us rise above ourselves, envy closes us in on ourselves. Love inspires a sincere esteem for every human being and the recognition of his or her own right to happiness. AL95. **JUBILEE.** Signs of hope should be present for migrants who leave their homelands behind in search of a better life for themselves and for their families. Their expectations must not be frustrated by prejudice and rejection. A spirit of welcome, which embraces everyone with respect for his or her dignity, should be accompanied by a sense of responsibility, lest anyone be denied the right to a dignified existence. Exiles, displaced persons and refugees, whom international tensions force to emigrate in order to avoid war, violence and discrimination, ought to be guaranteed security and access to employment and education, the means they need to find their place in a new social context. SNC 13. **Choose an act of love and sacrifice from the list, also published at www.marfam.org.za/lent**

March 22. World Water Day and Earth hour. The Peterson young people were excited to share about their plans for this day. "Funny that Earth Hour is about saving power by switching lights off for an hour in the evening and World Water Day is about saving water and creating awareness. Just the 2 elements that are causing such problems in our country nowadays. Whose problems are they, if not everyone's? Maybe if we all dealt with them responsibly some of the problems would be solved." "Maybe if beyond acting responsibly for a day we took responsibility and admitted our guilt about abusing the environment in so many ways. Not wasting resources or littering is Caring for God's creation and God will be pleased that some of us are making an effort to become an eco-friendly family and are encouraging others to do the same.

Reflect, share and act. Scripture: Who is a God like you pardoning iniquity and passing over our transgressions for the remnant of his inheritance? You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea. Mic 7:14-20 **Pope Francis. JUBILEE.** The Bible shows that the people that journeyed through the desert and yearned for freedom received the promise of an abundance of life-giving water: "With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation" (Is 12:3). The messianic prophecies gradually coalesced around the imagery of purifying water: "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean... a new spirit I will put within you" (Ezek 36:25-26). This water would bestow on God's people the fullness of life, like a fountain flowing from the Temple and bringing a wealth of life and salvation in its wake. DN 92. **Choose an act of love and sacrifice from the list, also published at www.marfam.org.za/lent**

March 23. Sunday Lent 3C. "If it bears fruit next year well and good, but if not, you can cut it down." Fr Oliver reminded the congregation, "We're nearing the end of summer and autumn and we have seen how parts of Africa have had major climatic disasters floods in parts and drought in others. People have been displaced and villages destroyed. In other parts drought still exists that will lead to famine in the months to come. Wars and conflicts contribute, and the natural disasters have highlighted too how nature has been harmed by our human activity. To what extent have we been responsible for the devastation in God's great garden. We are a continent of subsistence farmers and market gardeners and can reflect on God as a merciful gardener, caring for his fruit trees. But let us not test his patience.

Reflect, share and act. Scripture: Let me dig about the fig tree 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:** God's patience does not simply have to do with enduring all things. We encounter problems when we think that relationships or people ought to be perfect, or when we put ourselves at the centre and expect things to turn out our way. AL 91-92. **JUBILEE.** There is not much place for patience in this age of the Internet, as space and time yield to an ever-present "now". If we were still able to contemplate creation with a sense of awe, we might better understand the importance of patience. We could appreciate the changes of the seasons and their harvests, observe the life of animals and their cycles of growth, and enjoy the clarity of vision of Saint Francis. A renewed appreciation

of the value of patience could only prove beneficial for ourselves and for others. Saint Paul speaks of patience in the context of our need for perseverance and confident trust in God's promises. Yet, before all else, he testifies to God's own patience, as "the God of all patience and encouragement" (Rom 15:5). Patience, one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit, sustains our hope and strengthens it as a virtue and a way of life. May we learn to pray frequently for the grace of patience, which is both the daughter of hope and at the same time its firm foundation. SNC 4. **Choose an act of love and sacrifice from the list, also published at www.marfam.org.za/lent**

March 24. "My father, if the prophet had commanded you to do some great thing, would you not have done it?" Abel had done research into the history of Human Rights Day in South Africa, the tragic incident in our history way back in 1960 when many innocent marchers, during a peaceful protest, were killed and wounded by police. He asked, "How often since then have more innocent people been killed, families deprived of their loved ones and livelihoods destroyed. Have those who are guilty been held responsible? This year it is nearly 30 years since the adoption of the Constitution, which is meant to guarantee the rights and freedoms of all citizens, and the same question must be asked with urgency. Who is responsible for the wellbeing of another, if not each and every citizen together with our leaders? The late Anglican Archbishop Tutu said "Do your little bit of good where you are; it's those little bits of good put together that overwhelm the world."

Reflect, share and act. Scripture: Elisha sent a messenger to Naaman, the leper, saying "Go and wash in the Jordan seven times." But Naaman was angry and said, "I thought he himself would come out to me." So he went away in a rage. But his servant said, "My father, if the prophet had commanded you to do some great thing, would you not have done it?" So Naaman went and dipped himself in the Jordan seven times and his flesh was restored like that of a little child and he was clean. 2 Kings 5:1-15. **Pope Francis:** The Covid-19 pandemic unexpectedly erupted, exposing our false securities. It is my desire that in this time, by acknowledging the dignity of each human person we can contribute to the rebirth of a universal sense of fraternity, brotherhood between all men and women. Let us dream as a single human family each with his or her own voice. FT8. **JUBILEE.** Inclusive attention should also be given to all those in particularly difficult situations, who experience their own weaknesses and limitations, especially those affected by illnesses or disabilities that severely restrict their personal independence and freedom. Care given to them is a hymn to human dignity, a song of hope that calls for the choral participation of society as a whole. SNC 11. **Choose an act of love and sacrifice from the list, also published at www.marfam.org.za/lent**

March 25. The Annunciation. "Behold I am the handmaid of the Lord. Let it be to me according to your word." Pearl shared some of her insights with the others on the feast of the Annunciation. "Mary, a young girl, betrothed to be married, had her life completely turned upside down by the invitation she received through the angel Gabriel to be the mother of the Messiah. She rightly questioned the angel, asking how this could be possible, but her 'yes' to God was unconditional. From that moment on she devoted her life to her Son. This was nevertheless an unplanned pregnancy, and at that time it could have been as problematical as it has been for many other young women until our day. According to custom she could have been killed but Joseph had responded positively to God's message in a dream, and accepted and treasured Mary as his wife and Jesus as his son. Unwed mothers in different cultures have had very difficult experiences, as was reported in Ireland a while ago, where the moms and their babies were badly mistreated in institutions, because of the judgmental attitudes of the Church, the community and their own families too. Today, abortion is legal in South Africa and is far too commonly chosen as it remains seriously sinful. Social and family support for the right to life of unborn babies should always be available.

Reflect, share and act. Scripture: "Behold I am the handmaid of the Lord. Let it be to me according to your word." From Luke 1:26-38. **Pope Francis:** The Church has been present for centuries throughout the world and all things human are our concern. Wherever the councils of nations come together to establish the rights and duties of man, we are honoured to take our place among them. This journey of fraternity also has a Mother, whose name is Mary. Having received universal motherhood at the foot of the cross she cares not only for Jesus but also for the rest of her children. She wants to give birth to a new world, where all of us are brothers and sisters. FT 278. **JUBILEE.** Hope finds its supreme witness in the Mother of God. We see that hope is not naive optimism but a gift of grace amid the realities of life. Like every mother, whenever Mary looked at her Son, she thought of his future. Surely she kept pondering in her heart the words spoken to her in the Temple by the elderly Simeon: "This child is destined for the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed, so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed – and a sword will pierce your own soul too" (Lk 2:34-35). At the foot of the cross, she witnessed the passion and death of Jesus, her innocent son. Overwhelmed with grief, she nonetheless renewed her "fiat", never abandoning her hope and trust in God. In this way, Mary cooperated for our sake in the fulfilment of all that her Son had foretold in announcing that he would have to "undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again" (Mk 8:31). In the travail of that sorrow, offered in love, Mary became our Mother, the Mother of Hope. It is not by chance that popular piety continues to invoke the Blessed Virgin as Stella Maris, a title that bespeaks the sure hope that, amid the tempests of this

life, the Mother of God comes to our aid, sustains us and encourages us to persevere in hope and trust. SNC 24. **Choose an act of love and sacrifice from the list, also published at www.marfam.org.za/lent**

March 26. *I have taught you statutes and ordinances as the Lord my God commanded me.* Jonathan had done his homework and studied the Constitution. “The Constitution of a country (1996) does not belong to any political party but to every citizen. That might be forgotten in parliament or when elections come up and all political parties are lobbying for their own policies and interpretations of the law, but whatever the outcome of an election the Constitution is the arbiter of justice. Our bishops together with other religious groups also dialogue with the state to promote pro-family, pro-life policies for the good of all, while special interest groups lobby for environmental rights, justice and more.

Reflect, share and act. Scripture: *Moses said, “I have taught you statutes and ordinances as the Lord my God commanded me. Keep them and do them for that will be your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will say, “surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people. Make them known to your children and your children’s children.” Deut 4:1-9. Pope Francis: Families have a right to be able to count on an adequate family policy on the part of public authorities. Love overflowing with small gestures of mutual care is also civic and political and it makes itself felt in every action that seeks to build a better world. When we feel that God is calling us to intervene with others in social dynamics we should realise that this too is part of our spirituality. LS231. JUBILEE. Christian hope does not deceive or disappoint because it is grounded in the certainty that nothing and no one may ever separate us from God’s love: “Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril or the sword? No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom 8:35.37-39). This hope perseveres in the midst of trials: founded on faith and nurtured by charity, As Saint Augustine observes: “Whatever our state of life, we cannot live without these three dispositions of the soul, to believe, to hope and to love” SNC 3. **Choose an act of love and sacrifice from the list, also published at www.marfam.org.za/lent***

March 27. *“This is the nation that did not obey the voice of the Lord, their God, and did not accept discipline,* Stephen, a lawyer said, “It is difficult to legislate for the common good and for things like ecological conversion. It has been very interesting to see how much money and energy has gone into fighting events like the Covid-19 virus. Over time climate change has gone way down on the public agenda even though it is even more urgent and serious in the long term. It may be less clearly identifiable, but shouldn’t be. We have all seen recent climate catastrophes even closer to home.” Joyce added, “Activists and the popes too have spoken about it for many years as part of Catholic Social Teaching, it has not become a mainstream issue and with the US President taking a negative stance who knows what will happen. Who has studied *Laudato Si?* How many people have measured their carbon footprint? Humanitarian or human goods are hard to enforce but should be promoted. Pope Francis’s *Fratelli Tutti*, calls for social friendship beyond Catholic believers. We humans are the element of creation that can make decisions We cannot expect the animal kingdom or the plant kingdom to do that.

Reflect, share and act. Scripture: *You shall call to them but they will not answer you. And you shall say to them, “This is the nation that did not obey the voice of the Lord, their God, and did not accept discipline, truth has perished, it is cut off from their lips. Jer. 7:23-28. Pope Francis: A journey of peace is possible between religions. Its point of departure must be God’s way of seeing things. God’s love is the same for everyone, regardless of religion. It follows that we believers need to find occasions to speak with one another and to act together for the common good and the poor. This has nothing to do with watering down or concealing our deepest convictions. FT 281-2. JUBILEE. A heartfelt appeal I make in the light of the Jubilee is directed to the more affluent nations. I ask that they acknowledge the gravity of so many of their past decisions and determine to forgive the debts of countries that will never be able to repay them. More than generosity, this is a matter of justice. More serious today is the ‘ecological debt’ that exists, particularly between the global North and South, connected to commercial imbalances with effects on the environment and the disproportionate use of natural resources by certain countries over long periods of time”. As sacred Scripture teaches, the earth is the Lord’s and all of . us dwell in it as “aliens and tenants” (Lev 25:23). If we really wish to prepare a path to peace in our world, let us commit ourselves to remedying the remote causes of injustice, settling unjust and unpayable debts, and feeding the hungry. SNC 16. **Choose an act of love and sacrifice from the list, also published at www.marfam.org.za/lent***

March 28. Special Jubilee event: 24 hours with the lord. *Whoever is wise let him understand.* As the senior member of the family around the half-way mark through Lent Josh led the sharing. “I don’t know if we really value what God has to offer. He continues to beg us to come back to him, telling us he has more to offer than the idols we make for ourselves. Are glamour, money, rich friends, going to parties really what life is all about? The 24 Hours with the Lord is a great opportunity for us to reflect on where we stand with him and others. Everyone was given a chance to respond.

Reflect, share and act. Scripture: *O Ephraim what have I to do with idols? It is I who answer and look after you. Whoever is*

wise let him understand, whoever is discerning let him know for the ways of the Lord are right and the upright walk in them, but transgressors stumble in them. Hosea 14: 9. **Pope Francis: JUBILEE.** The indulgence is a way of discovering the unlimited nature of God's mercy which knows no bounds. The sacrament of Reconciliation is not only a magnificent spiritual gift, but also a decisive, essential and fundamental step on our journey of faith. There, we allow the Lord to erase our sins, to heal our hearts, to raise us up, to embrace us and to reveal to us his tender and compassionate countenance. There is no better way to know God than to let him reconcile us to himself (cf. 2 Cor 5:20) and savour his forgiveness. Let us not neglect Confession, but rediscover the beauty of this sacrament of healing and joy, the beauty of God's forgiveness of our sins! SNC23. **Choose an act of love and sacrifice from the list, also published at www.marfam.org.za/lent**

March 29. Missionaries of mercy. The Lord said, "I desire mercy not sacrifice. Fr Oliver was himself a foreigner and in some ways he could identify more with his compatriots than with the local people. The foreigners' faith experience, way of worshipping and family life was different but important to them. Some families had been split up with the generations of adults and children divided, but many were also trying to build a new life in a foreign country. They are not always well accepted and therefore their church community and liturgy is really important and they are naturally inclined to stick to their own people. In his ministry he realized that he had to find the way to balance welcoming, belonging and integration with their faith journey.

Reflect, share and act. Scripture: The Lord said, "I desire mercy not sacrifice, the knowledge of God, rather than burnt offerings. Hosea 6:1-6. **Pope Francis:** Pastoral activity must be implemented with due respect for their cultures, for the human and religious formation from which they come and for the spiritual richness of their rites and traditions. AL 46. **JUBILEE.** Signs of hope should be present for migrants who leave their homelands behind in search of a better life for themselves and for their families. Their expectations must not be frustrated by prejudice and rejection. A spirit of welcome, which embraces everyone with respect for his or her dignity, should be accompanied by a sense of responsibility, lest anyone be denied the right to a dignified existence. Exiles, displaced persons and refugees, whom international tensions force to emigrate in order to avoid war, violence and discrimination, ought to be guaranteed security and access to employment and education, the means they need to find their place in a new social context. SNC 13. **Choose an act of love and sacrifice from the list, also published at www.marfam.org.za/lent**

March 30. Sunday Lent 4C. The son gathered all he had and took his journey into a far country and there he squandered his property in loose living. Deacon Paul told the congregation, "After you have read the story of the Prodigal Son in Luke's gospel let us adapt the story and put it into a modern day context and see what we can learn from that.

"Jose Manuel had come from Madeira with practically nothing but some sound words of advice from his mother. "Find yourself a good girl who will be a good mother to your children and when you're in trouble pray to the Virgin." He had been lucky that an uncle was able to help him get a job and being hardworking he was soon earning good money and could impress the girls. He did marry a good girl who bore him three daughters and, after much prayer to the Virgin, finally a son. His bottle-store business was going well and he had become a rich and influential man in the community. He doted on the boy Paolo and gave him everything he wanted, but seldom took notice of his Maria and their daughters who came to resent their spoilt little brother. At high school Paolo started getting into trouble. There were plenty of friends to help him spend his money. They introduced him to alcohol and drugs and of course girls. At first his father refused to listen and would brush Maria aside when she and the girls tried to talk to him. After Paolo was arrested for drunken driving and Jose had to bail him out for the second time, he was very angry and gave the boy an ultimatum. "Get your life together or leave home," he shouted, never thinking that would happen, but it did. Arrogantly Paolo chose to leave home, demanded his inheritance and left town. Jose Manuel was shattered. At first he was angry and stormed around the store and house yelling at everyone. Then he became withdrawn and would sit by the window looking down the road. The daughters took over running the business. At times Jose ranted and raved, at times he even cried but always he blamed everyone else. Days, weeks and months passed. Paolo had secretly been in touch with his mother on whatsapp and even sometimes asked her for money. She tried to talk to his father but he refused to listen. She started a novena to the Virgin Mary and left pictures of Paolo around the house.

One night Jose had a dream, seeing young Paolo playing his first soccer match and scoring his first goal. When the team lost the match, the boy came running to his dad in tears. Jose hugged him saying, "Don't worry son I'll always be there for you." The next morning he asked Maria, "Do you know where Paolo is? Do you think he needs me?" "But of course, Papa" Paolo's mother said, "He and you have always needed each other but sometimes you are both too proud. Why don't you call him and ask him to come home for Easter." He picked up the phone. "Hi dad," came the reply, "I was just about to call you. I'm sorry to hear you haven't been too well. I really would like to come home for Easter. Is that OK with you?"

Deacon concluded the story, "Is it possible that behind every forgiving father is a manipulating, concerned, never-letting-go, determined-to-make-peace mother? Could we maybe even say that mercy is one of the feminine qualities of God? Where do you most experience mercy in your families?"

Reflect, share and act. Scripture: Read the parable in Luke 15:1-3,11-32. **Pope Francis.** The woman stands before the man as a mother, the subject of the new life that is conceived and develops in her and from her is born into the world. Every child has a right to receive love from a mother and a father, both are necessary for a child's integral and harmonious development. Respecting a child's dignity means affirming his or her need and natural right to have a mother and a father. AL172-3. **JUBILEE.** As we know from personal experience, every sin "leaves its mark," has consequences, not only outwardly in the effects of the wrong we do, but also inwardly, as "every sin, even venial, entails an unhealthy attachment to creatures, which must be purified either here on earth, or after death, in the state called Purgatory". These are removed by the indulgence, always by the grace of Christ, who, as Saint Paul VI wrote, "is himself our 'indulgence'". This experience of full forgiveness cannot fail to open our hearts and minds to the need to forgive others in turn. Forgiveness does not change the past; it cannot change what happened in the past, yet it can allow us to change the future and to live different lives, free of anger, animosity and vindictiveness. Forgiveness makes possible a brighter future, which enables us to look at the past with different eyes, now more serene, albeit still bearing the trace of past tears. SNC 23. **Choose an act of love and sacrifice from the list, also published at www.marfam.org.za/lent**

March 31. A new heaven and a new earth. Thus says the Lord. "Behold I create new heavens and a new earth. Mrs Beatus spoke to the group: The 2020-2021 COVID-19 pandemic is nearly 5 years behind us. It was a difficult time that still has after-effects today. It is not the only pandemic history has seen, but it was the most wide-spread, because of the nature of our global village. Economically the global village has suffered too, and creation in all its forms has suffered and survived many catastrophes. Human beings are responsible for causing many disasters such as conflicts and wars on every level. We are the only creatures with the capacity to be able to address many disasters, even if only after the event. Judgement and punishment for wrongdoing is necessary, but seemingly seldom happens as it should. In spite of all hope remains. God never abandons his people.

From *The Care of Creation – a Franciscan spirituality of the earth.* Ilija Delio et al. "God created, was present and continues to be present in his love, throughout the life of Jesus, his resurrection and the final transformation of all creation, as foretold in the gospels and the book of Revelation. Relationship is the key to the beauty of the universe. Since all reality is good, then my relationship with others, human and non-human ought to promote goodness."

Reflect, share and act. Scripture: Thus says the Lord. "Behold I create new heavens and a new earth. Be glad and rejoice forever in that which I create, for behold I create Jerusalem a rejoicing and her people a joy. No more shall be heard in it the sound of weeping or the cry of distress." Isaiah 65: 17-21. **Pope Francis:** If we accept the great principle that there are rights born of our inalienable human dignity, we can rise to the challenge of envisaging a new humanity. We can aspire to a world that provides land, house and work for all. This is the true path of peace which will only be possible in the event of solidarity as the whole human family. FT 127. **JUBILEE.** Hope is "that theological virtue by which we desire... eternal life as our happiness". The Second Vatican Council says that, "when people are deprived of this divine support, and lack hope in eternal life, their dignity is deeply impaired, as may so often be seen today. The problems of life and death, of guilt and suffering, remain unsolved, so that people are frequently thrown into despair". We, however, by virtue of the hope in which we were saved, can view the passage of time with the certainty that the history of humanity and our own individual history are not doomed to a dead end or a dark abyss, but directed to an encounter with the Lord of glory. As a result, we live our lives in expectation of his return and in the hope of living forever in him. In this spirit, we make our own the heartfelt prayer of the first Christians with which sacred Scripture ends: "Come, Lord Jesus!" (Rev 22:20). SNC 19. **Choose an act of love and sacrifice from the list, also published at www.marfam.org.za/lent**

APRIL THOUGHTS FOR THE DAY.

April 1. "Sir I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is troubled." Outside the church on Sunday morning there was a whole row of beggars. "Me, me, please help me, give me, just R5 madam!" Suzie said to herself, "I never know what to do and always feel bad, like I don't trust them." Maysie thought, "What would Jesus do?" "You know full well," the little voice of conscience said. "Jesus mission was healing, making people whole again."

Reflect, share and act. Scripture: At the pool of Bethzatha among the multitude of invalids there was a man who had been ill for 38 years. Jesus saw him and knew that he had been lying there a long time. He asked the man, "do you want to be healed?". The sick man said to Jesus, "Sir I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is troubled." From John 5:1-16. **Pope Francis: JUBILEE.** Signs of hope should also be shown to the sick, at home or in hospital. Their sufferings can be allayed by the closeness and affection of those who visit them. Works of mercy are also works of hope that give rise to immense gratitude. This should likewise be shown to all those healthcare workers who, often in precarious conditions, carry out their mission with constant care and concern for the sick and for the most vulnerable. Attention should also be given to those in particularly difficult situations, who experience their own weaknesses and limitations, especially those affected by illnesses or disabilities that severely restrict their personal independence and freedom. SNC 11. **Choose an act of love and sacrifice from the list, also published at www.marfam.org.za/lent**

April 2. The Father judges no one, but has given all judgement to the Son, "I hate him. Whenever I read about Jesus and his Father I feel so angry." Jason yelled at his mom. "Why doesn't my father look after us as he should? Where is he, anyway? Do you know who my father is, so I can go and find him and tell him what I think?" Moyra cringed when her son carried on like that. She knew the situation wasn't right, that boys really do need a father's love for their own good and also to get to understand what kind of person God is.

Reflect, share and act. Scripture: My Father is working still and I am working. The Father judges no one, but has given all judgement to the Son, that all may honour the Son as they honour the Father. From John 5:17-30. **Pope Francis:** Jesus wants to bring us to the Father. That is why, from the very beginning, the Church's preaching does not end with Jesus, but with the Father. The Aramaic word Jesus used to address the Father was "Abba", an intimate and familiar term that some found disconcerting. He addressed the Father in expressing his anguish at his impending death: "Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet, not what I want, but what you want" (Mk 14:36). Jesus knew well that he had always been loved by the Father: "You loved me before the foundation of the world" (Jn 17:24). In his human heart, he had rejoiced at hearing the Father say to him: "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased". DN37, 72 **JUBILEE.** This Jubilee experience of full forgiveness cannot fail to open our hearts and minds to the need to forgive others in turn. Forgiveness does not change the past; it cannot change what happened in the past, yet it can allow us to change the future and to live different lives, free of anger, animosity and vindictiveness. Forgiveness makes possible a brighter future, which enables us to look at the past with different eyes, now more serene, albeit still bearing the trace of past tears. SNC 23. **Choose an act of love and sacrifice from the list, also published at www.marfam.org.za/lent**

April 3. "O Lord, why does your anger burn hot against your people." "There are a few things that puzzle me about God and his justice," Nathan said to Phyllis. "I believe God was quite justified in being fed up with the Israelites when they started grumbling against him. When these teenagers of yours are so stubborn I can't handle it. I know I'm their stepdad and that makes it hard for both of us, but when you ask me nicely I really do try harder to control my frustration."

Reflect, share and act. Scripture The Lord said to Moses, I have seen this stiff-necked people. Let me alone that my anger may burn hot against them. Moses begged of the Lord and said, 'O Lord, why does your anger burn hot against your people whom you have brought out of the land of Egypt?' The Lord repented of the evil which he thought to do to his people. From Exodus 32:7-14 **Pope Francis: JUBILEE.** For the last Extraordinary Jubilee, I commissioned Missionaries of Mercy, and these continue to carry out an important mission. During this Jubilee, may they exercise their ministry by reviving hope and offering forgiveness whenever a sinner comes to them with an open heart and a penitent spirit. May they remain a source of reconciliation and an encouragement to look to the future with heartfelt hope inspired by the Father's mercy. I encourage bishops to take advantage of their precious ministry, especially by sending them wherever hope is sorely tested: to prisons, hospitals, and places where people's dignity is violated, poverty abounds and social decay is prevalent. In this Jubilee Year, may no one be deprived of the opportunity to receive God's forgiveness and consolation. **Choose an act of love and sacrifice from the list, also published at www.marfam.org.za/lent**

April 4. 'Let us lie in wait for the righteous man, because he is inconvenient to us After Mass a few men stayed chatting. "Politicians aren't the only people it is hard to trust. In every situation there are greedy, self-centred people just out to feather their own nest and eager to trap and exploit you. Even friends betray friends. What kind of Christians are they really, or is their religion just skindEEP?" "Or maybe ours too? Is this not a time for conversion or metanoia, to consider if you have

harmed someone, planned to fire or get rid of him or even just destroyed their good name? That kind of sin doesn't just need confession only, but also asking them forgiveness."

Reflect, share and act. Scripture *Ungodly men said to themselves, 'Let us lie in wait for the righteous man, because he is inconvenient to us and opposes our actions. He accuses us of sins against our training. Let us condemn him to a shameful death. Wisdom 2:12-22. Pope Francis: JUBILEE. Judgement, then, concerns the salvation in which we hope and which Jesus has won for us by his death and resurrection. The evil we have done cannot remain hidden; it needs to be purified in order to enable this definitive encounter with God's love. As we know from personal experience, every sin "leaves its mark". Sin has consequences, not only outwardly in the effects of the wrong we do, but also inwardly, inasmuch as "every sin, even venial, entails an unhealthy attachment to creatures, which must be purified either here on earth, or after death, in the state called Purgatory". In our humanity, weak and attracted by evil, certain residual effects of sin remain. These are removed by the indulgence.] The Apostolic Penitentiary will issue norms for obtaining and rendering spiritually fruitful the practice of the Jubilee indulgence.SNC 23, Choose an act of love and sacrifice from the list, also published at www.marfam.org.za/lent*

April 5. *Does our law judge a man without first giving him a hearing and learning what he does?' "You see, I'm right. I know I'm right and expect the judge to uphold my point of view." Labour disputes and even family disputes are reasoned out like that. "That may be so, but compromises may be necessary and circumstances can also have an influence. A poor child stealing to buy food, or a teenager stealing to buy drugs isn't quite the same, is it?" "You're right too but on top of that there is a growing awareness of the question of mercy. Pope Francis really challenges me when he even calls for a merciful judgement for everyone."*

Reflect, share and act. Scripture: *Nicodemus said to the Pharisees, Does our law judge a man without first giving him a hearing and learning what he does?' From John 7:40-53. Pope Francis: Mercy is not opposed to justice but rather expresses God's way of reaching out to the sinner, offering him a new chance to look at himself, convert and believe. FM21. JUBILEE. A reality to do with eternal life is God's judgement, both at the end of our individual lives and at the end of history. We should prepare ourselves consciously for the moment when our lives will be judged, but we must always do this from the standpoint of hope, the theological virtue that sustains our lives and shields them from groundless fear. The judgement of God, who is love will surely be based on love, and in particular on all that we have done or failed to do with regard to those in need, in whose midst Christ, the Judge himself, is present. Clearly, then, we are speaking of a judgement unlike any handed down by human, earthly tribunals; it should be understood as a rapport of truth with the God who is love and with oneself, within the unfathomable mystery of divine mercy. Sacred Scripture states: "You have taught your people that the righteous must be kind, and you have filled your children with good hope, because you give repentance for sins, so that... when we are judged, we may expect mercy" (Wis 12:19.22). SNC 22*

April 6. Sunday Lent 5. Adultery. *"Let him who is without sin among you, be the first to throw a stone."* Fr Michael decided to tell the congregation a story linked with the gospel of the day. John 8:1-11. He called it, "A Mother's prayer. "Gentle Jesus, meek and mild, look upon this little child... Yes Jesus, look upon him with mercy and love and especially with gentleness and compassion, but may be not with meekness and mildness. We have to be strong, so very strong. It's not his fault that he was born HIV positive. Is it mine, or his father's? Should we not have allowed him to be born? We should not have contracted the disease in the first place. I find the anger in me sometimes wants to boil over, to burn and destroy and then fall back exhausted. Slowly acceptance is growing. Mike was such a good husband at first and then seemed to get bored and started going with those women. When I found out I was shattered at first but then just wanted to retaliate and do the same. Then it all went horribly wrong and maybe we both got what we deserved. In those days there was no anti-retroviral treatment and Mike became very ill and succumbed to the disease. I and the boy are fortunate to be on treatment, but Lord, the guilt for me is so overpowering and yet I find it hard to understand that a God who is so good and merciful can allow the innocent to suffer too? One day I believe I will explain the situation to him. When he asks, 'What is adultery' maybe I will tell him, 'It is what adults do to children without thinking."

Reflect, share and act. Scripture: *"Let him who is without sin among you, be the first to throw a stone at her" "Has no one condemned you?" "Neither will I." John 8:1-11. Pope Francis: JUBILEE. A reality having to do with eternal life is God's judgement, both at the end of our individual lives and at the end of history. Sin has consequences, not only outwardly in the effects of the wrong we do, but also inwardly, inasmuch as "every sin, even venial, entails an unhealthy attachment to creatures, which must be purified either here on earth, or after death, in the state called Purgatory". In our humanity, weak and attracted by evil, certain residual effects of sin remain. These are removed by the indulgence, always by the grace of Christ, who, as Saint Paul VI wrote, "is himself our 'indulgence'". SNC 23. The pain of love becomes our salvation and our joy". Choose an act of love and sacrifice from the list, also published at www.marfam.org.za/lent*

April 7. "Have you condemned a daughter of Israel without an examination?" Ernestina shared with her friends, "I got quite a shock when I read the story of Susanna in the book of Daniel the other day. Two elders of the people desired Susanna a beautiful woman, the wife of their host, threatened her and falsely accused her, when she refused them. The prophet Daniel was inspired to speak out for her as she was due to be executed unjustly, but justice prevailed and the two elders were punished for their evil intentions and lies. Was abuse of women and lying officials already common in those Biblical times?" "For sure, society hasn't really changed has it, but isn't that why Jesus came in his own time to call people to repent and to practise justice?" "We sure need that today too with the high incidence of gbv." "I'm not too sure how I feel about mercy for the offenders though. Susanna did receive it but what about them?"

Reflect, share and act. Scripture: Read the Susanna story from Daniel 13:1-62. **Pope Francis:** Jesus' words show that his holiness did not exclude deep emotions. On various occasions, he demonstrated a love that was both passionate and compassionate. He could be deeply moved and grieved, even to the point of shedding tears. It is clear that Jesus was not indifferent to the daily cares and concerns of people, such as their weariness or hunger: "I have compassion for this crowd... they have nothing to eat... they will faint on the way, and some of them have come from a great distance" (Mk 8:2-3). DN 44. **JUBILEE.** The judgement of God, who is love will surely be based on love, and in particular on all that we have done or failed to do with regard to those in need, in whose midst Christ, the Judge himself, is present. SNC 23. Mercy is not opposed to justice but rather expresses God's way of reaching out to the sinner, offering him a new chance to look at himself, convert and believe. FM 21. **Choose an act of love and sacrifice from the list, also published at www.marfam.org.za/lent**

April 8. The Lord sent fiery serpents among the people and they bit the people and many died. Jacob belonged to his parish Justice and Peace group and worked in the prison too. "That is for my sins" he used to say. "But that is where I am able to put a different dimension on Justice and Peace. Yes people are guilty, some, not all, admit their guilt and I feel called to accompany them as they experience punishment on their journey towards repentance. I often see God's mercy at work there. I'm also excited to have heard about a programme that exists of Victim-Offender dialogues. And by the way why do snakes have such a bad image, not only in Biblical cultures but also pagan and some traditional religions have an unholy fear of snakes?"

Reflect, share and act. Scripture The people spoke against God and Moses. "Why have you brought us here? Then the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people and they bit the people and many died. Then the people came to Moses and said "we have sinned." So the Lord said to Moses, "make a fiery serpent and set it up as a sign and every one who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live." Numbers 21:4-9 **Pope Francis: JUBILEE.** During the Holy Year I think of prisoners who, deprived of their freedom, daily feel the harshness of detention and its restrictions, lack of affection and, in more than a few cases, lack of respect for their persons. I propose that in this Jubilee Year governments undertake initiatives aimed at restoring hope; forms of amnesty or pardon meant to help individuals regain confidence in themselves and in society; and programmes of reintegration in the community, including a concrete commitment to respect for law. SNC 9. "The Lord has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and release to the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour" (Is 61:1-2). Jesus made those words his own at the beginning of his ministry, presenting himself as the fulfilment of the "year of the Lord's favour" (cf. Lk 4:18-19). In every part of the world, believers, and their Pastors in particular, should be one in demanding dignified conditions for those in prison, respect for their human rights and above all the abolition of the death penalty, a provision at odds with Christian faith and one that eliminates all hope of forgiveness and rehabilitation. SNC10. **Choose an act of love and sacrifice from the list, also published at www.marfam.org.za/lent**

April 9. "Our God, whom we serve is able to deliver us." "Are there really still people who are so committed to their faith that they really think God will save them from harm?" Priscilla asked. "Well isn't that what martyrdom is?" "Not really, because martyrs even risk their lives." "Of course we only hear about them because they die, like Daswa. What about other martyrs these days who are killed for their beliefs but don't have a choice about that?" "Talking about faith miracles do happen too, people get healed or disasters are avoided after prayer. I heard that a massive hurricane was going to hit Mexico and when the people prayed it just petered out into an ordinary storm."

Reflect, share and act. Scripture: Shadrack, Meshack and Abednego said, "Our God, whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace. If not, we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image which you have set up. Read Daniel 3: 14-28. **Pope Francis.** The preaching of Jesus is made visible once more in the response of faith Christian are called to offer by their witness. FM16 **JUBILEE.** The most convincing testimony to this hope is provided by the martyrs. Steadfast in their faith in the risen Christ, they renounced life itself here below, rather than betray their Lord. Martyrs, as confessors of the life that knows no end, are present and numerous in every age, and perhaps even more so in our own day. We need to treasure their testimony, in order to confirm our hope and allow it to bear good fruit. The martyrs, coming as they do from different Christian traditions, are also seeds of unity, expressions of the ecumenism of blood. I greatly hope that the Jubilee will also include ecumenical celebrations as a way of highlighting the richness of the testimony of these martyrs. SNC 20. **Choose an act of love and sacrifice from the list, also published at www.marfam.org.za/lent**

April 10. *“from now on you will be catching people.”* In her confirmation group Abigail said, “When we celebrate days like St Patrick's and of St Daniel Comboni and the many other missionaries to foreign countries I wonder whether we stop to think of the hardships, penance and austerity they practised to bring the Christian faith to these countries over the centuries to millions all over the world. Maybe we don't still have an image of a missionary being fed to wild animals or boiled in a pot to be eaten by cannibals, but certainly torture and killing is still happening. “

Reflect, share and act. Scripture: *After doubting Jesus before the miracle of the great catch of fish when Jesus resent them to go and fish a second time Simon Peter said, “Depart from me, O Lord, for I am a sinful man.” Jesus replied, “from now on you will be catching people.” From Luke 5:1-11. Pope Francis:* *“We become good confessors when above all we allow ourselves to be penitents in search of his mercy. FM17. JUBILEE. During this Jubilee, may Missionaries of Mercy exercise their ministry by reviving hope and offering forgiveness whenever a sinner comes to them with an open heart and a penitent spirit. May they remain a source of reconciliation and an encouragement to look to the future with heartfelt hope inspired by the Father's mercy. I encourage bishops to take advantage of their precious ministry, especially by sending them wherever hope is sorely tested: to prisons, hospitals, and places where people's dignity is violated, poverty abounds and social decay is prevalent. In this Jubilee Year, may no one be deprived of the opportunity to receive God's forgiveness and consolation. SNC 23. Choose an act of love and sacrifice from the list, also published at www.marfam.org.za/lent*

April 11. The ecumenical group discussed, “Why do Muslims have a big issue with blasphemy and we Christians don't? You dare not take the name of the prophet Mohammed in vain and yet people use the name of God and of Jesus in disrespectful ways all the time.” “When Jesus was accused of blasphemy his Jewish listeners saw him as taking God's power on himself by saying, 'your sins are forgiven.' For us this is one of the proofs of his divinity.” “Whatever our background is respect for God and religious matters should still be accepted and even promoted as important.”

Reflect, share and act. Scripture: *The Jews answered, “We stone you for no good work but for blasphemy; because you, being a man, make yourself God.” From John 10:31-42. Pope Francis: JUBILEE. The Jubilee Year will also coincide with a significant date for all Christians, namely, the 1700th anniversary of the celebration of the first great Ecumenical Council, that of Nicaea. From apostolic times, bishops have gathered on various occasions in order to discuss doctrinal questions and disciplinary matters. In the first centuries of Christianity, synods frequently took place in both East and West, showing the importance of ensuring the unity of God's People and the faithful proclamation of the Gospel. The Jubilee can serve as an important occasion for giving concrete expression to this form of synodality, which the Christian community today considers increasingly necessary for responding to the urgent need for evangelization. All the baptized, with their respective charisms and ministries, are co-responsible for ensuring that manifold signs of hope bear witness to God's presence in the world. SNC 17. Choose an act of love and sacrifice from the list, also published at www.marfam.org.za/lent*

April 12. As world citizens everyone is involved in this debate. “Is a national interest necessarily in accordance with God's plan, or can it be against Jesus and his vision for God's kingdom?” “I believe in the prior value of the common good applied more widely than just in one country. President Trump's “Make America Great Again” is really very selfish.” “But does he have the right to do that?” “We in SA can be criticised for a policy like BEE if we really consider the common good.” “Is stopping another country's wars expected of us, as that involves migrants?” “And what about a call to debt cancellation?” And so the debate has to continue.

Reflect, share and act. Scripture: *Caiaphas said, “If we let him go on like this everyone will believe in him and the Romans will come and destroy both our holy place and our nation. You do not understand that it is expedient for you that one man should die for the people and that the whole nation should not perish. John 11:45-57. Pope Francis: JUBILEE. Another heartfelt appeal that I make in light of the Jubilee is directed to the more affluent nations. I ask that they acknowledge the gravity of so many of their past decisions and determine to forgive the debts of countries that will never be able to repay them. More than a question of generosity, this is a matter of justice. It is made all the more serious today by a new form of injustice which we increasingly recognize, namely, that “a true ‘ecological debt’ exists, particularly between the global North and South, connected to commercial imbalances with effects on the environment and the disproportionate use of natural resources by certain countries over long periods of time”. As sacred Scripture teaches, the earth is the Lord's and all of us dwell in it as “aliens and tenants” (Lev 25:23). If we really wish to prepare a path to peace in our world, let us commit ourselves to remedying the remote causes of injustice, settling unjust and unpayable debts, and feeding the hungry. SNC 16. Choose an act of love and sacrifice from the list, also published at www.marfam.org.za/lent*

“LOVE ONE ANOTHER AS I HAVE LOVED YOU.” John 15:12.

Family Reflections on the Love of Jesus for HOLY WEEK AND EASTER.

Holy Week reflections take up the focus on the love of Jesus from *Dilexit Nos*. This encyclical from Pope Francis issued in October 2024 is also relevant in the context of the Jubilee Year of Hope. Central to these reflections is the statement ‘LOVE ONE ANOTHER AS I HAVE LOVED YOU’ and the love of Jesus, human and divine, his person, his vision and his qualities which are expressed in a variety of ways included the Sacred Heart. The format used is a description of an imaginary activity of groups of families participating in a mini-retreat. Scripture references, Church teaching and quotations from Pope Francis are added.

Introduction. The words, “love one another as I have loved you” are part of Jesus’ discourse at the last supper, a very significant moment in his life and a very important statement containing three elements. We can see it as an invitation to love others, but also to reflect on Jesus and his way of loving, as well as his love for each of us individually. So we can ask what are some of the qualities of the love of Jesus, what can we learn from him for our relationships and how can we come closer to understanding, appreciating and loving him in return? The document *Dilexit Nos* issued shortly before the start of the Jubilee year is one of the valuable resource documents for living as Pilgrims of Hope and creating Signs of Hope, which are purposes of the year.

These reflections for Holy Week inked with the events as described mainly in Luke’s gospel can be used in many different ways, as an individual, a group or a family with or without children in appropriate ways. It can be seen as a Holy Week pilgrimage, a way to deepen our love for and understanding of Jesus, the God-man who loved us. He showed his love till the end of his human life, but still continues to love us each in a special way. To put it simply, “Getting to know him is to love him, and getting to love him is to desire to know him better.”

Pope Francis: *For everyone, may the Jubilee be a moment of genuine, personal encounter with the Lord Jesus, the “door” (cf. Jn 10:7.9) of our salvation, whom the Church is charged to proclaim always, everywhere and to all as “our hope” (1 Tim 1:1). SNC 1 “HE LOVED US”, Saint Paul says of Christ with certainty because Jesus himself had told his disciples, “I have loved you” (Jn 15:9, 12), “I have called you friends” (Jn 15:15). His open heart has gone before us and waits for us, unconditionally, asking only to offer us his love and friendship. For “he loved us first” (Because of Jesus, “we have come to know and believe in the love that God has for us” (1 Jn 4:16). DN1*

April 13. PALM SUNDAY. A story. Instead of just gathering to make palm crosses the group of families in preparation for Holy Week had chosen the day before Palm Sunday to start a mini-retreat that would continue briefly each day. There was time alone, time together as couples, for various family groups to share and a programme for younger children too. They had spent time in the morning meditating on the statement of Jesus, “Love one another as I have loved you” and when they met the director asked them to list some qualities of love that they had experienced and discovered. What was the message for themselves? It wasn’t really unexpected that the list looked rather like the message Paul gave to the Corinthians. “Love is patient, kind, never jealous, boastful or conceited, never rude or selfish; it does not take offence, is not resentful, takes no pleasure in other people’s sins, is truthful, always ready to excuse, to trust, to hope and to endure whatever comes. Love lasts forever. “ True love is unconditional.” “I need to work on my jealousy,” “trust, “pride,” were some comments. Even some young ones realised that showing off to their friends, and being impatient with younger siblings were not being loving. The director then told them “our task for this week will be to take time to think about Jesus and how you can identify these qualities in his personality and his life.”

Scripture: Read Luke 19: 28-40, Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem. Reflection, discussion and sharing. The families’ retreat director posed some questions to be considered by families. “Did Jesus take charge of the situation and does he come across as someone with authority? How does he show his love in this situation?” He also gave them some thoughts for reflection about their own lives. “At baptism we are baptised into the kingly mission of Jesus. Discuss what a loving king would do for his people; would he protect, defend, rule with fairness and justice? The 4th commandment “Honour your father and your mother” speaks of respect for parents and by extension also for all those in authority. What should be done if these people abuse their authority? How should we love those in authority over us?”

CHURCH TEACHING. *By reason of their special vocation it belongs to the laity to seek the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and directing them according to God’s will, so that these may grow according to Christ and be to the glory of the Creator and Redeemer. LG31. VATICAN II.*

April 14. MONDAY OF HOLY WEEK. Jesus and friendship. Scripture: Read John 12:1-11 that describes Jesus’ meal at the house of Lazarus, his sisters Martha and Mary and the apostles.

Reflection, discussion and sharing. The director introduced the reflection. There is a modern day rock opera called Jesus Christ Superstar that focuses on Judas and Magdalene and their relationship as friends of Jesus. It is criticised by some people because Judas is almost excused for betraying Jesus because he felt let down when Jesus does not turn out to be the kind of Messiah he was hoping for. In this show and some popular books nowadays the nature of the friendship between Jesus and Mary Magdalene is discussed. This gospel account of Mary pouring ointment over Jesus' feet and wiping them with her hair and the words of the very meaningful song she sings in the musical "I don't know how to love him" do speak to us too about our relationship with Jesus. Is he a remote spiritualised figure, a friend, a brother, a beloved, comforter and guide in times of need? That is from our human side. What do we know of Jesus as a friend from the scriptures? What did he mean when he said, "I do not call you servants any more, I call you friends, because I have made known to you everything I have learned from my Father?" Exploring qualities of friendship, e.g. loyalty, acceptance, intimacy, forgiveness, faithfulness, honesty, joy and more illustrate the unconditional love he showed even to Peter who denied him.

Discussion, sharing, action. Focusing then on friendship is Jesus a true friend to each of us? Are our family members also our friends or are our friends closer or more important than our family? What qualities do we show in our friendships? Are we open to being more than colleagues or just providing a service to others? If possible as a family share some qualities of friendship you have noticed. Thank Jesus for his loving friendship and for his invitation to love as deeply as he loves. If possible check out the musical *Jesus Christ Superstar* and Mary Magdalene's song "I don't know how to love him."

Pope Francis: *The sacrament of Reconciliation is not only a magnificent spiritual gift, but also a decisive, essential and fundamental step on our journey of faith. There, we allow the Lord to erase our sins, to heal our hearts, to raise us up, to embrace us and to reveal to us his tender and compassionate countenance. There is no better way to know God than to let him reconcile us to himself (cf. 2 Cor 5:20) and savour his forgiveness. Let us not neglect Confession, but rediscover the beauty of this sacrament of healing and joy, the beauty of God's forgiveness of our sins! SNC 23*

April 15. TUESDAY OF HOLY WEEK. Scripture: *The director read the short story and then the passage from Luke 19: 41-44 and asked his listeners again to consider what loving qualities of Jesus are displayed there?*

Jesus made his way up Northcliff hill. He loved hills where he so often prayed to his Father at any time but now he was coming to take a look around. He could see all around him for miles and miles. To the north there were parts of Johannesburg, Randburg, Midrand and almost as far as Pretoria. To the east was the skyline of central Johannesburg and still some mine dumps. To the south, towards Soweto, through the smog he could see houses, thousands of them, some quite modern, others poor shacks. To the west there were hills that reminded him how this city had sprung up in the wake of a gold rush chasing after money. Jesus sighed. Each year for nearly 2000 years he had sighed and wept over great cities of the world. Would they never learn? Would they never come to realise that the way of the kingdom is to be one of ongoing reconciliation. There had been greater hope here some 30 years ago. It had faded but he wasn't going to give up. "Love one another, as I have loved you," he kept on saying to anyone who would listen.

Discussion, sharing, action. The director then said, "Do we as families take stock from time to time and consider our own future and that of our city, country and world in this time of human, political and environmental turmoil? What is the loving thing to do as Jesus did? Is it still a good time through our own love to bring children into the world, children to whom we can pass on our hopes and dreams for God's kingdom? "

Pope Francis: *Looking to the future with hope entails having enthusiasm for life and a readiness to share it. Sadly, in many situations this is lacking. A first effect of this is the loss of the desire to transmit life. A number of countries are experiencing an alarming decline in the birthrate as a result of today's frenetic pace, fears about the future, the lack of job security and adequate social policies, and social models whose agenda is dictated by the quest for profit rather than concern for relationships.*

Openness to life and responsible parenthood is the design that the Creator has implanted in the hearts and bodies of men and women, a mission that the Lord has entrusted to spouses and to their love. It is urgent that responsible legislation on the part of states be accompanied by the firm support of communities of believers and the entire civil community. For the desire of young people to give birth to new sons and daughters as a sign of the fruitfulness of their love ensures a future for every society. This is a matter of hope: it is born of hope and it generates hope. SNC 9

April 16. WEDNESDAY OF HOLY WEEK. Scripture: *Read Luke 19:45-48* When the director read the account of the traders being expelled from the temple he opened up the subject of anger. This resulted in a huge debate in all the families and is of course very relevant to family life. Opinions ranged from "I don't think anger is ever OK" to "Anger is natural, you just have to learn to manage it." The director said, "Googling "Anger in the Bible" also shows that people have different opinions. Some questions raised are, "Is all anger sin and if so why are there references to God's anger? Is there such a thing as righteous or unrighteous anger or is it only to do with how we respond to the angry feelings that arise in us? Can anger be loving or what is the loving thing to do when one is angry? Could Jesus have been unloving in his act of chasing the traders out of the

temple and also in the way he constantly criticized the scribes and Pharisees? From another extreme in the Sermon on the Mount Jesus told his disciples to “turn the other cheek.”

Discussion, sharing, action. Mrs Peters, a psychologist, contributed to the discussion saying that anger is a natural physical reaction to an adverse situation that is not in itself wrong but needs to be managed properly and there are programmes that would be of enormous help in families where angry outbursts and abuse are only too common. Maurice suggested that their family could make a poster and put up the passage from Ps 103:8, “The Lord is compassion and love, slow to anger and rich in mercy.” But, he said, “Let’s make little post-its to change the words “The Lord” to “my dad,” or “my mom” or whoever. Everyone agreed that was a great idea.

Church teaching. *Scripture reveals anger and envy in man as consequences of original sin. Catechism of the Catholic Church 2259. Anger is a desire for revenge. To desire vengeance in order to do evil to someone who should be punished is illicit, but it is praiseworthy to impose restitution “to correct vices and maintain justice.” CCC 2302.*

April 17. HOLY THURSDAY. The director presented a short story for them to reflect on before reading the gospel.

They sat in a group around the scrubbed table, their Bibles open, eyes closed to the sight of peeling paint, ears closed to the sound of crying babies and nagging children, their hands dry and wrinkled from washing and cleaning and Jesus was there among them. “How have you practised your ministry of foot-washing?” he asked.

One woman spoke up, “I visit the sick every Thursday, bring clean clothes and food hampers.” Jesus said, “Well done, good and faithful servant.” Another spoke up. “I go to the squatter camps once a month and bring blankets.” Jesus said, “Well done, good and faithful servant.” Proudly each one listed their good works.

One woman sat quietly in a corner. Jesus asked her, “And You Ellen?” She burst into tears. “My Lord and Master, I feel so embarrassed. I used to do such a lot but then when my marriage was in trouble Peter accused me of never being home. We talked it through and prayed and decided I would concentrate on our 5 children for now. We are poor but I do not go to work. I make their clothes, teach them to sew and cook and Peter helps with their school work and plays soccer with the boys. I do feel guilty but” Jesus smiled, “Well done, friend. You have learned a hard lesson.

And all of you too, your hands are dry and wrinkled not from the weekly or monthly visits but from the daily ministry in your homes, wiping noses, eyes and bottoms, washing clothes, serving meals and mending broken hearts. Thank you for following my example. Much as I value your kindness greatly it is not mainly through the visits to the squatter camps but through the daily loving you give to your and my children that you wash my feet too.”

Scripture. discussion, sharing, action. The director then read the account of Jesus washing the feet of the apostles from John 13:1-15 beginning with “He had always loved those who were his in the world, but now he showed how perfect his love was.” What loving qualities does Jesus display and how can these be imitated best in your own life?

Church teaching. *In our own time, in a world often alien and even hostile to faith, believing families are of primary importance as centres of living, radiant faith. It is in the bosom of the family that parents are by word and example the first heralds of the faith. They should encourage them in the vocation which is proper to each child. LG 11*

Pope Francis: *Consequently, the Christian community should be at the forefront in pointing out the need for a social covenant to support and foster hope, one that is inclusive and not ideological, working for a future filled with the laughter of babies and children, in order to fill the empty cradles in so many parts of our world. All of us, however, need to recover the joy of living, since men and women, created in the image and likeness of God (cf. Gen 1:26), cannot rest content with getting along one day at a time, settling for the here and now and seeking fulfilment in material realities alone. This leads to a narrow individualism and the loss of hope; it gives rise to a sadness that lodges in the heart and brings forth fruits of discontent and intolerance.*

April 18. GOOD FRIDAY. The director handed out a newsheet that read:

**NEWS OF THE WORLD, Friday 18 April 2025.
JESUS CHRIST CRUCIFIED AGAIN.**

Our roving reporter interviewed Christ in his cell at St Francis' Care Centre. Showing her the wounds in his hands and feet, the gaping oozing wound in his side and with his face still bloodied he listed for her the crimes against God and humanity.

RAPE, ABUSE, INFIDELITY, SEXUAL PROMISCUITY, VIOLENCE, MUTI-MURDERS, HIJACKING, FRAUD, CORRUPTION, ARMED ROBBERIES, BETRAYAL, BROKEN RELATIONSHIPS, ABORTION, ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION, HIV/AIDS INFECTION, LACK OF COMPASSION, SELFISHNESS, GREED, LACK OF RESPECT FOR THE AGED, SICK AND DISABLED.

With tears in his eyes he quoted, “What they do to the least of these they do to me.”

Deeply moved she sat quietly for a while. On an impulse she took off her scarf and gently wiped his face. At last she spoke. "Why?"

As she waited for his response a voice resounded from the yard outside where the youth choir was practising for their traditional Good Friday dramatisation.

"Repent and believe the Good News. I have come that they many have life and have it to the full." And many voices rose in harmony.

"The spirit lives to set us free. Walk, walk in the light.

Jesus promised life to all. Walk, walk in the light.

He died in pain on Calvary, to save the lost like you and me.

We know his death was not the end, he gave his spirit to be our friend.

By Jesus' love our wounds are healed, the Father's kindness is revealed."

Jesus and Joanna looked at each other then quietly joined in.

"The Spirit lives in you and me. Walk, walk in the light.

His light will shine for all to see. Walk, walk in the light."

She got up, and leaving him in the darkened room walked out into the bright sunlight.

Discussion, sharing, action. The director posed the question, "Redemptive love: was there and is there, a human and a divine dimension to Jesus love? "Does Jesus' total gift of self ever come to an end? Does love ever end?" When reading the passion accounts in any of the gospels do so with a particular awareness of the ways that Jesus showed his love in spite of his pain and suffering.

Pope Francis: *Although the Scriptures preserve Jesus' words, ever alive and timely, there are moments when he speaks to us inwardly, calls us and leads us to a better place. That better place is his heart. There he invites us to find fresh strength and peace: "Come to me, all who are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest" (Mt 11:28). In this sense, he could say to his disciples, "Abide in me" (Jn 15:4). Jesus' words show that his holiness did not exclude deep emotions. On various occasions, he demonstrated a love that was both passionate and compassionate. He could be deeply moved and grieved, even to the point of shedding tears. DN 43-44 Devotion to the heart of Christ is not the veneration of a single organ apart from the Person of Jesus. What we contemplate and adore is the whole Jesus Christ, the Son of God made man, represented by an image that accentuates his heart. That heart of flesh is seen as the privileged sign of the inmost being of the incarnate Son and his love, both divine and human. More than any other part of his body, the heart of Jesus is "the natural sign and symbol of his boundless love". DN 48*

April 19. HOLY SATURDAY. Scripture. Reflection. Read John 11:1-43 and try to discover more about the loving Jesus and those who experience human love as his love. The director focused more directly on the married couples but suggested that everyone could relate to the sense of desolation and loss that the apostles must have felt on this day after Jesus' death and that we know that Jesus felt too at the death of his friend Lazarus.

Discussion, sharing, action. Cyril and Prudence shared. Cyril began, "Love one another as I have loved you" is the slogan chosen by Marriage Encounter which was for us a deeply moving experience. Our marriage had not been in a good place for some time and because I was hurting and feeling very lonely and abandoned I reluctantly agreed to participate in the programme. I can't even say exactly what it was that changed things so radically for us but listening to the stories of some couples and particularly through listening to each other as we were able to pour out our own feelings of desolation and through experiencing God's plan for our marriage to be a truly life-giving one with Jesus, as they said, as the 3rd partner became a real Resurrection moment for us."

Prudence added, "I truly believe that after that time of desolation we experienced Jesus' love in the deepest possible way and I must say that we are still challenged by those words to love one another, as he has loved and still loves us."

CHURCH TEACHING. *Christ did not live his life for himself but for us, from his Incarnation to his death and Resurrection. He is still "our advocate with the Father and remains ever in the presence of God on our behalf. CCC 519. In all of his life Jesus presents himself as our model. He is the "perfect man" who invites us to become his disciples and follow him. In humbling himself, he has given us an example to imitate, through his prayer he draws us to pray and by his poverty he calls us to accept freely the privation and persecutions that may come our way. CCC 520*

April 20. EASTER SUNDAY. Scripture, Reflection. Sharing, Discussion. Read the Resurrection account in John 20: 1-9 or any of the gospels. The director asked the families to consider how his disciples, still traumatized from experiencing his death had to learn to relate to the risen Jesus.

The youth from the different families had become quite close and shared quite deeply. "I prefer to relate to the flesh and blood Jesus" Josh said, "he is so much more human." They had to laugh at that. "Isn't that exactly why he did come to earth as a human being, from being a helpless squawking infant, no doubt, to a little bit of a rebellious teenager, if you will excuse me for saying so, to a man who could speak with authority, inspired tremendous love and devotion, but also hatred from those who were not willing to follow his way and love as he loved. We do believe what we are taught that he was truly God, but he was also truly man."

The director summed up their thoughts. "While we meditate and try to relate to Jesus as a man, to discover the personal qualities and learn how to love as he loved, at the Resurrection he moved into a different domain. As Risen Lord he returned and appeared at different times to different people. He remains with us too while at the same time being with the Father. His Post-resurrection appearances continued his teaching and prepared his followers for continuing the task of building the Kingdom, for which he promised to send a Helper. That is the task we still have today. You can call it Evangelisation, and maybe for some of us this week's experience could even be called a New Evangelisation, deeper love and greater knowledge and greater confidence in hope."

"Amen," they agreed. "That statement, "love one another as I have loved you" certainly has made me think." "And me."

Pope Francis: *Whether the image of the Sacred Heart or whatever the image employed, it is clear that the living heart of Christ – not its representation is the object of our worship, for it is part of his holy risen body, which is inseparable from the Son of God who assumed that body forever. We worship it because it is "the heart of the Person of the Word, to whom it is inseparably united. Nor do we worship it for its own sake, but because with this heart the incarnate Son is alive, loves us and receives our love in return. Any act of love or worship of his heart is thus "really and truly given to Christ himself", since it spontaneously refers back to him and is "a symbol and a tender image of the infinite love of Jesus Christ". DN 50 Surely we need to "abound in hope" (cf. Rom 15:13), so that we may bear credible and attractive witness to the faith and love that dwell in our hearts; that our faith may be joyful and our charity enthusiastic; and that each of us may be able to offer a smile, a small gesture of friendship, a kind look, a ready ear, a good deed, in the knowledge that, in the spirit of Jesus, these can become, for those who receive them, rich seeds of hope. SNC18*

April 21. EASTER MONDAY. In South Africa this is celebrated as Family Day, a day for moms and dads and grandparents and children and siblings and aunts and uncles and any members of the extended family, and beyond them the Family of God to remember to celebrate and proclaim: "The Lord is risen, Alleluia."

EASTER 2025, a story

The Greek owner at the Spar greeted all the customers who came in to buy Easter eggs by saying, "The Lord is risen, Alleluia." Instead of saying, "Thanks be to God, Alleluia," which is the right reply, most of them looked at him funnily and went on to get their eggs.

That is what worried Jesus in heaven with the Father and the Holy Spirit and many, many, many people who had died and come to heaven.

"What can you see happening over there," he asked. An old man spirit said, "Same as always, same as yesterday, today and tomorrow, wars here and there, floods, people going shopping, going on holiday, lots of accidents, tut-tut, and the floods and snow last winter were devastating. Climate change is with us, I say!"

Jesus answered, "You're right, but in some way people can also learn from their experiences. Didn't some of those awful things bring any of those people closer to God?" But he still looked sad.

A little girl spirit said, "but look over there, aren't there lots and lots of children running around their gardens, looking under bushes and even climbing trees. I remember we used to do that before I got sick. We were looking for Easter eggs and it was so exciting."

Jesus smiled, but still in a kind of a sad way. "I wonder whether they're thinking of me, of us, my Father and I, how we planned this whole business to help them. They were sinners and did so many bad things. Even children fought with each other, stole things and bullied each other and lots of other stuff. So we decided that they needed a new kind of life. I went to them, came as a baby, grew up and started teaching them and eventually their leaders didn't like what I was saying, so they took me and killed me. OK, that was part of the plan, but it was very painful. But the best part was that the Father raised me up again, brought me back to life and that is where the new life came in. All those Easter eggs, and bunnies and chickens are about new life, sure, but it is my kind of new life, a life of greater kindness, more love, less fighting and wars is what we were planning for. Do those chocolate goodies really help to remind people of that? And when they've eaten so much chocolate that they're feeling sick have they thought about other children who don't even get to eat a piece of bread? I think we have a long way to go to get people to hear the real message. It's also not so much about the things they give each other but the gift that I gave them. You see it is all about love and joy.

I think I'll have to get the Spirit to go over there and remind them and give a special blessing to that Greek man at the Spar for doing his bit. That's what everyone should be doing. Tell the people, "The Lord is risen, Alleluia. Be filled with joy and happiness and share it with everyone around you."

Then they can all reply. "Thanks be to God, Alleluia. I will share your joy and your peace in my world."

And Jesus said to himself and to the Spirit, "So let them enjoy their Easter, enjoy their Easter eggs, but remind them not to eat too much chocolate. It's really not good for them and they might end up here in heaven sooner than they think." TR

Reflect, share and act. Scripture: *This Jesus God raised up and of that we are all witnesses. Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit he has poured out this which you see and hear. Acts 2:33. 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. Family prayer is a special way of expressing and strengthening this paschal faith. Moments of joy, relaxation, celebration and even sexuality can be experienced as a sharing in the full life of the resurrection. AL 317. JUBILEE.* All of us, however, need to recover the joy of living, since men and women, created in the image and likeness of God (cf. Gen 1:26), cannot rest content with getting along one day at a time, settling for the here and now and seeking fulfilment in material realities alone. This leads to a narrow individualism and the loss of hope; it gives rise to a sadness that lodges in the heart and brings forth fruits of discontent and intolerance. During the Holy Year, we are called to be tangible signs of hope for those of our brothers and sisters who experience hardships of any kind. **Choose an appropriate action to share your Easter joy.**

April 22. Tuesday of Easter week. Magdalene loved this story. She shared, "Once when I was quite little you told me that Jesus was everywhere and I must look around to see him. I didn't know what he looked like. It seems that Mary Magdalene also didn't recognise him. That made me wonder, how different does he look to different people at different times."

Reflect, share and act. Scripture *Supposing him to be the gardener Mary Magdalene said to him, "Sir if you have carried him away tell where you have laid him and I will take him away. "Jesus said to her, "Mary". She turned and said to him "Rabboni, Teacher." Read John 20:11-18 Pope Francis: The Lord's presence dwells in real and concrete families, with all their daily troubles and struggles, joys and hopes. Living in a family makes it hard for us to feign or lie; we cannot hide behind a mask. AL315. JUBILEE. The Gospel tells us that Jesus "came to his own" (cf. Jn 1:11). Those words refer to us, for the Lord does not treat us as strangers but as a possession that he watches over and cherishes. He treats us truly as "his own". This does not mean that we are his slaves, something he himself denies: "I do not call you servants" (Jn 15:15). Rather, it refers to the sense of mutual belonging typical of friends. Jesus came to meet us, bridging all distances; he became as close to us as the simplest, everyday realities of our lives DN 34. Choose an appropriate action.*

April 23. Wednesday of Easter week. Peter said, "Why did those two disciples that were walking to Emmaus not recognize him? Who were they, don't they have names? Were they not important? I like to think that Jesus is there for me, the same as for the pope or the bishop even if I am not important." Mercia added, "What I like is that there were a pair of them, together, maybe a husband and wife, maybe with their kids and that Jesus took his time to walk and talk with them. I think we should do that too, all together."

Reflect, share and act. Scripture *He interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself. He went in to stay with them and their eyes were opened and they recognized him. Luke 24:13-35. Pope Francis. In talking with his disciples Jesus would invite them to recognize the paternal relationship God has with all his creatures. With moving tenderness he would remind them that each one of them is important in God's eyes, "Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? And not one of them is forgotten before God." LS 96. JUBILEE. The Sacred Heart is the unifying principle of all reality, since "Christ is the heart of the world, and the paschal mystery of his death and resurrection is the centre of history. All creatures "are moving forward with us and through us towards a common point of arrival, which is God where Christ embraces all things. In the presence of the heart of Christ, I once more ask the Lord to have mercy on this suffering world in which he chose to dwell as one of us. May he pour out the treasures of his light and love, so that our world, which presses forward despite wars, socio-economic disparities and uses of technology that threaten our humanity, may regain the most important and necessary thing of all: its heart. DN 31. Choose an appropriate action.*

April 24. Thursday of Easter week. Bryan seeing himself as a budding forensic pathologist said, "I am fascinated by Jesus and his resurrected body. How could he not just be a spirit but appear and disappear at will? It must really have been very hard for the disciples to understand and believe. Touching something does make it far more real and I suppose once you have crossed that barrier you can also take seriously what Jesus said.

Reflect, share and act. Scripture: *Jesus said to them, "Why are you troubled? See my hands and my feet that it is I myself. Touch me and see, for a spirit as no flesh and bones as I have. Luke 24:35-48 Pope Francis: . The New Testament does not only tell us of the earthly Jesus and his tangible and loving relationship with the world. It also shows him risen and glorious, present throughout creation by his universal Lordship. LS 100. JUBILEE. I once more ask the Lord to have mercy on this suffering world in which he chose to dwell as one of us. May he pour out the treasures of his light and love, so that our world, which presses forward despite wars, socio-economic disparities and uses of technology that threaten our humanity, may regain the most important and necessary thing of all: its heart. DN31. Choose an appropriate action.*

April 25. Friday of Easter week. Mom who loved picnics shared her thoughts and smiled. "It must have been a very strange breakfast picnic there on the shore of the sea of Tiberias with the disciples first being skeptical about going out again in their boat after having caught nothing all night and even at the end when they came with their 153 fish and Jesus was cooking breakfast for them they seemed uncertain. I wonder who said what in the end. I also sometimes don't know what to say to Jesus. Does anyone else feel like that? There is a story about an old man who would come into church every day and sit down in the back row for a long time. One day an usher asked him what he was doing just sitting there. The old man replied, "I just look at Jesus, and he looks at me."

Reflect, share and act. Scripture: *They went out in the boat but that night they caught nothing. As day was breaking Jesus stood on the beach yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. He said to them, cast the net on the right side of the boat and you will find some fish." So they cast it and now they were not able to haul it in. John 21:1-14* **Pope Francis:** *We can be fully present to others only by giving fully of ourselves and forgetting all else. Jesus is our model in this. Our loved ones merit our complete attention since he or she possesses infinite dignity as an object of the Father's immense love. This gives rise to a tenderness which stirs in the other the joy of being loved. AL 323* **JUBILEE.** *If we find it hard to trust others because we have been hurt by lies, injuries and disappointments, the Lord whispers in our ear: "Take heart, son!" (Mt 9:2), "Take heart, daughter!" (Mt 9:22). He encourages us to overcome our fear and to realize that, with him at our side, we have nothing to lose. DN 37. Choose an appropriate action.*

April 26. Saturday of Easter Week. "How often have I told you, shown you, nagged you and how often are you so thick you just don't understand or choose not to understand." They hadn't really started their family faith sharing yet and of course Percy would not have talked to his younger brother like that if they had. Aunt Norah was clever to use the opportunity to say that Jesus must also have felt frustrated and irritated at times with the "thickness" of the disciples. "Do we really always try hard enough to understand what we need to know," she added.

Reflect, share and act. Scripture *Afterwards he appeared to the Eleven themselves as they sat at table and he upbraided them for their unbelief and hardness of heart because they had not believed those who saw him after he had risen. And he said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation. Mark 16:9-15.* **Pope Francis:** *When a family is welcoming and reaches out to others, especially the poor and the neglected, it is a symbol, a witness and participant in the Church's motherhood. Social love is a reflection of the Trinity. The family lives its spirituality precisely by being at one and the same time a domestic church and a vital cell for transforming the world. AL 324.* **JUBILEE:** *May the Christian community always be prepared to defend the rights of those who are most vulnerable, opening wide its doors to welcome them, lest anyone ever be robbed of the hope of a better future. May the Lord's words in the great parable of the Last Judgement always find an echo in our hearts: "I was a stranger and you welcomed me" for "just as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you did it to me" (Mt 25:35.40). SNC 13. Choose an appropriate action.*

APRIL 27. Divine Mercy Sunday. Easter 2C. "Do not be faithless but believe. Fr Sylvester had a few thoughts to share with the people on this Sunday. "How did the early church grow?" he asked. "Were the disciples all fired up immediately? No. They needed extra help, right, like we all do, all the time." You could say that Divine Mercy Sunday is celebrating God's mercy as that extra something, but something that is always available to us. There is the special Divine Mercy devotion attached to this which is practiced in many countries. It focuses on God's mercy and our trust in God as we acknowledge our sinfulness and need of mercy and forgiveness. We priests have been given special sacramental powers to forgive sins in the name of God. In all humility I really wish more people would appreciate what that can mean for them. It can be a real way of 'touching' Jesus who heals and forgives."

Reflect, share and act. Scripture. "Put your finger here and see my hands and put out your hand and place it in my side; do not be faithless but believe." Thomas answered, "My Lord and my God." Read John 20:19-31. **Pope Francis.** *The Church is commissioned to proclaim the mercy of God, the beating heart of the Gospel, which in its own way must penetrate the mind and heart of every person. It will become possible for the balm of mercy to reach everyone, believers and those far away, as a sign that the kingdom of God is already present in our midst. AL309.* **JUBILEE.** *More recent saints, like, Saint Teresa of Calcutta and many others, have spoken with deep devotion of the heart of Christ. The experiences of Saint Faustina Kowalska, re-propose devotion to the heart of Christ by greatly emphasizing the glorious life of the risen Lord and his divine mercy. Inspired by her experiences and the spiritual legacy of Saint Józef Sebastian Pelczar (1842-1924), [151] Saint John Paul II intimately linked his reflections on divine mercy with devotion to the heart of Christ: DN147* **Explore and practice the Divine Mercy or other devotions to the Sacred Heart.**

April 28. Freedom Day SA. *Liberty is directed above all to love and the common good.* The speaker began, "What does freedom mean to you as an individual and a member of a family and community? It can even mean different things at different times and in these different contexts. On this holiday celebrating and commemorating the day in 1994 when the first fully democratic election was held in South Africa we do celebrate freedom and commemorate the new Constitution. Freedom is precious. It was and always is hard-bought and should be greatly appreciated. But it is not for free. It was bought at a price and still costs for many people. We as families can consider the cost of freedom and let us discuss the history of

the day with those too young to remember the past.” The packed hall applauded his speech. Would they go and do more?
Reflect, share and act. Scripture *It is truly right and just that we should give you thanks and praise O God, almighty Father for all you do in this world, through our Lord Jesus Christ. For though the human race is divided by dissension and discord, yet we know that by testing us you change our hearts to prepare them for reconciliation. Even more by your Spirit you move human hearts that enemies may speak to each other again, adversaries may join hands and peoples seek to meet together. By the working of your power it comes about, O Lord, that hatred is overcome by love, revenge gives way to forgiveness and discord is changed to mutual respect.* **Preface for Reconciliation. Pope Francis:** *Fraternity is born not only of a climate of respect for individual liberties or administrative equality. Fraternity calls for something greater. Liberty is directed above all to love and the common good.* FT103. **JUBILEE.** *We need to “abound in hope” (cf. Rom 15:13), so that we may bear credible and attractive witness to the faith and love that dwell in our hearts; that our faith may be joyful and our charity enthusiastic; and that each of us may be able to offer a smile, a small gesture of friendship, a kind look, a ready ear, a good deed, in the knowledge that, in the spirit of Jesus, these can become, for those who receive them, rich seeds of hope.*

April 29. Jason had a turn to lead the sharing. “Be honest everyone, “he said “are you all prepared to not only share your things within our family but for us to sell what we have and be prepared to share with everyone in the whole world. Isn't that pretty excessive? I think it is.” It was a very big challenge for all of them to consider. “I don't think that even Pope Francis expects us to go that far, but I know and believe that there are still people like the missionaries and other religious who have given up all their possessions.” “But they don't have kids to send to school.” So they threw the idea around. “It is being of one heart and soul that means feeling for one another that is important and not letting others go hungry.” “That would be a start for us at least,” was the conclusion.

Reflect, share and act. Scripture *The company of those who believed were of one heart and soul and no one said that any of the things which he possessed was his own, but they had every thing in common. There was not any one needy among them. Acts 4:32, 34* **Pope Francis:** *I invite everyone to renewed hope which speaks to us of something deeply rooted in every human heart, a thirst, a longing for fulfillment.* FT 55. **JUBILEE.** *I ask with all my heart that hope be granted to the billions of the poor, who often lack the essentials of life. Before the constant tide of new forms of impoverishment, we can easily grow inured and resigned. Yet we must not close our eyes to the dramatic situations that we now encounter all around us. Each day we meet people who are poor or impoverished; they may even be our next-door neighbours. Often they are homeless or lack sufficient food for the day. They suffer from a largely to producing weapons, the poor continue to be “the majority of the planet's population, billions of people. Let us not forget: the poor are almost always the victims, not the ones to blame.* SNC15. **Choose an appropriate action.**

April 30. Busi picked up the sharing from the day before. “Can you see that not everyone thought like those followers did who were willing to give up everything. What intrigues me as that the Jewish leaders were jealous that there were people so committed to their beliefs and to each other that they were prepared to give up what they owned. I wonder if the Jews had a guilty conscience because they were not living the way they should.” “In a peculiar way I can learn something from that too. I do feel jealous or rather resentful sometimes when I see really good committed people and wish I had that same will to do good.”

Reflect, share and act. Scripture *Filled with jealousy they arrested the apostles and put them in prison. At night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out and said, 'Go and stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this Life.'* Acts 5:17-19 **Pope Francis: JUBILEE.** *Echoing the age-old message of the prophets, the Jubilee reminds us that the goods of the earth are not destined for a privileged few, but for everyone. The rich must be generous and not avert their eyes from the faces of their brothers and sisters in need. I think especially of those who lack water and food: hunger is a scandal, an open wound on the body of our humanity, and it summons all of us to a serious examination of conscience. I renew my appeal that “with the money spent on weapons and other military expenditures, let us establish a global fund that can finally put an end to hunger and favour development in the most impoverished countries, so that their citizens will not resort to violent or illusory situations, or have to leave their countries in order to seek a more dignified life”.* SNC 16. **Choose an appropriate action.**