



## 2025 MARFAM JUBILEE YEAR FAMILY YEAR PLANNER

Theme: OUR WORLD, A FAMILY OF FAMILIES -



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

#### FAMILIES - PILGRIMS OF HOPE & SIGNS OF HOPE

**MARFAM – MARRIAGE AND FAMILY LIFE RENEWAL MINISTRY.** NPO 103-814

Toni Rowland tel 082 552 1275. [info@marfam.org.za](mailto:info@marfam.org.za). [www.marfam.org.za](http://www.marfam.org.za)

**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.

**GENERAL NOTES.** In the last few weeks the Church experienced great changes, the death of Pope Francis, a sad loss for many of us who were close followers of his ministry and his writings on family and the environment especially. Pope Leo XIV was very quickly chosen by the cardinals, inspired by the Holy Spirit, and elected to succeed Pope Francis. He promises to be a wise and strong leader, following in the footsteps of St Peter. As an Augustinian his spirituality and style are likely to be different, while in many other ways he will be continuing in the ways of Pope Francis, focusing on love, peace, justice, unity, the poor and migrants. For the time being the THOUGHTS FOR THE DAY will continue to include reflections from Pope Francis' documents and the Jubilee of Hope 2025.

**Setting the Scene.** For the 1st week of the month, the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, reflections are a shortened version of those in the World Council of Churches programme. This is because many families have members belonging to various churches. Special events during the month include Jubilee of Families 1 June. Pentecost, Fathers' Day and Youth Day. THOUGHTS FOR THE DAY use the SEE-JUDGE-ACT format and are built on the scripture readings of the day with quotations from Pope Francis and the Jubilee year. The underlying focus is on family situations with youth and children.

**OVERVIEW FOR JUNE. Children belong in Families.** Birth, childhood and growth into adolescence are the most vibrant stages in all of creation, human, animal and plant. Growth, and regrowth too, can often be stressful and conflictual. Ideally, in the security of a family first of all, the young need conscious protection, love, care and support, to monitor and direct their youthful energy towards full and responsible maturity. Many families today include members of different religions making Christian Unity week between Ascension and Pentecost a valuable time to promote unity in the diversity of their different faiths. **Pope Francis:** *The gift of a new child entrusted by God to a father and a mother, begins with acceptance, continues with lifelong protection and has as its final goal the joy of eternal life. AL166. Only if we devote time to our children, speaking of important things with simplicity and concern and finding healthy ways for them to spend their time will we be able to shield them from harm, prepare them to confront the risk of aggression, abuse and drug addiction. AL 260. It is true that the difficulties youth experience in their own family can lead them to ask whether it is worthwhile to start a new family, to be faithful and to be generous. I say that it is worth your every effort to invest in the family, there you will find the best incentives to mature and the greatest joys to experience and share. Letter to Youth*

**JUBILEE. 9.** *Looking to the future with hope also 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. In certain quarters, 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."*

#### 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

## **2025 WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY. Theme “Do you believe this? John 11:26**

**INTRODUCTION.** This text is an abbreviated version of the full programme for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity produced by the World Council of Churches. The provided resources included a Ecumenical Celebration of the World of God, a Worship Service and Intercessory prayers. Themes for daily prayers are followed by reflections from early Christian authors and each day concludes with a prayer and the Lord's Prayer. In the northern hemisphere the Week is celebrated in January. In the southern hemisphere churches use other times to celebrate the Week of Prayer, for example between Ascension and Pentecost which is a symbolic date for the unity of the Church.

For this year, 2025, the prayers and reflections were prepared by the brothers and sisters of the monastic community of Bose in northern Italy. The material is offered with the understanding that it may be adapted for use in local situations and used at any time throughout the year to express the degree of communion which the churches have already reached, and to pray together for that full unity which is Christ's will.

This year marks the 1,700th anniversary of the first Christian Ecumenical Council, held in Nicaea, near Constantinople in 325 AD. This commemoration provides an opportunity to reflect on and celebrate the common faith of Christians, as expressed in the Creed formulated during this Council; a faith that remains alive and fruitful in our days.

Convoked by the Emperor Constantine, the Council of Nicaea was attended by Fathers mostly from the East. The Church, having just emerged from hiding and persecution, was beginning to experience difficulty in sharing the same faith in the different cultural and political contexts of the time. Agreement on the text of the Creed was defining the essential common foundations on which to build local communities that recognised each other as sister churches, each respecting the diversity of the other. Disagreements had arisen among Christians in the previous decades. These disputes were on matters as diverse as: the nature of Christ in relation to the Father; the question of a single date to celebrate Easter and its relationship with the Jewish Passover; opposition to theological opinions considered heretical; and how to re-integrate believers who had abandoned the faith during the persecutions in earlier years. The approved text of the Creed used the first-person plural, “We believe...”. This form emphasised the expression of a common belonging. The Creed was divided into three parts dedicated to the three persons of the Trinity.

### *The Biblical Text for the Week of Prayer*

The guiding biblical text for the week was chosen – John 11:17-27 and should be read in full. The theme for the week, “Do you believe this?” (v. 26), takes its cue from the dialogue between Jesus and Martha when Jesus visited the home of Martha and Mary in Bethany following the death of their brother Lazarus, as narrated by the evangelist John. Jesus invites Martha's response to his declaration of his power over life and death and revealing his identity as the Messiah. “I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die” (vv. 25-26). Following this astonishing declaration, Jesus challenges Martha with a very direct and deeply personal question: “Do you believe this?”

The first generations of Christians earnestly sought to give a comprehensible answer to Jesus' question, “Do you believe this?” The Fathers of Nicaea strove to find words that would embrace the entire mystery of the incarnation and the passion, death and resurrection of their Lord. While awaiting his return, Christians around the world today are called to witness together to this faith in the resurrection, which is for them the source of hope and joy, to be shared with all peoples. Instead of newly-written reflections for each day, the scripture texts are followed by a short patristic reading from the early church from different geographical areas and ecclesial traditions (Greek, Syriac, Armenian and Latin). These offer an insight into Christian reflection of the time. More of these patristic readings are in the longer WCC programme.

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### **The Church Unity Commission (CUC) in South Africa invites all Christian churches to find time to pray together and for one another.**

*“In search of the unity for which our Lord prayed: “I ask that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.”*

Contacts: Website: [www.churchunitycommission.org](http://www.churchunitycommission.org) E-mail: [sg@churchunitycommission.org](mailto:sg@churchunitycommission.org) Telephone (021) 422 2744

(The prayer below is available in different local languages from the CUC.)

## PRAYER FOR WEEK OF CHRISTIAN UNITY.

Lord God, our Father draw our eyes to you  
so that together we may walk from darkness to the light of your face, revealed to us in Jesus.  
Renew our faith in you and bind us together through your love,  
so that we can recognise each other as your children, and come together as one  
through your Son and our brother, Jesus, who lives with you and the Holy Spirit. Amen.



The Church Unity Commission requests that prayers be held for these various Christian churches as indicated.

29 May Feast of the Ascension:	Pray for World Council of Churches, SACC, CUC, Ministers Fraternal
30 May Fatherhood and care of God who rules the universe: Is 63:15-1	Pray for Roman Catholic Church
31 May Creation as God's work: Romans 8:19-23	Pray for Covenant Churches
01 June Seventh Sunday of Easter	Pray for African Independent Churches
02 June The Incarnation of the Son: Jn 1:1-14	Pray for Anglican/Episcopal Churches
03 June The Paschal Mystery: Phil 2:5-11	Pray for Lutheran /Moravian Churches
04 June The Holy Spirit, the giver of life and joy: Jn 3:4-8	Pray for Presbyterian /Congregational Churches
05 June The Church, Community of Believers: Eph 4:1-6	Pray for Methodist Churches
06 June Baptism into the Death and Resurrection of the Lord: Matt 28:16-20.	Pray for Reformed Churches
07 June Waiting for the Kingdom and the life to come: Rev 21:1-4	Pray for Orthodox Churches
08 June Pentecost	Pray for Baptist/Pentecostal Churches

## Material for each day of the Week of Prayer produced by the World Council of Churches.

### June 1. Day 1. Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. The fatherhood and care of God who rules the universe

**Scripture:** Isaiah 63:15-17. Psalm 139:1-3, 13, 23, 24b. 1 Corinthians 8:5-6

**Patristic Reading** From the Greek tradition. "Behold the mysteries of love, and then you will contemplate the bosom of the Father, which the only-begotten Son of God has revealed. God himself is love, and through love he is contemplated by us. And while in his ineffable reality he is Father, in his compassion he has become for us mother. Clement of Alexandria [c. 150-215], *Which Rich Man Will Be Saved?* 37:1-2

#### For reflection:

1. How have you experienced God's fatherly care and motherly compassion in your own life?
2. What hinders us from recognising each person as a child of God?
3. How does acknowledging God as the Father of all affect our perception of and relationship with others?

#### Let us pray.

Father of compassion, renew our faith in you and bind us together through your love, so that we can recognise each other as your children, and come together as one.

We praise you through Jesus Christ, your only-begotten Son,  
the communion of the Holy Spirit. AMEN.

### June 2. Day 2 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity: Creation as God's work.

**Scripture:** Genesis 1:1-5. Psalm 148:1, 3, 9-14. Romans 8:19-23

**Patristic Reading.** From the Greek tradition. God cannot be seen by human eyes, but is seen and perceived through his providence and works. Just as one who sees a fully equipped ship entering port assumes that it has a pilot to guide it, so we must perceive that God is the pilot of the entire universe, even though he is not visible to the eyes of the flesh because he is incomprehensible. **Theophilus of Antioch** [2<sup>nd</sup> century], *Ad Autolycus*, I:5

#### For reflection:

1. We believe that God is present in all of creation although his presence is sometimes difficult to perceive.
2. Creation is a gift of God subjected to suffering, often inflicted by human beings. How can we better recognize our responsibility for its care and preservation?
3. If possible, spend some time in nature and contemplate how it connects us with the Creator.

#### Let us pray.

Lord God, Father of lights, strengthen our hearts in expectation and hope as we work for unity  
and together seek the harmony of all creation.

Let us be burning lamps, until the day of the coming of your Son in glory, with all his saints in the everlasting kingdom.

Blessed are you, now and forever, and to the ages of ages. AMEN.

**June 3. Day 3 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. The Incarnation of the Son**

**Scripture Readings:** Jeremiah 33:14-16. Psalm 72:7, 12, 16-17. John 1:1-14

**Patristic Reading:** *From the Armenian tradition. He took upon himself all human passions, excluding sin. That is: he hungered who gives food to all the living. He thirsted who gives the water of life to his believers. He felt weariness who is the rest of the weary. He slept who always kept Israel vigilant. He wept who wiped away every tear from all eyes ... He took on our passible body, so that he who is impassible might suffer with the passible body and he who is immortal might die with the mortal body, to free us who are guilty.* **Gregory of Skevra** [12<sup>th</sup>/13<sup>th</sup> centuries], *On True Faith and Pure Conduct in the Virtues*, 15-17

**For reflection:**

1. How does faith in Jesus, the incarnate Son of God, inspire and shape our lives?
2. How have you experienced Christ's consoling presence in your life?
3. Wherever we see someone who is thirsty, hungry, weeping or suffering, Christ is present.

**Let us pray:**

Lord God, our Father, draw our eyes to you so that together we may walk from darkness to the light of your face  
Revealed to us in Jesus, your son and our brother,  
Who lives with you and the Holy Spirit now and for ever and ever. Amen.

**June 4. Week of Prayer for Christian Unity., . Day 4. The Paschal mystery: Passion, Death and Resurrection of Jesus.**

**Scripture Readings:** Exodus 3: 7-8. Psalm 16:5, 7, 10, 11. Philippians 2:5-11

**Patristic Reading:** *From the Latin tradition. God the Father was very merciful: he sent his creative Word who, in coming to deliver us, came to the very place and spot in which we had lost life, and broke the bonds of our fetters. His light appeared and made the darkness of the prison disappear and hallowed our birth and destroyed death, loosing those same fetters in which we were enchained.* **Irenaeus of Lyon** [c. 135-198], *Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching*, 38

**For reflection:**

1. We know that we will all die. How does belief in Jesus destroying death change the way we approach this reality?
2. "God lets himself be pushed out of the world on to the cross. He is weak and powerless in the world, and that is precisely the way, the only way, in which he is with us and helps us." (Dietrich Bonhoeffer)
3. As the Risen One, Jesus is with us until the end of all time. In what ways does his companionship encourage you in your daily life?

**Let us pray:**

Lord, our God, glorifying your Son Jesus, you have freed us from death through his resurrection. Awaken our slumbering hearts, enlighten all who seek you and make the morning star shine upon us. Jesus Christ, the Living One, who is Lord for ever and ever. Amen.

**June 5. Day 5. Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. The Holy Spirit, the give of life and joy. Also World Environment Day**

**Scripture:** Ezekiel 36:24-28. Psalm 104:24-25, 27-29, 33-34. John 3:4-8

**Patristic Reading:** *From the Syriac tradition. It is not correct to say that the Spirit departs when we sin to return when we are converted ... What good is it for me if he dwells in me after I have become righteous? If at the time of the fall he does not dwell in me, does not give me a hand, and does not raise me up, how will I feel his help? What physician, when he sees a sick person who falls sick, leaves and abandons him, to come to him when he becomes healthy? Is it not more useful that the physician be with the sick person at the time of his illness?* **Philoxenus of Mabbug** [c. 440-523], *On the Inhabitation of the Holy Spirit*. .

**For reflection:**

1. God's Spirit renews the face of the earth every day, calling us to cooperation.
2. What are the sources of joy in your life and how are they related to the Holy Spirit?
3. Where do we see the Holy Spirit at work, overcoming our divisions and drawing us into deeper unity, and how can we join in this work?

**Let us pray:**

God our Father, you have revealed to us the wondrous mystery of your life, sending your Son into the world and sharing with us your Spirit of holiness and joy.

Let us rejoice in the Spirit, who renews the face of the earth and draws us towards unity.

We confess our faith in you, the One God, three times Holy: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Blessed are you, now and for ever and ever. AMEN.

**June 6. Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.**, . Day 6. The Churchy: community of believers.

**Scripture Readings:** Isaiah 2:2-4. Psalm 133. Ephesians 4:1-6

**Patristic Reading:** *From the Latin tradition. The church is one, spread abroad far and wide into a multitude by an increase of fruitfulness. As there are many rays of the sun but one light, and many branches of a tree but one strength based in its tenacious root in the same manner the church, shone over with the light of the Lord, sheds forth her rays over the whole world, yet it is one light which is everywhere diffused, nor is the unity of the body fractured. Her fruitful abundance spreads her branches over the whole world. Cyprian of Carthage [c.210-258], On the Unity of the Church, 5*

**For reflection:**

1. The Church is called to shed forth the light of Christ over the world. Where do you perceive this reality in your own context?
2. Even though in Christ the Church is one body, historically the churches are divided. How have you experienced the pain of this division?
3. The Church as the community of the Holy Spirit, the giver of peace, is sent to live and spread the message of peace in the world. In what ways might churches enable their members to fulfil this calling?

**Let us pray.**

God of heaven and earth,  
your Son Jesus Christ has revealed you as our Father and promised us the gift of the Holy Spirit:  
grant to your Church to overcome the scandal of our divisions,  
so that we may bear witness to your life of communion, in the unity of our profession of faith and in the love of mutual service. Through Christ our Lord. AMEN.

**June 7. Day 7. Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Baptism into the Death and Resurrection of the Lord.**

**Scripture Readings:** Micah 7:18-19. Psalm 51:1, 7, 10, 12. Matthew 28:16-20

**Patristic Readings:** *From the Greek tradition. Such is the power of faith in Christ, such the excess of his grace: As the element of fire, when it meets with ore from the mine, straightway of earth makes it gold, even so and much more baptism makes those who are washed to be of gold instead of clay. The Spirit at that time falling like fire into our souls, burning up the "image of the earthy", and producing "the image of the heavenly," fresh coined, bright and glittering, as from the furnace-mould. John Chrysostom [c. 350-407], Homily on the Gospel of John, X:2*

**For reflection:**

1. Christians are baptised into the death and resurrection of Christ. What does your baptism mean to you today?
2. Sin disfigures us in various ways. Through baptism, God liberates us from this humiliation.
3. In spite of different church traditions and practices, how does confessing "one Lord, one faith, one God our Father, we praise you and bless your name. baptism" (Eph. 4:5) affect our relationships with other Christians?

**Let us pray.**

Accept our thanksgiving for the unity Christians already enjoy  
in the confession of Jesus the Lord.  
Hasten the day, we beg you, of the full mutual recognition of our churches in the communion that you desire, and for which your Son prayed. . We ask this in the power of the Holy Spirit. AMEN.

**June 8. Pentecost. Day 8 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Waiting for the Kingdom and the life to come.**

**Scripture Scripture Readings:** Revelation 21:1-4. Psalm 85:8, 10-12. Luke 12:35-40

**Patristic Reading:** *From the Syriac tradition. Whoever lives in love in this creation breathes the life coming from God. While yet in this world, he breathes the air of rebirth. In this air the righteous will delight at resurrection. Love is the kingdom whereof our Lord mystically promised the disciples that they would eat in his kingdom: "You shall eat and drink at the table of my kingdom." What should they eat, if not love? Love is sufficient to nourish a man instead of food and drink. This is the wine that gladdens the heart of man. Blessed is he who drinks of this wine! Isaac of Nineveh [7<sup>th</sup> century], 43 3*

**For reflection:**

1. Love will be the reality of the Kingdom of God. Concrete actions of charity make this Kingdom present in our lives.
2. Living in expectation of the Kingdom of God, how do we embody signs of the coming Kingdom in the world today?
3. We are called to be ready for the second coming of the Lord. How do we prepare ourselves for it?

### Let us pray.

O Lord, hasten the coming of your great and glorious day!  
In our darkness, many men and women no longer dare to hope.  
Protect the flame of faith in the hearts of the weak and the suffering.  
May the Church be a faithful herald of the victory of Christ your Son over death  
and a beacon of expectation for his return in glory.  
He is the Living One, with you and with the Holy Spirit  
now and forever and ever. AMEN.



### MARFAM SUGGESTIONS FOR FAMILY PENTECOST ACTIVITIES AND TRADITIONS.

- As an activity, possibly with younger children, discuss and make a poster of the gifts and fruits.
  - Spend some time together reflecting, sharing and discussing the gifts and fruits you see in one another.
  - Each choose the gifts or fruits they believe they need for their own lives and pray for this to the Holy Spirit.
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**June 9. MARY MOTHER OF THE CHURCH.** Mrs Davies shared in her prayer group, “What has happened to the strong devotion to Mary that was so much part of Church life and also in families. We used to pray the Rosary together when I was a child but that now seems to be done mainly by women, or people on their own. Occasionally some families do pray the Rosary. I’m happy that Pope Francis has added a new feastday of Mary, as Mother of the Church.” Others agreed that it was a very good thing to promote devotion to Our Lady in their families, in a way that suited their own family, as a little church of the home and taking the children and youth into consideration. They decided to make this into a group project, sharing their suggestions with families and others outside the prayer group.

**Reflect, share and act. Scripture.** *After Jesus had been taken up into heaven, they returned to Jerusalem and went to the upper room where they were staying. All the apostles devoted themselves to prayer with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus. Acts 1:12-14. Pope Francis: JUBILEE: Hope finds its supreme witness in the Mother of God. In the Blessed Virgin, 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. SNC18.*

*The decree on the Memorial of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church reads, “the joyous veneration given to the Mother of God by the contemporary church, in the light of reflection on the mystery of Christ and on his nature, cannot ignore the Virgin Mary, who is both the Mother of Christ and Mother of the Church.” St Augustine said, “Mary is the mother of the members of Christ, because she cooperated in the rebirth of the faithful into the Church” while St. Leo said “the birth of the Head is also the birth of the body, indicating that Mary is at once Mother of Christ and mother of the members of his Mystical Body, which is the Church.” Act and pray. For the needs of families and children as appropriate.*

**June 10.** Young people were discussing, “Why are salt and light always grouped together, even in our minds. Have we absorbed that from the gospel without even being aware of it?” Mark thought out loud. “Salt and light are kind of related to the senses: taste and sight, all important parts of life and how we are created. Salt is also for preserving food and light is necessary for growth. Isn’t God’s creation of humans and of nature extremely clever. How can there be people who do not believe in a creator?” “But one who calls on us to co-operate and that’s certainly something our generation has to take very seriously. We’ve got to fix what our parents messed up. Are we more committed than they were?”

**Reflect, share and act. Scripture:** *“You are the salt of the earth. You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Matt 5:13-16. Pope Francis: Self-improvement on the part of individuals will not by itself remedy the extremely complex situation facing our world today. Social problems must be addressed by community networks. The work of dominating the world calls for a union of skills and a unity of achievement that can only grow from a mindset of ecological conversion. This is also a community conversion. LS219. JUBILEE: 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. **Act and pray.** For the needs of families and children as appropriate.*

**June 11.** Catechists were preparing for Youth Day. “If Moses was living in the 21<sup>st</sup> century what kind of laws would God be giving him?” It seemed a good idea to get the topic of law and obeying laws and rules onto the table at this time. Is there a difference between rules and laws other than the degree of punishment? So they suggested, “Discuss at home, ‘if you were to change roles as parents and children would there be different rules in the house, about chores, phones, drinking, drugs, going out and coming home times etc.’” They formulated a number of questions that could be considered in the workshop to be led by one of the parents who was a prosecutor in the High Court. After that the Youth Day fun could start.

**Reflect, share and act. Scripture:** “Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets. I have come not to abolish but to fulfil. Whoever obeys and teaches these commandments will be called greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Matt 5:17-20 **Pope Francis.** Countless studies have been made of marriage and the family, their current problems and challenges. We do well to focus on concrete realities, since ‘the call and the demands of the Spirit resound in the events of history.’ AL 31. **JUBILEE:** An ancient appeal, one drawn from the word of God, whose wisdom remains ever timely calls for acts of clemency and liberation that enable new beginnings: “You shall hallow the fiftieth year and you shall proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants” ( Lev 25:10). This institution of the Mosaic law was later taken up by the prophet Isaiah: “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” **Act and pray.** For the needs of families and children as appropriate.

**June 12.** Patrick and his mom often discussed current issues. “Hey Mom, you adults always lecture us on how to treat each other, but I think we can also lecture you at times. I want to ask you, why don't you go and make peace with your sister? I've watched you sometimes and I know you miss each other. It's been 5 years that you and she haven't spoken to each other. In a way she might as well be dead.”

**Reflect, share and act. Scripture:** So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brothers has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go first be reconciled to you brother. Matt 5:20-26. **Pope Francis:** Children do need to be patiently taught to treat one another as brothers and sisters. This training is at times quite demanding. AL195. Forgiving does not mean forgetting. Or better, in the face of a reality that can in no way be denied, relativized or concealed, forgiveness is still possible. 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. FT 250 **JUBILEE:** The 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. **Act and pray.** For the needs for forgiveness in families and children as appropriate.

**June 13. St Anthony of Padua.** Giving names to children is a cultural thing. They might be names of relatives or just any name that sounds nice. Sometimes the name has significance related to the time of the birth. At baptism the Church expects babies to be given a Christian or saint's name and children can explore who their name saint is. That was what Sibusiso Anthony Moloï did when he studied the life of St Anthony of Padua. “St. Anthony, please look around; something is lost and must be found.” He remembered that little prayer from his childhood. One time St Anthony himself prayed intensely for an important book he needed that was lost and his prayer was answered. The thief returned it. As a child St Anthony felt drawn to the religious life and wanted to be a missionary but his health was not good enough. He became a follower of St Francis and after he was shipwrecked he ended up in Italy as a humble brother until by chance his preaching skill was discovered and it became his life's work, turning many people from their sins. Many miracles are attributed to his intercession as a very holy man. A fellow monk found him one night in his room miraculously holding the baby Jesus. That image we see of him is of his deep love for Jesus and can be a real model for all the Anthonys and Antonettes, Tonys and Tonis. We can all grow in our love of Jesus and give to the poor, as a thank you when something is found after being lost.

**Reflect, share and act. Scripture:** “The harvest is great but the labourers are few. Luke 10:1-9. **Pope Francis,** The joy of the Gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus. Those who accept his offer of salvation are set free from sin, sorrow, inner emptiness and loneliness. With Christ joy is constantly born anew.” EG 1. **JUBILEE.** 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. **Act and pray.** For the needs of families and children to experience joy in Jesus’ love.

**June 14.** Just before Youth Day the Theology of the Body diocesan team presented a powerful and positive talk on youth sexuality and spirituality. They knew it was a tough issue for the young boys and girls and was too often associated with sin, but should be seen in a more life-giving light. Afterwards a number of the youth asked to go on to join in a Love Matters programme too that they had heard about. "It will help to confirm us in our beliefs." Jane said.

**Reflect, share and act. Scripture:** *On behalf of Christ be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. 2 Corinthians 5:14-21.* **Pope Francis:** *A sexual education that fosters a healthy sense of modesty has immense value. It is a natural means whereby we defend our personal privacy and prevent ourselves from being turned into objects to be used. AL 262.* **JUBILEE:** *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, always by the grace of Christ, SNC 23.* **Act and pray.** *For the needs of families and children as appropriate.*

**June 15. Trinity Sunday. Fathers' Day.** Fr Joseph looked around the church. In his parish the men sat on one side, women on another and young children all together but the youth often stayed at the back. He thought to himself, "How can I relate this situation to the Blessed Trinity? Maybe I should encourage them at least once a month to sit as family units, as best they can, to be more of a real symbol of a community of love. We could even call it a family Mass, like today when we celebrate Father's Day as well." In his homily he brought out the well-known images of the Trinity, the perfect community of love and then added that loving married couples and loving families, where ideally fathers are also present, should recognize their calling to imitate this community aspect. After all a special and helpful slogan could be "Fatherly Love is a Vocation and his way to Holiness."

**Reflect, share and act. Scripture:** *Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. to God who is, who was, and who is to come. Rev 1:8.* **Pope Francis.** *The Father is the ultimate source of everything, the loving and self-communicating foundation of all that exists. The Son, his reflection, through whom all things were created united himself to this earth. The Spirit infinite bond of love is intimately at the very heart of the universe, inspiring and bringing new pathways. The world was created by the three persons, acting as a single divine principle. When we contemplate the universe in all its grandeur and beauty we must praise the whole Trinity. LS 238-239. God sets the father in the family so that by the gifts of his masculinity he can be close to his wife and share everything and to be close to his children as they grow, to be a father who is always present, not controlling or overbearing. It is not good for children to lack a father and to grow up before they are ready. AL 177.* **JUBILEE: Act and pray.** *For the needs of fathers, families and children as appropriate.*

**June 16. YOUTH DAY.** "Why did Jesus make such difficult statements," Maysie asked her mother. "Surely if someone hurts me I've got a right to defend myself or fight back?" She replied, "I do agree that Jesus made many difficult statements for his way, this "blueprint" for a new kingdom. We do find them difficult and challenging but he is proposing an ideal society of love and justice to aim for." "I can see that would also be a good message for Youth Day as we remember the injustices the youth of 1976 experienced. but Nelson Mandela has told us all, "Never again....." "I think some of our world leaders of today need to take that to heart, as Pope Francis tried to tell us too." .

**Reflect, share and act. Scripture:** *"An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. I say "Do not resist one who is evil. If anyone strikes you on the right cheek turn to him the other also and if anyone would see you and take your coat, let him have your cloak as well." Matt 5:38-42.* **Pope Francis:** *Whenever our eyes are opened to acknowledge the other, we grow in the light of faith and knowledge of God. Whenever we encounter another person in love we learn something new about God. EG 272.* **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. SNC 18.* **Act and pray.** *For the needs of all the young people in our country today.*

**June 17.** Preston had been a gang member since his early teens. He had felt abandoned by his alcoholic mother, didn't know his father and his sister who had been looking after the younger siblings had run away. Patrick and his mom had been praying for this boy for some time when Patrick invited him to come to a mission for young people at their church. Just one sentence "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you," had touched Preston as he shared with Patrick, "I think I will be able to change my ways, but please carry on praying for me and please be my friend"



**Reflect, share and act. Scripture:** Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you. Matt 5:43-48 **Pope Francis:** The real question is not where our children are physically or whom they are with but rather where they are existentially, where they stand in terms of their convictions, goals, desires and dreams. AL 261. At times the hurt felt by some young people is heart-rending, a pain too deep for words. They can only tell God how much they are suffering and how hard it is for them to keep going, since they no longer believe in any one. Yet in that sorrowful plea, the words of Jesus make themselves heard,. "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted." May all young people who are suffering feel the closeness of a Christian community that can reflect those words by its actions, its embrace and its concrete help. CV 77. **JUBILEE:** 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 even self-destructive actions. **Act and pray.** For the needs of the youth and their families as appropriate.

**June 18.** "You know what, in the mission Fr G told us prayer, fasting and almsgiving isn't only for Lent. It is good for any time and you shouldn't show off how much weight you have lost pretending you're on diet. Do it as a sacrifice for some special intention like continuing to pray for guys like Preston and his gang members. Their way of life can't lead to anywhere good, and do they really feel happy, I wonder." "We youth should pray for those youth gangs, and even make sacrifices like fasting and quietly giving stuff to support and help them mend their ways."

**Reflect, share and act. Scripture:** When you fast anoint your head and wash your face that your fasting may not be seen by men but by your Father who sees in secret and will reward you. "Matthew 6:16-18. **Pope Francis:** : Anyone called to be a parent, pastor or guide to young people must have the far-sightedness to appreciate the little flame that continues to burn, the fragile reed that is shaken but not broken. The ability to discern pathways where others only see walls. To recognise potential where others see only peril. That is how God the Father sees things, he knows how to cherish and nurture the seeds of goodness sown in the hearts of the young. CV 67. **JUBILEE:** 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 and can lead to depression and even self-destructive actions. The Jubilee should inspire the Church to make greater efforts to reach out to them. With renewed passion, let us demonstrate care and concern for adolescents, SNC12. **Act and pray.** For the needs of families and children as appropriate.

**June 19.** "This is becoming one of my pet hates," Georgina declared, "empty phrases, words that have lost their meaning. We seem to just babble on. I think we've fallen into the same trap that Jesus warned us about. It does worry me but when my friends from the Harvest Pentecostal church pray they seem to talk about real things." Portia added, "I have discovered that if I slow down and think about the phrases they're not nearly as empty as all that, but I can apply them to my situation. But the statement about forgiving others is one that does catch me when I do think about it."

**Reflect, share and act. Scripture:** When you pray do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do for they think they will be heard for their many words. Say 'Our Father.....' Matthew 6:7-15. **Pope Francis.** A few minutes can be found each day to come together before the living God, to tell him our worries, to ask for the needs of our family, to pray for someone experiencing difficulties, to ask for help in showing love, to give thanks for life and its blessings and ask our Lady to protect us beneath her maternal mantle. AL 318 **JUBILEE:** 214. In your own way, you too must be a missionary, like the apostles and the first disciples of Jesus, who went forth to proclaim the love of God, to tell others that Christ is alive and worth knowing. Saint Therese experienced this as an essential part of her oblation to merciful Love. That is your mission as well. Each of us must carry it out in his or her own way; you will come to see how you can be a missionary. Jesus deserves no less. If you accept the challenge, he will enlighten you, accompany you and strengthen you, and you will have an enriching experience that will bring you much happiness. It is not important whether you see immediate results; leave that to the Lord who works in the secret of our hearts. Keep experiencing the joy born of our efforts to share the love of Christ with others. DN 214. **Act and pray.** For the needs of families and children as appropriate.

**June 20. World Refugee Day.** Millions of people particularly in Africa have left their homes and sometimes family members to escape war, drought, economic uncertainty or race or ethnic discrimination. Some children and young people come unaccompanied. Families may be separated and may end up in refugee camps, sometimes for years, or manage to reach other countries in the hope of finding work and a better life. They often come with some skills, but

are they being welcomed? "I have got used to school mates shunning me, or making fun of the way I talk." "I am always frightened for my children." Our family had to escape in a hurry from the xenophobic attacks and we are never totally at peace here." "I am grateful that I have good friends here, but many of them are migrants like myself. We stick together."

**Reflect, share and act. Scripture:** Jesus said to his disciples, "do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven. Matt 6:19-23 **Pope Francis:** Young migrants experience separation from their place of origin and often a cultural and religious uprooting as well. Fragmentation is also felt by the communities they leave behind which lose their most vigorous and enterprising elements and by families, especially when one or both of the parents migrate, leaving children in the country of origin. For the communities to which they come migrants bring an opportunity for enrichment and the integral human development of all. CV93. **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). **Act and pray.** For the needs of migrant families and children as appropriate.

**June 21.** Waiting for their confirmation class the young people shared, "Some people are really amazing the way they trust in God. I listen to the prayers on the radio sometimes and wonder if people really believe, or do they hope vaguely or with trust for what they pray for, without expecting that the answer will be what they wanted." "Does trust in God and his constant care come naturally or does it have to be cultivated? Let's go ask that old man. He's had enough experience." "What did the old man say?" "Go ask a little child." "I guess there is no simple answer."

**Reflect, share and act. Scripture:** Do not be anxious about your life. Consider the lilies of the field how they grow. They neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. Matt 6:24-34. **Pope Francis:** Dear young people, Dare to be more, because who you are is more important than any possessions. What good are possessions or appearances? You can become what God your Creator knows you are, if only you realise that you are called to something greater. Ask the help of the Holy Spirit and confidently aim for the great goal of holiness. In this way, you will not be a photocopy. You will be fully yourself. CV 107. **JUBILEE.** In a world where everything is bought and sold, people's sense of their worth appears increasingly to depend on what they can accumulate with the power of money. We are constantly being pushed to keep buying, consuming and distracting ourselves, held captive to a demeaning system that prevents us from looking beyond our immediate and petty needs. The love of Christ has no place in this perverse mechanism, yet only that love can set us free from a mad pursuit that no longer has room for a gratuitous love. Christ's love can give a heart to our world and revive love wherever we think that the ability to love has been definitively lost. DN 215 **Act and pray.** For the love, trust and the needs of families and children as appropriate.

**June 22. Feast of the Body and Blood of Christ.** Fr Fidelis took a very serious line. He began, "This is one of the most important feasts in the Church because it teaches us about the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist in the bread and the wine. I ask you whether you really do believe that as Catholics, or whether it is something you don't really think about but just take for granted? As a priest it is something that challenges me too. It helps me to remind myself that God is also present in the sacramental love relationship of marriage, which we should reverence much more than we do, as we should too with parental relationships. In fact God is present everywhere in Creation too, in so many different ways and appearances. This month is Youth month and we also celebrated Father's Day so now I especially call on fathers to value and worship Jesus in the Eucharist and grow in his love. Teach your children and do not desecrate it by unbecoming behaviour. Did you know that to strengthen people's faith there have been recognised miracles of the bread and wine physically being changed in appearance to human flesh and blood? That is confirming what the Catholic Church has taught for the last 2,000 years; echoing the words of Christ, So to each family member I invite you to think about, worship and thank Jesus for this gift of his love to us, the Church."

**Reflect, share, act. Scripture:** My Flesh is real food; my Blood real drink. Whoever eats My Flesh and drinks My Blood dwells continually in Me and I dwell in him." John 6:56-57. **Pope Francis:** Jesus knocks on the door of families to share in the Eucharistic supper. It is the sacrament of the new covenant where Christ's redemptive work is carried out. The close bond between married life and the Eucharist becomes all the more clear. AL318. God himself became man and gave himself as food for his creatures. The Eucharist joins heaven and earth; it embraces and penetrates all creation. The world which came forth from God's hands returns to him in blessed and undivided adoration. LS 236. **JUBILEE. Saint Paul VI** made the following observation. "There can be no doubt that pastoral commitment and missionary zeal will fan into flame, if priests and laity alike, in their desire to spread the glory of God, contemplate the example of eternal love that Christ has shown us, and direct their efforts to make all men and women sharers in the unfathomable riches of Christ". DN 205. **Act and pray.** For the needs of families and children as appropriate.

**June 23.** Mrs Mpambana got very annoyed with the behaviour of a group of Grade 11s. They were constantly in trouble and acted defiantly when she called them to order. "I think I should call your parents in" she shouted one day in frustration. "What parent?" Mavis replied, "I am the parent in my family and have to feed and care for 3 younger siblings." Mrs Mpambana was shocked and quickly changed her tune, recognizing the need for a more merciful response. When she conducted a survey she realized that more than half of the learners did not live with both biological parents. Some lived with a single parent, and many lived between two homes, with their parents divorced and sometimes remarried. She could see there were many difficulties for the parents and the learners. When she arranged a series of sessions for parents and their children with the school psychologist, many expressed their appreciation and a support group was started.

**Reflect, share and act. Scripture.** "Judge not and you will not be judged." Matt 7:1-18. **Pope Francis:** *The way of the Church is not to condemn anyone forever, it is to pour out the balm of God's mercy on all those who ask for it with a sincere heart. No one can be condemned for ever. There is a need to avoid judgements which do not take into account the complexity of various situations and to be attentive by necessity to how people experience distress because of their condition.* AL 296. **JUBILEE.** *We need to recognize the immense goodness present in our world, lest we be tempted to think ourselves overwhelmed by evil and violence. 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 **Act and pray.** *For the needs of families and children as appropriate.*

**June 24. Birth of John the Baptist** "JB is one of my favourite saints," Alan said, "He was a specially chosen person and he responded to what he knew he was called to do. Why are so many of our young people so wishy-washy with little sense of direction? Do they need strong parental guidance, teachers or mentors to inspire them? Where does a sense of direction and hope for the future come from? JB was a prophet like the Old Testament prophets preaching repentance and right behaviour. I wish God would speak to me and give me a sense of direction for my future."

**Reflect, share and act. Scripture:** *He will turn many of the sons of Israel to the Lord their God and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children.* Luke 1:16-17. **Pope Francis:** *Our world continues to create new forms of spiritual and material poverty that assault human dignity.* MM 19 **JUBILEE:** *Lack of opportunity does great harm to the youth in particular, since it closes them to life's beauty and richness, and can lead to depression and even self-destructive actions. For this reason, the Jubilee should inspire the Church to make greater efforts to reach out to them. With renewed passion, let us demonstrate care and concern for adolescents, students and young couples, the rising generation. Let us draw close to the young, for they are the joy and hope of the Church and of the world!* SNC 1. **Act and pray.** *For the needs of families and children as appropriate.*

**June 25.** Fr Sylvester and the parish family coordinator had been asked by some of the parents to set aside time to discuss with the youth the issue of teenage pregnancy. "Why are there so many young girls with babies in our churches? Is this good? Is this a free choice? Is there a false prophet out there somewhere, like peer pressure, that makes this out to be a good thing? They wanted the girls and the boys as well to have their say and listened carefully to search for a suitable response.

**Reflect, share and act. Scripture:** *Beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravening wolves. You will know them by their fruits."* Matt 7:15-20. **Pope Francis** to youth. *At this point in life you feel a great longing for freedom. Freedom is the gift of being able to choose the good. Love is a free gift, a responsibility but a noble responsibility and a daily task. It is nurtured by trust, respect and forgiveness. From The Year of Mercy and the Jubilee for Youth. 2016. JUBILEE.* *Hope, together with faith and charity, makes up the triptych of the "theological virtues," faith, hope and charity, that express the heart of the Christian life (cf. 1 Cor 13:13; 1 Thess 1:3). In their inseparable unity, hope is the virtue that, so to speak, gives inward direction and purpose to the life of believers. For this reason, the Apostle Paul encourages us to "rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, and persevere in prayer" (Rom 12:12).* **Act and pray.** *For the needs of families and children as appropriate.*

**June 26.** "We used to sing a song about the wise man and the rock at home in the olden days when we did pray and read the Bible together," Neal said. "It was actually nice then, but I don't know if that would work now with you young people, except maybe on special occasions. Apart from that we're all so busy with work, homework, working out at the gym and, ironically, attending self-development workshops. I hardly have any idea what each of our family members think about the burning issues in the world and also our own and the bigger environment. I can't help but wonder, "Who thinks our house is built on rock or sand or can it be partly on rock?"

**Reflect, share and act. Scripture:** *Everyone who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house upon the rock.* Matt 7:21-29. **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.* AI317 **JUBILEE:** *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. SNC 13. **Act and pray.** For the needs of families and children as appropriate.

**June 27. Sacred heart.** The image of Jesus and the devotion to his Sacred Heart have been popular through the ages and there are many religious congregations, schools and sodalities and family homes too dedicated to this special focus on his love. On this feast all the learners at Sacred Heart College participated in a special celebration. As the school was multi-cultural with learners from different faiths the focus was on the love of God and his merciful and forgiving love as Pope Francis describes. All learners were encouraged to study their own religious teaching in this regard and reflect on their own personal understanding.

**Reflect, share and act. Scripture:** All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction and for training in righteousness that God's people may be complete, equipped for every good work. 2 Tim 3:16 “I am the Good Shepherd says the Lord I know my own and my own know me. John 10:14. **Pope Francis:** “HE LOVED US”, Saint Paul says of Christ (cf. Rom 8:37), in order to make us realize that nothing can ever “separate us” from that love (Rom 8:39). His open heart has gone before us and waits for us, unconditionally, asking only to offer us his love and friendship. Because of Jesus, “we have come to know and believe in the love that God has for us” (1 Jn 4:16). The symbol of the heart has often been used to express the love of Jesus Christ. Some have questioned whether this symbol is still meaningful today. Yet living as we do in an age of superficiality, rushing frenetically from one thing to another without really knowing why, and ending up as insatiable consumers and slaves to the mechanisms of a market unconcerned about the deeper meaning of our lives, all of us need to rediscover the importance of the heart. DN 1-2. **Act and pray.** For the needs of families and children and greater devotion to the Sacred Heart.

**June 28.** Many learners knew very little of the history of God's people but Samuel and Amos had taken Biblical Studies as a subject and were able to share in the YCS group how these Old Testament readings speak much about punishment of those who abandoned God's ways and as a result were taken into captivity in Babylon. Was God being merciful at that time? Some said, no, while others argued that it was the punishment they deserved. Punishment is not to make the punisher feel good but to teach. It teaches the one who punishes as well as the one being punished. In current world crises many young people are suffering innocently and unjustly. Young men and women cannot see a future for themselves and children are deprived of opportunities to learn effectively.

**Reflect, share and act. Scripture:** Pour out your heart like water before the presence of the Lord. Lift your hands to him for the lives of your children, who faint for hunger at the head of every street. Lamentations 2:18- 19. But all was and is not negative. When Jesus heard the centurion he marvelled and said to those who followed him, “Truly I say to you not even in Israel have I found such faith. Matt 8:5-17. **Pope Francis:** If the simple fact of being human moves people to care for the environment of which they are a part, Christians in their turn realise that their responsibility within creation and their duty towards nature and the Creator are an essential part of their faith. LS 64. **JUBILEE:** 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 14. **Act and pray.** For the needs of families and children as appropriate.

**June 29. Sunday. 13C** Sts Peter and Paul. It's hard for us with internet and cell phones to imagine how it was 2000 years ago in the very early days of the Church. Peter had been with Jesus from the beginning, and here was this upstart Paul, who had been persecuting the followers of “the Way,” and was now preaching with such a loud voice what he believed and was inspired to say. It took some time for the two men to meet and discuss their differences and reach an amicable solution. In our different leadership crises at any level do we try to reach a consensus, or start a war? The Reformation in the 1500s originally started over serious differences and since then 1000s of break-away churches started up. Now, in our day, Christian unity has again become an important goal.

**Reflect, share and act. Scripture:** Jesus said, I tell you, you are Peter and on this rock I will build my Church and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. Matthew 16:13-19. **Pope Francis:** We Christians are very much aware that if the music of the Gospel ceases to resonate in our very being, we will lose the joy born of compassion, the tender love born of trust, the capacity for reconciliation that has its source in our knowledge that we have been forgiven and sent forth. Others drink from other sources, for us the wellspring of human dignity and fraternity is in the gospel of Jesus

Christ. FT 277. **Jubilee:** *The Council of Nicaea was a milestone in the Church's history. The celebration of its anniversary invites Christians to join in a hymn of praise and thanksgiving to the Blessed Trinity and in particular to Jesus Christ, the Son of God, "consubstantial with the Father", who revealed to us that mystery of love. At the same time, Nicaea represents a summons to all Churches and Ecclesial Communities to persevere on the path to visible unity and in the quest of finding ways to respond fully to the prayer of Jesus "that they may all be one. SNC 13. **Act and pray.** For unity and the needs of families and children as appropriate.*

**June 30.** "How many homeless people live in our cities these days?" One of the young social workers at the Family Welfare Department had made this her pet subject. As she was also a parishioner at Blackhill parish and an RCIA catechist she had asked this question in her class. She saw homelessness as a social justice question as well and they discussed it when dealing with the Laudato Si goal of ecological economics. One young man who was usually quite outspoken was very quiet on this topic. "Ephraim, what do you think about this?" she called on him. He blushed and blurted out, "Do any of you good people know what it is like to carry all your belongings with you and hide them in your locker early in the morning when you get to varsity, because it isn't safe to leave them in your tent by the bus shelter. I wanted to study and got the grant but don't have enough money for food and shelter and to support my little brother."

**Reflect, share and act. Scripture:** *Jesus said, "foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head. Matt 8:18-22. **Pope Francis:** The weakening of faith and religious practice in some societies has an effect on families, leaving them more isolated amid their difficulties. One symptom of the great poverty of contemporary culture is loneliness, arising from the absence of God in a person's life and the fragility of relationships. There is a feeling of powerlessness in the face of sociocultural realities that may end up crushing families. AL 43.*

**JUBILEE.** *Signs of hope are also needed by those who are the very embodiment of hope, namely, the young. They often see their dreams and aspirations frustrated. 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. SNC 13 **Act and pray.** For the needs of families and children as appropriate.*