



MARFAM 2026 YEAR OF ST FRANCIS.

“OUR WORLD, A FAMILY OF FAMILIES”



THOUGHTS FOR THE DAY JUNE. THEME: CHILDREN BELONG IN FAMILIES.

With a particular focus on children, youth and fathers and quotations from Popes Francis and Leo.

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Abbreviations: Pope Francis: EG = *Evangelii Gaudium* LS = *Laudato Si*. AL = *Amoris Laetitia* FT = *Fratelli Tutti*. CV – *Christus Vivit* – *Letter to Youth*. Pope Leo DT = *Dilexi Te* and *Magnifica Humanitas* (MH) This is the recent encyclical from Pope Leo. Download from www.vatican.va , study and use it for synodal dialogue and faith sharing, ideally also in families.

Overview: 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 can often be stressful and conflict-filled. However, ideally in any family, the young need conscious protection, love, care and support to monitor and direct their youthful energy towards full and responsible maturity. **Pope Francis:** *Difficulties the youth experience in their own family can lead the young to ask whether it is worthwhile to start a new family, to be faithful and to be generous. I say 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.*

The term **CIVILISATION OF LOVE** is used various times by Pope Leo in *Magnifica Humanitas*. The 1994 1st World Meeting of Families theme was THE FAMILY - HEART OF THE CIVILISATION OF LOVE. May that be a guiding vision for us at this time.
MH245. With the same faith as Mary, let us become “weavers of hope” in our world, sharing who we are and what we have, so that the presence of Jesus may grow among us and his Kingdom take shape. In the humble fidelity of daily life, even the era of AI can become a time in which the Holy Spirit brings about THE CIVILIZATION OF LOVE in our lives.
MH213. The CIVILIZATION OF LOVE will not arise from a single or spectacular gesture, but from the sum total of small and steadfast acts of fidelity that serve as a bulwark against dehumanization.

Setting the Scene. AI is certainly a topic of interest for everyone, not just Catholics and churchgoers but families, educators and workers too. Coming hard on the heels of synodality dialogue, listening and sharing it is very helpful for families with members of all ages, to address relevant life related issues. Of particular interest can be those relevant to children, fathers and youth during this month. Family faith sharing can be linked with Pope Leo’s *Magnifica Humanitas* from a fully human perspective while also considering the needs of all the families of creation. The Year of St Francis continues and can be commemorated by praying the Prayer of St Francis regularly, personally and together.

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.
O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console,
to be understood as to understand, to be loved as to loved.
For it is in giving that we receive, in pardoning that we are pardoned,
and in dying to self that we are born to eternal life. Amen

BEATITUDES FOR FAMILIES

Blessed are the poor in spirit who value their relationships with their children and families as their most prized possession, who recognise their dependence on God and make God a special part of their family life
Blessed are the gentle, men and women, who recognise that gentleness is the essence of motherhood and that fatherhood is a test of a true gentleman
Blessed are they who mourn, who grieve, because they have known what it is to love and be loved in their closest relationships, who carry their burden of grief as an offering for others
Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for justice who teach the truth about the rights and responsibilities of all family members, who uphold the cause of family unity, who defend the right to life from conception to death.
Blessed are the merciful who are able to forgive their parents, their children, their spouses and even those who have hurt them because they know and accept their own limitations and failings.
Blessed are the pure in heart who value their sexuality as God's great gift to his creatures, who do not use or abuse those in their care, who live all their relationships with honesty and integrity,
Blessed are the peacemakers who through learning to manage the day-to-day conflicts of family life learn the true nature of peace, who strive to restore broken relationships within and between families across the World as a Family of Families.
Blessed are those who are persecuted for the cause of right, those who suffer, but continue in difficult relationships, those who are ridiculed and rejected because they uphold the truth in their families and society .
..... for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

June 1. Global Parents Day. SEE. Politics of the day wasn't above the heads of the post-confirmation youth. Although State Capture was all but forgotten, corruption and the Madlanga Commission were brought up quite regularly. However, it was really when their local councillor who was well known and liked was charged with corruption that it hit home for them more forcibly. "Do you remember that one lesson we had when we considered how corruption was driven by passion," Dominic asked. "I think his passion for fancy cars got him to this point. We all better watch out that greed and a good life doesn't get in our way too."

JUDGE. Reflect, share. Scripture. *He has granted us his divine power and precious and great promises that through these you may escape from the corruption that is in the world because of passion and become partakers of the divine nature. 2 Peter 1:2-7. Pope Francis: Economic powers continue to justify the current global system where priority tends to be given to speculation and the pursuit of financial gain, which fail to take the context into account, let alone the effect on human dignity and the natural environment. LS 56. Pope Leo: In the era of artificial intelligence, when human dignity is threatened by new forms of dehumanization, ours is the pressing duty to remain profoundly human. We must lovingly safeguard the grandeur of humanity bestowed upon us and revealed in its fullness in Christ, the splendor of which no machine can ever replace. True progress always stems from a heart open to others, an intelligence willing to listen and a will that seeks what unites rather than what separates. MH 15.*

ACT AND PRAY. Reflect on the question, "where does my passion lie" and pray for commitment to justice in family and life choices.

June 2. SEE. "Hurricanes, floods, extremes in hot and cold weather, earthquakes and volcanoes. There is certainly much going on in the world around us. Is this a sign of end times?" Portia asked. "Some people, young and not so young believe "the end is nigh!" Others don't agree and claim that we still have much to learn and achieve." Mark said, "That isn't the only issue really, it is the challenge we face to manage and respond effectively to all these events until the end does come whenever that will be." "Will it be caused by our human actions, or exaggerated by AI?"

JUDGE. Reflect, share. Scripture. *We wait for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. 2 Peter 3:12-15. Pope Francis. The urgent challenge to protect our common home includes a concern to bring the whole human family together to seek a sustainable and integral development. We know things can change. LS. Pope Leo: 4:3. In *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis provided the first significant systematic treatment of the environmental crisis in a social Encyclical, demonstrating that it is not an isolated issue, but rather the ecological aspect of the contemporary socio-economic crisis. His proposal for an integral ecology combined care for our common home with the preferential option for the poor, and strongly affirmed that "the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor" MH 43.*

ACT AND PRAY. Consider are we waiting or ready for action required towards renewal of creation? Pray for commitment to action.

June 3. Charles Llwanga and Ugandan Martyrs. SEE. There were some Ugandan children in the catechism class and they knew all about the story of the 22 Ugandan martyrs. They shared some of the horrific and cruel ways in which they died, like being burned alive, in the 1880s at the command of the king. Some were young boys, like St Kizito the youngest of the martyrs, who was only 13 and passionate about his faith. One was a ruler's own son and others were officials at the court who disagreed with the king and protected some of the young pages from his homosexual demands. This allowed deacon Samuel to briefly open the subject of sexual orientation with the class too. Young people are having to face this challenge and be helped to understand their genuine developing gender identity without just exploring what is considered fashionable.

JUDGE. Reflect, share, Scripture: *Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, not anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Rom 8:39 Pope Francis: To respond to our vocation we need to foster and develop all that we are. This has nothing to do with inventing ourselves or creating ourselves out of nothing. It has to do with finding out true selves in the light of God and letting our lives flourish and bear fruit. CV 257. Pope Leo: The involvement in people's lives helps the Church understand ever more clearly that her mission has a historical scope and entails a responsibility for the way in which social relations are built. For this reason, she cannot consider herself a stranger to the forces shaping society. MH 19*

ACT AND PRAY. Consider the reality of martyrdom in parts of the world still today. Pray for a recognition of the rights of all.

June 4. SEE. When the Young Christian Students group met and read the prescribed readings for their meeting they soon realised that just talking about an issue of concern was not enough. Even though they were still young they could also take some action. Some said they should find ways to tackle the issue of child abuse, while others wanted to work on water conservation.

JUDGE. Reflect, share, Scripture: *Charge them before the Lord to avoid disputing about words, which does no good, but only ruins the hearers. Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who has no need to be ashamed. 2 Tim*

2:14-15. Pope Francis: *The existence of laws is insufficient in the long run to curb bad conduct even when effective means of enforcement are present. Motivation is required. LS 211. Pope Leo:* *Educating people about the use of AI, then, involves teaching them to decide when and for what purpose it ought not to be used. The speed and ease with which answers or summaries can be obtained risk extinguishing the desire to ask questions, which is a process that bears fruit only over time, MH140.*

ACT AND PRAY. Offer support to youth movements in schools or society to encouragement social commitment. Pray for youth on their personal journey in

June 5. World Environment day. SEE. There was a young adult group amongst the altar servers who used to meet on a Sunday evening with the parish deacon. Even though he was already quite elderly he had worked with this group for many years and they enjoyed the way he interacted with them. As he said, "I learnt from my own kids over the years. It doesn't help to preach and that's hard for me of course, but I would love to listen and hear your views too, especially today, about your faith, AI and Creation Care. How are these influencing your lives and future prospects?"

JUDGE. Reflect, share, Scripture: *All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. 2 Tim 3: 10-17.*

Pope Francis: *Greater investment needs to be made in research aimed at understanding more fully the functioning of ecosystems. Because all creatures are connected each must be cherished with love and respect for all of us as living creatures are dependent on one another. Each area is responsible for the care of this family. LS 42. Pope Leo:* *Indeed, dialogue is an ordinary part of human life and does not only concern relations between States. It involves acquiring an attitude that seeks to forge bonds of fraternity built on listening, an open demeanor, making time for each other and even wasting time together. For if we experience authentic encounters with others, with those who are different, strangers and migrants, it becomes much more difficult even to imagine war. MH220*

ACT AND PRAY. Support young adult involvement in assisting with AI issues in Church communities. Pray for young adults and the life choices facing them. .

June 6. SEE. Over the years Bruce had experienced a sense of calling to the permanent diaconate. He didn't say too much when their children were still young but as they grew older he shared this sense with Pat his wife and their teens. "It's something from deep inside of me. I can't help myself and just want to study and share my faith, teach others and build the Kingdom of God." He laughed and added, "Here I am preaching to you already! How would you feel if I applied to become a deacon?" The others thought for a while. "I could see it coming," May said. "I can understand and there is a sense of pride, even if it might feel a bit silly at times for me to have you up there on the altar. But then maybe it will also help to keep us all on the straight and narrow" she added.

JUDGE. Reflect, share, Scripture: *I charge you to preach the word, be urgent in season and out of season, convince, rebuke and exhort, be unfailing in patience and in teaching. The time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own liking. They will turn away from listening to the truth and wander into myths. 2 Tim 4:1-8. Pope Francis:* *Contemplation of creation allows us to discover in each thing a teaching which God wishes to hand on to us, since for the believer to contemplate creation is to hear a message, to listen to a paradoxical and silent voice. Alongside revelation contained in sacred Scripture there is a divine manifestation in the blaze of the sun and the fall of night. LS 85. Pope Leo:* *In light of what has been said, we can better understand why AI can be a valuable tool and, at the same time, why it calls for a measured and vigilant approach. When words are simulated, they do not build genuine relationships, but only their appearance. The artificial imitation of care or support can become particularly risky when it enters contexts where real relationships and emotional bonds are lacking. Here, the danger is not so much that a person may believe they are communicating with another person, but rather that they may gradually lose the very desire to form genuine human connections. MH100*

ACT AND PRAY: Reflect on the importance of lay preachers and pray for those who sacrifice their time and means.

Sunday June 7. Corpus Christi A. SEE. 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 and the Body of the community too. I ask you whether you really do believe that as Catholics, or whether it is something you don't really think about and take for granted? As a priest it 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 celebrate Father's Day so now I especially call on fathers to value and worship Jesus in the Eucharist. 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. Science has confirmed what we have believed in Faith and what the Catholic Church has taught for the last 2,000 years; echoing the words of Jesus. So please think about, worship and thank Jesus for this gift to us, the Church."

JUDGE. Reflect, share. 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: A family's living space could turn into a domestic church, a setting for the Eucharist, the presence of Christ seated at the table. AL 15. Pope Leo: The spirituality that we need (in this time of AI) is a Eucharistic spirituality, that is, a spirituality of ecclesial unity in love. The Incarnation and the Paschal Mystery reveal God entering into our human condition and transforming it through the gift of himself. This gift remains present and active in the Eucharist, in which the Lord gives himself and gathers the Church together, so that his offering becomes the principle of unity and source of new life. It is from this communion that Christian solidarity also arises, since "union with Christ is also union with all those to whom he gives himself."* MH 234.

ACT AND PRAY: Reflect on the importance of the Eucharist in family life. Pray for growth in family spirituality.

June 8. Beatitudes. SEE. While some lucky young people were able to go to World Youth Day, the rest of the youth group were also asked to reflect and share, ideally at home with their families. The youth leader suggested, "The eight beatitudes are a really good place to start. You can choose your favourite one even before you start but listen carefully to the point each beatitude makes. We call them the Spirit of the Kingdom. Patrick and his mom decided to do just that.

JUDGE. Reflect, share. Scripture: *Jesus went up on the mountain and his disciples came to him. He sat down and he opened his mouth and taught them saying, "Blessed are" Matthew 5:1-12. Pope Francis: Today we have to realise that a true ecological approach becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment so as to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor. LS 49 Pope Leo: The spirituality I wish to commend is that of the "wise architect" who, driven by hope for the Kingdom of God, is committed to building the world for the common good (cf. 1 Cor 3:10) MH 236*

ACT AND PRAY: Reflect and pray over the Beatitudes for Families. See above, page 1.

June 9. SEE. "Do you think those old ladies in the church are 'salt of the earth' people?" Mary asked her son Patrick. He said, "Maybe, but when I hear them complaining it makes me wonder if they've lost their saltiness. I prefer to look at the SSVP who you don't see in church all the time but they are out there doing stuff for others." "Maybe the light of the world people are those who lead the organisations helping others, or teaching." "During the recent terrible floods in many parts of the country you could see a lot of such women, men and some of our youth, like me and Joanne too, getting involved collecting food and clothes and some going out to meet and work with the affected people."

JUDGE. Reflect, share. Scripture. *"You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste how shall its saltiness be restored? You are the light of the world, a city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Matt 5:13-16. Pope Francis: 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. Pope Leo: In this task, we are called to assume an active role, without taking refuge in spiritual sentimentality or retreating into our own little worlds. We must be faithful to the truth, invest in education, cultivate relationships and love justice and peace.*

ACT AND PRAY: Examine our own saltiness and pray for openness to the needs to be addressed.

June 10. SEE. Mary said to her son Patrick, "you've been confirmed and are at university now, so you should be cleverer than me especially about AI. Patrick suggested they reflect on this extract from *Magnifica Humanitatis 100*. *In recent years, its private use has expanded significantly, prompting growing reflection on both the opportunities it offers and the risks tied to its rapid spread. In personal use, three aspects in particular deserve careful consideration: the ease with which results are obtained, the impression of objectivity and the simulation of human communication. The speed and simplicity with which information, complex analyses, media content and practical assistance can be accessed undoubtedly makes life easier. Yet they can also encourage excessive reliance and the search for ready-made answers, and weaken personal creativity and judgment. The apparent objectivity of the responses and suggestions these systems provide can lead us to overlook the fact that they reflect the cultural assumptions of those who designed and trained them, with all their strengths and limitations. The artificial imitation of positive human communication — words of advice, empathy, friendship and even love — can be engaging and at times genuinely helpful. However, for less discerning users, it can also be misleading, creating the illusion of a relationship with a real personal subject.*

JUDGE. Reflect, share. Scripture: *"I have not come to abolish the law and the prophets but to fulfil them. Matthew 5:17-19 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. AL31. Pope Leo: In response to the challenges of their time, each Pope interpreted historical changes according to the Gospel, bringing to*

light different aspects of a single heritage: the dignity of the person, the value of work, the universal destination of goods, solidarity and subsidiarity, care for creation and the centrality of peace and fraternity. MH 45

ACT AND PRAY. Reflect, dialogue and pray on the MH 100 extract,

June 11. SEE. Patrick said to his mom, “Hey Mom, you adults always lecture us on how to treat each other as brothers and sisters, 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 haven't spoken to each other. In a way she might as well be dead.”

JUDGE. Reflect, share. 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, Pope Leo : The dignity inscribed in each of us by the Holy Spirit can also be seen in our capacity to reflect critically, choose and love freely, and form authentic relationships. No computational system, however sophisticated, can create a heart that gives itself, or a conscience that discerns good from evil. Even when machines excel in efficiency, a human face that asks to be gazed upon remains the center of our history. MH 233.*

ACT AND PRAY. For healing and reconciliation in families that are hurting.

June 12. Solemnity of the Sacred heart. SEE. In apparitions to St Margaret Mary Alacoque Jesus showed her the depth of his love and begged her to promote greater love in the particular form of the Sacred Heart which has become a very well-known image – an earlier version of the Divine Mercy. Consecrating a home, Mass and communion on 9 consecutive 1st Fridays of the month were some of the requests, for which in return Jesus promised his own greater love and support. “I promise you in the excessive mercy of my Heart that my all-powerful love will grant to all those who hold to this devotion the grace of final penitence. They will not die in my disgrace, not without receiving the Sacraments. My Divine Heart shall be their safe refuge in this last moment.” www.sacredheartdevotion.com. Religious congregations, schools and the popular Sacred Heart sodality all have this image of Jesus as their patron. On this day too learners at the multicultural Sacred Heart College participate in a special celebration with a focus on the merciful and forgiving love of God as experienced in their own faith communities.

JUDGE. Reflect, share. Scripture. *Let us love one another, for love is of God and he who loves is born of God and knows God. The Father has sent his Son as the Saviour of the world. Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him and he in God. So we know and believe the love God has for us. 1 Jn 4:7-16. Pope Francis: In his encyclical Dilexit Nos Pope Francis reflected upon the human and divine love of the heart of Jesus Christ. We saw how Jesus identified himself with the lowest ranks of society and how with his love poured out to the end he confirms the dignity of every human being, especially when they are weak, scorned and suffering. DT 16. Pope Leo: God is merciful love, and his plan of love, which unfolds and is fulfilled in history, is above all his descent and coming among us to free us from slavery, fear, sin and the power of death. Addressing their human condition with a merciful gaze and a heart full of love, he turned to his creatures and thus took care of their poverty. Precisely in order to share the limitations and fragility of our human nature, he himself became poor and was born in the flesh like us. DT16.*

ACT AND PRAY. Discover or rediscover devotion to the Sacred Heart as expressed by Pope Francis, through *Dilexit Nos*.

June 13. SEE. 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. In some cultures the name's significance is related to the time of the birth. At baptism the Church expects babies to have a Christian or saint's name. Children can explore who their name saint is. That was what Sibusiso Anthony Moloji did and 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, about a time when St Anthony himself prayed intensely for an important book he needed that was lost. As a child he was drawn to the religious life and wanted to be a missionary but his health was not good enough. He was shipwrecked and ended up in Italy as a humble Franciscan brother, and a contemporary of St Francis. By chance his preaching skill was discovered and became his life's work, turning many people from their sins. A fellow monk found him one night in his room miraculously holding the baby Jesus. That is the image we see of him. This intense love for Jesus can be a real model for all the Anthonys and Antonettes.

JUDGE. Reflect, share. Scripture. *“The harvest is great but the labourers are few. From 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 Pope Leo. Let us remain faithful to the truth! Living amid incessant flows of information, opinions and images, we know how easy it can be to influence decisions and preferences through increasingly sophisticated algorithms. In this context, it is imperative to cultivate hearts that love the*

truth, prefer what is right despite the most appealing content and pursue wisdom rather than immediate results. We must always keep before us the truth about God and humanity, just as Christ has revealed them to us. MH 237

ACT AND PRAY. For some of us a devotion to St Anthony, finders of lost items, is very helpful. How do you feel about that?

June 14. Sunday 11A. SEE. Fr Fidelis preached especially to the youth, as so many of whom seemed to see Confirmation as a church-leaving certificate. "Have you had a genuine encounter with Jesus as Pope Francis so often spoke about? Have you experienced his love, his healing and his comfort in times of difficulty? Are you afraid to stand up and be counted because of something in your life? But most of all have you invited Jesus to be your friend?" Many of the confirmation group from three years earlier had remained close and Pauline reflected how that had helped her a lot in the tough years of finishing school and moving into the adult world. "They, even more than my parents in some ways were my spiritual counsellors."

JUDGE. Reflect, share. Scripture: *If you will obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my own possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine. Ex 19:2-6* **Pope Francis:** *In some young people we can see a desire for God, albeit still vague and far from knowledge of the God of revelation. In others we glimpse an ideal of human fraternity, Many have a desire to develop their talents in order to offer something to our world. In this we can find real starting points open to a word of incentive, wisdom and encouragement. CV 84.* **Pope Leo: Pope Leo in Equatorial Guinea 22 April 2026.** *"Dear young people, parents and all who are present, let us be inspired by the beauty of love; let us become witnesses to the love that Jesus has left us and taught us! Let us show every day that it is beautiful to love — that the greatest joys, in every situation, come from knowing how to give and from giving of ourselves, especially when we reach out to those most in need. The light of charity, nurtured in our homes and lived out in faith, can truly transform the world."*

ACT AND PRAY. On this Sunday nearest to Youth Day pray for the youth of today and consider too where the youth of 1976 are today. Are they the parents or grandparents of today's youth who are living in the different world of AI?

June 15. SEE. "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?" "I agree, Jesus made many difficult statements in this "blueprint" for a new kingdom, that we call the Beatitudes. We do find them difficult but remember that he is proposing an ideal society to which we want to aim for. Do you agree with that?"

JUDGE. Reflect, share. Scripture. *An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. I say "Do not resist one who is evil." If anyone strikes you on the right cheek turn to him the other also and if anyone would see you and take your coat, let him have your cloak as well. Matt 5:38-42.* **Pope Francis:** *Jesus, himself eternally young, wants to give us hearts that are ever young. He says, "True youth means having a heart capable of loving whereas everything that separates us from others makes the soul grow old." On putting on youthfulness St Paul mentions compassion, humility, meekness and patience, bearing with one another and forgiving each other. CV 13.* **Pope Leo in Equatorial Guinea:** *Your families are the fertile soil in which your human and Christian growth, like a young and delicate tree, sinks its roots. For this reason, I want to invite everyone to thank the Lord together for the gift of your loved ones. From MH: Particularly in an age of continuous technological transformation, we need a political creativity that will promote "work" and place the family and coming generations at the center; otherwise our economic progress will translate into new forms of insecurity and exclusion.*

ACT AND PRAY. Reread, dialogue and pray over the Beatitudes.

June 16. Youth Day SA. SEE. Every year on this day of commemoration of the 1976 Youth uprising the different youth groups, altar servers, choirs, Children of Mary, young adults, and confirmation candidates organised an event and invited the parish youth who were not actively involved to join them. There had to be music and dancing of course but because of problems that had been experienced in the area they decided to have a workshop too on Youth, the Family and AI to be presented by one of the dads, an AI technology expert. They had already prepared for this through discussion in their groups and families that made it more exciting because the youth and the parents wanted to know and understand the issues and how the spirit of the kingdom could come across. "When and how can you believe what is true and what is fake?" That was a relevant question in the light of so many corruption cases that have come before the law lately, but also how false stories about celebrities are a form of abuse.

JUDGE. Reflect, share. Scripture. *Your Father who is in heaven makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. You, must be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect. Read Matt 5:43-48.* **Pope Francis:** *The real question is not where our children are physically or whom they are with but rather where they are existentially, where they stand in terms of their convictions, goals, desires and dreams. AL 261.* **Pope Leo:** *In an era when truth is often distorted in order to serve particular interests and communication strategies, the field of education assumes decisive importance. Yet rapid technological transformations reveal just how unprepared we are on the educational level. The pervasiveness of digital media*

fosters a culture of immediacy and hyper-stimulation, which gives rise to fatigue, boredom and apathy concerning the effort required for seeking the truth. MH 139

ACT AND PRAY. Pray for the youth of 2026 and also for the youth of 1976 wherever they are today.

June 17. SEE. The Archdiocesan youth ministry team developed a survey about church attendance and membership in youth programmes. They wanted to find out why some young people like to go to church and others don't. Some are forced or expected to go. Some enjoy the social fellowship, others the more spiritual side, having had an encounter with Jesus. Some go to meet friends, others go to make friends because they feel lonely and want to belong. Some girls and boys go to show off in front of others. Some want to be seen as holy, and some are genuinely "holy." The important question is "In what ways are they growing in their love of God, others and self."

JUDGE. Reflect, share. Scripture. *Beware of practising your piety before men in order to be seen by them. For then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven. Matthew 6:1-6. Pope Francis on youth ministry: The Youth Synod called for the development of a ministry capable of being inclusive with room for all kinds of young people, to show what we are Church with open doors for everyone, with their doubts and frustrations, problems and efforts to find themselves. It is enough to have an open mind towards all those who have the desire and willingness to be encountered by God. CV 234. Pope Leo: In recent years, psychological and psychiatric literature has documented with growing insistence how early and unsupervised exposure to digital devices and social media can negatively impact sleep, attention span, control of emotions and relationships, especially during the most vulnerable stages of life, at times with tragic consequences, We must learn, then, how to exercise restraint in the use of AI and to protect our young people from the promise of the perfect machine, from that subtle temptation which renders human thought seemingly superfluous precisely when it is most needed. MH141.*

ACT AND PRAY. Consider your attitudes towards the youth of today. Are we helping or hindering their path to holiness?

June 18. SEE. "This way of praying is becoming one of my pet hates," Georgina declared, "empty phrases, words that have lost their meaning. We seem to just babble on. I think we've fallen into the same trap that Jesus warned us about. That does worry me. Then I see when some of my friends from the Pentecostal church pray they seem to talk about real things." "I do like more spontaneous prayer, but have discovered that if I slow down and think about the phrases they're not nearly as empty as all that, and I can apply them to my situation." Gloria added, "But the one about forgiving others is one that catches me every time I do think about it."

JUDGE. Reflect, share. Scripture. *When you pray do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do for they think they will be heard for their many words." Say 'Our Father.....' Matthew 6:7-15. Pope Francis: A few minutes can be found each day to come together before the living God, to tell him our worries, to ask for the needs of our family, to pray for someone experiencing difficulties, to ask for help in showing love, to give thanks for life and its blessings and ask Our Lady to protect us beneath her maternal mantle. AL 318. Pope Leo: 245. With the same faith as Mary, the Woman of the Magnificat, let us become "weavers of hope" in our world, sharing who we are and what we have, so that the presence of Jesus may grow among us and his Kingdom take shape. In the humble fidelity of daily life, even the era of AI can become a time in which the Holy Spirit brings about the civilization of love in our lives. MH245.*

ACT AND PRAY. Ways of praying are personal and can also be communal. Consider practising family faith sharing and prayer.

June 19. SEE. The YCS group to which Patrick belonged had members who came from rich families as well as poor families, with most of them in between. Their chaplain led a meditation on the topic of "treasure." "It's really hard to imagine but Jesus is using a real South African *ubuntu* concept when he is asking us not to be overly attached to our worldly belongings, a smartphone, Xbox, motorbike or computer. Maybe you have had to work hard for them. Consider that it might have taken you away from going to church or to your youth group. What in the end will be most important?"

JUDGE. Reflect, share. Scripture. *Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven. Where your treasure is there will your heart be also. Matt 6:19-23. Pope Francis: The Vatican Council emphasized the spirituality born of family life. Lay spirituality will take its particular character from the circumstances of married and family life. Family cares should not be foreign to that spirituality. AL 313. Pope Leo: Let us cultivate relationships! In an era that favors speed and fragmentation, the human person still yearns to receive care and recognition from attentive minds, kind words and hands capable of tenderness. The digital culture multiplies connections and offers new opportunities for interaction; yet, the human heart retains an irrevocable need for genuine closeness. I invite everyone to cherish places and times where physical presence remains crucial, such as shared meals. MH 239*

ACT AND PRAY. Consider what a sustainable lifestyle would need. Pray about it.

June 20. SEE. Which girl, or boy, for that matter, hasn't stood in front of their cupboard before a party and said, "I've got nothing to wear?" It's funny that Jesus chose such practical examples, but maybe in an exaggerated way, to make his point. Nowadays clothes have become so much part of one's identity it is hard to be able to detach oneself from spending all one's

money and energy on appearances and neglect the things of God's kingdom, like helping someone who really needs clothes or food or money for school books. Do we remember that many parents have worked hard to be able to afford what young people take for granted. Have you ever looked at a new outfit in a shop and said "No, I won't spend my money on that. It's not right, even if I can afford it."

JUDGE. Reflect, share. Scripture. *Do not be anxious saying, what shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or what shall we wear? The Gentiles seek all these things and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom and his righteousness and all these things shall be yours as well. Read Matt 6:24–34. Pope Francis: The emptier a person's heart is, the more he or she needs things to buy, own and consume. Obsession with a consumerist lifestyle above all when few people are capable of maintaining it, can only lead to violence and mutual destruction. LS204. Pope Leo: 240. Let us love justice and peace! The same technologies that facilitate communication and access to resources can also support models that exploit the most vulnerable, create new forms of slavery and derive profit from conflict. Every technical or economic decision should include spiritual discernment and be an opportunity for assessing whether the advances in AI are promoting justice and participation or concentrating wealth and power in the hands of a select few. I would encourage a careful examination of the supply chains of digital production, the working conditions hidden behind our devices and the mechanisms that profit from manipulation and war. MH 240*

ACT AND PRAY. Reflect on the importance of a sustainable lifestyle and examine your conscience on the matter.

June 21. 12th Sunday A. Fathers' Day. SEE. When the youth were preparing for Father's Day Deacon Samuel shared a passage from Pope Francis in *Amoris Laetitia* with them. Using the synodal method he had taught them, they reflected and listened and shared some of their joys and their pain about present, absent, abusive, loving and supportive fathers. In the end they decided, "Let's give that lovely message to our dads to remind them, but also ask God to bless us kids, and all those dads who aren't able to be there for us." Andrew said. "I want to say a big thank you to Pope Francis about that message, but I also believe that whatever their situation is a father should be a really important person for his children."

JUDGE. Reflect, share, Scripture: *Everyone who acknowledges me before men I also acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father in heaven. Matt 10:26-33.*

Pope Francis: *God sets the father in the family to be close to his wife, and to his children as they grow – when they play and when they work, when they are carefree and when they are distressed, when they are talkative and when they are silent, when they are daring and when they are afraid, when they stray and when they get back on the right path, to be a father who is always present and I do not mean controlling. Fathers who are too controlling, overshadow their children, they don't let them develop. Some fathers feel they are useless or unnecessary, but the fact is that a child needs to find a father waiting for them when they return home with their problems. They may try hard not to admit it, not to show it, but they need it. It is not good for children to lack a father and to grow up before they are ready. AL 177.*

Pope Leo: *Measures are needed to ensure a healthy way of living, for without a proper balance between work, leisure and rest, families are weakened and young people struggle to develop a sense of responsibility. MH 169*

ACT AND PRAY. Express thanksgiving for the gift of fatherhood and a pray for a blessing on all men who are fathers that they may value and not abuse their gift.

June 22. SEE. 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 chirped. "I am the parent in my family and have to feed and care for 3 little siblings." Mrs Mpambana was shocked and quickly changed her tune, recognising the need for a much more merciful response to the reality of a child-headed family. "Please come and see me after school," she said, "I didn't know and let's see what we can do about this situation."

JUDGE. Reflect, share. Scripture. *"Judge not and you will not be judged." Matt 7:1-5. Pope Francis: There is no stereotype of the ideal family, but rather a challenging mosaic made up of many different realities with all their joys, hopes and problems. The situations that concern us are challenges for which we should seek new forms of missionary creativity. AL 57. Pope Leo: social ties must be supported, with networks and educational communities that accompany life choices and prevent uncertainty from giving rise to loneliness or addictions. If implemented, these technological transformations can be navigated without undermining the capacity to build the future, which is what makes a society prosperous. MH169*

ACT AND PRAY. Consider the important role of education about AI and justice and dignity. Pray about it.

June 23. SEE. Bernadette thought to herself, "Much of what the church is teaching us seems to be kind of negative, "don't do this, or look at the problem side." When I was confirmed I decided to put another message on my wall in my room, and also on my facebook wall. The Golden Rule is, **WHATEVER YOU WISH THAT PEOPLE WOULD DO TO YOU, DO SO FOR THEM.**" It has

been my motto for 5 years now. I remember, once in matric when I was with a group who wanted to go drinking during break, my friend George stopped me, for which I thank God and him. He knew I wasn't that kind of girl but was just trying to keep up with the rest of the group.

JUDGE. Reflect, share. Scripture. *Whatever you wish that people would do to you, do so for them, for this is the law and the prophets. Enter by the narrow gate for the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. The gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life and those who find it are few. From Matt 7:12-14. Pope Francis: The primary reason for evangelising is the love of Jesus which we have received. If we do not feel an intense desire to share this love we need to pray insistently that he will once more touch our cold hearts and shake up our lukewarm and superficial existence. EG264. Pope Leo: Eight centuries ago, Saint Francis prompted an evangelical renewal in the Christians and society of his time. Wealthy and self-confident, the young Francis was taken aback and converted by his direct contact with the poor and outcast of society. The story of his life continues to appeal to the minds and hearts of believers, and many non-believers as well. It changed history. DT7*

ACT AND PRAY. How are you living out The Golden Rule? Reflect and share with someone.

June 24. Birth of John the Baptist. SEE. "JB is one of my favourite saints," Alan said, "He was a specially chosen person, to begin a new era in salvation history as we heard in Luke's gospel and his birth was quite unusual as his mother was past child-bearing age. We know little more about him until he reappears years later. But 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?" Marissa shared, "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."

JUDGE. Reflect, share. 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: A spirituality which forgets God as all-powerful and Creator is not acceptable. That is how we end up worshipping earthly powers or ourselves usurping the place of God even to the point of claiming an unlimited right to trample his creation underfoot. LS 75. Pope Leo: Our relationship with life seems to be in crisis today. Everything that appears as a "limit" — incapacity, illness, old age, suffering, vulnerability — tends to be seen primarily as a defect to be corrected, rather than as a reality through which our humanity matures and opens itself to relationship. And yet we must remember that humanity flourishes not despite limitations, but often through them. MH118*

ACT AND PRAY. Who are the JB's in your world today? Pray about it.

June 25. SEE. Neal said, '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.' Dad replied, "It was actually nice then but I don't know if that would work now with you young people. 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 we each of our family members think about anything that we do or expect. Do you think our house is built on rock or sand or can it be partly on rock?"

JUDGE. Reflect, share. Scripture. *Everyone who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house upon the rock. 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. AL 317 Pope Leo: 119. It is precisely within our limitations that the following find a place: compassion, as well as a sincere concern for the needs of others; a generosity that can emerge even in the midst of darkness and failure; spiritual experience and the worship of God. We see this at many moments when our limits become tangible: when we face rejection, when we suffer the illness or loss of a loved one, when we encounter our own weakness or failure. Mysteriously, it is precisely in such moments that we can discover a new wisdom, tangibly experience the closeness of others and encounter the presence of the Lord. MH119*

ACT AND PRAY. What is AI teaching you about your life and relationships? Pray about it.

June 26. SEE. "Talk about putting your money where your mouth is," Patrick commented. "The very first thing Jesus did after finishing his big sermon, or as you say his vision statement, was put it into practice by healing a leper, an untouchable. Pope Francis ask us to touch the wounds of those who suffer. I wouldn't really mind touching some sick people, but I've always been afraid to touch someone with full-blown AIDS, or today with ebola and leprosy, which are worse. So once again there is a challenge to being merciful and to go that extra mile. I hope God will give me the strength and courage I need as and when I am called upon.

JUDGE. Reflect, share. Scripture. *When Jesus came down from the mountain great crowds followed him and behold, a leper came and knelt before him and said, "Lord if you will you can make me clean." Matt 8:1-4 Pope Francis: In each of these*

little ones Christ himself is present. His flesh becomes visible in the flesh of the crushed, the malnourished and the exiled, to be acknowledged, touched and cared for by us. **Pope Leo:** God is merciful love, and his plan of love, which unfolds and is fulfilled in history, is above all his descent and coming among us to free us from slavery, fear, sin and the power of death. Addressing their human condition with a merciful gaze and a heart full of love, he turned to his creatures and thus took care of their poverty precisely in order to share the limitations and fragility of our human nature. DT 16.

ACT AND PRAY. How merciful are you and is AI influencing your decisions? Pray.

June 27. SEE. 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.

JUDGE. Reflect, share. 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:** Being church means being God's people, in accordance with the great plan of fatherly love. We are to be God's leaven in humanity. It means proclaiming and bringing God's salvation into our world, which often goes astray and needs to be encouraged, given hope and strengthening on the way. The Church must be a place of mercy freely given where everyone can feel welcomed, loved, forgiven and encouraged to live the good life of the Gospel. EG 114. **Pope Leo:** The diverse sensibilities present in the Church and the strong convictions that animate each person are a source of richness if they remain anchored in the certainty that unity is a gift received and a responsibility to be fulfilled. MH 88

ACT AND PRAY. With Pope Leo's encyclical *Magnifica Humanitas* on AI to help us, how can the world wake up to the needs of families and the poor. Pray for understanding and commitment.

June 28. SEE. Sunday 13A. Fr Elias ministered in a parish with a very mixed congregation. "Who amongst the different cultures cherishes children the most?" he started by asking? "I know that in my country if a woman is childless it is seen as a curse. Her husband is allowed to take a second wife, but that is mainly for the sake of the family name and its continuation into future generations." Joyce squeezed her husband's hand as they looked down on their baby sleeping in his arms. They were getting on in years and had battled with infertility and prayed and discerned much as they tried different procedures. They believed that God had finally gifted them with this baby.

JUDGE. Reflect, share. Scripture. A wealthy woman had generously provided shelter for Elisha. To reward her Elisha said to his servant. "What is to be done for her?" The servant said, "she has no son, and her husband is old." Elisha told the woman, "At this season, when the time comes round, you shall embrace a son." From 2 Kings 4:8-11, 14-16a. **Pope Francis.** Some couples are unable to have children. We know that this can be a cause of real suffering for them. At the same time, we know that marriage was not instituted solely for the procreation of children. AL 178. The technological revolution in the field of human procreation has introduced the ability to manipulate the reproductive act making it independent of the sexual relationship between a man and a woman. In this way human life and parenthood have become modular and separable realities, subject mainly to the wishes of individuals or couples. AL 56. **Pope Leo:** As technological development rapidly transforms languages, relationships, institutions and forms of power, we believers must and can choose which projects to work on and in what manner, so as to safeguard and value the grandeur of humanity that has been given to us as a gift. This is a choice not only for our future but also for our present, since artificial intelligence and other emerging technologies are already part of our daily lives. MH 90.

ACT AND PRAY. Explore and reflect on the ethical and moral aspects of technology and pray that justice will always prevail.

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

JUDGE. Reflect, share. Scripture. *I, Paul, went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas and remained with him fifteen days. Gal 1:19-20. Pope Francis: The rich heritage of Christian spirituality; the fruit of twenty centuries of personal and communal experience has a precious contribution to make to the renewal of humanity. Admittedly Christians have not always appropriated and developed the spiritual treasure bestowed by God upon the Church, where 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. Pope Leo: Whenever humanity is in danger of marring its true identity, we, Christians, lift our eyes to the Incarnate God, knowing that it is "only in the mystery of the Word made flesh that the mystery of humanity truly becomes clear. In Jesus Christ, this humanity in its grandeur becomes the Way, the Truth and the Life, opening the path for each of us to grow toward fullness. MH1.*

ACT AND PRAY. In dialogue with technology and human experience pray for increasing unity amongst Christians.

June 30. SEE. The prophet Amos was relaying the words of God to his people, expressing God's disappointment in his people's actions. Isn't it like that in families too, where members, youth and children, have been taught and warned? If they still disobey parents or elders have a right to punish them. The same applies to teachers and schools. In our day discipline has become a problem, as with a strong societal focus on children's rights the rights of those in authority are often rejected. Maintaining law and order in a loving way with a focus on good and healthy relationships remains the responsibility of fathers and mothers in particular.

JUDGE. Reflect, share. Scripture. *"You only have I known of all the families of the earth, therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities. O Israel because I will do this to you, prepare to meet your God!" Amos :1-8. Pope Francis: It is essential to help children and adolescent to realise that misbehaviour has consequences. They need to be encouraged to put themselves in other people's shoes and to acknowledge the hurt they have caused. Punishments for aggressive, antisocial conduct can serve this purpose. It is important to train children firmly to ask forgiveness and repair harm done to others. AL 268. Pope Leo: "The civilization of love will not arise from a single or spectacular gesture, but from the sum total of small and steadfast acts of fidelity that serve as a bulwark against dehumanization." (par. 213)*

ACT AND PRAY. Consider how the focus on dignity of an individual person also needs to have a social dimension. Pray for the needs of families and fathers in particular.