



2026 OUR WORLD, FAMILY OF FAMILIES –

MARFAM THOUGHTS FOR THE DAY

NOVEMBER : FAMILY LOSSES AND ENDINGS



GENERAL INFORMATION. Our family-focused THOUGHTS FOR THE DAY use a SEE-JUDGE-ACT format, with daily scripture-based reflections and quotations from Popes Francis and Leo. Thoughts are published on www.marfam.org.za, facebook and whatsapp. Email request to info@marfam.org.za. Check out MARFAM shop www.marfam.org.za/shop/ for various print booklets to order or download.

Abbreviations: Pope Francis: AL = *Amoris Laetitia* EG = *Evangelii Gaudium*, FT = *Fratelli Tutti*. LS = *Laudato Si*. Pope Leo DT = *Dilexi Te*, MH = *Magnifica Humanitas*

Magnifica Humanitas and the **CIVILISATION OF LOVE**. This recent encyclical from Pope Leo is used together with *Dilexi Te* and other writings. All these can be downloaded in full from www.vatican.va for study and for faith sharing, in families and groups, as a vehicle for synodal dialogue for couples and families. The objective and task chosen by Pope Leo XIV of **building a civilization of love** can be related back to Pope Paul VI, Pope John Paul II and the 1994 World Meeting of Families with the theme **FAMILIES – HEART OF THE CIVILISATION OF LOVE**. Promoting this together with the vision and model of “Church as Family and Family as Church” are part of MARFAM’s mission which includes Becoming Eco-Friendly Families. *Amoris Laetitia* + 10 and *Laudato Si* (LSACTION PLATFORM +5 are both also in the public eye with current special events.

NOVEMBER overview. Family Losses and Endings. Losses big and small are inevitable experiences of daily life. Birth, growth, decline and death are the natural cycle of every element of creation. For inanimate creatures it may be a painless letting go, or a cataclysmic event. Death and decay are in some instances also a source of renewal of the land. Extinction is a serious matter for the animal and plant kingdoms. For us as humans, created with special capabilities and gifts to love and hurt and forgive, this time of the year, as the liturgical year draws to a close, is a special time to remember life and death and their Creator as well as ultimate resurrection and reunion with our loved ones. **Pope Francis:** *If we accept death we can prepare ourselves for it. The better we live on this earth, the greater the happiness we will be able to share with our loved ones in heaven.* AL 258. *For human beings to destroy the biological diversity of God’s creation, these are sins against the natural world, ourselves and against God.* LS8. **Pope Leo XIV:** *Let the presbyters be compassionate and merciful to all, bringing back those that wander, visiting all the sick and not neglecting the widow, the orphan, or the poor, but always providing for that which is becoming in the sight of God and man.* DT 39. **St Francis:** *Praised be You, my Lord, through our Sister Bodily Death, from whom no one living can escape. Woe to those who die in mortal sin. Blessed are those whom death will find in Your most holy will, for the second death shall do them no harm. Praise and bless my Lord and give Him thanks and serve Him with great humility.*

SETTING THE SCENE. An imaginary PPC invited all the families in their wards and block groups to use the topic of losses and endings in a synodal way for family faith sharing with attentive listening and open sharing at home and also in their groups. Advent begins on 29 November and MARFAM’s Advent and Christmas programme will be built around the story of St Francis, and the Christmas crib. *Love Came Down at Christmastime.*

SPECIAL PRAYERS FOR THIS TIME – to download, print, and keep for use during the month along with pious lists. Families could create a small home altar with mementoes of those they wish to remember and pray for.

COMMUNAL PRAYER FOR THE DEAD.

God, Our Father, we remember in prayer those who have had a special place in our hearts and in our lives and are now no longer here with us. We thank you Lord, for the gift of life we have shared together. We ask forgiveness for the hurts we caused and forgive our loved ones too. Comfort us through the memories they leave us. May those memories give us courage for our journey into the future. Grant them a place of peace and joy in your kingdom where there is no more suffering and grief. And when each of us is called to depart from this life May we be reunited with them in eternal happiness. Amen

PERSONAL PRAYER FOR THE DEAD.

God, Our Father, I remember in prayer those who have had a special place in my heart and in my life and are now no longer here with me. I thank you Lord, for the gift of life we have shared together. I ask forgiveness for the hurts I have caused and forgive my loved ones too. Comfort me through the memories they leave me. May those memories give me courage for my journey into the future. Grant them a place of peace and joy in your kingdom where there is no more suffering and grief. When I am called to depart from this life may we be reunited in eternal happiness. Amen

PRAYER during the Jubilee Year of St Francis.

St Francis, our brother, you who 800 years ago, went to meet Sister Death as a man at peace, intercede for us with the Lord. You who recognized true peace in the Crucifix of San Damiano teach us to seek in Him the source of all reconciliation, that breaks down all walls. You, who unarmed, crossed the lines of war and misunderstanding, give us the courage to build bridges where the world erects borders, in this age marked by conflict and division. Intercede for us that we may become artisans of peace; unarmed and disarming witnesses to the peace that comes from Christ.

November 1. Sunday All Saints. SEE. Fr Teddy asked the congregation, “Why do you suppose the gospel for this feast is the Beatitudes? I have been wondering about that myself until I realised that the qualities of those mentioned there are in fact the qualities of saints. You know that St Paul called his people saints while they were still alive, but we tend to think of saints only after death and a process of canonisation. But let’s try to be saints in the way Paul saw it and live the beatitudes in our lives, our family lives. On top of that of course we must reflect on the saints in heaven. Who is your favourite? It can be a fun activity to do think about and even research some saints at home and share who and why we admire those saints. Mine is Brother Juniper, one of St Francis’ original companions but also a popular cartoon character. Do check him out! ”

JUDGE. Reflect, share, Scripture: *The Beatitudes: Blessed are the poor in Spirit. Blessed are the merciful, those that mourn, those that hunger and thirst for justice. Blessed are the peacemakers and the pure in heart. Matthew 5. Pope Francis: Blessed are the open hands that bring hope, that reach beyond every barrier of culture, religion and nationality and pour the balm of consolation over the wounds of humanity. Blessed are the open hands that ask nothing in exchange; they are hands that call down God’s blessing. From Message World Day of the Poor. Pope Leo: In a Church that recognises in the poor the face of Christ and in material goods the instrument of charity, Augustine’s thought remains a sure light. Today, fidelity to Augustine’s teachings requires not only the study of his words but also a readiness to live radically his call to conversion, which necessarily includes the service of charity. DT 47.*

ACT AND PRAY. COMMUNAL PRAYER FOR THE DEAD and Prayer for the Year of St Francis.

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November 2. Commemoration of the Faithful Departed. SEE. Each year a good number of people from the parish went as a group to the cemetery to visit the graves of their own beloved deceased family and friends. After her husband died, year after year, Beatrice would debate with herself whether to go with them. At first she had felt a need for the company of others, then a remoteness, then pain again, and so until after a number of years she stopped going with them, but still cherished his memories in her heart and messaged her children and grandchildren to remind them too.

JUDGE. Reflect, share, Scripture: *We would not have you ignorant brothers and sisters, concerning those who are asleep that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. 1 Thes 4:13. Pope Francis: “With prayer and interior liberation peace can return in its own good time.” From AL255. For those who believe in you, Lord, life is not ended by changed. Our loved ones are not lost in the shades of nothingness; hope assures us that they are in the good strong hands of God. AL 256. Pope Leo: St Teresa of Calcutta has become a universal icon of charity lived to the fullest extent in favour of the most destitute, those discarded by Society. She dedicated her life to the dying, abandoned on the streets of India. She gathered the rejected, washed their wounds and accompanied them to the moment of death with the tenderness of prayer Her love for the poorest of the poor meant that she did not only take care of material needs but also proclaimed the good news to the Gospel to them. They do not need our pity ad sympathy, they need our understanding love. They need our respect, that we treat them with dignity. DT 77.*

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November 3. SEE. Fear of loss. Mrs Page, the parish's volunteer psychologist shared with Fr Michael, "Isn't it strange how often people avoid what needs to be addressed, whether it is a terminal illness and approaching death, a marriage running into difficulties and fears about divorce or issues with children, other family members or work related matters. Is there a great fear of loss, so much so that we manage to hide it and pretend it doesn't exist?" "Or even refuse any help that is offered," he responded. "That always saddens me but thank God that isn't always the case."

JUDGE. Reflect, share, Scripture: *A man gave a great banquet and invited many. When the time came he sent his servant to say to those who had been invited. "Come, for all is now ready." But they all began to make excuses. From Luke: 14: 5-24. **Pope Francis:** the life of every family is marked by all kinds of crises, yet these are also part of its dramatic beauty. Couples should be helped to realise that surmounting a crisis need not weaken their relationship, instead it can improve, settle and mature the wine of their union. AL 232. **Pope Leo:** While some regions spend heavily on superfluous interventions or dreams of individual enhancement accessible only to a select few, other parts of the world lack the essential equipment needed to save millions of human lives. To think that new technologies will automatically benefit everyone is to ignore the evidence. MH161*

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November 4. SEE. "What on earth could Jesus mean by saying we have to hate everything and everyone and take up one's own cross to follow him?" Jasmine had often pondered over this statement. "Can he really mean hate, or is he using exaggerating language to make his point more strongly?" When her husband left her for another woman she was devastated. There were times when she felt as if she hated him and even the whole world and she prayed a lot about that. Gradually as she came to see Jesus' statement differently she realised that for her not having that earthly attachment could be a way forward.

JUDGE. Reflect, share, Scripture: *"If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple." Luke 14:25-33. **Pope Francis.** The joy of the gospel is such that it cannot be taken away from us by anyone or anything. The evils of our world, and those of the church must not be excuses for diminishing our commitment and our fervour. EG 84. **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. This human face is the fullness toward which history is moving. MH233*

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November 5. Loss. SEE. "Have you seen those adverts on street poles or been given leaflets at traffic lights about some forms of healing ministry that are promoted in our country these days. Is it really possible to "Bring back lost lover" with muti or other practices or is there an element of witchcraft involved there and something we Catholics should be concerned about? Loss is a natural part of life, but it is a consequence of original sin one could say. It can cause much heartache and does need to be dealt with, but in appropriate ways. Some of us pray to St Anthony to find things like car keys or ID books we have lost. Others go to Retrouvaille, a programme for troubled marriages hoping to "rediscover" their love that they think they may have lost. Jesus told stories of God's care for us including for sinners. He tells of the shepherd who goes after one of the 100 who was lost and the woman who goes in search of one coin out of ten she had lost.

JUDGE. Reflect, share, Scripture: *The woman said, "Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin which I had lost. Just so I tell you there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents."* Luke 15:3-10: **Pope Francis.** *Today our challenge is not atheism as much as the need to respond adequately to many people's thirst for God, lest they try to satisfy it with alienating solutions or with a disembodied Jesus who demands nothing of us with regard to others.* EG 89 **Pope Leo:** *The various areas such as the search for the truth in public life, education in the digital environment, the transformation of work, the fragility of families and new forms of slavery—are not isolated phenomena. Rather, they reflect a common underlying issue, namely that if technology becomes the ultimate criterion, the human person risks being reduced to data, a cog in a machine or a commodity. If, however, technology is integrated with a wise perspective, it can become an instrument of growth, justice and fraternity.* MH180

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November 6. SEE. Too many people nowadays lose their jobs, some even more than once, and seldom through any fault of their own. Not all of them have made provision for this and many do feel "too old to dig and too ashamed to beg." Debt counsellors and financial advisors have their hands full. Is their advice always honest and for the benefit of their client or for themselves? That situation is really as old as the hills. In the gospel Jesus noted that even bad managers can make good decisions; decisions that will help others and not only themselves. What is money for except to assist people? But we cannot give away what doesn't belong to us in order to buy favour as in Jesus' parable of the dishonest steward. As children of the light we have much to learn about the proper use of goods – for the benefit of everyone.

JUDGE. Reflect, share, Scripture: *"Sons of this world are wiser in their own generation than the sons of light."* From Luke 16:1-8. **Pope Francis.** *We have created new idols. The worship of the ancient golden calf (cf. Ex 32:1-35) has returned in a new and ruthless guise in the idolatry of money and the dictatorship of an impersonal economy lacking a truly human purpose. The thirst for power and possessions knows no limits.* EG 55- 56. **Pope Leo:** *Work remains a fundamental dimension of the human experience, for not only is it a means of sustenance, but it is also a context for expression, relationships and contributing to the community. Therefore, the problems related to work extend beyond the income necessary for family survival. A society that guarantees employment to only a small fraction of the population, despite having a high level of technical development, risks exposing many to forced inactivity, a lack of responsibility and the absence of daily tasks and stimuli, resulting in human and cultural impoverishment.* MH154

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November 7. SEE. There is a back-to-front saying these days: "less is more." What could that possibly mean? Charles sat down with the children when they were quite young to explain it. "You know that my father lost everything he owned when his land was taken away from him and with that his source of income. We children had to learn to manage with very little. We were able to rebuild our fortune but I am proud to say that father never allowed us to cheat anyone. The experience we had taught us to be more generous with the poor. I believe that small moneys used faithfully can help, especially in teaching us wisdom in our use of greater wealth in money or other things. God who sees the heart knows where our primary love is.

JUDGE. Reflect, share, Scripture: *He who is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much. You can't serve both God and Money.* Luke 16:9-15. **Pope Francis:** *Ethics leads to a God who calls for a committed response which is outside of the categories of the marketplace. God calls human beings to their full realisation and to freedom from all forms of enslavement.* From EG 57. **Pope Leo:** *The power and prevalence of emerging technologies are interwoven into the fabric of daily life, shaping decision-making processes and deeply affecting the collective imagination: "Never has humanity had such power over itself. New technologies open up a horizon extending in directions that are imaginable*

but not yet fully predictable. This complicates the assessment of their potential impact and the long-term effects they may have on both the dignity of individuals and the common good. MH 4

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November 8. Sunday 32A. SEE. Father Daniel with the Parish Family team had started a group of bereaved parents. "This is for your support of one another," he said. "The group will meet once a month but you are free to meet informally with one another at any time." "Hope is the one concept I have to hold on to," Mrs Peters shared with her friend as she sat weeping quietly. "How could a young boy like him, on the brink of life die in such a gruesome accident. I know he hadn't been a regular church goer since he was confirmed but I hope that his faith and my prayers even helped him to make his peace with God in those moments before he died."

JUDGE. Reflect, share, Scripture: *We would not have you ignorant, brethren concerning those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. 1 Thes. 4:13-14. Pope Francis* How can we even begin to understand the grief of parents who have lost a child? *It is as if time stops altogether, a chasm opens to engulf both past and future. How many people – I can understand them – get angry with God. AL254. It consoles us to know that those who die do not completely pass away and faith assures us that the risen Lord will never abandon us. AL256 Pope Leo:* *When we acknowledge our fragility our hearts become open to supporting one another and to invoking the One who can grant what no human power can ensure: the profound reconciliation of hearts and with it, true peace. From Elderly message 2026.*

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November 9. Trafficking. SEE. We hear a lot about child trafficking, how these traffickers groom children to become prostitutes. Is that sinful for them or for the traffickers? Or what about those who go to prostitutes, surely that is sinful? The children are tempted with sweets, cellphones, clothes and may be given drugs to make them become addicted. Could their behaviour then be regarded as sinful? The school had sent a notice to families to talk to their children about trafficking but of course the idea of temptation and sin was not something the school addressed. Parents, as the first educators of their children, dare not lose out on doing their moral duty or else their children may lose their lives.

JUDGE. Reflect, share, Scripture: *Jesus said, "Temptations to sin are sure to come but woe to him by whom they come! But anyone who tempts children does a great wrong, such people should be thrown away." Luke 17:1-6 Pope Francis* *The sexual exploitation of children is a scandalous and perverse reality in present-day society. Sexual abuse of children is all the more scandalous when it occurs in places where they ought to be most safe, in families, schools, communities and Christian institutions. AL 45. 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. This is further aggravated by easy access to violent or degrading content that offends sensibility, to pornographic and hypersexualized material, to messages that trivialize the body and emotions, and to proposals that normalize risky behavior. Online phenomena such as grooming, blackmail and the sexual exploitation of minors are not uncommon, and are made more insidious by the use of fake profiles, algorithms that facilitate dangerous contact, and AI tools capable of manipulating images and videos. Having a personal mobile device at too early an age and using it without adult supervision can exacerbate young people's vulnerabilities, foster addiction and expose them to isolation, bullying and cyberbullying, as well as to pressures to share intimate images or sensitive information. MH141*

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November 10. SEE. A priest once shared with a group about his experience with ministering to those approaching death. Some seem so afraid, some seem to hold back even though their condition is terminal. Nowadays there is discussion about assisted suicide especially when pain becomes too much to bear. "But," he said, "I have found that helping people to die in peace may well include healing of relationships, dealing with unfinished business and making things right with family members. When things have been put right they are ready to go in peace. Families should understand this and speak about death whenever they can, even with children."

JUDGE. Reflect, share, Scripture: *The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God and no torment will ever touch them. In the eyes of the foolish they seemed to have died and their departure was thought to be an affliction and their going from us to be their destruction, but they are at peace. Wisdom 2: 23 -3:9. Pope Francis:* *If we accept death we can prepare ourselves for it. The way is to grow in our love for those who walk at our side until that day, when death will be no more, mourning and crying and pain will be no more. AL258 Pope Leo:* *Christians see the darkness and acknowledge it for what it is, yet they do not merely gaze upon it passively, for they know the light and understand the darkness. Even when suffering seems to have the last word Christians serve the good and are sustained by hope. MH211*

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November 11. SEE. All illnesses, physical and mental, result in a loss in the quality of life. Some are fatal. Some diseases cause a loss in dignity too as sufferers are discriminated against and stigmatised. Many of those infected with HIV and those who have died from Aids related diseases have suffered serious psychological and emotional pain too. Leprosy was a terminal disease until recent times and in Jesus' day sufferers lived as outcasts from the community. Jesus' gift of his healing ministry extended to anyone, outcasts and foreigners but he still, and rightfully, expected some recognition and thanks. As a family activity why not consider the stories of all ten of the lepers, the one who did give thanks and those who maybe took this for granted. Give them names. Use your own imagination: How would you react if suddenly you were restored to life and community: What did you miss while you were excluded?

JUDGE. Reflect, share, Scripture: *One of the lepers when he saw he was healed turned back praising God. Jesus asked,, Were not ten lepers cleansed? Where are the nine? Was no one found to return and give praise to God except his foreigner?" Luke 17:11-19. Pope Francis:* *the family can discover together with the Christian community new approaches, a different way of understanding and identifying with others by welcoming and caring for the mystery of the frailty of human life. Al 47 Pope Leo:* *in the 16th century St John or the Cross and St Camillus de Lellis took on the mission of serving the sick with total dedication. "Each person should ask the Lord for a motherly affection for their neighbour so that we may serve them with all charity both in soul and body, in hospital, on battlefields, in prisons and on the streets they embodied the mercy of Christ the Physician. DT 50 .*

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November 12. The Kingdom. SEE. From Jesus' own time until now people keep asking about the coming of the Kingdom. "Where is it, what does it look like?" they asked him. Different churches and theologians using the Bible and external signs as described in the Book of Revelation have tried to identify what its final ending will be. We can think of those who have died already experiencing it, which is what we celebrated on 1 November, All Saints Day. However do we sometimes forget the words of Jesus himself, when he said, "Behold the kingdom of God is in your midst?" But even those words continue to confuse us. Is it within each one, in the Church, in Christianity, wherever the values of the Kingdom are lived, or wherever Wisdom is found?

JUDGE. Reflect, share, Scripture: *In wisdom there is a spirit that is intelligent, holy, unique, subtle, unpolluted, invulnerable, loving the good, humane, steadfast, free from anxiety. God loves nothing so much as the man who lives with wisdom. Wisdom 7:22-8:1 "Gods kingdom is in your midst", says Jesus. Luke 17:20-25: **Pope Francis:** The kingdom already present and growing in our midst engages us at every level of our being and reminds us of the principle of discernment. It must be directed to all men and the whole man. EG 181 **Pope Leo:** Dilexit Te. St Lawrence demonstrated his fidelity to Jesus Christ in a similar way to St Stephen by uniting martyrdom with service to the poor. St Lawrence was forced by the Roman authorities to turn over the treasures of the Church. The following day he brought the poor with him. Questioned about the promised treasure he pointed to the poor saying, "these are the treasures of the church. DT 38.*

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November 13. Taking Action. SEE. Isn't it true that in spite of all the strife, conflict and disasters that we see on TV every day we mostly carry on living as normal. We may give some money to a disaster fund or a charity out of a sense of obligation, or maybe guilt or compassion. However, it seems that mainly when people have suffered a loss or are suffering from a particular disease that they are more prepared to take some action, maybe form or join a support group like COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS for those who have lost a child or SUICIDES ANONYMOUS who have called in to the helpline when they are feeling out of control.

JUDGE. Reflect, share, Scripture: *If they have the power to know so much that they could investigate the world, how did they fail to find sooner the Lord of all things?" Wisdom 13:1-9. **Pope Francis :** if the family in the light of faith accepts the presence of persons with special needs they will be able to recognise and ensure the quality and value of every human life, with its proper needs, rights and opportunities. **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. The light of faith offers a perspective on reality that helps us recognize what we call the "contingency" of the things of this world. While it is right to strive to alleviate the suffering that marks human life, it is also wise to acknowledge our fundamental finitude, knowing that "religious experience, and in particular Christian faith, propose that we live, without oversimplification, this ambivalence between human greatness and limitation, interpreting it in the light of our original and fundamental relationship with God." MH118*

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November 14. Widowhood. SEE. Widows are commonly written about in the Bible, primarily because of their vulnerability, rather than the fact that they are widows, have lost a spouse and maybe mourning that loss and learning to deal with the life experience. Widowers too have to work through a process. For some this results initially in a state of confusion, a sense of helplessness and inadequacy, at least for a time. Gradually they may recover a sense of justice, seek compensation if there has been wrongdoing and become quite strong in their demands.

JUDGE. Reflect, share, Scripture: *"In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor regarded man and there was a widow who kept coming to him and saying, "Give me justice. Vindicate me against my enemy, Give me justice." The judge said to himself, because this widow bothers me I will give her what she wants or she will wear me out by her continual coming. Luke 18:1-8. **Pope Francis** When a society is willing to leave a part of itself on the fringes no political programme or resource spent on law enforcement or surveillance systems can indefinitely guarantee tranquillity. This is not because inequality provokes a violent reaction from those excluded but because the socioeconomic system is unjust at its root. EG 59 **Pope Leo:** 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*

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November 15. Sunday 33 A. WORLD DAY OF THE POOR. SEE. Although her family had been poor as a result of the 2nd World War they had worked hard and reached a comfortable middle class level. At the same time Antonette had always found this issue of "the poor" very challenging. Today in South Africa there is growing poverty largely due to lack of work opportunities. "What can ordinary people like us do?" she had asked. Fr Teddy was taking the World Day of the Poor seriously. He preached on the message of Pope Francis and had previously invited families to take to heart his wish for compassion and care for the poor.

JUDGE. Reflect, share, Scripture: *The Lord is the refuge of the poor (cf. Ps 14,6)Pope Leo Message for world day of the poor. **Pope Francis:** I invite the whole Church and men and women of good will everywhere to turn their gaze to those who stretch out their hands and plead for our help and solidarity. This Day is meant above all to encourage believers to react against a culture of discard and waste towards the culture of encounter. It is my wish that Christian communities will create moments of encounter and friendship, solidarity and concrete assistance. They can invite the poor and volunteers to take part together in the eucharist this Sunday. If there are poor people where we live who seek assistance let us draw close and welcome them as honoured guests at our table. They can be teachers helping us to live the faith more consistently. With their trust and readiness to receive help they show us in a quiet and often joyful way how essential it is to live simply and to abandon ourselves to God's providence." **Pope Leo:** 5. The eighth centenary of the death of Saint Francis of Assisi prompts us to recall how, upon arriving in Rome as a pilgrim to the tomb of the Apostle Peter, he was moved with compassion for the beggars. To understand and experience their suffering, he took off his own clothes and exchanged them for the ragged garments of one of them, sitting down to beg and spending the entire day among the poor with a joyful spirit (cf. Fonti Francescane, 1405–1406). We wish to bear witness that it is possible, even today, to experience the same joy by putting ourselves in the shoes of the poor and listening to them rather than merely speaking about them. Those who have God as their refuge have the freedom to make prophetic choices, which testify to the fact that everything can be reimagined from the ground up, in the humility and fraternity that alone can heal a world wounded by arrogance. Message for World Day for the Poor 2026*

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November 16. The diocese had organised a pilgrimage to Lourdes for a number of families who had members with disabilities. They had met beforehand to pray together and by sharing their stories all became very excited. Would they or any of them be healed? The trip was quite arduous for them but it was a most spiritually uplifting experience. "Was anyone healed?" Bryan asked after they had come back. "In a way, I suppose I can say that not one of us was

completely cured from their disability but almost every one of us was healed spiritually. I know that God touched me personally even though I am still blind.” Jane said.

JUDGE. Reflect, share, Scripture: “Son of David, have mercy on me.” Jesus asked him, “What do you want?” “Lord let me receive my sight.” Luke 18:35-41. **Pope Francis:** *If the family, in the light of faith, accepts the presence of persons with special needs, they will be able to recognise and ensure the quality and value of every human life with its proper needs, rights and opportunities. AL 47. Once a human being declares independence from reality and behaves with absolute dominion the foundation of our life begins to crumble for instead of acting as a cooperator with God in the task of creation, man sets himself up in place of God. LS 117. Pope Leo: 120. Even when limitations are experienced as inner suffering, human wisdom teaches us not to deny or suppress it, but to integrate it. To eliminate suffering entirely would mean, in the end, extinguishing love and desire as well. Those who love and desire cannot avoid passing through trial and suffering; and over the years, we carry within us lessons that leave their mark like scars, the memories of a journey shaped by freedom and failure, dreams and disappointments. It is only thanks to the interplay of these elements that the wonders of the soul occur within us, allowing us to sense the richness of our humanity. To renounce this adventure, both tragic and splendid, in the name of a presumed transcendence of all limits, could mean many things, but it would no longer be human. MH120*

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God, Our Father, we remember in prayer those who have had a special place in our hearts and in our lives and are now no longer here with us. We thank you Lord, for the gift of life we have shared together. We ask forgiveness for the hurts we caused and forgive our loved ones too. Comfort us through the memories they leave us. May those memories give us courage for our journey into the future. Grant them a place of peace and joy in your kingdom where there is no more suffering and grief. And when each of us is called to depart from this life May we be reunited with them in eternal happiness. Amen

November 17. SEE. When Stuart lost his job it seemed like the end of the world to him. The retrenchment package was only going to help the family for a few months and he was the main breadwinner. He fell into depression and for a time wouldn’t talk to anyone. Even when the family prayed together he kept away, feeling abandoned. It was little Belinda who came to him one evening and jumped on his lap, put her arms around him and hugged him and said, “Why are you sad, Daddy. I love you and wish you would come and play like we used to.” That little touch of loving support shook him out of his depression and he was able to start looking for a job again.

JUDGE. Reflect, share, Scripture: *Behold I stand at the door and knock. If any one hears my voice and opens the door I will come in to him and eat with him and he with me. He who conquers I will grant him to sit with me on my throne. Rev 3:1-22. Pope Francis: We can appreciate the suffering created by unemployment and the lack of steady work. This takes its toll on the serenity of family life. AL25. Pope Leo: The Magisterium has recognized in work “the essential key” [150] to understanding the entire social question, since it is through their work that individuals develop many dimensions of their existence. In view of this, we can understand the great intuition of Saint Benedict of Nursia, who united prayer and work, showing daily activity to be a part of the human response to God’s call. Created in the image of the Creator, our own work in some way continues his, for thereby we contribute to the progress of society and the common good, put to good use the capabilities we have received, improve and beautify the world, support our families, engage in cooperative relationships and, through listening and dialogue, learn to build together something that no one could achieve alone. MH148*

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November 18. SEE. Bryan shared, “You know, I always used to think of the parable of the talents in terms of admiring the men who doubled their money and kind of felt sorry for the other who just kept his money safe. But why should be punished? Did he really do something wrong, or did he just not do something right, like manage his master’s goods for profit? Or how important is profit any way? What would be our task concerning our own talents from God? It does need confidence to be an achiever and there are times, like when we are depressed over difficult situations, that we are hardly able to achieve anything. Would God still be a hard taskmaster?

JUDGE. Reflect, share, Scripture: Lord, here is your pound, which I kept laid away in a napkin for I was afraid of you, because you are a severe man. Luke 19:11-28. **Pope Francis:** The truly popular thing, since it promotes the good of the people, is to provide everyone with the opportunity to nurture the seeds that God has planted in each of us: our talents, our initiative and our innate resources. LS 162 When we fail to acknowledge as part of reality the worth of a poor person, a human embryo, a person with disabilities, it becomes difficult to hear the cry of nature itself. Once the human being declares independence from reality and behaves with absolute dominion the foundations of our life begin to crumble. LS117. **Pope Leo:** In light of these two images, the Holy Spirit challenges us today regarding our relationship with technology and the ongoing digital revolution. Scientific discoveries are talents entrusted to humanity so that they may bear fruit (cf. Mt 25:14-30). Technology has the power to heal, connect, educate and protect our common home; but it can also divide, exclude and generate new forms of injustice. In the abstract, technology in and of itself is not a solution to humanity's problems, just as it is not inherently evil. In practice, however, technology is never neutral, because it takes on the characteristics of those who devise, finance, regulate and use it. MH9

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November 19. SEE. Jesus' Concern. Going on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land has been popular for many centuries. Nowadays Jerusalem doesn't look like it did in Jesus time as it was partly destroyed by the Romans only 30 years after his death. It was also captured and fought over in many wars over the centuries. Would Jesus still weep over Jerusalem today and the fate of all its children, Israelites and Palestinians? How many other cities in the world would he weep over? Would he weep over ours?

JUDGE. Reflect, share, Scripture: Jesus wept over Jerusalem saying, "The days are coming when your enemies will hem you in on every side and dash you to the ground, you and your children within you because you did not know the time of your visitation." Luke 19:41-44. **Pope Francis:** The word of God is not a series of abstract ideas but rather a source of comfort and companionship for every family that experiences difficulties or suffering. It shows them the goal of their journey when God will wipe away every tear from their eyes and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain any more (Rev 21:4) AL 22 **Pope Leo:** As we look to the future, I would like to recall the image of Nehemiah whom we chose as our companion and guide. Nehemiah heard the cry of a devastated city, brought that pain to prayer, discerned before God, asked for help, received permission to return, organized the work, confronted internal and external resistance and rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem with the assistance of the people, brick by brick. In this era of digital transformation, I see in him a striking parable of our own vocation, which is not to be passive spectators of social and cultural fractures, nor mere commentators on what is crumbling, but men and women prepared to enter the construction sites of history — research laboratories, technology companies, schools, the media, institutions and local communities — in order to rebuild what has collapsed and protect what is threatened. MH241

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November 20. SEE. Jesus. Margaret once challenged the Sacred Heart Sodality members about the wording on their T-shirts. "Yes, we do see Jesus as meek, mild and humble but is that your favourite image of him? There are different images and sometimes I can relate better to the one where he overturns the tables of the money-changers and chases those selling sacrificial animals away. I want the Jesus I hope to meet one day to be a just, powerful kingly figure, even though I recognise his absolute humility."

JUDGE. Reflect, share, Scripture: Jesus entered the temple and began to drive out those who sold, saying to them, "it is written, 'my house shall be a house of prayer,' but you have made it a den of robbers. Luke 19:45-48. **Pope Francis :** The kingship of Christ is most evident on Golgotha. Jesus' complete abandonment to the Father, nailed to the cross, poor, naked and stripped of everything, incarnates and reveals the fulness of God's love and the power of the Love that

awakens him to new life and Resurrection. *Message World Day of the Poor.* **Pope Leo:** 5. Love for the Lord, then, is one with love for the poor. The same Jesus who tells us, "The poor you will always have with you" (Mt 26:11), also promises the disciples: "I am with you always" (Mt 28:20). We likewise think of his saying: "Just as you did it to one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did it to me" (Mt 25:40). This is not a matter of mere human kindness but a revelation: contact with those who are lowly and powerless is a fundamental way of encountering the Lord of history. In the poor, he continues to speak to us. DT5

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November 21. SEE. At the widowed retreat the group prayed the Stations of the Cross for Widowed People. "You know why we have a 15th Station," Antonette asked. "The 15th Station is a reflection on hope. Because all of us, who miss our spouses so much, do experience a need to see them again, to know that death is not the end and that they are with God, waiting for us, to be reunited.

JUDGE. Reflect, share, Scripture: *those who are accounted worthy to attain to the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage for they cannot die any more, being sons of the resurrection. Luke 20:27-40. Pope Francis:* *Indeed for your faithful people Lord, life is changed not ended, and when this earthly dwelling turns to dust an eternal dwelling is made ready for them in heaven. From Preface for the Dead. The better we live on this earth, the greater the happiness we will be able to share with our loved ones in heaven. AL 258. Pope Leo:* *God shows a preference for the poor: the Lord's words of hope and liberation are addressed first of all to them. Therefore, even in their poverty or weakness, no one should feel abandoned. And the Church, if she wants to be Christ's Church, must be a Church of the Beatitudes, one that makes room for the little ones and walks poor with the poor, a place where the poor have a privileged place (cf. Jas 2:2-4). DT21*

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November 22. OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, KING OF THE UNIVERSE. SEE. There are many parishes dedicated to Christ the King, but at St Damian's Fr Teddy had put a crown on the figure on the cross for all to see. He spoke of kings and queens, princes and princesses who hold a rather confusing place in society today. "We admire them for their status but many of us don't really want them to rule over us. We prefer democratically elected leaders. Even Jesus hardly presented an admirable kingly figure as he stood before Pilate, but yet he embodied the true qualities of giving his life for his people. At his 2nd coming he will be the universal king of all who are on the side of truth and listen to his voice. 'Will you be among his subjects? Will you be sheep or goats?'

JUDGE. Reflect, share, Scripture: *When the son of man comes before him will be gathered all the nations and he will separate them one from another as a shepherd separates sheep from the goats. Read Matthew 25:31-46. Pope Francis:* *"the kingship of Christ is most evident on Golgotha. Jesus' complete abandonment to the Father, nailed to the cross, poor, naked and stripped of everything, incarnates and reveals the fulness of God's love and the power of the Love that awakens him to new life and Resurrection. Message World Day of the Poor. Pope Leo:* *Let us cultivate what Pope Francis called a "situated anthropocentrism," which recognizes the human being as a creature embedded in a network of relationships with other living beings and with all of creation. Fidelity to the truth requires integrating the possibilities offered by technology within a framework marked by wisdom, which is capable of safeguarding both the dignity of each person and the future of our common home. MH237*

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November 23. SEE. Bryan raised a point that he had been considering. "Why is it that we most often think of "poor widows?" Do we not make proper provision for the time when one of us is going to be left? I have tried to do my homework and make sure that while I am never going to be rich I will be able to look after myself in my old age." Others contributed. "My pension is always used up to look after the grandchildren and even the children borrow money from me." "Nowadays in most cases the time has gone when the family will look after their elders. Sometimes they're put into an old age home and just left there." "I am proud to say that although I have never been very well-off I am happy in my little cottage because the children visit regularly and I have many friends too. If I can bring some sunshine into their lives I feel richly blessed."

JUDGE. Reflect, share, Scripture: *"This poor widow has put in more than all of them. They contribute out of their abundance but she out of her poverty put in all the living that she had. Luke 21:1-4* **Pope Francis:** *After the grieving process we have to help the person to realise that after the loss of a loved one, we still have a mission to carry out and that it does us no good to prolong the suffering. AL 255. The earth herself, burdened and laid waste, is among the most abandoned and maltreated of our poor. We have forgotten that we ourselves are dust of the earth, we breathe her air and we receive life and refreshment from her waters. LS 2* **Pope Leo:** *Our love and our deepest convictions need to be continually cultivated, and we do so through our concrete actions. Remaining in the realm of ideas and theories, while failing to give them expression through frequent and practical acts of charity, will eventually cause even our most cherished hopes and aspirations to weaken and fade away. For this very reason, we Christians must not abandon almsgiving. It can be done in different ways, and surely more effectively, but it must continue to be done. DT 119*

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November 24. SEE. In very recent times there have been many of the events that Jesus mentioned when he spoke of the end times. Earthquakes, fires, famines and disease have come and there is a constant state of war somewhere in the world. But these things have also been happening for the last 2000 years and people have always debated whether the end is near. What is becoming more marked today is a greater awareness of how we, humankind, are contributing to these events and in particular the destruction of our environment. Pope Francis in his encyclical *LAUDATO SI* calls on us to look forward and protect our environment. He speaks of *THE WORLD OUR HOME*, irrespective of how long it will remain our home before the 2nd Coming.

JUDGE. Reflect, share, Scripture: *"When you hear of wars and tumults, do not be terrified, for this must first take place, but the end will not be at once." From Luke 21:5-11* **Pope Francis:** *We are far from the so-called end of history since the conditions for a sustainable and peaceful development have not yet been adequately articulated and realised. EG 59* **Pope Leo:** *The task of building in our time must place our relationship with God at its center. Our rule must be the acceptance of human limitations as a natural and positive reality, and should be characterized by shared responsibility and a language characterized by the Gospel. At the end of this reflection, the plan for a civilization of love can be seen more clearly, and the construction site appears to be already up and running, thanks especially to the many living stones solidly united to Christ the cornerstone (cf. 1 Pet 2:4-6). MH236*

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there is no more suffering and grief. And when each of us is called to depart from this life May we be reunited with them in eternal happiness. Amen

November 25. 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER VIOLENCE. SEE. This campaign every year from 25 November to 10th December is an opportunity to create awareness, dialogue and share for many organisations but also for men and women, at home, school and work. The issue is not equality but a loss, the physical, emotional and psychological abuse and treating women and children as objects, rather than human beings with value and dignity. We are all created in the image of God but not all treated with the same respect. The right attitude should be taught and modelled at home. Take a look around. How are we doing?

JUDGE. Reflect, share, Scripture: *Alleluia. Be faithful unto death, says the Lord and I will give you the crown of life. Alleluia. Pope Francis: extreme poverty and other situations of family breakdown sometimes even lead families to sell their children for prostitution or for organ trafficking. AL 46. The human person is the clearest reflection of God's presence in the world; all of the Church's work in pursuit of both justice and peace is designed to protect and promote the dignity of every person. For each person not only reflects God but is the expression of God's creative work and the meaning of Christ's redemptive ministry. The Challenge of Peace #15. Pope Leo: 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*

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November 26. SEE. Groups discussed "the last things" which came up a lot in the readings of the time. "In almost every generation there are people who believe the end of the world is nigh. We call that millennialism. Some people interpret the book of Revelation and speak about The Rapture, when they believe that if they have lived righteous lives, they will get taken up into heaven. Some Old Testament books like Daniel and Ezekiel also wrote in that apocalyptic style. Even Paul wrote about the end times to the Thessalonians. In our time Pope Francis continuously draws attention to the abuse of the environment as a sign of our times. Will that contribute to the end of the world – as a Family of Families? Jesus told us that only the Father knows. Does that give you hope and comfort or not?"

JUDGE. Reflect, share, Scripture: *And there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and upon the earth distress of nations in perplexity. Luke 21: 20-28. Pope Francis: Patriarch Bartholomew has drawn attention to the ethical and spiritual roots of environmental problems which require that we look for solutions not only in technology but in a change of humanity; otherwise we would be dealing merely with symptoms. LS 9. Pope Leo: Guided by the Spirit, the People of God come to recognize in cultural and social transformations both the signs of the presence of Christ, who comes and guides history toward its fulfilment, and those aberrations that obscure his face. History is understood as one of the places in which the Church allows herself to be taught by the Spirit about the humanizing power of the Gospel; and she learns to develop her own teaching at the service of the dignity of every person and the good of all peoples. MH22*

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God, Our Father, we remember in prayer those who have had a special place in our hearts and in our lives and are now no longer here with us. We thank you Lord, for the gift of life we have shared together. We ask forgiveness for the hurts we caused and forgive our loved ones too. Comfort us through the memories they leave us. May those memories give us courage for our journey into the future. Grant them a place of peace and joy in your kingdom where there is no more suffering and grief. And when each of us is called to depart from this life May we be reunited with them in eternal happiness. Amen

November 27. SEE. Bryan continued to work with groups. "Every time we say the Creed I believe we should think more about the words we use. We talk about death and judgement but maybe we aren't really listening to ourselves. As we come to the end of the Church's year we can also think about the end of our own lifespan and what we will be judged for. Did we lose hope or faith or give up loving as much as we could? If we did take some time for such

reflection maybe we would change our ways and our attitudes for the year to come. I do believe that hope can come in cycles, let's say hope can be recycled."

JUDGE. Reflect, share, Scripture: *Think of the fig tree and all the trees, as soon as they come out in leaf you see for yourselves and know that the summer is already near. So when you see these things you know that the kingdom of God is near. Luke 21: 29-33. Pope Francis:* *The Church has a public role over and above her charitable and educational activities. She works for the advancement of humanity and of universal fraternity. She does not claim to compete with earthly powers but to offer herself as a family among families, this is the Church open to bearing witness in today's work open to faith, hope and love for the Lord and for those who he loves with a preferential love. A home with open doors, because she is a mother, in imitation of Mary the Mother of Jesus. FT 276. Pope Leo:* *The Church regards all who sincerely seek "truth, goodness and beauty" as companions on the journey, and considers them as "precious allies" in defending the dignity of every person and in caring for creation. Adopting the pastoral approach of the Second Vatican Council, which invites us to listen, discern and interpret the signs of the times, and enlightened by the wisdom of the word, the Church is not afraid to encounter human knowledge. Indeed, the word of God provides reliable standards for establishing paths of justice and opening ways of reconciliation and peace among peoples. MH23*

ACT AND PRAY. COMMUNAL PRAYER FOR THE DEAD.

God, Our Father, we remember in prayer those who have had a special place in our hearts and in our lives and are now no longer here with us. We thank you Lord, for the gift of life we have shared together. We ask forgiveness for the hurts we caused and forgive our loved ones too. Comfort us through the memories they leave us. May those memories give us courage for our journey into the future. Grant them a place of peace and joy in your kingdom where there is no more suffering and grief. And when each of us is called to depart from this life May we be reunited with them in eternal happiness. Amen

November 28. SEE Bryan in concluding his tour of the healing groups he had visited said, "At a time of loss people are particularly vulnerable and without being given support, or using the support that is offered, they may give in to depression, addictions like alcohol or addictive medication. A vicious cycle could be set up that also leads to a personal sense of loss of dignity and self-esteem. How would you like to look, standing before God on your judgement day? Drunk and disorderly, beautifully dressed and made up or like your real, normal self, the way you lived? Jesus has a word of advice for us!"

JUDGE. Reflect, share, Scripture: *"watch at all times praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that will take place and to stand before the Son of man." From Luke 21:34-36 Pope Francis:* *No family drops down from heaven perfectly formed, families need constantly to grow and mature in the ability to love. This is a never-ending vocation born of the full communion of the Trinity. Our contemplation of the fulfilment which we have yet to attain allows us to see in proper perspective the historical journey which we make as families and in this way to stop demanding of our interpersonal relationships a perfection, a purity of intentions and a consistency which we will only encounter in the Kingdom to come. This keeps us from judging harshly those who live in situations of frailty. All of us are called to keep striving towards something greater than ourselves and our families. Let us make this journey as families, let us keep walking together. AL 325. Pope Leo:* *The Church's Social Doctrine is not a handbook of principles and norms to be applied, but a process of shared discernment. It is born from the encounter between the eternal truth of the Gospel and the questions of history. It allows itself to be challenged by the signs of the times, and draws nourishment from the contributions of science, culture and human experience. Therefore, when the dignity of our brothers and sisters is violated, when politics fails to address the tragedies of humanity, when the economy turns against the person or science oversteps the limits of its competence, the Church — together with other Christian denominations and believers of other religions — must make her voice heard, not in order to dominate, but to promote communion. Understood in this way, Social Doctrine becomes a theology of communion in history, a history in which the Word made flesh continues to be present through dialogue, memory and prophecy. MH27*

ACT AND PRAY. COMMUNAL PRAYER FOR THE DEAD.

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ADVENT 2026 THE YEAR OF ST FRANCIS.

November 29. YEAR B FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT. SEE. When little Michelle asked her mom, “Did St Francis really see the baby Jesus on that Christmas night so very long ago?” she was talking about the Incarnation, or as we often say, “The Word was made flesh.’ We don’t use that kind of churchy, theological language when we talk to one another at home but that is our belief. Our life of faith in God is lived every single day, but in a more special way in the days leading up to Christmas and at Christmastime with Jesus, Mary and Joseph.

Michelle, then said to her mom, “That must have been amazing, like a miracle. Nearly like when I wake up on Christmas morning and find that baby Jesus has arrived in our crib.” Michelle’s mom told her, “St Francis really saw Jesus in the crib and also in everyone and everything. We’re going to try to follow St Francis, watch out and look for Jesus too this Advent as we get ready for Christmas,” with our ideal of everyone, everywhere finding him as we think of OUR WORLD, A FAMILY OF FAMILIES.

JUDGE. Reflect, share, Scripture: *We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities like the wind take us away Yet O Lord, you are our father, we are the clay and you are our potter, we are all the work of your hand. From Is 63-64. Jesus said, “watch, for you do not know when the master of the house will come, lest he come suddenly and find you asleep. MK13:33-37* **Pope Francis:** *Saint Francis is the example par excellence of care for the vulnerable and of an integral ecology lived out joyfully and authentically. He was particularly concerned for God’s creation and for the poor and the outcast. He loved all God’s creatures and was deeply loved for his joy. He lived in simplicity and in wonderful harmony with God. LS 10.* **Pope Leo:** *800 years ago, St Francis prompted an evangelical renewal through his conversion and contact with the poor and outcast. The story of his life changed history. The Second Vatican Council adopting the parable of the Samaritan and the preferential choice for the poor continues to be a source of renewal “if we can only set ourselves free of our self-centeredness and open our ears to their cry. DT 7.*

ACT. For Reflection and Sharing. As family members share what you already know about St Francis and how he can relate to our lives today. How can we follow in his way? ‘For the sake of the house of the Lord, our God, I will seek good things for you.:

November 30. Saint Andrew, SEE. “Was Andrew, Peter’s older brother, the one who let his kid brother become the leader of the pack?” That was a question posed to the youth at their group meeting. After their discussion they came to realise that in God’s kingdom such things don’t matter. Jesus, and St Francis like Jesus, could see some special qualities in each person, man, woman and child. Andrew’s fame rests on the fact that, recognizing Jesus as the greater teacher, he left John the Baptist and called his brother too to follow Jesus. Like so many of the first followers of Jesus Andrew gave his life and was martyred. He was not nailed but tied to a cross, which would have lengthened his time of suffering.

JUDGE. Reflect, share, Scripture: *Their voice has gone out to all the earth and their words to the ends of the world. Romans 10:9-18* **Pope Francis:** *“In the name of human fraternity, that embraces all human beings, unites them and renders them equal; In the name of this fraternity torn apart by policies of extremism and division, by systems of unrestrained profit or by hateful ideological tendencies that manipulate the actions and the future of men and women; in the name of God and of everything in this statement we declare the adoption of a culture of dialogue as the path; mutual cooperation as the code of conduct; reciprocal understanding as the method and standard” FT285. Taken from FRATELLI TUTTI the encyclical of Pope Francis, referring to his fraternal meeting with the Grand Imam Ahmad Al-Tayyeb. For the full statement see Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together, Abu Dhabi 2019. Pope Leo:*

ACT. For Reflection and Sharing. As family members consider what fraternity could mean for you. Is it just about being related to one another, or is there something deeper underpinning our relationships that calls for conversion.

For MARFAM’s further Advent and Christmas reflections see the booklet **LOVE CAME DOWN AT CHRISTMASTIME – St Francis and the Christmas Crib.** Obtainable from MARFAM 0825521275. info@marfam.org.za or downloadable from www.marfam.org.za/shop.