

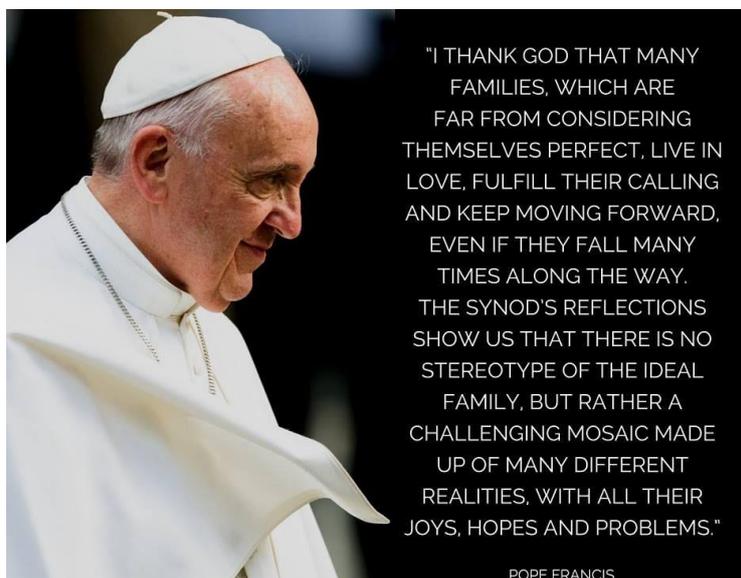
Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph



Today's Gospel is the beautiful story of the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple. As member of the Jewish faith, Mary and Joseph took Jesus to the Temple in Jerusalem, so that Jesus might be consecrated to the Lord. It was here that the family met Simeon and Anna. Simon is described as an upright and devout man, whilst Anna is described as a prophetess. They were obviously wise and filled with God's grace. They both praised God when they saw the child and spoke about him to others. Simeon speaks of Jesus as "*a light to enlighten the nations*". We are then told that the family went back to their home town of Nazareth in Galilee and brought the child up allowing him to grow in wisdom and maturity.

The scriptures do not give us information about what happened in those early childhood years so we have the opportunity to imagine what life might have been like for them. Nazareth was between a village and a small town in size and there was poverty amongst the people. Life would have been hard, but, as we know, love conquers all. Whatever experiences Jesus had in those formative years enabled him to show love, compassion, strength and faith. They enabled him to have a strong sense of justice, to stand up for the marginalised and bring comfort to the afflicted.

When we consider the family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, we have to respect the fact that families, at that time but also in our own time, do not conform to a stereotype as Pope Francis said:



A family does not mean a husband, wife and child. Whenever there are people in a loving relationship we can see family. There may be blended families, extended families, small families, large families.....the list goes on. We should rejoice in the wonder of so many types of family and know that each family is a reflection of the Holy Trinity. God as a relational community is where each person in the Godhead relates to the others in love and together this triune God reaches out to people in love, seeking deep communion with them. We are made in the image and likeness of God; therefore we are called to be in a relational community with one another and with our God. We are called to be family.

May we rejoice in all the families to which we belong, not only our blood family. Through them, may we grow in wisdom. May we, like Jesus in his family at Nazareth, be enabled to show love, compassion, strength and faith, so that we might develop a strong sense of justice, be able to stand up for the marginalised and bring comfort to the afflicted.

Let us pray for all families in our parish community at this time.

We pray for those whose loved one has died, that they might be help in God's comforting arms.

We pray for those who feel marginalised because their family does not fit what society thinks is the norm.

We pray for families where there is domestic violence.

We pray for families who are struggling during the Covid-19 pandemic.

We pray for those who will be apart from family this Christmas.

May we, as the family of the Most Holy Trinity, welcome all into our parish and our family, celebrating the "*mosaic of families*".

