

realpeople

the gospel in everyday language



Today's Readings

God in family bonds. Sirach 3:2-6,12-14
Live in love. Col 3:12-21
Escape to Egypt. Mt 2:13-15,19-23

Next Week:

Epiphany
Is 60:1-6; Eph 3:2-3,5-6;
Mt 2:1-12

In a nutshell

To escape Herod's murderous intentions, Joseph is told in a dream to flee to Egypt with Mary and the child Jesus. It is a journey made in trust and obedience to God. When we are faced with great challenges in our own family life, may we make the journey with faith, trusting that God will bring us to a safer place.



The holiness of families

A little child shall lead

When my daughter came to collect her three children from a day's visit with me, we were worried to see a fire raging in a residential area not far away from my house. The eldest child, aged six, had the answer. At her suggestion, we all stood on the footpath beside the car, praying for the people affected by the blaze. Prayer and trust in God is a normal and very important part of the lives of this little family. (AK)

Single people are family members too

Today I heard a quiet, solid testimony of faith in conversation with a 53-year-old parishioner. Alfred has never married or had children of his own and, over the years, has given generously of his time and talent in various forms of outreach to his faith family - to youth, to the elderly and, more recently, to young adults.

'To be single is to have the opportunity of an extraordinary love affair with God,' he said.

Family bonds

I slid into a pew at my parish church one Sunday evening. At the other end of the pew was a Year 12 student at the school where I teach. Usually she is at Mass with her mother but this time she was alone. I said facetiously 'Is Mum out on the town tonight?' 'Yes, she replied. 'Every year she has an outing with her mother, aunts and cousins - they call it Cousins Day. They have afternoon tea or dinner somewhere special. Today is Cousins Day.' What a great idea! Later in the Mass, when we reached the Lord's Prayer, she quietly but confidently took my hand for the duration of the prayer. Sometimes we are too quick to think that young people are not 'at home' at Mass. (TE)

The journey

A reader shares this Gospel reflection:

Being born abroad, and my husband being an only child, we were fortunate in having three daughters who are very closely knit in personality, geography and family ties. Now one of them has left with her husband and two sons to live in the USA. The loss has been particularly sad for us all.

One Sunday, as my husband and I were driving to Mass, we recalled the predicament of the Holy Family: the threat of Herod, their departure for Egypt in the dead of night, Mary's fears for her son. This certainly helped us put our sense of loss in perspective.

Perhaps this may help another set of parents too.



Chillingly reminiscent of the Holy Family's flight to Egypt, an East Timorese woman recalls what happened to her own family following the vote for Independence in 1999.

'My family had to go into hiding in early September. I sent my three teenage daughters to the convent so the nuns could protect them. Then my husband and the rest of my family, including my two babies, escaped to the hills during the night.

'I will never forget seeing my girls again when they finally reached the hills in safety. I cried and cried and thanked God for looking after them.' (Maria)

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Pray. Act.

Today, put all your differences aside, and simply dwell on the goodness of each member of your family. Bring your thoughts to God in prayer.



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