

REFLECTION

"The child's mother and father stood there wondering at the things that were being said about him."

There is a programme on various national TV channels called, *Who do you think you are?*, which aims to help well-known personalities delve into their family backgrounds, highlighting the most interesting discoveries. In the British version of the programme, it has proved possible to trace more than one family back to medieval monarchs. More unusual episodes are when expectations are turned upside down. A black woman returning to the Caribbean was surprised to find a black ancestor who owned slaves rather than being a slave himself. Moreover, most of the local population were still named after him. An actress knew that her family was of Irish stock, and her anti-Catholic mother was of the firm belief that they were members of the Anglo-Irish gentry whose name they bore. However, the research team discovered that they were in fact descendants of Irish Catholic Travellers who had taken the name of their local gentry on emigrating to England, as they thought it would help more in their acceptance and settling down in their new home. The actress could not wait to inform her mother, whose reaction to the news was not recorded.

What would be the response if we asked the same question of Jesus and his family? St Mark and St Luke offer us family genealogies of Joseph, heredity deemed to come through the father even if he was not the biological parent. The genealogies are not the same. The evangelists have different intentions. St Mark wants to show how Jesus is descended from Abraham and David, thus continuing the line of the covenant God makes with God's chosen people. St Luke goes back to Adam because he is more interested in showing Jesus as the one who calls all humanity to salvation.

In their infancy narratives Matthew continues to give Joseph a more central role. He is the one who guides and protects Mary and her child, relying, like his forebear of the same name, on instructions given by angels in his dreams. Luke, perhaps because of his personal acquaintance, has Mary as his dominant person, recording the visit to her of the angel Gabriel, her visit to Elizabeth and the birth of her son in the stable. Both parents bring Jesus to the Temple and marvel at Simeon's prophetic words, but it is to Mary that Simeon speaks personally, warning that a sword will pierce her soul. When both parents find the boy Jesus sitting in the Temple among the teachers, it is his mother who addresses him with their anxieties.

Joseph is absent from the public life of Jesus, leading commentators to presume his death. All the synoptic evangelists depict Mary as visiting Jesus with relatives – and he seems to give them the cold shoulder, pointing out that his true family are his followers. St John, however, portrays Mary in a very different role. She is the one who propels Jesus into his public life at the marriage feast of Cana. She stands at the foot of the cross at the end of her Son's life. Jesus gives Mary into the care of the beloved disciple, with whom, according to tradition, she will spend the rest of her days.

The Holy Family has commonly been used as an ideal example of the nuclear family. As we can see from the above examples from Scripture, this idea may mislead us. The Holy Family went through the same trials and misunderstandings that affect any family then and now. What is helpful for us is to see how they reacted in such demanding circumstances. Throughout their lives, their guiding star was a strong belief in, and dependence on, God, the reference point to whom they all turned.

Secondly, particularly in Mary and Joseph, we are given clear examples of parents who care. This care is shown in the way they fulfil the religious traditions on behalf of their son, keeping him out of harm's way and bringing him up in love and kindness. He in turn accepts their authority and guidance, only differing when it comes to the question of his ultimate calling. At that point we have a sense of Jesus educating his parents in the demands of the role that God has given him. In modern terms, they negotiate, both sides honestly expressing their concerns, and then continue in harmony.

For the contemporary reader there is inevitably a desire to know more. Later, legends grew up about Jesus displaying magical powers, but such instances say more about later generations' fascination with magic than about the intentions of the evangelists. The latter wish to show how all elements of the life of Jesus reveal him fulfilling the promises made to his people and extending those promises to the whole world. His family relations reveal that same truth, and we, in our turn, are called to try to express that truth in all aspects of our lives.

Saints Days/Coming Events

January 1– Monday - Mary, the Holy Mother of God. (Mass 9.00am)
January 2– Tuesday- St Basil the Great and St Gregory Nazianzen
January 7– Sunday - The Epiphany of the Lord
January 8– Monday– The Baptism of the Lord.

-SACRAMENTS-

For information on BAPTISM, FIRST RECONCILIATION, FIRST HOLY COMMUNION, CONFIRMATION, MARRIAGE, ANOINTING OF THE SICK - EUCHARIST TO THE HOUSEBOUND please visit the parish website for details.

Recently Deceased: Lorenzo Di Donato, Frank Bova, Robert Pirto, Cathy Rinaudo, Pietro Leto, Giuseppe Annetta, Ken McTaggart, Colin A. Kerr, Giustino Tauriello, Fatima Taukitoku, Jose Antonio Probaos, Placido Veneziano, Fr Michael Mullins SM, Sr Joan McBride SM.

Please note: Names of recently deceased will remain for a 3 month period before being removed.

Rest in Peace: Concetta Lo Surdo, Giustino Tauriello, Antonio Nesci, Beniamino Di Pasquantonio, Antonino Di Girolamo, Giuseppe Colantuono, Michael & Mary Kayrooz and Families, Marco Monaco, Nunzia Ferrara, Angelo Testa, Salvatore Giarratano, Joe Di Marti, Mary Attard, Luciano Frisone, Elisa Procopio, Salvatore Procopio, Monika Fisi'ihoi, Domenico Nicita, Kaliammah Subramaniam, Grazia Scuderi, Saverio Mafodda, Valentina Mannino, Antonio Cardillo, Helen Bedirian, Luigino De Domeneghi, Rofayla Daoud, Michael & Mary Kayrooz & families, Rocco Delfino, Rosa Delfino, Domenico Nicita, Iolanda Caruso, Domenico Catalano, Ilario Furlan, Carmela Catania, Salvatore Catania, Concetta Cardillo, Maria Oppedisano, Anna Rosa Angilletta, Cosimo Angilletta, Joe Angilletta, Frank & Immacolata Angilletta, Giuseppe Aversa, Domenico & Olimpia Spadaro, Lawrence Wong, Pietro Banno, Jack McEnally, Domenico Banno, Lucy The, Jim Tuite, Sarina Torrisi, Lattari & Aversa families, John & Moya Phillips, Mons Dino Fragiaco, Fr Frank Furfuro & All Souls in Purgatory.

In your love and concern please pray for the following ill members of our community: Enrico Cuomo, Neville Hill, John Kcoury, Mary Finios, Rose Uthappa, Asela Savieti, Glen Dixon, Venu Uthappa, Roberto Tramarin, Vittoria Lavecchia, Anna Attard, Rosa Santos, Elisha Lau, Aitken Family, Liz Smith, Pat Rankine, Jerry Andre, Donna Neeley, Adeline Ashing, Annelise Buda, Giovanni Luci, Stephan Ferenc, Giancarlo Buda, Mario Bianco, Jozo Tadic

In keeping with the Privacy Act names cannot be published in our Parish Bulletin without the permission of the persons themselves or their next of kin. Please specify on your Mass Envelope your intention to include the person's name in this Bulletin or contact the Parish Office on 9798 6657



A message from the Archdiocese of Sydney

Child sexual abuse is a crime. The appropriate people to deal with crimes are the police. If you, or anyone you know have been abused, please contact the police. Alternatively, you can contact the Safeguarding and Ministerial Integrity Office at (02) 9390 5810 or safeguardingenquiries@sydneycatholic.org. You may also want to speak to your Parish Priest who will be able to provide support and guidance. The Archdiocese has a legal obligation to report crimes to the police.