

# SoulSpace

THE GOSPEL OF THE FAMILY: JOY FOR THE WORLD

Season colour: **GREEN**

In this series, **Fr Gerard Moloney, C.Ss.R.** anticipates the World Meeting of Families which will take place in Ireland in August 2018.



## VILLAGE PEOPLE

Many of the social, familial and parish ties that bound people in the past have weakened or broken down with the result that we have become more disconnected from one another, more private, more autonomous.

A consequence of this is that children can miss out on the day-to-day influence of their grandparents and other significant family members. "Listening to the elderly tell their stories is good for children and young people," Pope Francis reminds us in *The Joy of Love*, 193. "It makes them feel connected to the living history of their families, their neighbourhoods and their country." It also helps them to learn about and celebrate their Catholic faith.

As the domestic church, the nuclear family has the biggest role in handing on the faith, but it is not just the responsibility of parents and the school. It is a task also for grandparents and for the wider network of godparents, family, and friends. Their good example and witness can be vital in helping young people develop and deepen their relationship with God.

### THE CHALLENGE

There is an old African proverb that says it takes a village to raise a child. What the proverb means is it takes an entire community of different people interacting with children in order for children to experience and grow in a safe environment. This doesn't diminish the primary role of parents in raising their children. It simply points out that the more people who look out for a child, the more strong, positive

role models he or she has, then the better for that child. Parents who depend on grandparents, other family members or neighbours to mind their children while they are at work know the truth of this proverb.

Pope Francis knows it too. He credits his grandmother with being the biggest influence in his life. She was the one who educated him in the faith, who helped him figure out his life choices. But it's not just grandparents who play a vital role. Pope Francis also stresses the role of siblings in offering good example to their brothers and sisters. And then he goes beyond the nuclear family to point out the importance of the wider family circle. We are all part of a wider family, he says, which includes our neighbours and in-laws and is an ever-expanding community. All have a role in helping to build a strong, healthy family. And all have a role in handing on the faith. ■



*The Holy Father*

**“**The nuclear family needs to interact with the wider family made up of parents, aunts and uncles, cousins and even neighbours. This greater family may have members who require assistance, or at least companionship and affection, or consolation amid suffering. The individualism so prevalent today can lead to creating small nests of security, where others are perceived as bothersome or a threat. Such isolation, however, cannot offer greater peace or happiness; rather, it straitens the heart of a family and makes its life all the more narrow.”

Pope Francis, *The Joy of Love*, 187



### Today's readings

Wisdom 1:13-15; 2:23-24  
2 Corinthians 8:7,9,13-15  
Mark 5:21-43

Jesus around the countryside and in particular Capernaum. There is something special about this man Jesus. But as soon as he arrives into Nazareth, his home town, he is rejected and laughed at. There is a sceptical inquisitiveness present in today's Gospel story. Who is this man? Where did he get such wisdom? He is just a carpenter's son surely? Sure, we know his mother and sisters! Jesus is rejected many times in the Gospels but being rejected by his own family must have been hurtful.

With this revelation in mind, it is worth noting that the scene that follows this is Jesus sending out the Twelve in twos, telling them to leave everything behind. It is perhaps Jesus' experience with his own family and friends in Nazareth that inspires a mission that will involve turning one's back on what is familiar and moving away from one's home to preach the Word of God to the world.

### GOD'S WORD TODAY

What a contrast we are presented with today, when compared with last week's Gospel.

You might remember the scene of Jesus healing Jairus' daughter and the haemorrhaging woman. The characters in the story are marked by their belief and trust in Jesus. As a result of such great acts of healing, crowds will follow

