

THE HOLY FAMILY & OUR WORLD THIS CHRISTMAS
Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph – 26 December 2021



Image: Syrian children in Khabour, Syria taken by Claudia Fahlbusch | unsplash.com

As we reflect on the world this Christmas,
and as we celebrate this Sunday’s *Feast of the Holy Family*,
we are invited to **look out into the world, our human family.**

GOSPEL OF LUKE 2:41-52

Let us turn to Jesus, 12 years old in the Temple and his parents **searching** for him.
We can identify with the love and heartache
and worry of the parents of Jesus, as they **search** for him.

Today’s Gospel relates:

*‘Now every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover.
And when he was twelve years old, they went up as usual for the festival.
When the festival was ended and they started to return,
the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it.
Assuming that he was in the group of travellers, they went a day’s journey.
Then they started to look for him among their relatives and friends.
When they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem to search for him.*

*After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers,
listening to them and asking them questions.
And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers.
When his parents saw him they were astonished;
and his mother said to him, 'Child, why have you treated us like this?
Look, your father and I have been searching for you in great anxiety.'
He said to them, 'Why were you searching for me?
Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?'
But they did not understand what he said to them.
Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them.
His mother treasured all these things in her heart.
And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favour.'*

The Gospel captures our attention with the heartache that Mary and Joseph felt.
Three long days **looking** for Jesus. Three days!!

How would we feel in that situation?

Each year in the world media, we hear stories of parents **searching** for lost children.
Yet in our world today, the plight of people lost
in poverty, abuse, confinement is often overlooked or ignored by many people.

Like Mary and Joseph, we are called to **look** for the lost,
to search for the forgotten and ignored.

POPE FRANCIS CHRISTMAS MESSAGE TO THE WORLD

Pope Francis expresses his deep concern this Christmas
in his [Urbi Et Orbi Message](#) for our world as

*'we continue to witness a great number of conflicts, crises and disagreements.
These never seem to end; by now we hardly even notice them.
We have become so used to them
that immense tragedies are now being passed over in silence;
we risk not hearing the cry of pain and distress of so many of our brothers and sisters.'*

In a spirit of **looking** for those in real need,
Pope Francis draws the world's attention this Christmas to the peoples of

- Syria
- Iraq
- Yemen
- Israelis and Palestinians'
- Lebanon
- the Middle East and the whole world.
- those who provide humanitarian aid to peoples forced to flee from their homelands'
- the Afghan people,
- Myanmar

- Ukraine
- Ethiopia
- the Sahel region
- North Africa,
- Sudan
- South Sudan.
- the Americas.
- victims of violence against women
- migrants, displaced persons and refugees
- young children and adolescents suffering from bullying and abuse
- the elderly
- families
- necessary medical care – and vaccines in particular
- military and civilian prisoners of war
- those imprisoned for political reasons

and Pope Francis invites us to pray for them.

He leads us in his prayer for the Earth, our Common Home,

‘Eternal Word become flesh, make us attentive to our common home, which is suffering from the carelessness with which we so often treat it. Inspire political leaders to reach effective agreements, so that future generations can live in an environment respectful of life.’

Let us pause and reflect on this message of Pope Francis to us this Christmas.

‘Dear brothers and sisters, amid all the many problems of our time, hope prevails, “for to us a child is born” (Is 9:6). He is the word of God, who became an infant, capable only of crying, and in need of help for everything. He wished to learn how to speak, like every other child, so that we might learn to listen to God, our Father, to listen to one another and to dialogue as brothers and sisters. O Christ, born for our sake, teach us to walk beside you on the paths of peace. Happy Christmas to all!’

It is a lifelong journey in listening to God and listening to the cries of the world and the Earth, our Common Home.

May we continue to search, to listen and to care for the human family and the Earth our Common Home.

Let us pray

Father Gerry Hefferan

Readings: <https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/122621.cfm>