

The Closeness of God ©

by Frances Molloy – Pastoral Care Project Charity No 1094766

In The Prayer of The Holy Family book of reflections by Father Livinus Donohoe, O.C.D. he brings home to us the closeness of God. "*When you talked to Him (Jesus) you were looking into the human eyes of God,*" here Fr Livinus invites us to see the gospel of Luke Ch 2 v 40-50 differently.

How - what does Joseph teach us today about the responsibility of caring – a husband caring for his wife; or a son caring for his mother?

Pondering Mary and Joseph's experience will surely connect with many parents/guardians who have found themselves in a situation of when a child went missing, but what happens when an elderly person with dementia whom you are responsible for suddenly wanders off – lost?

The Week of Prayer and Awareness of Dementia 12-19th March is an invitation to look again at the person with dementia, despite dementia causing forgetfulness they are receptive to the Holy Spirit, and often share this love with those around them. Like you and me they too need help to feel the closeness of God - what can we do?

How can we respond to the needs of the family as they support the person who has dementia, and so prevent them becoming isolated?

We are privileged at the Pastoral Care Project to have accompanied many people with dementia and their loved one on their spiritual/sacramental journey - they are the inspiration for this week of prayer and their experiences have helped us in producing resources in which others can benefit from.

The response this year from parishes, schools and organisations has been amazing, but not surprising. The increased interest from schools to join in prayer; some are offering the rosary every day and several will be visiting the elderly in their parish. Many will be giving alms to the Pastoral Care Project. We are so very thankful to them for responding to the invitation "we all have something to offer" this way they are helping others through us.

We wish to thank Archbishop Bernard Longley for his continued support and prayers, to the many bishops nationally and to Bishop David McGough, lead bishop to the Project, especially for sharing his personal story, (Catholic Today Jan 2014).

Our heartfelt thanks to Cardinal Vincent Nichols for his continued encouragement, and for contacting the Project to say that in his support of the week of Prayer and Awareness 12-19th March he will be offering Mass on 18th March in his private chapel. This generous gift of the Mass and his kindness and concern will touch the lives of so many in a very special way.

Also taking this week of prayer to heart is Sr Annie Bromham IBVM who gifted the Pastoral Care Project by painting the image here of the Finding of Jesus in the Temple.

Excerpt from the reflection - The Closeness of God. ©

Based on the painting and Luke Ch 2 v 40-50

Joseph how did you feel when you realised
Jesus was missing?
You knew how it felt to be overshadowed by the
sense of guilt...
The litany of *'if only'* recited to the tune of
hope...hope ebbing away when suddenly you
and Mary together see Him....
Jesus is in the Temple!



*"I feel a flood of emotions...
welling up within me...
I see Jesus as he looks to His mother.
Her hand goes out to hold him...
I feel the tears running down my beard.
I thought the situation with Herod was difficult,
the flight into Egypt, but back then we could
lift Jesus up and hold him.
Now the roles are reversed.
It is not us who are holding Jesus...
It is Jesus who is holding us...
in the Father's love...
Nothing compares to this moment."*

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