



## Feast of the Holy Family 31 Dec

How are we Family?

I thought was a simple question to contemplate, I thought I knew the answer I had a loving and caring family with so many fond memories. Yet I realised that my experience was not what many people share. It has been a difficult year with the cost of living placing extra stress on many families, war and families destroyed, natural disasters and an increase in homelessness to name a few. Yet there has been joy for many families.

Any parent's nightmare would be to lose a child, the same for Mary and Joseph as they frantically searched for Jesus and when finding him did not understand his words. Yet Mary treasures all these things in her heart. We like Mary and Joseph may be confronted at times with difficult conversations, misunderstanding, or simply a lack of understanding when we interact with family, friends, or our companions. We may find it difficult to answer question they ask about why they are suffering or why bad thing happen to them.

Jesus replies "Why are you looking for me? Did you not know I must be in my father's house" yet he returns to Nazareth with the. He journeys with them, not out of childish anger or pride but out of Love. He does not leave His Fathers' house he shows that his Father is in all of creation, and that God is present in all families, peoples, and situations that we find our selves in. Like Mary and Joseph we may not understand the where or why we are lead on a certain journey or how to see the Face and will of God there, but we too like Mary are asked to treasure these things in our heart.

As Vincentians we are called to look after and tend the larger family of God, we are asked to search for those in need and when found to journey with them along their path. We are not asked to fix them; we like Josph and Mary are asked to be family to them. We are given a gift in all we encounter on our journey and to see all we encounter as brothers and sisters. When we enter into relationship with them we need to ensure our questions and our conversations are always based in love and never judgment. We are to respond as the 12-year-old adult Jesus did, to act out of love and to grow in wisdom as we are also given a hand up by our companions.

What does it mean to share in the family of our companions?

What does it mean to share in our Vincentian family?