December 30, 2018

Holy Family, Year C

***Past and future blessings***

Slim Dusty is fondly remembered as Australia’s ‘King of Country’. During his lifetime, Slim released more than a hundred albums, selling more than seven million records and earning over 70 gold and platinum album certifications.

*‘Looking forward, Looking Back’* is a famous Slim Dusty song. As another year comes to an end and the countdown to 2019 begins, Slim’s song title offers some practical wisdom. Today is a timely opportunity for all of us to look forward and look back, to reflect on the past year’s blessings and to set our goals for the year ahead.

Imagine the Holy Family of Nazareth doing the same. They, too, had much to look back on and much to anticipate! Mary might have recalled the angel’s words about Jesus at the Annunciation, *“He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High God. The Lord God will make him a king … his kingdom will never end”* (Luke 1:32, 33b). Joseph might have recalled his dream, when the angel told him to name Mary’s son Jesus, *“because he will save his people from their sins”* (Matthew 1:21).

Mary and Joseph might also have reflected again on their experience with Simeon. Holding the infant Jesus, Simeon shared his vision where he saw the fulfillment of all God’s promises and the hope for the future salvation of Israel. *“For my eyes have seen your salvation … a light to reveal your will to the gentiles and bring glory to your people Israel”* (Luke 2:30, 32). No wonder Mary and Joseph were amazed!

Remembering and reflecting on these special moments of God’s presence and grace must have helped Mary and Joseph to trust in God’s faithfulness and to know that whatever the future might hold, they would not be alone.

Think now about your own ‘holy family’? How was God present to you this year? Were there times of joy: like the birth of a new child or grandchild, a marriage, a new job, a graduation? Were there times of sadness and struggle: like illness, death, disharmony, financial troubles? Spend some time reflecting on how God has been with you through it all.

But don’t just look back; look forward too. How has the past year prepared you for the blessings to come? Maybe God is beginning to unfold something new in your life. How might you embrace it? Does it call you to trust, especially if the situation seems unclear or uncertain? Looking forward is an invitation for you to be open to God’s blessings, to be amazed at how God is at work in your life and to know that even better things are still to come!

Looking back on 2018 we thank our loving God for being with us. Looking forward to the new year, we pray that we will remain close to the One who is always present and faithful to us.

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