

A FAMILY TRULY LOVED BY GOD

I listened to the 'Wedding at Cana' story, which made me think about the love between the Virgin Mary and her son, Our Lord Jesus Christ. The stewards told her that no wine was left for the guests at the wedding. She told them to do what Jesus said. She then told her son about the lack of wine. He answered that it was not his concern.

However, he did help and told the stewards what to do, which showed his love for his mother. He could not refuse her wish. The water he asked the stewards to fill the casks with miraculously turned into the best of wines. All this made me think about the love God had for the women in that family:

1. The Virgin Mary.
2. St. Anne. The mother of the Virgin Mary.
3. St. Elizabeth. The cousin of the Virgin Mary.

God selected these three women for specific roles. He chose Anne to be the mother of the Virgin Mary, who would be the mother of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, known to the Jews as the expected Messiah. He chose Mary's cousin Elizabeth as the mother of John the Baptist, who spread the word about repentance and the Messiah.

THE VIRGIN MARY

People worldwide know about Mary being the mother of Our Lord Jesus Christ. In straightforward terms, she was a virgin who, by the power of God, gave birth to Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Our Blessed Lady, as she is sometimes called, has appeared in many places over the last 2000 years. Two famous ones are Lourdes and Fatima. All these places have been noted for the miracles that have happened there. Mary is a much-loved Queen of Heaven and has many Feast Days.

Pages could be written about her, but her name, the Immaculate Conception, makes us believe that she is truly special in God's eyes.

ST. ANNE

God's choosing Anne and her husband Joachim to be the parents of Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ, shows that he must have known they were holy and worthy of special treatment. Here is a remarkable story about St. Anne that you may not have heard about.

When the Romans were persecuting the early Christians, some of them took the remains of St. Anne as far from Rome as possible. They landed in Southern France, settling in a place called Apta Julia, which today is now the city of APT.

Barbarians regularly invaded that area of France. St. Auspicius, the 1st bishop of APT, had St. Anne's remains buried in a deep, secret crypt to protect them from these invading hordes. Over these perilous years, the exact spot where she was buried was lost.

A Cathedral was to be built over the remains of the original church in APT, and Charlemagne was present at its reconsecration. The one thing that bothered everyone was not having discovered St Anne's relics. However, a miracle was to save the day.

A 14-year-old nobleman called John, who had been deaf, dumb and blind from birth, suddenly started behaving strangely. He approached the high altar and started to pound his staff on the steps, indicating that they should look beneath. They found a door to an ancient crypt closed by huge stones. As it was opened, the blind youth led the way into the underground church to a lower crypt. Here, they found a burning lamp, which shone very brightly, and as they entered, it went out, and at that very moment, the boy John was able to see, speak and hear. His first words were: "The body of St. Anne, mother of the Virgin Mary, Mother of God, is in yonder recess."

Charlemagne and his followers opened the recess, and in a casket, they found the body of St. Anne wrapped in folds of precious cloth. On the casket was the inscription, "Here lies the body of Blessed Anne, mother of the Virgin Mary. Charlemagne had a description of the findings written and sent to the Pope. This and the pope's answer still exist in the Vatican Library.

The Feast day of St. Anne is 26TH July.

St. Anne is the patron saint of grandparents, mothers, married couples, and the infertile.

ST. ELIZABETH

Elizabeth was the wife of Zacharias, and both were:

"righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless" (Luke 1:6)

Zachariah prayed regularly in the Temple in Jerusalem, and one day, the Angel Gabriel appeared before him, telling him that his wife Elizabeth would have a baby boy and that they were to call him **JOHN**.

Zachariah asked Gabriel how this could be as he and his wife were old and passed the age of having children. The Angel Gabriel told him that as he doubted God's ability, he would be struck dumb until he gave the baby the name John. Elizabeth did become pregnant and was visited by her cousin Mary, who was also pregnant. She recognised that Mary was blessed by God and said;

“Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb” (Luke 1:42).

When Elizabeth gave birth to a boy, her relatives and friends were happy for her and asked what the boy was to be called. She said, “JOHN.” The crowd was puzzled, as the tradition was for the first-born boy child to be called after the father or some prominent male in the family. There were no Johns in the family. They then turned to Zachariah and asked him.

Zachariah was dumb, so he wrote down JOHN, and immediately he could speak as God had promised. Their son would be known as John the Baptist, who **‘made the way’** for Jesus Christ, who said:

“I tell you solemnly, of all the children born of women, a greater than John the Baptist has never been born; yet the least in the Kingdom of heaven is greater than he is.” (Matt 17:11)

The Feast Day of St. Elizabeth is 5TH November.

St. Elizabeth is the patron saint of bakers, nursing homes, brides, and beggars.

ANNE, MARY AND ELIZABETH MUST BE TRULY SPECIAL IN THE EYES OF GOD.