



PARISH OF FINCHAMPSTEAD AND CALIFORNIA

WEEK 4 – FROM 30 MARCH 2014

LENT WELL SPENT ... at Home

Bible readings – Exodus 2. 1-10 (NRSVA)

The Israelites are in captivity in Egypt ...

¹ A man from the house of Levi married a Levite woman. ² The woman conceived and bore a son; and when she saw that he was a fine baby, she hid him for three months. ³ When she could hide him no longer she got a papyrus basket for him, and plastered it with bitumen and pitch; she put the child in it and placed it among the reeds on the bank of the river. ⁴ His sister stood at a distance, to see what would happen to him.

⁵ The daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river, while her attendants walked beside the river. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her maid to bring it. ⁶ When she opened it, she saw the child. He was crying, and she took pity on him. 'This must be one of the Hebrews' children,' she said. ⁷ Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, 'Shall I go and get you a nurse from the Hebrew women to nurse the child for you?' ⁸ Pharaoh's daughter said to her, 'Yes.' So the girl went and called the child's mother. ⁹ Pharaoh's daughter said to her, 'Take this child and nurse it for me, and I will give you your wages.' So the woman took the child and nursed it. ¹⁰ When the child grew up, she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and she took him as her son. She named him Moses, 'because', she said, 'I drew him out of the water.'

Luke 2. 33-35

Mary and Jesus took Jesus to the Temple when he was 40 days old. The elderly and godly man Simeon recognised Jesus as the one who will save not only the Jews but the Gentiles as well ...

³³ The child's father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. ³⁴ Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, 'This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed ³⁵ so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too.'

Questions on the Bible readings

- 1 What kinds of discussion might there have been between the Levite and his wife: when she became pregnant; when the baby was born; when the baby could no longer be hidden?
- 2 Why did the wife seem to be the one who made all the arrangements?
- 3 Where might we see God's hand in this account?
- 4 If Mary and Joseph were already amazed by what Simeon had told them about Jesus' future, what would they have made of Mary's sword-pierced soul? And in light of the annunciation and birth narratives about Jesus, why would they have been amazed anyway?

General questions about families and faith

- 5 What are the issues that arise in families as a result of matters of faith? What different ways are there in which such issues can be addressed and/or resolved? Do some work better than others?
- 6 In what ways does your own faith contribute to family life?
- 7 How does Christianity help or affect breaking or broken relationships and their aftermath? How adequate is church teaching on such issues?
- 8 What are the dangers of the church focusing on 'standard families' as normative, especially in relation to those who live on their own?
- 9 Jesus seems to have been unsentimental about his own family (see eg Mark 3. 31-35 below). What should we learn from this?
- 10 What can we learn from our own families that might make our church community better?

For reflection – Mark 3.31-35

Jesus' mother and his brothers came; and standing outside, they sent to him and called him. A crowd was sitting around him; and they said to him, 'Your mother and your brothers and sisters are outside, asking for you.' And he replied, 'Who are my mother and my brothers?' And looking at those who sat around him, he said, 'Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother.'