Did you have a good Christmas? I hope so, and I hope, too, that you've had a little bit of time in the last few days to stop and reflect and rest. I'm very conscious of how busy our lives can be, so full of things that we feel we have to do, and how easy it is for rest time to get pushed out.

And that's not good for any of us. The Bible reminds us that rest time matters. After the busyness of creation, God rested and gave us the Sabbath; a gift of time to pause and recover our energies, a pause point in each week. Then after the hectic, emotional rollercoaster of Holy Week and the shock of Good Friday, there's another pause point before the joy of Easter and resurrection. So those few days after Christmas and before New Year feel like another of those times to pause and be grateful.

Our gospel reading for today tells us about the period of time after a different festival, the festival of Passover. I love the fact that Mary, Joseph, and the 12-year-old Jesus travelled to Jerusalem to celebrate the festival in a huge group of relatives and friends and other travellers.

It sounds noisy and chaotic and great fun. Which is why, on the journey back home after the celebrations, when everyone was probably a bit tired and the youngsters overexcited, still there wasn't immediate concern when his parents couldn't find Jesus. They assumed he was somewhere else in the group, but then they realised he wasn't there, and they rushed back to Jerusalem to search the city for him.

I lost my three-year-old in a crowd once, just for a few minutes, but they seemed like hours, and I was in a complete panic. She was fine. She’d found another family and invited herself to their picnic, but she might not have been. So, I sympathise with how Mary and Joseph felt, and how they told off Jesus for causing them such anxiety.

Although the story tells us that afterwards, Jesus was obedient to his parents, it's clear that he was bewildered that they hadn't guessed that he would be found in the temple, his father's house, asking questions of the teachers there and learning from them. His pause point, perhaps, was to listen and reflect in the place where he felt closest to God.

I wish you all a very Happy New Year, and I kindly suggest that if you're someone who makes resolutions, you consider building some quiet time into your diary. It could make a real difference.

Let's pray. God, our creator who offers us refreshment and renewal, help us to celebrate the birth of your son by turning towards you, where we find our rest. Amen.