

# **CORNELIA'S JEWELS**

Edited by P. Ribes, s.j. from a Roman legend written by James Baldwin

**Our children are the greatest treasures God has given us  
Look after them with utmost care.  
Make them the first priority of your life.**

## **A ROMAN LEGEND**

It was a bright morning in the old city of Rome many years ago. In a vine-covered summer-house, in a beautiful garden, two young brothers were standing by. Their mother Cornelia was talking with a lady friend of hers.

The younger boy remarked to his brother. "Have you ever seen such a handsome lady as our mother's friend? She looks like a queen." "Yet she is not as beautiful as our mother" said the elder boy. The young one replied. "It's true, our mum is best".

Soon after that, Cornelia came down the walk to call her sons. She was simply dressed in a plain, white robe. Her arms and feet were bare without the glitter of golden rings or chains about her hands and neck. With a tender smile, she said, to her sons: "Boys, I have something to tell you." They bowed before her and replied: "What is it, mum?"

"We shall dine today here in the garden -and my friend is going to show us her casket of jewels which you have heard so much of"

The brothers looked shyly at their mother's friend. Was it possible that she had still other rings besides those on her fingers? Could she have other gems besides those which sparkled in the chains about her neck?

When their meal was over, a servant brought out from the house the casket of jewels. The lady opened it. Ah, how those jewels dazzled the eyes of the wondering boys! There were strings of pearls white as milk, and smooth as satin, heaps of shining rubies, red as glowing coals, sapphires as blue as the sky on a summer day and diamonds that flashed and sparkled like sunlight.

The brothers looked long at the gems. "Ah!" whispered the younger one, "if our mother could only have some beautiful jewels like these!" At last, however, the casket was closed and carried carefully away.

"Is it true, Cornelia, that you have no jewels?" asked her friend. "Is it true, what I have heard it whispers" "No, I have two most beautiful and precious jewels" answered Cornelia. And as she said that, she drew her two boys to her side, "here are my jewels. They are worth more than all your gems."

The boys never forgot their mother's pride and love for them. and after many years, when they had become great men in Rome, they ever treasured their mothers' love for them.

