

Reflections

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The Importance of the Parent in authority and personal dignity

1. Authority. The link to God is the most important, but the path toward God is by means of a healthy attachment to the parents. Through them, the child will forge his experience and fundamental image of authority.

If the experience is positive, he/she will understand authority as power of love and service which is protective and stimulates proper growth. By means of a negative experience with the parents, he/she will see authority as an oppressive power, unjust, violent and fearsome.

The first experience determines the future relationship with all authority: God, priests, teachers, bosses or in politics.

2. Personal dignity. From the experience of authority with one's own parents depends another most important experience: the experience of one's own personal dignity.

This experience determines in a profound way personal security, the ability to love and the creativity of the person. Anyone who does not feel dignified and valuable will forever feel insecurity when facing life. He/she will be a person with a complex, incapable of accepting or loving himself/herself. This person will not be able to love others because he/she will not be able to recognize with serenity the values of others, without seeing them as rivals who awaken their envy. This puts them on the defensive or makes them destructive in order to affirm themselves at the expense of others.

We all know this type of person with whom it is very hard or impossible to live with. They are insecure and will not have the courage to unfold their talents. They will back down from obstacles and will gladly not assume the tasks they face.

3. Our task as parents. A healthy conscience from one's personal dignity comes forth in only one way: feeling loved, especially by one's own parents.

Our great task as parents is to give this love to our children by means of concrete acts:

making time to talk to them and to play with them, preferring to listen to them instead of the TV, caressing them, taking care of their needs and wishes, etc.

With this we tell them: You are valuable, you are the most precious treasure we have. You are much more precious than things or money. They have a unique dignity: they are persons and they are our children. They are going to believe it because they feel it at each moment. They are truly going to feel as persons (and not things) and they are going to dare to see the world without fear. Throughout life, they are going to live a healthy attachment with themselves, with their fellow man and with work.

4. The father. All of this which sounds so beautiful is very difficult to make into reality.

The problem especially affects the father because the mother possesses a greater sense for the personal relationship. Her nine-months physical union with the child normally becomes a deep affective attachment. On the other hand, the father identifies much more with the functional and impersonal values of the world of work.

He likes change, speed, efficiency. Personal dialog and the slow and patient love- bond are not easy for him. At home, generally, he is more distant than the mother.

5. The challenge. The renewal of the family requires conquering anew our own paternity. Without it, we will never be men capable of creating a new world, a really human world. Without rescuing paternity, we will never be happy children, truly human beings and full-fledged Christians.

Questions for reflection

1. Am I aware what my task as a father implies..... of its consequences?
2. Have I noticed some of the mentioned attitudes in my children: insecurity, envy.....?
3. How am I at home.....distant.....warm.....?

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