

Reflections

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Some Obstacles on the Way to Family Sanctity

1. Dreaming of the ideal family

One danger is dreaming of the ideal family, and therefore, rejecting the real family. To love the family group is to love real, concrete, flesh and bone, persons. Whoever loves his/her dream family more than his/her family itself....judges it, accuses it and condemns it. We Christians are idealists. Our ideals are especially high: a holy family is a challenge out of the ordinary. But we Christians are also realists. We know that growth is slow and that it demands from us much understanding, patience and confidence. Let us love our family just as it is. Let us love our relatives just as they are, with their values and limitations. And from that love – which is the basis for everything – let us build the future.

2. Inability to change

An element which can make difficult the development of a family is the inability to change. To be disposed to change, or not to be disposed to change, is something which can cause great friction in daily life. Growth always carries with itself the transformation of the person, of his/her mentality and of his/her life.

Sanctity does not exist without great changes. And change requires a combination of humility, bravery, strength and energy which can weaken with time. Carlos Valles, SJ, calls it mental arthritis or spiritual rheumatism. After 40, the motto can be very well be: “leave me in peace!” But for us who are Christians, that is, young in spirit, it should not be that way.

The great enemy for change is the desire for security. The usual ways are clear, secure, trustworthy. With them we know what awaits us and how to face things. New ways always include risk, and the human being always flees danger. Change is always going against. Nevertheless, if we aspire for sanctity, we must have faith, courage and the simplicity to change. Let us allow God to show us new means and allow Him to take us down unknown paths.

To refuse to change is to harden, to become stagnant. To be disposed to change is to be disposed to live, to grow, to mature. Are we disposed to this?

3. To judge others

Another obstacle is our inclination to judge others. The differences among us, of mentality, of being, different criteria, lead us to criticize and judge easily.

And sense of judgment destroys all relationship. Jesus himself insisted: “Do not judge.” Not to judge is a Gospel commandment, it is a basic rule for human relationships and it is an inevitable precept for mental health. And, it is very difficult.

I cannot avoid that my eyes see what is obvious and what my mind declares in a spontaneous way that such conduct is bad. The sense of judgment that something is good or bad, would be best left up to God, the supreme Judge.

What I can do is express my opinion clearly about a concrete conduct, without expressing a moral judgment about it.

And what I have to learn is to limit my comments about the action, without judging the person. To condemn the sin and not the sinner is another great Christian principle. Furthermore, the person is classified, tagged, and condemned – without recourse to appeal.

Questions for reflection

1. Are we resistant to changes?
2. Do we judge others?
3. How do I act when facing the fault of a relative?

If you wish to subscribe, comment on the text or give your testimony, write to: pn.reflexiones@gmail.com

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