

# Reflections

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## Preparation for Family Life

We know that the family is deeply threatened by factors which attempt against its stability and integrity. It is necessary that we Christians defend it passionately and valiantly.

The basis for all family life is love which has united two lives. If love between the spouses weakens or is lost, then the entire family is in danger. Therefore, the main preparation for the couple planning for marriage is **education for love**, but for true love.

I say this because today there is great confusion. Love is not the same as the feeling of attraction nor is it an uncontrolled and sensual passion. It is not the same as a physical attraction between a man and a woman, nor is it true love that which often appears on the media as a disordered sexual illness.

True love is not a passive experience. It is an active attitude which demands something from me. Essentially, love is giving, it is attempting to make the other person happy. For the majority, love consists in “being loved” and not in “loving.” They wait for the other person to make them happy. They are concerned about appearing attractive, being pleasant and everything is done with the aim of being loved. Love, for them, is receiving and enjoying.

Therefore, we must not doubt that a sexual wave advances among our youth and threatens to destroy the joy, the purity and the beauty of love – with the aim of converting it into sensual materialism which is the source for many disillusionings, sufferings and failures.

Preparation for marriage should begin in adolescence and extend until love and inner attitudes which will help them become good spouses and parents have matured since this will be their main “profession” and is the hardest art to learn.

Today we see innumerable cases of parents who do not understand their children and who do not have the ability to educate them or to gain their confidence. We see many spouses who are not capable of forgiving each other or of overcoming their character defects, etc.

The truth is that they have arrived at marriage without practically any preparation except for their courtship: without the formation of moral and social virtues which are essential to forming a good home.

For one’s profession, many years are dedicated to study. For marriage, on the contrary, little is done, sometimes nothing or almost nothing. Why are we shocked by the many marriage and family failures?

The Church makes attempts to prepare the couples before marriage. These preparatory meetings are insufficient. Preparation for marriage should also take place within the educational systems, in youth groups, and most especially in the home.

## The family is the great school of love.

In the family we learn and we practice love in its multiple forms: the love of children for their parents.....brotherly love with siblings.....the experience of married love in the example of the parents.....and also the love for God. The family is where we experience love, service, forgiveness, generosity, giving of oneself to others, sacrifice and giving up for the sake of love.

Sanctity and the beauty of family love finds its earthly culmination in the Family of Nazareth. Jesus, who was coming to build a new world, spent 30 years with Mary trying to live the new ideal of the Christian family and He only preached in public for 3 years. Mary learned the importance of the family from Him.

Therefore, wherever She went, She created the environment of a home: at the home of her cousin, Elizabeth; at Cana; at the Cenacle. Since then, wherever She arrives, She immediately creates family and converts men and women into children and into brothers and sisters. That is how She was in her earthly life and that is the grace which She now bestows from Heaven.

Let us ask the Blessed Virgin to help create an atmosphere of personal love in all our homes. If we open the doors of our homes to the educative power of Mary, then she will become our Mother and Educatrix.

## Questions for reflection

1. How do I prepare my sons and daughters for marriage?
2. Do I collaborate in my parish in the formation of engaged couples?
3. Am I a person who creates a family atmosphere?

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