

# Reflections

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## Spirit of the Holy Family

Today, the Church wants to awaken the exemplary spirit which reigned in Nazareth in order that it may reign today in all our families. I think that the spirit of the Holy Family was – above all else – a spirit of love, a spirit of faith and a spirit of sacrifice.

**a) A spirit of love.** It is a love which is accepted mutually, it is sustained and it is endured – in spite of all defects and limitations because God Himself has chosen and united his members.

1. In the first place, we must relive in our family the mystery of the Holy Family: **the redeeming love of Christ.**

In Christ, the husband is responsible for the salvation of his wife. He has to love her to the point of saving her. The woman is responsible for the salvation of her husband. The parents are responsible for the salvation of their children: it is their main mission for which some day they will be held accountable, and the children, little by little, according to the measure of their growth, become responsible for the salvation of their parents.....responsible for loving them to the point of saving them.

2. According to the image of Mary and Joseph, the love of the parents for each other and for the children, should be, in second place, **an unselfish and respectful love.**

To educate is to serve unselfishly and respectfully the originality and individuality of the children. It means to awaken and to help develop the gifts which God has given to each one of them.

Without a doubt, this requires a lot of time, a lot of energy, and a great deal of patience from the parents because it is their most creative task.....the most difficult, but also the most beautiful and the most fruitful. The parents must see and recognize Jesus in their children as in the Family of Nazareth. I educate and love Christ Himself in my child: "Whoever receives a child as this, receives Me."

3. According to the example of Jesus, **the love of the children for their parents should be obedient and respectful.** He himself, the Son of God, was submissive to his parents until the age of 30. Let us recall that text of the Gospel when he was 12 years old: "Jesus went with them to Nazareth and continued under their authority."

**b) A spirit of faith.** The spirit of love is based on a profound spirit of faith and confidence. In the Holy Family of Nazareth, as in our family, it was necessary to have mutual confidence, to demonstrate faith daily. Joseph had to have blind faith in Mary; he had to believe in Her in an extraordinary way. He had to love Her very much in order to believe so much in Her, and Mary had to believe in Joseph; She had to trust in his pure love, in his respect, in his esteem.

Joseph and Mary had to have faith in their Son. Although he appeared a child like all others, they always believed in the mystery which was in Him. They did not always understand everything He did, all that He told them, but they trusted in Him. They kept his words and meditated on them, and Jesus demonstrated the confidence He had in his parents: He was with them for thirty long years.

**c) A spirit of sacrifice.** The spirit of authentic love and the spirit of profound faith carry with them the spirit of sacrifice. For the Holy Family, sacrifices and sufferings began early on:

\* Birth in solitude and misery. They were never more poor, more fatigued, nor more alone than when the Lord was born.

\* Then, the death of the Innocents; as a first result of the birth of the Savior, the families of the country were in mourning, the children under the age of two assassinated .

\* The flight into Egypt in the dark of night; their stay there as fugitives.

\* That is the way it was always until the dark day at Calvary.

Sacrifices belong to family life. We all know it and we always experience it anew. Therefore, a profound spirit of sacrifice is necessary for each family who is on the way to the ideal of the Holy Family of Nazareth.

## Questions for reflection

1. Do I respect the decisions of my children?
2. How do I teach respect to my children?
3. How do I bear the sacrifices of family life?

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