

Reflections

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Family: Community of Hearts

To build up a family, a community of hearts, is not an easy task. It requires a great deal of nobility, dedication, patience and unselfish love on everyone's behalf. Many obstacles exist along the way, primarily due to our limitations, our lack of self-education and personal maturity.

It costs us something, for example, to love each person in spite of their way of being different, their rarities and crazinesses which bother us and tire us out. All families have experienced this or another type of difficulty. And the younger persons who have not experienced this, will do so at the appointed time.

But in spite of all the problems, one must continue striving for a profound community of hearts. Because without it, our families can be transformed into small infernos in which intrigues, jealousies, envies, and revenge rule.

Now, what can we do to become a true community of hearts? Or in other words, how should that love be which unites us as an attachment in the depth of our souls?

1. Qualities of our love. To build up a community of hearts, our love should have three qualities:

1.1 It should be a love which shelters the brother/sister. It is an everlasting love which never stops sheltering. It is like the degenerate son whom the family expels; but always has a home in the heart of his mother. It is a love which shelters others without exception.

All should find a favorite place in my heart, in all situations, also in moments of crisis, alienation or when one has fallen.

1.2 It should also be a love which exalts, never a love which pulls you down. And that is not easy in today's society with all of its anti-values. But our love should tend towards uplifting unto the heights, just like the flames of a fire which raise everything upward.

1.3 Our love should be a love which overcomes and bears. Such a profound love which wants to lead us to a community of hearts cannot exist without sacrifices and renunciations.

We have to learn to put up with, not only with love, but also with joy. We have to give a full and total "yes" to others, that is, also accept and bear with everyone's whims and silliness.

2. The education of our heart. How should we educate it in relationship to others?

2.1 I should make sure to have a **respectful heart**. A heart which has respect and even veneration for each person. And that respect I maintain unmoved when facing the person's weaknesses, limitations and failures. In the family we are forming, we want to become only one heart and only one soul, but in such a way that nobody loses his/her originality.....that each one is free to think and act.

2.2 My heart should become an **extremely kind heart**. It is a kindness which overlooks the limitations and weaknesses of others, a kindness which does not pay attention to the offensive and hurtful things of others. And all of this as fruitfulness of a deep and overflowing kindness of the heart.

2.3 My heart should **feel responsible for others**. I have to become responsible for them, for their health, their joy of living, their affective maturity, their emotional equilibrium, their inner freedom, their independence when facing a society of consumerism. I am responsible for their ascetic and spiritual growth, their aspiring for ideals, their fulfillment of their resolutions, their fidelity in their struggle for sanctity. This fraternal responsibility also means speaking to the other person with great frankness; help the person to see, with love, his/her mistakes and failures; criticize the person, if necessary, with humility and sincerity.

Questions for reflection

1. Do I have that respectful heart which sees each family member with profound admiration?
2. Do I possess that inner richness of sincere and benevolent kindness which forgets the bad experiences of the other person and only looks at the good experiences?
3. Do I have that heart which is responsible for others?

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