

Reflections

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Priestly Function of the Family

In her **priestly** function, the Church offers spiritual sacrifices to the Father and leads the world towards Him. “The baptized come to be ‘living stones’ for the edification of a spiritual edifice, for a holy priesthood.....”

In Baptism, we participate in the common priesthood of the faithful. To lead the family to the Father, to be educators of the religious life of our children, that is our difficult task as parents. In the sacrament of matrimony we receive the necessary grace to fulfill this task.

From this function, we could extract many consequences for our daily life. How have we developed our creativity in the Easter and Christmas celebrations? Let us remember that we are a living part of the Church and that we participate in its liturgical life. The Eucharist is the “source and pinnacle of Christian life” and, therefore, should also be for our family life. “May our daily life be a perpetual repetition of the presentation of the gifts, of consecration and communion. Thus we will participate in the sacrificial function of the priest.” We are priests for our children and our task is to help them grow in their life of prayer. Here, the mother has a particular role in the education and the father presiding in the family prayers and the blessing of the children.

The Church participates in the **real** function of Christ in the government of the world. But does it as the Good Shepherd serving his own. Parents fulfill this task, in the first place, with their children. “The salvation of my family has been placed in my hands. This is very important for our personal and spiritual attitude. I am the good shepherd foreseen by God from all eternity for my Church in miniature; on my shoulders rests the happiness or misfortune of my children”. The three essential virtues of the good Shepherd are his love, his faithfulness and his care.

1. The good Shepherd is he who gives his life for his sheep, the one who loves his own. That is the inner attitude of parents with their children. It is about kindly understanding the children.

The parents try to listen and understand what their children carry in their hearts. They trust in the goodness of the children and encourage them. They are respectful of each one’s originality and of the mystery of smallness which exists in each person.

2. Faithfulness is the particular characteristic of this love. Faithfulness between spouses is not only about not deceiving our spouse with another man or another woman, but faithfulness means to strive daily in the small things so that this love can grow.

A faithful employee is one on whom we can count on at every moment and one who does his job well, not only the one who deceives us working for the competition. How important it is to value this aspect which is so weak in our family life! How important it is to pray for our mutual faithfulness!

3. The care of the pastor leads us to strive so that our family is open and concerned for those around us. A family in solidarity with those around us with whom we are called to live. If we want to set up a great community, we have to be in solidarity with the families united with us. Let us be concerned for them, let us make sacrifices and let us pray for them. We want to build a small kingdom, not only on the background of our own family, but beyond it; we want to be one soul and one heart with all the families.

If someone would come and ask where the Church is, my response would have to be: my family. What a great task!

My family is a Church in miniature. Christ is present there and from there fulfills his redemptive work. If formerly the convents were the places around which the Christian West grew, now it will be the families, true workshops of Christian life around which the West will again be Christian.

Questions for reflection

1. Is my family a domestic Church?
2. Are we a family in solidarity with others?

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