

Illustration

One of the greatest threats facing families now is simply that *we don't spend enough time together*. We are so busy working, or socializing, or watching TV that we have less and less time for each other. What a pity.

There is a story about a solicitor who lived a considerable distance from her elderly father. Months had passed since they had been together and when her father called to ask when she might visit, the daughter detailed a list of reasons that prevented her from taking the time to see him, e.g., court schedule, meetings, new clients, research, etc., etc. At the end of the recitation, the father asked, "When I die, do you intend to come to my funeral?" The daughter's response was immediate, "Dad, I can't believe you'd ask that! Of course, I'll come!" To which the father replied, "Good. Forget the funeral and come; I need you more now than I will then."

Spending time together with the family is a way of showing our family that we love them. When we love our family we want to sacrifice ourselves by spending time with them, and all the more so when we realize that by not spending time with them we are depriving them of our love and hurting them.

The Christian Family

"With the Christian family, parents are the primary educators in the faith and "the first heralds of the faith with regard to their children." But all the members make up the family, and each can make a unique contributions in which a sense of God's loving presence is awakened and faith in Jesus Christ is confessed, encouraged, and lived."

(National Directory for Catechesis)

Note: Kindly make available Divine Mercy Picture for all families.

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My Faith Journey

[YEAR OF FAMILY – SIMLA CHANDIGARH DIOCESE]

ISSUE : 1

Year 2015

Action Plans:

1. The parish team (priests, Religious and Catechist) will visit at least 20 families a month and come together and evaluate the family needs/ problems and search for possible solutions.
2. In all parishes of our diocese on Divine Mercy Sunday the homily will be based on the family to make them aware of Synod on Family and its implications in their families.
3. By April 11, 2015 all parishes will have formed a *Parish Family Cell*.
4. Sunday after Christmas (Feast of Holy Family) will be celebrated as the Family Day in all parishes.
5. The Family Year will be officially closed in our diocese on the Feast of Christ the King 22nd November 2015.



"The Holy Family is the icon of the domestic Church, called to pray together. The family is the domestic Church and must be the first school of prayer. It is in the family that children, from the tenderest age, can learn to perceive the meaning of God, also thanks to the teaching and example of their parents: to live in an atmosphere

marked by God's presence."- Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, Dec, 28th, 2011

Why Family Catechesis is So Important

The family is a place in which the Gospel is transmitted and from which it extends. The family as a locus of catechesis has a unique privilege: transmitting the Gospel by rooting it in the context of profound human values. It is, indeed, a Christian education more witnessed than taught, more occasional than systematic, more ongoing and daily than structured into periods.

"With the Christian family, parents are the primary educators in the faith and "the first heralds of the faith with regard to their children." But all the members make up the family, and each can make a unique contribution to creating the basic environment in which a sense of God's loving presence is awakened and faith in Jesus Christ is confessed, encouraged, and lived."

Benefits of Family Catechesis:

1. Involves the whole family in learning and building up the faith of the whole family.
2. Provides a way to teach, model, and demonstrate family faith practices.
3. Provides the resources for families to live Christian Practices at home.
4. Builds up the confidence and ability of parents to share faith and values with their children

If we want children and teens to become lifelong Catholics and members of the Church we have to start now by involving the whole family in the life of the Church.

The Church at the Service of the Family

The family in the modern world, as much as and perhaps more than any other institution, has been beset by the many profound and rapid changes that have affected society and culture. Many families are living this situation in fidelity to those values that constitute the foundation of the institution of the family. Others have become uncertain and bewildered over their role or even doubtful and almost unaware of the ultimate meaning and truth of conjugal and family life. Finally, there are others who are hindered by various situations of injustice in the realization of their fundamental rights.

Knowing that marriage and the family constitute one of the most precious of human values, the Church wishes to speak and offer her help to those who are already aware of the value of marriage and the family and seek to live it faithfully, to those who are uncertain and anxious and searching for the truth, and to those who are unjustly impeded from living freely their family lives. Supporting the first, illuminating the second and assisting the others, the Church offers her services to every person who wonders about the destiny of marriage and the family.

In a particular way the Church addresses the young, who are beginning their journey towards marriage and family life, for the purpose of presenting them with new horizons, helping them to discover the beauty and grandeur of the vocation to love and the service of life.

(Taken from FAMILIARIS CONSORTIO OF St. JOHN PAUL II ON THE ROLE OF THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY IN THE MODERN WORLD)

Teaching points

Scripture passage for Reflection: Mt 18:21- 22; 23-35

Catechism of the Catholic Church: The Family in God's Plan

The nature of the family: 2201, 2202, 2203

The Christian family:

2204 "The Christian family constitutes a specific revelation and realization of ecclesial communion, and for this reason it can and should be called a *domestic church*." It is a community of faith, hope, and charity; it assumes singular importance in the Church, as is evident in the New Testament.

2205 The Christian family is a communion of persons, a sign and image of the communion of the Father and the Son in the Holy Spirit. In the procreation and education of children it reflects the Father's work of creation. It is called to partake of the prayer and sacrifice of Christ. Daily prayer and the reading of the Word of God strengthen it in charity. The Christian family has an evangelizing and missionary task.

2206 The relationships within the family bring an affinity of feelings, affections and interests, arising above all from the members' respect for one another. The family is a *privileged community* called to achieve a "sharing of thought and common deliberation by the spouses as well as their eager cooperation as parents in the children's upbringing."

Family Devotions and Prayer. The Christian faith shapes the whole of our lives and involves a lifetime of study, reflection, and prayer. Family devotions provide a way to learn more about the Bible and Christian tradition as a family, and apply the teachings to daily life as a follower of Jesus Christ. This understanding of a devotional life includes, but is not limited to, public worship, bedtime prayers, Bible reading and study, table grace, evening and morning prayers, and praying alone at any time of the day or night.

Family Devotion for the month of April.

Divine Mercy: During the month of April have a picture of Divine Mercy of Jesus in the houses and pray the Divine mercy chaplet. Take some time to help families learn Divine Mercy of Jesus and consecrate the families.

Activity:

1. Family Prayer: Praying together- Turning to God for support, guidance and strength
2. Family Meal—eating together, saying grace before and after meals.

GRACE BEFORE MEALS:

Bless us, O Lord, and these Your gifts which we are about to receive from Your bounty through Christ, O Lord. Amen

THANKSGIVING AFTER MEALS:

We give You thanks, O almighty God, for all Your benefits, through Christ our Lord. Amen

Practice:

“Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy” (Mt.5:7)

The beatitude of the world is quite different; it runs like this: “Blessed is the man who thinks first about himself.” Our Lord came to correct; at the beginning of his public life, on the hill of the Beatitude, He preached: **“Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy.”** At the end of his public life, on the hill of Calvary, he practiced that Beatitude as he addressed the thief: **“This day you shall be with me in paradise.” (Lk 23:39)**

In the family, let every member feel the sorrow and misery of another as if it were his/her own. Mercy is a compassion that seeks to unburden the sorrows of others. Unless we are merciful to others, God cannot be merciful to us.

“Be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful.” (Lk.6:36)

Ejaculation: Divine mercy of Jesus, I trust in you. (pray as many times as possible)