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Preparatory catechesis for the World Meeting of Families
Love is Our Mission – The family fully alive

Part II

THE MISSION OF LOVE

With men and women created in the image of God, history begins. God makes a covenant with us, first through Israel and then through Christ and the Church. In this relationship, God teaches us to love as he loves. In other words, having been created for communion, we learn that love is our mission. In short, “God’s way of loving becomes the measure of human love.”

God’s love is captured vividly in Ephesians 5, where Saint Paul extends the marriage analogy to Christ and the Church. Paul urges both husbands and wives to “be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ.” (Eph 5:21) Christian marriage is therefore not a negotiation over rights and responsibilities, but rather a description of mutual self-giving. Jesus enables Christians to speak confidently about God’s love. He opens up God’s covenant to all people, completing Israel’s history as a universal narrative of redemption. Jesus embodies life-giving love because he is, literally, God’s Word made flesh. He loves the Church as his bride, and this unselfish love “proven in blood on the cross” sets the model for the kind of mutual love and service needed within every Christian marriage and family.

As Pope Benedict XVI taught: “By contemplating the pierced side of Christ, we can understand ... God is love. It is there that this truth can be contemplated. It is from there that our definition of love must begin. In this contemplation the Christian discovers the path along which his life and love must move.”

For many today, “love” is little more than a warm feeling or physical attraction. These things have their place. But real love “love that endures and deepens and satisfies the human heart over a lifetime” grows from what we give to others, not what we take for ourselves. The Lord Jesus Christ died on a cross for our salvation. Authentic Catholic teaching on marriage and the family separates true love from all counterfeits. Scripture has many complementary and overlapping ways of describing God’s love, but marriage is foremost among them. The covenant between God and his people “first Israel and then the Church” is like a marriage. This marriage is not always easy, but human sin never has the last word. God’s fidelity reveals what true love and fidelity look like. Jesus Christ, who welcomes all of us into membership in God’s family, gives us a new and unexpected definition of love, giving us new possibilities for living.

God works through us. We have a mission. We are in the world for a purpose “to receive God’s love ourselves and to show God’s love to others. God seeks to heal a broken universe. He asks us to be his witnesses and helpers in that work. We ought to ask ourselves:

- a. Why is God’s love like a marriage?
- b. How is God’s way of loving different from our human way of loving?
- c. Can you think of a time when God’s love helped you to love in a more honest and better way?

Готовачи Катехиза до Світової Зустрічі Родин
Любов є нашим завданням - найбільш жива родина

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МІСІЯ ЛЮБОВІ

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XVI : «Роздумуючи над проколотим боком Христовим, ми можемо зрозуміти... Бог є любов. Саме тут можна роздумувати над цією правдою. Саме тут починається дефініція любові. У цих роздумах християнин відкриває шлях, яким має іти його життя та любов.»

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