



Reflection 8

**FOLLOWING CLELIA'S FOOTSTEPS
TOWARD THE HEART OF JESUS**

Sincere, faithful, patient, and generous love, as in the Family of Nazareth

May every family feel in their homes the living presence of the Holy Family of Nazareth that fills our little domestic communities with sincere and generous love, source of joy even in trials and difficulties.

Word of God – 1Corinthians 13: 1-13

If I speak in human and angelic tongues but do not have love, I am a resounding gong or a clashing cymbal. And if I have the gift of prophecy and comprehend all mysteries and all knowledge; if I have all faith so as to move mountains but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away everything I own, and if I hand my body over so that I may boast but do not have love, I gain nothing. Love is patient, love is kind. It is not jealous, [love] is not pompous, it is not inflated, it is not rude, it does not seek its own interests, it is not quick-tempered, it does not brood over injury, it does not rejoice over wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails. If there are prophecies, they will be brought to nothing; if tongues, they will cease; if knowledge, it will be brought to nothing. For we know partially and we prophesy partially, but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away. When I was a child, I used to talk as a child, think as a child, reason as a child; when I became a man, I put aside childish things. At present we see indistinctly, as in a mirror, but then face to face. At present I know partially; then I shall know fully, as I am fully known.

So faith, hope, love remain, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION - AMORIS LÆTITIA

Christian families are invited to value the gifts of marriage and the family, and to persevere in a love strengthened by the virtues of generosity, commitment, fidelity and patience (*cf. Amoris Letitia, 5*).

Every family should look to the icon of the Holy Family of Nazareth. Its daily life had its share of burdens and even nightmares, as when they met with Herod's implacable violence. This last was an experience that, sad to say, continues to afflict the many refugee families who in our day feel rejected and helpless. Like the Magi, our families are invited to contemplate the Child 21 and his Mother, to bow down and worship him (*cf. Mt 2:11*). Like Mary, they are asked to face their family's challenges with courage and serenity, in good times and bad, and to keep in their heart the great things which God has done (*cf. Lk 2:19, 51*). The treasury of Mary's heart also contains the experiences of every family, which she cherishes. For this reason, she can help us understand the meaning of these experiences and to hear the message God wishes to communicate through the life of our families. (*Amoris Letitia, 30*)

Being patient does not mean letting ourselves be constantly mistreated, tolerating physical aggression or allowing other people to use us. We encounter problems whenever we think that relationships or people ought to be perfect, or when we put ourselves at the centre and expect things to turn out our way. Then everything makes us impatient, everything makes us react aggressively. Unless we cultivate patience, we will always find excuses for responding angrily. We will end up incapable of living together, antisocial, unable to control our impulses, and our families will become battlegrounds. That is why the word of God tells us: "Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamour and slander be put away from you, with all malice"

(Eph 4:31). Patience takes root when I recognize that other people also have a right to live in this world, just as they are. It does not matter if they hold me back, if they unsettle my plans, or annoy me by the way they act or think, or if they are not everything I want them to be. Love always has an aspect of deep compassion that leads to accepting the other person as part of this world, even when he or she acts differently than I would like. (*Amoris Letitia*, 92)

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“Do not be afraid to think about love, but about the love that takes risks, faithful love, love that makes the other grow and in which you grow reciprocally. Think about fruitful love. Here, as I [was being driven around the arena], I noticed children in their parents’ arms: this is the fruit of love, true love. Take a risk on love!

“Freedom does not allow for half measures...The greatest of freedoms. . . is the freedom of love. Love is not a profession. Love is life . . . And there you must learn to discern: when there is real love and where there is simply enthusiasm. . . . Love’s greatest enemy is the double life. . . .if you begin to love the double life, love is lost; love leaves. . . . Love does not allow for half measures: all or nothing. And in order to make this love grow, one must avoid short cuts. Love must be sincere, open and brave. (Pope Francis, August 11, 2018)

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Mother Clelia

“Jesus does not want me to murmur nor allow myself to be overcome by irritation against those who do wrong; on the contrary, I must sympathize with their blindness, pray for their conversion. . . .He wants me to sympathize and make others sympathize with the pains of all the afflicted and console them with good and gentle words, rejoicing to be able to raise up the dejected soul of a brother and spread a little balm on his pain.” (Diary)

“Don’t forget, my daughters, that Jesus’ love is sensitive to all our

neighbor experiences of good and of evil; He weeps with those who weep, rejoices with those who rejoice. He suffers everything that others suffer: whether they be present or absent, friend or enemy, near or far away; because He sees in everyone a member of the same Body of which Jesus Christ is the Head.” (Spiritual Anthology, pp. 97-98)

“The Gospel tells us that the lips speak what the heart dictates; if, therefore, our thoughts and words are always conformed to the teachings of Jesus Christ as taught to us by the Church, it is certain that the Holy Spirit has written on our hearts. But if we make rash judgments, slander, tell lies, have evil relationships or if we use vulgar language, swear or use obscenities, then it is Satan who has written on our hearts.” (Diary)

CONSIDER:

- **What Christian values are present in your family?**
- **What is the greatest obstacle in your family to living love, respect, patience, marital fidelity?**

PRAYER – Trust Him

Trust Him when dark doubts assail you, trust Him when your strength is small; trust Him when to simply trust Him seems the hardest thing of all.

Trust Him! He is ever faithful!

Trust Him! For the Heart of Jesus is the only place of rest.

In marital fidelity there is joy. God is always faithful to us, giving us every good: above all, the love of married life and the love of children. If children are raised by faithful parents, they will learn the secret of happiness and the meaning of life.

