



Synod
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For a synodal Church
communion | participation | mission

Reflection 12

*Following Clelia's Footsteps
Toward the Heart of Jesus*

"FAMILIES, LIVE THE JOY THE JOY OF FAITH!"

Luke 2: 1-20 – THE BIRTH OF JESUS

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that the whole world should be enrolled. This was the first enrollment, when Quirinius was governor of Syria. So all went to be enrolled, each to his own town. And Joseph too went up from Galilee from the town of Nazareth to Judea, to the city of David that is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, to be enrolled with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. While they were there, the time came for her to have her child, and she gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. Now there were shepherds in that region living in the fields and keeping the night watch over their flock. The angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were struck with great fear. The angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For today in the city of David a savior has been born for you who is Messiah and Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was a multitude of the heavenly host with the angel, praising God and saying: "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests." When the angels went away from them to



heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go, then, to Bethlehem to see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." So they went in haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the infant lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known the message that had been told them about this child. All who heard it were amazed by what had been told them by the shepherds. And Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart. Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, just as it had been told to them.

Pope Francis – I have listened to your experiences and the stories you have shared. I have seen so many children, so many grandparents... I have felt the pain of families living in situations of poverty and war. I have listened to the young people who want to be married even though they face numerous difficulties. And so, let us ask ourselves: how is it possible to live the joy which comes from faith, in the family, today? But I ask you also: is it possible to live this joy or is it not possible?

...The Lord knows our struggles: he knows them. He knows the burdens we have in our lives. But the Lord also knows our great desire to find joy and rest! Do you remember? Jesus said, "... *that your joy may be complete*" (cf. *Jn 15:11*). Jesus wants our joy to be complete! . . . Take home this Word of Jesus, carry it in your hearts, share it with the family. It invites us to come to Jesus so that he may give this joy to us and to everyone.

In order to have a healthy family, three words need to be used. And I want to repeat these three words: please, thank you, sorry. Three essential words! We say please so as not to be forceful in family life: "May I please do this? Would you be happy if I did this?" We do this with a language that seeks agreement. We say thank you, thank you for love! But be honest with me, how many times do you say thank you to your wife, and you to your husband? How many days go by without uttering this word, thanks! And the last word: sorry. We all make mistakes and on occasion someone gets offended in the

marriage, in the family, and sometimes - I say - plates are smashed, harsh words are spoken, but please listen to my advice: don't ever let the sun set without reconciling. Peace is made each day in the family: "Please forgive me", and then you start over. Please, thank you, sorry! . . . Let us say these words in our families! To forgive one another each day!

The life of a family is filled with beautiful moments: rest, meals together, walks in the park or the countryside, visits to grandparents or to a sick person... But if love is missing, joy is missing, nothing is fun. Jesus always gives us that love: he is its endless source. In the sacrament he gives us his word and he gives us the bread of life, so that our joy may be complete. (Pope Francis, Address to Families, October 26, 2013)

Mother Clelia

May Your will be done at the beginning of each of my actions, in all things, but above all in adversity. I ask, O Lord, the grace to be able to say with a sincere heart: May Your will be done.

In the moments when I am agitated and complain, give me light, O dear Jesus, so that I may understand that all things happen to me through the disposition of Your adorable Will. May I bow my head willingly before Your fatherly corrections, repeating with an honest spirit: May Your will be done, may I profit from my tribulations by correcting everything in me that displeases Your most loving Heart.

(Diary p. 91)

PLEDGE: Pope Francis advises us: "Let us ask ourselves: what can I do concretely during these days as we draw near to Christmas? How can I do my part? Let us make a concrete commitment, even if small, that is adapted to our situation in life, and let us continue to do it to prepare ourselves for this Christmas. For example: I can call a person who is alone, visit that elderly person or that person who is ill, do

something to serve a poor person, someone in need. Even still: maybe I need to ask forgiveness, grant forgiveness, clarify a situation, pay a debt. Perhaps I have neglected prayer and after a long time, it is time to draw near to the Lord's forgiveness. Brothers and sisters, let us find something concrete and do it! May Our Lady, in whose womb God became flesh, help us."

Prayer - Wipe away, Baby Jesus, the tears of children! Embrace the sick and the elderly! Move men to lay down their arms and to draw close in a universal embrace of peace! Invite the peoples, O merciful Jesus, to tear down the walls created by poverty and unemployment, by ignorance and indifference, by discrimination and intolerance. It is you, O Divine Child of Bethlehem, who save us, freeing us from sin. It is you who are the true and only Saviour, whom humanity often searches for with uncertainty. God of peace, gift of peace for all of humanity, come to live in the heart of every individual and of every family. Be our peace and our joy! (*John Paul II*)

The family is "alive" if it is united in prayer. It is "strong" when it discovers the Word of God. It is "generous" if it remains open to life, does not discriminate, and serves those in greatest need (Pope Francis, September 11, 2021).

