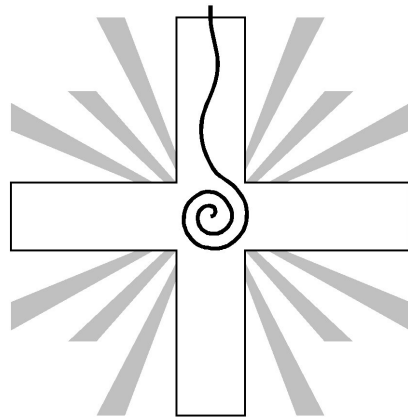


“He who loses Faith loses the fragrance of Life”



Non nobis, Domine

The Family

extract from
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THE FAMILY - THE CHILD - THE UPBRINGING OF CHILDREN

The teachings of the Law which I have passed on to you are addressed to all mankind and constitute a rule to be obeyed by all its components. The Law lays down definite instructions for those who intend to form a family of their own, since the family represents a group of beings who in time may multiply. This means that a true understanding of this new relationship, from the very moment of its inception and thereafter, demands particular attention. From the first coming together of a man and a woman both acquire new obligations and relinquish certain rights, because this union may have certain specific consequences. The birth of a child is both permitted and desired by the Law but it is essential for both partners, confronted with this possibility, to transform their initial attitude both physically and spiritually.

Those couples who are brought together only by a physical impulse stray from the specific teaching which regards the family, while those who are united in the Name of the Law, are not only bound by the Christic rules which affect every individual, but by those which bear specifically upon the new relationship. Moreover, the dualism which today separates the family from its social environment of the people as a whole should be completely eliminated, and the family must no longer be considered as a separate self-sufficient entity. A bond of interdependence must be seen to exist between these two social entities. Understanding and tolerance are the two basic factors in human life, in social life, they are the twin pillars upon which peace rests wherever it is to be found, ranging from the boundless peace of eternity to the peace and harmony of the family. Nowadays, the peace which Christ left to mankind has lost its original splendour, it has been darkened and tarnished by spiritual human movements by differences. These discords may be likened to an incessant fluctuating motion, variable in duration and strength but continually disturbing the brilliance, the purity of a crystalline surface. The crystal-pure surface represents concord and it is this concord which can lead us, through reason and faith, to understand the value of the peace which Christ left to the Twelve Apostles in its twofold form: "The peace I give you, My peace I give you". The first of its forms may be considered as the power to create peace in society, in the family; the second is the divine peace, the peace without which creation would come to an end, for each pulse, every rhythm of the Infinite which seeks to become transformed into life, into a vital impulse, needs an environment penetrated by that peace, by divine peace, by the peace which can communicate and transmit its energies.

I have spoken of the likelihood that spiritual dissonances will arise. These are not conflicts and clashes but, humanly speaking, spiritual misunderstandings. If a person is thirsty and is only given normal water to drink, such as any family can

give, while what he really desires is a cup of cool crystal-clear spring water, he knows that he longs for something which in the circumstances he cannot obtain. An apparently normal desire remains unfulfilled, the thing desired is not to be had. Out of this circumstance there arises the conflict. The ordinary water provided by the family has to slake a thirst that can never be fully satisfied by it since it craves special water with specific properties.

The example of water can stand for the craving to indulge any human desire, the pleasure of possessing the right to impose one's own opinion on others. If you believe that understanding and tolerance are the indestructible pillars of life then these spiritual discords will cease, since thought, reason and conscience will fulfil their task of evaluating every wish expressed and come to see the absurdity of this desire or at least the impossibility of satisfying it. Discord ceases, harmony is re-established between the two souls and it is this that must prevail. All else is futile, all else retains some tiny but undeniable trace of pride. But if spiritual disharmony is abolished, checked as soon as it begins to appear, then the twin pillars of toleration and understanding can achieve their function and peace is established, filling the family with harmony and fulfilment. Not just in the human social world but specifically in the family, the duty of every individual towards his fellows is to strive to do away with these disharmonies wherever they tend to occur, not to give way to them since giving way once will mean sowing the seeds for an early repetition of further incidents of the same sort.

Harmonious family life and the true upbringing of the children all depend on a fit sense of values and sentiments which can be illuminatingly conceived as being like a rose-bush with its small buds and some blooms that have opened fully. The bush is a single entity, whose roots nourish it and give life, colour and perfume to the open flowers. The sense of harmony is innate in and among these buds. Each one in itself feels its equality, its fellowship with the other buds, while it also loves the opened blooms, as if it felt that its own origin began in the life of those spreading roots which cost effort strain and anguish to the open roses which are now ready to wither and fall.

This image, this comparison which I have used, has been sent to you by the Father to enable you to understand that every aspect of creation is intended to bring home to the minds, the spirits and the hearts of men the perfection of creation itself.

I shall make this concept clearer to you. A family: the roses that have already opened fully and are soon to lose their petals are the parents; the buds, now unfurling, are the children, their descendants. All of them together form a single, indivisible unity and are given life by their sacrifices, struggles, sorrows and are cheered by the sun of the Lord. Clearly all these children stem from a single impulse: it is the Lord who gives the children, who causes the buds to unclose and,

in accordance to sacred law, entrust them to one home, one rose-bush, rather than another, one family rather than another. He bestows them so that the buds, the children, may receive as much light, as much warmth, as much sunshine as possible, and all this despite the inevitable thorns which exist for them all, for the open blooms, for the growing buds and those just coming into being, but which mean that the plant, the family, should be viewed with care, with love, but never with fear.

Some, or many or all families may be granted the joy of possessing one or more such buds, and it is clear that those whose task is to tend them, the families and their members, receive the gift and must bestow their care upon it. There is one idea that must be impressed upon the child's Spirit and later upon his physical mind: this is the singleness, the unity of the family, of that particular set of roses and buds and hence the right of every bloom and every bud to benefit from those energies which the Law has empowered the plant to provide through its roots which are spread out through the soil, the soil which the Lord has endowed with the capacity to absorb His energies in equal measure for all.

It is at this point that the error arises. Differences should be carefully eliminated, whereas you cause them and perpetuate them. Harmony and concord are essential, but how can a superior being grow up to believe this if the concept has not been implanted and taken root in him? Equality among all men but, over and above all, equality in the family. No distinction in the treatment shown towards the smaller buds and the other more mature ones. If this absolute equality is lacking then you will have made room for the entry of outward strife, for open conflict. Jealousies, bitterness, sorrows and trouble are all the fruits of remissness on the part of the parents who have allowed these distinctions to arise.

The twin forms of Spirit and man must develop together. This means that while matter will develop after the manner of brute matter into a shape corresponding to the tasks it has to perform, the soul will develop in sympathy, in love, in tenderness. The soul will thus succeed in triumphing over the brute nature of matter, otherwise the latter would petrify the sensitivity of the Spirit and it would fail to bear its richly rewarding fruits. All the members of the family, must receive precisely the same measure of love, from the newly developed buds, because it is only in this way that this habit will eventually become an intrinsic part of the child's very nature and so acquire the force of a principle, benefiting the family circle and radiating beyond it. In this way a perfect being may be formed, beneficial to himself and to humanity, his fellow beings.

As I speak of the child, I see in my mind's eye the many little ones who were kept away from Christ by the multitudes as they were waiting for the divine word to be spoken, when Jesus uttered those words which represent a whole patterns of action: "Suffer the little children to come unto Me and forbid them not". Elsewhere I

have interpreted the word "child" as referring to a state of rebirth, of purity, of transparent purity achieved by man. Mankind can attain the Christic summit only when it has become like a little child once more. Today, however, my emphasis is different, today I wish only to speak of children as such, in their simplicity, in their meekness, in that poverty of Spirit which is actually a strength, no more than a seeming poverty which will mature, develop, and in its progress lead to the fulfilment for which it is destined.

Here lies the heart of the matter: it is necessary to allow and assist the child to attain this fulfilment. Why should there be any distinction made between one age and another? Why consider the child a being incapable of assimilating, of perceiving?

You may suppose that the man who has money, who has knowledge (granted him by the Father), is a superior being, superior to the child, when he sets out to regain the heights from which he fell. You are mistaken, because money is valueless, only the Spirit is precious; age is valueless, only faith is precious. The person who feels more important than one of his fellow beings only because he possesses wealth or intellect in a larger measure is a self-limited individual, one who repeats in a different guise, in another form, the original sin of pride, that pride which caused him to fall to the earth and still holds him there today.

Your efforts, your faith, must all be directed solely and singly towards the training of new sowers of the seed. Be of help and assistance, seeking to develop these gifts, and consider the child as no less precious than yourself, not yet fully developed but still your equal. This means that you must consider a child capable of perceiving the greatness of the Everlasting through your powers of explanation; you should not teach children to rejoice in the wealth of their family or pride themselves on some particular piece of knowledge. You should rejoice and lead the child to rejoice in the capacity to know the Uncreated, the Everlasting One, through the created world by which you are able to live. The task which I am laying upon you must be begun in early childhood or else you will find at a later age that you will have to engage in different reasonings for father and for child, for mother and for child, for one brother and another. On the other hand, the ability to harmonize both types of knowledge lies in gently but effectively enduing the children's Spirit with a sense of the Father's constant presence among you. He is the integral and vital part of the Heavens; wherever you are, wherever you desire to and must bring the teaching to children the Almighty is present: He is all things and in all places.

Some may smile, others meditate. He who smiles to himself says: "I have completed my task, I have used my knowledge or I make use of it". I ask: "How have you used it"? Have you followed the same path as was followed by Jesus, so that you too can say, "Suffer the little children to come unto me"? Or have you

followed this path only on the human and social level, in that confused and erroneous way that is unacceptable to the Law? You should educate children on the human level and teach them the rules of life appropriate to their age but certain Christic energies, divine energies, must also be inculcated from the very earliest years. The words Jesus/Christ, Christ/God, which you utter with devotion, must be repeated continually to the children until they become an intrinsic part of them, so that the children can never imagine they are alone again. If they were left to themselves they would be a prey to Satan but Christ/God stands beside them and it is He who has succoured and still succours you all. The Power that defends the child is the same Power that will make the transition a happy one when the hour comes for you to pass on.

All this must be told sweetly, like a fairy tale, so that it becomes instilled in the mind, thought and Spirit of the child, and by combining with it the two parallel concepts of reason and conscience you will begin to create an image of the Divine Figure which must hover constantly, perpetually over the Spirit of the child, the man of tomorrow.

Your task is to sow the seed, but it must be implanted in the child. Sowing the seed should no longer mean a laborious task for the child but become a desire, a craving which arises out of the explanation which it is in your power to give him that life is motion, life is work, life is effort, life is sorrow. The child must absorb these axioms: "One cannot live without suffering, one cannot live without effort". The difficulties you encounter in bringing up a child are twofold since We intend this knowledge to be instilled in the child in his potential, spiritual capacity whereas you wish, because you find it less trouble, to lead the child towards human knowledge. You want him to stand out as a schoolchild among other schoolchildren, not as a Spirit among Spirits. We want the adult to achieve his full powers, having previously acquired all these prerequisites, all the needful abilities and energies indispensable if he is to carry out his mission.

Aid and succour! How many times have I said that by charity I do not mean the gift of money but the gift of soul! Christ is the model of charity. He went so far as to sacrifice himself, to give himself up, to destroy his own divine identity in order to redeem your failings. This is the concept which should be progressively developed and instilled in the beings that surround you. With the concept of aiding and succouring fixed in your thoughts, now turn your gaze upon the beings who live in your sphere, in your family. They must not vegetate inertly, they must live. Seek to help them, but above all seek to instil in them a twofold understanding: that of Faith in its reality, not its hypocritical forms, and the concept of Love, also in its reality, not in the form of money.

Teaching the child to give money is called *charity*. Teaching the child to practise self-abnegation, suffering, striving to ease the sufferings, the troubles, the

hardships of others, is called compassion. These are two forms of charity: one of them is social, human, and has a certain comparative value which is certainly not indispensable for our ascent, to regain our original place. The other is the path taken by Christ and it is a way that leads to only one goal, the Father. All aspects of family life must be taken into account, because it is necessary to understand clearly the relationship between the members of the family circle and other people considered collectively, whole peoples and nations, since there are relations of spiritual interdependence of which you have no inkling, no understanding. No one exists as an isolated individual, every being has an unconscious relationship with one of his fellows. If you lead an individual, in childhood, towards perfection or merely towards some improvement, you will automatically project the same teachings towards the being in spiritual contact with him, sharing a spiritual bond, and in this way the seed you sow will be twofold.

The bond linking one member of the family to another is a bond subject to the same doubts, the same waverings, the same errors as the bond which binds two people together. The family in its deepest essence, in all its values, should be the subject of meditation, so as to be able to spread understanding of this higher concept: the family should not be considered separately as something apart. It must be seen as a sharing part of the whole. This means putting an end to the dualism between family and other people (society), replacing it with a constant bond and an awareness of this bond, awareness of the existence of such a relationship. This is the concept which you must use as your starting point for the spiritual, human and social education of a being, every day and at all times using love but also firmness. There can be no human progress if it is not preceded by previous substantial progress, though this may only be in formation. You must be convinced that it is essential, indispensable for the children to be first educated spiritually, then humanly. To be their tutors you must be good leaders, good teachers, good workers, but to become "peacemakers" you must begin with yourselves, shaping yourselves and bringing harmony into your own lives. When, in addition, I say you must "dehumanize" yourselves, I mean that you must cleanse yourselves of all impurities and join that band of "children" who will move towards Christ/God by following the path they have already chosen. The "loving firmness" which you should consider necessary for the spiritual training of children is a quality that each of you must develop first, by means of those three forms of prayer which I have already mentioned: effort, sorrow and tears, understood in an unselfish sense. When you have achieved these three powers, to suffer, strive and weep for your brothers, then you will understand the significance of this loving firmness which is indispensable for the guidance of the child.

- *Why do children so frequently rebel against their parents?*

What appears in the guise of rebellion nowadays is the outcome of the state of transformation of not just humanity but also the environment which shelters humanity. You can observe: "The different races are being lost, mineral resources are exhausted, certain species of plant life no longer exist". This is a process which gradually, despite all the remedies which mankind seeks to apply, must and will be accomplished. It is not a state of rebellion for rebellion's own sake, it is a state of a different mental - not spiritual - concept. Mankind, in its youthful form, mistakenly uses the forms of violence, of brute force, but it is the mind which is being upset to recompose itself subsequently. It is the "world of ideas" which follows the transformation of the earth: this is the starting point for all these alterations, transformations: metamorphoses.

You should, as far as possible, repress, or rather not so much repress as restrain and guide, since the task of parents was and is and always shall be one of spiritual education. You must therefore guide children along the true paths without blaming other parents for having adopted a mistaken system. Do not be over-assertive or heavy-handed, but let your touch provide unerring guidance, a touch that is firm when it needs to be firm, which can convey to the child that love which belongs as of right to the Father, the Source of Love, and at the same time give the child that sustaining knowledge, or at least awareness, which is not always given or is only given inappropriately.

A rich man can create a being free from greed, from avarice. This means he will be conscious of the value of money and the possibilities of using it not for himself but for the needs of others. You must, in other words, inculcate in children the concept of co-operation. You must tell these young ones, these buds of promise, that they exist not by the will of their mother and father but by virtue of a divine plan which is hidden from men. You must teach them respect and awe of the Holy Father. You must lead them to recognise in their own father and mother two irreproachable, two perfect counsellors. The child, the new born babe, must sense the certitude of truth, the enlightenment of truth in his father and mother. The teachings of the parents must both be and be seen to be the truth and nothing but the truth. The child will sense that his father and mother radiate an energy entirely different in kind from that radiated by his peers and so be linked more closely to these two masters of life. This is the moment to seize firm hold of the reins, not tightening them all at once but making their presence, and gradually their power, felt.

Wisdom must be the constant and unfailing companion of the whole marriage partnership. There is no room for error in giving advice to a child, the counsel given must be precisely right. This leads me back to the "world of ideas": thought,

reason, conscience and the child who receives the fruits of the reasonings of the conscience.



TO ALL MOTHERS

Indulgence of the child's faults is not love but sin.

Indulgence means passively accepting children's weaknesses and errors. Love means correcting them, slaking their thirst, appeasing their hunger.

To love one's children means helping them by forming their natures. Love means considering small failings ugly deformities and great merits as infinitesimally small quantities. Love means instilling in the children powers of analysis which will enable them to acquire a capacity for self-criticism and self-control.

An over-indulgent mother is at fault, just like a harsh and over-severe mother. A mother should be seen as the link between her children and the Divine One, since she is accountable to Him for the training and upbringing she gives the children entrusted to her care. A mother should be gentle and loving but also just and above all firm in her attitude towards faults that clearly reveal the hand of Satan. This does not mean she should be insensitive, overbearing and repressive towards the child, but she should exert a constant, loving vigilance, lest one day she find herself confronted by a crooked and deformed tree dominated by Satan instead of the upright trunk of a healthy tree.

