

[Children] growing up in warm and friendly families, they learn to relate to the world in this way, without giving up their faith or their convictions. We know that Jesus himself ate and drank with sinners (cf. Mk 2:16; Mt 11:19), conversed with a Samaritan woman (cf. Jn 4:7-26), received Nicodemus by night (cf. Jn 3:1-21), allowed his feet to be anointed by a prostitute (cf. Lk 7:36-50) and did not hesitate to lay his hands on those who were sick (cf. Mk 1:40-45; 7:33). The same was true of his apostles, who did not look down on others, or cluster together in small and elite groups, cut off from the life of their people. Although the authorities harassed them, they nonetheless enjoyed the favour 'of all the people' (Acts 2:47; cf. 4:21, 33; 5:13).

AL, 289

[The Church must act] like the beacon of a lighthouse in a port or a torch carried among the people to enlighten those who have lost their way or who are in the midst of a storm. Let us not forget that the Church's task is often like that of a field hospital.

AL, 291

The way of the Church is not to condemn anyone for ever; it is to pour out the balm of God's mercy on all those who ask for it with a sincere heart ... there is a need 'to avoid judgements which do not take into account the complexity of various situations.

AL, 296

[M]oments of joy, relaxation, celebration, and even sexuality can be experienced as a sharing in the full life of the resurrection.

AL, 317

[T]o want to form a family is to resolve to be a part of God's dream, to choose to dream with [God], to want to build with [God], to join [God] in this saga of building a world where no one will feel alone.

AL, 321

Each of us is a 'fisher of men' (Lk 5:10) who in Jesus' name 'casts the nets' (cf. Lk 5:5) to others, or a farmer who tills the fresh soil of those whom he or she loves, seeking to bring out the best in them.

AL, 322

Our loved ones merit our complete attention. Jesus is our model in this, for whenever people approached to speak with him, he would meet their gaze, directly and lovingly (cf. Mk 10:21). No one felt overlooked in his presence, since his words and gestures conveyed the question: 'What do you want me to do for you?' (Mk 10:51) ... We are constantly reminded that each of those who live with us merits complete attention, since he or she possesses infinite dignity as an object of the Father's immense love. This gives rise to a tenderness which can 'stir in the other the joy of being loved. Tenderness is expressed in a particular way by exercising loving care in treating the limitations of the other, especially when they are evident'.

AL, 323

Led by the Spirit, the family circle is not only open to life by generating it within itself, but also by going forth and spreading life by caring for others and seeking their happiness. This openness finds particular expression in hospitality, which the word of God eloquently encourages: 'Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares' (Heb 13:2).

AL, 324

Let us keep walking together. What we have been promised is greater than we can imagine. May we never lose heart because of our limitations, or ever stop seeking that fullness of love and communion which God holds out before us.

AL, 325

Prayer to the Holy Family

Jesus, Mary and Joseph, in you we contemplate the splendour of true love; to you we turn with trust. Holy Family of Nazareth, grant that our families too may be places of communion and prayer, authentic schools of the Gospel and small domestic churches. Holy Family of Nazareth, may families never again experience violence, rejection and division; may all who have been hurt or scandalised find ready comfort and healing. Holy Family of Nazareth, make us once more mindful of the sacredness and inviolability of the family, and its beauty in God's plan. Jesus, Mary and Joseph, Graciously hear our prayer.

Amen.

AL, 325



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