

OCTOBER – TOGETHER ON MISSION

By understanding its mission, the family can more fully embrace God's plan for the fullness of divine life and love that he wishes to share with the family.

Breaking Open the Theme

When we think of being missionary, we often assume that this means we must travel to a faraway place and share our gifts and our faith. But being on mission is actually part of our everyday existence as baptized sons and daughters of God. Just as Jesus was sent into the world to save humanity, Jesus sends the family into the world with a specific mission. The Christian family, as a domestic church, is entrusted with the mission “to guard, reveal, and to communicate love.”⁸² What makes its task unique is that the family does this mission *together*.

To live out this mission of the family, it is necessary to attend Sunday Mass as a family, to give thanks to God for your mission and to pray as a family for the graces necessary to carry it out. Family prayer is an opportunity to bring the family together to “pause for prayer.”⁸³ Families can learn in a particular way how to pray from the Holy Family of Mary, Joseph and Jesus. They were a family of prayer. Christ regularly prayed the psalms with his family and Mary knew the Scriptures well (cf. Lk 1:46-55). St. Joseph, as head of the household, would have led them in prayer.

October is traditionally the month of the holy rosary. Through the rosary, and through the Joyful Mysteries in particular, we meditate upon the life of the Holy Family through the eyes of Mary. The rosary is one of the simplest and most powerful prayers that the family can pray together. Both St. John Paul II and Pope Francis have often asked families to pray the rosary.⁸⁴ By coming together in this way for prayer and by turning together to Jesus with Mary, many families have experienced profound moments of peace, joy and reconciliation.⁸⁵

Meditation

From Carl Anderson and Father José Granados' Called to Love

Jesus said to the disciples: “You are the light of the world” (Matt 5:14). The Lord’s words apply in a special way to the family. Light, after all, fulfills its “mission” of bestowing warmth and visibility not by some extra activity added to its nature, but simply by being what it is. Similarly, just as the mission of the sun is nothing other than to shine, the mission of the family is just to be itself. John Paul II was calling

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the family to this essential mission when he exclaimed: “Family, become what you are!” What happens when the family becomes what it is? Here is John Paul II’s answer:

... the family has the mission to become more and more what it is, that is to say, a community of life and love. ... The family has the mission to guard, reveal and communicate love, and this is a living reflection of and a real sharing in God’s love for humanity and the love of Christ the Lord for the Church His bride. (*Familiaris Consortio*, 17)

... The family, we said, is the hearth from which the light of love spreads out to vivify the structures of society. ... Significantly, the mission of the Church can be described in similar terms. The Church exists, after all, to radiate God’s love into the world. The Church is the sacrament of love that both shows forth and effects man’s union with God and man’s union with man (see *LG* [Lumen Gentium], 1).⁸⁶

1. How do we as a family allow our light to shine before others in the world? How do we think of and care for others outside of our family?
2. What can we do to allow ourselves to be God’s missionaries and to radiate his love into the world?
3. Do we live our family life as missionary disciples? Do we allow Jesus’ word to dwell in our family and to teach us what it means to love? How can we do more to build up one another for the mission of love?

Scripture Reading — Psalm 144:1-3; 9-15

A prayer of thanksgiving for God’s faithfulness

Blessed be the LORD, my rock,
 who trains my hands for battle,
 my fingers for war;
My safeguard and my fortress,
 my stronghold, my deliverer,
My shield, in whom I take refuge,
 who subdues peoples under me.

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O God, a new song I will sing to you;
on a ten-stringed lyre I will play for you.
You give victory to kings;
you delivered David your servant.
From the menacing sword deliver me;
rescue me from the hands of foreign foes.
Their mouths speak untruth;
their right hands are raised in lying oaths.

May our sons be like plants
well nurtured from their youth,
Our daughters, like carved columns,
shapely as those of the temple.
May our barns be full
with every kind of store.
May our sheep increase by thousands,
by tens of thousands in our fields;
may our oxen be well fattened.
May there be no breach in the walls,
no exile, no outcry in our streets.
Blessed the people so fortunate;
blessed the people whose God is the LORD.

Family Project

Set aside a Sunday afternoon this month to pray the rosary together as a family. Consider having a family brunch before praying, and talk to your children about the rosary and how it is prayed. Pray especially for peace in your family and for the healing of family wounds.