

# AUGUST – HOSPITALITY

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*Scripture speaks frequently about the importance of a family's hospitality because of its life-giving love that nourishes weary souls and heals broken hearts.*

## **Breaking Open the Theme**

Hospitality is necessary for a Christian family as a domestic church. It is part of a Christian's mission (Heb 13:2, Rom 12:13, Mt 10:42, Lk 10:29–37, Gn 18:1-10). But what is hospitality? Christ teaches us through the parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk 10:29-37) that one dimension of hospitality is “to make a neighbor of a stranger.”<sup>71</sup> Hospitality, as the word itself and the parable of the Good Samaritan suggest, helps to heal others, like a hospital.

Yet the concept of Christian hospitality goes even deeper. The Rule of St. Benedict states, “All guests who present themselves are to be welcomed as Christ, for he himself will say: ‘I was a stranger and you welcomed me.’”<sup>72</sup> Christian hospitality, then, is not just merely being kind and welcoming toward the stranger or our own family members; it is welcoming all as Christ.

This radical Christian hospitality by families can occur in many simple ways. We can invite people over for a celebration or regular family activities, serve a home-cooked meal, wave hello to neighbors from the porch or even ask others to join for family prayer. The possibilities are endless. The key is that families not just open the door but also open their hearts with love toward others, sharing a love that is warm and life-giving like Christ's.

## **Meditation**

*From Pope Francis' Amoris Laetitia*

Led by the Spirit, the family circle is not only open to life by generating 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 unaware” (Heb 13:2). When a family is welcoming and reaches out to others, especially the poor and the neglected, it is “a symbol, witness and participant in the Church's motherhood.” Social love, as a reflection of the Trinity, is what truly unifies the spiritual meaning of the family and its mission to others, for it makes present the kerygma [teachings] in all its communal imperatives. The family lives its spirituality precisely by being at one and the same time a domestic church and a vital cell for transforming the world.<sup>73</sup>

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1. What are some specific ways in which our family practices hospitality within our home? In what ways is hospitality challenging for our family, and in what ways does it help our family grow in grace and happiness?
2. Have we ever thought of hospitality in terms of welcoming the other as Christ? How might this calling of Christian hospitality change our practices of hospitality?
3. What are some ways as a family to grow in hospitality? How might we open our home more to the poor, lonely, brokenhearted and neglected? Is there someone who has a rough family life that could use some time around our family for the support and encouragement that love offers?

### Scripture Reading — Psalm 84:9-13

*A praise of God's house*

LORD God of hosts, hear my prayer;  
listen, God of Jacob.  
O God, watch over our shield;  
look upon the face of your anointed.  
Better one day in your courts  
than a thousand elsewhere.  
Better the threshold of the house of my God  
than a home in the tents of the wicked.  
For a sun and shield is the LORD God,  
bestowing all grace and glory.  
The LORD withholds no good thing  
from those who walk without reproach.  
O LORD of hosts,  
blessed the man who trusts in you!

### Family Project

Invite acquaintances from your parish or neighborhood over for a meal, and spend some time socializing afterward. Invite them to join you for family prayer, too.