



UP TO THE SOURCE

Adoratio with St. John Paul II

FOR COUPLES

The Marital Covenant: Communion and Community

From the "Letter to Families" from Pope John Paul II, Feb. 2, 1994

The family is a community of persons whose proper way of existing and living together is communion: *communio personarum*. While always acknowledging the absolute transcendence of the Creator with regard to his creatures, we can see the family's ultimate relationship to the divine "We." *Only persons are capable of living "in communion."* The family originates in a marital communion described by the Second Vatican Council as a "covenant," *in which man and woman "give themselves to each other and accept each other"...* Jesus makes clear and unmistakable to all that the *indissoluble character* of marriage is the *basis of the common good of the family*.

"I promise to be faithful to you always... all the days of my life." Only "persons" are capable of saying those words; only they are able to live "in communion" on the basis of a mutual choice which is, or ought to be, fully conscious and free.

...We bow our knees before the Father from whom all fatherhood and motherhood is named (cf. Eph. 3:14–15). Parenthood is the event whereby the family, already constituted by the conjugal covenant of marriage, is brought about "in the full and specific sense."

Experience teaches that parenthood represents both a task and a challenge. The task involves the spouses in living out their original covenant. The *children* born to them—and here is the challenge—*should consolidate that covenant*, enriching and deepening the conjugal communion of the father and mother... Married couples need to be well aware of this. From the outset they need to have their hearts and thoughts turned towards the God "from whom every family is named", *so that their fatherhood and motherhood will draw from that source the power to be continually renewed in love.*

Fatherhood and motherhood are themselves a particular proof of love; they make it possible to discover love's extension and original depth. But this does not take place automatically... In the life of husband and wife together, fatherhood and motherhood represent such a sublime "novelty" and richness as can only be approached "on one's knees."

Experience teaches that human love, which naturally tends towards fatherhood and motherhood, is sometimes affected by a profound *crisis* and is thus seriously threatened... Marriage is a covenant of persons in love. And *love can be deepened and preserved only by Love*, that Love which is "poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us" (Rom. 5:5). Our prayer should concentrate on the crucial and decisive moment of the passage from conjugal love to childbearing, and thus to fatherhood and motherhood. That is precisely the moment when there is an indispensable need for the "outpouring of the grace of the Holy Spirit."

"Will you accept children lovingly from God, and bring them up according to the law of Christ and his Church?" When the Church asks "are you willing," she is reminding the bride and groom that they stand before the *creative power of God*. They are called to become parents, to cooperate with the Creator in giving life. Cooperating with God to call new human beings into existence means contributing to the transmission of that divine image and likeness of which everyone "born of a woman" is a bearer.

Litany of Married Saints

Holy Mary Mother of God, and Saint Joseph of Nazareth, Spouses,	<i>Pray for us</i>
Saint Joachim and Saint Anne, Parents of the Virgin Mary,	<i>Pray for us</i>
Saints Aquila and Priscilla, Missionary Couple,	<i>Pray for us</i>
Saints Anastasios and Theopista, Martyred Spouses,	<i>Pray for us</i>
Saints Henry II and Cunegunda, Spouses and Emperors,	<i>Pray for us</i>
Saint Stephen and Blessed Gisella, Spouses and Monarchs,	<i>Pray for us</i>
Saint Isadore the Farmer and Saint Mary of the Head, Married Laborers,	<i>Pray for us</i>
Blessed John and Thecla Hashimoto, Married Martyrs and Parents of Martyrs,	<i>Pray for us</i>
Blessed John Yu Jung and Lutgarda Yi Sun-I, Spouses and Martyrs,	<i>Pray for us</i>
Saints Louis Martin and Zélie Guérin, Spouses and Parents of Saints,	<i>Pray for us</i>
Blessed Victoria Rasoamanarivo, Faithful Wife,	<i>Pray for us</i>
Saint Franz Jägerstätter, Husband and Martyr,	<i>Pray for us</i>
Saints Luigi and Marie Beltrame-Quattrocchi, Spouses,	<i>Pray for us</i>



A Prayer for Couples by St. John Paul II

God, from whom all fatherhood in heaven and on earth comes,
Father, you are love and life,
make every human family on earth become,
through your Son, Jesus Christ, “born of woman,”
and through the Holy Spirit, source of divine charity,
a true sanctuary of life and love
for generations that always renew themselves.

Let your grace guide the minds and deeds of the spouses
towards the good of their families
and all the families in the world.

Let the younger generation find strong support in the family,
for their humanity and their growth in truth and love.

Let love, strengthened by the grace of the sacrament of marriage,
prove stronger than any weakness or crisis,
through which our families sometimes pass.

Finally, we ask you through the intercession of the Holy Family of Nazareth,
that the Church in the midst of all the nations of the earth
can fruitfully fulfill its mission
in and through the family.

You, who are life, truth and love,
in the unity of the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

“The good God gave me a father and a mother worthier of heaven than of earth” (S. Thérèse of Lisieux, Letter 261).

