



Reflection 9

FOLLOWING CLELIA'S FOOTSTEPS
TOWARD THE HEART OF JESUS

THE FAMILY IN LIGHT OF THE WORD OF GOD

"A Bible for every family! . . . The Bible, not to place it on a shelf, but to keep it at hand, to read it often, every day, both individually and together, husband and wife, parents and children, maybe in the evening, especially on Sundays. This way the family grows, walks, with the light and power of the Word of God!" (Pope Francis, Angelus October 5, 2014)

Luke 2:41-50

Each year his parents went to Jerusalem for the feast of Passover, and when he was twelve years old, they went up according to festival custom. After they had completed its days, as they were returning, the boy Jesus remained behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it. Thinking that he was in the caravan, they journeyed for a day and looked for him among their relatives and acquaintances, but not finding him, they returned to Jerusalem to look for him. After three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions, and all who heard him were astounded at his understanding and his answers. When his parents saw him, they were astonished, and his mother said to him, "Son, why have you done this to us? Your father and I have been looking for you with great anxiety." And he said to them, "Why were you looking for me? Did you

not know that I must be in my Father's house?" But they did not understand what he said to them.

Reflection

The text shows us Jesus in the temple listening to and explaining the Scriptures. The adult Jesus prays often with the Psalms. Even his last words on the Cross recall the ancient prayers of Israel. The believers' direct and constant relationship with the Bible is indispensable. The family is called to become one of the privileged places for conversation with God through the Scriptures. Every Christian, or at least every family, should have a personal Bible to read every day and carry even on vacation or when traveling. The personal Bible should never be missing from the "suitcase" of every believer!

AMORIS LETITIA - We pastors have to encourage families to grow in faith. This means encouraging frequent confession, spiritual direction and occasional retreats. It also means encouraging family prayer during the week, since "the family that prays together stays together". When visiting our people's homes, we should gather all the members of the family and briefly pray for one another placing the family in the Lord's hands. It is also helpful to encourage each of the spouses to find time for prayer alone with God, since each has his or her secret crosses to bear. Why shouldn't we tell God our troubles and ask him to grant us the healing and help we need to remain faithful? The Synod Fathers noted that "the word of God is the source of life and spirituality for the family. All pastoral work on behalf of the family must allow people to be interiorly fashioned and formed as members of the domestic church through the Church's prayerful reading of sacred Scripture. The word of God is not only good news in a person's private life but also a criterion of judgement and a light in discerning the various challenges that married couples and families encounter". (227)

Every family should look to the icon of the Holy Family of Nazareth. Its daily life had its share of burdens and even nightmares, as when they met with Herod's implacable violence. This last was an experience that, sad to say, continues to afflict the many refugee families who in our day feel rejected and helpless. Like the Magi, our families are invited to contemplate the Child and his Mother, to bow down and worship him (cf. Mt 2:11). Like Mary, they are asked to face their family's challenges with courage and serenity, in good times and bad, and to keep in their heart the great things which God has done (cf. Lk 2:19, 51). The treasury of Mary's heart also contains the experiences of every family, which she cherishes. For this reason, she can help us understand the meaning of these experiences and to hear the message God wishes to communicate through the life of our families. (n. 30)

Mother Clelia

Mother Clelia's faith, sustained by prayer, was strengthened by her great personal commitment. Her faith was based on the Word of God and guided solely by Gospel values. Drawing abundantly from the Scriptures, she shaped her entire being and life on them and drew from them abundantly.

A witness attests: "At a time when when the Sacred Scriptures could not be read freely, Clelia, in a complete ecclesial spirit, nourished her soul by reading the Scriptures, especially the New Testament. She not only read them, but she assimilated them, meditating on what she read until it became her way of thinking and living."

PRAYER (Psalm 119: 101-105)

I keep my steps from every evil path that I may observe your word. From your judgments I do not turn for you have instructed me. How sweet to my tongue is your promise, sweeter than honey to my mouth! Through your precepts I gain

understanding; therefore I hate all false ways. Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light for my path.

For Reflection

- In moments of great difficulty and crisis, families rarely turn to the Word of God for light and strength. What is missing and what is possible to do?
- Why do today's families see Sacred Scripture as too abstract and distant?
- How can we help families not only to accept the Bible and read it but let it become a true light for them?



The Word of God offers families wisdom for living and the light needed to interpret every event, large or small. It gives them a foretaste of the Eternal Marriage Feast to which every family has been called from all time.

