

Family Prayer Is Very Pleasing to our Lord - MabuhayRadio

Written by Francis Fernandez
Saturday, 06 September 2008 04:09 -

Jesus frequently teaches us that salvation and the consequent union with God is, ultimately, a personal thing: nobody can take our place in this personal dealing with God. But He also desires that we support each other and that we help each other on our way towards our final goal. This union so pleasing to the Lord should be shown especially amongst those who have spiritual bonds with one another or are of the same family. This union, one that demands our living so many virtues, is so much desired by the Lord that He has promised as a special gift, to give us more easily what we ask for with unity of intention. Thus we read in the Gospel of the Mass: I say to you further, that if two of you shall agree on earth about anything at all for which they ask, it shall be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together for my sake, there am I in the midst of them (Matt18:19-20).

Prayer in common (cf Acts12:5) has been practiced in the Church from time immemorial. It is not opposed to nor can it be substituted for by private prayer which unites the Christian in an intimate way to Christ. Family prayer is in a special way very pleasing to Our Lord; it is one of the treasures we have received from previous generations so that we can get abundant fruit from it and pass it on to generations to come. They have excellent means in the few, short daily religious practices that have always been lived in Christian families, and which I think are marvelous: grace at meals, morning and night prayers, the family rosary ... Customs vary from place to place, but I think one should always encourage some acts of piety in which the family can join together in a simple and natural fashion.

This is the way to ensure that God is not regarded as a stranger whom we go to visit in church once a week on Sunday. He will be seen and treated as He really is, not only in church, but also at home, because Our Lord has told us that 'Where two or three are gathered together in my name, I am there in the midst of them'(Matt 18:20, Conversations with Monsignor Escrivá, 103).

This prayer – John Paul II teaches, commenting on this passage of the Gospel – has for its own object family life itself...: Joys and sorrows, hopes and disappointments, births and

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birthday celebrations, wedding anniversaries of parents, departures, separations and homecomings, important and far-reaching decisions, the death of those who are dear to us, etc. - all of these mark occasions for God's loving intervention in the family's history. They should be seen as suitable moments for thanksgiving for petition, for trusting abandonment of the family into the hands of their common Father in heaven. The dignity and responsibility of the Christian family as the domestic Church can be achieved only with God's unceasing aid, which will surely be granted if it is humbly and trustingly petitioned for in prayer (John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation, Familiaris Consortio, 22 November 1981, 59).

Family prayer communicates a special fortitude to the whole family. The first and principal help we give to parents, to children, to brothers and sisters, is to pray with them and for them. Prayer fosters the supernatural vision that makes it possible for us to understand what is happening around us and in the family, and teaches us to see that nothing is foreign to the plans of God: He always shows himself to us as a father, and tells us that the family is more his than ours. Prayer also enlightens us in those events that without our being close to him would be incomprehensible: the death of a loved one, the birth of a handicapped child, sickness, economic difficulties ... With Our Lord, we love his holy Will, and families instead of disintegrating are united more strongly amongst them selves and with God.

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