



# *Apostles for Today*

*Prayer and Reflection - August 2017*

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## **DIALOGUE IN THE FAMILY**

The family consists of and is based on dialogue, made up of a thousand small things, all of which are important and significant: the simplest gestures, considerateness, kindnesses, outdoing one another in serving each another, but above all, nurturing harmony between people without ever tiring.

We believe that two things are particularly important: reciprocity and perseverance. But who can give us these gifts if not grace?

The Holy Family is the example which Jesus offers to us. He at the centre of the family, not as a baby who attracts attention as such, another object of some “vice”, benevolently granted by the parents, but rather as the “holy one” among them.

Around Jesus there was a first mystery which involved his parents, from the moment of the Annunciation: the dialogue between Mary and Joseph was supported by faith in God who sustained everything and who always accompanied them. God was the “guarantor” of that family.

The moment of birth was also unusual, but the simple and the strangers were there to welcome the baby and his parents.

How much Joseph and Mary must have talked among themselves. How many questions must have been asked about the events and about their future. Jesus certainly did not create the basis for a simple and predictable future ... perhaps they weren't even thinking about it ... Providence was the lamp that led them forward.

Providence is working also today, but do we make room for it? Do we question ourselves in our family to understand why unexpected things happen and what Jesus might be wanting to say to us in this way? Contemplation, when it is shared, is a different way of dialoguing ... contemplation is the response to the sacred.

A friend whom we know was struck by a very serious and rare illness; her husband, a doctor, was obviously very worried. After her initial treatment we went to visit them and they told us that they had encountered a lot of suffering and had been struck by the gentleness and serenity of other families who were facing the same painful situations, simply speaking together and being affectionate. They simply said to us: "this was the greatest learning experience for us". In this way, having the eyes to sense Jesus who is speaking to you in different situations and to contemplate him together is a very deep level of dialogue, perhaps even a gift.

Life today is very often frenetic and it seems that there is never enough time. This is partly true, but dialogue between a couple is something which is built up over the years ... it is a basic way of being which is acquired through grace and which must be nourished every day, with creativity in every situation.

We parents, it could be said all adults in general, also have the opportunity to form even the youngest in profound contemplation and communication. To involve them in an environment where people live in this way, without presuming that everything must be perfect. In fact, our entire humanity accompanies us and our children, but we know that our limits are overcome by the love of Jesus.

It is not easy to keep the dialogue with our children alive, above all in the years of growth, but we have tried to, without becoming discouraged over silences or conflicts. They formed part of the “package”, so to speak, but then, once they had gone through adolescence, recognised our firmness and understood the importance of dialogue particularly in the most difficult moments.

We understood in our family life within the Pallottine Family the importance of loving the other through opening ourselves to listening, to authentic dialogue, free from prejudices and unselfish. To understand the other's reasons whoever they might be in order to be able to live our differences as a richness; this is something which we can do wherever we find ourselves and in any situation.

## FROM SAINT VINCENT PALLOTTI:

“... each one, imagining themselves to be in the House of Nazareth as if part of the Holy Family of the Man-God, is to commit themselves with that humility, respect, simplicity, and spirit of benefitting as much as can be imagined that they would have practised and promoted as if they really had found themselves living with Jesus, Mary and Joseph” (OCCC II, 104).

## QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

- Do we feel the need and the joy of sharing our experiences?
- How much time do we dedicate to dialogue in the family/community?
- When we confront one another, do we try to convince others, or do we try to understand them and their reasons and experiences?
- Does our outward attitude put others at their ease, creating a climate of trust and reassurance, or do we inadvertently raise a dividing wall when faced with someone who has a different view?
- How do we react when faced with someone sharing their pain? Is it easier to rejoice together or to face a difficulty?

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