

## INTRODUCTION

Just as the work of human education is intimately connected with fatherhood and motherhood, so Christian formation finds its origin and its strength in God the Father who loves and educates his children. Yes, God is the first and great teacher of his People, as it states in the striking passage of the Song of Moses: "He found him in a desert land / and in the howling waste of the wilderness; / he encircled him, he cared for him, he kept him as the apple of his eye. / Like an eagle that stirs up its nest, that flutters over its young, spreading out its wings, catching them, bearing them on its pinions, / the Lord alone did lead him, and there was no foreign God with him" (Deut 32:10-12; cf. )

*(Christifideles Laici no. 61)*

## MONDAY

### The Christian Family

<sup>40</sup> And as the child grew to maturity, he was filled with wisdom; and God's favour was with him. <sup>41</sup> Every year his parents used to go to Jerusalem for the feast of the Passover. <sup>42</sup> When he was twelve years old, they went up for the feast as usual. *(Luke 2:40-42)*

<sup>16</sup> He came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day as he usually did. *(Luke 4:16)*

62 . The Christian family, as the "domestic Church", also makes up a natural and fundamental school for formation in the faith: father and mother receive from the Sacrament of Matrimony the grace and the ministry of the Christian education of their children, before whom they bear witness and to

whom they transmit both human and religious values. While learning their first words, children learn also the praise of God, whom they feel is near them as a loving and providential Father; while learning the first acts of love, children also learn to open themselves to others, and through the gift of self receive the sense of living as a human being. The daily life itself of a truly Christian family makes up the first "experience of Church", intended to find confirmation and development in an active and responsible process of the children's introduction into the wider ecclesial community and civil society. The more that Christian spouses and parents grow in the awareness that their "domestic church" participates in the life and mission of the universal Church, so much the more will their sons and daughters be able to be formed in a "sense of the Church" and will perceive all the beauty of dedicating their energies to the service of the Kingdom of God.

*(Christifideles Laici no. 62)*

*In what concrete way you are called to make your family a natural and fundamental school for formation in faith?*

## TUESDAY

### I Must Be In My Father's House Feast of Sts. Simon and Jude

<sup>46</sup> It happened that, three days later, they found him in the Temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them, and asking them questions; <sup>47</sup> and all those who heard him were astounded at his intelligence and his replies. <sup>48</sup> They were overcome when they saw him, and his mother said to him, 'My child, why have you done this to us? See how worried

your father and I have been, looking for you.' <sup>49</sup> He replied, 'Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?' <sup>50</sup> But they did not understand what he meant. <sup>51</sup> He went down with them then and came to Nazareth and lived under their authority. His mother stored up all these things in her heart. <sup>52</sup> And Jesus increased in wisdom, in stature, and in favour with God and with people.

*(Luke 2:46-52)*

Situated and at work within the particular Church or diocese is the Parish which has the essential task of a more personal and immediate formation of the lay faithful. In fact, because it is in the position to reach more easily individual persons and singular groups, the parish is called to instruct its members in hearing God's Word, in liturgical and personal dialogue with God, in the life of fraternal charity, and in allowing a more direct and concrete perception of the sense of ecclesial communion and responsibility in the Church's mission.

*(Christifideles Laici no. 218)*

*Do you consider the church as your source of wisdom? Are you on time in going to the church in attending liturgical celebrations?*

## WEDNESDAY

### We Do Share In God's Work

<sup>4</sup> While there is one that says, 'I belong to Paul' and another that says, 'I belong to Apollos' are you not being only too human? <sup>5</sup> For what is Apollos and what is Paul? The servants through whom you came to believe, and each has only what the Lord has given him. <sup>6</sup> I did the planting, Apollos did the watering, but

God gave growth. <sup>7</sup> In this, neither the planter nor the waterer counts for anything; only God, who gives growth. <sup>8</sup> It is all one who does the planting and who does the watering, and each will have the proper pay for the work that he has done. <sup>9</sup> After all, we do share in God's work; you are God's farm, God's building. *(1 Corinthians 3:4-9)*

Internal to the parish, especially if vast and territorially extensive, small Church communities, where present, can be a notable help in the formation of Christians, by providing a consciousness and an experience of ecclesial communion and mission which are more extensive and incisive. The Synod Fathers have said that a post-baptismal catechesis in the form of a catechumenate can also be helpful by presenting again some elements from the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults with the purpose of allowing a person to grasp and live the immense, extraordinary richness and responsibility received at Baptism.

*(Christifideles Laici no. 218)*

Schools and Catholic universities, as well as centers of spiritual renewal which are becoming ever more widespread in these days, are also important places for formation. In the present social and historical context which is marked by an extensively deep cultural involvement, the Synod Fathers have emphasized that parents' participation in school life- besides being always necessary and without substitution-is no longer enough. What is needed is to prepare the lay faithful to dedicate themselves to the work of rearing their children as a true and proper part of Church mission. What is needed is to constitute and develop

this "formation community" which is together comprised of parents, teachers, clergy, women and men religious and representatives of youth. In order that the school can suitably fulfill its natural function in formation, the lay faithful ought to feel charged to demand from everyone and for everyone a true freedom in education, even through opportune civil legislation.

**(cf. Congregation for Catholic Education, Concerning the Lay Educator, Witness of Faith in the Schools)(222).**

*Is the community where you belong (e.g. Verbum Dei) has a great significance for you? In what way it helped you in your growth?*

#### THURSDAY

**"Do whatever He tells you"**

<sup>37</sup> For here the proverb holds true: one sows, another reaps; <sup>38</sup> I sent you to reap a harvest you have not laboured for. Others have laboured for it; and you have come into the rewards of their labour. **(John 4:37-38)**

"Do whatever He tells you". **(John 2:5)**

To be able to discover the actual will of the Lord in our lives always involves the following: a receptive listening to the Word of God and the Church, fervent and constant prayer, recourse to a wise and loving spiritual guide, and a faithful discernment of the gifts and talents given by God, as well as the diverse social and historic situations in which one lives. Therefore, in the life of each member of the lay faithful there are *particularly significant and decisive moments* for discerning God's call and embracing the mission entrusted by Him. Among these

are the periods of *adolescence* and *young adulthood*. No one must forget that the Lord, as the master of the laborers in the vineyard, calls *at every hour* of life so as to make his holy will more precisely and explicitly known. Therefore, the fundamental and continuous attitude of the disciple should be one of vigilance and a conscious attentiveness to the voice of God. It is not a question of simply *knowing* what God wants from each of us in the various situations of life. The individual must *do* what God wants, as we are reminded in the words that Mary, the Mother of Jesus, addressed to the servants at Cana: "Do whatever he tells you" (*Jn 2:5*). However, to act in fidelity to God's will require a *capability* for acting and *the developing of that capability*. We can rest assured that this is possible through the free and responsible collaboration of each of us with the grace of the Lord which is never lacking. Saint Leo the Great says: "The one who confers the dignity will give the strength!" **(Christifideles Laici no. 210)**

*God has sent us people who are instruments for our formation and helped us discern on God's will for us. Do we give time to listen to them and obey what He tells us to do?*

#### FRIDAY

**Formation of Self**

Then addressing the crowds and his disciples Jesus said, <sup>2</sup> 'The scribes and the Pharisees occupy the chair of Moses. <sup>3</sup> **You must therefore do and observe what they tell you;** but do not be guided by what they do, since they do not practice what they preach.

**(Matthew 23:1-3)**

In the work of formation some convictions reveal themselves as particularly necessary and fruitful. First of all, there is the conviction that one cannot offer a true and effective formation to others if the individual has not taken on or developed a personal responsibility for formation: this, in fact, is essentially a "formation of self".

**(Christifideles Laici no. 225)**

*Living out what we preach is a living instrument for others to be formed. How can we unite the split between our faith and our daily lives?*

#### SATURDAY

**ALL SAINTS DAY**

He went down with them then and came to Nazareth and lived under their authority. **(Luke 2:46)**

There is no doubt that *spiritual* formation ought to occupy a privileged place in a person's life. Everyone is called to grow continually in intimate union with Jesus Christ, in conformity to the Father's will, in devotion to others in charity and justice. The Council writes: "This life of intimate union with Christ in the Church is nourished by spiritual helps available to all the faithful, especially by active participation in the liturgy. Lay people should so make use of these helps in such a way that, while properly fulfilling their secular duties in the ordinary conditions of life, they do not disassociate union with Christ from that life, but through the very performance of their tasks according to God's will, may they actually grow in it"(214).

*In our community Verbum Dei, we are given formations in different*

*stages and situations in our life. We have the initiation, discipleship and apostolic stage. Do you recognize this help provided for your spiritual growth? How do you make use of this help?*

#### SUNDAY READINGS

**The Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed (All Souls)**

**1<sup>st</sup> Reading:** Wisdom 3:1-9

**Responsorial Psalm:** Psalm 23

**2<sup>nd</sup> Reading:** Romans 5:5-11 or Romans 6:3-9

**Gospel:** John 6:37-40

# Verbum Dei

GUIDELINES FOR PRAYER

**He went down with them then and came to Nazareth and lived under their authority (Luke 2:46)**

October 27- November 2



**Objective of the week:**

To realize that as we value our formation as disciples of Christ we are called to value the places, the means and the instruments that provide us.