

Love is Our Mission – *The family fully alive*

CREATED FOR JOY

Many people today honestly seek meaning of life, but don't know whom to trust or where to commit their lives. Amid this uncertainty, Christians are people who trust in Jesus Christ. Despite the ambiguities of human history, the Catholic way of hope and joy, love and service grounds itself in an encounter with Jesus. One of the most significant 20th-century papal documents on family life — *Familiaris Consortio*, summarized how Catholic teaching about God and human nature shapes Catholic beliefs about how we should live:

“God created man in his own image and likeness: calling him to existence through love, he called him at the same time for love. God is love and in himself he lives a mystery of personal loving communion. Creating the human race in his own image and continually keeping it in being, God inscribed in the humanity of man and woman the vocation, and thus the capacity and responsibility, of love and communion. Love is therefore the fundamental and innate vocation of every human being.” FC 11.

Catholic views on marriage, family, and sexuality belong to a larger mission to live in a way that makes God's love visible and radiant; to live this mission makes everyday life alive with God's joy. The entire human person — body and soul, our maleness and femaleness, and all that follows from each — is implicated in God's invitation. The family is most fully alive when we embrace God's invitation to be the sons and daughters he created us to be.

Our era is a confusing and uncertain time. Jesus Christ is a trust-worthy anchor. Human dignity rests securely in Jesus, God become man. Jesus reveals who God is, and who we are. In Jesus, we meet a God who reaches out to us, who creates communion and invites us to share in his joy. We are made in God's image and called to communion with him and each other. This love gives purpose and shape to all aspects of human life, including the family. We ought to ask ourselves:

- a) What things in my life distract me from Jesus? What would help me to become more familiar or even intimate with Jesus Christ?
- b) What does it mean to be “created in the image of God”? Is it possible to understand human identity without God? Why or why not?
- c) “Love is our mission” is the theme of this catechesis. What does “love” mean in my life? How might a mission to love affect my choices, priorities, and ambitions?