

(English translation)

Christmas 1973

The Family

Christmas is a celebration of the family.

But where was the most extraordinary family born, but in a cave in Bethlehem? It is there, with the birth of a baby, that it started. It is there that, for the first time, in the hearts of Mary and Joseph love was released for a third member: the God made man.

The family: it is a word that contains an immense meaning: rich, profound, sublime and simple, and above all real.

Either the family exists, or it does not.

The atmosphere of a family is an atmosphere of understanding, of calm relaxation, one of unity, mutual love, peace that affects the members in the whole of their being.

My wish this Christmas would be that one word be branded in letters of fire on our souls: family.

A family, whose members starting with a supernatural vision, seeing Jesus in others, end with the most down-to-earth and simple expressions typical of family life. A family whose members do not have a heart of stone but a heart of flesh, like Jesus, like Mary, like Joseph.

Are there among you some who are suffering because of spiritual trials? They must be understood as much as and more than a mother would. Bring them the light with a word or by example. Do not let them feel the absence of the family warmth, on the contrary, let them feel it all the more.

Are there among you some who are suffering physically? Let them be treated as favourites. It is necessary to suffer with them. Try to understand them right to the depth of their pain.

Are there some who are dying? Imagine yourself in their place and do for them whatever you would have done for you up to the moment of your last breath.

Is one of you rejoicing over some success or for any other reason? Rejoice with him or her so that the joy is not spoilt and the soul closed in on itself, but the happiness is shared by all.

Is one of you going away? Do not let him or her leave without a heart filled with a single legacy: the sense of the family, so as to take it with them wherever they go.

Never put any kind of activity, either spiritual or apostolic, before the spirit of the family.

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