

(English translation)

Palaeur (Rome), 5 June 1993

FamilyFest 1993

Seeds of Communion for the Third Millennium

A Proposal

My warmest greetings to all of you present at the Sports Arena in Rome, to all the families meeting in the 500 FamilyFest gatherings linked to us on every continent, and to all those who are watching or listening to FamilyFest.

We are on the threshold of the third millennium. The family, every family, can take a leading role in this new era. A masterpiece of love created by God, the family can be of inspiration in helping to change the world of tomorrow.

If we look closely at the family, almost as if we were taking an x-ray of it, we discover those great and precious values which, when projected onto and applied to humanity at large, can transform it into one big family.

The family is founded on love, a bond that has many nuances: love between husband and wife, between parents and children, between grandparents, uncles, aunts, nieces, nephews, among brothers and sisters. It is a love that grows and constantly surpasses its own limits. Love between spouses generates new life, and brotherhood becomes friendship. Authority and roles, when expressions of love, are respected naturally.

In a family, it comes naturally to put all things in common, to share everything, to have one family budget. Savings are not the result of accumulation but of providence. It's natural to take care of the needs of those who are not yet, or no longer, productive.

In a family, people of all ages live together. It comes naturally to live for the other, to love one another.

Even the children's upbringing occurs in a natural way: think of their first steps, their first words. They are punished and forgiven only for their own good.

It's normal to find a sense of justice in the family, for all to feel the guilt and shame experienced by one member. To suffer, to sacrifice oneself for the others, to carry one another's burdens, is normal. Solidarity and loyalty to one's own family comes naturally.

In a family the other person's life is as precious as your own, sometimes even more precious than your own: there is concern for everyone's health and the necessary care for any member who is ill.

The family is the natural setting where life begins and ends, where the disabled, the elderly and the terminally ill find welcome, affection and care.

In a family each member is dressed and nourished according to his or her needs.

The family home is created and cared for by all the family members.

In a family there is teaching and there is learning: everything helps the growth of each individual. The family members may have different cultural values but the diversity is a source of enrichment for all.

Communication comes naturally in a family: each member shares in everything.

Now, each family has to live out its own vocation as a family in order to serve as a model for the entire human family, transferring onto it its own values with their characteristic way of being.

The family then becomes, as the title of FamilyFest suggests, seeds of communion for the third millennium.

Is it natural in a family to have everything in common? That is the seed that can give life in society to a new economic system at the service of the human person; that is the seed of a culture of giving, of an *economy of communion*.

Is it natural in a family for the members to live one for the other, to “live the other”? That is the seed that will grow into mutual acceptance among groups, peoples, traditions, races and civilizations which then favors mutual inculturation.

In the family, aren't values passed on naturally from one generation to the next? That could be an incentive for re-emphasizing the importance of values of education in society at large. The manner of correcting and forgiving in the family setting can be of light in terms of our judicial system.

In the family, is one person's life as precious as another's? That is the seed of the culture of life that needs to permeate laws and social structures.

Does the family take care of its home; does the home reflect family harmony? That is the seed of a renewed environmental and ecological consciousness.

Is education in the family aimed at helping the individual grow and mature? That is the seed that can give cultural, scientific and technological research the key to discovering the mysterious plan of God on humanity and to working for its good.

Is communication in the family impartial and constructive? That is the seed for a communications system at the service of the individual that spreads and promotes what is positive and is an instrument of peace and global unity.

Is love the natural bond among the members in the family? That is the seed for social structures and institutions that cooperate for the good of the individual and of the community, to the point of achieving universal brotherhood and appreciation for all groups of people.

In the world there are already structures and institutions at local, national and international levels: government ministries, hospitals, schools, courts, banks, associations, all kinds of organizations. However these structures need to be humanized, they need a soul so that the spirit of service circulating in them reaches the same intensity, the same spontaneity and the same spirit of love for the individual that one experiences in a family.

God created the family as a model and prototype for every other form of human community. This then is the family's task: to keep love always alive, reviving those values that God has given the family and bringing them everywhere into society, generously and tirelessly.

This is the challenge being offered to you so that in the third millennium all of humanity may become one big family.

Chiara Lubich