

Faith in 52

A yearlong parish retreat based on the work *I Believe in Love*
by Father Jean C. J. d'Elbee

Week 47: Sept. 23rd through Sept. 29th, 2013

For Individuals

(pages 251-256 of the book *I Believe in Love*, beginning at the ☞ symbol)

STEP 1: OPENING PRAYER

1. Speaking to the Holy Spirit, say: *“O Holy Spirit, soul of my soul, I adore You. Enlighten, guide, strengthen, and console me. Tell me what I ought to do and command me to do it. I promise to be submissive in everything that You ask of me, and to accept all that You permit to happen to me. Only show me what is Your will”* (Cardinal Mercier).

STEP 2: PRAYERFUL READING

1. Prayerfully read ONLY the weekly assigned pages of *I Believe in Love*.
2. While reading, pay careful attention to the phrases, ideas, or images that might bring about comfort or even those that are challenging. Rest on these a while and speak with the Lord about them, receive His graces, and ponder what has been laid out before you.

STEP 3: MEDITATION

1. Keeping your imagination quiet, figuratively or literally shutting your eyes to all the things of sense, and closing your ears to all the sounds of earth, so as to be able to withdraw into the sanctuary of your baptized soul, which is the temple of the Holy Spirit, do the following:
 - “The Enthronement (of the Heart of Jesus) is the response to the words of Jesus: ‘Behold, I stand at the gate and knock. If any man shall hear my voice and open to me the door, I will come in to him and will sup with him, and he with me’ (p. 253). What do you do when Jesus spiritually knocks upon the door of your soul or conscience? Are you quick to receive Him, do you delay in answering, or do you even hear his gentle rapping? Spend a few minutes thinking of your day so far. Where and when has He come to you? Through whom has He been your guest? Did you recognize Him in the moment or only now in hindsight? After this exercise, directly invite Jesus into the interior tabernacle of your soul. Say: “Jesus, You are welcomed, most welcomed. I accept You into my heart. Live within me.” Give Jesus the pleasure of dwelling in you.
 - “Love the Heart of Jesus; love Him foolishly; love Him above all things, immersing all your affections in Him without fear of sacrifice. The Heart of Jesus is an abyss which does not divide. We love more, we love better when we love Jesus. Natural affection is transformed, made greater, made God-like. Love is the entire gospel: it is the entire Jesus, in the arms of His Mother and the arms of the Cross” (p. 256). Look at an image of the Sacred Heart of Jesus: peer into His eyes and into the Heart that burns with love for you. Dive into the Sacred Heart of Jesus.
 - Finish by saying the *Our Father* in a spirit of complete abandonment. ■



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The Enthronement of the Two Hearts

Pope Pius XII encouraged newlyweds to enthrone the image of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in their homes and to consecrate themselves to Him.

In the revelations, full of love, our Savior promised, among other things, that “wherever the image of His Heart shall be exposed to be singularly honored, it will bring down all sorts of blessings”. Having confidence in the Divine word, you can and will surely want to assure to yourselves the benefits of so great a promise, keeping and properly honoring in your homes the image of the Sacred Heart ... It is fitting, then, dear Christian husbands and wives, brethren of Jesus, that the image of His Heart “which has so loved men,” be exposed and honored in your homes, like that of the nearest and most loved relative who pours out the treasures of His blessings upon you, your children, and your undertakings.

Exposed and honored. That is to say, this image should not only watch over your hours of rest in a private chamber, but it should be loyally honored by being hung above the entrance, or in the dining room or parlor or in some other fre-



quently used place. “Everyone therefore that shall confess Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in Heaven” [Matt. 10:32] ...

Honored means that at least now and then an attentive hand will place before the precious little statue or modest image of the Sacred Heart a few flowers, or a lighted candle, or even keep a lamp burning there; and that the family will gather round it each evening for a united act of homage, an humble expression of contrition, and a request for new blessings.

In a word, the Sacred Heart is duly honored in a home when He is acknowledged as the King of Love by each and every one; which is to say that the family is consecrated to Him, inasmuch as the total giving of oneself to a holy cause or a holy person is called consecration. The Sacred Heart of Jesus has pledged Himself to heap special blessings upon those who give themselves to Him in this manner ...

But he who consecrates himself should also fulfill the obligations that such an act imposes. When the Sacred Heart reigns in a family, and surely He has the right to reign everywhere, it is necessary that an atmosphere of faith and piety envelop everyone and everything in that blessed household ... In the consecrated family, parents and children feel themselves under the eye of God and friendly with Him; they are therefore observant of His Commandments and the precepts of His Church. Before the image of the King of Heaven, become their earthly Friend and constant Guest, they fearlessly and meritoriously meet all the labors of their daily duties ...


May it be so with you, my dear sons and daughters! Living united with Jesus even in this life, receiving Him frequently in Holy Communion, venerating His image daily, you shall only leave this earth to contemplate eternally the bright and beatific reality of that Divine Heart in Heaven.

- from Pope Pius XII, “The Reign of the Sacred Heart in the Christian Family,” June 5, 1940, *The Holy Father Speaks to Newlyweds* (Wash. D.C.: National Catholic Welfare Council (N.C.W.C.), 1943), p. 27-28. ■

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For Group Sharing

(pages 251-256 of the book *I Believe in Love*, beginning at the  symbol)

STEP 1: OPENING PRAYER

1. Gathering with your spouse, family, or a group of friends at a time of your choosing, though preferably on the following Sunday, make the Sign of the Cross and then say together to the Holy Spirit: *“Come Holy Spirit, come by means of the powerful intercession of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, your well-beloved Spouse.”*

STEP 2: PUBLIC READING

1. Depute or invite a competent reader among the group to read aloud the weekly assigned pages of *I Believe in Love*. All should be encouraged to listen attentively; any distractions, i.e., cell phones, televisions, etc., should be turned off or removed during this time.

STEP 3: PRAYERFUL DISCUSSION

1. After the public reading, someone should facilitate the public discussion. This facilitator should read aloud the questions below. Considering the constraints of time or the particular audience, not every question need be asked nor discussed. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you when in doubt.
2. Everyone may speak but should not speak over others, should not dominate the conversation, and should not ridicule others. All should try to be like Christ who is “gentle and humble of heart.” Moreover, all should be asked to keep confidential the contents of the discussion. No one should reveal more than what they feel comfortable sharing or be forced to speak.

(Continued on page 4)

The Christian Family: Called to Evangelize

To the extent in which the Christian family accepts the Gospel and matures in faith, it becomes an evangelizing community. Let us listen again to Paul VI: “The family, like the Church, ought to be a place where the Gospel is transmitted and from which the Gospel radiates. In a family which is conscious of this mission, all the members evangelize and are evangelized. The parents not only communicate the Gospel to their children, but from their children they can themselves receive the same Gospel as deeply lived by them. And such a family becomes the evangelizer of many other families, and of the neighborhood of which it forms part.”(123)

As the Synod repeated, taking up the appeal which I launched at Puebla, the future of evangelization depends in great part on the Church of the home.(124) This apostolic mission of the family is rooted in Baptism and receives from the grace of the sacrament of marriage new strength to transmit the faith, to sanctify and transform our present society according to God’s plan.

Particularly today, the Christian family has a special vocation to witness to the paschal covenant of Christ by constantly radiating the joy of love and the certainty of the hope for which it must give an account: “The Christian family loudly proclaims both the present virtues of the Kingdom of God and the hope of a blessed life to come.”(125)

The absolute need for family catechesis

(Continued on page 4)

Faith in 52

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(Continued from page 3)

- Recount to each other the history of the devotion of enthroning the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary in the home (p. 251-252). Have you or your family enthroned the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary in your home? What happened in the ceremony? Do you still make time to offer special prayers and devotions to the Two Hearts? Is your home filled with holy images of Jesus, Mary and the Saints? Which is your favorite and why?
- How is the family the “beginning and basis of human society” (p. 253-254)? What does “the success of the lay apostolate” or the vitality of the family depend upon (p. 254-255)? What happens to a culture and to a society when its families are strong? What happens “when Jesus Christ is not the king, the center of hearts in our family and social life” (p. 255)?
- The family is a “little church” (p. 254) or a “domestic church” (*Lumen Gentium* §11). In what ways should a husband and father be like a “bishop” or a priest? How should a wife and mother embody the Church and Blessed Mother Mary? What roles do children play?
- Do you believe that families should have an “apostolic and missionary spirit” (p. 255)? How can we form families to look outwards, to be motivated to evangelize and serve those outside of their kin? How can the family be the “cradle *par excellence* of vocations” (p. 255)?

STEP 4: CLOSING PRAYER

1. When finished with the discussion, the entire group should conclude with the prayer:

May the Heart of Jesus, in the Most Blessed Sacrament, be praised, adored, and loved with grateful affection, at every moment in all the tabernacles of the world, even until the end of time. Amen. ■

The Christian Family... (Continued from page 3)

emerges with particular force in certain situations that the Church unfortunately experiences in some places: “In places where anti-religious legislation endeavors even to prevent education in the faith, and in places where widespread unbelief or invasive secularism makes real religious growth practically impossible, ‘the Church of the home’ remains the one place where children and young people can receive an authentic catechesis.”(126)

- from St. John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio* (Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Nov. 22, 1981), §52. ■



The Flight into Egypt (detail)
by Bartolomé Esteban Murillo

Next Eucharistic “Hour of Power” in English

- Saturday, October 5th, 7-8 p.m., St. Peter McMahan Hall

Next Parish Dessert Potluck*

- Saturday, October 5th, 8-9 p.m., Upper Room Library