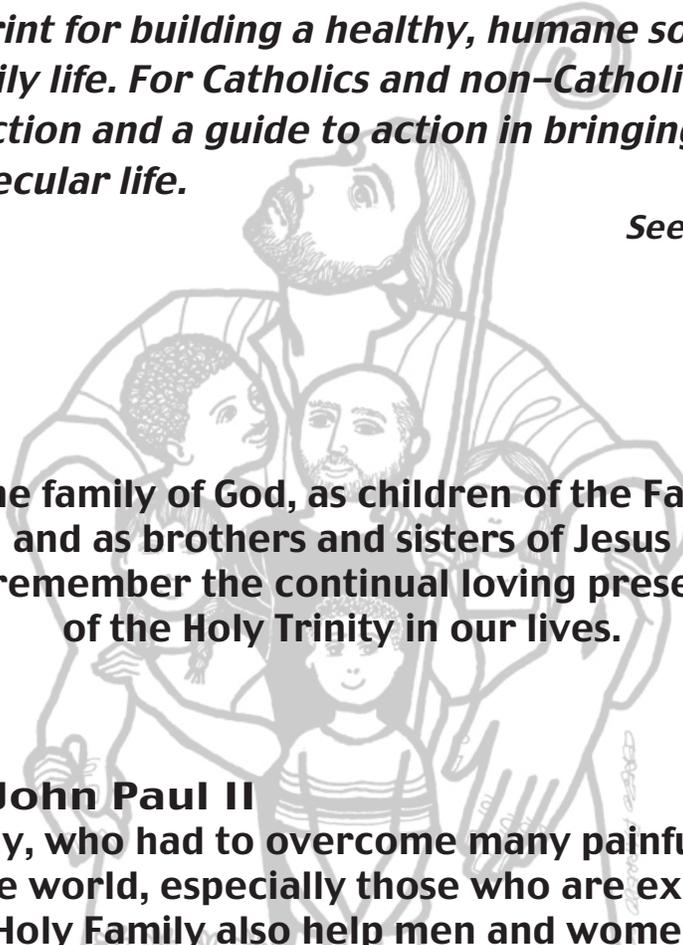


CELEBRATING THE FAMILY

The well being of families, strained today by the twin forces of individualism and state power, is acknowledged as the basis of any healthy society. In our day, because of the weakening of families, society is beset by a host of evils, from abortion and the suppression of parental rights in education, to chronic poverty, crime, and the neglect of the aged.

In response to this critical situation, the Pontifical Commission on the Family released, on October 22, 1983, a document of immediate and far-reaching significance for American society. The Vatican Charter of Family Rights constitutes a blueprint for building a healthy, humane society founded on the integrity of family life. For Catholics and non-Catholics, it should serve as a source of reflection and a guide to action in bringing the values of the Gospel to bear on secular life.

*See www.wf-f.org/charter
for more information.*



**As the family of God, as children of the Father
and as brothers and sisters of Jesus
we remember the continual loving presence
of the Holy Trinity in our lives.**

Prayer of Pope John Paul II

“May the Holy Family, who had to overcome many painful trials, watch over all the families in the world, especially those who are experiencing difficult situations. May the Holy Family also help men and women of culture and political leaders so that they may defend the institution of the family, based on marriage, and so that they may sustain the family as it confronts the grave challenges of the modern age!

May Christian families find the light and strength to be united and to grow as the ‘domestic church’ especially in their diligent participation in the celebration of the Eucharist on Sunday.”

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Ecclesiasticus (Sirach) 3: 2–7, 12–14

**For the Lord honored the father above the children,
and He confirmed the right of the mother over her sons and daughters.
Those who honor their father atone for sins,
and those who glorify their mother
are like the ones who lay up treasure.
Those who honor their father will be gladdened by their own children,
and when they pray they will be heard.
Those who glorify their father will have long life,
and those who obey the Lord will refresh their mother;
they will serve their parents as their masters.
O children, help your father in his old age,
and do not grieve him as long as he lives;
even if he is lacking in understanding, show forbearance;
in all your strength do not despise him.
For kindness to a father will not be forgotten,
and against your sins it will be credited to you.**

Colossians 3:18–21

Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them. Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.

Matthew 2:13–15, 19–23

Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Rise, take the Child and His mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there till I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the Child, to destroy Him.” And he rose and took the Child and His mother by night, and departed to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfil what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, “Out of Egypt have I called My Son.”

But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, “Rise, take the Child and His mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the Child’s life are dead.” And he rose and took the Child and His mother, and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus reigned over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there, and being warned in a dream he withdrew to the district of Galilee. And he went and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled, “He shall be called a Nazarene.”

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Reflection from the Catechism of the Catholic Church

533 The hidden life at Nazareth allows everyone to enter into fellowship with Jesus by the most ordinary events of daily life: The home of Nazareth is the school where we begin to understand the life of Jesus – the school of the Gospel. First, then, a lesson of silence. May esteem for silence, that admirable and indispensable condition of mind, revive in us. . . A lesson on family life. May Nazareth teach us what family life is, its communion of love, its austere and simple beauty, and its sacred and inviolable character... A lesson of work. Nazareth, home of the “Carpenter’s Son”, proclaims the severe and redeeming law of human work.

534 The finding of Jesus in the temple is the only event that breaks the silence of the Gospels about the hidden years of Jesus. Here Jesus lets us catch a glimpse of the mystery of His total consecration to a mission that flows from His divine Son-ship: “Did you not know that I must be about My Father’s work?” Mary and Joseph did not understand these words, but they accepted them in faith. Mary “kept all these things in her heart” during the years Jesus remained hidden in the silence of an ordinary life and was obedient to them.

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**Sing of Mary, pure and lowly,
Virgin mother undefiled,
Sing of God’s Son most holy
Who became her little Child.
Fairest Child of fairest mother,
God the Lord Who came to earth,
Word made flesh our very brother
Takes our nature by His birth.**

**Sing of Joseph, man most holy,
In David’s royal line.
Obedient to the will of God.
Sing of the guardian of Jesus the Christ
and the devoted foster-father,
Who was given the Child to confide.
Husband of the Virgin Mary
and the first to show love and guide.**

**Sing of Jesus, Son of Mary,
In the home at Nazareth.
Toil and labor cannot weary
Love enduring unto death.
Constant was the love He gave them,
Though He went forth from their side,
Forth to preach and heal and suffer,
Till on Calvary He died.**

Prayer

O Lord Jesus Christ, who by subjecting Yourself to Mary and Joseph consecrated family life with wonderful virtues. Thank you, O Lord, for the gift of our families. Be with us in our good times and in our struggles. Help us be always conscious of the love we have for one another, especially now as we reflect on the many blessings you have given us. Grant that by the help of both Your parents we may fashion our lives after the example of Your Holy Family and obtain everlasting fellowship with it. In Your most Holy Name we pray. Amen.

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A Prayer for Parents

Lord of Life, we are grateful for the gift of parents, surrogate parents, grandparents and great-grandparents as well as Godparents. These persons who were chosen by You for us have shared with us not only life but a multitude of gifts and talents as well. We are each indeed home-made, and our parents were the doorway by which we entered into the Wonder of Life. In our grandparents, we sensed and felt the thread of history and the treasure of tradition that lays within our family. We ask that those who guided our early steps and called forth our latent talents may be richly rewarded by You, our Parent-God. In the long tradition of holy parents of Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca, Jacob and Rachel and Mary and Joseph, may our parents be blessed by You, O Faithful Love. May all teachers, coaches, social workers, counselors, guides and friends who have at time been parental persons to us, be blessed as well by Your Divine Compassion and Care. Show us, O Lord, Whom we call our Father, how we can express our gratitude to those who have given us life by living lives of Light and Life. Amen.

Intercessions

Let us adore the Son of the Living God

**Who humbled Himself to become a son of a human family.
Lord Jesus, You are the Model and Savior of us all.**

**Christ, by the mystery of Your subjection to Mary and Joseph,
teach all people reverence and obedience to lawful authority.**

**Jesus, You loved Your parents and were loved by them.
Establish in our families mutual trust and peace.**

**Jesus, in the family at Nazareth,
You grew in wisdom, age, and grace before God and others.
Help us to grow in all things toward You.**

**Jesus, loving and obedient Son of Mary and Joseph,
Help all children and youth to have a great respect and love
for those who care for them.**

**Jesus, Mary and Joseph,
Watch over, guide and bless all families
but especially those whose family life is shattered by divorce, death,
unemployment or addiction. Give them hope and perseverance.**



**O God of goodness and mercy
to Your Fatherly protection we commend our families,
our homes and all who belong to us.
We commit all to Your love and keeping.
Fill our homes with Your blessings
even as You filled the house
at Nazareth with Your presence.**

**Saint John Baptist de La Salle,
and all you holy Brothers who have gone before us,
teach us to have a great love for the family of God.**

Live Jesus in our hearts. Forever!