

Motherhood is Nation-building

A mother shares her reflections on the power of motherhood to reshape the country. She also describes her involvement with the family organization “Educhild.”

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I have often searched far and wide for answers to our nation’s problems. Yet perhaps the solution has always been close to home—literally. At the heart of every Filipino household is a quiet, radiant force: the mother. She

is the *ilaw ng tahanan*, the light of the home.

And when her light shines brightly, it does not only illuminate her own family; it lights the way for the whole nation.

“Ilaw ng Tahanan”

Filipino mothers are lovingly called *ilaw ng tahanan*, a title rich in meaning. The word *ilaw* does not simply mean light; it also suggests clarity, understanding, and insight. In Tagalog, *liwanag* speaks of brightness and clarity. When we say, “*Ikaw ang nagbigay-liwanag sa aking buhay,*” we are really saying, “You brought clarity to my life.”

A mother’s light reveals the values that must be upheld in the home. She brings clarity amid confusion and helps her family discern what truly matters—and when danger is near. With wisdom and love, she guides

both husband and children. In this way, she becomes the keeper of the family's vision.

Complementing her is the father, the *haligi ng tahanan*—the pillar of the home. He provides strength, stability, and moral grounding. Together, the *ilaw* and the *haligi* form a partnership that upholds the family's foundation. Their roles are distinct yet beautifully intertwined, creating a home filled with love, purpose, and direction.

Scripture reminds us:

“No one after lighting a lamp puts it under a bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house... Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.”¹

A mother's light is meant to shine—not only within her home, but

beyond it. Her influence is not confined to four walls; it can shape communities and, ultimately, help illuminate the nation itself.

Let your light shine

We mothers move within three essential spheres of responsibility: ourselves, the relationships we nurture—our husband and children—and our home. When we lovingly tend to each area of our life with grace, joy, and intention, our light shines brilliantly—radiating warmth, spreading hope, and revealing the deeper values that hold our family together.

SELF. Beauty and self-care are not selfish; they are essential. Proper sleep, a healthy diet, and regular exercise allow a mother to thrive. A healthy mother can run and play with her children. A sleep-deprived mother cannot give of herself fully. A sickly mother struggles to provide

the brightness and cheer that make a home charming and inviting. When a mother is physically well and glowing, her beauty shines through. She becomes a source of radiance for both family and home.

Beyond physical needs, a mother must also be beautiful on the inside. Our beauty should reflect that of our Creator. A deep spiritual life is indispensable. Prayer, reflection, and a living relationship with God empower us from within, enabling us to truly illuminate others.

RELATIONSHIPS. A strong marriage strengthens the entire family. As *ilaw ng tahanan*, the wife and mother becomes a fire that ignites her husband's passion and courage. He must be able to rely on her—to help discern decisions, to offer practical and sound advice, and to give unwavering loyalty and fidelity. A wife is her husband's first and

greatest supporter: celebrating his victories, comforting him in his losses, and standing beside him in every season. When a husband finds this in his wife, he is empowered to fight for his family and serve his community with strength and integrity.

Children, too, need a mother's light. We instill values, nurture strengths, and guide them with both love and discipline. Gifted with the ability to nurture, a mother recognizes her children's talents, skills, and dispositions. From an early age, she sees who is patient, who is resilient, who is generous. Her light reveals their potential—and also their weaknesses—so she can guide and support them wisely. The virtues that build a strong nation—honesty, charity, respect, and justice—are first learned at home. A mother is her child's most devoted fan, helping

them grow into compassionate and capable adults.

Like riverbanks guiding a stream, mothers shape the flow of their children's lives—allowing them to bend, grow, and find their way. Children formed by both firmness and affection are the hope of the future. When values are deeply rooted in childhood, serving others and loving one's country become second nature.

HOME. The home is the heart of the family. Whether grand or humble, it becomes a sanctuary when lit by a mother's warmth. This warmth nourishes the family—through peaceful rest, nourishing meals, and moments of togetherness. Family ties are strengthened around the dinner table, where laughter is shared and encouragement freely given. A bright and cheerful home becomes the

foundation of a family that knows how to give and share.

Such a home does not keep its warmth to itself. Others find refuge there. Often, all it takes is an invitation for someone to be enveloped by the peace, cheer, and love that flow from a mother's light.

Nation-building

An empowered husband, well-guided children, and a warm home are the building blocks of a flourishing nation. As one reflection on Our Lady reminds us: “Mary placed herself at the service of others—a service of love. The community of believers invokes her; many nations and peoples call upon her their ‘Queen.’ For her, to reign is to serve. Her service is her reign.”²

Imitating Our Lady, we mothers are called to reign in our homes through love and service. When mothers care

for their children and guide them with wisdom, they are quietly but powerfully building the nation.

Ensuring that our families eat well and rest well is nation-building.

Supporting our husbands—becoming the flame beneath their wings as they soar—is nation-building. A bright and cheerful home can become the headquarters of future Filipino heroes.

Nation-building does not always take place in grand halls or public offices, nor only in bridges, hospitals, or infrastructure projects. More often, it happens in our kitchens, at bedtime, and in quiet moments of prayer.

There is hope for the Philippines—and it begins at home. It begins with the *ilaw ng tahanan*. May every mother allow her light to radiate beyond her family and into society, illuminating the path toward a stronger, more united nation.

Educhild

Motherhood is profoundly powerful—especially when it is shared.

Imagine mothers, each brightly lit, coming together to exchange wisdom and encouragement—more so when they journey alongside their spouses.

My husband Paul and I have been serving in Educhild for the past nine years. During this time, we have accompanied hundreds of couples and parents, and one truth has become clear: great parenting—both motherhood and fatherhood—can be learned. We don't have to wing it, mommies. Motherhood is a skill that can be taught, practiced, and joyfully shared. I myself have learned invaluable parenting and motherhood skills from the many Educhild moderators we've had the privilege to listen to and work with.

When lessons enlighten not only you but also your family and home,

sharing them becomes irresistible—almost a responsibility. How can one keep such treasure to oneself? As Educhild volunteers, we pass on what we ourselves have received. Those “*Eureka!*” moments slowly become lived values at home.

As Area Chair Couple for “Educhild QC East,” Paul and I have taken on the mission of bringing marriage and parenting formation to our adopted school, PAREF Northfield School for Boys in Antipolo. We help the parents understand that parenting teens is not so much about changing teenagers, but about how parents can support them through seasons of growth, discovery, and change.

Today, “Educhild QC East” has grown not only in number but also in scope. There is joy in giving, excitement in serving, and generosity in sacrifice—whether it’s driving hundreds of kilometers to Baguio City for a

Beyond I Do weekend conference in the midst of a raging storm, or flying across the Philippine Sea to Indonesia to build friendships through the *Effective Parenting* series.

At Educhild, family development is not just a vision—it is a way of life. What a joy it is to be part of this mission: creating Loving Couples, Great Parents, and Happy Families.

Educhild Foundation Inc. began in 1976, when a group of parents envisioned providing parenting education for fellow parents. It is a founding member of the International Federation for Family Development (IFFD), a non-profit organization with consultative status at the United Nations. IFFD is the largest international civil society organization dedicated to family development, encompassing over 200 family enrichment centers and more

than 7,000 volunteers across 68 countries.

Nearly 50 years since its founding, Educhild has graduated thousands of parents through its marriage and parenting courses, addressing every stage of family life—from FIRST STEPS (ages 0–3), FIRST LETTERS, MIDDLE CHILDHOOD, PARENTING TEENS, and beyond. Marriage enrichment programs include the MARRIED LOVE Course and the BEYOND I DO weekend retreat.

We would be delighted to share these marriage and parenting skills with you.

For more information, please email educhildph@gmail.com or visit www.educhildph.com.

1 Matthew 5:15-16

2 Letter of Pope John Paul II to Women, 29 June 1995

Denice Price

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