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"Share this joyful and hope-filled vision of the family"

Homily of Monsignor Fernando Ocariz, at the 28th Marian Day of the Family held in the shrine of Torreciudad on September 1, with over 16,000 people taking part.

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“My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior”
(Responsorial Psalm: *Lk* 1:46-47).
When repeating these words of Our

Lady in the responsorial psalm, we have expressed our desire to accompany our Mother in her attitude of thanksgiving and praise to God. We have many reasons to raise our hearts to God, who wants to carry out great things in us, and through us in our families, in society and in the whole world.

Today, in celebrating this Marian Day of the Family close to Our Lady of Torreciudad, we raise our hearts to God with these words of holy Mary. Certainly, we are and we realize we are very little, greatly in need of God's help in order to be good children of his and bring forward our families in accord with his will. But with our Mother in Heaven we can pray this prayer of thanksgiving to God: "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior."

In the Gospel we have seen how an angel restored peace to Saint Joseph's heart, in a complicated moment in the history of the family of Nazareth (cf. *Mt* 1:18-23). We are amazed to see how Mary and Joseph also encountered difficulties in bringing forward their family! The history of their home is not an idealized one. The Holy Family was without doubt the happiest family the world has ever seen or will see, but nevertheless they had to confront real setbacks and problems.

“We know that in everything God works for good with those who love him” (*Rom* 8:28). We have heard these words of Saint Paul in the second reading. Many of us will recall how Saint Josemaria summed them up in three words: *omnia in bonum*, everything works for the good. How often these words will have helped us to embrace God's will, also when we don't understand why

He allows something that makes us suffer or that causes others to suffer. We can also apply them in the context of each home. Everything works for the good: a financial problem that requires a change of plans, the challenges involved in raising children, the difficulties in trying to make compatible a demanding job with the needs of the home... Everything works for the good, if we put everything in God's hands. He will give us the strength needed to turn it into an opportunity to grow as a family, to find in these small or great challenges a way to be more united, because everyone bears them with love.

“I thank God,” says Pope Francis, “that many families, which are far from considering themselves perfect, live in love, fulfil their calling and keep moving forward, even if they fall many times along the way” (Apost. Exhort. *Amoris laetitia*, 57).

These are hope-filled words. At the same time, they invite us to ask ourselves: are we aware of the great good that families do when they strive to be a school of communion, of forgiveness, of solidarity? Truly, families can give light and warmth to other families, to friends, neighbors, school or work colleagues. “God wants every family to be a beacon of the joy of his love in our world. What does this mean?” the Holy Father asked a few days ago in Ireland. “It means that we, who have encountered God’s saving love, try, with or without words, to express it in little acts of kindness in our daily routine and in the most hidden moments of our day” (Address, Dublin, 25 August 2018).

To attain this, there is no need to wait until everything in one’s own home is going perfectly. “Every Christian home,” Saint Josemaria said, “should be a place of peace and

serenity. In spite of the small frustrations of daily life, an atmosphere of profound and sincere affection should reign there together with a deep-rooted calm, which is the result of authentic faith that is put into practice” (*Christ is Passing By*, no. 22). This is how families can cooperate very directly and effectively in building up and strengthening the civilization of love that Saint John Paul II spoke about.

In the Collect prayer today we have addressed God with these words: “In your commandments the family finds its authentic and sure foundation.” This is truly the rock that gives stability to the family: the loving and wise plan of our Creator and Father for the family. Therefore we want to get to know and appreciate ever better the features of this marvelous divine plan, and spread it joyfully in every sector of society.

Let us also renew today, close to Our Lady, the resolution to live the Communion of Saints intensely. Let us pray for the Church, for the Pope, and for all the shepherds and faithful. And may we raise our prayer to Heaven today especially for all the world's families, asking that they receive the strength of the prayer and sacrifice that accompanies each of our days.

Our Mother, Our Lady of Torreciudad, with your help we want to share this joyful and hope-filled vision of the family with those around us. We ask you to teach us to go forward together, as a family, towards the encounter with God and with other men and women. And that we not become discouraged when the path becomes hard, or when we stumble, because we know that you always accompany us.

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