



Catechesis in preparation for the
10th World Meeting of Families

Rome June 22-26, 2022



**“Family love: a vocation and
a path to holiness”**

Catechesis No.1



Vocation and family

Vocation as a calling

The term *vocation* comes from the Latin verb *vocare* whose meaning is *to call*. For each person, God's first calling is to become His children through the Sacrament of Baptism.

Some people who are baptized are called to give their lives to God through consecration as priests or religious; others are called to give themselves to the Lord through the Sacrament of Matrimony. Married life, therefore, is also a *vocation*, that is, **a call from God**.

One's name

The habit of *calling each other* by name is a widespread practice in our families, especially if there are children. Choosing a name, which is given to children and with which they will be called throughout their entire lives, is a very important decision made for parents.

There are many reasons why a name is chosen. Sometimes there are names that have been handed down in the family for generations; sometimes it is the name of a saint to whom the parents are particularly devoted, or the name of a person who, in some way, has left a mark on the parents' lives. For each person, a name is a sort of *calling card* with which one presents oneself to the world. In fact, it already says a lot about a person.

Loneliness

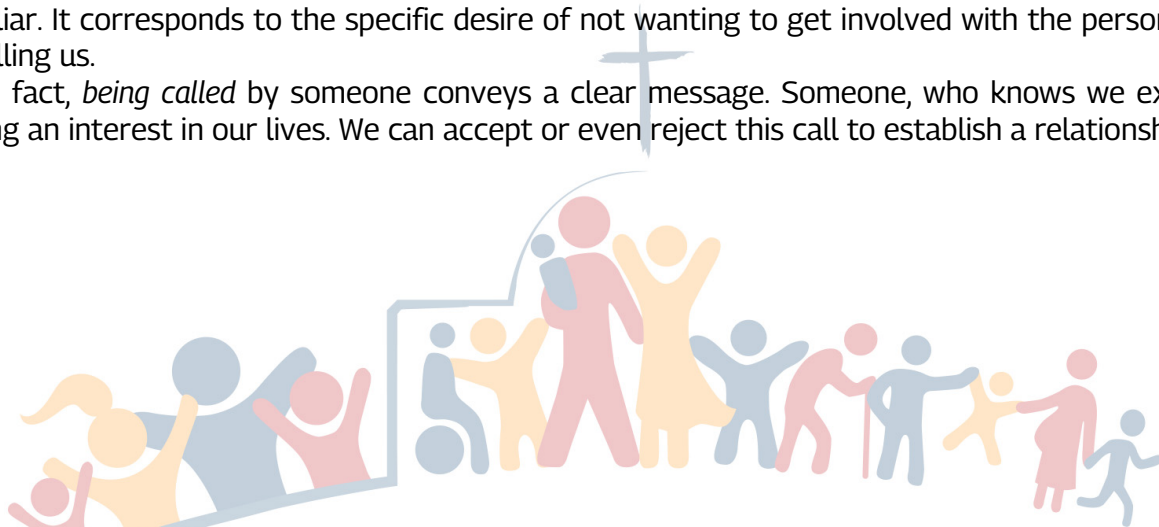
When we happen to have a conversation with someone whose name we do not remember, it is a sign that we have not really connected with that person. The biggest nightmare for a person is that of not being remembered. The feeling of loneliness, which derives from this, comes above all from the impression one gets of not feeling thought of and desired. The long period of *lockdown* that we experienced proved to be a time of extreme loneliness for many, especially for the elderly and for those who, for a variety of reasons, experience the difficulty and hardship of living alone.

We are called

One of the most frequent habits that parents have regarding their children is that of calling them. They do it to wake them up in the morning, to find out where they are, to urge them to fulfill their duties, to show them their love.

Pretending not to hear someone who is calling us is a strategy with which we are all quite familiar. It corresponds to the specific desire of not wanting to get involved with the person who is calling us.

In fact, *being called* by someone conveys a clear message. Someone, who knows we exist, is taking an interest in our lives. We can accept or even reject this call to establish a relationship.





God calls us by name

A passage from St. Paul reveals to us that all of us are *called*, each of us is known and called upon by God the Father:

«He saved us and **called us to a holy life**, not according to our works but according to his own design and the grace bestowed on us in Christ Jesus **before time began**, but now made manifest through the appearance of our savior Christ Jesus, who destroyed death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel». (2 Tim 1:9-10)

God has called us *before time began*. People call us by the name given to us by our parents. **God himself calls us by that name.**

When reading the Bible, on several occasions, it is obvious that God continually calls men and women in various ways to establish a relationship with Him and to welcome Him into their lives. Today the Father calls us to follow Jesus, because through Him we are given a life in which death is conquered by Christ; a life that, regardless of all the difficulties, is worth living because it leads towards eternal life. **With the strength that comes from the Holy Spirit, we can respond to God's calling, which is unique to each of us.**

Matrimony is a response to a calling

Through the Sacrament of Matrimony, a husband and wife are answering to a calling that God has made to them. That calling entails *loving as He loves*.

However, the *yes* pronounced on their wedding day by the bride and groom clashes every day with the effort of loving each other despite all their fragility and weaknesses. This means that the call to Love can only be sustained by the grace of Christ. This requires that the spouses **continually welcome this Grace** which, received daily, enables them to gradually learn, with tenacious perseverance and humble patience, to love one another and *to love as Jesus loves*.

It is comforting to know that, despite the normal hardships and inevitable moments of difficulty, the presence of Christ remains of essential support and incomparable comfort. His voice, conveyed through the Word, never ceases to call, to console and encourage as we continue on our way.





It is advisable that each person have the time to reread the catechesis, and to reflect on what resonates in his or her heart in a particular way.

Points of discussion for couples/for families

Seek the Lord while he may be found, call him while he is near.

*For my thoughts are not your thoughts,
nor are your ways my ways (cf. Is 55:6-8)*

Sometimes God's calling does not correspond to our desires, to our thoughts, to what seems right to us. The Prophet Isaiah tells us: *Seek the Lord, call him.*

- Let us share, as a couple and with our children, whether we wondered what God's calling was for us when we were growing up.
- Were we aware that getting married meant answering to a calling from God?

Points of discussion within the community

Let us reflect, as a community, on marriage as a vocation, as a calling from God to **become a sacrament** and therefore an image (imperfect but real) of His love.

- When we hear a calling in our hearts, how can we tell if it is truly from God?
- Let us reflect upon the importance of discernment when faced with life choices, but also upon the small calls that God makes to us every day.

For more details:

«*Marriage, consecrated life, priesthood: every true vocation begins with an encounter with Jesus*»

https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2017/documents/papa-francesco_20170830_udienza-generale.html





Family Love: Vocation and Path to Holiness

Heavenly Father,
We come before You to praise You
and to thank You for the great gift of the family.
We pray to You for all families
consecrated by the Sacrament of Matrimony.
May they rediscover each day
the grace they have received,
and as small domestic Churches,
may they know how to witness to Your presence
and to the love with which Christ loves the Church.
We pray to You for all families faced with difficulty and suffering
caused by illness or circumstances of which only You know.
Sustain them and make them aware
of the path to holiness upon which You call them,
so that they might experience Your infinite mercy
and find new ways to grow in love.
We pray to You for children and young people:
may they encounter You and respond joyfully
to the vocation You have in mind for them;
We pray for parents and grandparents: may they be aware
that they are signs of the fatherhood and motherhood of God
in caring for the children who, in body and spirit, You entrust to them;
and for the experience of fraternity
that the family can give to the world.
Lord, grant that each family
might live their specific vocation to holiness in the Church
as a call to become missionary disciples,
in the service of life and peace,
in communion with our priests, religious,
and all vocations in the Church.
Bless the World Meeting of Families.
Amen.

Official prayer for the *X World Meeting of Families*
22-26 June 2022

