

Catechesis in preparation for the
10th World Meeting of Families

Rome June 22-26, 2022



**“We are all children,
we are all brothers and sisters”**

Catechesis No. 4

We are all children, we are all brothers and sisters

In a family there are different roles, but we are all united by a common identity: we are all children! No one chooses to be born. Each of us owes their existence and their life to a mother and a father. We cannot give life to ourselves, we can only receive it.

Life is a mystery that shines before us when children are born, and we see them for the first time with our own eyes; at that moment we are overcome by something more immense. That boy, that girl, are proof of the mystery of life that only partly depends on us and that we started to love even before we met them.

We all need each other.

When children are young, they need us. Their everyday lives depend on us: food, clothes, body care, communicating, learning to live in the world. Even as adults, however, we all have the experience of depending on something and someone. We are always in need of help, love and forgiveness!

What lies behind this truth?

Loved before birth

God the Father envisioned each of us as unique beings and loved us from before we were born.

«Io pensavo a te prima ancora di formarti nel ventre materno. Prima che tu venissi alla luce, ti avevo già scelto». (Ger. 1,5).

Being dependent, which characterizes our coming into the world, tells us that Someone loved us first, desired us, and that our parents were open to accepting our life as a gift.

It is terrible and distressing to feel we are *not needed*, even not being chosen for a team when we were children, or being chosen last, as if we were a rebound.

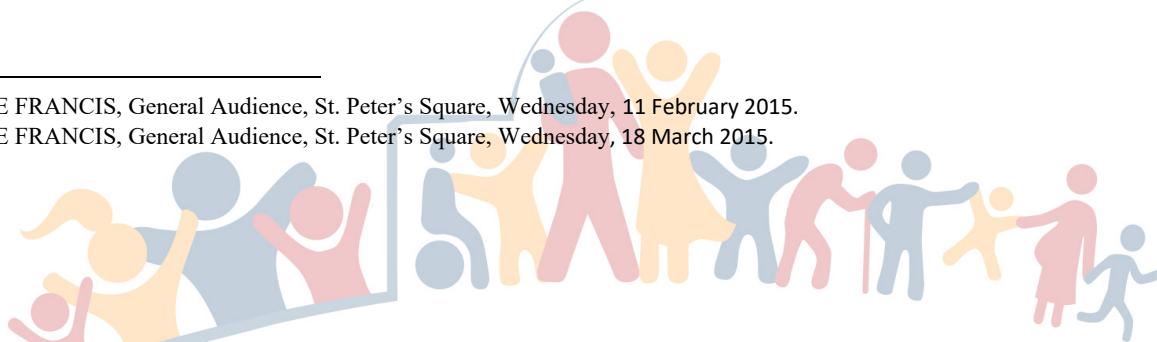
But, if we think that **we have been chosen and called all along**, then being in God's heart frees us from the anxiety and assures us that **we have been rooted all along in a love that comes "before" everything else**.

«From this also derives the depth of the human experience of being son or daughter, which allows us to discover the most gratuitous dimension of love, which never ceases to astonish us. It is the beauty of being loved first: children are loved before they arrive»¹.

We have not chosen ourselves rather we have been chosen; this suggests to us that the necessary condition for entering the Kingdom of God consists of *«not considering ourselves self-sufficient, but in need of help, of love, of forgiveness»²*, all things that children, especially when they are small, constantly remind us of.

¹ POPE FRANCIS, General Audience, St. Peter's Square, Wednesday, 11 February 2015.

² POPE FRANCIS, General Audience, St. Peter's Square, Wednesday, 18 March 2015.





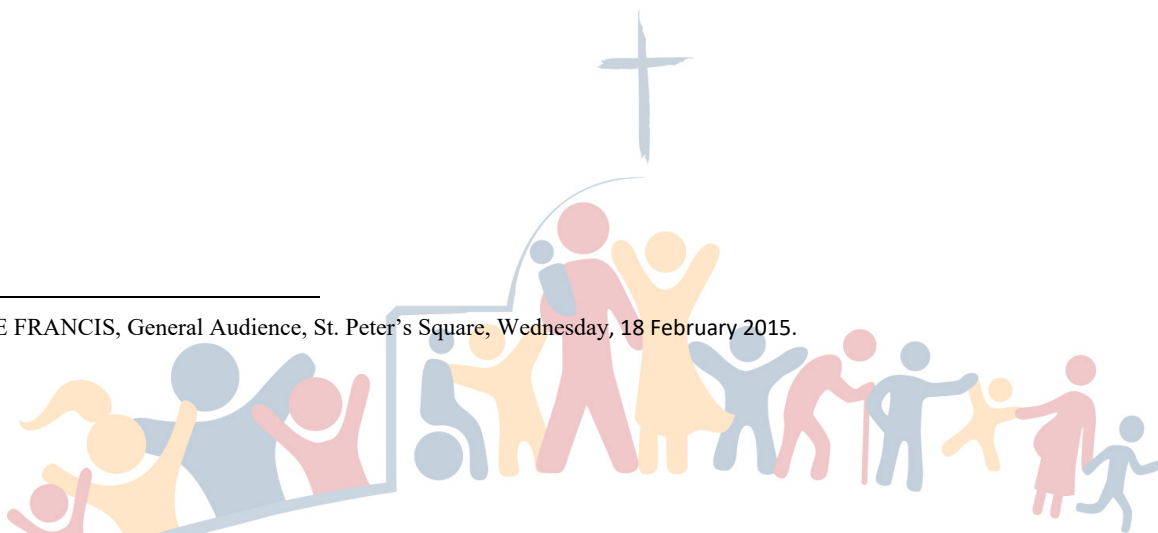
Living in fraternity

The family is the first place where we learn to live the fraternity to which, as children of one Father, we are all called.

*«In the family, among siblings, human coexistence is learned, how one must live in society. Perhaps we are not always aware of it, but **the family itself introduces fraternity into the world!** Beginning with this first experience of fraternity, nourished by affection and education at home, the style of fraternity radiates like a promise upon the whole of society and on its relations among peoples.*

The blessing that God, in Jesus Christ, pours out on this bond of fraternity, expands in an unimaginable way. He renders it capable of overcoming all differences of nationality, language, culture and even religion. History has shown well enough, after all, that even freedom and equality, without brotherhood, can be full of individualism and conformism, and even personal interests»³.

³ POPE FRANCIS, General Audience, St. Peter's Square, Wednesday, 18 February 2015.





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 manner.

Points of discussion for couples/for families

Everyone is always in need of help, love, and forgiveness!

- How do we feel when we are helped, loved, forgiven?
- Who do we feel has helped, loved, forgiven us?
- In the heart of every person we meet lies the desire to feel helped, loved, forgiven. Our presence alongside every person can therefore be important. Let's think about these last few days: who have we made happy and who have we struggled to love?

Let us embrace Pope Francis' invitation:

«Each of us think in our heart about our children – if we have any; [...] And let us all think about our parents and thank God for the gift of life»⁴.

Points of discussion within the community

- Children need us to grow up, but we too need others.
- It is terrible and distressing to be or feel we are *not needed*. What might it mean, concretely speaking, to make sure that everyone in our community feels needed? We could organize the next preparatory meeting for the World Meeting of Families, offering everyone the possibility to get involved.
- Let us embrace Pope Francis' invitation:
«Let us think of our brothers, our sisters, and from our heart let us pray in silence for them»⁵.

For more details:

https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/it/audiences/2015/documents/papa-francesco_20151014_udienza-generale.html

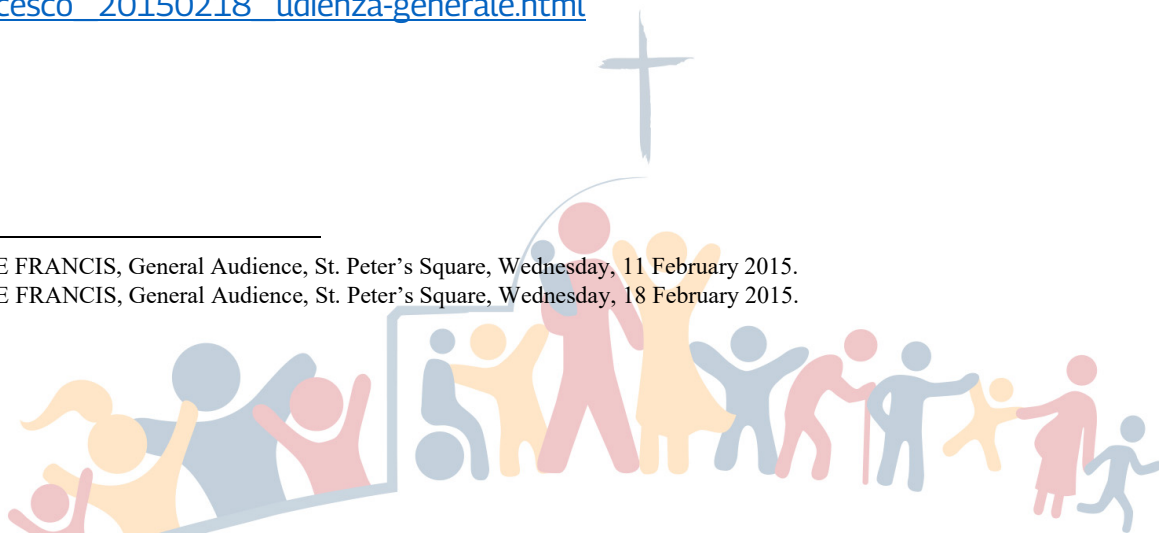
https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/it/audiences/2015/documents/papa-francesco_20150211_udienza-generale.html

https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/it/audiences/2015/documents/papa-francesco_20150318_udienza-generale.html

https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/it/audiences/2015/documents/papa-francesco_20150218_udienza-generale.html

⁴ POPE FRANCIS, General Audience, St. Peter's Square, Wednesday, 11 February 2015.

⁵ POPE FRANCIS, General Audience, St. Peter's Square, Wednesday, 18 February 2015.





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

