15 May: is the International Day of the Family. This date was proclaimed in 1993 by the United Nations General Assembly echoing the importance that the international community gives to the family. It is the occasion to be conscious about it and have a better understanding of the social, economic and demographic processes affecting this important nucleus of society.

Pope Francis has convened a Synod on the Families, for this year in October. In the last catechesis each Wednesday, he reminded us of the value of the family, and God’s plan for it, and also the great gift of God to humanity, with the creation of man and woman, and the Sacrament of Marriage.

During the 7th Summit of the Americas, held last month in the city of Panama, representatives of civil society from 18 countries of Latin America stated in official documents, their advocating of explicit protection to the family, as a guiding principle to ensure peace and security in the region, and maintain responsibility for the education of children.

TO BEGIN THE PRAYER:

◆ We remember to create a sacred space, where each of the participants will share from his/her own wisdom.

◆ We can choose a hymn to the Holy Spirit or another appropriate hymn. We know the importance that family has in the development of the person, and how this affects the future links that we establish throughout our lives. I connect with my childhood, my adolescence. How were my links? I remember one in particular? I remember a pleasant or unpleasant experience, which has been significant, after which I have been changed? How has this experience influenced me later in my life, in my relationships? We can write a word on a piece of paper and place it where it can be read. We can share in community, with respect and a welcoming heart.

◆ We pray with the Psalm 110 (111).

◆ Along with the psalmist we thank God for all we have received through our families. We ask forgiveness and give forgiveness for those things that are not so positive. And we express it. We give thanks and bless God for life, and for our families and community.
We look now at the Family of Nazareth. Pope Francis reminded us in his talk: "The message that comes from the Holy Family is above all a message of faith. In the family life of Mary and Joseph, God truly is the center, and he is present in the person of Jesus. For this reason the family of Nazareth is holy. Why? Because it is centered in Jesus. When parents and children breathe together this climate of faith, they possess an energy that allows them to deal with difficult moments, as shown, for example, in the experience of the Holy Family in the dramatic event of the flight into Egypt: a hard situation".

The Christ Child with his Mother Mary and Saint Joseph, are a simple icon of family but an especially bright one. The light that radiates is a light of mercy and salvation for the whole world, a light of truth for every human being, and for each human family. This light coming from the Holy Family encourages us to offer warmth in difficult family situations: lack of peace, harmony is missing and forgiveness is needed. We pray that our solidarity will increase, especially in relation to the families who are living in very difficult situations caused by disease, lack of work, discrimination, the need to emigrate...

And here we stop a moment and in silence we pray for all those families in difficulty due to: illness, unemployment, discrimination, need to emigrate, or who live with misunderstandings or disunity. In silence we pray for these families. (Feel free to express intentions.)

FINAL PRAYER: Invoke fervently Blessed Mary, Mother of Jesus and our Mother, and St. Joseph, her Spouse. We pray that they will enlighten, comfort and guide all the families of the world, so that they may comply with dignity and serenity in the mission that God has entrusted to them.

Jesus, Mary and Joseph, in you we contemplate the splendor of true love, and with confidence we pray:

Holy Family of Nazareth makes our homes places of communion, cenacles for prayer, authentic schools of Gospel and small domestic churches.

Holy Family of Nazareth, never again let episodes of violence, of obstinacy and division affect families; if someone has been hurt or shocked, that member will soon be comforted and healed.

Holy Family of Nazareth let the next Synod of bishops give us a new awareness of the sacred and inviolable character of the family, of its beauty in the plan of God.

Jesus, Mary and Joseph, listen to our supplication. Amen.

Submitted by Miss Adriana Parise (GS Partner) and Sr. Mónica Scavuzzo
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