

FATHER CAFFAREL, A COMPANION ON OUR PATH TOWARDS GOD
“BUT LOVE IS MY ESSENCE !”

DAY 4

Couple on Mission

“Seekers of God’, such a Couple is a demonstration of God in our world”

“Remember to welcome strangers” (Heb 13:2)

The second ministry of couples: hospitality. This is often neglected by Christian homes, because its character as a Church mission is hardly ever emphasised. However, the apostles explained themselves clearly, *“Bring strangers in need into your homes,”* Paul wrote to the Romans (Rom 12:13; cf. 1 P 4:9; Heb 13:2). And the Church Fathers echoed the apostles, *“Compete with the Church,”* Saint John Chrysostom told couples.

For so many of our contemporaries, being welcomed into the heart of a real home is of such importance! This discovery of family loves - conjugal, paternal, maternal, filial, fraternal - introduces them into a new world where they find the internal balance they lacked precisely, for lack of having grown up in this irreplaceable environment that is a happy family.

Much more precious still to them are the riches of grace of the Christian home. No doubt the non-believing visitor does not suspect the presence of Christ and the Church, but not knowing this does not prevent the mystery from permeating them, since it makes itself known and communicates via the familiar realities of home life, that whole bundle of loves I was talking about before, all the daily activities.

Also, one must remember that in God’s plan, the Christian home is a "relay" on the Church’s way: there, without knowing it, the unbeliever makes their first contact with the Church, the sinner experiences its mercy, the poor and the abandoned discover its motherhood. They are not frightened by this discovery of the Church because, according to the admirable expression of one couple, *“couples are the smiling and gentle face of the Church.”* How many, who would never have gone directly to the liturgical community and to the sacraments, are gently led there through the intermediary of the family community?

Nothing seems more important than to make Christian couples understand that through hospitality and welcoming they exercise an irreplaceable “mediation” between the world and the Church.

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