

**Meditations in preparation for the Solemnity of St. Joseph  
Institute Servants of the Lord and the Virgin of Matará**

**Meditation Day 12 (February 29th)**

*Head of the Holy Family*

*Pray for us!*

*Analyzing the nature of marriage, both St. Augustine and Saint Thomas place marriage as the "indivisible spiritual union," as the "union of hearts," as "consent,"<sup>1</sup> highlighting elements in marriage that manifest themselves in an exemplary manner. At the culminating moment in the history of salvation, when God reveals his love for humanity through the gift of the Word, it is precisely the marriage of Mary and Joseph which realizes in full "freedom" the "gift of his Bride" by welcoming and expressing such love.<sup>2</sup> "In this great work of renewal of all things in Christ, marriage, purified and renewed, becomes a new reality, a sacrament of the new Covenant. And behold, on the threshold of the New Testament, as already at the beginning of the Old, there is a couple. While the union of Adam and Eve had been the source of the evil that has flooded the world, that of Joseph and Mary constitutes the summit, through which holiness is spread throughout the earth. The Savior has begun the work of salvation with this virginal and holy union, in which he expresses his omnipotent will, to purify and sanctify the family, as the sanctuary of love and cradle of life "<sup>3</sup>*

*How many teachings derive from all this for the family! Because "the essence and the role of the family are ultimately defined by love" and "the family receives the mission of guarding, revealing and communicating love, as a living reflection and real participation of God's love for humanity and the love of Christ, Our Lord, for the Church, his Bride"<sup>4</sup>; It is in the Holy Family, in this original "domestic church,"<sup>5</sup> where all Christian families should look. In fact, "by a mysterious plan of God, the Son of God lived hidden in it for many years: it is therefore the prototype and example of all Christian families."<sup>6</sup>*

We ask St. Joseph the grace to imitate the Holy Family of Nazareth.

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<sup>1</sup> S. Augustine, *Contra Faustum*, XXIII, 8; *PL* 42, 470 ss.; *De consensu evangelistarum*, II, I, 3: *PL* 34, 1072; *Sermon*, 51, 13, 21: *PL*, 38, 344 s.; S. Thomas, *Summa Theol.*, III, q. 29, a. 2 in conclus.

<sup>2</sup> *Alocutions* del January 9; January 16; February 20 1980: *Insegnamenti*, III/I (1980), pp. 88-92; 148-152; 428-431

<sup>3</sup> Paul VI, *Alocution* to the Movement "Notre Dame" (4 de mayo de 1970), n. 7: *AAS* 62 (1970), p. 431. Analogical Exhortation of the Family of Nazareth as model of the family, for example, Leo XIII, Apostolic Letter, *Neminem fugit* (June 14, 1892): *Leo XIII P.M. Act, XII* (1892), pp. 149 s.; Benedict XV, Motu Proprio *Bonum sane* (25 de julio de 1920): *AAS* 12 (1920), pp. 313-317.

<sup>4</sup> Apostolic Exhortation, *Familiaris consortio* (November 22, 1981), 17; *AAS* 74 (1982), p. 100. (Spanish Edition)

<sup>5</sup> Apostolic Exhortation, *Familiaris consortio* (November 22, 1981), 49: *AAS* 74 (1982), P. 140; Cf. Conc. Ecum. Vat. II, Const. dogm. *Lumen gentium* about the Church. 11; Decree *Apostolicam actuositatem* about the apostolate of the laity, 11.

<sup>6</sup> Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris consortio* (November 22, 1981), 85: *AAS* 74 (1982), pp. 189 s. (Spanish Edition)