



The Holy See

JUBILEE OF FAMILIES, CHILDREN, GRANDPARENTS AND THE ELDERLY

HOMILY OF THE HOLY FATHER LEO XIV

St Peter's Square

7th Sunday of Easter - Sunday, 1 June 2025

[Multimedia]

The Gospel we have just heard shows us Jesus, at the Last Supper, praying on our behalf (cf. *Jn* 17:20). The Word of God, made man, as he nears the end of his earthly life, thinks of us, his brothers and sisters, and becomes a blessing, a prayer of petition and praise to the Father, in the power of the Holy Spirit. As we ourselves, full of wonder and trust, enter into Jesus' prayer, we become, thanks to his love, part of a great plan that concerns all of humanity.

Christ prays that we may "all be one" (v. 21). This is the greatest good that we can desire, for this universal union brings about among his creatures the eternal communion of love that is God himself: the Father who gives life, the Son who receives it and the Spirit who shares it.

The Lord does not want us, in this unity, to be a nameless and faceless crowd. He wants us to be one: "As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us" (v. 21). The unity for which Jesus prays is thus a communion grounded in the same love with which God loves, which brings life and salvation into the world. As such, it is firstly a *gift* that Jesus comes to bring. From his human heart, the Son of God prays to the Father in these words: "I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me" (v. 23).

Let us listen with amazement to these words. Jesus is telling us that God loves us as he loves himself. The Father does not love us any less than he loves his only-begotten Son. In other words, with an infinite love. God does not love less, because he loves first, from the very beginning! Christ

himself bears witness to this when he says to the Father: “You loved me before the foundation of the world” (v. 24). And so it is: in his mercy, God has always desired to draw all people to himself. It is his life, bestowed upon us in Christ, that makes us one, uniting us with one another.

Listening to this Gospel today, during the Jubilee of Families, Children, Grandparents and the Elderly, fills us with joy.

Dear friends, we received life before we ever desired it. As Pope Francis said: “all of us are sons and daughters, but none of us chose to be born” (*Angelus*, 1 January 2025). Not only that. As soon as we were born, we needed others in order to live; left to ourselves, we would not have survived. Someone else saved us by caring for us in body and spirit. All of us are alive today thanks to a relationship, a free and freeing relationship of human kindness and mutual care.

That human kindness is sometimes betrayed. As for example, whenever freedom is invoked not to give life, but to take it away, not to help, but to hurt. Yet even in the face of the evil that opposes and takes life, Jesus continues to pray to the Father for us. His prayer acts as a balm for our wounds; it speaks to us of forgiveness and reconciliation. That prayer makes fully meaningful our experience of love for one another as parents, grandparents, sons and daughters. That is what we want to proclaim to the world: we are here in order to be “one” as the Lord wants us to be “one,” in our families and in those places where we live, work and study. Different, yet one; many, yet one; always, in every situation and at every stage of life.

Dear friends, if we love one another in this way, grounded in Christ, who is “the Alpha and the Omega,” “the beginning and the end” (cf. *Rev* 22:13), we will be a sign of peace for everyone, in society and the world. Let us not forget: families are the cradle of the future of humanity.

In recent decades, we have received a sign that fills us with joy but also makes us think. It is the fact that several spouses have been beatified and canonized, not separately, but as married couples. I think of Louis and Zélie Martin, the parents of Saint Therese of the Child Jesus; and of Blessed Luigi and Maria Beltrame Quattrocchi, who raised a family in Rome in the last century. And let us not forget the Ulma family from Poland: parents and children, united in love and martyrdom. I said that this is a sign that makes us think. By pointing to them as exemplary witnesses of married life, the Church tells us that today’s world needs the marriage covenant in order to know and accept God’s love and to defeat, thanks to its unifying and reconciling power, the forces that break down relationships and societies.

For this reason, with a heart filled with gratitude and hope, I would remind all married couples that marriage is not an ideal but the measure of true love between a man and a woman: a love that is total, faithful and fruitful (cf. SAINT PAUL VI, *Humanae Vitae*, 9). This love makes you one flesh and enables you, in the image of God, to bestow the gift of life.

I encourage you, then, to be examples of integrity to your children, acting as you want them to act, educating them in freedom through obedience, always seeing the good in them and finding ways to nurture it. And you, dear children, show gratitude to your parents. To say “thank you” each day for the gift of life and for all that comes with it is the first way to honour your father and your mother (cf. *Ex 20:12*). Finally, dear grandparents and elderly people, I recommend that you watch over your loved ones with wisdom and compassion, and with the humility and patience that come with age.

In the family, faith is handed on together with life, generation after generation. It is shared like food at the family table and like the love in our hearts. In this way, families become privileged places in which to encounter Jesus, who loves us and desires our good, always.

Let me add one last thing. The prayer of the Son of God, which gives us hope on our journey, also reminds us that one day we will all be *uno unum* (cf. Saint Augustine, *Sermo super Ps. 127*): one in the one Saviour, embraced by the eternal love of God. Not only us, but also our fathers, mothers, grandmothers, grandfathers, brothers, sisters and children who have already gone before us into the light of his eternal Pasch, and whose presence we feel here, together with us, in this moment of celebration.