

VAIHARAI

(The Dawn)

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VAIHARAI

Family: The Domestic Church

From Editor's Desk

Moses commanded the fellow Israelites with the following words: "And these words which I command you this day shall be upon your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise" (Deut 6:6-7). It was a fitting recommendation to the people that they should live according to the expectation of God in the Promised Land. The new affluence and freedom comparing to the past experience as slaves in Egypt should not distract them from human and divine values. The responsibility of the parents is vital to teach values to the younger generation especially in the context of affluence and freedom. The command of Moses is meaningful in today's context too.

Family is the basic structure of the society and of the Church. Unless this basic structure is healthy and authentic, the society and the Church cannot grow and go forward without difficulties. Parenting and family education begin with affection. Parents should know the role of affection they have for their children. Though affection is foundational for a healthy family, a wrong, imperfect and immature perception of it can bring in deviation in parenting

and disaster in the growth of a child. Unfortunately, in the modern world parents find less time for parenting and for offering themselves as gift to their children by spending quality time with them. Parents should also know that they are the primary teachers of human values and religious values. Practicing catholic parents are guarantee for the healthy growth of their children.

Incomprehension and/or distorted understanding of matrimonial responsibilities will make family hostile to the wellbeing and normal growth of children. Incomprehension and distortion regarding the dignity and role of husband and wife spoil peace at home and make children feel insecure. Pastors and elders have bounden responsibility to look into this threat in order to avoid further friction in matrimonial relationship. A mature pastoral guidance will ensure the wellbeing of the family, the *Domestic Church* (LG, 11), and give confidence to those who are affected by matrimonial difficulties.

Do the pastors take serious the *domestic church* and equip themselves to guide married couples to make their homes into *domestic churches*? It is important to build the Church right from the *domestic churches* under their pastoral concern. In this regard a healthy relationship of the pastors with their flock is imperative. Pastors should spend time in order to equip themselves to help the struggling couples and disoriented youngsters. They should spend time to prepare the Word of God as a healthy food for the people that people may live their life with Christian flavour. Let the parents also know that they have a 'missionary responsibility' primarily towards their own children through family catechism and family prayer. Let the pastor and

parents take effort to make Christian families into *Domestic Churches* that life at home and participation in the Liturgy becomes truly Christian, i.e., joyful!

“Pastoral activity needs to bring out more clearly the fact that our relationship with the Father demands and encourages a communion which heals, promotes and reinforces interpersonal bonds” (Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 67).

Dr T. Xavier Terrence

Editor