

# Are **YOU** Church in Your Home?

A family is our first community and the most basic way in which the Lord gathers us, forms us and acts in the world. The early Church expressed this truth by calling the Christian family a Domestic Church or Church of the Home.

As families, you carry the mission of the Church of the Home in ordinary ways when:

**You believe in God** and that God cares about you, in good times and bad.

**You love and value others.** Children form a picture of God from the love they experience among their relatives and godparents.

**You foster intimacy.** To share oneself and be accepted within a family is indispensable to forming a close relationship with the Lord.

**You evangelize** by professing faith in God, acting in accord with gospel values and setting an example of Christian living for your children and for others.

**You educate**, especially by example. Sometimes children listen and learn; sometimes they teach you. Your wisdom and theirs come from the same Spirit.

**You pray together**, thanking God for blessings, reaching for strength, asking for guidance in crisis and doubt.

**You serve one another**, sacrificing your own wants for the other's good. Your "deaths" and "risings" become compelling signs of Jesus' own life, death and resurrection.

**You forgive and seek reconciliation.** When you do so, family members come to believe that, no matter what, they are still loved by you and by God.

**You celebrate life**, whether for birthdays, weddings, births, deaths, first day of school or graduation, new jobs, old friends, family reunions, surprise visits, holy days and holidays. You come together when tragedy strikes or in joyful celebration of the sacraments. As you gather for a meal, you break bread and share stories, becoming more fully the community of love Jesus calls us to be.

**You welcome the stranger**, the lonely one, and the grieving person into your home. You give drink to the thirsty and food to the hungry. The gospel assures us that when we do this, they are strangers no more, but Christ.

**You act justly** in your community when you treat others with respect, stand against discrimination and racism, and work to overcome hunger, poverty, homelessness, illiteracy.

**You affirm life** as a precious gift from God. You oppose whatever destroys life, such as abortion, euthanasia, unjust war, capital punishment, neighborhood and domestic violence, poverty and racism. Within your family, you make peace.

**You raise up vocations** to the priesthood, religious life, married life, and single life. This is especially fostered through family prayer, involvement in family life, and by the way you speak of priests, vowed religious men and women, permanent deacons, and lay people who minister in the church.