

SECTION 40
THE WAY OF DAILY LOVE
IN MARRIAGE AND FAMILY LIFE
Part 2: Love is kind

"Love is always a gift of God," Pope Francis writes (AL 228). Our entire life, our personal talents and the whole of creation are a gift of God, but love is the greatest gift (1 Corinthians 13:13). Love is even the source of all other gifts, because we are all *"rooted and grounded in love,"* as it is written by St. Paul (Ephesians 3:17),

St. Paul's 'Hymn of Love' (1 Corinthians 13) is not a 'what-to-do-list', as if St. Paul wants to command us to be patient or kind. It is first of all a proclamation of the Good News that we *are capable* of being patient, kind and forgiving. Why? Because it is *"the love of God"* that, *"has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us"* (Romans 5:5).

In the 'Hymn of Love' St. Paul describes the qualities of God's love, poured out into our hearts. In that way, he also reminds us that God's love becomes fruitful through the love of our hearts. Our hearts are really gifted and enabled to love one another as God loves us, because we are guided by the Holy Spirit.

With St. Paul and Pope Francis, we should keep in mind that *"love is more than a mere feeling"* (AL 94). Nevertheless, by being

kind to one another, we *"experience the happiness of giving, the nobility and grandeur of spending ourselves generously, purely for the pleasure of giving and serving, without asking to be repaid"* (AL 94).

The Pope quotes Saint Ignatius of Loyola, who has said, *"Love is shown more by deeds than by words"* (AL 93). Also, in daily life, most of the time spouses and their children show their kindness to one another not just by words, but by deeds, while being *"ever ready to be of assistance"* (AL 93).

A Reflective Moment

"The principle of spiritual realism requires that one spouse not presume that the other can completely satisfy his or her needs.

The spiritual journey of each needs to help them to a certain "disillusionment" with regard to the other, to stop expecting from that person something which is proper to the love of God alone.

This demands an interior 'divestment' (or 'detachment') (which) enables the spouses to find in the love of God the deepest source of meaning in their own lives.

*Each day we have to invoke the help of the Holy Spirit
to make this interior freedom possible.”*

(Pope Francis, *Amoris Laetitia*, n. 320).