

**SECTION 43**  
**THE WAY OF DAILY LOVE**  
**IN MARRIAGE AND FAMILY LIFE**  
**Part 5: Love is not arrogant or rude.**

One of the basic principles of Pope Francis' Spirituality of the Heart is that true love forms a reflection or image of divine love. True love among couples, family members, friends or neighbors is a human manifestation of divine love that constantly is poured out into our hearts. This applies in particular to the love of married couples. At the beginning of his letter "the Joy of Love" the Pope writes: "*The majestic early chapters of Genesis present the human couple in its deepest reality. The first chapter says that "God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them" (Gen. 1:27). It is striking that the "image of God" here refers to the couple, "male and female" (AL 10). And the Pope continues: "The couple that loves and begets life is a true, living image capable of revealing God the Creator and Savior. The triune God is a communion of love, and the family is its living reflection"* (AL 11; see also Section 32).

While reflecting on the intimate relationship between divine love and truly human love, the Pope writes: "*The deeper love is, the more it calls for respect for the other's freedom and the ability to wait until the other opens the door to his or her heart"* (AL 99). These words apply first and foremost to God's love for us and as a result, also to true human love. God never behaves arrogantly or rudely, intrusively or insensitively towards us. God respects our human freedom and waits until we open our hearts, while allowing his love to permeate our hearts. Thus, any misfortune or sorrow that we experience, we should never attribute to God, as if God wants to punish us for doing evil or wants us to be unhappy.

Jesus teaches us to look at his Father as a compassionate God (see Luke 6:36), who respects our autonomy, our capacities and limitations, and who loves us, even when we are sinners (Romans 5:8). Being compassionate, just as our Father is compassionate, urges us, in the words of Pope Francis, to, “*approach a person with immense respect and a certain dread of causing harm or taking away someone’s freedom*” (AL 127).

### **A Reflective Moment**

*“Develop the habit of giving real importance to other persons.*

*This means appreciating them  
and recognizing their right to exist,  
to think as they do and to be happy.*

*Never downplay what they say or think,  
even if you need to express your own point of view.*

*Everyone has something to contribute,  
because they have their life experiences,  
they look at things from a different standpoint  
and they have their own concerns,  
abilities and insights.*

*We ought to be able to acknowledge the other person’s truth,  
the value of his or her deepest concerns,  
and what it is that they are trying to communicate,  
however aggressively.*

*We have to put ourselves in their shoes  
and try to peer into their hearts,  
to perceive their deepest concerns  
and to take them as a point of departure for further dialogue.”*

(Pope Francis, “Amoris Laetitia” n. 138).