



Equipes Notre-Dame

My Very Dear Couples,

At the International College in Florianopolis last July, the general theme was the verse from St John's Gospel that says, "*For without me, you can do nothing.*" (Jn 15,5) This statement of Jesus means that we have an absolute need to be united to him in order to obtain *eternal life*, since He Himself is Life.

When we speak of *eternal life*, many of us shake our heads with a certain amount of scepticism, because what interests us here and now is not *eternal life*, but instead this real life that we are currently living. For *eternal life*, we will have lots of time, all of eternity even. Indeed, we think that *eternal life*—life that never ends—is a reality of an eschatological order. So, talking about *eternal life*, means imagining life after death. But since we are in no hurry to die, we put off until later any thoughts about *eternal life*.

However, things are not exactly like that. When Jesus says, "*For without me, you can do nothing,*" he is drawing our attention to the concrete *Hour* in which we are living and that accompanies us in the constant movement of time that we live and travel in. He wants to offer us the *fullness of life* here and now, in order for us to have the strength, serenity and peace throughout our voyage, that is our life, similar to the apostles' voyage, when during the night, they had to cross the sea of Galilee and were surprised by a great storm.

We too cross the *sea of life* in the midst of a huge storm that threatens the family, the Church, and all of humanity. It is possible that in the whole of history, humanity has never experienced such a storm, a hurricane like the one that today threatens the Church, the family and couples. How can we survive in the midst of such a tropical storm? How, like St Peter, can we walk on the waves without deviating, if the Lord does not give us a hand?

This is why the Lord founded his Church; he promised St Peter that the gates of hell would not have power over it; why he left us the sacraments that heal us—priesthood, penance (sacrament of forgiveness and peace) and the anointing of the sick—; why he brought about the creation of our Movement in the Church, with its Endeavours, that help us all, both couples and spiritual counsellors, to experience the holiness of our two sacraments; why he left us His Mother, Our Lady, as our Mother, and who, a hundred years ago, said to the little shepherds (and says to us today), "*Then you are going to have much to suffer, but the grace of God will be your comfort.*"

One of the Endeavours upon which I have much insisted, as you well know, is *couple prayer*. This year, as spiritual preparation before the great gathering of Fatima, I invite you to make the recitation of the Rosary your couple prayer. Our Lady promised that peace depended on the Rosary being said every day: peace in the world, peace in families, peace amongst couples and the conversion of poor sinners. Thus, praying and

saying the Rosary will be a means for us, according to Our Lady's promise, to safely get through the great tropical storm that threatens the world and that touches the Church too.

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