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## EVERY PERSON HAS AN EXTRAORDINARY POTENTIAL!

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If the first two meetings of the third level of the family- and parish-based *Remain in My Love* catechetics programme aroused our sense of wonder and marvel for God's wonderful gift of the earth, this meeting risks doing as much! God has placed so many beautiful qualities in every human being, qualities that are as many gifts from Him, and for which we can praise Him with all our hearts!

### CONTEMPLATION

One of the most beautiful sights I have ever seen in my life is that of two parents gazing on their new-born child. They don't tire looking at it from every angle, touching its hands, and kissing and hugging it. And they have every right to act that way. Life is so beautiful, and it is so great! It is full of potential, full of energy, full of promise. To be able to see, to listen, to feel. And we should be able to keep this sense of admiration alive. Every season brings new visions in its wake. The tender gaze is a lot like that of young lovers as they discover their mutual qualities. The eight year old child is the bearer of many and varied qualities. There is so much to be found, there, so much goodness, boldness, and energy. There is love in the heart, life in the body, and light in the eyes. God has already placed in each child what will bring out the best for tomorrow, for the sake of others. However, every child is a richness in itself, for today.

### COMPARISON

In Saint Matthew's Gospel, we are told how Jesus could look at creation and contemplate it, and have sound advice for us humans: "Do not worry about your livelihood, what you are to eat or drink or use for clothing. Is not life more than food? Is not the body more valuable than clothes? Look at the birds in the sky. They do not sow or reap, they gather nothing into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not more important than they? Which of you by worrying can add a moment to his life-span? As for clothes, why be concerned? Learn a lesson from the way the wild flowers grow. They do not work; they do not spin. Yet I assure you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was arrayed like one of these. If God can clothe in such splendor the grass of the fields, which blooms today and is thrown on the fire tomorrow, will he not provide much more for you, O weak in faith?" In Saint Luke's Gospel, Jesus adds: "Do not be afraid: how much more important you are than the birds."

### HAPPINESS

In another passage from Matthew, Jesus says: "To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. Happy are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear! Amen I say to you: many prophets and just men have wished to see what you see, and to hear what you hear, and it was not granted to them." Do we take enough time to thank the Lord for the wonders He has worked in each of us: our hearing, sight, smell, and health? What would be our attitude to life and to God if we could not see or hear, or walk? I often marvel at some of the wounded people I meet, the handicapped and the sick, and those with diminished faculties; I marvel at their profound happiness and serenity. They help us discover different dimensions of our being, especially true happiness, which is basic to life. They reveal to us the mysteries of the Kingdom.

### DISCOVERY

Learning how to recognise all the potential which the Lord has given us is not pride but rather gratitude for the gift received. Even the Virgin Mary prayed this way: "My being proclaims the greatness of the Lord, my spirit finds joy in God my savior. For he has looked upon his servant in her lowliness; all ages to come shall call me blessed. God who is mighty has done great things for me, holy is his name; his love is from age to age on

those who fear him.” It is a life-long task to make an inventory of all the marvellous gifts received. Through all these gifts, it is important to discover the presence of Jesus himself. We must go beyond appearances. Jesus shows us he is present in the poor, the lame, the blind, and the rejected. Not only were we created in the image and likeness of God, but Jesus himself took on our human nature. He was all kindness towards our broken humanity. Jean Vanier writes: “Jesus is not only present in the poor, but he is present in the poor in us. When weakness is followed with trust, humility, and boldness, it becomes the path through which the power of God reaches us. The grace of Jesus is shown in and through our weakness.”

## FAMILY

After having praised the God of Life for all the wonders He has worked in every child, I would like to conclude this appreciation by thanking God for the gift of the family: “Married Christian couples who say ‘yes’ to life and have children carry within themselves the victory of love. Walking on a path to holiness, they are privileged witnesses to God’s love. Together they spread incredible news: God is the God of the living, and in Jesus Christ, love triumphed over death once and for all. In fact, it is within the family itself that we can find the ‘good news’ of a love that overcomes fear and brings hope to the world. What great and happy news! A reminder that God wants a full life, a life exceeding all expectations, an eternal life for all families. Yes, what good news! Let us rejoice in God’s presence at the heart of our families and proclaim that the Christian family is good news for the third millennium. The family is a little church, a sanctuary of life, a domestic church, a church at home, a mysterious presence of the living God. The good news, then, is that God is with us in our daily lives, in our hearts and in our homes. It is within this domestic church, built by a man and a woman who have chosen to live out the sacrament of marriage, that children learn to spend time with Jesus and are invited to become a living witness of the gospel in the Church and in society.” (*From the COFL brochure, “Family Matters”*)

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