THE DAILY BREAD

The Mission of the Apostles



The Domestic Church

Making a Home Holy

A FORMATION BOOK BY

Kendall Peterson

The Everyday Apostle

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INTRODUCTION

The Church in Your House

The Church has an ancient and startling name for the Christian family: she calls it the domestic church, the church of the home. The phrase is not a sentimental flourish but a serious claim, that a man's household is itself a church in miniature, a real cell of the whole Body of Christ, where the faith is lived, handed on, and made visible in the ordinary round of family life. This means that a man's home is not merely the place he returns to after the real business of life is done; it is itself a place of mission, perhaps the most important mission field he will ever have, and the family gathered under his roof is a church he has been given to build.

For the man awakened to his call to be sent, this truth reorders his priorities in a way he may not expect. He might assume that his mission lies chiefly out in the world, in his workplace and his wider circles, and that his home is simply where he rests between missionary efforts. But the Church's teaching points him first inward, to his own household, and tells him that the holiness of his home and the handing-on of the faith to those under his roof is not a lesser task than his outward mission but, for most men, the primary and most consequential one. A man who wins the world and loses his own children has failed at the mission closest to his heart, and no success elsewhere can make up for it.

As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. — Joshua 24:15

We will begin with what it means that the family is a church, and why that changes everything about how a man sees his home. We will consider the man's particular role in making his home holy, the spiritual leadership that is his to exercise and often his to recover. We will look at the practical building of a household of faith, the prayer, the rhythms, the sacramentals, and the culture that make a home a domestic church. We will take up the handing-on of the faith to children, which is a father's grave and joyful duty. We will face the home as a place of mission to those within and beyond it, and finally see the domestic church as the seedbed from which the wider mission of the Church is continually renewed.

CHAPTER ONE

Your Home Is a Church

What the Domestic Church Means

The claim that a family is a church strikes the modern ear as a pious exaggeration, a nice way of saying that families should be religious. But the Church means it literally. The Christian family is a true church, a genuine cell of the Body of Christ, in which the realities of the whole Church are present in miniature, and grasping this is the foundation of everything else a man will do to make his home holy. A home is not merely a place where a church-going family happens to live; the family itself, in its life together, is church.

Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them. — Matthew 18:20

A Cell of the Whole Body

The Church has taught from the earliest centuries that the Christian household is a church in miniature, an ecclesia domestica, in which the mystery of the whole Church is truly present in small. In the family, as in the great Church, Christ is present where two or three are gathered in his name; the Word of God is read and handed on; prayer rises to the Father; the members are bound together in love and bear one another's burdens; and the life of grace is nurtured and passed to the next generation. The family does not merely resemble the Church or support the Church from outside; it is church, a real cell of the one Body, carrying out in its own sphere the same essential realities the whole Church carries out in hers. This is why the home has such dignity and such weight: it is holy ground, a place where the Church herself is truly present and at work, and the ordinary life of a faithful family is, rightly seen, an ecclesial life, the life of the Church lived at the scale of a household.

The First Place the Faith Is Learned

The domestic church is, for nearly every Christian, the first and most formative place the faith is encountered, learned, and absorbed, which gives the home an irreplaceable role in the whole life of the Church. Long before a child hears a homily or attends a class, he learns what the faith is by living in a household that practices it, absorbing from the air of his home whether God is real and central or distant and optional, whether prayer is natural or foreign, whether the faith is a living thing or a formality. The deepest religious formation a person ever receives is usually the one he receives at home in his earliest years, caught more than taught, breathed in from the ordinary life of the family. This makes the domestic church the seedbed of all later faith, the place where the fundamental dispositions toward God are formed, and it means that what happens in a man's home religiously matters more than almost anything else for the faith of those who

grow up in it. The home is the first school of the faith, and its lessons, learned in the bone, last a lifetime.

Why This Changes Everything

Grasping that his home is a church changes how a man sees his whole domestic life, lifting the ordinary round of family existence into something sacred and charged with eternal significance. The meals, the bedtimes, the daily routines, the labor of raising children, the thousand small acts of family life are no longer merely domestic logistics but the very stuff of a church's life, occasions of grace, moments in which the faith is lived and handed on. The man who sees his home as a church no longer regards his family life as separate from or secondary to his spiritual life; he sees that his family life is a central part of his spiritual life, perhaps the most important part, the place where his holiness and his mission are most tested and most fruitful. This recognition dignifies the whole of domestic life and places on a man a holy responsibility, for he is not merely running a household but building a church, and the ordinary days of his family are the days in which that church is either built up or allowed to languish.

CHAPTER TWO

The Man's Role in a Holy Home

Spiritual Leadership and Its Recovery

If the home is a church, it has need of spiritual leadership, and the Christian tradition has always looked in a particular way to the husband and father to provide it. This is a truth much neglected and often abandoned in our time, when the spiritual life of the family is frequently left entirely to the wife while the husband absents himself, and recovering the man's proper role in the spiritual life of his home is among the most urgent tasks of the domestic church. A man is called not to delegate the holiness of his home but to lead it, and much depends on whether he accepts that call.

Fathers… bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. — Ephesians 6:4

The Abdication of the Father

One of the quiet tragedies of modern family life is the widespread abdication of the father from the spiritual leadership of his home, the common pattern in which religion is regarded as the mother's department and the father, even a believing one, takes little active part in the faith life of his family. He may attend Mass, may believe sincerely, but

he leaves the praying with the children, the teaching of the faith, the whole religious tone of the home to his wife, and so absents himself from precisely the role the tradition most looked to him to fill. The consequences are grave and well attested: the faith of children correlates powerfully with the practice of the father, and a home in which the father is religiously passive, however devout the mother, tends to produce children whose faith does not survive into adulthood at nearly the rate of homes where the father is actively engaged. The father's spiritual engagement is not optional decoration; it is, humanly speaking, one of the strongest factors in whether the faith is successfully handed on, and his abdication is one of the chief reasons it so often is not.

The Father as Spiritual Head

The recovery the domestic church needs is the recovery of the father as the spiritual head of his home, a role that is not about domination but about responsibility, initiative, and sacrificial service. To be the spiritual head of a household means to take active responsibility for the faith life of the family, to lead rather than delegate, to be the one who initiates the prayer, who ensures the faith is taught, who sets the religious tone, who takes the family to Mass not as a passenger but as a leader. This headship is modeled on Christ, who is head of the Church precisely as the one who laid down his life for her, and so the man's spiritual leadership is exercised not as a privilege to be enjoyed but as a service to be rendered, a laying down of himself for the holiness of those entrusted to him. A man leads his domestic church not by issuing commands but by going first, praying first, serving first, sacrificing first, so that his leadership is the leadership of example and self-gift. This is the role the tradition asks of him, and the home in which a man takes it up is transformed.

Leading by Being Led

The paradox at the heart of a father's spiritual leadership is that he can lead his family toward God only to the degree that he is himself being led by God, so that his leadership flows from his own discipleship and cannot outrun it. A man cannot give what he does not have, and a father whose own spiritual life is thin and neglected has little to lead his family into, however much he may wish to; the fountain cannot rise higher than its source. This means the recovery of a father's spiritual leadership begins not with his family at all but with himself, with his own prayer, his own sacramental life, his own growth in holiness, from which alone a genuine leadership of his home can flow. The children will catch far more from what their father actually is than from what he tells them to be, and a father serious about leading his domestic church must first be serious about his own following of Christ. He leads by being led, heads his home by being himself under the headship of Christ, and the holiness he wishes to see in his family must first be

real in him. This is humbling, but it is also freeing, for it means that the first and most important thing a man can do for the holiness of his home is to pursue his own.

This cuts against a common evasion, in which a man tells himself he will attend to his own spiritual life once the demands of raising a family have eased, as though his discipleship and his fatherhood were separate projects competing for the same hours. But they are not separate; his discipleship is the engine of his fatherhood, and to defer the one is to starve the other. The busiest season of raising children is precisely the season his family most needs a father who prays, and the man who waits for a quieter life to get serious about God will find that by the time it comes, the children who most needed his example have already grown and gone. The time to pursue his own holiness, for the sake of the home he leads, is now, in the thick of it, however little time there seems to be.

CHAPTER THREE

Building a Household of Faith

The Practices That Make a Home Holy

A domestic church is not built by good intentions alone but by concrete practices, the actual habits and rhythms and physical signs that make the faith a lived reality in the daily life of a home. A man who wishes to make his home holy must therefore give attention to the practical construction of a household of faith, the deliberate building into family life of the prayer, the rhythms, the sacramentals, and the culture that together make a home a true domestic church. These are not complicated, but they must be chosen and established, for they rarely arise on their own.

These words that I command you today shall be on your heart… and you shall teach them diligently to your children. — Deuteronomy 6:6-7

Family Prayer

The beating heart of a domestic church is family prayer, the regular gathering of the household to pray together, which more than anything else makes the home a place where God is actively present and sought. A family that prays together, however simply, establishes God as a living reality at the center of its common life, and the children raised in such a home absorb from the practice itself that prayer is natural, that God is real, and that the family's life is ordered toward him. This prayer need not be elaborate: grace before meals, a blessing at bedtime, a family rosary or a time of shared prayer in the evening, prayer together in times of trouble and thanksgiving, these simple practices,

kept faithfully, build a praying household. What matters is not sophistication but regularity and sincerity, that the family actually prays together as a settled habit of its life, so that praying together becomes as natural as eating together. A man leading his domestic church makes family prayer a priority he protects, for it is the single practice that most establishes his home as a place of faith, and its presence or absence does more than almost anything to determine the spiritual character of a household.

Rhythms and the Liturgical Year

A holy home is also shaped by the rhythms of the faith, especially the seasons and feasts of the liturgical year, which give the family's life a sacred shape that secular time lacks. When a household observes Advent and Christmas, Lent and Easter, the feasts of the saints and the great solemnities of the year, marking them in the home with their proper customs, foods, decorations, and devotions, the faith becomes woven into the very calendar of the family's life, and the children grow up in a world whose time is structured by the mysteries of Christ rather than only by the secular markers of the culture. These rhythms do powerful work, for they make the faith concrete and festive, give the family shared traditions that carry deep meaning, and form in children a sense that the year itself is holy. A man building a domestic church does well to establish such rhythms in his home, letting the liturgical year shape the family's seasons, so that the faith is not an abstract set of beliefs but a lived culture with its own calendar, celebrations, and traditions, embedded in the ordinary flow of the family's year.

Sacramentals and the Culture of the Home

The physical environment and culture of a home also form its members in the faith, and a domestic church is marked by the sacramentals and the Catholic culture that make the faith visible in the very fabric of the household. A crucifix on the wall, holy images, a family altar or prayer corner, holy water at the door, blessed objects, these sacramentals are not superstition but tangible reminders of the faith, means of grace, and signs that this is a Christian home where God is honored. Beyond objects, there is the whole culture of the home: the books on the shelves, the conversations at the table, the way the faith is spoken of, the values that are honored, the entertainment that is welcomed or refused, all of which form the children far more than they realize. A man building a domestic church attends to this whole environment, filling his home with the signs and the culture of the faith, so that a person entering the house or growing up in it absorbs, from its very atmosphere, that this is a household belonging to God. The home itself preaches, and the man who makes his home visibly and culturally Catholic has made its very walls and rhythms into instruments of formation.

CHAPTER FOUR

Handing On the Faith

The Father as First Teacher

At the center of the domestic church stands the handing-on of the faith to the children, the great work of transmitting to the next generation the treasure a man has received, and this is among the most solemn and consequential duties a father bears. The faith is not inherited automatically, like a family name; it must be actively handed on, taught and modeled and prayed into the children, or it will be lost. A father is, by the Church's own teaching, the first teacher of his children in the ways of faith, and how he carries out that teaching largely determines whether the faith survives in his family into the next generation.

Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.
— Proverbs 22:6

The Duty No One Else Can Fully Carry

The handing-on of the faith to children is, first of all, the parents' own duty, one that cannot be fully delegated to the parish, the school, or the religious education program, however helpful these may be. Parents, and in a particular way the father, are the primary religious educators of their children, charged by God with the transmission of the faith, and the common modern practice of outsourcing this duty entirely to an hour of weekly religious instruction is a grave mistake, for no program can substitute for the formation a child receives, or fails to receive, in the daily life of his home. The parish supplements the home; it cannot replace it. The faith is handed on most powerfully not in a classroom but in the ten thousand ordinary moments of family life, in the answered questions, the modeled prayer, the lived example, the conversations about God woven through the days. A father who assumes the parish will handle his children's faith has misunderstood where faith is really transmitted, and has abdicated a duty that is irreducibly his own, one that no institution can carry in his place.

Caught More Than Taught

The deepest handing-on of the faith happens less through formal instruction than through the example of the parents' own lived faith, for children catch the faith more than they are taught it, absorbing it from what they see their parents actually are. A father may teach his children all the right doctrines, but if they do not see him pray, do not see the faith shaping his actual choices, do not see that God is real and central in his

own life, the lessons will not take; whereas a father whose faith is visibly real in his daily life hands on something his children absorb far below the level of conscious instruction. Children are relentless observers of their parents, and they learn what their parents truly believe not from what they say but from how they live; a father's real, lived faith is the most powerful catechism his children will ever receive. This places the weight of handing on the faith squarely back on the father's own discipleship, for the most effective thing he can do to pass on the faith is to live it genuinely and visibly himself, letting his children catch from his example the reality of the God he serves.

Teaching Through the Seasons of a Child's Life

Handing on the faith is not a single act but a long work carried out through all the seasons of a child's growth, adapted to each stage and continued with patience over many years. In the early years it is largely a matter of simple prayers, Bible stories, and the absorbed atmosphere of a faithful home; as children grow it becomes teaching, answering questions, explaining the faith more fully, and preparing them for the sacraments; in adolescence it becomes the harder work of helping a young person make the faith his own amid doubts and pressures, which requires wisdom, patience, and much prayer. Through all of it a father must persevere, not expecting the work to be quick or easy, not despairing when children question or resist, trusting that the faith patiently handed on through the years takes root even when its growth is not immediately visible. The promise of Scripture is that a child trained up in the way he should go will not, in the end, depart from it, and a father labors in that hope, handing on the faith faithfully through every season of his children's lives, and entrusting the harvest, which may come only after many years, to God.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Home as a Place of Love

Where Holiness Is Learned in the Flesh

A domestic church is not finally made holy by its prayers and practices alone but by the love that animates it, for a home is where a person first learns, in the flesh, what love is, and where the deepest formation in holiness quietly happens. All the religious practices in the world cannot make a home a true domestic church if the love within it is cold, and a home rich in genuine love is already doing the deepest work of the faith even before a word is spoken. The quality of love in a household is the quality of its holiness, and building a home of love is the heart of making a home holy.

Above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. — Colossians 3:14

Love Is the First Lesson

The first and most lasting lesson a person learns about God is learned, long before any formal teaching, from the love or its absence in his home, for a child's earliest image of God is shaped powerfully by his experience of being loved, especially by his father. A child who grows up in a home of genuine, steady, sacrificial love learns in his very body that love is real and reliable, and comes to the idea of a loving God with the ground already prepared; a child who grows up in a home of coldness, harshness, or chaos carries a wound that can make the love of God hard to believe. This is a sobering responsibility for a father, whose love, imperfect as it is, becomes for his children a first glimpse of the Father's love, and whose failures of love can obscure that image for years. The most important thing a man can do to form his children in the faith may simply be to love them and their mother well, steadily, and sacrificially, for in doing so he teaches them, beneath all words, the reality of love from which all faith grows.

The Marriage at the Center

At the center of a home's love stands the marriage of the parents, and the love between husband and wife is the foundation on which the whole domestic church is built, the first thing the children see and the deepest security they know. A father who loves his children's mother well, who treats her with tenderness, respect, and fidelity, who makes their marriage visibly strong and loving, gives his children a priceless gift: the security of a stable and loving home, and a living picture of the faithful love that the faith proclaims. The marriage is meant to be a sacrament, a sign of Christ's own faithful love for his Church, and children who grow up watching a father love their mother in this way absorb a vision of love and fidelity that forms them more deeply than any lesson. Conversely, a home where the marriage is cold or conflicted teaches its own hard lessons, whatever else is taught. A man building a domestic church therefore gives first attention to his marriage, knowing that to love his wife well is itself a central act of making his home holy, the love at the center from which the love of the whole household flows.

A Home That Forms Saints

The ultimate purpose of all this love is that the home should be a place where saints are formed, where the members grow in holiness through the daily school of family life, which is itself one of the most effective schools of sanctity there is. Family life, lived in love, is a relentless training in the virtues: in patience with those one cannot escape, in

forgiveness of daily offenses, in self-sacrifice for others' good, in the laying down of one's preferences and comfort for the sake of those one loves. A man is sanctified by his family perhaps more than by anything else, worn and shaped by the daily demands of love into a holier man than he would otherwise become, and his children are formed by the same school. The domestic church, then, is a workshop of holiness, where ordinary people are slowly made into saints through the patient love of family life, and a man who gives himself to loving his family well is not only building a holy home but being made holy himself, sanctified by the very love he pours out. The home of love is a factory of saints, and the daily labor of family love is holy work that sanctifies all who give themselves to it.

This reframes the frustrations of family life, which a man is tempted to regard as interruptions of his real spiritual progress rather than as its very substance. The lost sleep, the tested patience, the surrendered plans, the thousand small deaths to self that family life demands, these are not obstacles to a man's sanctification but the precise instruments of it, the file and the chisel by which God is actually shaping him. A man who understands this stops resenting the demands of his family as intrusions on his holiness and begins to recognize them as the form his holiness is taking, the ordinary cross by which he is being conformed to Christ. The home does not interrupt the work of becoming a saint; for a married man, the home is where that work is chiefly done.

CHAPTER SIX

The Home That Reaches Outward

Hospitality, Witness, and Mission

A domestic church is not meant to be a fortress sealed against the world but a center of light that reaches outward, blessing and witnessing to those beyond its walls. A home can turn inward, becoming a comfortable refuge concerned only with its own, or it can become what the domestic church is meant to be, a place of welcome, witness, and mission whose warmth and faith overflow to others. The making of a holy home is completed when that home becomes a source of blessing to the world around it, and a man building a domestic church looks not only inward to his family but outward to the mission his home can serve.

Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. — Hebrews 13:2

The Apostolate of Hospitality

One of the most powerful ways a Christian home reaches outward is through hospitality, the opening of the home to others, which is itself a genuine apostolate and a form of witness that few things can match. A home that welcomes others, that opens its table and its doors, that offers warmth and friendship and a place of belonging, preaches the faith in a way words cannot, for people experience in such a home a quality of life and love that draws them and raises questions about its source. The early Church spread in large part through the hospitality of Christian homes, and the same remains true: a welcoming Christian home is a place where others encounter the faith not as an argument but as a lived reality, warm and attractive. A man building a domestic church makes his home a place of hospitality, welcoming not only friends but the lonely, the searching, the stranger, letting the warmth and faith of his household overflow to others, and so turning his home into an instrument of witness and a place where people encounter Christ through the love of a Christian family.

The Family's Witness to the World

Beyond deliberate hospitality, a faithful family is a witness to the world simply by what it is, for a genuinely Christian family, visibly different in its love, its stability, its joy, and its faith, stands as a powerful sign in a culture where such families have grown rare. The world watches families, and a family marked by evident love and faith, by the strength of its marriage and the character of its children, raises questions and offers hope simply by existing, a visible demonstration that the Christian vision of family is not only possible but good. In an age of family breakdown, a happy and holy Christian family is itself a form of evangelization, a living argument more persuasive than any words. A man who builds a holy home is therefore engaged in mission even when he does nothing deliberately missionary, for the family he builds is itself a witness, a sign held up before a watching world of what human life and love can be when they are ordered to God. The domestic church evangelizes by being what it is, and its very existence is a quiet proclamation.

Sending Out the Formed

Finally, the domestic church reaches outward through the people it forms and sends into the world, for the children raised in a holy home go out from it as missionaries in their own right, carrying into their schools, their friendships, and eventually their own families and callings the faith they received at home. The home is a seedbed, and its fruit is borne not only within its walls but in the lives of those it forms and releases into the world; a family that successfully hands on the faith sends out into the world men and women who will themselves be apostles, and whose influence will extend far beyond the home that formed them. In this sense the domestic church is the engine of the wider mission,

continually producing the formed Christians who carry the faith outward, so that a man who builds a holy home and hands on the faith to his children is contributing to the mission of the whole Church across generations. The holy home does not keep its light to itself; it forms and sends, releasing into the world the apostles of the next generation, and so a man's labor within his own four walls reaches out, through the children he forms, to touch a world he will never see.

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Seedbed of the Mission

Why the Home Comes First

We come finally to the place of the domestic church within the whole mission of the Church, and to the truth that the holiness of the home is not in competition with a man's wider apostolate but its very foundation and source. A man might worry that giving himself to his home means neglecting the larger mission, or might be tempted to pursue a public apostolate while his own household languishes. But the domestic church is the seedbed from which the whole mission grows, and the man who builds a holy home has not withdrawn from the mission but has given himself to its most fundamental form.

If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith. — 1 Timothy 5:8

The Home Is the First Mission

For a married man, the holiness of his home and the souls of his own family are his first and most sacred mission, prior to and more important than any other apostolate he might undertake, and no outward success can compensate for failure here. There is a real danger, even among zealous Christian men, of pouring oneself into a public or parish apostolate while neglecting the mission closest at hand, of saving the world while losing one's own children, and Scripture speaks with startling severity of the man who fails to provide for his own household. A man's first responsibility is to the souls entrusted most directly to him, his wife and children, and the holiness of his home must come before his wider missionary ambitions, not because the wider mission does not matter but because this is the part of it that is most inescapably his. The man who builds a holy home and forms his children in the faith has accomplished something no public success could equal, and the man who neglects them for other good works has failed at the mission that was most truly his own. The home comes first, not as a retreat from mission but as its primary form.

From the Home the Mission Flows

Far from competing with a man's wider apostolate, the holiness of his home is the very source and strength of it, for the home is where a man is formed, sustained, and renewed for whatever mission he carries into the world. A man whose home is holy, whose marriage is strong, whose family life is a place of love and faith, goes out into his wider mission from a position of strength, renewed and supported by the domestic church that is his foundation; a man whose home is in disorder carries that disorder into everything else, and his outward mission suffers from the weakness at its root. The holy home is the base from which the mission is launched and the place to which the missionary returns to be restored, and the stronger and holier a man's home, the stronger his whole apostolate. There is no conflict, then, between building a holy home and pursuing the wider mission; the first is the foundation of the second, and a man serves his larger mission precisely by first making his home the holy seedbed from which his whole apostolic life can flow.

Renewing the Church From the Home

In the end, the renewal of the whole Church and the re-evangelization of the whole culture depend more on the domestic church than on any program or initiative, for it is in holy homes that the faith is kept alive and handed on across generations, and from holy homes that the saints and apostles of the future come. The great movements of renewal in the Church's history have always been rooted in and sustained by faithful families, and the future of the faith in any place depends finally on whether the faith is being successfully lived and transmitted in its homes. This gives the ordinary man building a holy home a dignity and an importance he may never have suspected: in making his home a domestic church, handing on the faith to his children, and forming the next generation of believers, he is doing work on which the future of the whole Church depends, work as consequential as any public apostolate and more so than most. The renewal of the Church will come, if it comes, largely from her homes, and the man who makes his own home holy is laboring at the very foundation of that renewal, building in his household a cell of the Church from which the faith will flow outward and forward into a future he will not live to see.

CONCLUSION

Build the Church Under Your Roof

As for me and my house, said Joshua, we will serve the Lord, and in that ancient vow stands the whole vocation of the Christian father: to make of his household a people that

serves God, a domestic church, a holy home. This book has unfolded what that means: that the home is truly a church, the first place the faith is learned; that the man is called to spiritual leadership of his home, a role much neglected and needing recovery; that a holy home is built by concrete practices of prayer, rhythm, and culture; that handing on the faith to children is a father's irreplaceable duty; that the home is made holy finally by love; that it is meant to reach outward in hospitality and witness; and that it is the seedbed from which the whole mission of the Church flows.

The vision is high, but the work is near at hand, carried out not in some distant field but under a man's own roof, in the ordinary life of his own family. And it is work of the first importance, for a man's home is the mission entrusted most directly to him, the souls of his own family the ones he will answer for most closely, and the domestic church he builds the foundation of everything else he will do. No man who neglects this will find that success elsewhere makes up for it; and no man who gives himself to it will find his labor wasted, for the holy home he builds will bear fruit in the lives of his children and their children, and in the renewal of a Church that depends on such homes.

So build the church under your roof. Take up the spiritual leadership of your home; lead your family in prayer; shape your household by the rhythms and the culture of the faith; hand on the faith to your children by your teaching and above all by your example; love your wife and children well, for love is the deepest lesson; open your home in hospitality; and know that in doing all this you are not withdrawing from the mission but building its foundation and seedbed. The Church needs holy homes more than it needs almost anything else, and the one you are called to build is your own. As for you and your house, serve the Lord, and make of your home a domestic church from which his light will shine for generations.

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