



ORDEAL AND SUFFERING OF THE FAMILIES:

Stigmata and Passover!



St Damien's crucifix, symbol of Christ Triumphant

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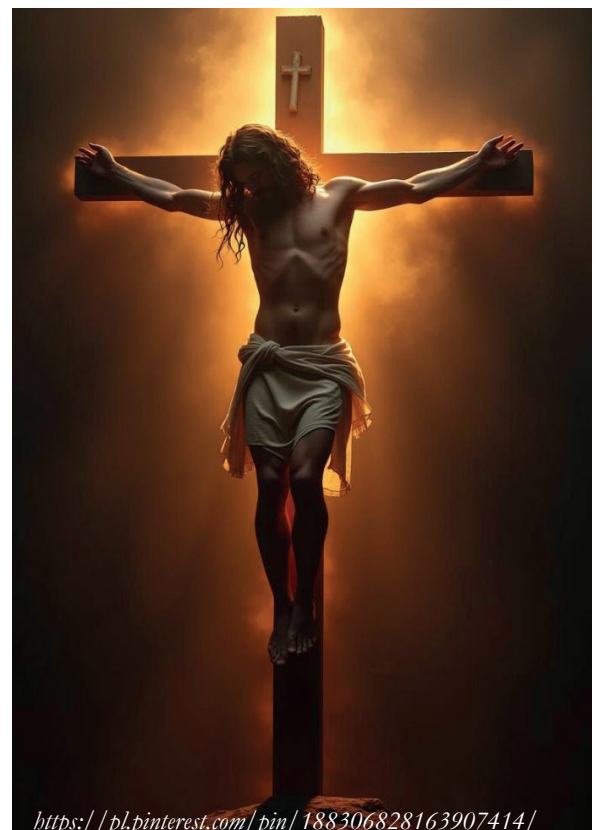
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INTRODUCTION

The family has evolved in many ways in recent years, the pace of life, the mutation of morals, currents such as gender, relativism, migrations for professional or political reasons or related to wars, the rejection of values such as fidelity, commitment, the family itself, the intrusion of information and communication technologies / not to mention the legislative power tending to weaken the family, explain this profound change. The family unit is the foundation of a nation. The family is sacred because the Son of God wanted to be born into a family. The family was willed by God. However, the reading of the word of God shows that the families of the Bible have experienced trials: incest, murder, migration, poverty (Mary and Joseph). We may wonder what the hardships of today's families are. The ordeals of families and the suffering that results from them can leave a mark, a visible or invisible scar. They can be likened to wounds that bleed for a longer or shorter period of time. If the suffering, a consequence of the ordeal, can be assimilated to a wound, a scar, an imprint, a mark, or any trace that reveals a deterioration, can we not, by parallelism, associate the ordeal and its corollary suffering as a stigmata?

Stigmata are alasting march, the visible or invisible sign of the mark of suffering or hardship. There is also a more spiritual or religious approach to stigmata. From the Latin «stigma», which means «prick with a hot iron», the stigmata refer to the wounds inflicted on Jesus during his Passion. In any case, suffering and the ordeal that precedes it can be described as stigmata. This notion calls for suffering, rejection (stigmatization). The Church, as an expert in humanity, cannot be indifferent or passive in the face of the suffering, not only of man, but also of families. If the suffering of man and woman, taken separately, is the object of all the Church's attention, since the Acts of the Apostles, the care and accompaniment of families has been a much more recent pastoral challenge. Church movements have set up groups dedicated to the family.

In the face of the stigmata of families and in the pastoral concern to accompany families, to take care of the family, to help them, it is necessary to know the trials that are at the origin of the suffering of families and constitute stigmata. This knowledge is a starting point for developing strategies and considering how to help, keep and safeguard or protect the family. Many movements of the Church bear witness and manifest the importance of the family for God, for the Church, for human society in general. In this fundamental option of watching over and caring for the family, following several writings of the Popes (Amoris Laetitia, etc.), the International Center of the Secular Franciscan Order (CIOFS) has created a commission whose objectives are to work specifically at the service of the Family. The theme of this book «Family trials: stigmata and Easter» is part of this project. Our thinking revolves around



a problem. Considering the trials of families (always including the notion of suffering), can they not be a tomb, a pit but be transfigured? They can then become glorious wounds, for the stigmata of Christ have become glorious. How can we move from the suffering of the family to the passover of the family? In this perspective, this essay will allow us to explore the trials, sufferings and stigmata of different types of families and the possible paths of Easter.

CHAPTER 1 – TRIALS AND SUFFERINGS OF FAMILIES

In this chapter, we will look at the different types of families and the relative trials. Among the categories of families, we have: the nuclear family, the single-parent family, the blended family, the polygamous or polyandrous family.

The nuclear family is universal and present in all societies. The term lone-parent family is used to refer to households where people live without a spouse with one or more children. A blended family is the union of two spouses who are themselves the result of the break-up of at least one first couple, with full or shared custody of all or part of the siblings from the first unions. Polygamy is the marriage alliance of a man simultaneously with several living and legitimate wives. A distinction is made between petty polygamy (two or three wives, a maximum of four in some religions such as Islam, after which they are concubines) and large polygamy, which is the prerogative of chiefs.

1.1 Nature, Cause, and Path to Victory in the Face of Family Hardships

In this section, we propose a typology of family tests. We specify that hardships are the antecedents or sources of the families' suffering. We present these trials, the causes or origins, the particular consequences, the ways to resolve them, but also the ways to avoid these tests, because the test is not always inevitable. These paths can be the subject of training for pastoral agents at the service of the Family and why not themes of reflection for the restoration of the family. Families can go through many hardships and many researchers and experts have studied these family challenges. Here are some common challenges families may face.

1.1.1 Financial and material hardships

This type of ordeal can be caused by job loss, excessive debt, bad investments or scams, unexpected medical expenses, low income, divorce or separation and unforeseen events.

Very often, the consequences of financial distress are: stress, anxiety, family tensions, difficulties in providing for the family's basic needs: housing, food, education of children through schooling, deterioration of marital relationships and a deleterious family climate. The escape through the window of joy, peace, serenity and happiness in the family.

To overcome this ordeal, there is an internal, personal approach, namely the will to overcome it, the awareness that there is no fatality, the wisdom to ask for help, the recourse to external help to face these trials. The Church's missions could include awareness-raising campaigns, re-education and training in budget management, financial planning, expenditure reduction, and strategies for implementing income-generating activities. The formation of the laity should not only focus on theological aspects and prayer, but also on the challenges of society in order to enable the laity, on mission in the world, to remain salt of the earth and light of the world.

The training of young people and the preparation of adults for marriage could include techniques and methods for saving regularly, taking adequate insurance, financial education, family planning, financial intelligence.

1.1.2 Parenting and Parenting Issues

Problems related to parenting and parenting are inherent to challenges such as rebellious adolescence, behavioral disorders, discipline problems, etc.

As far as education is concerned, these problems relate on the one hand to classical education, i.e. the appropriate schooling of children or young people, and on the other hand to the transmission of values in the family. The ordeal that materializes either by the impossibility or major difficulties in sending children to school or the feeling of failure in the transmission of values can be explained by the lack or inadequacy of financial resources. In European and developed countries in general, this problem does not generally arise because there is national education and social assistance. In African countries, on the other hand, this ordeal is recurrent because incomes are often very low.

Health problems or disability very often have an impact that makes schooling difficult. To cite the case of autistic children, suffering from Down syndrome, there is no specific and substantial social assistance or public structures to support parents wishing to send disabled children to school in view of this disability. Sometimes, a lack of family or parental support or a family dysfunction can also be a challenge. Finally, the absence of one or more parents can cause failed acts or rebellion by the children and create a break in the transmission of values. The influence of society, the harmfulness of social networks and toxic friendships can also hinder the efforts and seeds of education desired by parents.

The consequences are school dropout, academic delay, low self-esteem, the vicious circle of poverty and limited professional and family opportunities. Children's academic difficulties, conflicts with school, or decisions about education can be stressful for parents.

To face this type of ordeal, it is necessary to become aware of reality, to refuse fatality, to set up academic and/or psychological support, to communicate: The pastoral care of the family can initiate in the annual programs of young people and adults, themes such as education, transmission, mental and physical health support, inclusion, community support.

For example, during my thesis in France, our son was diagnosed with autism by the Aquitaine Research Center. I frequented the Focolare. Being autistic, our son was referred to a day hospital, the lyrebird and did not have the opportunity to go to school because he was in a «bubble». In a surge of solidarity, the Focolare of my group «Word of Life» have organized; some have organized weekly painting workshops, others weekly visits to the parks; a connection with a speech therapist specialized in disabled children or by listening to a program told me about the ABA method which had beneficial effects for our son. Mother of Mercy France had contact with a method in the test phase, the Tomatis method in Belgium, which not only contributed financially but made all the contacts. The Franciscan family in France gave me all its spiritual support thanks to the holiday stays in Brive-la-Gaillarde; I will always remember this week of holidays on the theme of prayer, which not only strengthened me in addition to praying together, but which led to a decisive year in terms of developments for the children. My whole family and I were welcomed in less than a week by the Good Shepherd community of Belgium, contacted by the Franciscan family of France to accommodate us. Indeed, we

were going into unknown territory; Everything had been decided forty-eight hours after the Franciscan family holidays and the start of the school year was just around the corner. It was important not to be late for the day hospital or for the little sisters to the nursery. And the therapy lasted 12 days. The Franciscans who welcomed us in Belgium, having learned that it was our wedding anniversary during this period, organized a wedding anniversary, made all the contacts for the buses that were to take us and bring us back to Sint Truiden; a beautiful witness of solidarity, of unity, of the action of the Church, the family of God.

To anticipate or constantly support families who are tried or threatened by such ordeals, it is always possible to encourage listening; mental and physical health support, promoting family stability through family stays, family retreats, family activities and community support. In our parish in France, Sacré Coeur de Bordeaux, the community organized a space for children, during Mass, made available to young people from the parish for babysitting, for parents wishing to participate in parish activities or retreats. For us who had young children and a handicapped person, this parish pastoral choice was a great help to us.

1.1.3 Violences domestiques

Domestic violence is often part of a cycle. For Johnson (2008), domestic violence is: intimate terrorism, violent resistance and situational intimate partner violence. They are due to endogenous factors to family members, emotional fragility, mental health, drug addiction or exogenous factors such as redundancy, job loss, stress.

They result in physical and psychological injuries, social isolation, domestic homicides, child disturbances, and even school failure. Families are thus confronted with situations of domestic violence, serious risks to their safety and well-being.

Reactive actions such as education and awareness-raising, support for victims, early interventions, listening and alert frameworks. Prevention remains the order of the day, particularly through awareness-raising, education in non-violence, and social monitoring.

1.1.4 Addictions

Copello, Templeton, Orford, Velleman (2010) have conducted a reflection on substance abuse and substance abuse within the family. Addictions or dependence on drugs, alcohol or gambling are a great source of suffering in families. Genetic factors, external influence, poorly managed stress and trauma explain addictions. These have an impact on physical and mental health, the quality of family relationships which become tense. They very often cause financial problems. Seeking help from specialists and family support can help combat addictions and destructive consequences. Early education, monitoring, listening, support and help with mental health can help avoid the vicious circle of addiction.

1.1.5 Health Disorders

Health problems, whether they are serious illnesses, disabilities, or mental health issues, can have a significant impact on family life. The ordeal of health can have its origins in genetic factors, lifestyle, the quality of the environment, stress, accidents. It takes the form of physical and emotional suffering and has consequences on daily activities, induces a readjustment of family roles, and affects family relationships. Often access to appropriate medical care and treatment can be compromised by the level of financial resources. In the case of mental

health, the most challenging of the greatest suffering stems from the professional and institutional stigma of youth with mental health problems and their families (Heflinger & Hinshaw, 2010).

Possible prevention is the adoption of a healthy lifestyle and the use of regular health check-ups. Mental health and physical health problems have different impacts depending on the type of family and the level of financial resources. Caritas and health groups could reflect on innovative pastoral care to accompany health problems, in conjunction with dedicated public institutions. Family pastoral groups should not exclude this area of concern for health, because health challenges affect the health of families in one way or another.

1.1.6 Relationship Problems

Relationship problems lead to conflicts, which, if left unmanaged, destroy the quality of family life. These problems feed on the breeding ground of ineffective communication, differences of opinion, mental health problems, stress. They induce stress and anxiety, family tensions, and an impact on children. Family conflicts can be emotionally taxing.

Extended family, community, open and respectful communication, family therapy, education and awareness, mediation, family relationship education, mental health support, stress management are all tools, methods, approaches and actions that can alleviate, heal or even avoid relationship problems.

1.1.7 Migration and displacement

Migrations decided freely and without constraints may result from the desire to seize economic opportunities, political exile or to meet educational needs. There is also migration or displacement forced by armed conflicts or political crises. Families who migrate or are displaced for economic, political or environmental reasons may face challenges related to adapting to a new environment and losing support networks.

They often result in a geographical, punctual and sometimes permanent family separation, the necessary cultural adaptation, and economic changes. Communication, reviewing priority scales, and courage can help family members not fall into disarray.

1.1.8 Cultural and religious diversity

Cultural diversity at the beginning of a so-called ecumenical union, the contrary evolution of the religious practice of one of the spouses or the choice by the children of a religion other than that of the parents, intercultural or interreligious marriages that do not evolve in the initial direction are often a source of conflict and suffering in families. Family issues from different cultures or religions can face tensions and challenges related to understanding and preserving their cultural or religious identities.

Migrations and displacements, religious conversions are at the root of these tensions and conflicts fuelled by a lack of understanding, tensions, lack of communication and tolerance.

1.1.9 Natural disasters, wars and emergencies

Natural disasters such as the recent floods in France, in several cities in Gabon and in other countries, earthquakes, pandemics, forest fires, neglect of safety measures, accidents, wars (Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan, Ukraine, Russia, rebellions in Burkina

Faso), unstable political situations in Libya, in Iraq etc... which cause precariousness, insecurity, forced migrations result in moral, physical and mental suffering, loss of life, material goods, and emotional stress. In general, these situations affect the well-being, stability and prosperity of families.

The weak means of anticipating accidents at the local level are awareness of local risks, the need to comply with safety standards, education, resilience and faith.

1.1.10 Divorce and Separation

Failure to keep commitments, selfishness, emotional instability and changes in principles, infidelity, communication problems, financial problems, mental health problems that often lead to conflicts that are not properly resolved often result in divorce or separation (Amato, 2010). This regrettable outcome, which is never a source of happiness, has emotional and financial impacts on daily life and on the children and always leads to a readjustment of daily life. In the face of this human and family tragedy, counselling and therapy, mediation, social and community support can accompany families and children who are suffering, alleviate suffering and pain, without anaesthetising them. To avoid this family earthquake, prevention is possible through communication, preventive therapy, training on conflict management, investment in relationships, mental health support and a dynamic and realistic pastoral care of couples and families.

Separations and divorces can be especially stressful, especially when children are involved. Reorganizing family life and custody issues can be complex.

1.2 Types of tests associated with family types

The two main types of Christian families are the classic family and the single-parent family. The single-parent family is born from the death of one of the spouses or unfortunately from divorce, knowing that God has divorce as an abomination. Even though we are increasingly witnessing the emergence of blended families, we will look at the two main groups of families.

1.2.1 Tests common to all families

We note that there are trials and therefore common sufferings regardless of the type of family. These include financial hardships, illness, managing or lack of family time, stress, domestic violence, substance abuse. There are also common sufferings related to these ordeals that families may encounter, regardless of their structure: physical, moral, existential, relational, emotional.

Families can face various types of hardships and challenges throughout their lives. These tests can vary depending on many factors, such as family composition, socio-economic status, culture, geographical region, etc. Here are some of the most common challenges families face:

1.2.2 Exacerbated Challenges in Single-Parent Families

Single-parent families often face specific challenges due to their unique family structure. Divorce or separation, forced migration and family adjustments are often at the root of this type of ordeal and the suffering associated with it. The challenges specific to single-parent families are social isolation and, more markedly, the emotional needs of children. Smith (1994) lists a few specific or marked tests:

Financial hardships: Single parent families may experience financial hardship due to the unique financial burden that rests on one parent. Doesn't the Bible say two is better than one?

Time management: Balancing parenting responsibilities with work and other commitments can be a major challenge for single parents.

Social isolation: Single parents can sometimes feel socially isolated, especially if they have little time for social activities due to family responsibilities.

Parenting stress: The pressures of raising children alone can lead to emotional and physical stress for single parents.

Children's emotional needs : Children in single-parent families may have special emotional needs due to the absence of a parent.

Table 1: **Comparison of suffering and hardship by family type**

Common tests	Specific events	Common suffering
Financial Trials	Social Isolation (MF)	Physical or physical suffering
Chronic or incurable illness, severe disability	Children's Emotional Needs (FM)	Moral suffering
Time management	Divorce and Separation (FC)	Existential suffering
Parental stress	Migration and Family Adjustments (CF)	Relational suffering
Domestic violence		Emotional suffering
Substance abuse; addictions of all kinds such as gambling, alcoholism, within the family		
Adolescence and transition to adulthood		

1.3 Suffering, consequence of the trial

Suffering can be defined as a subjective experience of discomfort, physical or psychological pain, emotional distress, or discomfort. It generally involves a negative and unpleasant perception of the state or situation experienced by an individual (Cassell, 1982). Suffering, or the fact of suffering, is a prolonged state of physical or moral pain (Larousse, 1982). Suffering of the body, moral, existential, relational or emotional, including the main types of suffering (Schurmans, 2010).

CHAPTER 2 – FROM TRIALS TO STIGMATA?



Every trial carries within itself its sufferings, which vary according to the type of trial, the psychology of the person who is going through the trial and his or her degree of faith and knowledge of the Scriptures. There are transient sufferings (2.1) and sufferings that last over time and resemble open wounds that bleed for years. In the latter case, the suffering can be assimilated to stigmata (2.2)

2.1 Transient suffering

Suffering can be described as temporary when the consequences and effects on morale, psychic and relationships fade, or even disappear and have disappeared. The loss of a child, infidelity, the experience of a difficult period of unemployment that is coming to an end. Hardship and related suffering can be overcome at some point. On the other hand, some trials leave gaping wounds, open in time, traumas that disturb the joy and balance of those who have experienced it. It is this type of suffering, sometimes invisible but very real, that we call stigmata.

2.2 The Stigma of Hardship at Different Family Levels

2.2.1 *In the sacrament of marriage, the stigmata of a spouse*

In the context of marriage, trials such as adultery, misunderstandings, routine, spiritual dryness, the divergent evolution of the needs of each of the spouses, the indifference of one of the spouses, can cause permanent moral suffering; Among these stigmata are the destructive feelings and wounds of rejection, abandonment, humiliation, guilt. We do not omit feelings of sadness and insecurity.

The possible reactions and choices are resignation, conflicts, divorce, bitterness, even depression, loss of self-confidence. However, it is always possible to choose to dare to hope, to accept pain as a cross to be carried freely in the footsteps of Christ, who was the first to be rejected, humiliated, abandoned, and shows us that the cross leads to the resurrection.

2.2.2 *The stigma of children*

Children may be traumatized by the absence of one parent in single-parent families or by both parents because of work, rejection or indifference by one or both parents, violence between or towards parents, or the feeling of being less appreciated than one of their siblings. In the latter case, this feeling may be due to having a disabled brother or sister who focuses the parents' attention, a situation of remarriage of the parents, or a false impression.

In all these cases, the child can externalize this suffering through violence, withdrawal, anger, school failure, and silence. It is up to parents and adults, if they are attentive and attentive to children, to identify these symptoms and initiate a dialogue that can open the way to healing and the restoration of inner peace or even reconstruction.

2.2.3 Stigma in the extended family

The extended family finds its meaning particularly in Africa

Sterility

Polygamy

Rejection by the in-laws



A hand stretched out to receive stigmata in return

CHAPTER 3 – FAMILIES’ RESPONSE TO THE ORDEAL



Suffering can impact family relationships, either by creating tension or strengthening family solidarity, depending on how it is managed (Johnson & Aiken, 2009).

3.1 Common Family Reactions to the Trial

Boss & Spielberger (1987) identified classic family reactions to the ordeal. We opt to classify these reactions into two groups.

3.1.1 *Passive or even natural reactions*

Faced with any ordeal, families respond with family stress, characterized by tensions, concerns, and worries within the family. Hardships can exacerbate pre-existing family conflicts or trigger new conflicts, often due to pressure and emotions. Family members may experience a range of emotions, including sadness, anger, fear, and anxiety, in response to the ordeal. These are emotional reactions.

3.1.2 *Active and positive reactions*

The trial is an adversity, a difficulty, which, if not properly addressed, decrees the shipwreck of the family. Among the reactions identified by Boss & Spielberger (1987), we note so-called positive reactions because the families who make these choices have chosen to live and not to let adversity destroy them.

The choice of family solidarity allows families to come together to face challenges together and to be stronger. It is a way of living «that they may all be one» of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

In the face of adversity, some families develop more open communication, allowing family members to share their emotions and concerns. They reject silence, escape into distraction, alcoholism or the ease of leaving.

Families may choose to adapt. For example, hardships can lead to a different distribution of roles within the family, where members adapt to meet changing needs. Family members may change roles to care for the person in pain, such as taking on more domestic responsibilities or providing physical care (Johnson & Aiken, 2009).

In the same vein, distressed families may opt to change family dynamics, sometimes permanently, by affecting roles, relationships, and expectations within the family. Family dynamics are voluntarily changed.

Families can seek external support, whether from friends, extended family members, counsellors or mental health professionals. These families choose humility and recognize their poverty. Also with a view to seeking help, they may seek support from mental health professionals, support groups, or other resources to help the person in pain (Johnson & Aiken, 2009). Whoever humbles himself will be exalted.

3.1.3 Rejection and Abandonment vs. Support

In some cases, suffering can be stigmatized within the family, which can lead to limited communication or lack of support. This is often the case when an illness such as acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), a chronic or degenerative mental illness, or a repeated addiction occurs.

Families can respond by offering emotional support to the person who is suffering, expressing empathy, compassion, material and financial assistance, and love. The Church, the family of God, can also participate in this type of help. Our third daughter was born prematurely in France and she was supposed to stay for several weeks after I came home. Mother of Mercy decided to pay the taxi fares. I had to go to Pellegrin Hospital every day.

3.2 Families' Responses to Suffering

Families' reactions to suffering are an important research topic in psychology and social work. How families respond to the suffering of one family member can have a significant impact on the mental and emotional health of all family members. Here are some common family reactions to suffering (Johnson & Aiken, 2009).

3.2.1 Emotional reactions

There are emotional reactions and actions that we will describe as collective or Life choices. The suffering of one family member can cause worry and anxiety in other family members, causing them to either seek solutions to relieve the suffering or isolate themselves.

3.2.2 The choice of communication

The choice of communication can alleviate suffering, allowing members to share their emotions and concerns.»

3.2.3 The Choice to Act

Any family affected by suffering can choose to take action. The actions are numerous, divergent, constructive or destructive, individual or collective. What is essential is that the ordeal and suffering that result from it never have the death of the family as its only outcome. In memory a beautiful song of hope: «He did not say that you would sink, he did not say, that you would sink, he said: let's go to the other side.»

3.3 Family Resilience

Family resilience, like individual resilience, is a dynamic process. It is not a stable state acquired once and for all. It is something that is constantly evolving, always liable to be challenged by certain circumstances arising from the external environment or resulting from the evolution of the internal organization. From this perspective, resilience has nothing to do with invulnerability. Delage (2008), identified a set of levers and principles of resilience.

3.3.1 A Leader

Resilience usually needs a driving force, a «leader» who can lead others through his or her personal ability to face and care for those who are there. A constellation of factors therefore interact in the resilience process. They can be grouped into seven main headings

3.3.2 Family Beliefs

The belief developed in the family that one can, despite everything, get out of a traumatic situation. This belief takes place in the set of beliefs likely to animate family life.

3.3.3 The Possibility of Having Some Control

Everyone is at first confronted with powerlessness, everyone suffers the blow. Regaining the possibility of action and control fuels hope and the beginning of physical and emotional calming, which, in turn, strengthens action and control. When I first heard about autism and that my son had autism, I began to say that this disease was Western. As a PhD student, I started by researching this disease. The knowledge I gain from it throws me to the ground. A long moment of questions, fears and anxieties takes over. Then, the word of God, my faith in God who loves me and no doubt a fighting spirit allow me to get back up and undertake one of the greatest battles of my life as a mother.

3.3.4 Family Functionality

For the family, it is a question of maintaining or re-establishing an organized functioning, even if this organization differs from that of the past. The family must be able to continue to carry out its functions, often with changes in the roles assigned to each person, new distributions in the distribution of tasks, and new collaborative attitudes to the consequences of the situation. It is the ability and ability to adapt to a new situation.

3.3.5 Relational ethics and global security

Relational ethics is the concern developed in the family to take care of one another, to be attentive to each other. The family thus develops moral qualities of equity, justice, and loyalty. It allows and offers the possibility of regaining a certain overall security thanks to the quality of the relationships developed within the family and with the outside world.

3.3.6 Capacity for mentalization within the family

The capacity for mentalization within the family, so that, from now on, it is possible to work on representation and so that each and every one of us can access a meaning, build an acceptable history of the situation in order to start again in the direction of life. It is the result of all the other dimensions and truly the heart of the work of resilience.

3.3.7 The spiritual dimension developed in the family

It is everything that does not belong to the rational register and that is likely to be the subject of intense psychic activity. This does not necessarily mean adherence to religious beliefs and practices, although this dimension must be taken into account. For me, the word of God, faith and hope played a big role in the choice to seek to help our son in any way we could. It is in God that I found the strength, to move from one therapy to another, to dare to faith, to dare to brave the looks, the reluctance of the teaching team when it came to trying experiences of school integration, to organize a school follow-up and to ensure the financial sacrifices, in essential time, without social assistance, in Gabon, to allow our son to start and continue an adapted schooling with tutors for each subject in a classical school. Accepting the humiliations, the disdain of certain teachers or facing charlatan psychologists who, after several sessions, are unable to make a synthesis, a report or define a treatment protocol after a financial investment and a time that was only possible from my Franciscan spirituality and my Christian faith.

3.4 The choice of resignation or victimization

Faced with the various ordeals mentioned: illness, conflicts, financial and educational problems, addictions, etc... The couple, the parents, the family can choose to resign themselves and allow the trials to be a tsunami or a volcanic eruption.

CONCLUSIONS

The book allowed us to travel through different family trials, classic or specific trials depending on the type of family, the causes and consequences of these trials but also actions to mitigate them or to prevent them. We were able to identify the different types of reactions of families to the ordeal based on psychological research. There are passive, active, positive reactions, the choice of resilience or resignation. There are objective and rational approaches but also the spiritual dimension.

Finally, family hardships also result in injuries or traumas that can be likened to stigmata. In any case, we can affirm with strength, faith and hope that the transitus, the Passover and the Resurrection are always possible. This requires making a radical choice, the choice to live, the choice of life, the choice to carry one's cross with Christ, and its stigmata in the manner of St. Francis of Assisi.

Finally, family hardships also result in injuries or traumas that can also be assimilated to stigmata. Trauma is not related to the event itself but to the individual perception of that event. The latter can have a different impact on everyone. But an ordeal whose pain persists, which we compare by parallelism to a trauma or a stigma, can heal. That's for sure. We have seen that it is almost always possible to find help by asking for help from competent people, thanks to solidarity and family values. It is also possible to adapt to the changes brought about by hardships, to modify roles in the family. In addition to this reactive approach, there is also a proactive approach that involves training, listening and education. The role of the Church, the family of God, the expert in humanity, appears to be a major one in order to be truly the Salt of Families and the Light of Families, Christian or not. The witness of the accompaniment of our family, having a handicapped child, autistic, by Christian communities in France shows that the Church, through her pastoral care and the CARITAS of her communities and movements, has the mission of being today an apostle of the family and can succeed in this mission, through the power of the Holy Spirit, the intercession of the Virgin Mary and of all the holy and blessed couples, lay people and religious saints in heaven.

In any case, we can affirm with strength, faith and hope that the transitus, the Passover and the Resurrection are always possible regardless of the trial and suffering that results from them. It requires making a radical choice, the choice to live, the choice of life, the choice to carry one's cross. The stigmata or trauma of his life with Christ who invites us to carry our cross with him and in his footsteps. And why not live the trial of the family or the trial of the family at the school of Saint Francis of Assisi?

This theme could be deepened by questioning the role of faith in the behaviour and reactions to the trials of the family. We can also look at the role of the extended family in over-

coming hardships. The larger the extended family, the faster the ordeal is overcome. Finally, the study of the relationship between family values and overcoming the test.



*Fabrizio Santafede - The Holy Family with Saint Francis
of Assisi adoring the Infant Jesus*

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