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OUR
FATHER

*Reflections
on the
Lord's Prayer*



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Training for Giving and for Forgiveness

The family is a big training gym for the mutual giving and forgiveness without which no love can last for long. Without giving of oneself and without forgiving one another, love does not last; it does not endure. In the prayer that he himself has taught us—the Our Father—Jesus has us ask the Father, “Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.” And in the end

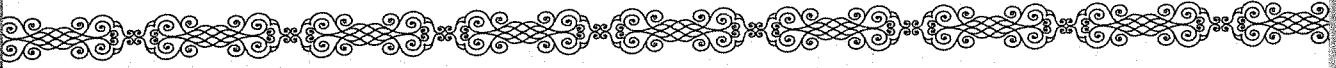
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he comments: "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father also will forgive you; but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Mt 6:14-15). One cannot live without forgiveness—or at least, one cannot live well, especially in the family. Every day we do wrong to one another. We have to take stock of these mistakes, due to our frailty and our selfishness. But what is asked of us is to heal right away the wounds that we cause, to repair immediately the threads that we break in the family. If we wait too long it becomes too difficult. And there is a simple secret for healing wounds and dispelling accusations. It is this: do not let the day end without apologizing, without making peace between husband and wife, between parents and children, between brothers and sisters . . . between daughter-in-law and mother-in-law! If we learn to apologize

Our Father

right away and to forgive one another, then wounds heal, marriage becomes stronger, and the family becomes an ever more solid house, one that withstands the impacts of our wrongdoings large and small. And this is why there is no need to make a big speech. A caress is enough. One caress and everything is over; it is time to move on. But never end the day at war!

If we learn to live like this in the family, we will do the same outside of it, wherever we find ourselves. It is easy to be skeptical about this. Many—even among Christians—think that this is an exaggeration. "Yes," they say, "those are beautiful words, but it is impossible to put them into practice." But thanks to God, that is not the case. In fact, it is precisely in receiving forgiveness from God that we in turn are capable of forgiving others. This is why Jesus has us repeat these words every time



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we recite the prayer of the Our Father, every day. And it is indispensable that, in a society that is merciless at times, there should be places, like the family, where we can learn to forgive one another.