Some quotes from

**The Joy of Love**

**Where are our children?**

*“The real question, then, is not where our children are physically, or whom they are with at any given time, but rather where they are existentially, where they stand in terms of their convictions, goals, desires and dreams. The questions I would put to parents are these: “Do we seek to understand ‘where’ our children really are in their journey? Where is their soul, do we really know? And above all, do we want to know?” (261)*

**Marital love**

*“Marital joy can be experienced even amid sorrow; it involves accepting that marriage is an inevitable mixture of enjoyment and struggles, tensions and repose, pain and relief, satisfactions and longings, annoyances and pleasures, but always on the path of friendship, which inspires married couples to care for one another: “they help and serve each other”.” (126)*

**Look at me!**

*“The aesthetic experience of love is expressed in that “gaze” which contemplates other persons as ends in themselves, even if they are infirm, elderly or physically unattractive. A look of appreciation has enormous importance, and to begrudge it is usually hurtful. How many things do spouses and children sometimes do in order to be noticed! Much hurt and many problems result when we stop looking at one another. This lies behind the complaints and grievances we often hear in families: “My husband does not look at me; he acts as if I were invisible”. “Please look at me when I am talking to you!”. “My wife no longer looks at me, she only has eyes for our children”. “In my own home nobody cares about me; they do not even see me; it is as if I did not exist”. Love opens our eyes and enables us to see, beyond all else, the great worth of a human being. (128)*

**What do you say?**

*“This love must be freely and generously expressed in words and acts. In the family, “three words need to be used. I want to repeat this! Three words: ‘Please’, ‘Thank you’, ‘Sorry’. Three essential words!” “In our families when we are not overbearing and ask: ‘May I?’; in our families when we are not selfish and can say: ‘Thank you!’; and in our families when someone realizes that he or she did something wrong and is able to say ‘Sorry!’, our family experiences peace and joy”. Let us not be stingy about using these words, but keep repeating them, day after day. For “certain silences are oppressive, even at times within families, between husbands and wives, between parents and children, among siblings”. The right words, spoken at the right time, daily protect and nurture love.” (133)*

**Make room for conscience**

*We have long thought that simply by stressing doctrinal, bioethical and moral issues, without encouraging openness to grace, we were providing sufficient support to families, strengthening the marriage bond and giving meaning to marital life. We find it difficult to present marriage more as a dynamic path to personal development and fulfilment than as a lifelong burden. We also find it hard to make room for the consciences of the faithful, who very often respond as best they can to the Gospel amid their limitations, and are capable of carrying out their own discernment in complex situations. We have been called to form consciences, not to replace them. (37)*

**How was your day?**

*“…. many of the respondents pointed to the problems families face in raising children. In many cases, parents come home exhausted, not wanting to talk, and many families no longer even share a common meal. Distractions abound, including an addiction to television. This makes it all the more difficult for parents to hand on the faith to their children. Other responses pointed to the effect of severe stress on families, who often seem more caught up with securing their future than with enjoying the present. This is a broader cultural problem, aggravated by fears about steady employment, finances and the future of children.” (50)*

**Don’t lose hope!**

*“ I thank God that many families, which are far from considering themselves perfect, live in love, fulfill their calling and keep moving forward, even if they fall many times along the way. The Synod’s reflections show us that there is no stereotype of the ideal family, but rather a challenging mosaic made up of many different realities, with all their joys, hopes and problems. The situations that concern us are challenges.*

*We should not be trapped into wasting our energy in doleful laments, but rather seek new forms of missionary creativity. In every situation that presents itself, “the Church is conscious of the need to offer a word of truth and hope… The great values of marriage and the Christian family correspond to a yearning that is part and parcel of human existence”. If we see any number of problems, these should be, as the Bishops of Colombia have said, a summons to “revive our hope and to make it the source of prophetic visions, transformative actions and creative forms of charity”.”(57)*

**Take time, quality time.**

*“This means being ready to listen patiently and attentively to everything the*

*other person wants to say. It requires the self‐discipline of not speaking until the time is right. Instead of offering an opinion or advice, we need to be sure that we have heard everything the other person has to say. This means cultivating an interior … Do not be rushed, put aside all of your own needs and worries, and make space. ….Often the other spouse does not need a solution to his or her problems, but simply to be heard, to feel that someone has acknowledged their pain, their disappointment, their fear, their anger, their hopes and their dreams. How often we hear complaints like: “He does not listen to me.” “Even when you seem to, you are really doing something else.” “I talk to her and I feel like she can’t wait for me to finish.” “When I speak to her, she tries to change the subject, or she gives me curt responses to end the conversation”.” (137)*