

SECTION 44
THE WAY OF DAILY LOVE
IN MARRIAGE AND FAMILY LIFE
Part 6: Love is not Resentful

“Indignation is healthy when it makes us react to a grave injustice,” writes Pope Francis (AL 103). For example, if one of the spouses, through irresponsible behaviour, damages or endangers the love relationship, the other is right to be angry. And it is also a good thing that he or she says so, clearly, because the love relationship between spouses is a precious treasure that must be handled with care.

The Pope quotes the apostle Paul, *“Be angry, but do not sin; do not let the sun set on your anger”* (Ephesians 4: 26). One must never end the day without making peace in the family. Then the Pope continues: *“And how am I going to make peace? Just by a small gesture, a little something, and harmony within the family will be restored. Just a little caress, no words are necessary.”* (AL 104).

But if one of the spouses really wants to call the other to account for his or her behavior, it is important that the words are chosen carefully so as not to hurt the other, especially when discussing difficult issues. *“Making a point should never involve venting anger and inflicting hurt”* (AL 139).

When we feel overwhelmed by anger, the Pope states, *“we can always cling to the anchor of prayer.”* This will lead us back to *“the source of peace,”* namely God's love in our hearts. (Gaudete et Exsultate 114). Moreover, *“to pray for a person with whom I am irritated is a beautiful step forward in love”* (Evangelii Gaudium 101).

The Pope also cautions that even if many disagreements are not about important things, couples must be careful, because *“what might alter the mood is the way things are said or the attitude with which they are said.”* At such moments, it is important to *“show affection and concern for the other person. Love surmounts even the worst barriers”* (AL 139-140).

A Reflective Moment

“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.

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 her or his pain, disappointment, fear, anger, hopes and dreams.

How often we hear complaints like:

“He or she does not listen to me.”

(Pope Francis, Amoris Laetitia 137)