

**NAZARETH SCHOOL AS A STIMULUS IN THE BIBLICAL FORMATION OF THE
FAMILY COMMUNITY AGNUS DEI**

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Abstract:

Every family seeks encouragement for their spiritual and sociological growth. This article brings research among 30 members of the Agnus Dei family community. We explored the impact of the biblical text, in particular, the Gospel of Mark on married couples who encounter daily difficulties in raising children, but also in the personal upbringing of adults. The researcher of this article was inspired by the characters of the holy family: Joseph, Mary and Jesus. Jesus' upbringing in Nazareth and the boy's upbringing enabled his parents' personal spiritual formation. That part makes up the first part of the paper. It is followed by a survey among members of the Agnus Dei family community.

Research has shown that there is a great interest in God's word. Throughout the year, attendees had the opportunity to listen to commentaries on the Gospel of Mark. In addition to certain exercises, they applied instructions to daily life. The results showed that their family community was re-formed by the word of God. They felt an improvement in interpersonal relationships in the family but also in the community. The Nazareth school actually became a stimulus for all participants in catechesis. Biblical methods in raising a family indicate positive results.

Keywords: Mark's Gospel, education, upbringing, family, children, Agnus Dei community

Discipline: theological

*A NÁZÁRETI ISKOLA, MINT EGY STIMULUS AZ AGNUS DEI CSALÁDI KÖZÖSSÉG
BIBLIAI FORMÁCIÓJÁBAN*

Absztrakt:

Minden család bátorítást keres lelki és társadalmi növekedéséhez. A tanulmány az Agnus Dei családi közösség 30 tagja körében végzett kutatást mutatja be, melyben feltártuk a bibliai szöveg - különösen Márk evangéliumának hatását - azokra a házaspárookra, akik napi nehézségekkel szembesülnek a

gyermeknevelésben, és a felnőttek személyes fejlődésében. A tanulmány íróját a szent család szereplői: József, Mária és Jézus ihlették. Jézus, a fiú názáreti nevelése lehetővé tette szülei személyes lelki formálódását. Ez a rész alkotja a tanulmány első részét. Ezt követi egy, az Agnus Dei családi közösség tagjai körében végzett felmérés. A kutatás megmutatta, hogy nagy az érdeklődés Isten ígéje iránt. Az év során a jelenlévőknek lehetőségük volt meghallgatni a Márk evangéliumához fűzött kommentárokat. Bizonyos gyakorlatok mellett utasításokat alkalmaztak a mindennapi életben. Az eredmények azt mutatták, hogy családi közösségüket Isten ígéje formálta újra. Érezték az interperszonális kapcsolatokban megjelenő javulást a családban, de a közösségben is. A názáreti iskola valójában a katekézis minden résztvevője számára ösztönzővé vált. A családnevelés bibliai módszerei pozitív eredményeket mutatnak.

Kulcsszavak: Márk evangéliuma, oktatás, nevelés, család, gyerekek, Agnus Dei közösség

Disciplina: teológiai

From Nazareth to the family community

The family of Joseph, Mary, and Jesus spent their time in Nazareth. The hands of the carpenter shaped little Jesus. The father's and the mother's example influenced the child Jesus until he went into a public mission among the people as a thirty-year-old. It is worth taking a closer look at the biblical data that speaks of the mental and spiritual progress of God and Man in the structure of the family that we will call the School of Nazareth. The School of Nazareth is a stimulus for many, with that in mind, the members of the family community Agnus Dei had the opportunity to listen to catechesis conceived on the word of God for a year (2019-2020), as a stimulus in family life.

Biblical data on Nazareth

The word Nazareth means flower or star because it depicts the beauty of Galilee. Some also suggest that the word means "guard" because it guards the Ezrelon Valley (Tomašević, 2017). Nazareth is a place on the southern border of Galilee, about 350 m above sea level. It is not mentioned in the Old Testament by either Josephus or the Talmud. It is only in the New Testament that it is called the homeland of Jesus. Its geographical location justifies omitting the mention of Nazareth in the Old Testament. It was not located between any

important roads, so it is not mentioned in other places. Even though Luke's Gospel speaks of Nazareth as a city and not a village, the differences between a village and a city were not so significant, so the terminology does not follow the reality (Biblijski leksikon, 1972; Metzger and Coogan, 2004).

The information about the childhood of Jesus of Nazareth brought to us by the particularly synoptic Gospels is very scarce. Only the evangelists Matthew and Luke recorded any information, while Mark and John completely omitted the childhood of Jesus and the Nazarene ambience of the family of Joseph and Mary. In Matthew, Nazareth is first mentioned in 2:23. Joseph must return there with his family after fleeing to Egypt. In Luke we read that Mary, the mother of Jesus, lived in Nazareth. Her husband Joseph also had to live there (cf. Lk 1:26). They created an atmosphere for their future family. But outside of the moments when they fantasized about their family, they had no idea what would happen to them and that they would become the mother and father of the Son of God (cf. Lk 2:48). They went through beautiful moments in their family community, but there was no shortage of ugly ones. Their family peace was interrupted by their flight to Egypt because of Herod's desire to kill Jesus, but it was also

interrupted by the moment when Jesus disappeared from their sight during their pilgrimage to Jerusalem, that is, as they were returning to Jerusalem (cf. Lk 2: 41-50). At the end of the account of the finding of Jesus in the temple among the teachers, he listened to them and asked them questions, and all who heard it were overwhelmed with reason and Jesus' answers. Jesus was 12 years old at the time (cf. Lk 2:47). At the end of this passage there is a hidden picture of the School of Nazareth: "And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them. And his mother carefully kept all these memories in her heart. But Jesus prospered in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man" (Lk 2: 51-52). Jesus was shaped by his family in his house in Nazareth: father and mother. Every Jewish family was a "pious house." Each house was a small prayer sanctuary, dedicated to prayer but also to upbringing in the Law. The Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms were read there (Tomić, 1990).

The question is how could Jesus advance in wisdom and grace with God and men? How can one who is "full of grace and truth" still prosper (Jn 1:14), in whom "all the riches of wisdom and knowledge are hidden" (Col 2: 3), who is embodied wisdom (Jn 1:15)? Luke uses these expressions to emphasize that Jesus, in addition to being God, is also a true man. He can therefore grow to the full maturation of intellectual abilities, from childhood to adulthood. Wisdom was not infused into him, but transmitted from his parents, in their family specifically (Tomić, 1990). Thus, Jesus progresses in knowledge, which Luke the Evangelist emphasizes in terms of: From infant (2,12,16) he grows into a child (2,17,27.40) and into a boy (2,43), all the way to growth in wisdom when Jesus will become a Rabbi (Stöger, 2019). Looking at the Jewish upbringing of children, we see that the father assumes control over the child from the cessation of breastfeeding. He must shape his son, imprint on him the indestructible values of Israel. The child acquires the most knowledge in the family school, under the watchful eye of his father. From the age of five, he entered the synagogue

school and learned to read the Law. In addition to spiritual education, the father had the duty of teaching his son to be a craftsman. It was regularly a craft that his father was engaged in. Joseph's family belonged to the middle class. Jesus became not only a carpenter, as the Greek word (tecton) says, but a carpenter, and a blacksmith, and a builder of houses (Tomić, 1990). Every family shapes their child. However, the reverse process also occurs here. In the school of Nazareth, Jesus had an influence on his parents. The Gospel of Joseph says that he was a *cadik* - a righteous man (Mt 1:19). Jesus' mother Mary carefully kept all the memories in her heart (Lk 2:51).

Jesus grows up in the natural environment of his family, in which religious precepts are observed. In addition, the Bible is read regularly. In such circumstances, the growth of the individual in the family occurs, and therefore, the whole family grows as well. A family like this one from Nazareth can very easily have an effect on the entire society. Prompted by doing good, it will pass it on to others until complete peace is achieved. For Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, the lull of the house of Nazareth became a special school of education and prayer.

The family community Agnus Dei

Many people are enthusiastic about the Nazareth School of Education. Many are also looking for ways to raise their children and spouses. The Agnus Dei family community was formed two years ago, in response to the challenges facing the family. From that moment, the biblical formation began, which presupposes the acquaintance with Jesus Christ and the application of evangelical values to everyday life in the family. The family community has thirty members. Every Saturday, married couples gather to pray and listen to the Word of God.

Within a year, the leader of the meeting addressed 31 biblical themes from the Gospel of Mark. The aim of the meeting was to shape the faithful with the offered biblical values in the mutual education of family members, and their application in everyday situations, especially in the

upbringing of children and the growth of spouses. Each unit consists of reading a specific gospel passage and meditation. The meeting lasted for an hour. Participants were able to ask questions immediately after the meeting or via email. The year of biblical formation was rounded off with a published book entitled *Notebook after St. Mark* (Krasicki, 2020). The topics covered by the contents of the book are: the family, family values, marriage, faith, education of children, unity, joy, responsibility, healing, mutual help, forgiveness. After a year, we conducted a survey among the participants that shows the results of their efforts and the application of the Word of God in everyday life.

The aim of this research is to determine whether the attitude of the catechesis participants towards their own family and their children has changed during the year of participation. The study will involve 30 participants in catechesis which were conducted once a week for a year. We assume that the results achieved on the applied measuring instruments will indicate a significant effect of the one-year education in the direction of a more positive attitude towards the family and the more positive parental behavior towards children. As a request for feedback after a year of formation, we sent a survey to the participants by e-mail.

Measuring instruments

The following measuring instruments were used in this study: 1) Family Interaction Quality Questionnaire (Vulić-Prtorić, 2004) which examines the assessment of the quality of family relationships (Table1). and 2) Parental Behavior Perception Scale (Macuka, 2007) which measures the parents' perception of children's behavior through two dimensions: emotionality and psychological control (Table2). In doing so, the emotional dimension includes the acceptance factor and the rejection factor.

The presentation of measuring instruments and results

Instruction

“Dear Sir/Madam,

The following is a series of statements that describe your relationship to your family and to your children (regardless whether the children are young, adolescents, or adults). Please respond to them by assessing the extent to which a particular statement applies to you, keeping in mind the effect of the catechesis you have been undergoing for a year. In other words, assess whether your relationship with your family and children has changed in the last year under the influence of the content you analyzed during catechesis.

The degrees mean:

- 1- Incorrect
- 2- Partly correct
- 3- Completely correct

The following set of statements refers to your attitude towards your family, i.e., any possible changes towards your family in the last year (Table 1).

The next set of statements refers to your relationship with your child / children, or possible changes in that relationship in the last year (Table2)

- 1- Incorrect
- 2- Partly correct
- 3- Completely correct”

Conclusion

Based on the responses sent, we see the success and improvement of communication within the family. Catechesis has become a special stimulator in the mutual growth of the family community Agnus Dei. In fact, catechesis has become a kind of Nazareth School that helps in the upbringing of children, but also in the formation of spouses. Better communication and togetherness are recognizable. Parents began to realize their mistakes in raising their children. Mutual prayer and reading the Word of God every day contributed to the visible well-being, not only of the individual but of the whole family community.

Table 1. Family Interaction Quality Questionnaire (Vulić-Prtorić, 2004)

| Items | | Degrees | | |
|-------|---|---------|----|----|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 1. | For me, my family has become a source of comfort and satisfaction. | 0 | 1 | 29 |
| 2. | My family is not getting on my nerves. | 2 | 5 | 23 |
| 3. | If I were to start a family again, it would be similar to my current family in many ways. | 0 | 4 | 26 |
| 4. | I am glad to be a member of my family. | 0 | 0 | 30 |
| 5. | I feel good in my family. | 0 | 0 | 30 |
| 6. | Compared to other families, I think mine is very good. | 0 | 8 | 22 |
| 7. | Everyone in my family understands me. | 0 | 16 | 14 |
| 8. | I am proud of my family. | 0 | 1 | 29 |
| 9. | My family is a happy family. | 0 | 3 | 27 |
| 10. | My family members do good to each other. | 0 | 2 | 28 |
| 11. | I can really trust my family. | 0 | 0 | 30 |

Table 2. Parental Behavior Perception Scale (Macuka, 2007)

| Items | | Degrees | | |
|-------|---|---------|----|----|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 1. | I apologize more often when I treat a child unfairly. | 0 | 9 | 21 |
| 2. | I shout at the child less often. | 0 | 11 | 19 |
| 3. | I show him/her love more often. | 0 | 4 | 26 |
| 4. | I provide more security. | 0 | 4 | 26 |
| 5. | I comfort him/her more when he/she is sad. | 0 | 2 | 28 |
| 6. | I encouraged him/her to talk about things that were important to him/her. | 0 | 4 | 26 |
| 7. | I accepted his/her mistakes more. | 2 | 10 | 18 |
| 8. | I noticed the child to a greater extent. | 0 | 7 | 23 |
| 9. | I tried to be more with him/her when he/she needed it. | 0 | 4 | 26 |
| 10. | I could talk to her/him about intimate things as well. | 1 | 9 | 20 |
| 11. | I had time to talk to him/her when he/she needed me. | 0 | 7 | 23 |
| 12. | I encouraged him/her to succeed in various activities. | 0 | 4 | 26 |
| 13. | I avoided "lecturing" on how he/she should behave. | 1 | 19 | 10 |
| 14. | I have an honest relationship with my child. | 0 | 2 | 28 |
| 15. | I wonder what problems he/she has. | 0 | 0 | 30 |
| 16. | I don't use belittling when he/she does something wrong. | 0 | 5 | 25 |
| 17. | I don't criticize too much. | 0 | 13 | 17 |
| 18. | I don't question him/her all the time. | 1 | 12 | 17 |
| 19. | I do not make fun of him/her in front of others. | 3 | 1 | 26 |
| 20. | I do not threaten to do anything to him/her. | 1 | 6 | 23 |
| 21. | If I make a mistake, I don't punish him/her with silence. | 1 | 5 | 24 |
| 22. | I kiss him/her often. | 0 | 6 | 24 |
| 23. | I often smile at him/her. | 0 | 6 | 24 |
| 24. | I do not blackmail him/her if he/she does not follow my rules of conduct. | 1 | 10 | 19 |
| 25. | I do not compare him/her to others. | 0 | 9 | 21 |

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