CATHOLIC FAITH FORMATION

International Group · Saint Ignatius Church, Tokyo

How to Speak of Christ in the City

Family, first proclamation, and the age of artificial intelligence

Sunday 4 October 2026 · 14:00–16:00
Kibe Hall · St. Ignatius Church, Tokyo
First Sunday of the month · Mission Month
World Mission Day 18 October

A tip from Pope Leo XIV, 21 August 2026: the family is the first school of humanity.

The word read at the start

MATTHEW 10:7–10

7 And going, preach, saying: The kingdom of heaven is at hand.
8 Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out devils: freely have you received, freely give.
9 Do not possess gold, nor silver, nor money in your purses:
10 Nor scrip for your journey, nor two coats, nor shoes, nor a staff; for the workman is worthy of his meat.

1 PETER 3:15

15 But sanctify the Lord Christ in your hearts, being ready always to satisfy every one that asketh you a reason of that hope which is in you.

Douay-Rheims 1899 American Edition · public domain

Why this afternoon

Four threads, one city

01

Leo’s August word

On 21 August 2026 he told Catholic legislators that, in the age of AI, the family is the first school of humanity.

02

Japan’s families

The Gospel is spoken first at the table: marriage, children, ageing parents, work hours, and mixed households.

03

World Mission Day

18 October 2026 — centenary. Theme: “One in Christ, united in mission.”

04

AI in the home

A tool must not become a companion, a teacher, or a judge in place of persons.

THE QUESTION

How do we speak of Christ in a city that is courteous, busy, and mostly not Christian?

Not a lecture on the train. A sentence a family can carry home — and a life that does not contradict it.

The family is the first school of humanity

Address to the International Catholic Legislators Network, 21 August 2026. Theme: human dignity and artificial intelligence.

“The first school of humanity would be the family.”

“Trust before calculation, generosity before competition, dialogue before division, and love before power.”

“The world does not need an artificial intelligence that diminishes humanity.”

WHAT HE ASKS

Guide technology.
Do not hinder invention, and do not leave it ungoverned.

Strengthen marriage and families.
Support parents in their educational mission.

Human intelligence enlightened by wisdom. Innovation directed by charity.

vatican.va · 21 August 2026

Before the city, the table

Trust	*before calculation*	A child learns that a face is not a score.
Generosity	*before competition*	The home is where someone eats who did not earn it.
Dialogue	*before division*	We practise hearing a person we cannot mute.
Love	*before power*	Authority in a family is for the weak, not over them.

Three erosions to name

1

Persons reduced to data

Relationships become simulations. A chatbot is asked what a spouse or a parent used to be asked.

2

Desire flooded and bent

Young minds meet content that outruns a parent's voice. Formation is outsourced to a feed.

3

Family life made precarious

Economic models that make marriage and children harder — time, housing, care of the old.

Family issues we actually meet

The domestic church

For many in Tokyo the only regular Christian word is spoken at home, not in the street.

Marriage under pressure

Late marriage, long hours, and the cost of housing make a stable home harder to begin and to keep.

Few children, long care

A small child and an ageing parent can both be in the same kitchen. Mission includes both.

Mixed households

Spouse, parent, or child may not share the faith. Courtesy is not the same as silence about Christ.

Memory of the dead

Ancestor reverence is near. Catholics can speak of the communion of saints without dismissing the family altar.

Screens at the table

AI tutors, translators, and companions now sit where conversation used to be.

A family sentence, not a slogan

> *“Jesus Christ loves you; he gave his life to save you; and now he is living at your side every day to enlighten, strengthen and free you.”*

Evangelii Gaudium 164 · the kerygma a parent can say without a pamphlet

At table

Grace before a meal is already a public word, even if only the family hears it.

At a sickbed

Care of a parent is a sermon on the body, not a theory of dignity.

At the school gate

One honest sentence about why Sunday matters beats a borrowed argument.

Toward 18 October

World Mission Day begins in the household that prays for missionaries by name.

Two Sundays from today

World Mission Day 18 October 2026

Centenary of the Day established by Pius XI in 1926. Theme chosen by Leo XIV: “One in Christ, united in mission.” It echoes his motto, In Illo uno unum.

One in Christ

Union with him is the start of mission, not a prize after it. John 17:21.

United in mission

No baptised person is exempt. Witness, prayer, and generosity.

Tokyo’s part

Xavier’s city still needs a first word. This group is already a small catholic sign.

Message dated 25 January 2026, Feast of the Conversion of St Paul. He names St Francis Xavier among the ad gentes missionaries.

A tool is not a person

At home

Do not let a machine become confessor, spouse, or parent. Ask who is still responsible.

At school

An AI tutor can drill a fact. It cannot love a child or hand on the faith.

At work

Scoring people — hiring, care, credit — must stay under a human yes or no.

In prayer

A generated text is not the Word. Silence and the Eucharist are not products.

In mission

Leo also says technology can serve evangelisation — if it tells the truth and does not counterfeit a face.

Our line

From Magnifica Humanitas: dignity is given, not computed. Highlight Christ; protect humanity.

Yes. Name the wounds nearest the hall.

Mission in Japan is not first a flight. It is the person who does not leave the room, the mother alone with a child, the youth in Kabukicho who has nowhere to sleep. Subsidiarity says the nearest community acts first.

Loneliness

Hikikomori is a long withdrawal, not a slogan. Presence over months is already a mission.

Toyoko

Runaway youth gather by the Toho building in Kabukicho. Many are fleeing harm at home. Do not improvise a rescue.

Despair

Japan’s suicide figures are a public wound. The parish accompanies; it does not replace care, and it does not describe methods.

Single mothers

Work, rent, and stigma sit on one pair of shoulders. A table and childcare are a first proclamation.

Rented family

Agencies hire actors to stand in as relatives. It shows a hunger for a household, not a business plan for the Church.

Subsidiarity

Help begins at home and in the parish hall. The state and the clinic remain; we do not wait for them to love.

For mental health ministry

Prayed on this feast of St Francis. He holds an image of St Dymphna, patron of those who suffer mental illness and of those who care for them.

Saint Sharbel Center — Relics: Saint Dymphna (YouTube)

> *“May your Church be an open house, a safe space where everyone has a place — a community that accompanies and never excludes, that listens without judging and draws near without fear.”*

Open house

This meeting stays in Kibe Hall. A later family afternoon would need a larger room and the Sunday coffee room — only with the parish priest’s leave.

No stigma

He asks forgiveness for looking away. Naming a withdrawal or a mother’s strain is not gossip.

Carers too

He prays for professionals, families, and volunteers. We invite them; we do not replace them.

Francis heard it at San Damiano.
The chapel was the one in front of him.

1 Listen	This CFF stays in Kibe Hall, first Sunday of the month. A later family afternoon could use a larger parish hall, with coffee in the room that already serves it — if the parish priest agrees.
2 Stay small	Subsidiarity: ten chairs, one priest or host, no new NGO. The parish does hospitality. Partners do casework.
3 Name Christ once	A grace, a sentence from Leo's prayer, an open door to Mass. No argument. Francis preached by the life and, when asked, by the word.
4 Hand on	If someone is in immediate danger, the helpers already in the room know the path. We do not become the clinic.

Practical steps, nearest first

At the table

Say grace aloud once this week. One sentence of Christ is already mission in a mixed household.

At the door

One message or visit to someone withdrawn. Do not extract a hikikomori. Leave the door open and come again.

A name

Pray this month for one single mother in the parish, by name, and ask what hour would actually help.

A seat

Offer a regular chair at Sunday coffee. Loneliness is often cured by being expected, not by a talk.

No rented family

If a neighbour is hiring a stand-in relative, the parish can be the real table — a wedding, a hospital visit, a funeral.

The line, not us

Post the existing help lines. We accompany. We do not counsel a crisis, and we never describe a method.

One Saturday, then World Mission Day

Invite, do not found

Ask Caritas, a mothers' circle, or a youth shelter to speak. The word in a larger hall; coffee in the room that already has the kitchen. Not this Sunday, and not without leave.

Childcare corner

A single mother cannot sit if the child cannot. Two parishioners and toys, at the far end of the coffee room.

Japanese and English

A door card: stage one side, kitchen and coffee the other. No intake form. Ask the parish priest before a date is named.

Three months, same hour

Repeat the coffee on the first Saturday. A programme that changes every month is not a house.

18 October envelope

World Mission Day: one coin for the missions, and one name — a missionary, and a neighbour who will not come.

Hand on

Toyoko is not a parish walk without a partner already there. If someone is in danger, the guest group knows the path.

A step already taken · not a plan still on paper

Akasaka-san has accepted

Midori Akasaka, Representative Director of Certified NPO Florence, will speak on family issues at the 8th Evangelii Summit Japan, 21–22 November 2026. Theme of the Summit: “One in Christ, united in mission” — the same word as World Mission Day.

Who

Representative Director since 2022. Childcare worker, career consultant, mother of two. Her school was Catholic. She speaks without a fee.

What Florence sees

Sick-child care, small nurseries, medical-care children, single-parent households, food outreach, unexpected pregnancy.

Working title

Toward child-rearing that is not isolation — what Florence has seen of children and households in Japan.

Why it counts

Kibe Hall is this month’s meeting. A later family afternoon, if permitted, invites a neighbour to coffee. The Summit in November invites the person already beside those households.

The two hours

14:00	Welcome. St Francis at San Damiano: “Rebuild my Church.”
14:10	Scripture: Matthew 10:7–10 and 1 Peter 3:15.
14:20	Leo, 21 August: the family is the first school.
14:32	October intention: mental health ministry. An open house.
14:44	Tokyo’s wounds, named without spectacle. Subsidiarity.
15:00	Practical steps: table, door, Saturday coffee, 18 October.
15:35	World Mission Day, then 21–22 November: Akasaka-san has accepted.
15:50	Closing prayer with Leo’s October prayer. Tea if the room allows.

Open and shared discussion

Questions for the circle

1. If someone in your building asked why your family goes to Mass, what would you say in one minute?

2. Which wound is nearest this hall: hikikomori, a single mother, Toyoko, or a rented stand-in for a relative?

3. A later open house — word in a larger hall, coffee next door — would need the parish priest's permission. What could we ask him?

4. Whom do we invite: Caritas, a shelter, a mothers' circle — and what do we not pretend to be?

5. Before 18 October, whom will this group pray for by name?

6. Francis rebuilt the chapel in front of him. Akasaka-san has accepted for 21–22 November. What is still ours to do in Kibe Hall before then?

Related viewing · English audio; Japanese captions where YouTube provides them

YouTube and sources

A	Bishop Barron — How to Proclaim the Faith (14:39)	youtube.com/watch?v=GSUFaH4ZcyI
B	Catholic Online — St Francis: Go and Rebuild My Church (8:57)	youtube.com/watch?v=peOFGInlivc
C	Jeff Cavins — What is the Gospel at Its Core?	youtube.com/watch?v=fTFjup9nbFA
D	Archdiocese of Washington — Kerygma (short)	youtube.com/watch?v=ZhOVbAWVz8M
E	EWTN — Evangelii Gaudium: roadmap (5:31)	youtube.com/watch?v=4EoGEgZNqe0
F	Arthur Brooks — A Public, Normal, and Magnetic Faith	youtube.com/watch?v=-vjcvrBowfI
G	The Pope Video — October 2026, mental health ministry	youtube.com/watch?v=RxoIiPoyRLY
H	Vatican News — General Audience, 12 August 2026	youtube.com/watch?v=FIHxpLgbIH0

August address: vatican.va, 21 August 2026. October intention released 1 October 2026. World Mission Day message: 25 January 2026.

To sing, or to play while people gather

Three hymns for this afternoon

Open

All creatures of our God and King

youtube.com/watch?v=U3eKQLX7nO0

Francis's Canticle of the Sun, 1225. His feast is today. Lyric video, Catholic Music Initiative.

Before the word

Ubi caritas

youtube.com/watch?v=HBFTO1W5R-0

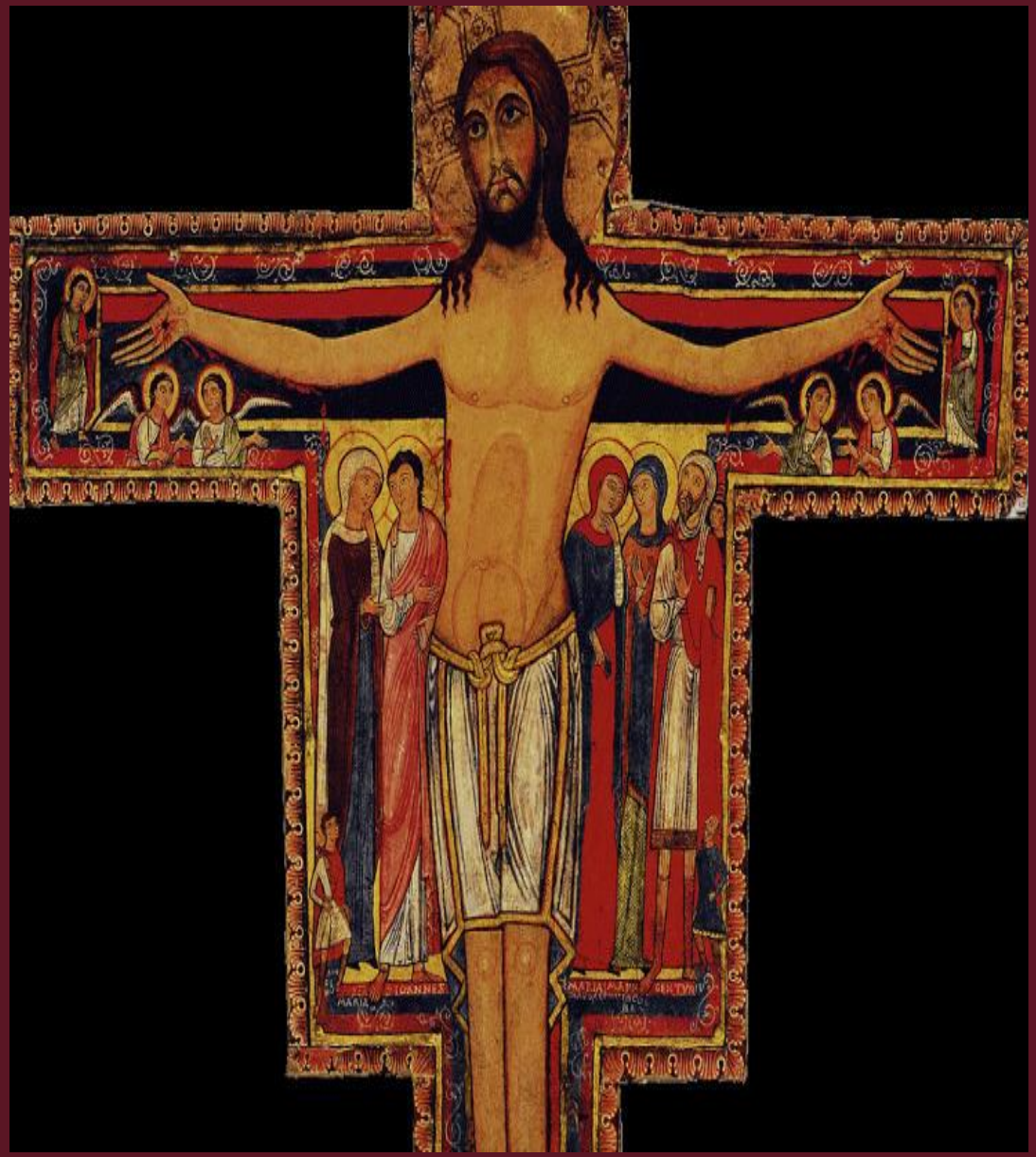
Where charity and love are, God is there. Taizé, chant, and hymn. Fits the open house.

Close

Make me a channel of your peace

youtube.com/watch?v=fYz14jEoaeU

The peace prayer long attributed to Francis. The words are later; the desire is his. OCP.



SAN DAMIANO

The cross that said: Rebuild my Church.

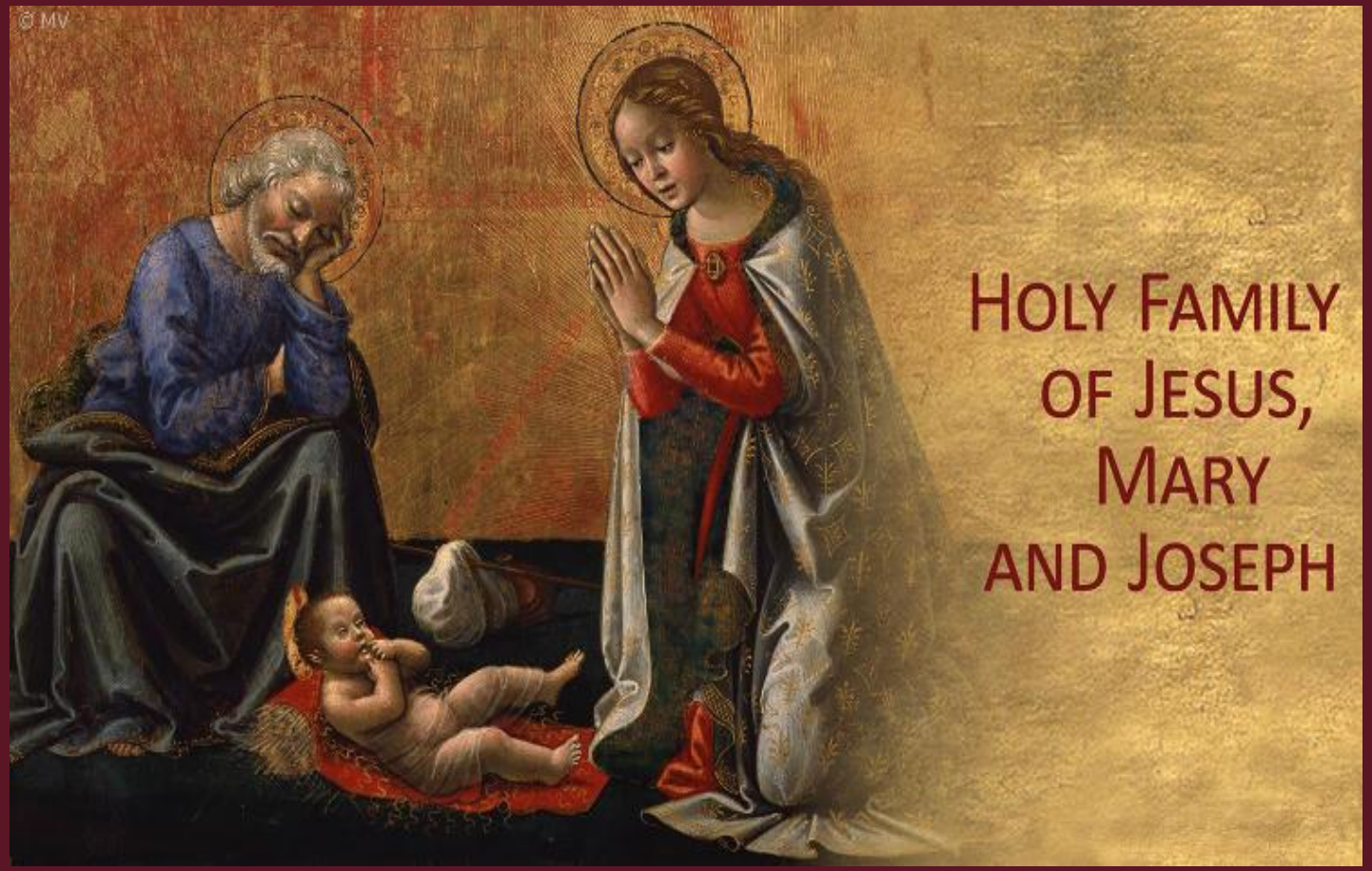
Twelfth-century crucifix, San Damiano, Assisi. Francis heard the word in front of this image. The chapel was the one before him.

Catholic Online — St Francis: Go and Rebuild My Church (YouTube)

XAVIER'S CITY

Tokyo still needs a first word.

Japanese portrait of St Francis Xavier, seventeenth century. World Mission Day, 18 October, names him among the ad gentes missionaries.



THE FIRST SCHOOL

Trust before calculation.

Leo XIV, 21 August 2026. The family is the first school of humanity.

Further viewing

Toyoko	Japan Today, 7 min. A short account. The long ARTE film is for the host only, not the hall.	youtube.com/watch?v=HJ-oM38s8UI
Hikikomori	BBC, Rent-a-sister. Withdrawal, and the hired presence that is not yet a household.	youtube.com/watch?v=q9IRmUEsz6g
Rented family	Why rental family is booming again. Actors standing in for relatives.	youtube.com/watch?v=TMQ9BSyYKHM
Florence	Official vision film, 2024. Sick-child care, single parents, food, isolation.	youtu.be/n12HkErDQVs
Single mothers	The Ones Left Behind (McAvoy) is a film, not a free clip. Florence's field includes these households: florence.or.jp/english	

CLOSING PRAYER

Lord Jesus, you said to Francis, Rebuild my Church. The chapel was the one in front of him. Make Kibe Hall an open word for the lonely, the withdrawn, the mother alone, the young who have run. If a larger room is to be opened later, let it be with the parish priest's blessing. Guard us from stigma and from pretending to be the clinic. Saint Francis, Saint Dymphna, pray for us.

"May your Church be an open house, a safe space where everyone has a place."

From Leo XIV's October 2026 prayer for mental health ministry

Ad maiorem Dei gloriam

Catholic Faith Formation ministry group · International Group
Kibe Hall · first Sunday · 4 October 2026