7 Great tips from Pope Francis to moms

The Holy Father offers these suggestions, along with his thanks for being the "strongest antidote to the spread of self-centered individualism"

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Check out these great tips and reflections from Chapter 5 of the pope's document on family and love, [Amoris Laetitia](#) (The Joy of Love):

1. Children are never a mistake. "There are those who dare to say, as if to justify themselves, that it was a mistake to bring these children into the world. This is shameful!" He asks that children always be recognized as a gift of God, even when they were not within the couple's original plans.

2. No sacrifice is too large when made for your child.

3. Citing Pope John Paul II, Francis refers to pregnancy as participating in "the mystery of creation, which is renewed with each birth." These nine months are full of hopes and dreams, as the mother wonders what her baby's life will be like. Francis encourages expectant mothers: "Keep happy and let nothing rob you of the interior joy of motherhood. Your child deserves your happiness. Don't let fears, worries, other people's comments or problems lessen your joy at being God's means of bringing a new life to the world. Prepare yourself for the birth of your child, but without obsessing, and join in Mary's song of joy: 'My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord and my spirit exults in God my Savior'…. Try to experience this serene excitement amid all your many concerns, and ask the Lord to preserve your joy, so that you can pass it on to your child."

4. Children are not the result of personal goals or expectations. He or she is

not an accessory or a solution to some personal need. He or she is a human being. "A child is a human being of immense worth and may never be used for one's own benefit. So it matters little whether this new life is convenient for you, whether it has features that please you, or whether it fits into your plans and aspirations." The pope adds, "We love our children because they are children, not because they are beautiful, or look or think as we do, or embody our dreams. We love them because they are children. A child is a child." The pope invites parents to await the birth of their children with tenderness, to accept them unconditionally and to welcome them without expecting something in return.

5. Children need the love of their father and mother, who help them to mature harmoniously. They also need the love that the parents have for each other. "The love of parents is the means by which God our Father shows his own love," the pope says. "Husband and wife, father and mother, both 'cooperate with the love of God the Creator, and are, in a certain sense, his interpreters.' They show their children the maternal and paternal face of the Lord. Together they teach the value of reciprocity, of respect for differences and of being able to give and take."

6. Francis recommends wisely integrating the demands of a job with the responsibilities of motherhood, especially noting the importance of accompanying children in a special way during their early years. He says an absence of the "maternal presence with its feminine qualities poses a grave risk to our world."

7. And he reminds women of the need to use their feminine genius: their tenderness, compassion and capacity to welcome. "Their specifically feminine abilities – motherhood in particular – also grant duties," he says, "because womanhood also entails a specific mission in this world, a mission that society needs to protect and preserve for the good of all."

The pope thanks mothers, saying they are "the strongest antidote to the spread of self-centered individualism… It is they who testify to the beauty of life."

Certainly, "a society without mothers would be dehumanized, for mothers are always, even in the worst of times, witnesses to tenderness, dedication and moral strength."

"Dear mothers," he says, "thank you! Thank you for what you are in your family and for what you give to the Church and the world."

Translated from the Spanish edition of [Aleteia](#).