

## FAMILY

The intimate partnership of married life and love has been established by the Creator and qualified by His laws, and is rooted in the conjugal covenant of irrevocable personal consent....For, God Himself is the author of matrimony, endowed as it is with various benefits and purposes. All of these have a very decisive bearing on the continuation of the human race, on the personal development and eternal destiny of the individual members of a family, and on the dignity, stability, peace and prosperity of the family itself and of human society as a whole. (*GS*, #48)

The well-being of the individual person and of human and Christian society is intimately linked with the healthy condition of that community produced by marriage and family. (*GS*, #47)

Families too will share their spiritual riches generously with other families. Thus the Christian family, which springs from marriage as a reflection of the loving covenant uniting Christ with the Church, and as a participation in that covenant, will manifest to all men Christ's living presence in the world, and the genuine nature of the Church. This the family will do by the mutual love of the spouses, by their generous fruitfulness, their solidarity and faithfulness, and by the loving way in which all members of the family assist one another. (*GS*, #48)

The family is a kind of school of deeper humanity. But if it is to achieve the full flowering of its life and mission, it needs the kindly communion of minds and the joint deliberation of spouses, as well as the painstaking cooperation of parents in the education of their children. The active presence of the father is highly beneficial to their formation. The children, especially the younger among them, need the care of their mother at home. This domestic role of hers must be safely preserved, though the legitimate social progress of women should not be underrated on that account. (*GS*, #52)

The mission of being the primary vital cell of society has been given to the family by God himself. This mission will be accomplished if the family, by the mutual affection of its members and by family prayer, presents itself as a domestic sanctuary of the Church. (*AA*, #11)

Christian families bear a very valuable witness to Christ before the world when all their life they remain attached to the Gospel and hold up the example of Christian marriage. (*AA*, #11)

The family which is founded and given life by love, is a community of persons: of husband and wife, of parents and children, of relatives. (*FC*, #18)

Thus the fundamental task of the family is to serve life, to actualize in history the original blessing of the Creator - that of transmitting by procreation the divine image from person to person. (*FC*, #28)

In our time, in a world often alien and even hostile to faith, believing families are of primary importance as centers of living, radiant faith. For this reason the Second Vatican Council, using an ancient expression, calls the family the *Ecclesia domestica*. It is in the bosom of the family that parents are “by word and example...the first heralds of the faith with regard to their children. They should encourage them in the vocation which is proper to each child, fostering with special care any religious vocation.” (CCC, #1656)

The conjugal community is established upon the consent of the spouses. Marriage and the family are ordered to the good of the spouses and to the procreation and education of children. The love of the spouses and the begetting of children create among members of the same family personal relationships and primordial responsibilities. (CCC, #2201)

A man and a woman united in marriage, together with their children, form a family. This institution is prior to any recognition by public authority, which has an obligation to recognize it. It should be considered the normal reference point by which the different forms of family relationship are to be evaluated. (CCC, #2202)

“The Christian family constitutes a specific revelation and realization of ecclesial communion, and for this reason it can and should be called a domestic church.” It is a community of faith, hope, and charity; it assumes singular importance in the Church, as is evident in the New Testament. (CCC, #2204)

The Christian family is a communion of persons, a sign and image of the communion of the Father and the Son in the Holy Spirit. In the procreation and education of children it reflects the Father’s work of creation. It is called to partake of the prayer and sacrifice of Christ. Daily prayer and the reading of the Word of God strengthen it in charity. The Christian family has an evangelizing and missionary task. (CCC, #2205)

The family is the original cell of social life. It is the natural society in which husband and wife are called to give themselves in love and in the gift of life. Authority, stability, and a life of relationships within the family constitute the foundations for freedom, security, and fraternity within society. The family is the community in which, from childhood, one can learn moral values, begin to honor God, and make good use of freedom. Family life is an initiation into life in society. (CCC, #2207)

The family, a natural society, exists prior to the State or any other community, and possesses inherent rights which are inalienable. (The Holy See, *Charter of the Rights of the Family*, October 22, 1983, D)

The family constitutes, much more than a mere juridical, social and economic unit, a community of love and solidarity, which is uniquely suited to teach and transmit cultural, ethical, social, spiritual and religious values, essential for the development and well-being of its own members and of society. (The Holy See, *Charter of the Rights of the Family*, October 22, 1983, E)

On the Catholic side, efforts must be made to spread the conviction based on truth that the physical and moral health of the family and of society can be protected only by a generous obedience to the laws of nature, that is to say, of the Creator, and, above all, by fostering a deep and sacred respect for them. (Pius XII, *Allocution to the Italian Association of Large Families*, January 20, 1958)

The good sense of the people has always and everywhere seen in large families the sign, the proof, and the source of physical health, while history makes no mistake when it sees in the tampering with marriage laws and the laws of procreation the first cause of a nation's decadence. Large families, far from being a 'social ill,' are the guarantee of the physical and moral well-being of a people. (Pius XII, *Allocution to the Italian Association of Large Families*, January 20, 1958)

The family possesses and continues still to release formidable energies capable of taking man out of his anonymity, keeping him conscious of his personal dignity, enriching him with deep humanity and actively placing him, in his uniqueness and unrepeatability, within the fabric of society. (*FC*, #43)

The child has the right to be conceived, carried in the womb, brought into the world and brought up within marriage: it is through the secure and recognized relationship to his own parents that the child can discover his own identity and achieve his own proper human development. (*CDF, DV*, February 22, 1987, II A 1)

The family is the key element in the formation of a person's character and attitudes toward society. (*PCF, From Despair to Hope: The Family and Drug Addiction*, June 22, 1991, I B)

The Christian model of the family remains the primary point of reference upon which to insist in any action for the prevention, treatment and recovery of the vitality of the individual in society. The family must become once again the place where children can experience the unity which strengthens them in their own particular personality. Families must be both the object and subject of an education in togetherness and self-giving in love. (*PCF, From Despair to Hope: The Family and Drug Addiction*, June 22, 1991, III A)

The natural family, stable and monogamous—as fashioned by God and sanctified by Christianity—'in which different generations live together, helping each other to acquire greater wisdom and to harmonize personal rights with other social needs, is the basis of society.' (Paul VI, *PP*, March 26, 1967, #36)

The family environment is thus the normal and usual place for forming children and young people to consolidate and exercise the virtues of charity, temperance, fortitude and chastity. As the domestic church, the family is the school of the richest humanity. (*PCF, The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality: Guidelines for Education Within the*

*Family*, December 8, 1995, #48; Quoting *GS*, #52)

The family first of all should be a home of faith and prayer, in which God the Father's presence is sensed, the Word of Jesus is accepted, the Spirit's bond of love is felt, and where the most pure Mother of God is loved and invoked. (PCF, *The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality: Guidelines for Education Within the Family*, December 8, 1995, #62)

In the bosom of the Church the family is the natural setting in which new lives are destined to regeneration through Baptism. Christian married couples have the task of preparing people who will be purified and given rebirth by the sacramental washing, becoming members of the Mystical Body. (John Paul II, *Discourse to the Participants of the Plenary Assembly of the Pontifical Council on the Family: The Tasks of the Christian Family*, May 30, 1983, #5)

The family is the natural source from which a pro-life civilization springs, the center where all the values that protect life converge, and the basic social unity of all civilizations at the service of life. (John Paul II, *Discourse to the Participants of the Plenary Assembly of the Pontifical Council on the Family: The Family in the Mission of the Laity*, June 10, 1988, #2)

The family is the fundamental gift to humanity. It is the first, natural, living cell of society, on which all other communities and societies are based and the first, living cell of the Church. (The Second International Theological Pastoral Congress at the Second World Meeting of the Holy Father with Families, *The Family: Gift, Promise, and Hope for Humanity*, October 3, 1997, #2.1)

Family life is a daily gift that requires love, patience and sacrifice. But in this gift each day, even in its simple unfolding, there are dynamics of transcendence and decisive importance in formation, such as personalization or growth in humanity. It is a gift that binds the different generations in an endless chain of reciprocity and solidarity. It is the best school of humanity, where the mutual gift of the parents pervades the whole home. Thus new members arise who are mature, respectful of others, grateful for solidarity that helps them live in charity. (The Second International Theological Pastoral Congress at the Second World Meeting of the Holy Father with Families, *The Family: Gift, Promise, and Hope for Humanity*, October 3, 1997, #2.5)

The family is thus a necessary gift to society, to the whole of humanity. In this first school of the virtues, we learn respect for others, mutual aid and self-restraint. (The Second International Theological Pastoral Congress at the Second World Meeting of the Holy Father with Families, *The Family: Gift, Promise, and Hope for Humanity*, October 3, 1997, #2.6)