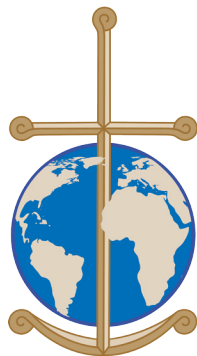


THE CARITAS IN VERITATE FOUNDATION WORKING PAPERS  
*“The City of God in the Palace of Nations”*

*Creating a Future*

*Family as the Fabric of Society*



With a selection of recent texts from the Church's engagement  
regarding the role of the family in today's society

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**Published by Mathias Nebel and Mary G. Burns FCIV  
16 chemin du Vengeron, CH-1292 Chambésy  
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<b>EDITORIAL</b>		5
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>		9
<b>SECTION ONE: <i>Family as the Fabric of Society</i></b>		
	<b>Family and Migration: An Ethical Challenge</b> <i>Laura Zanfrini, Univerisità Cattolica del Sacro Cuore (Milan)</i>	15
	<b>The Cost of Family Breakdown</b> <i>John Ashcroft, Relationships Foundation (Cambridge)</i>	43
	<b>Reconnecting Family and Faith in Business</b> <i>Michael Naughton, Ken Goodpaster, Ritch Sorenson; University of St. Thomas (Minnesota)</i>	65
<b>SECTION TWO: <i>Recent Church Texts on the Family</i></b>		
	<b>Review and Introduction to the Texts</b> <i>Mathias Nebel, Director, FCIV</i>	87
<i>Papal Address</i>	<b>Address to the Members of the Centesimus Annus—Pro Pontifice Foundation</b> , Benedict XVI, 2009	93
<i>Papal Address</i>	<b>Address at the International Colloquium on the Complementarity of Man and Woman</b> Pope Francis, 2014	96
<i>Holy See</i>	<b>Charter on the Family</b>	99
<i>UN Speech</i>	<b>The Family as the Resource of Society: 20th Anniversary of the UN Year for the Family</b> , Archbishop Vincenzo Paglia, 2014	105
<i>UN Intervention</i>	<b>Statement at the International Dialogue on Migration</b> , Archbishop Silvano Tomasi, 2014	111
<i>Pontifical Council for the Family</i>	<b>Serving the Family and Life; Serving the Human Person</b> , Carlos Simon Vazquez, 2014	115

## *Editorial*

### **We are all of one mind...**

**N**obody seriously denies the importance of family relationships to human development. It is well known that the family space is crucial to the transmission and acquisition of the elements inherent to human dignity: responsibility, rationality, love, language, freedom, justice, etc. The work of Piaget and his many successors only confirmed something which was always widely recognized: human beings are born into family relationships; children accede to language, reason, freedom through their parents; and parents introduce their children to social life and the institutions organizing our common world.

But this does not seem to be enough to make it a priority in the UN Agenda, as the Secretary General timely remarks: “At the international level, the family is appreciated but not prioritized in development efforts. The very contribution of families to the achievement of development goals continues to be largely overlooked (...).”<sup>1</sup>

### **But then not that much...**

**T**he «why» question is unavoidable: why has the family’s important role in peace, human rights and development policies been overshadowed? Why is the UN system reluctant to adopt and further advance family based policies regarding development?

It is certainly not out of a lack of UN declarations recognizing its importance! Although there is no explicit family framework at the international level numerous UN documents have shown a very consistent recognition of the role and importance of family. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognizes that the family is the “natural and fundamental group unit of society” and is therefore “entitled to protection by society and the State” (1948, Art. 16 §3); Elsewhere “that [family] plays a key role in social development and is a strong force of social cohesion and integration” (Social Summit+5 2000, III §56). Or that “for the full and harmonious development of the children’s personality, they should grow up in a family environment, in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding” (Children Summit, 1990, §18).

### **The root causes of the problem...**

**T**o understand the lack of interest at the UN for a family approach to development, we have to look for other reasons than a lack of legislation. The present practical mistrust over the notion of family directly results from two trends: the first has been the push for sexual and reproductive rights; the second is the evolution of practice and law in western countries over marriage and family. Both have brought a sort of stigmatization of family that makes it a non-starter for development policies.

The debate on sexual and reproductive rights has been divisive around contraception methods and sexuality, hence also on marriage and family conceptions. Typically, to quote family in this context is regarded positioning oneself on the conservative side, opposing the new reproductive rights. Moreover, the ongoing battle for legal recognitions of free and same sex unions in UN texts has had the result of making the use of the word family a conflicting term that parties are keen to avoid in policy making.

### **Taking a new look on a family perspective for development...**

**Y**et a family perspective should not be reduced and restricted to the two previous debates. The present Working Paper is keen to highlight how much an approach to development issues may gain from adopting a family perspective. Three topics will be covered by the present issue: Migration and Family, Business and Family, And the Social Cost of Family Breakdown. Indeed, family relationships are decisive in order to understand the dynamic of migration and some of its most peculiar problems, whereas the solidarity and security of family relationship are crucial features on which many small and medium enterprises have thrived. In turn, it appears that the fight against poverty is deeply intertwined with family issues, not only in developing countries but also in developed one.

Indeed, in most developing countries the solidarity and security provided by extended family network is the only one that mitigates poverty. Help in time of need, solace in time of grief, shelter in time of war or deterrence; family ties prove to be the backbone of the incredible resilience of the poor. Is this of no importance to International development planning?

At the same time, developed countries see the social cost of family breakup rising steadily and social security systems facing difficulties to fill the void left by the demise of this form of natural solidarity. Is this not something on which we should reflect?

For the option for the poor to be more than just a slogan, we should address the question of family related poverty. In Pope Francis words: “We now live in a culture of the temporary, in which more and more people are simply giving up on marriage as a public commitment. This revolution in manners and morals has often flown the flag of freedom, but in fact it has brought spiritual and material devastation to countless human beings, especially the poorest and most vulnerable. Evidence is mounting that the decline of the marriage culture is associated with increased poverty and a host of other social ills, disproportionately affecting women, children and the elderly. It is always they who suffer the most in this crisis.”<sup>2</sup>

#### **NOTES**

1. Report of the Secretary-General on the Follow-up to the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family and beyond (2011), §9 . (A/66/62-E/2011/4, §9).
2. Pope Francis, *The Complementarity of Man and Woman in Marriage*, November 17 2014.

## *Executive Summary*

**T**he family is both self-evident and complex. Everyone is born, lives and dies in the context of family relationships. That is a given. Yet this truly universal human experience has taken different forms throughout cultures and history. That is the complexity. The Catholic Church's position is that these particular forms, however complex, do not impede our ability to recognize a certain number of permanent features that hold true to all forms of family life. This similarly applies to the idea that human dignity is always equal however different each individual may be from the others.

The Working Paper investigates how adopting a family perspective can add precious information to the way migration, poverty, and business are approached by the international community. The present approach at the UN usually focuses on individuals, overlooking the facts that migration flows mostly occur along family relationships, that family is the most important network for mitigating poverty worldwide and that good business practices owe a great deal to family values.

This Working Paper is issued by the Caritas in Veritate Foundation as its contribution to the 20th Anniversary of the Year of the Family. By proposing a reflection on topics not usually associated with the family, we hope to open up a dialogue in international affairs that would help break the highly ideological power play over the definition of the family. We are convinced that a family approach to many of the current developmental challenges would indeed help us understand far better what occurs on the ground and what ultimately helps the poor and marginalized.

The first part of this Working Paper shows how a family approach to migration, poverty, and business actually adds valuable and original insights to these questions. The second part proposes some recent texts of the Catholic Church on the relationships between family and migration, poverty, and business. It also features a text written for this issue by the Pontifical Council of the Family presenting the overall development of Catholic thought about the family.

### **Migration and Family**

Laura Zanfrini summarizes the results of the recent studies on migration from a family perspective. She starts by recognizing that family still tends to be seen as one of the hurdles of migration: a problem – family reunification,

lone children migrants - that migration policies have to address properly.

But actually this is an undue, ideological reduction, as recent studies show. Families play a crucial role in the dynamics of migration. It is along family relationship that most people move; the distribution pattern of the flow of capital sent home by migrants also goes along family lines, and it is family ties that provide the main sources of human security to migrants (mitigate risk; increase resilience). At five times the amount of international direct public help, the migrant's remittances are the main source of capital transfer to developing countries. The third and fourth part of Zanfrini's article raises issues from the right to family reunification to the many challenges faced by children in migration cases (in countries of origin and host countries). A fifth part tries to take a Catholic perspective on the issue. It looks at how the Church experience and structure may help improve family oriented migration policies. It lists six points: 1. Countries of origin should revise how migrants are perceived and protected on their own territory; 2. Principles informing migration policies should be consistent with human rights and democratic values; 3. Security systems of host countries should be less tied to work and individuals; 4. The Catholic Church can help grasp the limits and aporias of a State-centric system response to poor and vulnerable migrants; 5. Local Churches can offer a special support to families involved in migration processes; 6. Migrants should be seen by Christians as prophetic signs of the grace of Christ to our time.

### **The social cost of family breakup**

Beyond ideological disputes, the increasing fragility of legal unions and marriage in western countries has a cost to society. In the first part, John Ashcroft exposes the measure done for the United Kingdom of what family break-up means to the State budget: 46 billion GBP in 2014. Based on the index created by the Relationship Foundation, the paper shows that poverty and family break-up are closely linked, and that any fight against poverty should include a family friendly strategy. Actually the cost of addressing poverty after family failure amounts to 5 to 7 time more than what prevention actions could cost. The second part of the paper reviews the way in which the calculations were done in order to assess the cost of the changing structures of family relationships in the UK. It addresses the costs upon health, social services and social care, welfare taxes and benefits, housing, education and civil and criminal justice. The conclusions highlight why supporting greater stability in family relationships is economically consistent and how fighting poverty is successful within a family approach to social justice.



## **Business and family**

The thesis of Professors Naughton, Goodpaster and Sorenson's paper is that we will not get business right if we do not get the family right. The family serves as the fundamental cell of the culture. This fundamental cell is the place from which business receives its moral and spiritual resources to promote and develop just practices within the business. In the first part of their paper the authors investigate three important dis-connects currently affecting the relationship between business and family: 1. A disconnected self, meaning the contrasting or even contradictory set of standard behaviours required from individuals between the spheres of economics and family; 2. Disconnected business and family institutions, where the economy is no longer informed by the prior norms and has lost the meaning of the family and the common good. 3. Disconnect between poverty and family, where recent studies and evidence show that family break-up are positively correlated to a higher poverty rate.

In the second part the authors consider the reasons of these dis-connections, crucially stating that the moral guidance of business not only comes from the market and from the law, but primarily from the larger culture and, in particular, from the family and from religion. Family and faith-based institutions provide the cultural soil out of which businesses grows: firstly, they limit economic activity thus situating it within the wider human activities; secondly, family and religion order economic activity and remind it of its purpose by connecting business to the common good. What the family and religion do for business is to identify the comprehensive set of goods that business must produce and to help it resist the temptation to reduce itself to mere material accumulation in the form of profits, salaries, or price.

Finally the third part reflects how a family perspective on business activity actually transforms the business world. Three core principles are put forward: 1. Providing good goods (providing goods which are truly good and services which truly serve and go beyond market value); 2. Offering good work (organizing work where employees develop their gifts and talents not only for themselves, but for others); 3. Creating good wealth (Creating sustainable wealth that can be distributed justly to stakeholders and not only to shareholders).

## SECTION ONE

### *FAMILY AS THE FABRIC OF SOCIETY*

# ***FAMILY AND MIGRATION: AN ETHICAL CHALLENGE***

A Caritas in Veritate Foundation Report<sup>1</sup> by

**LAURA ZANFRINI**

*Univerisità Cattolica del Sacro Cuore (Milan)*

**I**n recent decades, family has gained a very important role in both the expansion of the field of research in migration studies and the rethinking of integration models within the receiving society.<sup>1</sup> The challenge is to adopt a new analytical perspective, represented by the family and its strategies, in order to survive and develop as a fundamental determining unit in the domain of migration choices, strategies, and behaviours.

According to various contemporary theoretical perspectives, family is the natural decision-making unit, or, at any rate, the institution on the behalf of which the choice to emigrate is made and which “utilizes” its members for its needs of survival and development. Family is also the agency that receives and manages the precious flow of remittances from family members working abroad, thus determining its impact on the economies of the sending communities. In this sense, family is a strategic actor for the economic and social development of the source countries and can activate forms of co-operation and support. Due to the revenues produced by their parents and other family members working abroad, new generations can achieve high levels of education while having a positive impact on the process of human capital accumulation and development. On the other hand, family can also be the source of processes of coercion and conflicting dynamics that may become causes, or consequences, of migration. Moreover, left-behind families, most especially children, represent a dramatic phenomenon that is challenging both the public and the religious institutions due to the social, educative, psychological, and moral costs it can produce. Finally, obeying to family economic wellbeing, contemporary migration could generate deep human and social costs, particularly manifesting possible tensions among the different components—economic, social, cultural, and spiritual—of development [Caritas in Veritate, n. 31].

On the other end of the migration process, family is a factor that strongly influences the evolution of migratory projects and supports the process of

## ***¶ Summary***

migrants' integration, even if it sometimes necessitates a "generational sacrifice" in order to assure the (presumed) best chances to the members of the other generations. The lack of family relations and support makes dysfunctional behaviours more likely, such as alcoholism, deviance and drug addiction. On the other hand, family reunion, particularly after long periods of separation, can reveal itself a difficult or even traumatic experience for the individuals involved, thus suggesting the need for special support to be given to the families by both the origin and the receiving societies. Migrant offspring, particularly those belonging to low status families, are especially exposed to the risk of school failure and professional underachievement. Moreover, from the standpoint of the hosting society, the presence of migrant families is a phenomenon that transforms the impact and significance of migration, translating an economic issue into a political one. Particularly in countries that have institutionalized the "guest worker" model, the presence of families completely redefines the assessment of the cost/benefit trade-off generated by migration, obliging educational and welfare institutions to face new needs and new challenges. At the same time, this same presence could enrich school offer—due to the opportunity to develop intercultural awareness and intercultural dialogue—and even stimulate adaptation among welfare regimes toward the novel structure of social risks and social needs as it has been emerging in a global and "mobile" society. Lastly, as far as Christian communities are concerned, the presence of families coming from abroad can be seen as an authentic prophetic opportunity to assess their catholicity and search for their true, universal standing.

Despite the fact that family constitutes a crucial piece in the process of human mobility, receiving societies' expectations concerning migration continue to be predominantly founded on an atomistic conception. The same is true as far as sending countries are concerned, considering that the vast presence of left-behind families constitutes the best guarantee of continuing to receive remittances from abroad. As an emblematic consequence of this gap, researchers denounce that family reunification is not always the best solution, claiming that it could involve a deterioration of opportunities of migrants' children and even of the relationship between various family members. This does not include the fact that most single migrants are induced to renounce their own family aspirations (as it is dramatically revealed by the high rate of voluntary abortions among migrant women) or even to "sacrifice" themselves for the wellbeing of left-behind family members. Moreover, the fact of having a member working abroad sometimes transforms the family into a voracious consumer of remittances, discouraging the search for employment opportunities and various other types of activity within society. In all of these situations, we run the risk of forgetting that each person must always be considered as an end in and of himself—as it is unambiguously stressed by the Catholic Social Thought—, rather than as a means of family security.

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Family is also generally underrated in legislation concerning immigration, which is often founded on an individualistic perspective. As we will see, the European experience is particularly emblematic, because of its “schizophrenic” attempt to maintain the logic of the “gastarbeiter” (that is, the migrant admitted with a temporary permit strictly linked to the working condition) and that of the denizenship (a status right now accorded to the vast majority of migrants that guarantees the access to a rich range of rights and opportunities, together with a permanent authorization to stay and, of course, the right to reunite their family members). However, these kinds of problems are obviously not exclusive to the European landscape; it is sufficient to consider the phenomenon of so-called “mixed status families” emerging in the US context, not to mention the situation of some Asian immigration countries where migrants are treated as atomistic workers with neither present nor potential family ties.

In this regard, family is an emblematic example of the gap between social processes and their regulation, calling into question the human and social costs of globalization, particularly as regards the experience of migrants’ children. Bridging this gap would require commitment of both the receiving and sending countries as well as public authorities, civil society’s organizations, and local churches joining together in attempts to construct new migration policies and practices based on the dignity of the human person. Finally, our local churches face the challenging opportunities surrounding the hosting of migrant families as well as they encounter tests of their faith and teaching.

## 1. The Emerging Role of Family in Migration Studies

In recent decades, family has gained a progressively more important role in contemporary migration studies. In this section we will briefly recall some of the main theoretical perspectives in the field of socio-economic studies while focusing attention on family strategies in relation to migratory choices.

The *new economics of migration*<sup>2</sup>, moving from a critique of the neo-classical paradigm and its individualistic assumptions, redefines migration as a family strategy aiming at allocating human resources in order to face market collapse and inadequacy of welfare systems. As noted in a comprehensive review of theories of international migration<sup>3</sup>, a key insight of this new approach is that migration decisions are not made by isolated individual actors, but rather by larger units of related people – typically families or households – in which people act collectively not only to maximise expected income, but also to minimize risks and to loosen constraints associated with a variety of market failures (crop insurance markets, futures markets, capital markets) apart from those in the labour market. In fact, unlike individuals, households are in a position to control risks to their economic wellbeing by diversifying the allocation of household’s resources, such as

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family labour. Moreover, in developing countries, the institutional mechanisms (private insurances and governmental programs) for managing risks to household income are imperfect, absent, or inaccessible to poor families, giving them incentives to diversify risks through migration. Finally, the new migration economic theorists argue that families send workers abroad not only to increase income in absolute terms, but also to increase income relative to other households in order to reduce their relative deprivation compared with the local reference group (often constituted by families which have already sent some of their members abroad).

In contemporary times, a very popular approach is *network theory*<sup>4</sup>, which underlines the relational nature of migration and the various functions played by migrant networks, in particular in selecting which family member is the most suitable to migrate, and in supporting the process of adaptation to the new social context. Migrant networks are sets of interpersonal ties connecting migrants, former migrants, and non-migrants in origin and destination areas through ties of kinship, friendship, and shared community origin; therefore, they constitute a crucial form of social capital. Since migratory movements are at the same time a network-creating and a net-dependent process, they acquire a self-propulsive dynamic. This means that, in a certain sense, they are more influenced by the system of family obligations and expectations than by economic or demographic variables, as supposed by the theories most popular until very recently. Furthermore, each additional migrant that contributes to the expansion of the network reduces the risks of movement for all of his or her relations, eventually making it virtually risk-free and costless to diversify household labour allocations through emigration. Consequently, as networks expand and the costs and risks of migration fall, the flow becomes less selective in socioeconomic terms and more representative of the sending community—for example, registering the presence of individuals of different age and gender—. Lastly, once they have begun, flows can become very difficult to fall under governmental supervision because the process of network formation lies largely outside their control; certain immigration policies, however, such as those intended to promote family reunification or family sponsorship, work at cross-purposes with the monitoring of migration flows, since they reinforce migrant networks by giving members of kin networks special rights of entry.

A rich array of contributions come from gender studies, whose main merit is that of having recognized the gendered nature of migratory models, behaviours, and institutions, as can be brought to light by focusing attention on family and its system of labour division.<sup>5</sup> For example, some scholars have studied how, following the migration of one, some, or all family members, the relationship between men and women changes and evolves according to specific “cultures of migration” that assign different tasks and responsibilities to the various components of the family which

are not necessarily in coherence with the traditional role's patterns. Others have emphasised the special significance of women's experience,<sup>6</sup> the possibility of emancipation connected with migration, but also the subjection of individual projects to the need of the nuclear or of the extended family. Furthermore, a chief outcome of the research about female migration concerns the close relationship that links them to the various welfare regimes and the problems that accompany those regimes,<sup>7</sup> as well as with the scant development of welfare policies in many sending countries<sup>8</sup>. Finally, a special accent has been placed on the "care-drain" process caused by the migration of wives and mothers,<sup>9</sup> and on the various forms of "transnational motherhood" initiated in order to continue taking on the responsibility of caregiving despite the physical distance<sup>10</sup>. In this context, a main concern regards the phenomena of left-behind children, "or orphans of migration", an expression which has been significantly coined to allude to mothers' migration, rather than that of the fathers' migration<sup>11</sup>.

Another idea worth mentioning is that of the *welfare magnet effect*<sup>12</sup> which emphasises the role of welfare's benefits in the genesis, directionality, and evolution of migratory movements. The magnet hypothesis has several facets. Welfare programs can attract immigrants who otherwise would not have migrated to a certain destination, but they can also discourage immigrants who "fail" from returning to their sending country. Actually, being a self-selective population who have chosen to incur in the costs of migration, migrant families are more sensitive to the offer of welfare benefits than the native population; they are more inclined to geographical mobility with the consequence that inter-territorial differences in welfare benefits generate magnetic effects on the immigrant population. Besides the potential policy significance of these considerations, it is important to note that what guides the decisions about mobility and settlement is the family wellbeing, whose importance could even overcome, in many circumstances, that of working opportunities for the family breadwinner.

Other important insights have been coming from the concept of transnationalism, a label that has become very popular among migrations' scholars. As a matter of fact, international migration is commonly considered as one of the major social processes through which globalisation breaks into the various social institutions and structures, unhinging old approaches soaked in "methodological nationalism". In this frame, the idea of the "transnational family"<sup>14</sup> not only overcomes methodological nationalism<sup>13</sup> in the analysis of the processes of integration, but also offers a good example of the persistence of transnational belonging and practices along with the passing of generations<sup>15</sup>. At the same time, it reveals the salience of the feedback effects that migration produces in the source community, even after various cohorts, deeply influencing life prospects and life choices of the younger generations.

Last, but not least, the philosophy of *co-development*<sup>16</sup> enhances the roles

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**"Migrant families are more sensitive to the offer of welfare benefits than the native population..."**

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of migrants, Diasporas and transnational families for the economic and social development of the communities of origin.

## 2. Family Immigration between “Pros” and “Cons” and Ideological Traps

**A**s for the relationship between family and migration, a central issue is represented by the “pros” and “cons” of family’s migration and reunification for both the sending and the receiving countries.

Starting from the latter –i.e., the receiving countries– we can observe that the presence of families is usually considered as a factor of “normalisation” and social acceptance of migrants. The same conditions required by the law to obtain reunification with their family members press migrants to emerge from the informal economy and, if it is the case, from irregular conditions, and to achieve better living conditions. In some legislation, the possibility to migrate with one’s spouse and children is conceived of as a means to attract “desired” migrants, such as high-qualified workers or potential investors, and encourage their settling. For the receiving nations, especially in the case of societies confronted with a serious aging process –as is the norm in contemporary Europe, but the same is true in the case of Japan–, the arrival of migrant families could be considered as a way to sustain the population growth and renew the active-age population and labour forces. At the same time, this reinforces cultural pluralism, a trait that enjoys a positive consideration by significant stakeholders in contemporary societies. Lastly, family immigration favours –and legitimizes– the development of social research and social work applied to the (real or socially constructed) “problems” of migrants and their descendants, and fuels the survival strategies of certain organizations facing the loss of autochthonous clients (for example vocational schools).

Obviously, from the point of view of the host countries, family immigration also has various harmful consequences. In general, favouring the process of permanent immigration impedes the possibility to regulate migration influx and presence in accord with the labour demand, a possibility particularly stressed in the European context. In fact, it was exactly the growing presence of migrants’ family members that, in the Seventies, turned immigration from an economic issue into a political one with the emergence of questions related to intercultural and inter-religious cohabitation. In the eyes of the local population, family immigration increases the strain on the welfare apparatus (public schools, health, assistance, etc.), thus encouraging competition with the weaker sectors of the autochthonous population over access to social services and benefits (crèches, subsidized housing, etc.). This is especially true where immigration is “poor”, as in the case of the contemporary European landscape: it is sufficient to note that one out of ten people at risk of exclusion have a migrant background in the

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**“...favoring the process of permanent immigration impedes the possibility to regulate migration influx and presence in accord with the labor demand...”**

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European Union. This problem becomes even more complex in the case of countries that have relied on importing migrants in order to fill manual and low-qualified jobs: in Italy, for example, almost half of the migrant families are at risk of poverty<sup>17</sup>. After all, family immigration irreversibly changes the hereditary characters of native people, bringing into question the idea of a nation founded on the principle of descendants –again, an idea particularly rooted in the European legacy–. If, as observed, family immigration enriches a society bringing with it other cultural traditions, then at the same time it forces the native population to come to terms with cultural and religious pluralism, including the sensitive topics involving family life. See, for instance, arranged, forced, and polygamous marriage, crimes of passion, genital mutilation and so on.

On the sending countries' side, researchers' attention has been predominantly given to the "cons" of family migration. This is due to a largely pragmatic reason: the departure of a migrant worker's family members produces the immediate effect of slowing or even stopping the flow of remittances. At the same time, it discourages investments and returning migration. Considering the dramatic importance of migrants' remittances and investments for many source countries, we can understand how these countries may try to discourage family reunification in an open manner. According to some researchers' results, family immigration could also have the effect of weakening the accumulation of human capital, as it "worsens" the school performance of migrant children. For example, a transnational research project focused on Filipino migrant children<sup>18</sup> –one of the main countries of emigration in the contemporary landscape– who were registered on different schools' career paths. Left behind children experienced a distortion in their educational and professional aspirations due to the hegemony exerted by a strong "culture of migration"; but at the same time, they could benefit from the opportunity to attend high quality schools and universities thanks to the remittances coming from their parents who were working abroad. Aware of the enormous sacrifices and efforts of their parents, they tried to work hard and had educational and career ambitions that were, in fact, higher than their peers were. On the contrary, those who had re-joined their parents during childhood were subject to a high risk of dropout and lack of success in school both due to linguistic barriers and the need to work and earn money. Finally, migrants' children that arrived in Italy at a mature age, even if well educated, often experienced a decline in skills (the so called brain wasting process).

Although all of these results could lead us to think that family reunification abroad produces only negative results for the sending societies, we can and should identify some of the "pros" of family emigration. Family emigration slows population growth and putting pressure on the school system, an impact that can be wished by the countries that experience dramatic demographic increases while lacking the resources to guarantee education,

health and social assistance to the younger generations (as it is particularly true for example in the case of African countries). In this perspective, child and youth emigration can constitute a “safety valve” for unemployment, in the face of a decidedly considerable growth rate that outpaces the capacity to generate new jobs. Again, family emigration increases the number of citizens who reside abroad, an outcome that could be envisaged by those States interested in the prospect of Diaspora’s mobilisation as a strategy to support the economic and social development of the sending communities<sup>19</sup>. Indeed if, traditionally, the idea of migrants as agents of development of their origin countries referred mainly to temporary migrants oriented to return home, then attention has now shifted to a more complex picture of the Diasporas to include permanent expatriates as subjects well integrated in host countries and second-generation immigrants<sup>20</sup>. Last but not least, even if, as we shall see, it is not always the best solution, family reunification is expected to contain the social costs associated with human mobility –particularly in containing the phenomenon of left-behind children–. From this standpoint, it should be welcomed, despite the computation of its burdens and benefits.

In any case, the discourse about the relationship between family and migration is often victim of what we can call “ideological traps”<sup>21</sup>: filters across which we look at reality and we estimate the outcomes of various phenomena and behaviours. As we shall see, a consequence stemming from this can be the legitimization of migration policies and practices producing high human and social costs for individuals and families involved, influencing the same choices about family reunification.

The first trap is that of economic liberalism, which is expressed by the tendency to construct, socially and institutionally, migrants as pure workers –labour force or, according to the current migration policies, high-qualified workers, or “brains”, useful in enforcing economic competitiveness–, atomistic actors without familial ties and links. Emblematically embedded in the figure of the “guest worker”, this conception is witnessed by the various schemes through which the receiving States try to prevent migrants’ settlement and reunification with their family members; i.e., schemes for seasonal migration, rotation schemes, circular migration, and so on. In any case, this conception is paradoxically –and maybe unconsciously– supported also by those political and civil actors who are more sympathetic with migrants whenever they attempt to legitimise migrants’ presence by stressing their economic role and the “need” of their work (“who can come are all those who have a job, and, more exactly, a job we do not want to carry out”). In such a way, the idea promoted is one that states that the governance of human mobility must obey economic considerations and the arrival of the family members risk to be seen as an unwelcome and useless consequence of the importation of labour. Especially during a phase of economic recession, as the present one, it becomes more and more difficult to

justify the presence of migrants and their families, and in particular to justify their costs in terms of public welfare. At any rate, some non-democratic countries do not hesitate to adopt this doctrine in a resolute way, inhibiting family reunification and recurring to the expulsion of pregnant women.

A second trap can be defined in terms of functionalistic familism: here the emphasis is put on the idea of migration as a family mandate, which can justify the sacrifice of the individual projects and aspirations, whenever the cultural codes and traditions expect their subjugation for the collective (familial) wellbeing. This approach is oriented to defend the traditional division of labour based on gender, assigning the father the role of the main breadwinner, even if this implies the father's emigration. In this prospect, the problem lies exactly in what does not appear to be a problem: as denounced by a study promoted by the Filipino Episcopal Commission for the Pastoral Care of Migrants, the tendency is to consider, as "normal", the father's absence and the experience to grow up in families with only one parent (the mother), thus undervaluing its consequences concerning the process of intergenerational transmission of marital and parental roles<sup>22</sup>. This conception involves an asymmetric evaluation of separated families: if the departure of the father is accepted or even socially appreciated because it is coherent with traditional role expectations, the mother's emigration is considered as inconvenient and in opposition to the wellbeing of children and other family members. Here we see that families where the mother is working abroad instead of being supported risk facing isolation and social stigmatisation. Moreover, even in the eventuality of family reunification, children may continue to accuse their mothers of having "abandoned" them, thus further feeding the mother's sense of guilty. On the other hand, the situation of considering the father's absence as "normal" is somehow a mirror of a cultural tendency in which the father figure is considered as less relevant—or only marginally better—than the way in which it used to take place in the past.

An opposite risk involved is the adoption of the filter of feminism. In this case, migration is primarily considered as an opportunity to emancipate women—especially when this entails the leaving of a patriarchal society—or as a source of exploitation for female migrants. In this vein, a "degenderization" of society is desirable<sup>23</sup> in order to promote the advent of more balanced models of division of labour, thus permitting both mothers and fathers not only to be active in the labour market but also to have a part in their children's education and care, due to a practice of interchangeable roles. Even when this perspective is shared and understood—as it stresses the opportunity to design a society where the gender will "matter less"<sup>24</sup>—, we cannot ignore that, with the aim to surmount the conventional conception of the family and especially of motherhood, it runs the risk of treating the costs of separation as traditionalistic constructs. Consequently, we must assist in inhibiting any initiatives aimed at limiting the migration of mothers.

The last ideological trap is cultural differentialism, by which we mean the legitimization of special rights (e.g. the so-called “ethnic rights”) and behaviours even if they conflict with the cultural codes of the receiving society. Immigrant societies fall in this kind of trap to the extent in which they permit practices incompatible with their legal culture –or also with their common sense of what is proper– presuming that these practices are based on different cultural traditions that must be accepted and recognized. In the past, the evocation of presumed cultural specificities was used to justify deplorable measures which aimed, for example, at selecting potential migrants (as in the cases of Indian girlfriends subjected to virginity testing before obtaining the permit to rejoin their future husbands). However, beyond these extreme examples, a differentialistic approach can induce public authorities to be “tolerant” towards certain kinds of conduct, as in the case of men who use violence against their wives and children, or of parents who do not comply with the duty of their children compulsory education. Finally, differentialism is a danger lurking that, as stressed by the contemporary debate about multiculturalism, is particularly detrimental to the most vulnerable members of the family whenever the respect of the minorities’ cultures overcomes the safeguard of individual rights and dignity. There are particularly sensitive issues in question here, such as genital mutilation, arranged marriages, or the imposition of anachronistic norms of behavior to sons and daughters.

### 3. About the Right to Family Reunification: looking at the European Experience

In the European experience, as opposed to what happens in the so-called “settlement countries” (Australia, Canada, New Zealand, United States), family migration was an unexpected –and “undesired”– phenomenon, which was, to a certain extent, induced by the policies of immigration control in force since the Seventies, which closed the door of labour migration. In any case, in many European countries this has become the main channel of entry. As a matter of fact, despite the attempts to avoid the permanent settlement of migrants and their communities, family reunification is now considered as a fundamental right but is dependent upon a certain level of income and integration.

In the Member States of the European Union, according to the Council Directive 2003/86, the absolute right to residence *must be recognized* to: a) the sponsor’s<sup>25</sup> spouse; b) the minor children of the sponsor and of his/her spouse, including adopted children; c) the minor children including adopted children of the sponsor where the sponsor has custody and the children are dependent on him or her<sup>27</sup>; d) the minor children including adopted children of the spouse where the spouse has custody and the children are dependent on him or her. In accordance with the same Directive, the fol-

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“Despite the attempts to avoid the permanent settlement of migrants and their communities, family reunification is now considered as a fundamental right but is dependent upon a certain level of income and integration.”

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lowing subjects may have the right to residence: a) first degree relatives in the direct ascending line of the sponsor or his/her spouse, where they are dependent on them and do not enjoy proper family support in the country of origin; b) the adult unmarried children of the sponsor or his/her spouse, where they are objectively unable to provide for their own needs on account of their state of health; c) the unmarried partner with whom the sponsor is in a duly attested stable long-term relationship and his/her children. Finally, further spouses apart from the one already residing in the country in the event of a polygamous marriage do not have the right to residence: in this specific case, the EU legislation put a strict fence to the possibility of accepting an institution contrary to the European legal culture.

Above and beyond the variety of the national rules –which must be coherent with the previous statements– we can observe that the right to family reunification is based, first of all, on the relationship of dependency between the applicant and the family member s/he is joining. This provision has the consequence of ignoring –or sometimes, as in the past, even impeding– the participation of the reunited family members in the labour market. More crucially, it compromises the fate of the children when they become of age: if they lack the prerequisites for obtaining the renewal of their residence permit (for example a job contract or attendance of the educational system), they risk, according to some legislations, being forcibly deported (considering that they cannot formally obtain a permit for family reasons once become of age). In any case, these provisions reflect a “legal” concept of the family, resulting in the disregard of different definitions of kinship shared in some cultures of origin, but also those arisen from the new confines of the family resulting from the migration itself (e.g., the care giver of the children left behind), or even those shared by the host country (e.g., children of age that, in most European societies, continue to be dependent on their parents and live with them)<sup>28</sup>.

Aside from the relationship of dependency, two other criteria contribute to the selectivity of the right for family reunification. The first one is the status of the applicant: temporary migrants, permanent migrants, EU citizens, citizens allowed to free circulation in the EU, and naturalized citizens enjoy different opportunities and rights, all the way up to total exclusion from this possibility (as it usually happens to seasonal migrants and to other categories of migrants defined as “temporary”<sup>29</sup>). The second criterion concerns the level of inclusion. All national legislations define requisites that the migrant must possess in order to apply for the entry of their family members (accommodation, income, sickness insurance, etc.). Nevertheless, in recent times, we observe the tendency to require a certain level of integration for the family member who is joining (this requisite is generally assessed by language tests or reached by the attendance of mandatory courses). All things considered, the combination of these criteria gives rise to selective access to the right to join one’s family, introducing discrimi-



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“Reunification is thus not necessarily permanent, since migratory movements must adapt to work commitments, to family strategies and sometimes to the desire of preserving the attachment to the country of origin.”

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nations on the basis of citizenship, legal status, socio-cultural condition and gender. The more a migrant is poor and vulnerable, the less s/he can benefit of this right<sup>30</sup>. We are alluding to a *fundamental* human right.

Actually, policies for family immigration can be seen as an emblematic example of a *persistent tension*, strongly embedded in the European history, *between the logic of the guest worker* –the illusion to select entrants and residents according to the labour market needs and to the economic gain of the host society– *and the logic of denizenship* –the progressive extension of migrants’ prerogatives, claimed by the European tradition of respect of human rights–. Here we come to what can be defined *the unresolved paradox of the European experience*<sup>31</sup>; that is the paradox of a population of (temporary) workers transformed into denizens, without any significant change in the expectations of Europeans concerning immigration. In fact, those that on one hand are recognised as universalistic rights, to which migrants are eligible in conditions of equality with citizens (for example, the right to a job or to housing) are, at the same time, necessary requisites for obtaining the status of regular migrant –exactly the same status that confers the possession of rights–, and in particular for acceding to the right to family reunification.

But, besides all these considerations, one question arises: is family reunification always the best solution when the wellbeing of all family’s members and the life chances of migrants’ offspring are taken into account? Or, on the contrary, does the gap among the crucial role that is played by the family in the process of human mobility and the migration’s conception on which both the legislation and the receiving (and sending) societies’ expectations are based make the reunification an unsatisfactory solution? Empirical evidence provides us contradictory findings, which, in any case, can be cause for reflection. Reunification with family members –particularly with children– is especially envisaged by those migrants who possess a “weak” status, which prevents them from maintaining the links with the country of origin (for example because of the geographical distance, or of the lack of proper documents). Paradoxically, a “strong” status (e.g., to be a EU citizen living in another European country) may discourage reunification or favour a sort of physical and symbolic commute with the sending State that could be detrimental to young children and their school careers (Italians living in Germany are a case in point<sup>32</sup>, but the same is true for Romanian living in Italy or in Spain who perceives their migration as temporary and reversible, and sometimes even delay the enrolment of their reunited children in school<sup>33</sup>). Migrant parents often reunite with their children even if they lack the proper conditions and the time to care for them, to the point that difficulties encountered can lead them to send the children back home to be raised by relatives (the same sometimes happens even to children born in the host country). Reunification is thus not necessarily permanent, since migratory movements must adapt to work commitments, to family strategies and sometimes to the desire of preserving the attachment to the

country of origin. More often, reunification involves children who are on the verge of reaching the age of majority (that is the limit age to rejoin parents through the legal procedure), giving life to the so-called “spurious” second generations<sup>34</sup> who frequently encounter difficulties of integration in the new society. When they lack one or more of the prerequisites prescribed by the law, migrants can resolve to realise a “de facto” reunification, sponsoring the arrival of the spouse and/or the children who will not have a permit of stay, staking a claim on their life chances. In this latter case, a possible outcome is the formation of a “mixed status family”, whose members enjoy different legal conditions and diverse life opportunities. After all, as we have noted in describing the pros and cons of family immigration, family reunification does not seem to be the best solution when we consider, for example, the school’s career of migrants’ children. Migrant families often strengthen the idea of the family as an inseparable unit with mutually dependent interests and needs: this way of thinking has to face the reality of many children who are gradually undermined rather than enhanced by migration. Actually, migrant parents’ interests are not always matching with those of their children, even in cases where immigration is apparently steered by the best interest of the children<sup>35</sup>.

At any rate, legislation merits special attention. Not only because, as we have seen, even in the democratic and progressive Europe, the right to family reunification is accessible only to certain immigrants, with the tendency to exclude the poorest and the weakest. But also because the relationship between family strategies and legislative restrictions often generates “perverse” outcomes, augmenting the vulnerability of the individuals involved. As one can imagine, all of these aspects contribute to the establishment of systems of civic stratification –real, although not necessarily legal– of the accessibility of the right to family cohesion, based on characteristics which have to do with the nationality of the immigrants, with their socio-economic status, with the individual’s status within the family, and with their individual immigration experience. In an attempt to maintain diverse and often divergent interests (for example, facilitating the integration of immigrants, but at the same time containing immigration and preventing it from taking roots in the territory), the norms in place produce imperfect solutions that raise important moral questions. Without taking into account the fact that the countries of origin have their own political agendas and strategies regarding the issue, an aspect which is frequently overlooked by political analysts, we see that for the nations which are interested in increasing the precious flow of the remittances of their emigrants in foreign countries, the reunification of families represents a worthless solution, so much so as to induce authorities to discourage and obstruct it.

Those who study the family have been analyzing the repercussions that reunification has on the psychological and emotional equilibrium of those involved for years<sup>36</sup>, especially when it involves people who are going

through particularly delicate phases of the cycle of personal or family life, or when it gives rise to situations of cohabitation among people who were previously not acquainted (i.e., the mother's new companion, or brothers or sisters born after the parents' emigration). Parents can continue to put off reunification with their children, concentrating instead on economic objectives which allow them to create better conditions with which to accommodate them, only to then be obliged to accelerate the process before the children become of age, thus uprooting them at a particularly delicate time and risking the damage of their scholastic pursuits. Finally, as we have already remarked, if we consider the process of accumulation of human capital, it can be observed that the children who are left-behind may find advantages in all of the opportunities their parents' emigration allows them to enjoy (above all the chance to attend quality schools and Universities); those who do join their parents often encounter difficulties resulting from the interruption in the education process, and in many cases cannot count on the support of the parents, who are often overwhelmed by work responsibilities and do not possess the linguistic skills necessary to help them with homework or to interact with teachers.

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**“Beyond the question of family reunification, it is important to note how the whole relationship between family and migration laws is characterized by tensions and contradictions.”**

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Actually, beyond the question of family reunification, it is important to note how the whole relationship between family and migration laws is characterized by tensions and contradictions. On the one side, is the outcome of a building up of many and varied interests –among which the slowing down of immigration and its settlement, the containment of its costs, the defence of the nation's identity, the need to facilitate migrants' integration– the regulation in force inevitably produces “imperfect” solutions. On the other side, as stressed by a set of contemporary theoretical streams, the structure of networks, needs and obligations organized around the family constitutes a real challenge to the systems of migration control and management of both the receiving and the sending countries. Notwithstanding the fact that family constitutes a crucial actor in the process of human mobility, the legislation concerning migration (but the same could be demonstrated as regards the domain of citizenship) continues to be founded on an individualistic conception. If we wish to contain the costs of migration and at the same time amplify their benefits for individuals, families, and countries involved, fulfilling this gap is a real need.

#### 4. Children and Migration

One of the most sensitive issues connected with family migration is the involvement of children. On the one hand, children are often the “reason” pushing parents to emigrate, in order to guarantee them a better future. On the other, migration usually implies difficulties and suffering for children involved.

Most of the literature has been concentrated, as we have seen, on the



condition of left-behind children, and on the difficulties that children can face immediately after the reunification with their parents. What frequently emerges is the tendency to underestimate how children, even if of young age, have their own understanding of what constitutes their wellbeing. Here, again, we can observe how it is important to base any evaluations of migration phenomena on the principle of human dignity, whatever the age, the gender or the specific condition of people concerned.

As stressed by some recent studies<sup>37</sup>, migrant parents are often unaware of the challenges that family migration and family reunification imply for their children from a psychological and social standpoint. They lack important information that would help them in envisaging migration plans which take into account some factors of protection for their children, and which are able to favour their chance of wellbeing. During the most critical stages of the migration process, it is hard for families to cope with all the difficulties, on emotional, relational, social, cultural and spiritual levels. In particular, a great need emerges for services able to support family communication, especially during the time of separation between parents and children when communication, if not adequately supported, may hinder a functional development of the parental relationship and produce a relevant distance between family members.

The educational careers of migrants' offspring is another issue largely inquired, starting from the awareness that neither choices nor scholastic achievement are independent from the ascribed status of people, from the education provided by the family to the social environment one grows up in: the conclusions regarding migrant's children are easily drawn. To clear the field of misunderstandings, it should be stated that scholastic attainments are different for different national groups (and different within the same group), but are also different for descendants of immigrants of the same origin residing in different foreign countries. In some cases, the scholastic results of the children of immigrants are above average, and contribute to the creation of a positive stereotype regarding their propensity to study and to the abnegation that their parents applied to maintain their own achievements. All the same, reports and analyses produced by the principal systems of monitoring on international level agree in concluding that, with a few exceptions, students with an immigrant background suffer, in general, from systematic educational disadvantages. These disadvantages concern the type of course study (their more marked presence in the less "noble" courses of study and in those for underachievers), the number of years of study and the level of instruction reached, scholastic performance, and dropout rates. These phenomena are certainly neither new nor unexpected, but are perceived and interpreted through different lenses with respect to the past. At one time, the weak scholastic performance of children of immigrants was seen as the consequence of the scarce investment that immigrant families had made in the instruction of their children. Today, on

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the contrary, this same weakness is interpreted as a sort of denunciation of the discrimination the children of immigrants are subjected to during the journey towards the fruition of educational opportunities.

To synthesize the factors explaining this systematic disadvantage<sup>38</sup> we can distinguish those pertaining to national scholastic policies, as well as to immigration policies (macro factors); meso factors pertaining to schools and the relationship between students and teachers, and micro factors pertaining to the family and community backgrounds of the students. With reference to the first level, it has been observed that the educational disadvantage, which children of immigrant backgrounds suffer from, varies according to nationality and the organization of the educational systems. In general, the scholastic achievement of immigrant children is better where the differences in economic levels among students are more contained, and above all where investments in childhood education policies favor pre-school education. Early schooling is a strategic move that breaks the cycle of disadvantage and creates the bases for the learning process. Again, scholastic performances among foreign students are better in school systems based on general education, and where the selection process takes place at an advanced age; this gives the children time to recuperate from their initial disadvantages (i.e. insufficient command of the language of the new country).

Regarding the “meso” level, the absence of or the distortion of the image of immigrants and their culture in textbooks and in didactic materials negatively influences the level of self-esteem of foreign students, and the same can be said regarding the scarcity of teachers belonging to ethnic minorities or immigrant communities. Often schools are not equipped to meet the needs of multi-linguistic and multi-cultural student bodies. Anglo-Saxon literature has discussed for many years, for example, how the main reason for underachievement in black youths is the abyss that separates their cultural backgrounds from those that shape teachers and scholastic institutions. Germany, notwithstanding the conspicuous presence of immigrants and their descendants, has for many years continued to reason as a homogenous society; thus, the specific competences of young foreigners (bilingualism, biculturalism) have rarely been appreciated. Diverse, but equally illustrative, is the French experience, as it illustrates the counter-intuitive effects of decisions taken with precisely the intention of sustaining the young *issus de l’immigration*. The concentration of foreign students in the same classes or the same institutions influences their scholastic performance negatively, as it does the performance of their indigenous classmates; favoring the dispersion of immigrant or foreign students in different classes and schools may produce decidedly advantageous effects for the entire scholastic community. In general, the performances of the students with immigrant backgrounds are superior in higher quality schools. The presence of high performance classmates, the presence of teachers with immigrant backgrounds, and assistance and tutorship opportunities which meet the specific needs

of foreign students and incentivize the participation of parents in scholastic life all provide positive influences. Lastly, the attitudes of teachers and their expectations regarding performance by the students with immigrant backgrounds have an extraordinary importance; low expectations almost inevitably produce low results and induce apathy towards the objectives of learning, and growing disaffection towards school. On the other hand, good educational credentials on the part of descendants of immigrant families and of members of certain minorities reduces, but absolutely does not annul, the risk of being victims of discriminatory behavior by employers or of remaining confined to a sort of underclass phenomena which produce a strongly demoralizing effect on the youngest generations. Awareness of discrimination against one's co-nationals may even lead to the forming of an "anti-school" culture, as occurred among young Mexicans raised in American barrios, where one of the key elements in the Chicano and Cholo subcultures lied in the negation of the usefulness of education and in the resulting de-emphasis of scholastic objectives and of achievement; a syndrome efficaciously synthesized by the expression "learning not to learn"<sup>39</sup>.

Finally, on a micro level, it should be observed how, although they share the desire for a better future for their children, not all immigrant families attribute the same importance to the investment in instruction or are able to tap into resources which are sufficient to support a scholastic career. Not all immigrant communities appear equally able to produce "successful models" to be emulated and which can interface adequately with educational institutions. A particularly problematic phenomenon regards the admission to high schools of "spurious" second generations, i.e. those students who came to the new country in a pre-adolescent or adolescent age: in virtue of their specific conditions—which are the outcome of an unfortunate tangle between family strategies and legal requirements—, these youths frequently encounter a series of problematic events. With respect to their pre-immigration status, they are often victims of a retrocession, both in terms of the classes attended and in terms of the quality and prestige of the study programs. The inadequacy of family resources—especially regarding educational backgrounds, level of mastery of the language, the capacity to support children in their learning processes—is glaringly obvious. In any case, difficulties connected with a migratory background may be amply counterbalanced by initiatives of pre-school education, linguistic support (for children and their parents), and other "soft" forms of affirmative action and appreciation of the talents of minority groups.

To conclude, if these questions are analyzed with an unprejudiced eye, they take on a significance that provides fertile ground for a total reorganization of educational systems according to directives that have been clearly defined, yet are still to be put into place. The challenge represented by the vast presence of foreign minors in disadvantaged socio-economic conditions constitutes, therefore, a fundamental opportunity for formal

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national educational systems to give proof of their equity, not to mention the fact that the family immigration experience may also represent a point of strength for foreign students and a support of the elaboration of motivations and expectations which contribute to the positive outcome of individual educational projects. Finally, immigrants’ children can also take advantage of certain characteristics that distinguish them, from bilingualism, to their belonging to a transnational network of material and symbolic exchange, to the solidarity that reinforces minority groups, to the double citizenship that opens them to further possibilities in a world which is becoming more and more globalized.

### **5. Enhancing the Family Role within the Migration Dynamic: a Catholic Perspective**

In this last section, let us focus the attention on how the above posited questions can be considered from a Catholic perspective and how they can confront national and local Churches, challenging their responsibilities but also offering them new opportunities of advancement and development.

1. Considering the reasons which determine contemporary international migration, national and local Churches, in both the sending and the receiving countries, must encourage and feed a critical reflection about the affirmation of a certain “culture of migration”, which not only makes the latter the only solution strategy with respect to various critical situations, but also contributes to institutionalize reprehensible behaviours and practices, often involving the most vulnerable (such as women, teen and children). This kind of consideration must, first of all, be addressed to the authorities of the countries of origin, who not only often close their eyes on the phenomena of smuggling and trafficking, but often, through the rhetoric of the figure of the expatriated worker –described like a national hero who sacrifices himself/herself for the wellbeing of the family and the community of origin– disregard the mandate of ensuring a government attentive to reproducibility of growth and development. Moreover, this reflection must address also the individuals and families involved in migration processes, who are often slaves of patterns of behaviour and yearnings of emulation which make migration a desirable solution regardless of its price and its consequences for the dignity of persons. It is the same principle of the dignity of every person, which should consider the wellbeing of the single migrant as an aim that cannot be subordinated to the improvement of the family’s condition. In a similar way, we have to ask ourselves if the phenomena of divided families that has become a norm in many sending communities is really the only solution to guarantee the survival and the development of the family. Besides claiming less restrictions to the possibility of legal migration, we have to ask ourselves

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**“It is the same principle of the dignity of every person, which should consider the wellbeing of the single migrant as an aim that cannot be subordinated to the improvement of the family’s condition.”**

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if migration is always the best solution, or if, on the contrary, the widespread diffusion of the culture of migration may end up being detrimental to the future of the sending countries and of their new generations, who are often subjugated to the same culture since their early years, and are often forced to make their school choices based upon the migration opportunities as opposed to their individual aptitudes and vocations.

2. Policies regulating human mobility, especially those concerning family and humanitarian migration, represent a way to affirm basic principles and values. In welcoming –and rejecting– requests of entries and protection based, for example, on the denial of the freedom to practice one’s own religion, on the fear of being subject to genital mutilation, or forced into an arranged marriage, on the need to evade the punishment inflicted on those who have a different sexual orientation, on the request of medical treatment for sick or disabled, or, more simply, on the desire to reunite their family (intending it in a more or less extended way), the authorities (and the societies of which these authorities are expression) state the idea of democracy and civil coexistence reiterating the values and principles that do not tolerate violations. In other words, the policies towards migrations –today often subject to security and budgetary pressures– should be an occasion for self-reflection through which a society decides which values it is based upon are and which values deserve to be handed down as a legacy to the younger generations. In this context, the Catholic Church must solicit the adoption of policies and practices coherent with the aim of an integral human development, encouraging new forms of cooperation between sending and receiving countries, and between public authorities and civil society’s organisations with the aim of making the interaction of conscience and intelligence more coherent with the contemporary system of interdependences [see *Caritas in Veritate*, n. 9].

3. By virtue of its constitutional universalistic character, the Catholic Church can, better than anyone else, grasp the limits and aporias of a State-centric system in response to the demands of inclusion and protection coming from the poor and vulnerable. The migrants and their family members witness the unresolved tension between the inclusive logic of universal human rights –which, in its turn, has its roots in the Christian principle of the primacy of the person and its dignity– and the State, exclusive, prerogative to exclude the “undesirable” (the actual selective nature of the fundamental right to family reunification is a case in point). Moreover, their experiences indicate the challenges to meet in order to rethink theories of belonging and justice, going toward the “fiction” of national societies delimited by state fences<sup>40</sup>. This is particularly true whenever children are involved: international law grants them a rich set of rights, not only the rights to be protected and cared, but also the right to maintain a regular

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personal and direct relationship with their parents; however, these formal assertions often have to face nationalistic incrustations.

Another crucial point concerns the regulation not only of the right to emigrate, but also of the right to move: it is sufficient to mention the difficulties that divided families often have to face in order to obtain a visa on the occasion of important events in the life of their family members living abroad (a marriage, a diploma...). This is a crude testimony of a global regulation of human mobility based on the “natural” division between rich and poor nations.

4. Thanks to their transnational links, national and local Churches can offer a special support to families involved in migration processes, starting from the awareness that their lives are inscribed in a transnational space. For example, local Churches on both shores of the migratory process can sustain the implementation of programs and interventions supporting family transnational communication and parental relationship during the migration route, involving not only migrant families, but also the sending and receiving communities. This kind of support would be particularly important for parents and children to promote shared plans for the future, mostly concerning migration, family reunification and family re-emigration in the sending community. As far as family reunification is concerned, it is important to make parents more aware of the difficulties their children have to face once reunited with them in a new context, so as to render them more attentive and supportive with respect to the challenges implied by the process of migration and family reunification. Another crucial mission is the sensitization of national and local authorities in order to make them more supportive towards the needs of reuniting families, for example, encouraging the acknowledgement of a parental leave which would permit mothers and fathers to spend more time with their children after their arrival. Finally, it is important to contrast those contractual solutions –more and more widespread– that, as they imply the migrant worker’s cohabitation with his/her employer (as in the case of home-based elderly care), are constitutionally incoherent with the characters of the “decent work” [as it is defined, for example, by Caritas in Veritate, n. 63].

It is also important to promote opportunities of contact and dialogue between migrant and autochthonous parents, and newly arrived children and autochthonous children, together with opportunities for reinforcing the linguistic competences in both the host country and the mother tongue. Finally, it is of crucial importance to assist migrants and their children who decide to return home (or to send their children back) after having experienced a failure in the process of integration within the host society.

5. “Bringing the poor into our house”; international migration, especially when it produces the sorrowful reality of divided families, forces us to



question the axiom on which the welfare systems are based, constituted by individual and family biographies that develop within the boundaries of the State-nation. The Church, which always “advocates for the poorest”, must solicit our societies to see in the migrant families (and of migrants with left-behind families) a fruitful occasion to re-think welfare regimes according to a project based on the principle of the centrality of the person and aimed at uniting equity ideals with the respect of individual differences. Migrants’ treatment, even in the most advanced democracies, highlights the limitations and flaws of the current regimes of citizenship, as well as the contradictions and the consequences of the principle of conditionality in accessing rights. In this manner, we see the possible evolution (or better involution) of a society that thinks it possible to get along without some of its inhabitants and that risks a return to the past, when the attribution of rights occurred on a census basis.

In the contemporary context of reform of the traditional welfare regimes, citizenship and citizens’ rights are based more and more on the individual working situation, with deep consequences on the process of family formation and fecundity. Migrants, especially those who have experienced the hard costs of adaptation to a new society and have faced various forms of discrimination, risk being transformed into a systematically disadvantaged group. The same is true as far as their children are concerned, especially in the case of those who have migrated during their adolescence and are particularly exposed to the risk of scholastic and professional underachievement. Therefore, they ask for new answers and pose new challenges to the measures to support employability often in need to recover aspects such as self-esteem, physical and mental health, trust and social skills. In other words, migrants and their reunited family members can be seen as a kind of archetype of contemporary man/woman who, living in a “society of uncertainty”, is the involuntary protagonist of biographical and working paths that are reversible and versatile, surrounded by critical moments in which it highlights his vulnerability, but, at the same time, he/she bears a desire for redemption and self-realization in the name of freedom. Moreover, they solicit major attention to the process of socialisation of new generations, starting from the awareness that migrant families, especially if reunited after long periods of separation, often face difficulties in exercising their educative mission and a normative control over their children’s behaviour, thus emphasising the difficulties experienced by other families as well. A particularly crucial step would be supporting families in the more and more tricky “transmission of an ethic of work and of life”, one of most problematic consequences of the advent of the “flexible capitalism”<sup>41</sup>. Actually, within the contemporary society, where the influence of the ascribed status on the professional destinies of new generations is even stronger than before, migrant offspring risk becoming a metaphor of the difficulty of trans-generational transmission of the sense of work as a vocation. Besides

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**“Migrants, especially those who have experienced the hard costs of adaptation to a new society and have faced various forms of discrimination, risk being transformed into a systematically disadvantaged group.”**

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this, if in some cases, circular migration can represent an added chance for high status migrant children, then in other cases it can have a very negative influence on school careers. For this reason, it is advisable to promote transnational collaboration between educational institutions to facilitate children's integration or re-integration in the different school systems. Finally, the basic aim would be to empower migrant families, valuing their autonomy and their potential contributing capacity.

Moreover, immigration represents an opportunity to overcome the limitations of a strictly nationalistic conception of citizenship: some experiences conceived and implemented at a local level –provoked especially by the presence of migrants worried about the condition of their left-behind families– prefigure ways to expand the circle of the included people, in order to ensure the effective enforceability of the rights and practices of solidarity beyond transnational limits. In recent years, attention has been paid in particular to the initiatives of “transnational welfare”, created due to the activism of civil society and immigrant associations, which, free from regulatory and organizational constraints that block the initiative of public administrations, promote projects capable of going beyond the borders of nations by responding to the needs of international migrants and their families; the focal point is the concept of global solidarity, which has become the essential principle of strategies and actions whose benefits are not always immediately visible in the context of planning<sup>42</sup>. In this context, bilateral cooperation, which so far has been seen primarily as a tool used to contrast migratory pressure and to redistribute the burden of protection, now takes on a more promising and virtuous aspect. In addition, in the context of the “trans-nationalisation” of the practices of inclusion and social protection, the Church, due to her widespread presence across the territories, can play a leading role in the wake of some consolidated experiences of collaboration between the Churches of departure and arrival.

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**“In the context of the “trans-nationalisation” of the practices of inclusion and social protection, the Church, due to her widespread presence across the territories, can play a leading role in the wake of some consolidated experiences of collaboration between the Churches of departure and arrival.”**

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6. Finally, for our national and local Churches, the presence of migrant families represents a prophetic opportunity to see Christ who “pitches His tent among us” and who “knocks at our door”, offering new comers the possibility «to know of Christ and the transforming power of his grace in these situations which, in themselves, are very frequently desperate»<sup>43</sup>.

Moreover, the presence of Christian migrant families calls faith and ecclesial experience to be reconsidered and provides local Churches the opportunity to assess their catholicity and search for their true face (i.e. her universal character), to experience that ethnic and cultural pluralism which should become a structural dimension of the Church, «to embed herself into the immense variety of the human condition in all its legitimate manifestations»<sup>44</sup>, to not just welcome but to be in communion with the various ethnic groups, to be brought to the deepening of their faith, and to acquire a mentality more universal and less locally bound<sup>45</sup>.

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**“When asking to welcome refugees for religious motives, our Churches have an extraordinary opportunity and an extraordinary responsibility to play.”**

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Finally, when asking to welcome refugees for religious motives, our Churches have an extraordinary opportunity and an extraordinary responsibility to play. First, they have to demonstrate a special effort, for example by requiring programs and protection devices specifically reserved to their care, and by sensitizing local, national and supranational authorities to these issues. At the same time, the arrival of these Christian families brings an unexpected liveliness to the Western Churches – that have, over time, seen a reduction in their ability to attract faithful–, urges us to share the same faith with Christians who come from other countries and other continents, raises the hidden evangelical possibilities, and opens spaces for the creation of a new humanity announced in the paschal mystery: a humanity for which every foreign land is home and every home is a foreign land<sup>46</sup>; a humanity which forms only one *family*.

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**“When asking to welcome refugees for religious motives, our Churches have an extraordinary opportunity and an extraordinary responsibility to play.”**

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# *THE COST OF FAMILY BREAKDOWN*

A Caritas in Veritate Foundation Report<sup>1</sup> by

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Family relationships are changing in both structure and stability, although with significant variation between countries. The implications of this in terms of outcomes for both children and adults, as well as the wider costs to society, are the subject of considerable debate. The costs of breakdown - both emotional and financial - are, of course, most immediately and acutely felt by those directly affected, but also spread more widely. The positive contribution of families is essential if policy goals in many areas are to be achieved, whilst the costs of weaknesses in family relationships add to the pressures on public finances. Any government facing both public expectations of improved outcomes and challenging fiscal constraints cannot afford to disregard the implications of changing family relationships.

This paper draws on the experience of the Relationships Foundation<sup>1</sup>, a UK registered charity, which looks at how to create an environment that sustains the relationships that are essential for both individual and community wellbeing. Since 2009 it has run a programme on family policy including assessments of the cost of family breakdown<sup>2</sup>, a comparison of pressures on families across European countries<sup>3</sup>, and methodologies for family proofing policy<sup>4</sup>. In reflecting on the costs of family breakdown this paper considers:

- What is meant by family breakdown and its extent
- Why assessing the costs of breakdown is important
- How the costs might be assessed.

The paper draws only on the experience of the UK but we hope that this will offer valuable lessons to other jurisdictions.

## *9 Introduction*

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**“Any government facing both public expectations of improved outcomes and challenging fiscal constraints cannot afford to disregard the implications of changing family relationships..”**

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## 1. What do we mean by relationship breakdown and how extensive is it?

To assess the impact or consequences of a change requires some definition of that change. With regard to family relationships, changes in the experienced quality of the relationship, the stability of relationships, their legal structure, or changes in household composition may all be of interest. Policymakers may be concerned with couple relationships, parenting relationships, or the health and strength of wider family networks and the social support they provide. The continuity and quality of parental relationships, including those after the breakdown of a couple relationship may also be of interest, as may the breakdown of parenting relationships which result in a child being taken into care or support to the family being required. For those single parents where no stable couple relationship has ever formed, relationship break down may be interpreted as the non-formation of the relationship.

For some of these changes there is good data. Marriages and divorces, for example, are both legally registered and annual official data released. Where levels of cohabitation have increased, however, the start and end of couple relationships may not be clearly determined (nor legally registered) and it can be harder to track the consequences of the break-up of those relationships. Within legally registered relationships such as marriage or civil partnerships the timing of the 'breakdown of the relationship' in terms of its relationship quality, physical separation or legal dissolution will be different. Relationships may remain legally intact, but display both the symptoms and costs of a broken relationship. So, for example, domestic violence could be regarded as an aspect of a 'broken' relationship even if the relationship remains legally intact.

The definition of 'family' may also influence the ways in which breakdown is understood. The UK Office for National Statistics, for example, define family for census purposes as:

*"a group of people who are either: a married, same-sex civil partnership, or cohabiting couple, with or without child(ren); a lone parent with child(ren); a married, same-sex civil partnership, or cohabiting couple with grandchild(ren) but with no children present from the intervening generation; or a single grandparent with grandchild(ren) but no children present from the intervening generation."*<sup>5</sup>

The Vanier Institute of the Family in Canada is an example of a more functional (rather than structural) definition:

*"... any combination of two or more persons who are bound together over time by ties of mutual consent, birth and/or adoption or placement and*

*who, together, assume responsibilities for variant combinations of some of the following: physical maintenance and care of group members; addition of new members through procreation or adoption; socialisation of children; social control of members; production, consumption, distribution of goods and services; and affective nurturance – love.*<sup>6</sup>

A definition that focuses on functions then allows relationships breakdown to be considered in terms of impaired capacity to fulfil those functions, rather than in terms of changes in household composition or legal status of relationship. Thus, for example, poor parenting relationships might be considered as an aspect of broken relationships as opposed to a narrower focus on couple relationships.

We suggest that it is helpful to understand the benefits of healthy relationships and the costs of broken relationships in the broadest sense. Doing so should not be taken as assuming any particular causal mechanisms for those consequences (for example poverty or the legal status of the relationship). Within this broader narrative it is then possible, at least in some cases, to assess the costs of specific changes in more detail in the context of developing policy responses to those changes.

### *Changing family relationships in the UK*

Family relationships have always been subject to change including, for example, cultural changes in the relationships between men and women, or adults and children; socio-economic changes in patterns of employment or welfare policies; legal changes with regard to marriage and divorce; or technological changes affecting life expectancy, birth control or household tasks. Their relevance to this debate depends on the ways in which these changes affect the relationship between individuals, households and the state, and the outcomes of family functioning including, for example, mutual care and support or the healthy maturation of children.

Changes in family structure and household composition are easier to track than changes in the nature or quality of relationships such as the attachment of early years children, parenting styles or the nature of cohabiting couple relationships. The most notable structural changes are rises in cohabitation, lone parenthood, children born outside marriage, and single person households. There are 26.4 million households in the UK, 29% of which consist of only one person. Of the 18.2 million families, 12.2 million consist of a married couple with or without children. Lone parent families have increased by 22% since 1996 with the 1.9 million lone parents representing 24.5% of all families with children. In 2013, there were 2.8 million cohabiting couple families in the UK, representing 15.7% of all families and 18.9% of families headed by a couple. The proportion of cohabiting couples has doubled since 1996.<sup>7</sup>

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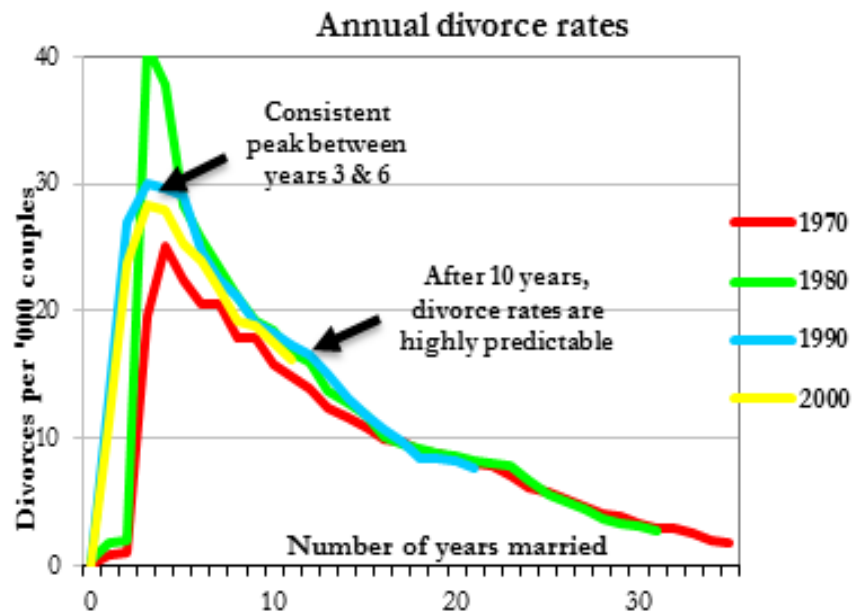
**“Changes in family structure and household composition are easier to track than changes in the nature or quality of relationships such as the attachment of early years children, parenting styles or the nature of cohabiting couple relationships.”**

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### *Marriage and divorce*<sup>8</sup>

The marriage rate (and the annual number of marriages) has declined significantly from its 1970 peak despite a small uptick in the last year. The average age at first marriage is now 30.9 for men and 29.1 for women, eight years older than it was in 1970 when marriage peaked and couples married at 23.2 and 21.8 respectively. Two in five marriages are now likely to end in divorce. Divorce rates have fallen from their 1993 peak with almost all the change taking place in the early years of marriage. The greatest risk of divorce continues to be in years 3-6 of marriage.

One of the most notable changes has been the decline in divorce rates during the early years of marriage. Couples who married in the late 1980s and early 1990s had the highest rates of divorce during their first five years of marriage: amongst these couples, 10.6% of couples divorced in the first five years. For couples who married in 2007, only 6.9% of couples divorced in these early years.



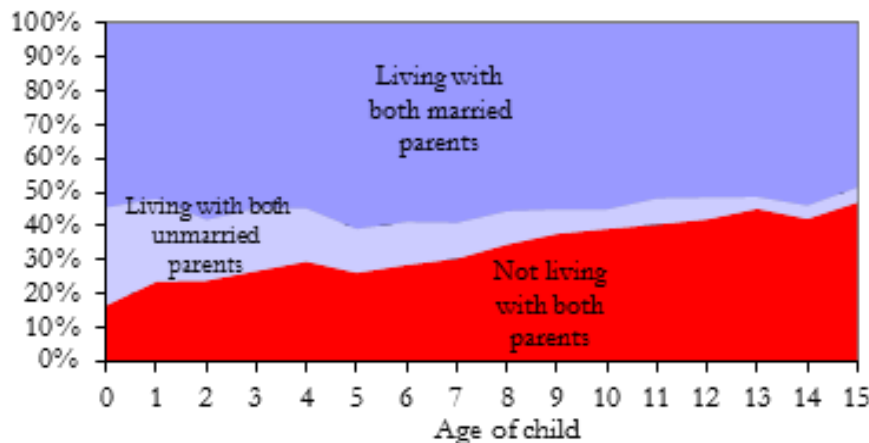
The best current longitudinal survey of what happens to parents and children comes from the Millennium Cohort Study, a survey of 18,000 mothers (initially) with children born in the years 2000 and 2001. This survey shows how married parents are far less likely to split up than 'cohabiting' or 'closely involved' parents during the early years. Over the first seven years, for example, 13% of married parents split up compared to 30% of 'cohabiting' parents and 37% of all parents who are unmarried couples.

The Understanding Society survey (a large national panel survey) shows that in 2010-11, the proportion of children not living with both natural parents rose from 15% amongst newborns to 45% amongst teenagers aged



13-15. Since relatively little family breakdown occurs after couples have been together for 15-20 years, the total figure for family breakdown in the UK today is therefore somewhere slightly above 45%.

Family stability amongst children  
(Source: Understanding Society 2010-11)



## 2. Why costs are (or should be) measured

The costs of the breakdown of relationships may be seen in terms of opportunity, emotional or psychological costs, as well as financial costs to both the individuals directly involved and to wider society. Future opportunities may be restricted through the impact on the development of children and their life chances or through changes in employment (for example having to restrict working hours on becoming a sole carer for children). The pain associated with the breakdown of a relationship can have long-term scars, affecting both happiness and the future formation and success of relationships. Individuals may end up worse off financially, due to the additional costs of creating two households, and reduced income for at least one partner. This paper looks only at the wider financial costs to society, but this is not an indication that other costs are not believed to be significant.

There are a number of reasons for attempting to assess the costs of family breakdown. Perhaps most importantly, it is a vital element in any case for investing in prevention, in prioritising one policy option over another, or in highlighting the consequences of cultural changes and informing debate about wellbeing might best be promoted. More broadly, in a context of significant pressures on public spending and tight fiscal constraints, awareness of the financial costs of breakdown informs debate about the social and economic sustainability of current policy.

Measures to support families, or avoid undermining them, will often have costs. Providing access to relationships education and counselling, support

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“The costs of the breakdown of relationships may be seen in terms of opportunity, emotional or psychological costs, as well as financial costs to both the individuals directly involved and to wider society”.

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“Understanding the costs of relationships breakdown, and the potential for government action to influence the rate of breakdown, is essential in demonstrating the benefits of investing in that support.”

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for family finances through the tax or welfare system, help with care responsibilities, family support workers to work with troubled families, maternity and paternity leave provisions, or restrictions on working long or unsocial hours may all have some costs – directly on government, or on business through greater regulatory demands. Understanding the costs of relationships breakdown, and the potential for government action to influence the rate of breakdown, is therefore essential in demonstrating the benefits of investing in that support<sup>9</sup>. This becomes even more important when those providing services are paid by results, often linked to social investment funds, where the payment for achieving specific outcomes needs to be linked to the costs to government if that outcome is not achieved. So, for example, funding for action to reduce the numbers of children being taken into care, such as Multi Systemic Therapy with families, is informed by assessments of the future costs of that care<sup>10</sup>.

Another UK example is the evaluation of the cost effectiveness of government funding for relationships support to couples.<sup>11</sup> The UK government had committed £30m of funding over four years to a number of organisations providing support to couple relationships.<sup>12</sup> The Department for Education (which was responsible for this funding stream) commissioned an evaluation of the effectiveness of the interventions. Using our assessment of the cost of breakdown converted into a per-couple per-year cost, they calculated an average benefit of £11.50 for every pound invested in relationships support.

### *History of measurement*

Despite considerable rhetoric about family friendly policy the UK government does not have any official figures on the cost of relationship breakdown, they do not inform budget projections, and with no clear responsibility for any over-arching family policy there is no effective mechanism to ensure coherence of family policy across government.

A government minister noted in a House of Lords debate when asked about the costs of breakdown:

*“My Lords, I am unable to give an official figure. A number of organisations have produced estimates—for example, the Relationships Foundation, at £45 billion-odd—but there is no consensus. The social security spend on lone parents and collecting child maintenance is just under £9 billion, but we must acknowledge that there are wider societal costs.”*<sup>13</sup>

In 1999 Sir Graham Hart published his report Funding for Marriage Support for the Lord Chancellor’s Department.<sup>14</sup> The report noted that:

*“Marital breakdown inflicts enormous damage on many of the people involved – not only the couples, but their children, and others – and on society. In 1994 the costs of family breakdown to the public purse were estimated at between £3.7bn and £4.4bn a year ... It is likely that today public spending*

*caused by family breakdown is running at £5bn a year. There are also indirect costs, such as those arising from damage to children's education, from subsequent criminal behaviour and from the impact of breakdown on the use of the housing stock. Nor is it simply a question of financial costs. The human misery resulting from marital conflict and breakdown is immense.*"<sup>15</sup>

Any reworking of such a calculation today would need to take into account the fact that the majority of relationships breakdown no longer takes place in the context of married relationships.

The charity Family Matters produced a report for the Lords and Commons Family and Child Protection Group in 2000 which estimated the direct costs of family breakdown at £15 billion. This informed the Fractured Families report by the Centre for Social Justice which updated these figures to £22 billion.<sup>16</sup>

In 2009 OnePlusOne produced a report When Couples Part which examined the consequences of relationship breakdown, based on an extensive literature review.<sup>17</sup> This did not attempt to calculate the costs of breakdown, but proposed the template on the following page.

In the same year Relationships Foundation produced its first assessment of the costs of relationship breakdown, suggesting a total costs of £37 billion (now updated to £46 billion).<sup>18</sup> This was set out in a two part document, setting out both the benefits of strong, healthy family relationships and the costs of their failure. This was part of a series of reports that argued for a broader account of national progress that included greater recognition of the contribution of relationships to wellbeing,<sup>19</sup> a more detailed examination of the ways in which policy in many areas both depends on and influences family relationships,<sup>20</sup> and then the need to put the assessment of and support for relationships right at the heart of the policy making process.<sup>21</sup> Given that policy debate remains heavily skewed towards economic concerns, setting out the fiscal implications of failing to support family relationships effectively was a necessary and important element of this debate.

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**"Any reworking of such a calculation today would need to take into account the fact that the majority of relationships breakdown no longer takes place in the context of married relationships."**

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### 3. An approach to measurement

**T**he costs and consequences of the breakdown of relationships, however defined, are both social and economic, and are experienced by those directly involved in the relationship, as well as family, friends, employers and society as a whole. Our approach focused on the economic costs to society and built on the approaches adopted in previous attempts at measurement. This should not be seen as implying that the personal pain and costs are less significant, but simply a more narrowly focused attempt to inform an aspect of policymaking. The first step was to identify the major areas of potential impact: tax and benefits, housing, health and social care, criminal and civil justice, and education.

	Woman's cost <sup>17</sup>	Man's costs	Other family members' costs	Costs to public purse	Costs to wider society
<b>Immediate costs (first year)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of income</li> <li>• Additional expenditure due to separate household</li> <li>• Reduction in opportunity to take paid employment</li> <li>• Cost of formal childcare</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional expenditure due to separate household</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing financial and in-kind support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social security and housing benefits costs for new households</li> <li>• Cost of additional use of health services by the partners</li> <li>• Cost of providing additional social housing units</li> <li>• Lower tax receipts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Higher rents and house prices due to extra pressure on housing</li> </ul>
<b>Medium-term costs (up to 10-15 years)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continued loss of income, reinforced by impact of worklessness on future earnings</li> <li>• Higher household expenditure (mitigated by some repartnering)</li> <li>• Poorer health</li> <li>• Higher mortality</li> <li>• Cost of formal childcare</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional expenditure due to separate household</li> <li>• Poorer health</li> <li>• Higher mortality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Less access to financial and other support as parents age</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social security and housing benefit costs for extra households</li> <li>• Incapacity benefit costs for differential health</li> <li>• Cost of additional use of health services by the partners</li> <li>• Cost of substance misuse services</li> <li>• Lower tax receipts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Higher rents and house prices due to extra pressure on housing</li> </ul>
<b>Longer-term costs (more than 15 years)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continued loss of income, reinforced by impact of worklessness on future earnings</li> <li>• Higher household expenditure (mitigated by some repartnering)</li> <li>• Poorer health</li> <li>• Higher mortality</li> <li>• Cost of formal childcare</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional expenditure due to separate household</li> <li>• Poorer health</li> <li>• Higher mortality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Less access to financial and other support as parents age</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social security and housing benefit costs for extra households</li> <li>• Incapacity benefit costs for differential health</li> <li>• Cost of additional use of health services by the partners</li> <li>• Cost of substance misuse services</li> <li>• Lower tax receipts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Higher rents and house prices due to extra pressure on housing</li> </ul>

The tax and benefits system is significant because, after the breakup of a relationship, at least one party ends up financially worse off and more likely to need support. Forming two households increases the costs,<sup>22</sup> whilst it is hard for one person to take on all the responsibilities of work and care. The amounts paid in benefits are easily identified from official figures and thus provide a starting point for calculation, but adjustments are needed to reflect the fact that some people whose relationships break down would have been on very low incomes and in need of financial assistance anyway.

Many of the issues relating to financial assistance for housing costs are similar to tax and benefits – those whose relationships break down are more likely to need assistance. Just as the tax and benefit costs of relationship breakdown will vary according to different countries' welfare policies (if they are less generous, the cost of breakdown may appear lower), so too the housing costs will be influenced by national housing markets and levels of assistance provided. For countries such as the UK whose housing costs are relatively high, the cost of breakdown will appear greater.

With regard to health, the evidence on the way in which relationships contribute to improved health outcomes is very strong, but costing this contribution is more problematic (as, indeed, are attempts to calculate the health costs of smoking or alcohol). Where the resources to make such calculations are limited, it may not be possible or practical to do much more than suggest a plausible estimate of the proportion of total expenditure that may be a consequence of relationship breakdown. The publication of such estimates can then invite comment, debate or refinement, with the plausibility of any estimates justified by reference to such data as may be available on, for example, differential usage of services or morbidity rates, or the quoted costs of other factors impacting on health.

Similar issues apply in estimating the costs of relationship breakdown to the justice system or education. While different outcomes for children of intact and broken relationships are readily identified, there is significant debate over the extent to which such differences can be linked to family relationships, or are better seen as consequences of underlying factors which may affect both the parental relationship and child outcomes. People whose relationships breakdown are more likely to have few educational qualifications, to form couple relationships at a young age and to be on low incomes. Here again, the practical requirements of simplicity may require estimates of the percentage of total costs, the plausibility of which are justified by evidence on different outcomes and research on causal mechanisms.

Each of these areas represent significant debates in their own right. What follows is not a review of all the available research and literature. Rather it sets out as a case study the approach we adopted as a small organisation with limited resources to stimulate more serious public debate on the implications and significance of broken relationships. It covers

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**“Our approach focused on the economic costs to society and built on the approaches adopted in previous attempts at measurement.”**

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the main areas of costs identified in our original assessment, but does not discuss all of the smaller elements.

### *Health*

The evidence on the impact of relationships on health is well established. For example, a meta-analytic review carried out in 2010 of 148 research studies – many of which statistically adjusted for standard risk factors such as alcohol misuse and cardio-vascular disease – found that people with stronger social relationships are 50 per cent more likely to survive than those whose social relationships are weaker.<sup>23</sup> Indeed, the analysis concluded the influence of social relationships on the risk of death is greater than that of physical inactivity and obesity and comparable with well-established risk factors for mortality such as smoking and alcohol.

In discussing the implications of these findings for public health, the Tavistock Centre for Couple Relationships note that:

*“These findings, the authors stress, are likely to be an underestimate of the true impact of stronger social relationships on longevity, in part due to the fact that most measures of social relations did not take into account the quality of the social relationships, thereby assuming that all relationships are positive. However, research suggests this is not the case, with negative social relationships linked to greater risk of mortality.”*<sup>24</sup>

This immediately gives a benchmark comparator for costs. The House of Commons Health Select Committee estimated that the total annual cost of obesity and overweight for England in 2002 was nearly £7 billion.<sup>25</sup> This total includes direct costs of treatment, the cost of dependence on state benefits (arising from the impact of obesity on employment), and indirect costs such as loss of earnings and reduced productivity. The Committee estimated that the direct healthcare costs for the treatment of obesity alone and its consequences were between £991 million and £1,124 million in 2002, equating to 2.3–2.6% of NHS expenditure (2001/2002). The costs to society were estimated to have increased to £16 billion by 2007, and the potential costs of a predicted growth in obesity were estimated by a government Foresight report to increase dramatically to nearly £50 billion by 2050.<sup>26</sup>

The mechanisms by which relationships affect health are increasingly well understood. One route is through the way in which relationships either buffer or increase the effects of stress on the immune system. Studies have indicated that relationship distress and depression are linked – in fact it is estimated that 60% of those with depression attribute relationship problems as the main cause for their illness.<sup>27</sup> Relationships also influence healthy or unhealthy behaviour including willingness to seek medical help, alcohol (and other drug) abuse, or sexual health. One study, for example, demonstrated a greater likelihood of people abusing alcohol one year after



scoring highly on a rating of marital dissatisfaction, leading the authors of the study to observe that “if marital dissatisfaction is related to the course of alcohol use disorders, then reducing marital dissatisfaction should reduce the likelihood of onset or recurrence of alcohol use disorders”.<sup>28</sup>

Whilst health economists could seek to calculate accurate assessments of the health costs of broken relationships (and we believe that any government Health Department should have an informed assessment of how changes in family relationships might influence demand for services and costs of provision), we took a simple approach to offering plausible indicative estimate as a basis for debate. A starting point was standardised patient consulting ratios by legal marital status and sex.<sup>29</sup> This, alongside a number of other (now rather dated) studies indicated higher uses of health services by divorced men and women.<sup>30</sup> In the light of changes in family relationships, including the rise of cohabitation, marital status is now a less useful indicator. We took a conservative estimate of 10-15% of visits to general practitioners being related to family breakdown, but further and more recent research might allow more accurate assessment. While visits to the doctor in the UK are free, prescriptions are charged for with exemptions for certain groups including those on low income. The cost of prescriptions is a significant component in overall NHS costs and we, again, attributed 15% of this to relationship breakdown in the light of the propensity for greater use of health services and because lone parents were less likely to pay for prescriptions.

Other costs to the NHS including hospital treatment, mental health services and Accident and Emergency were again based on rough allocations, as well as looking at the reported costs of different pressures on services such as alcohol misuse or sexually transmitted infections. Disentangling the complex inter-related web of factors is, of course, not straightforward. Taking mental health as an example, there are again a range of studies indicating disproportionate demand for these services. Yet the experience of lone parenthood, for example, can vary: where there is greater financial support, access to childcare and employment, housing and other forms of support the incidence of health-related problems may be reduced. The breakdown of a relationship may increase the demand for support in some areas, but the effective provision of that support may reduce other costs where the negative impacts of breakdown are being effectively ameliorated.

For some issues, such as the costs of domestic violence to the NHS, more precise estimates were available. A 2001 report for the Government Women and Equality Unit estimated the cost to the NHS of physical injuries from domestic violence as £1.2 billion. There are, of course, non-physical impacts of domestic violence which bring other costs. Walby estimated the total cost to society (not just health) as £22.9 billion (three quarters of which is a monetary value placed on human and emotional costs).<sup>31</sup> A 2009<sup>32</sup> update suggested that these costs had fallen due to lower prevalence

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**“In the light of changes in family relationships, including the rise of cohabitation, marital status is now a less useful indicator.”**

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of domestic violence. Nevertheless the Early Intervention Foundation still concluded that:

*“Based on existing estimates of prevalence, the overall costs to the public purse of domestic violence remain substantial. If one adds to this the wider long-term impact on mental health and intergenerational effects on child development, not captured in these estimates, there is an overwhelming argument for a preventative approach.”*<sup>33</sup>

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### *Social services and social care*

Social services and care in the UK have different institutional mechanisms of funding and provision in the UK and remain poorly integrated with health care. The principal areas of cost that we considered were the costs of taking children into care as a result of the breakdown of relationships, the costs of social workers supporting families, and the provision of social care to older people or those with disabilities.

In the year ending 31 March 2013, a total of 68,110 children were looked after by local authorities in England, a rate of 60 per 10,000 children under 18 years. The absolute number of children looked after has increased by 12% since 2009 (60,900) and the rate per 10,000 children under 18 has increased from 54 in 2009 to 60 in 2013.<sup>34</sup> The average annual cost of this is £36,524 per looked after child. The main reason for a child being taken into care is abuse or neglect, or other aspects of family dysfunction. Poverty, drug abuse, homelessness and mental health problems can all be part of the dangerous cocktail of circumstances that lie behind ‘troubled families’. Many of these factors may have inter-generational roots, with parents’ childhood experience of abuse or neglect disfiguring their adult relationships.

It can be debated how much of this cost of care should be attributed to family breakdown. Our initial assessment of a £2.04 billion cost included 98% of children in care, picking up on a figure quoted in a House of Lords debate.<sup>35</sup> This fits with a broad definition of relationship breakdown, but clearly cannot be regarded as the only factor behind children being taken into care.

Social services work with families who need support, as well as in providing social care to older people (social care still being mostly institutionally separate from health care in the UK). The total social services budget for children and families when we made our initial assessment was £6 billion. Leaving aside the amount spent on children in care (counted above) we took two thirds of the remainder as the cost of breakdown (giving a cost of £2.95 billion).

The value of care for older people provided by families is estimated to be £119 billion a year. The current generation of ‘baby-boomers’ will enter into old age with a much greater history of relationship breakdown than previous generations and it is not yet clear to what extent that will affect

the willingness or ability of family members to provide care. Earlier studies have suggested that children of divorced parents are less willing to let a sick or aging father live with them.<sup>36</sup> We took 10% of the £10 billion for services for older people to give a £1 billion cost of breakdown. As with other areas, more detailed research might allow a more nuanced estimate. The changing contribution of family carers may not, for example, lead to higher state spending but rather to more loneliness and lower wellbeing. The Campaign to End Loneliness, for example have found that over one million older people in the UK describe themselves as ‘always’ or ‘often’ feeling lonely.<sup>37</sup>

### *Welfare, tax and benefits*

When relationships break down and families separate demands for welfare support tend to increase. Few of those involved in divorce or separation become financially better off as a result. Even if the total income remains the same it will normally be more expensive to run two households than one. Women are still more likely to have custody of children, meaning they bear most of the former household costs, whilst their ability to earn is reduced by their care responsibilities. This is particularly the case in countries such as the UK with high child care costs.

Calculation of this aspect of the costs of family breakdown is complicated by a number of factors including changes in welfare policy, employment trends (and, in this context, particularly female employment rates), and the impact of wider policy measures on employment and incomes. The ‘cost’ of breakdown in this context is thus partly an indication of how much a society is willing to pay. Recent welfare reforms in the UK, for example, such as a cap on the total amount of benefits payable to a family, could reduce the total cost without any change in the numbers of relationships breaking down or the wider consequences of this. Support that is available for all families, such as free or subsidised childcare that aids maternal employment, could reduce welfare spending if it succeeds in increasing the employment rate, and would not show up as a cost of breakdown.

One illustration of this problem is the analysis by Jill Kirby of the changes that occur when a couple on average pay separate.<sup>38</sup> She provided an example where an intact couple’s net contribution (the extent to which the tax they pay is greater than the benefits they receive) is £5,156 but on separation the net cost (the amount that benefits exceed tax paid) is £7,451. Such calculations inevitably depend on a range of assumptions, with the employment rate of lone parents being one of the most significant. Between 1996 and 2013 this increased by 16%.<sup>39</sup>

Different countries have very different welfare systems, as well as different ways of reporting data, so approaches to assessing this aspect of the cost of breakdown will necessarily vary. We therefore set out our initial approach (developed prior to the major welfare reforms currently underway in the

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UK) as an illustration of how it might be done.

Tax credits were introduced in the UK as a form of means tested social security benefit. It included a Child Tax Credit for those responsible for at least one child, and a Working Tax Credit for those in work but on low incomes. A commitment by the then Labour government to tackle child poverty (defined as living in households with income less than 60% of median income) led to a significant increase in the payment of such benefits.

Government figures disclose the total amount paid in tax credits (B) and the cost of administering these payments (A). It is also possible to identify the total number of families (F), and the number of families comprising a single adult with children (L) who receive these benefits. Given that a quarter of couple families were on benefits, we assumed that a quarter of lone parent families would be on benefits even if they were in a couple relationship. This, then, allows a basic cost calculation which in our initial report was £5.05 billion:

$$\text{Tax credit cost} = (A + B) \times 0.75L/6$$

Lone parents, however, receive more child contingent support than couple families, and are more likely to be out of work or in need of in-work financial assistance. Three times as many lone parents were found to receive the maximum out-of-work award as couples even though there were three times as many couples on tax credits as lone parents. The childcare element of tax credits was paid to 161,700 couple families and 287,000 lone parents. We therefore made what we believe to be a conservative estimates that lone parents received 25% more than their basic pro-rata share so adjusted the cost to £6.31 billion. There are specific benefits available to lone parents with young children totalling £4.34 billion. This took the total tax and benefit costs in our initial calculation to £10.65 billion.

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### *Housing*

The cost of housing in the UK is amongst the most expensive in Europe. Housing benefit provides assistance with paying rent, whilst Council Tax benefit provided assistance with this property related tax paid to local government. The Department for Work and Pensions published *Income-related Benefits Estimates of Take-up*<sup>40</sup> provides figures for both the total cost of these benefits and the numbers of lone parents claiming them. The total claimed by lone parents was £4.14 billion. However, as with other benefits it is reasonable to assume that some people whose relationships breakdown would need financial assistance anyway. An earlier research report for DWP had shown that 44% of lone parents received Housing Benefit compared to 5% of couples<sup>41</sup>, whilst 55% of lone parents received Council Tax Benefit compared to 7% of couples. We reduced the total amount of housing related benefits to lone parents by 10% to reflect the amount that would still be claimed if they were in a couple relationship to give a cost of £3.68 billion.

### *Education*

The impact of families on the healthy maturation of children affects schools and the costs of education in many ways. In the UK concerns have been raised about the numbers of children failing to learn basic skills before starting school (eg language, toilet training, use of cutlery), disruptive behaviour in school, poor educational outcomes, dropping out of tertiary education, or the rise in the numbers of young people ‘not in education, employment or training’.

The costs incurred may include the additional time demands placed on teachers, the need for additional support to those with identified Special Educational Needs, the costs of managing exclusions from school, vandalism to school property, stress related leave of absence (which can also be due to the teachers’ own family relationships), the demands for free school meals for low income parents, or the provision of maintenance allowances for students.

Individual costings for each of these areas were not readily available so we simply estimated a cost of 4% of the education budget, which meant these consequences of breakdown contributed £3.12 billion to our original estimate. Given our aim of raising awareness about the costs of breakdown, and stimulating debate, we felt that such estimates, provided they are transparently made, are reasonable if they invite others to contribute to the development of more robust estimates.

### *Civil and Criminal Justice*

The Centre for Social Justice’s Fractured Families report found that that 70% of young offenders are from single parent families. Half the under 18s in prison have a history of being in care or involvement in their families by social services. A quarter of all prisoners were taken into care as a child. Offending and anti-social behaviour have many causal roots, and disentangling the role of family is far from straightforward. Recent years have seen growing awareness of the importance of early years development on affect regulation, cognitive development and subsequent offending behaviour.

We took the simple approach of attributing a quarter of all police, prison and court costs to family breakdown, making a total of £5.64 billion. Given that the costs of domestic violence alone to the criminal justice system were estimated at around £1 billion in 2001, this does not seem an unreasonable figure.

### **Conclusion**

**T**his working paper has looked at how the financial costs of breakdown in family relationships might be calculated without reference to the values or social teaching that guide responses to this issue.

Given the scale of the consequences for both the families affected and for society as a whole, however, it is important to link the narrower issue of costs back to a wider debate.

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**“Given the scale of the consequences for both the families affected and for society as a whole, however, it is important to link the narrower issue of costs back to a wider debate.”**

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Political debate is, properly, infused with values shaping views about desired goals and how they may most appropriately be pursued. Yet the application of any value can be hotly contested. Fairness, for example, may mean that children should not be left to bear the consequences of their parents’ relationship choices or mistakes, or indeed the factors that may have put their parents’ relationships under unsustainable pressure. For others, fairness may mean not picking up the tab for the consequences of other peoples choices and actions. Individual liberties and responsibilities may be balanced in different ways. The quality of relationships may be judged by reference to the satisfaction of the participants, the outcomes (such as the development and life chances of children), or with reference to ethical norms (for example commitment and faithfulness).

While there will always be points at which people disagree about the values that should inform the conduct of relationships and public policy, the scope for consensus should not be underestimated. The breakdown of relationships inescapably involves pain and costs, not least for those most directly affected. In some cases the ending of a relationship is unavoidable, or the best available option. One party may have little or no choice in the matter. Yet the total amount of relationships breakdown is changeable. Relationships education works. Relationships are more stable where people make a clear decision about being a couple with a future, rather than sliding into a relationship.<sup>42</sup> Relationships can be supported, or put under unsustainable pressure – for example through debt, unemployment, long working hours, housing pressures or caring responsibilities.

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**“Relationships are more stable where people make a clear decision about being a couple with a future, rather than sliding into a relationship.”**

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Given the impact of the breakdown of relationships on children, parents and society as a whole it makes sense to start with a commitment to build a more supportive environment for relationships, and to enable access to high quality relationships education and support, particularly in the most vulnerable early years of relationships. In 2012, three out of four debt advice clients in a relationship said their debt had negatively affected the relationship, causing it to end entirely for one quarter of them.<sup>43</sup> Many young people admit to having moved in with their partner sooner than they would otherwise have done due to high housing costs, and, conversely, couples delay marriage (to afford the expensive wedding they dream of) and delay having children due to the lack of a suitable home in which to raise them. In a survey of family carers, 75% said that it was hard to maintain relationships and social networks because of the impact of caring.<sup>45</sup> These examples illustrate the potential for policy in many areas to influence family relationships.

Nor need supporting greater stability in relationships be construed as an ethical judgement – it can also be simply about championing people’s



dreams. Surveys consistently show that most young people in the UK want to get married at some point. People hope that their relationships last; that their children will not experience the break up of their parents' relationship. Policy action to support relationships, and reduce the cost of breakdown, will thus often be about helping people to achieve their goals.

Yet the economic case is also strong. With governments in many countries facing fiscal constraints, and thus demands to reduce spending, reducing the costs of breakdown becomes increasingly important. It is no longer feasible simply to pursue growth, or redistributive approaches to poverty reduction, and then pick up the pieces of family life. Progress in many areas – improved educational outcomes, better health, better care for older people, reduced welfare dependency, or improved community safety depend upon a strong positive contribution from families. There are many ways in which families can be supported: through practical assistance and a more supportive environment. Failure to do so is not sustainable.

One response to this in the UK has been the introduction in October 2014 of a 'Family Test' on all policy decisions.<sup>46</sup> The guidance for the test notes that:

*“While families typically mediate how policies impact individuals and how individual citizens engage with public services, the impact of policy on families is not always anticipated or well understood in the policy making process. The focus of policy is for the most part on individuals, users of public services, workers or narrowly defined household units. This means that the impact of policy, positive and negative on families as a whole, and how families can impact the effectiveness of policy can often be overlooked. The Family Test will address this. The objective is to introduce a family perspective to policy making by asking policy makers to anticipate the potential impact of policy on families at each stage of the policy making process, and document the potential impacts to raise awareness and support effective decision making and debate.”<sup>47</sup>*

The Test encourages reflection on five questions:

1. What kinds of impact might the policy have on family formation?
2. What kind of impact will the policy have on families going through key transitions such as becoming parents, getting married, fostering or adopting, bereavement, redundancy, new caring responsibilities or the onset of a long-term health condition?
3. What impacts will the policy have on all family members' ability to play a full role in family life, including with respect to parenting and other caring responsibilities?
4. How does the policy impact families before, during and after couple separation?
5. How does the policy impact those families most at risk of deterioration of relationship quality and breakdown?

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Each government department is expected to assess its own policies, with involvement of stakeholders encouraged to gain better knowledge of the potential or actual impact of policy. Previous attempts at assessing the impact of policy, such as the US experience under the Reagan presidency, foundered when such assessments became a focus for ideological conflict over policy. In the UK there is now perceived to be the potential for sufficient consensus for the family test to be a constructive contribution to better policy making. A broad perspective on the many in ways in which families can be supported, or put under pressure, should over time highlight ways in which the extent of relationship breakdown, and the costs and consequences that result, can be reduced.

## NOTES

1. [www.relationshipsfoundation.org](http://www.relationshipsfoundation.org)
2. <http://www.relationshipsfoundation.org/when-relationships-go-rightwhen-relationships-go-wrong-wellbeing-series-3/>
3. <http://www.relationshipsfoundation.org/the-relationships-foundation-family-pressure-gauge/>
4. <http://www.relationshipsfoundation.org/towards-a-conceptual-framework-for-family-proofing-policy/>
5. <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/census/2011/census-data/2011-census-user-guide/glossary/index.html>
6. [http://www.vanierinstitute.ca/about\\_us#.U\\_3ghfldUzM](http://www.vanierinstitute.ca/about_us#.U_3ghfldUzM)
7. Office for National Statistics, Statistical Bulletin: Families and Households, October 2013
8. The following analysis is drawn from analysis by The Marriage Foundation, a charity we have helped to launch, and is available at <http://www.marriagefoundation.org.uk/Web/Content/Default.aspx?Content=477>
9. There are also non-economic reasons for providing support, such as the promotion of wellbeing
10. The cost of taking a child into care can be between £20K and £180k per annum. [http://data.gov.uk/sib\\_knowledge\\_box/essex-county-council-children-risk-going-care](http://data.gov.uk/sib_knowledge_box/essex-county-council-children-risk-going-care)
11. [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/275240/RR315\\_-\\_Relationship\\_Support\\_Interventions\\_Evaluation\\_210114.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/275240/RR315_-_Relationship_Support_Interventions_Evaluation_210114.pdf)
12. The main providers in the UK have come together under the umbrella of the Relationships Alliance <http://www.relate.org.uk/policy-campaigns/policy-priorities>
13. House of Lords Debate, 4 March 2014, column 1215
14. The Funding of Marriage Support Review, Lord Chancellor's Department, 1999
15. Ibid. para 9
16. Fractured Families: Why Stability Matters, Centre for Social Justice, June 2013 p. 68
17. <http://oneplusone.publiclifeprojects.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/WHEN-COUPLES-PART-FINAL-VERSION.pdf>
18. <http://www.relationshipsfoundation.org/when-relationships-go-rightwhen-relationships-go-wrong-wellbeing-series-3/>



19. <http://www.relationshipsfoundation.org/thriving-lives-which-way-for-wellbeing-wellbeing-series/>
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# ***RECONNECTING FAMILY AND FAITH IN BUSINESS***

## ***A FAMILY POINT OF VIEW ON HUMAN ECOLOGY***

A Caritas in Veritate Foundation Report<sup>1</sup> by

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The 20th Anniversary of the International Year of the Family (2014) is an important moment for us to remind ourselves of the family's irreplaceable role in economic life, especially in relation to business. It is a time to examine the difficult challenges for families wishing to participate and fulfill their responsibilities in the permanent whitewater of our global economy, and to propose ways to foster greater integration rather than compartmentalization between family and business. We present in this paper a three-fold analysis of the relationship between family and business life:

- seeing the challenges for family business, especially the modern problem of disconnection;
- judging with the right principles to provide a proper relationship between family and business; and
- acting in accord with these principles within business and in particular family business.

Our thesis is simply this: If we are to get business right, we have to get the family right. The family serves as “the fundamental cell”<sup>1</sup> of culture, and because an economy is embedded in that culture, business must take its operating cues from the family. If not, business will default to a highly instrumental and ultimately inhuman, albeit efficient, form of operation. The importance of the family, however, cannot be discussed without the importance of religion, since the health of one is fundamentally dependent on the health of the other. When people turn from religion, they also turn from having families; when people have families, they turn to religion and religious communities for support. Family and religion serve as a double helix, a spiral arrangement of the two complementary strands of cultural DNA that makes up

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the basic human ecology of society.<sup>2</sup> When human ecology is in good order, family and faith both limit the activities of business and remind business of its important calling.<sup>3</sup> It is precisely this embedded relationship that gives business a healthy cultural DNA system allowing it to serve the common good of the organization and the larger society. Throughout the paper we will speak about business in general and then in the last section focus particularly on family businesses as a unique expression of this relationship.

### **Seeing: The Challenge of Disconnection**

**D**isconnected Self: There are of course many problems and challenges in business and the professions in general. When we look at business scandals and financial crises (as well as scandals and crises in other professions such as doctors in Auschwitz, teachers, social workers and clergy who have abused children, and lawyers who have enriched themselves at the expense of justice), we are faced with what Gaudium et spes calls one of the more serious errors of our age: “the split between the faith which many profess and their daily lives.”<sup>4</sup> Many business people, as well as others, will often experience a sense of unease about how they conduct their work and how they live outside of their work. This unease stems from a concern about living two lives and not one. Nathaniel Hawthorne wrote that “No man, for any period, can wear one face to himself and another to the multitude without finally getting bewildered as to which may be true.”

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**“This phenomenon is referred to as the divided life, defined as separating one’s identity or role into distinct spheres of values, such that certain behaviors may be considered impermissible in one realm, but permissible in the other.”**

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This phenomenon is referred to as the divided life, defined as separating one’s identity or role into distinct spheres of values, such that certain behaviors may be considered impermissible in one realm, but permissible in the other. The divided life can also be understood through the lens of Alasdair MacIntyre’s “compartmentalization,” defined as follows:

*By compartmentalization I mean that division of contemporary social life into distinct spheres, each with its own highly specific standards of success and failure, each presenting to those initiated into its particular activities its own highly specific normative expectations, each requiring the inculcation of habits designed to make one effective in satisfying those particular expectations and conforming to those particular standards. So what is accounted effectiveness in the roles of the home is not at all the same as what is so accounted in the roles of the workplace. What is accounted effectiveness in the role of a consumer is not so accounted in the role of a citizen. The detailed specificity in the multiplicity of roles is matched by the lack of anything remotely like adequate prescriptions for the self which is required to inhabit each of these roles in turn, but*

*which is itself to be fully identified with none of them. Yet it is this now attenuated core self, which in the compartmentalization of the distinctively modern self has become a ghost.*<sup>5</sup>

MacIntyre provides one of the more convincing contemporary explanations of the danger of the divided life. What he makes clear is that modern culture not only fails to challenge compartmentalization, but it works particularly hard at avoiding its acknowledgment. What is it about this age that fosters rather than resists this split? An immediate response can be seen in the language and categories we use to describe our lives. We live in an age where our categories are no longer distinctions but separations or walls: public/private, body/soul, church/state, spirituality/religion, faith/work.<sup>6</sup> Yet, another response lies in the way that we think about our institutions.<sup>7</sup>

*Disconnected Institutions:* It is often the case that those things that we have so long taken for granted, so long ignored, are often those items that keep the whole together. If we are to confront this problem of the divided life within business, we must take into consideration the importance of the family and religion. These are the primary institutions for overcoming compartmentalization and can serve as important facilitators of the health of business. This is no easy task, for the family as well as religion are rarely considered when business and its related problems of purpose, social responsibility and ethics are examined.

The economic historian Karl Polyani articulated the important function of “embeddedness” that helps us to understand the institutional relationship between family and religion on the one hand, and business on the other.<sup>8</sup> The economy (and more specifically business) is morally embedded in the larger culture and law, namely non-economic institutions. One of the problems of our modern era (especially in relation to the global economy) is that its moral embeddedness in the culture has been displaced by an economy that claims its own independent logic and values. James Booth explains how the attributes claimed for it are familiar:

*An economy whose actors are considered equals and a system indifferent to their non-economic attributes, a contractarian, voluntaristic institutional context for exchanges; and the view that the public authority should not decide among preferences—that one is entitled to live one’s life ‘from the inside,’ selecting and ordering one’s preferences according to the good as one understands it and seeking to engage the voluntary cooperation of others in one’s pursuit of them.*<sup>9</sup>

This morally thin approach to economic and business life has been challenged throughout the Christian social tradition. If business is guided only by the economic values of efficiency, productivity and profitability, a form of “economism” results which eventually pol-

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lutes the culture. John Paul II explained that “[o]f itself, an economic system does not possess criteria for correctly distinguishing new and higher forms of satisfying human needs from artificial new needs which hinder the formation of a mature personality.”<sup>10</sup> For example, some “goods and services”—however much there might be a market for them—do not really add value to the lives of their stakeholders.<sup>11</sup>

The history of this detachment from the culturally embedded character of the economy is a complex one, but we can begin to see the importance of the family in relation to business by recognizing the radical institutional changes presented by the Industrial Revolution. Prior to the 1800s, the economy was embedded in the household and in the family, where production, consumption, procreation, love, faith and education formed community.<sup>12</sup> The Greek word for economy, *oikonomia*, means management or rules of a household (*oikos*, “house” and *nomos*, “custom” or “law”). While they were not without their own problems, work and family encouraged more natural and organic (embedded) relationships.

Since the 1800s, this structure has been largely, though not completely (e.g., family businesses, which we will examine in the third section of this paper) replaced by an economy that removed economic production from the family. The new, growing and independent institution of the corporation left the family as the principal place in which consumption, religion and private morality were embedded.

The removal of work from the household created significant benefits: division of labor, which allowed for specialization to increase productivity and efficiency, and accelerated technological advances for a growing and dynamic economy. These new forms of commerce and manufacturing made products affordable to the masses that were once available only to the most elite. Yet, these modern developments also created what Wendell Berry describes as “a movement of consciousness away from home,”<sup>13</sup> and what others identified as a cosmopolitan detachment of personal, religious and familial life from business. David Schindler has also described this detachment as kind of “homelessness.”<sup>14</sup> As the industrial economy uprooted the household economy, the organic unity of households with economic units was jettisoned.

The further removed business became from the family and faith, the more it was viewed as a mechanical operation of inputs and outputs needing to be engineered for maximum efficiency. This mechanistic pattern severs the businessperson from any morally or spiritually created order where “[h]e assumes that there is nothing that he can do that he should not do, nothing that he can use that he should not use.”<sup>15</sup> As the business economy begins to inhabit its own space within the global economic system, it not only disconnects business from the larger culture, but also capital from community, employee from

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**“As the industrial economy uprooted the household economy, the organic unity of households with economic units was jettisoned.”**

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consumer, and production from consumption. It is what Jeff Gates calls “disconnected capitalism.”<sup>16</sup>

This division has not only changed our experience of work, but even more significantly, it has changed how we value the family. If work has become more mechanical, more calculative, more functional, the family has become more sentimental, more emotional and more therapeutic.<sup>17</sup> With economic reality shifted to productive organizations, the family comes to be seen as an emotional safe haven in the heartless world of work, where individuals can retreat from the cold competitive world of business to the private life of affirmation and consumption found in the home.<sup>18</sup> Increasingly, the family is viewed less as a social institution and more as a private enclave, where individuals live according to their own individual moral codes. The view of family as a private domain is thought to have little influence on the public world of business and politics.<sup>19</sup> This view has led us to expect from the family both too much in the form of emotional elation and too little in the form of social contribution. Along with religion, the family is relegated to a private and subjective sphere, thereby undermining its humanizing influence on the culture.

*Disconnection and Poverty:* One of the more tragic consequences of the broken relationship between the family and economic life is persistent poverty. Society’s economic woes are directly related to the declining health of the family and religion.<sup>20</sup> Without the social capital that marriage and intact families provide, workers fail to develop the habits, skills and character to succeed in work. Pope Francis captured the significance of this phenomenon when he spoke of it at a recent marriage conference: “Evidence is mounting that the decline of the marriage culture is associated with increased poverty and a host of other social ills, disproportionately affecting women, children and the elderly. It is always they who suffer the most in this crisis.”<sup>21</sup>

While the causes of poverty and the lack of social and economic mobility are complicated and varied (inefficient government regulations, regressive tax policies, poor education, increased globalization of production, lower real wages, increased automation, etc.), their relationship to family and religion are important. In the US, for example, there is an increasing cultural divide between lower and middle class populations that are withdrawing from marriage and religion and upper middle class populations that have higher participation rates in such institutions. Not only is economic inequality growing, but so is cultural inequality. While marriage and religious participation rates declined for all classes since the 1960s, significant divergence started to occur in the 80s. For the upper middle class, marriage stabilized during the mid-1980s, and since then actual divorce rates have started to decline.<sup>22</sup> For the lower to middle classes, however, marriage participation rates

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continued to slide to the point where a minority are now married. This “marriage gap” among the classes has grown from 10% in the 1960s to 35% today. Whereas in the 1960s, poor and rich both participated in religion and marriage at similar rates, today a majority of upper middle class people marry, their children are born into two-parent homes and usually attend religious services. A majority of middle to lower class people do not marry, their children are born into single parent homes, and they usually do not attend religious services.<sup>23</sup>

To be sure, the cause and effect relationships between economic issues such as poverty and cultural institutions such as family and religion are complicated and situational. Where there is increased poverty, family life suffers. Where marriage destabilizes, economic inequality increases and entrepreneurial activity and social mobility decrease. While not every married intact family is healthy, what is clear, is that children and women, in the aggregate, fare worse economically in unmarried and divorced circumstances than in intact families. W. Bradford Wilcox reports that the shift in family structure away from marriage accounts for approximately 40% of the increase in economic inequality since 1975. Children from lower to middle income married two-parent families have greater economic mobility than those raised without both parents or whose parents are unmarried.<sup>24</sup>

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**“Where marriage destabilizes, economic inequality increases and entrepreneurial activity and mobility decrease.”**

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### **Judging: Rethinking the Connection between Business and Family through Human Ecology**

*You cannot build an emerging society . . . if you are simultaneously destroying the cultural foundations that cement your society . . . [W]ithout a sustainable culture there is no sustainable community and without a sustainable community there is no sustainable globalization*

Thomas Friedman<sup>25</sup>

The Catholic social tradition insists that it takes many institutions in collaborative relationships to foster the common good. It recognizes the importance of the state and its collaboration with business, but the Catholic tradition also emphasizes an even more significant need for collaboration between business and cultural institutions such as the family and religion. The moral guidance of business not only comes from the market and from the law, but primarily from the larger culture and, in particular, from the family and religion. As important as markets and laws are in the economy, companies must also acknowledge the need for collaboration with the family and faith institutions that provide the cultural soil out of which business grows.

Family and religion serve as a double helix, an iterative symbiotic relationship that keeps cultures intact. Business needs to respect their

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**“The Catholic tradition also emphasizes an even more significant need for collaboration between business and cultural institutions such as family and religion.”**

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importance and appreciate their influence. This is premised on a view of institutional life that assumes a human ecology.<sup>26</sup> Pope Francis, along with Popes Benedict and John Paul II, have argued that we are suffering an ecological crisis “for social environments,” and, like natural environments, these social environments, especially the family, need protection. Francis has stated that “although the human race has come to understand the need to address conditions that menace our natural environments, we have been slower to recognize that our fragile social environments are under threat as well. . . . It is therefore essential that we foster a new human ecology.”<sup>27</sup>

One aspect of this human ecological crisis is that business sees itself as an autonomous entity limited only by the law and incentivized principally by markets. When it sees itself in a separate sphere with minimal obligations to the larger culture and the political sphere, this isolation will result in disorder, well-demonstrated in the financial crisis of 2008. This makes for a morally and spiritually bankrupt business system. Like anything in the environment, if we act as if it has no relationship to anything else, we will often do significant damage.

Within a proper human ecology, business is not some autonomous reality; rather, it is embedded in a cultural reality which it influences and by which it is influenced. When grounded in communities of persons such as families, religion, education and a healthy and non-corrupt state, business is more likely to order itself toward the common good properly understood. When family and religion serve as the DNA of the culture, they do two very important things for the health of business.

First, they limit economic activity. Religion, especially monotheistic religion in the West, does this through the Sabbath and other religious practices and rituals. As Abraham Joshua Heschel puts it, the Sabbath tells us that production and consumption do not own or completely define us.<sup>28</sup> Not only does the Sabbath limit economic activity, it provides space for human and religious identity. Jewish essayist Achad Haam captures the point with a twist: “the Sabbath has preserved the Jews more than the Jews have preserved the Sabbath.”<sup>29</sup> Families also constrain economic activity when they are committed to the fundamental goods of marriage, goods which have been influenced and supported by religion. The unity of the couple and its covenantal bond takes time and commitment that cannot be violated by the demands of work, and the procreative good of children demands time for their formation and development.

Second, family and religion order economic activity and remind it of its purpose by connecting business to the common good and its participants to their particular vocations. The family plays a foundational role in all institutions, since it is the first school of virtue where desires

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**“Family and religion serve as a double helix, an iterative symbiotic relationship that keeps cultures intact”**

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**“The family plays a foundational role in all institutions, since it is the first school of virtue where desires are matured, reason is formed, the will is shaped and a community of persons is established.”**

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are matured, reason is formed, the will is shaped and a community of persons is established. Pope Francis explains that as a school, the family grounded in marriage is “where we begin to acquire the arts of cooperative living.”<sup>30</sup> This familial formation which serves as the basic cell of culture should influence business not to be another family but to be human places of production. Religion, when it has a mature social tradition, will speak of our work life not as a necessary evil, but as a vocation that fosters the growth of people. Religious institutions foster social networks that help people to explore meaningful life issues and to have higher quality, stable relationships that support and complement family life.<sup>31</sup>

This is why true leadership in business “begins and finds its most important expression in the leadership of the primary institutions” of family and faith.<sup>32</sup> These institutions are the places where we appreciate the inherent dignity of others, where we share goods in common, where we experience the importance of integral human development. And if we fail to appreciate, share and experience such things in primary institutions such as family and faith, we will find it much more difficult to develop them in secondary institutions such as business.

What the family and religion do for business is to identify the comprehensive set of goods that business must produce and to help it resist the temptation to reduce itself to mere material accumulation in the form of profits, salaries, or price. A recent work from the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace on business leadership, *The Vocation of the Business Leader*, offers a normative account of business decision making that is anchored in three institutional goods of business, goods that are influenced and informed by the goods of marriage and religion.<sup>33</sup> They are:

- Good Goods: providing goods which are truly good and services which truly serve, which go beyond “market value.”
- Good Work: organizing work where employees develop their gifts and talents not only for themselves, but for others.
- Good Wealth: creating sustainable wealth that can be distributed justly to stakeholders and not only to shareholders.

These goods come more naturally to a business when businesspeople have first been formed in a cultural soil of marriage and family that connects people to what is deeply human. The unitive good of self-giving between husband and wife and the procreative good of openness to life create the context for family members to be givers and not merely takers. Such marital goods help businesspeople resist an exclusively market logic that reduces the three goods of business to mere profit maximization—to a company that simply serves itself.

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## Acting: Family Businesses at the Crossroads of Our Culture and Our Economy

There are many actions that need to be taken to reconnect family and faith with business. Businesses must allow their employees to be faithful mothers, fathers, sons and daughters. This entails ensuring living wages, good benefits, decent work, work/family balance and so forth.<sup>34</sup> The state also has an important obligation to ensure these conditions and outcomes. In this last part of our reflection, however, we want to look at family businesses as a model for the kind of integration we have been advocating.

The embedded relationship of business within family and religion that we discussed above is made more concrete by looking at family businesses. While family businesses can suffer from the divided life, there is greater likelihood of integration rather than compartmentalization because they live at the crossroads of the economy and culture. In their study of family-run businesses, Aronoff and Ward provide a helpful distinction between functional and fundamental values that helps us to see the moral collaboration between culture and business.<sup>35</sup> They explain that non-family businesses often base themselves upon functional values such as profits, teamwork, innovation, creativity, industriousness, etc. These values are obviously important to running a business, but they don't touch the person in any profound fashion in relation to community, solidarity, or the common good, nor do they provide any kind of distinctive vision for the business itself.

Family-run businesses are often informed by more fundamental principles that connect to the deeper meaning of the person and to a wider notion of social responsibility.<sup>36</sup> These values can create stronger cultures since they often have "a more celebrated and preserved history" to draw upon to make sense of day-to-day practices and actions. Aronoff and Ward point out that family firms emphasize:

- Collectivity more than individuality;
- Past and future orientation to time more than present orientation;
- The natural goodness of the person more than merely self-interested utility maximization.<sup>37</sup>

The "familiness" of these businesses creates a deeper human reason for their decision making, which is often the basis for a stronger organizational culture. This bright side has a corresponding dark side, however. Disordered families and religions make for the most inhumane of businesses. They become cesspools of nepotism and cronyism. Religious zealots within business use their power to proselytize employees and suppliers disrespecting the fundamental right of religious liberty. These problems are as deep as those caused by a preoccupation with profit.

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Thus, while we need to be on guard about the ways in which family and religion can distort family businesses, we do not want to underestimate their moral and spiritual power for meaningful work and the common good. We can think of it this way: there are four prerequisites to having a family business. First, parents must have a family. Second, they must own a business. Third, the business must be passed to the next generation. Fourth, the family must agree on what is important so that they can work together and pass on the enterprise at its best. What is rarely explored about these basic realities of family business is the underlying system of meaning that comes from the faith-based values of a family, which makes meaningful family businesses possible. We will now offer a few observations about the importance of faith to socially responsible family business.

Our first observation is that dedication to religious faith is related to getting married and having children (and vice a versa), thus creating the conditions for a family business.<sup>38</sup> There is a strong correlation between religious observance and commitment, family size and industrious work habits. In general, the more committed people are to faith-based values, the more hope they have about the future and the more likely they will be to have children, which are conditions for the existence of family businesses.<sup>39</sup> David Brooks gives the example of Orthodox Jews. He explains that within the US, “only 21 percent of non-Orthodox Jews between the ages of 18 and 29 are married. But an astounding 71 percent of Orthodox Jews are married at that age. And they are having four and five kids per couple.” Because of their high marriage rates and fertility they will have vibrant families capable of successful family businesses. There is increasingly strong evidence that those, like the Orthodox Jews, who are strongly grounded in family and religion, often, although not always, do better economically. While we do not subscribe to the simplicity of the “gospel of wealth,” we nonetheless want to argue that strong families and strong religion reinforce each other and they provide the conditions for strong family businesses.<sup>40</sup>

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Our second observation is that faith is more likely to be enduring in a family, and in a family business, if faith-based values and practices are integrated into daily family life. For example, Orthodox Jewish religion influences what the faithful eat, what they wear and how they behave.<sup>41</sup> The weekly Jewish Sabbath, which has been passed from family to family for over 3500 years, is seen as a source of vibrancy in this faith. Members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, the Mormons, have a health code that dictates restrictions on coffee and tea consumption as well as bans on tobacco, alcohol and harmful drugs. Members are expected to participate in the lay clergy, support church activities and engage in religious worship at home.

Catholics are called to go to Mass weekly and participate regularly in the sacraments, visible signs of inward and spiritual divine grace. Muslims are called to pray, fast and give alms.

These rituals and practices serve as reminders that life is about more than simply “my” choice, that personal choice is embedded in a much larger moral and spiritual order. One of the ironies of a “personal choice” ideology, which reflects “the logic of the market,” is that once it is established, choice strangely becomes less significant. The Jewish sociologist Philip Rieff argued that “There is no feeling more desperate than that of being free to choose, without the specific compulsion of being chosen.”<sup>42</sup> If life is simply about “personal choice” then our choices are relegated to taste or opinion, and become as significant as choosing between vanilla or strawberry yogurt. What we lose when all we have is our “choice” is that choices don’t connect us to anything outside of ourselves. They are merely private decisions. It is not the content of the choice that matters, but the personal preference of isolated individuals—making choices indifferent to any life project or plan. D.H. Lawrence, the English novelist and poet, wrote: “The moment you can do just what you like, there is nothing you care about doing. Men are only free when they are doing what the deepest self likes. And there is getting down to the deepest self! It takes some diving.”<sup>43</sup> What religion, and in particular vocation, does for business is to connect our individual choices to a transcendent discovery that we ourselves are chosen for something.

Our third observation is that when family and faith inform the practices of a family business, a stronger identity and culture between the family and business is established. Part of this identity is a strong sense of “corporate social responsibility.” As St. James tells us, faith without works is dead (Jas 2:17). While family businesses can conceal rather than reveal their deep familial and spiritual roots and operate their businesses solely in terms of profit, faithful family businesses will often pride themselves on a deep connection to their employees and communities. The following practices illustrate exemplary family businesses and the ways in which they exercise their social responsibility.

**1. *Decent and Good Work:*** One common characteristic of family businesses is that the names of the owning families are on the doors of the business, either literally or figuratively. Unlike investors in public companies whose only stake in the business may be return on investment, families that own businesses have their reputations at stake, such as the way they treat employees. In many family businesses, family members work shoulder-to-shoulder with non-family employees. Owners seek to maintain decent and good work for both family and employees. Because family members personally experience what it is

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“What religion, and in particular vocation, does for business is to connect our individual choices to a transcendent discovery that we ourselves are chosen for something.”

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like to be an employee, they seek to provide employees developmental opportunities. Employees have a voice in their work, because owners work with them. Because they are in this business for the long-term, for generations, they seek entrepreneurial growth through collaboration and creative input from employees, creating a sense of shared responsibility. These businesses employ the principle of subsidiarity by 1) promoting autonomy, providing relevant information and clarifying responsibilities, 2) equipping employees with the right tools, training, and experience to carry out their tasks and 3) giving employees freedom to fulfil their responsibilities and receive recognition for their performance.<sup>44</sup>

**2. *Personal Concern:*** Exemplary family businesses, precisely because they have their origins in families, tend to be sensitive to the needs of not only their own family life, but the lives of their employees' families. They will often have a deep sense that their employees are not merely employees, but coworkers who are fathers and mothers, sons and daughters. This deeper sense of their identity moves family businesses to provide a wide variety of services to their employees, especially those in relation to their families such as employment for other members of employee families, education for their children, mortgages for their homes, etc. Owners of one nationwide trucking company in the US personally travel to the funerals of employees. Family businesses take on the family concerns of their coworkers.

**3. *Just Wage:*** Family businesses, precisely because they have their origins in families, often are sensitive to the needs of not only their own family life, but the lives of their employees' families. When a family business employer receives work from an employee, both participate not only in an economic exchange, but also in a personal relationship. For this relationship to flourish, an employer must recognize that in their labor, employees "surrender" their time and energy and cannot use them for another purpose. A living wage, then, is the minimum amount due to every independent wage earner by the mere fact that he or she is a human being with a life to maintain and a family to support. But precisely because the family business is a business, pay is not only income for the worker; it is also a cost to the employer and has a significant impact on the economic health of the organization.<sup>45</sup>

**4. *Secure Employment:*** Exemplary family businesses would support Pope Francis's outspoken criticisms of companies who lay off employees. He is concerned that a "logic of profit" rather than relationships has taken over the decision making of certain companies. He stated that "[w]ith work, it's not a game! And whoever - for the sake of money, or business, or to earn even more - takes away work, [should] know he takes away the dignity of the person." The exem-

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"This deeper sense of their identity moves family businesses to provide a wide variety of services to their employees, especially those in relation to their families such as employment for other members of employee families, education for their children, mortgages for their homes, etc."

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"A living wage, then, is the minimum amount due to every independent wage earner by the mere fact that he or she is a human being with a life to maintain and a family to support."

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plary family businesses prides itself on being a community of persons rather than merely a collection of individuals.<sup>46</sup> Realizing its culture is based on family values, it seeks to hire employees with values that fit the culture. These businesses invest in their employees. Because of this relationship, exemplary family businesses are reluctant to lay off loyal employees during challenging economic times.<sup>47</sup> For example, during the great recession, a large window manufacturer asked everyone, managers and employees, to take a cut in wages so that no one would lose his job. Another second-generation manufacturing company refused to outsource manufacturing to other countries so that it could retain employment for local employees. In general, these family businesses seek lifetime employment for their employees and they go to great lengths to avoid layoffs.

**5. *Concern for the Larger Community:*** A core characteristic of a family business is transfer of business ownership to the next generation. Studies suggest that a strong positive relationship exists between the intention to pass business ownership to the next generation and contributions to the community. The motivation seems to be one of building a better local community for the next generation and for employees. Among other things, they build churches, schools, medical clinics, and recreation facilities, as well as provide generous contributions to many causes, especially those causes that affect the poor. Business families use their capabilities and resources to lift up those around them.

These practices, along with others, not only make the businesses stronger, but they make families and communities stronger. When family businesses have decent work, personal concern, living wages, secure employment and community benefit, conditions are created for them to flourish and succeed. If employees suffer from sub-living wages, layoffs and debilitating work, the family suffers and is more likely to break down making prosperity for all more difficult within society.

## Conclusion

If family businesses can truly be both families and businesses at the same time, they are worth our time and energy to celebrate and hold up on a hill during this 20th Anniversary of the Year of the Family. They provide a concrete institutional expression that makes the world more human. The family as an enduring moral and spiritual force is irreplaceable for good companies. The thesis of this paper is that we will not get business right, if we don't get the family right. The family and the underlying goods of marriage serve as the fundamental cell

of the culture. This fundamental cell is the place from which business receives its moral and spiritual resources to promote and develop just practices within the business. Family businesses, however, are intimately situated at the crossroads of the culture and the economy, and while they do not have a monopoly on such practices, their family-centeredness should make clearer to the world the possibilities of living an integrated rather than a compartmentalized life.

## NOTES

1. Pope Francis (address to the European Parliament, Strasbourg, France, November 25, 2014), [http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2014/november/documents/papa-francesco\\_20141125\\_strasburgo-parlamento-europeo.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2014/november/documents/papa-francesco_20141125_strasburgo-parlamento-europeo.html).
2. See Mary Eberstadt, *How the West Really Lost God* (West Conshohocken: Templeton Press, 2013).
3. See Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Vocation of the Business Leader*, [http://www.stthomas.edu/media/catholicstudies/center/johnaryaninstitute/publications/publicationpdfs/vocationofthebusinessleaderpdf/PontificalCouncil\\_4.pdf](http://www.stthomas.edu/media/catholicstudies/center/johnaryaninstitute/publications/publicationpdfs/vocationofthebusinessleaderpdf/PontificalCouncil_4.pdf).
4. Paul VI, *Gaudium et Spes*, 43.
5. Alasdair MacIntyre, "Moral Philosophy and Contemporary Social Practice: What Holds Them Apart?" In *The Tasks of Philosophy. Selected Essays*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 117.
6. While many historians may trace the origins of this modern split to different sources, it would seem that Machiavelli is a significant source for intensification of these divisions in the modern world. He recognizes this division without lament, and he accepts it and actually explains that a unity of life leads to a loss of power. For Machiavelli, "how we live is so far removed from how we ought to live, that he who abandons what is done for what ought to be done will rather bring about his own ruin than his preservation." Yet unlike Machiavelli, whose word to the prince on the price of success—"learn how not to be good"—counsels a principle of expediency, while maintaining a façade of virtue when advantageous, we tend to accept a divided life, acquiescing in a pretended necessity to maintain a "split personality" by maintaining a separation between public and religious life, and seeing any unity between the two as a certain fanaticism or at best a naïve religiosity failing to confront the necessary compromises for social peace. Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince and the Discourses* (New York: Modern Library, 1940), 56.
7. See Hugh Heclo, *On Thinking Institutionally*, (Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2008).
8. Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation: the Political and Economic Origins of our Time*. (Mattituck, N.Y.: Amereon House, 1990).
9. William James Booth, "On the Idea of the Moral Economy," *American Political Science Review* 88, no. 3 (1994): 661.
10. John Paul II, *Centesimus annus*, 36.
11. See Kenneth E. Goodpaster, "Goods that are Truly Good and Services that Truly Serve: Reflections on Caritas in Veritate," *Journal of Business Ethics* 100 (S1): 9-16.
12. See Wendell Berry, *Home Economics: Fourteen Essays* (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1987), 184. For discussions on the pre-modern economic order see Luigino Bruni and Stefano Zamagni, *Civil Economy: Efficiency, Equity, Public Happiness* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2007), chapters 2-4, as well as Christopher Dawson, *Religion and the Rise of Western*

Culture (New York: Image Books, 1957), chapter IX.

13. See David Schindler, "Homelessness and the Modern Condition: The Family, Evangelization, and the Global Economy," *Logos: A Journal of Catholic Thought and Culture* 3, no. 4 (2000): 42, quoting Wendell Berry. See also *Caritas in Veritate*, 40.

14. David Schindler, "Homelessness and the Modern Condition: The Family, Evangelization, and the Global Economy," *Logos: A Journal of Catholic Thought and Culture* 3, no. 4 (2000): 34-56.

15. Ibid., Wolfgang Grassl explains: "the Industrial Revolution has increasingly loosened the embeddedness of economic behavior in society and culture by moving it into a formal and calculative space." "Hybrid Forms of Business: The Logic of Gift in the Commercial World," (2011): 6, <http://www.stthomas.edu/media/catholicstudies/center/johnaryaninstitute/conferences/2011-vatican/GrasslPCJPPaper.pdf>.

16. See Jeff Gates, *The Ownership Solution: Toward a Shared Capitalism for the Twenty-first Century*, (Reading, MA: Perseus Books, 1999).

17. See also Robert Bellah, et al., *Habits of the Heart* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), see chapter 4 on "Love and Marriage."

18. See Stanley Hauerwas, *A Community of Character* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981), chapter 8.

19. This more therapeutic understanding of marriage and family led to less restrictions on non-marital sex, divorce, contraception, abortion and homosexuality, activities largely understood as personal private choices rather than in terms of their effects on long-term health family and faith as institutions. Mary Eberstadt explains that the churches who advocated these reforms "contributed to an unwanted and unexpected denouement: they weakened both literally and figuratively the foundations on which those same churches depended—i.e., natural families. In their efforts to reach out to individuals who wanted a softening of Christian doctrine, the churches inadvertently appear to have failed to protect their base: thriving families whose members would then go on to reproduce both literally and in the figurative sense of handing down their religion. Here again, we see the power effect of the double helix of family and faith." Eberstadt, *How the West Really Lost God*, 140.

20. W. Bradford Wilcox, Andrew J. Cherlin, Jeremy E. Uecker, and Matthew Messel, "No Money, No Honey, No Church: The Deinstitutionalization of Religious Life Among the White Working Class," [http://creed-design.com/NMP/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/Religion\\_WorkingPaper.pdf](http://creed-design.com/NMP/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/Religion_WorkingPaper.pdf). The work of Wilcox and others are disputed by others who argue that the real problem of increasing inequality and poverty are less cultural and more economic and political forces of reduced welfare benefits, lack of health care, decline of unions, automation, globalization, etc. Often labeled as Pluralists, they "are skeptical of efforts to restore longstanding family forms. They deny that good or bad outcomes are intrinsic to any family type and believe that observed differences can be eliminated by providing outside assistance and resources or changing policies to make life easier for fragmented families" (Amy L. Wax, "Engines of Inequality: Class, Race and Structure," *Family Law Quarterly* 41, no. 3. (2007): 567, [http://lsr.nellco.org/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1219&context=upenn\\_wps](http://lsr.nellco.org/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1219&context=upenn_wps)).

21. Pope Francis, "We Must Foster a New Human Ecology," (Address, Humanum Confernece, Vatican City, November, 2014).

22. W. Bradford Wilcox and Elizabeth Marquardt, eds., "When Marriage Disappears: The New Middle America," *The State of Our Unions: Marriage in America*, 2010, <http://stateofourunions.org/2010/SOOU2010.pdf>.

23. See Charles Murray, *Coming Apart: the State of White America, 1960-2010*, (New York, N.Y: Crown Forum, 2012).

24. Data mentioned in "Sociology Expert Says Pro-Marriage Culture Reduces Inequality," National Catholic Register, June 19, 2014, <http://www.ncregister.com/daily-news/sociology-expert-says-pro-marriage-culture-reduces-inequality/#ixzz3KAoFQBjW>; for further information, see Wilcox's studies with The National Marriage Project at the University of Virginia, <http://nationalmarriageproject.org/>.
25. Thomas Friedman, *Lexus and the Olive Tree*, New York: Anchor Books, 1999, 302.
26. See John Paul II, *Centesimus annus*, 38-39; Benedict XVI, *Caritas in veritate*, 51.
27. Pope Francis, "We Must Foster a New Human Ecology." <http://saltandlighttv.org/blog/featured/we-must-foster-a-new-human-ecology-pope-francis>. See also Benedict XVI, *Caritas in veritate*, 51. "The Church has a responsibility towards creation and she must assert this responsibility in the public sphere. In so doing, she must defend not only earth, water and air as gifts of creation that belong to everyone. She must above all protect mankind from self-destruction. There is need for what might be called a human ecology, correctly understood. The deterioration of nature is in fact closely connected to the culture that shapes human coexistence: when "human ecology" is respected within society, environmental ecology also benefits. Just as human virtues are interrelated, such that the weakening of one places others at risk, so the ecological system is based on respect for a plan that affects both the health of society and its good relationship with nature. . . . The book of nature is one and indivisible: it takes in not only the environment but also life, sexuality, marriage, the family, social relations: in a word, integral human development. Our duties towards the environment are linked to our duties towards the human person, considered in himself and in relation to others. It would be wrong to uphold one set of duties while trampling on the other. Herein lies a grave contradiction in our mentality and practice today: one which demeans the person, disrupts the environment and damages society."
28. Abraham Heschel, "The Sabbath," In *Working: Its Meaning and Its Limits*, ed. Gilbert C. Meilaender (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2000), 261-267.
29. Marva Dawn, *Keeping Holy the Sabbath*, 42.
30. Pope Francis, "We Must Foster a New Human Ecology" <http://saltandlighttv.org/blog/featured/we-must-foster-a-new-human-ecology-pope-francis>
31. See W. Bradford Wilcox and Andrew J. Cherlin, "The Marginalization of Marriage in Middle America," [http://www.brookings.edu/-/media/research/files/papers/2011/8/10%20strengthen%20marriage%20wilcox%20cherlin/0810\\_strengthen\\_marriage\\_wilcox\\_cherlin](http://www.brookings.edu/-/media/research/files/papers/2011/8/10%20strengthen%20marriage%20wilcox%20cherlin/0810_strengthen_marriage_wilcox_cherlin).
32. Michael Keating, *True Leadership*, unpublished.
33. Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Vocation of the Business Leader: A Reflection*, #80. See also Robert Kennedy, *The Good Business Does* (Grand Rapids, MI: Acton Institute, 2006). See also David Specht and Richard Broholm, "Three-fold Model of Organizational Life," *Seeing Things Whole* (2009), [http://www.seeingthingswhole.org/uploads/Watermark-Three-Fold-Individual\\_439175.pdf](http://www.seeingthingswhole.org/uploads/Watermark-Three-Fold-Individual_439175.pdf). These three institutional goods correspond to what Alasdair MacIntyre explains as three goods people want out of their work: "Most productive work is and cannot but be tedious, arduous, and fatiguing much of the time. What makes it worthwhile to work and to work well is threefold: that the work that we do has a point and purpose, is productive of genuine goods [good goods]; that the work that we do is and is recognized to be our work, our contribution, in which we are given and take responsibility for doing it and for doing it well [good work]; and that we are rewarded for doing it in a way that enables us to achieve the goods of family and community [good wealth]." Alasdair MacIntyre, "How Aristotelianism Can Become Revolutionary: Ethics, Resistance and Utopia," in *Virtue and Politics*, eds. Paul Blackledge and Kelvin Knight (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2011), 323.

34. See ILO's Decent Work Agenda, International Labour Organization (2013), <http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/decent-work/lang--en/index.htm> and <http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/decent-work-agenda/lang--en/inaex.htm>.
35. Craig E. Aronoff and John L. Ward, *Family Business Values* (Marietta, GA: Family Enterprise Publishers, 2001).
36. Various studies have indicated that family-owned businesses are more socially responsible than other kinds of business. See [http://www.heraldextra.com/news/local/education/college/family-businesses-are-more-socially-responsible-study-shows/article\\_2aad6f26-4c0e-5daf-a5b0-189fe3a34f63.html](http://www.heraldextra.com/news/local/education/college/family-businesses-are-more-socially-responsible-study-shows/article_2aad6f26-4c0e-5daf-a5b0-189fe3a34f63.html).
37. See Aronoff and Ward; see also Tapies, Josep & John L. Ward, eds. *Family values and value creation: The fostering of enduring values within family-owned businesses* (New York, NY: Palgrave, Macmillan, 2008), 4.
38. See Mary Eberstadt's thesis on the importance of strong families influencing religion.
39. Faith-based values are transferred across generations when parents and children have the same faith. Vern L. Bengtson and his colleagues conducted four decades of research about families and faith. Mormons (85%) and Jews (82%) had the greatest parent-child religious similarity followed by no religious tradition (63%), Catholics (43%), and Mainline Protestant (26%). Mainline Protestants and Catholics had the greatest rate of decline of religious stability across generations. See Vern Bengtson, *Families and Faith: How Religion is Passed Down Across Generations* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2013).
40. See the first section of this paper.
41. Brooks explains that when, for example, Orthodox Jews shop for food, "the collective covenant with God is the primary reality and obedience to the laws is the primary obligation. They go shopping like the rest of us, but their shopping is minutely governed by an external moral order. . . . They give structure to everyday life. They infuse everyday acts with spiritual significance. They build community. They regulate desires. They moderate religious zeal, making religion an everyday practical reality. The laws are gradually internalized through a system of lifelong study, argument and practice. The external laws may seem, at first, like an imposition, but then they become welcome and finally seem like a person's natural way of being." In other words, faith means something in their day-to-day decisions. "The Orthodox Surge," *The New York Times*, March 7, 2013.
42. Philip Rieff, *The Triumph of the Therapeutic*, (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1966), 93
43. D.H. Lawrence, *Studies in Classic American Literature*. (New York: Penguin Books, 1923), 12-13.
44. *Vocation of the Business Leader*, 47ff. See Michael Naughton, Ken Goodpaster, Jeanne Buckeye and Dean Maines, "Subsidiarity: A Guiding Principle for Good Work," in progress.
45. See Helen Alford and Michael Naughton, *Managing as if Faith Mattered* (University of Notre Dame Press, 2001), chapter 5.
46. The key insight here is that when the Catholic social tradition speaks about business as a "community of persons," the nature of this community does not come principally from the business itself, or from law or from markets. The notion of community must come from the larger culture and in particular family and religion. The foundation of community life is family and religion, which is why if business is not connected to this cultural center or worse violates it (corrupting goods and services, overworked careerists, etc.), it loses its identity by severing itself from the moral and spiritual resources that can make it a community of persons. It is also the reason why law and markets, while necessary to healthy businesses, are insufficient to fully explain the nature as well as

purpose of business. This is not to say that a business is a family or a religion, nor is it to underestimate the important conditions of law and markets, but rather that its civilizing and humanizing character is dependent upon a familial and religious form. People who come from healthy familial structures and religious upbringing are more relational, more other-focused and more giving. For example, social capital research shows that people committed to a faith tradition were more likely “to give money to charity, do volunteer work, help the homeless, donate blood, help a neighbor with housework, spend time with someone who was feeling depressed, offer a seat to a stranger or help someone find a job” Jonathan Sacks, “The Moral Animal, December 23, 2012, [http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/24/opinion/the-moral-animal.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/24/opinion/the-moral-animal.html?_r=0).

47. We are grateful to Kyle Smith, CEO of Reell Precision Manufacturing, for this insight.

## **SECTION TWO**

### ***RECENT CHURCH TEXTS ON FAMILY IN THE CONTEXT OF MIGRATION, POVERTY AND BUSINESS***



# ***A SHORT INTRODUCTION TO THE MAGISTERIUM'S TEXTS ON THE FAMILY***

MATHIAS NEBEL

*Director, Caritas in Veritate Foundation*

## **1. Two different emphasis on the family**

**M**any texts and interventions of the magisterium have addressed the family and almost every important text at least mentions it. A “charter of the rights of the family” has even been proposed by the Holy See in 1983. This introduction will not, therefore, pretend to cover all the occurrences of the term in the corpus of Catholic Social Teaching, but only highlight some of the most recurring issues raised by the magisterium when speaking on the family. Accordingly, we have chosen to publish in the following section a very small number of interventions that relate to the three themes treated in the previous part of this volume: migration, poverty and business. To give at least an overview of the rest, we have asked the Pontifical council for Family to provide us with a text that would present the Church’s teaching on the family. This text closes this section.

Two periods clearly divide the way the Catholic Church has addressed the family. The first encompasses the texts going from *Rerum novarum* (1891) up to *Populorum progressio* (1967), the second embraces the time frame that spans from *Humanae vitae* (1968) to *Caritas in Veritate* (2009). During the first, family itself is seen as a shared evidence and is approached mainly through its social and economic dimensions. The second period, however, is characterized by the debate around the legal evolutions of marriage, the social transformation of sexual behavior and new reproductive techniques. Here the family is mainly addressed in the perspective of these questions, usually in order to recall the Christian definition of family (natural law).

The two periods do not so much capture a change of content but rather a change of emphasis. The social and economic importance of family is never denied, but instead coexists within another dominant perspective. In his recent teaching, however, Pope Francis has given strong signals that he does not desire to see the family reduced to a debate on marriage and sexuality. The present Synod on the family is precisely investigating this pastoral aggiornamento of the Church discourse on the family.

## 2. The economic importance of the family

The oldest texts composing the corpus of Catholic Social Teaching documents are the most explicit on this issue. The following paragraph mentions the lasting elements put forward regarding the economic importance of the family:

1. Family is first mentioned *as a production unit*; that is, how a whole family may be seen as producing together some good (typically a farm), or as the income aggregation of the family members' work. *Rerum novarum* therefore recognizes the family as an economic unit that is important to the way we analyze production and income distribution (RN 43-46).

2. *Wages, poverty and family*. Miserable wages nurture extreme poverty, which brings about the disintegration of the family (RN 5 43-46). Catholic Social Teaching emphasizes how important just wages (QA 74-76; MM 68), total working hours (RN 39), health conditions at work (RN 42), dignified working conditions (LE 9), the limitation put to children's work and women's work (RN 42), are to the dignity of family life. The housing conditions – often in that time attached to the factory – are also mentioned (QA 135), as well as the need for work to avoid impeding access to basic education (LE 10). Even if these remainders are not any more pertinent to industrialized countries, none of this is out of context in most of the developing world.

3. *Family, economic security and stability*. "In the task of development man finds the family to be the first and most basic social structure" (PP 38). The family brings security and stability to its members. They provide each other help in times of distress, mutual comfort, and they share, in solidarity, family resources. This is why social encyclicals have stressed access to private property not in a defense of liberalism, but out of meeting the needs of poor families (QA 61). The access to private property provides basic security and stability (MM 33. 119); the possession of goods is the first and most straightforward risk insurance against life hazards (GS 69). The same reason is behind the support of the magisterium for mutual insurance systems. By mitigating poverty and social risk, they provide the security and stability needed by families to flourish.

4. *Equilibrium between work and family relationships*. John Paul II and then Benedict XVI have both insisted on the need for equilibrium between work and family relationships (LE 10; CV 51). The increasing engagement of both parents in formal working activities should leave enough time for family life. It should, especially, never encroach on the development of the children's relationship with their parents (CV 63).

5. *Family breakup and poverty*. Pope Francis has underlined the fact that extreme poverty and exclusion grow where family solidarities are lacking: "Evidence is mounting that the decline of the marriage culture is associated with increased poverty and a host of other social ills, disproportionately

affecting women, children and the elderly. It is always they who suffer the most in this crisis.”<sup>1</sup> The family network is the best prevention to social exclusion. The instability of families reduces their capacity to prevent the fall into extreme poverty.

### 3. The family as source of social life

The second Vatican Council has famously stated that the family is the “foundation of society” and a “school of humanity” (GS 52). It is the place where children are introduced to social life; where language, culture, knowledge, values, and institutions are transmitted and learned (FC 43). The family is key to introducing the young generation to the practical functioning of the social world. This has been explicated through the following statements:

1. *A logic of love and solidarity.* Of utmost importance is the fact that family relationships are built – or should be built – on mutual love and not self-interest (CA 39; FC 12). The family is a school of humanity in the sense that our relationships with others are born into a “logic of gift” (GS 52; FC 43; CV 6.34). The rationality of solidarity and of the common good precedes the logic of competition and power relationships (FC 43). Therefore the logic of love is not something estranged from the social reality, but is the basis of the solidarities on which social life is built (CA 39; CV 2).

2. *Necessity of this community of love for children to become part of the society.* A child raised out of this logic is estranged to a crucial part of social life (FC 50). As the first community, family relationships are the cradle where a child is initiated into the sense of justice, of truth, and to the respect for the common good. (JM 57, CA 39).

3. *The State’s protection of the family.* As the source of social life, the family precedes the State<sup>2</sup>; it commands the effective transmission of the social and political institution of a country to the younger generations (GS 46-52; CA 39, Catechism 2224). Hence the family is entailed to receive from the State a legal recognition that defines and protects it (AA 11). But keep in mind that marriage – the legal institution, explicated in positive law by each country – has its root in the anthropological reality of the family (RN 12-13; FC 13). Beside the mere legal recognition of the family, governments should also enact adequate policies, whenever needed, so as to further and promote its social function and ensure its stability (FC 44).

4. *The responsibility of the spouses.* The Church also ties the family’s legal protection to the recognition of some limits to the State’s legislative power or to the scope of its policies (RN 14; FC 45-46). The spouses must be free to choose to marry; as they are the ones who bear the responsibility to choose how many children they want a have (Charter art. 3), theirs is also the choice of the faith in which they want their children to be brought up (Charter art. 5). The insistence of those two aspects by the Church is

historically grounded in the conflicts that gave rise to the modern State. The magisterium frequently refers to subsidiarity regarding procreation and education of children (RN 11. 35-36). The State should only intervene where the primary responsibility of families is failing to live up to its duties (FC 45).

#### 4. Sexual revolution and Christian ethics

As said in the introduction, the last five decades have been largely dominated by questions raised by the sexual revolution of the sixties and the quick transformations of social behavior that followed. The way in which the magisterium would address the family react to these changes, up to the point of appearing sometimes as a “Leitmotiv” occulting other aspects of the previous Church’s teaching on family.

1. *A sexual revolution.* Over a relatively short period, western countries first, followed by the globalized elites around the world, have undergone a sexual revolution. Some of its features, as seen by the magisterium, have been (FC 4-10): a. the irruption of efficient medical technology in matters of sexual reproduction (birth control, assisted procreation, genetic engineering, etc.); b. the rapid transformation of mass behavior and social norms regarding sexuality sparked by a change of culture (individualism and a “right driven” equality); c. the impressive increasing of fragility and instability in marriage and the correlative succession over time of different forms of unions; d. the steady rise of mono-parental and recomposed families; e. the legislative work which has given a legal framework to this revolution.

2. *Diversity and unity.* Since *Humanae vitae*, numerous documents of the magisterium have addressed these questions. They all share a fundamental point which is the following: the different historical roles assumed by the family are indeed plainly normal, arising from the cultural diversity of human societies (FC 10). But this diversity is not such that it can impede the rational and universal recognition of some normative elements that define the family (FC 17). In the same way as the difference among individual does not impede the recognition of the rational and universal recognition of their dignity, some normative elements are key to the existence of family whatever their actual cultural diversity may be.

3. *Essential and universal elements of the family.* Among these permanent and normative features the magisterium maintains the following: a. Families are composed by a man and a woman; it is a community of love and freedom open to the gift of life through the reception of the children they may have; b. Children are a gift and their existence cannot be submitted only to their parent’s will of power or to the birth control policies of the State. They have rights that apply from their very conception; c. The family plays an essential social function as school of humanity and fabric of

social relationships; it must be protected by the State; d. The legal forms given to family must maintain marriage as between a man and a woman, freely contracted, one and indissoluble. On the basis on those elements, the magisterium insists on some well-known moral norms: a. Fidelity; b. Responsible paternity and maternity; b. No abortion; c. Natural forms of contraception only, etc.<sup>3</sup>

4. *Rebalancing the Church's teaching.* The Church's insistence and the media's infatuation on these issues have dangerously reduced the relevance of the family in public debate to its mere legal definition and to questions of sexual ethics. Pope Francis has deplored this narrowing of the perspective and called for the Church a Synod on the family that will deliver its work in 2015. The social role of family, especially regarding the prevention of poverty, has however already been marked by Francis as one key issue.

### **5. Family perspective on the three topics of migration, poverty and business.**

It came as a surprise in the creation of this Working Paper that few texts would indeed be dedicated to these more specific issues. Curiously, when addressing migration, the magisterium seldom adopts a family perspective to understand the dynamic of migration flows. More surprisingly still is the fact that on business, we could not find a single recent text that would stress the importance of the family in and upon the business world. This must be contrasted against the strong engagement of the Church on the ground. On migration and poverty, many Church affiliated organizations are longstanding pioneers; however, this engagement has not translated into a more family oriented advocacy by the magisterium on these questions.

*On migration*, the family's importance is highlighted by the magisterium mainly in the context of the vulnerability of migrants and the protection of their dignity and human rights. As far as family is concerned, a special emphasis is put on the right to family reunification, on housing and work, on the needs and rights of child-migrants, on the right to education for children and on the integration of migrant families in the country of destination (Charter, art. 12).<sup>4</sup>

Interestingly, the family also frequently emerges in relation to the country of origin (for example by addressing the fate of the "left behind" family members). The long separated spouses and the trend of children being educated without the presence of one of their parents are not desirable forms of family life (FC 77). Another example is the well-known importance of the monetary savings sent by migrants to their country of origin and the subsequent impact on development. These very important flows of capital are family based in the sense that they are invested within and through family cells (CV 62). It is to be remembered that Mater and magistra saw

in the need of the family the foundation of a right to migration (MM 45). The importance of family solidarity is another point which is stressed by the magisterium concerning migration. Usually not developed, the importance of family solidarity for security, work, health, integration and spiritual comfort is pervasive (FC 44).

***On poverty and family.*** The family plays a fundamental role in the prevention of poverty. This is the constant view of *Rerum novarum* and the early twentieth century Encyclicals (RN 13). Families, by forming the first network of solidarity, are the most efficient and reliable source of help to the poor (FC 43; 50). In modern vocabulary, families are the first and main provider of human security, something that was included in the Charter of the rights of the Family: “The extended family system, where it exists, should be held in esteem and helped to carry out better its traditional role of solidarity and mutual assistance.” Charter, art. 6c).

The preferential option of the Church for the poor and marginalized obviously also extend to the household of poor families (SRS 42). The magisterium frequently reminds us of how poverty undermines a family’s stability and increases its vulnerability (QA 61; FC 85). Poverty affects the material basis of the family, its income and its capacity to help each other and show solidarity for the weakest (QA 135). Relationships within the family then become competitive about their resources and thus the family link grows ever more fragile (FC 81). Poverty will also adversely affect the education of children, their work and their social opportunities (Charter K).

Therefore the promotion of the family through adequate policies by States or the International community is not only required but should become one of the priorities of governments (GS 52). Housing, education, social security should concentrate on the family necessities to strengthen their capacity for the common good of society (FC 85).

***On business and family,*** as said before, we were unable to find any significant documents of the magisterium. One eventually finds brief references to the family as unit of production (MM 85-142), its importance for development (PP 38), its role as early school for work or the important values it creates for economic activities (LE 10; 19), but no document really dwells on the relationship between family and business<sup>5</sup>. It clearly is a domain of future development.

## NOTES

1. Pope Francis, We Must Foster a New Human Ecology, 24 November, 2014.
2. “The family: the “society” of a man’s house - a society very small, one must admit, but none the less a true society, and one older than any State. Consequently, it has rights and duties peculiar to itself which are quite independent of the State” *Rerum novarum*, 11.
3. See for the whole paragraph the charter of rights of the family, 1983.
4. The Charter of the family has an article on dedicated to migrants:
5. “The families of migrants have the right to the same protection as that accorded other families. a) The families of immigrants have the right to respect for their own culture and to receive support and assistance towards their integration into the community to which they contribute. b) Emigrant workers have the right to see their family united as soon as possible. c) Refugees have the right to the assistance of public authorities and International Organizations in facilitating the reunion of their families.” Charter of the Family, 1983, §12.
6. The most obvious mention is probably : “But if we hold to a human and Christian concept of man and the family, we are bound to consider as an ideal that form of enterprise which is modelled on the basis of a community of persons working together for the advancement of their mutual interests in accordance with the principles of justice and Christian teaching.” (MM 142).

## ABBREVIATIONS

RR. *Rerum novarum* (1891)  
 QA. *Quadregesimo anno* (1931)  
 MM. *Mater et magistra* (1961)  
 PT. *Pacem in terris* (1963)  
 GS. *Gaudium et spes* (1965)  
 AA. *Apostolicam actuositatem* (1965)  
 PP. *Populorum progressio* (1967)  
 LE. *Laborem exercens* (1981)  
 FC. *Familiaris consortio* (1981)  
 CA. *Centesimus annus* (1991)  
 CV. *Caritas in veritate* (2009)  
 EG. *Evangelii gaudium* (2013)



# ***ADDRESS ON THE MIGRANT FAMILY FOR THE 93RD WORLD DAY OF MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES***

POPE BENEDICT XVI

18 October 2006

**D**ear Brothers and Sisters!  
On the occasion of the coming World Day of Migrants and Refugees, and looking at the Holy Family of Nazareth, icon of all families, I would like to invite you to reflect on the condition of the migrant family. The evangelist Matthew narrates that shortly after the birth of Jesus, Joseph was forced to leave for Egypt by night, taking the child and his mother with him, in order to flee the persecution of king Herod (cf. Mt 2:13-15). Making a comment on this page of the Gospel, my venerable Predecessor, the Servant of God Pope Pius XII, wrote in 1952: “The family of Nazareth in exile, Jesus, Mary and Joseph, emigrants and taking refuge in Egypt to escape the fury of an evil king, are the model, the example and the support of all emigrants and pilgrims of every age and every country, of all refugees of any condition who, compelled by persecution and need, are forced to abandon their homeland, their beloved relatives, their neighbors, their dear friends, and move to a foreign land” (Exsul familia, AAS 44, 1952, 649). In this misfortune experienced by

the Family of Nazareth, obliged to take refuge in Egypt, we can catch a glimpse of the painful condition in which all migrants live, especially, refugees, exiles, evacuees, internally displaced persons, those who are persecuted. We can take a quick look at the difficulties that every migrant family lives through, the hardships and humiliations, the deprivation and fragility of millions and millions of migrants, refugees and internally displaced people. The Family of Nazareth reflects the image of God safeguarded in the heart of every human family, even if disfigured and weakened by emigration.

The theme of the next World Day of Migrants and Refugees – The migrant family – is in continuity with those of 1980, 1986 and 1993. It intends to underline further the commitment of the Church not only in favor of the individual migrant, but also of his family, which is a place and resource of the culture of life and a factor for the integration of values. The migrant’s family meets many difficulties. The distance of its members from one another and unsuccessful reunification often re-

sult in breaking the original ties. New relationships are formed and new affections arise. Some migrants forget the past and their duties, as they are subjected to the hard trial of distance and solitude. If the immigrant family is not ensured of a real possibility of inclusion and participation, it is difficult to expect its harmonious development. The International Convention for the protection of the rights of all migrant workers and members of their families, which was enforced on July 1st, 2003, intends to defend men and women migrant workers and the members of their respective families. This means that the value of the family is recognized, also in the sphere of emigration, which is now a structural phenomenon of our societies. The Church encourages the ratification of the international legal instruments that aim to defend the rights of migrants, refugees and their families and, through its various Institutions and Associations, offers its advocacy that is becoming more and more necessary. To this end, it has opened Centres where migrants are listened to, Houses where they are welcomed, Offices for services offered to persons and families, with other initiatives set up to respond to the growing needs in this field.

Much is already being done for the integration of the families of immigrants, although much still remains to be done. There are real difficulties connected with some "defense mechanisms" on the part of the first generation immigrants, which run the risk of becoming an obstacle to the greater maturity of

the young people of the second generation. This is why it is necessary to provide for legislative, juridical and social intervention to facilitate such an integration. In recent times, there is an increase in the number of women who leave their countries of origin in search of better conditions of life, in view of more promising professional prospects. However, women who end up as victims of trafficking of human beings and of prostitution are not few in number. In family reunification, social workers, especially religious women, can render an appreciated service of mediation that merits our gratitude more and more.

Regarding the integration of the families of immigrants, I feel it my duty to call your attention to the families of refugees, whose conditions seem to have gone worse in comparison with the past, also specifically regarding the reunification of family nuclei. In the camps assigned to them, in addition to logistic difficulties, and those of a personal character linked to the trauma and emotional stress caused by the tragic experiences they went through, sometimes there is also the risk of women and children being involved in sexual exploitation, as a survival mechanism. In these cases an attentive pastoral presence is necessary. Aside from giving assistance capable of healing the wounds of the heart, pastoral care should also offer the support of the Christian community, able to restore the culture of respect and have the true value of love found again. It is necessary to encourage those who are interiorly-

wrecked to recover trust in themselves. Everything must also be done to guarantee the rights and dignity of the families and to assure them housing facilities according to their needs. Refugees are asked to cultivate an open and positive attitude towards their receiving society and maintain an active willingness to accept offers to participate in building together an integrated community that would be a “common household” for all.

Among migrants, there is a category that needs to be considered in a special way: the students from other countries, who are far from home, without an adequate knowledge of the language, at times without friends and often with a scholarship that is insufficient for their needs. Their condition is even worse if they are married. Through its Institutions, the Church exerts every effort to render the absence of family support for these young students less painful. It helps them integrate in the cities that receive them, by putting them in contact with families that are willing to offer them hospitality and facilitate

knowing one another. As I had the opportunity to say on another occasion, helping foreign students is “an important field of pastoral action... Indeed, young people who leave their own country in order to study encounter many problems and especially the risk of an identity crisis” (L’Osservatore Romano, 15 December 2005).

Dear Brothers and Sisters, may the World Day of Migrants and Refugees become a useful occasion to build awareness, in the ecclesial community and public opinion, regarding the needs and problems, as well as the positive potentialities of migrant families. My thoughts go in a special way to those who are directly involved in the vast phenomenon of migration, and to those who expend their pastoral energy in the service of human mobility. The words of the apostle Paul, “*caritas Christi urget nos*” (2 Cor 5:14), urge us to give ourselves preferentially to our brothers and sisters who are most in need. With these sentiments, I invoke divine assistance on each one and I affectionately impart to all a special Apostolic Blessing.

# ***ADDRESS TO PARTICIPANTS IN THE INTERNATIONAL COLLOQUIUM ON THE COMPLEMENTARITY BETWEEN MAN AND WOMAN***

POPE FRANCIS

Rome, 17 Novembre 2014

**D**ear Brothers and Sisters, I cordially greet you and I thank Cardinal Müller for the words with which he introduced this meeting.

1. I would like to begin by sharing a reflection on the theme of your colloquium. “Complementarity” is a precious word, with multiple values. It can refer to various situations in which one component completes another or compensates for a lack in the other. However, complementarity is much more than this. Christians find its meaning in the First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians, where the Apostle says that the Spirit has endowed each one with different gifts in order that, as limbs join the human body for the good of the organism as a whole, so the talents of each one contribute to the benefit of all (cf. 1 Cor 12). To reflect upon complementarity is but to ponder the dynamic harmonies which lie at the heart of all Creation. This is a key word: harmony. The Creator made every complementarity, so that the Holy Spirit, the Author of harmo-

ny, could create this harmony.

It is fitting that you have gathered here in this international colloquium to explore the theme of the complementarity between man and woman. In effect, this complementarity lies at the foundation of marriage and the family, which is the first school where we learn to appreciate our talents and those of others, and where we begin to acquire the art of living together. For most of us, the family is the principal place in which we begin to “breathe” values and ideals, as we develop our full capacity for virtue and charity. At the same time, as we know, in families tensions arise: between egoism and altruism, between reason and passion, between immediate desires and long-term goals, and so on. But families also provide the environment in which these tensions are resolved: this is important. When we speak of complementarity between man and woman in this context, we must not confuse the term with the simplistic idea that all the roles and relationships of both sexes are confined to a single and

static model. Complementarity assumes many forms, since every man and every woman brings their personal contribution — personal richness, their own charisma — to the marriage and to the upbringing of their children. Thus, complementarity becomes a great treasure. It is not only an asset but is also a thing of beauty.

2. Marriage and the family are in crisis today. We now live in a culture of the temporary, in which more and more people reject marriage as a public obligation. This revolution of customs and morals has often waved “the flag of freedom”, but it has, in reality, brought spiritual and material devastation to countless human beings, especially the poorest and most vulnerable. It is ever more evident that the decline of the culture of marriage is associated with increased poverty and a host of other social ills that disproportionately affect women, children and the elderly. It is always they who suffer the most in this crisis.

The crisis of the family has produced a human ecological crisis, for social environments, like natural environments, need protection. Although humanity has come to understand the need to address the conditions that threaten our natural environment, we have been slow — we have been slow in our culture, even in our Catholic culture — we have been slow to recognize that even our social environments are at risk. It is therefore essential that we foster a new human ecology and make it move forward.

3. It is necessary to insist on the

fundamental pillars that govern a nation: its intangible assets. The family is the foundation of co-existence and a guarantee against social fragmentation. Children have a right to grow up in a family with a father and a mother capable of creating a suitable environment for the child’s growth and emotional development. This is why, in the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, I stressed the “indispensable” contribution of marriage to society, a contribution which “transcends the feelings and momentary needs of the couple” (n. 66). And this is why I am grateful to you for the emphasis that your colloquium has placed on the benefits that marriage can provide children, the spouses themselves, and society.

In these days, as you reflect on the complementarity between man and woman, I urge you to emphasize yet another truth about marriage: that the permanent commitment to solidarity, fidelity and fruitful love responds to the deepest longings of the human heart. Let us think especially of the young people who represent our future: it is important that they should not let the harmful mentality of the temporary affect them, but rather that they be revolutionaries with the courage to seek strong and lasting love, in other words, to go against the current: this must be done. I would like to say one thing about this: we must not fall into the trap of being limited by ideological concepts. The family is an anthropological fact, and consequently a social, cultural fact, etc. We cannot qualify it with ideologi-

cal concepts which are compelling at only one moment in history, and then decline. Today there can be no talk of the conservative family or the progressive family: family is family! Do not allow yourselves to be qualified by this, or by other ideological concepts. The family has a force of its own.

May this colloquium be a source of inspiration for all who seek to support and strengthen the union of man and woman in marriage as

a unique, natural, fundamental and beautiful good for people, families, communities and societies.

In the same context I would like to confirm that, God willing, I will go to Philadelphia in September 2015 for the Eighth World Meeting of Families.

I thank you for the prayers with which you accompany my service to the Church. I too pray for you and I bless you from my heart. Thank you very much.

# *CHARTER OF THE RIGHTS OF THE FAMILY*

HOLY SEE

October 22, 1983

Considering that:

A. The rights of the person, even though they are expressed as rights of the individual, have a fundamental social dimension which finds an innate and vital expression in the family;

B. the family is based on marriage, that intimate union of life in complementarity between a man and a woman which is constituted in the freely contracted and publicly expressed indissoluble bond of matrimony and is open to the transmission of life;

C. marriage is the natural institution to which the mission of transmitting life is exclusively entrusted;

D. the family, a natural society, exists prior to the State or any other community, and possesses inherent rights which are inalienable;

E. 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.

F. the family is the place where

different generations come together and help one another to grow in human wisdom and to harmonize the rights of individuals with other demands of social life;

G. the family and society, which are mutually linked by vital and organic bonds, have a complementary function in the defense and advancement of the good of every person and of humanity;

H. the experience of different cultures throughout history has shown the need for society to recognize and defend the institution of the family;

I. society, and in a particular manner the State and International Organizations, must protect the family through measures of a political, economic, social and juridical character, which aim at consolidating the unity and stability of the family so that it can exercise its specific function;

J. the rights, the fundamental needs, the well-being and the values of the family, even though they are progressively safeguarded in some cases, are often ignored and not rarely undermined by laws, institutions and socio-economic programs;

## *¶ Preamble*



K. many families are forced to live in situations of poverty which prevent them from carrying out their role with dignity;

L. the Catholic Church, aware that the good of the person, of society and of the Church herself passes by way of the family, has always held it part of her mission to proclaim to all the plan of God instilled in human nature concerning marriage and the family, to promote these two institutions and to defend them against all those who attack them;

M. the Synod of Bishops celebrated in 1980 explicitly recommended that a Charter of the Rights of the Family be drawn up and circulated to all concerned;

the Holy See, having consulted the Bishops' Conferences, now presents this "Charter of the Rights of the Family" and urges all States, International Organizations, and all interested Institutions and persons to promote respect for these rights, and to secure their effective recognition and observance.

### **Article 1**

All persons have the right to the free choice of their state of life and thus to marry and establish a family or to remain single.

a) Every man and every woman, having reached marriageable age and having the necessary capacity, has the right to marry and establish a family without any discrimination whatsoever; legal restrictions to the exercise of this right, whether they be of a permanent or temporary nature, can be introduced only when they are required by

grave and objective demands of the institution of marriage itself and its social and public significance; they must respect in all cases the dignity and the fundamental rights of the person.

b) Those who wish to marry and establish a family have the right to expect from society the moral, educational, social and economic conditions which will enable them to exercise their right to marry in all maturity and responsibility.

c) The institutional value of marriage should be upheld by the public authorities; the situation of non-married couples must not be placed on the same level as marriage duly contracted.

### **Article 2**

Marriage cannot be contracted except by free and full consent duly expressed by the spouses.

a) With due respect for the traditional role of the families in certain cultures in guiding the decision of their children, all pressure which would impede the choice of a specific person as spouse is to be avoided.

b) The future spouses have the right to their religious liberty. Therefore to impose as a prior condition for marriage a denial of faith or a profession of faith which is contrary to conscience, constitutes a violation of this right.

c) The spouses, in the natural complementarity which exists between man and woman, enjoy the same dignity and equal rights regarding the marriage.

### **Article 3**

The spouses have the inalienable

right to found a family and to decide on the spacing of births and the number of children to be born, taking into full consideration their duties towards themselves, their children already born, the family and society, in a just hierarchy of values and in accordance with the objective moral order which excludes recourse to contraception, sterilization and abortion.

a) The activities of public authorities and private organizations which attempt in any way to limit the freedom of couples in deciding about their children constitute a grave offense against human dignity and justice.

b) In international relations, economic aid for the advancement of peoples must not be conditioned on acceptance of programs of contraception, sterilization or abortion.

c) The family has a right to assistance by society in the bearing and rearing of children. Those married couples who have a large family have a right to adequate aid and should not be subjected to discrimination.

#### **Article 4**

Human life must be respected and protected absolutely from the moment of conception.

a) Abortion is a direct violation of the fundamental right to life of the human being.

b) Respect of the dignity of the human being excludes all experimental manipulation or exploitation of the human embryo.

c) All interventions on the genetic heritage of the human person

that are not aimed at correcting anomalies constitute a violation of the right to bodily integrity and contradict the good of the family.

d) Children, both before and after birth, have the right to special protection and assistance, as do their mothers during pregnancy and for a reasonable period of time after childbirth.

e) All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, enjoy the same right to social protection, with a view to their integral personal development.

f) Orphans or children who are deprived of the assistance of their parents or guardians must receive particular protection on the part of society. The State, with regard to foster-care or adoption, must provide legislation which assists suitable families to welcome into their homes children who are in need of permanent or temporary care. This legislation must, at the same time, respect the natural rights of the parents.

g) Children who are handicapped have the right to find in the home and the school an environment suitable to their human development.

#### **Article 5**

Since they have conferred life on their children, parents have the original, primary and inalienable right to educate them; hence they must be acknowledged as the first and foremost educators of their children.

a) Parents have the right to educate their children in conformity with their moral and religious

convictions, taking into account the cultural traditions of the family which favor the good and the dignity of the child; they should also receive from society the necessary aid and assistance to perform their educational role properly.

b) Parents have the right to freely choose schools or other means necessary to educate their children in keeping with their convictions. Public authorities must ensure that public subsidies are so allocated that parents are truly free to exercise this right without incurring unjust burdens. Parents should not have to sustain, directly or indirectly, extra charges which would deny or unjustly limit the exercise of this freedom.

c) Parents have the right to ensure that their children are not compelled to attend classes which are not in agreement with their own moral and religious convictions. In particular, sex education is a basic right of the parents and must always be carried out under their close supervision, whether at home or in educational centers chosen and controlled by them.

d) The rights of parents are violated when a compulsory system of education is imposed by the State from which all religious formation is excluded.

e) The primary right of parents to educate their children must be upheld in all forms of collaboration between parents, teachers and school authorities, and particularly in forms of participation designed to give citizens a voice in the functioning of schools and in the for-

mulation and implementation of educational policies.

f) The family has the right to expect that the means of social communication will be positive instruments for the building up of society, and will reinforce the fundamental values of the family. At the same time the family has the right to be adequately protected, especially with regard to its youngest members, from the negative effects and misuse of the mass media.

### **Article 6**

The family has the right to exist and to progress as a family.

a) Public authorities must respect and foster the dignity, lawful independence, privacy, integrity and stability of every family.

b) Divorce attacks the very institution of marriage and of the family.

c) The extended family system, where it exists, should be held in esteem and helped to carry out better its traditional role of solidarity and mutual assistance, while at the same time respecting the rights of the nuclear family and the personal dignity of each member.

### **Article 7**

Every family has the right to live freely its own domestic religious life under the guidance of the parents, as well as the right to profess publicly and to propagate the faith, to take part in public worship and in freely chosen programs of religious instruction, without suffering discrimination.

### **Article 8**

The family has the right to exercise its social and political function

in the construction of society.

a) Families have the right to form associations with other families and institutions, in order to fulfill the family's role suitably and effectively, as well as to protect the rights, foster the good and represent the interests of the family.

b) On the economic, social, juridical and cultural levels, the rightful role of families and family associations must be recognized in the planning and development of programs which touch on family life.

### **Article 9**

Families have the right to be able to rely on an adequate family policy on the part of public authorities in the juridical, economic, social and fiscal domains, without any discrimination whatsoever.

a) Families have the right to economic conditions which assure them a standard of living appropriate to their dignity and full development. They should not be impeded from acquiring and maintaining private possessions which would favor stable family life; the laws concerning inheritance or transmission of property must respect the needs and rights of family members.

b) Families have the right to measures in the social domain which take into account their needs, especially in the event of the premature death of one or both parents, of the abandonment of one of the spouses, of accident, or sickness or invalidity, in the case of unemployment, or whenever the family has to bear extra burdens on behalf of its members for reasons of old age,

physical or mental handicaps or the education of children.

c) The elderly have the right to find within their own family or, when this is not possible, in suitable institutions, an environment which will enable them to live their later years of life in serenity while pursuing those activities which are compatible with their age and which enable them to participate in social life.

d) The rights and necessities of the family, and especially the value of family unity, must be taken into consideration in penal legislation and policy, in such a way that a detainee remains in contact with his or her family and that the family is adequately sustained during the period of detention.

### **Article 10**

Families have a right to a social and economic order in which the organization of work permits the members to live together, and does not hinder the unity, well-being, health and the stability of the family, while offering also the possibility of wholesome recreation.

a) Remuneration for work must be sufficient for establishing and maintaining a family with dignity, either through a suitable salary, called a "family wage," or through other social measures such as family allowances or the remuneration of the work in the home of one of the parents; it should be such that mothers will not be obliged to work outside the home to the detriment of family life and especially of the education of the children.

b) The work of the mother in the

home must be recognized and respected because of its value for the family and for society.

#### **Article 11**

The family has the right to decent housing, fitting for family life and commensurate to the number of the members, in a physical environment that provides the basic services for the life of the family and the community.

#### **Article 12**

The families of migrants have the right to the same protection as that

accorded other families.

a) The families of immigrants have the right to respect for their own culture and to receive support and assistance towards their integration into the community to which they contribute.

b) Emigrant workers have the right to see their family united as soon as possible.

c) Refugees have the right to the assistance of public authorities and International Organizations in facilitating the reunion of their families.

# ***ADDRESS ON THE FAMILY AS A RESOURCE FOR SOCIETY ON THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UN YEAR OF THE FAMILY***

H.E. ARCHBISHOP VINCENZO PAGLIA

15 May 2014

**I**t is an honor and a pleasure to address you in this Event being conducted under the auspices of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in preparation for the Twentieth Anniversary of the International Year of the Family. I offer my sincere thanks to His Excellency, the Most Reverend Francis A. Chullikatt, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations, for all he has done to make this Event possible.

As the Department has emphasized, the Anniversary is an “opportunity to refocus on the role of families in development; take stock of recent trends in family policy development; share good practices in family policy making; review challenges faced by families worldwide and recommend solutions.”

As well, I am in agreement with Resolution 2012/10 adopted by ECOSOC that stresses the need “for undertaking concerted actions to strengthen family-centered policies and programs as part of an in-

tegrated, comprehensive approach to development”; and that invites States, civil society organizations and academic institutions “to continue providing information on their activities in support of the objectives of and preparations for the twentieth anniversary.”

That’s the reason why we are here.

As you all know, this is a particularly important time for the whole Catholic world. Our Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI has announced that on February 28th he will retire from his ministry as Supreme Pastor of the Church. This is the first time, in the more than 2000 years of the Church, that a pope has done so of his own free will; and it shows the great spiritual stature of His Holiness. Realizing that age has weakened him significantly, he is stepping aside to a life of prayer and preparation for his eternal reward so that the Church can choose a new successor of Peter who will guide it in fulfilling its mission at this crucial moment in human history.

The Holy See nevertheless considers it very important to speak

to the world whenever possible, particularly about the core issues of life and human relationships, so notwithstanding the loss we feel as a Church, we would not miss this opportunity for me to address you as President of the Pontifical Council for the Family.

The family in fact is the fundamental unit of human society. It is where the generations meet, love, educate, support each other and pass on life from age to age.

This understanding of the family has been embraced by all cultures throughout history. With good reason the Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognizes that: "(1) Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to

found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution. (2) Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses. (3) The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State."

Likewise, the Holy See, recognizing that attention to the family and its rights is crucial in the formulation of government policies, thirty years ago promulgated its Charter of the Rights of the Family to reaffirm the importance of that institution and to strengthen the family's unique role in society.

The Preamble to the Charter reads: "The rights of the person, even though ... expressed as rights

of the individual, have a fundamental social dimension which finds an innate and vital expression in the family." And therefore, "based on marriage, that intimate union of life in complementarity between a man and a woman which is constituted in the freely contracted and publicly expressed indissoluble bond of matrimony and is open to the transmission of life," the family should be protected and promoted by society and by the State.

Thus, in the Charter, the common experience of humankind finds an explicit and forceful documentary affirmation.

For this reason, I would like speak about the family as the fundamental resource of society, the source of social capital and the birthright of all humanity. Indeed the stability of any society depends *pari passu* on the stability of the families from which it springs.

Today, however, the family is threatened on many sides, and its extinction is prophesied time and again. Nevertheless it continually exhibits a vigor much greater than that of the many forces which have tried to eliminate it as a relic of the past and as obstacle to the emancipation of the individual and the creation of a more free, egalitarian and happy society.

But I can tell you now, without any hesitation, that in all our research the family--mother, father and children--notwithstanding the many attacks to which it is subject--comes first in the hearts of the world's peoples; and studies show that the great majority of



young people look forward happily to marriage as a lifelong faithful union with their husband or wife.

And the fact that the family comes first in the hearts of the people is further proof that it is the foundation of society itself, and indeed that it is the primary and the richest of humanity's resources

Unfortunately, that vision is opposed by cultural currents that for example consider it impossible to love someone forever. But when I hear things like that, I ask myself how can a young man profess, with great enthusiasm, undying love for his favorite sports team but can't do the same for his wife! Clearly something is wrong!

To provide what I hope are some useful guideposts, I would like to expand my discussion to four separate areas, drawing on certain sociological studies promoted by the Pontifical Council for the Family.

First, the couple and marriage. The fact of getting married constitutes an added value for persons and for society, in that the marriage contract enhances the quality of the relationship of the couple and has important positive consequences (biological, psychological, economic and social) for children and adults. Simple cohabitation is not equal to marriage because it renders relations unstable and creates major uncertainty in the lives of children. Divorce itself (or the choice of single parenthood) increases the risk of school failure for children. The stability of family relations is a precious good, and when it is lacking, all members of the family are

at risk. In particular, marriage stability is decisive for the successful socialization of children. Divorce, as well as birth outside marriage, increases the risk of poverty for children and mothers. Stepfamilies, reconstituted families and blended families experience many problems with respect to relations between the new parents and the children of their former unions.

On the other hand, marriage, between a man and a woman, generates benefits that other forms of "living together" do not. Those other forms are just not the same as marriage.

Second, Intergenerational Concerns. Natural families experience solidarity between generations much more frequently and more deeply than other forms of life in common. Children who live with their own biological parents enjoy better physical and psychological health, and experience more trust and hope in life, in comparison with those who live in other contexts. For example, adolescent children of married couples are at less risk of developing deviant behaviors (including abuse of alcohol and drugs) than those living with single parents, unmarried couples or separated couples.

The analysis of three different family structures, intact two-parent families, blended families and single-parent families, demonstrates the greater fragility of the latter two patterns. In blended families following separation, the parents have major difficulties in developing their educational role and are

more often in disagreement with each other as regards educational themes. Single parents or those separated or divorced are characterized by major distrust of external social contexts and develop a privatized vision of the family. Children of divorced parents exhibit increased incidence of major psychological illnesses and states of anxiety.

Even worse, studies show that children raised without a father account for a very high percentage of the homeless, of adolescents who commit homicides, of adolescent suicides and of incarcerated youth. This last data gives serious grounds for caution when we speak of alternative "families." All too often, decisions, even legislative decisions, seem to be made without taking into account the tragic consequences that might result.

Third, Family and Work. It is crucial to remember that the family constitutes an incredibly rich resource for the world of work, much more than the world of work benefits the family. In other words, the world of work "exploits" the family-resource and does not take sufficiently into account the demands of family life. It is enormously difficult for families, especially those with children, to harmonize family and professional life. As a consequence, the world of work, recognizing the importance of the family to human society, should organize itself in a way that puts the needs of the family first.

In that context, and particularly during times of high unemployment, the actions of government as

they affect families must be examined carefully. The welfare state is characterized by family assistance programs principally intended to address situations where the family is broken, unstable or lacking in internal resources. In these cases the state attempts in effect to be a substitute for the family, or at least for some missing element of the family.

But by substituting itself for the family, the welfare state produces a kind of vicious circle where instead of strengthening family relationships, it weakens them even further, and thus creates increased need for government assistance. Increased need leads to crisis, however, because it gives rise to expectations that the government cannot hope to meet, firstly because financial resources are never unlimited, but more importantly because government cannot itself function as a family, only as an agency. It thus becomes clear how important it is for government programs not only to promote family "mainstreaming" but more importantly for the government to have a correct understanding of the family when formulating public policy and to respect subsidiarity, which should be a guiding principle in any governmental action.

Fourth, Family and Social Capital. Free and democratic political and economic processes are possible only where there is a strong social fabric, where the public and civil sphere requires and rewards basic human values, promotes the common good and ensures the cir-

cumstances in which families can be created and thrive.

But when speaking of social fabric, it is important to remember that, in the words of Alexis de Tocqueville, “modern democracy needs a solid and stable family.” This means that not only does the family benefit from a strong social fabric, but as it builds and strengthens relationships it is also the creator of primary social capital. Thus, using Adam Smith’s terminology, the family, as the creator of the fabric that it needs, can be regarded as an important source of “the wealth of nations.”

These four considerations bring us to a very clear, very precise conclusion: the natural family (marriage, father, mother, children) is and remains a vital resource for society.

Some may say that the family has changed over the centuries, but we must also realize that, whatever circumstances families may encounter on an empirical level, the family’s constitutional genome does not cease to be the source and origin of society. Without this ‘social genome,’ society would lose the quality and power of the family as a living organism (the fundamental cell) which, rather than being a burden on society, constitutes the primary vehicle for the humanization of persons and social life.

Moreover, the fact that the family is a primary school of love and gratitude is manifested in a particular way in families where weak and disabled members are present, because the person in difficulty requires a special organization of

family life. Families in such circumstances develop specific virtues that can be called empowerment and resilience. Such virtues bring with them social advantages that the family with disabled or dependent members offers to society. As a matter of fact, the effort that these families undertake for the rehabilitation and social inclusion of their disabled or dependent member in all spheres of society, from school to work, reflects a humanizing belief in the possibility of social inclusion and human solidarity, in particular with regard to the weakest and most marginalized. These families provide domestic care for the seriously disabled, thereby activating the virtues that family members practice in being care-givers, each according to his or her specific capabilities. Another example of families that clearly generate benefits for all of society can be found in those that adopt children or act as foster parents.

Dear friends, in contemporary debate there is much discussion of different types “families” in the plural, and disagreements are fairly marked, but on one point I believe that all are in agreement: the natural family progression—marriage, mother, father, children—is the one in which our humanity is best and most surely realized and the one which—while no one in other circumstances is to be marginalized or denied solidarity—society is called on to regard most highly.

In ECOSOC Resolution 2012/10 Member States are encouraged to implement effective national poli-

cies, strategies and programs to address family poverty, social exclusion, work-family balance and intergenerational solidarity. Everyone who cares about the family should welcome all these goals, but all efforts undertaken to reach them should reflect commitment to and respect for the family as human so-

ciety's foundation, source and protection.

And I would add that the Holy See's Charter of the Rights of the Family, which I want not only to commemorate but also to promote among all nations, can well serve as a model for the tools to be used as those goals are pursued.

# ***STATEMENT OF THE HOLY SEE TO THE UN IN GENEVA AT THE 2014 INTERNATIONAL DIALOGUE ON MIGRATION***

H.E. ARCHBISHOP SILVANO M. TOMASI

Geneva, 8 October 2014

**M**r. Chairman,  
The migrant family is a critical component of the growing phenomenon of migration in our globalized world. Thus the Delegation of the Holy See finds it most opportune to have chosen this topic for reflection at the 2014 International Dialogue on Migration (IDM).

1. Migrants very often move out of concern for the needs of their families; at times, they even risk their lives on flimsy boats or in dangerous deserts in the hope of ensuring their families a decent life as the IOM Report documents. Through their work, the taxes they pay, the new businesses they start and a variety of services they provide, most migrants offer a positive economic and social contribution to the receiving societies. Women domestic workers, for example, leave their children behind in the home country in order to become caregivers for children, disabled and elderly persons abroad. While migrants are a positive presence in their host societies, they face the

risk that their own children and relatives remain in the shadow and deprived of their affection at home. The remittances sent home focus the debate on the financial benefits generated by migrants. While this money is important to improve health and education for the family members left behind, it does not quite compensate for other needs: human affection, a necessary presence to educate in values and integrity, a reference model for responsible behaviour, especially for young people. The human emptiness felt when a father or mother emigrates becomes a reminder of the ambivalence of emigration and of the fundamental right to be able to stay at home in dignity. Especially when mothers emigrate, other negative consequences emerge: children's school attendance declines, early marriages of adolescent girls increase, and there is a heightened risk of drug abuse. As Pope Francis recently stated, "it is necessary to respond to the globalization of migration with the globalization of charity and cooperation, in such a

way as to make the conditions of migrants more humane. At the same time, greater efforts are needed to guarantee the easing of conditions, often brought about by war or famine, which compel whole peoples to leave their native countries.”

2. Children, therefore, as well as elderly persons and spouses left behind, must become a high priority in any migration policy and debate: they are particularly vulnerable, and hence should receive special protection. Policy and program development should aim at maximizing the benefits of remittances, limiting the negative effects of migration and emphasizing family ties as a primary concern in the management of immigration by States. Policy formulation often treats family and labor migration as two distinct realms, “social” and “economic.” In reality, the two concepts are closely intertwined. In the planning by the international community and in discussions focused on the post-2015 Development Agenda, migration must have a proper place, not only as functional to development and demography, but as a major human rights commitment aimed at safeguarding the dignity of every human person and the centrality of the family.

3. Indeed an urgently needed immigration reform involves the formulation of a legal framework that helps keep families together. The life and dignity of every human person is lived within the family. All children need their parents. Parents have the responsibility to protect and nurture their children, and

yet deported parents are prevented from living out this fundamental vocation. Too many families are now torn apart. By allowing children to emigrate unaccompanied further problems arise as they are exposed to lawlessness and despair. The family structure, however, should be the place where hope, compassion, justice and mercy are taught most effectively. Family is the basic unit of coexistence, its foundation, and the ultimate remedy against social fragmentation.

4. Finally, achievable measures could be implemented in a realistic and sensitive manner. Migrants, who are restricted or prevented from traveling home in order to provide personal care for elderly parents or affection to their kin, should be entitled to occasional leaves and should benefit from special prices for their trip home. Interest fees for the transfer of remittances must be lowered. The process to obtain a visa for a spouse or close family members (which in certain countries takes several years) needs to be speeded up. Ad hoc “family counselors” to serve in regions with a very high rate of migrants should be engaged in order to provide assistance and advice to members of the family “left behind” and to facilitate timely reunification of the family. In fact, when return migrants revert to day-to-day interaction with their societies of origin, they experience a “reverse culture shock.” The changes in family dynamics that result from migration do not end when the migrant returns to the society of origin; in fact, migrants

generally return to a family situation that is very different from that before departure. Family members can become “strangers” since they have been absent from each others’ lives and since relations between them are largely based on the sending of money and goods or sporadically maintained by new forms of Internet communications.

5. In conclusion, it is mandatory to avoid treating the “left behind” population merely as passive recipients of the effects of migration. In this context, family migra-

tion, needs to be reconceived using frameworks of trans-nationalism that grant more flexibility to the movement of people, especially in countries where the presence of the family of the migrant workers is legally impeded. Healthy interaction and personal relations among family members are obstructed by borders. States and civil society are prompted by their own future to give priority to the family and thus make migrations a more positive experience for all.



# ***SERVING THE FAMILY AND LIFE*** ***SERVING THE HUMAN PERSON***

MGR. CARLOS SIMON VAZQUEZ

*Sotto-Segretario del Pontificio Consiglio per la Famiglia*

**I**n his Letter to Families, written on the occasion of the International Year of Families, Saint John Paul II spoke of a “heritage of truth about the family, which from the beginning has been a treasure for the Church [...], the treasure of Christian truth about the family.” (n.23) Since then, “this treasure [that] has been examined in depth in the documents of the Second Vatican Council, [...] in the Encyclical *Humanae Vitae* of Pope Paul VI [...] and in the Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris Consortio*”, and the Church’s concern for this “treasure” has continued to evolve, as manifested by yet more magisterial declarations such as the Letter to Families (1994), or additionally, other very significant documents such as the Charter of the Rights of the Family (1984) and the Catechism of the Catholic Church, that latter of which dedicates considerable articles, chapters, sections and parts to the institutions of marriage and the family (1992).

Other texts as well, though not

written with the family as such as their direct object, must be added to this treasure of truth regarding the family, as they touch upon questions strictly related to the identity and mission of the family, such as human sexuality and the beginning, developmental processes, and ending of human life.

Among these documents we may cite the Declaration on Procured Abortion (1974), the declaration *Persona Humana* (1975), the declaration *Iura et bona* (1980), the letter *Homosexualitatis problema* (1986), the instruction *Donum vitae* (1987), the apostolic letter *Mulieris dignitatem* (1988), the encyclical *Evangelium vitae* (1995) and the instruction *Dignitas personae* (2008). All of these latter documents were published by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, excluding the apostolic letter *Mulieris dignitatem* and the encyclical *Evangelium vitae*, issued by John Paul II.

The questions and themes coming together in this treasure of truth are family, marriage, human life and

sexuality. At the level of the teaching of the Magisterium of the Church, a division into two groups can be seen in the last 50 years: one regarding the family, which the Magisterium always considers coupled to marriage, and the other regarding human life and sexuality. It is important to keep in mind that the Church has published many other documents on these issues, and that it is not always possible to make a rigid distinction between them, as is the case of *Humanae vitae*. Notwithstanding, the number of documents already mentioned reveal how the Church -which in recent years has increasingly been expressing itself on the family through its Magisterium- holds a very high degree of concern and love for humanity. This is because it is the human person who is fully alive, that is to say, the concrete person, in his or her situation and circumstances, who is always at the center of the heart of the Church (cf *Gaudium spes*, n. 3). This is the motivation behind the aforementioned documents regarding the family, marriage, human life, and sexuality. It should also be said, furthermore, that these issues or themes present in such documents are intimately connected to each other and thus remain inseparable.

The Church opens this treasure, in the first place, to those who profess the Christian Faith. At the same time the Church – and not without any lesser love or desire to assist – wishes to offer the light of this doctrine to all of humanity. “The Catholic Church, aware that the good

of the person, of society and of the Church herself passes by way of the family, has always held it part of her mission to proclaim to all the plan of God instilled in human nature concerning marriage and the family, to promote these two institutions and to defend them against all those who attack them” (Charter for the Rights of the Family; cf *Familiaris consortio*, nn. 3-46). In doing this, however, the Church does not seek to impose, but only to share the truth that it possesses. Also, human reason can discover without the assistance of the light of the faith, that which the Church teaches on marriage, family, the inviolable dignity of the human person, and the value of life in whatever stage it is found, etc. Faith thus confirms what is inscribed in human nature itself and which every person is able to come to know.

There is a widespread notion that the Church speaks only to say “no” to “solutions” presented by and through other fields of inquiry, such as for example, as if the Church stands against issues concerning experimental sciences, to the problems faced by contemporary culture, or developments which take place within society. This idea is due to an inadequate knowledge of what the Magisterium of the Church actually teaches, as these teachings, in their particular areas, draw their inspiration from and are applications of principles that are always affirmations and expressions of love of humanity. It is clear, moreover, that correct responses and “solutions” to concrete cases can be varied and for

this reason, the Magisterium of the Church – in the interest of a legitimate plurality – places emphasis on “denouncing” those actions that are not coherent with the dignity of the human person and his or her fundamental rights.

### **I. The Good of the Family, our Future and the Patrimony of Humanity**

All the aforementioned documents from the Magisterium of the Church have the family as their object, at least indirectly, and some documents among these should be particularly highlighted: the constitution *Gaudium et spes* of the Second Vatican Council (1965), the apostolic exhortation *Familiaris consortio* (1981), the Charter of the Rights of the Family (1984), the Letter to Families *Gratissimam sane* (1994), and the Catechism of the Catholic Church (1992) – The Sacrament of Matrimony (second part, second section, chapter three, article seven), The Sixth Commandment (third part, second section, second chapter, article six), and its many references to the families (third part, second section, article four). All of these propose the same doctrine, but do so, however, with different points of emphasis in terms of content, modes of presentation, etc. This is due to the focus given to people and their situations, problems, issues, etc., present in the ordinary circumstance in which they find themselves.

The Magisterium of the Church speaks of the family and families, because to promote and protect the family is to promote and protect the future of humanity. It is in the family that the people who form members of society are born, grow, and formed into persons. There is interest, therefore, to correctly ascertain the nature and mission of the family, both internally and externally: its “role” in the construction of society (participation in the education of its members, its responsibilities in public life, politics surrounding the family, etc.).

As Benedict XVI recalled, proceeding in the way of the documents previously mentioned, “the family is a necessary good for peoples, an indispensable foundation for society”, because it is the first school where persons are formed and educated, “it is the setting where men and women are enabled to be born with dignity, and to grow and develop in an integral manner” (Aloc., 18.I.2009). The family is the fundamental place for the person, where the values that make a harmonious development of society possible are safeguarded. The family is, in the divine plan, “the primary place of the ‘humanization’ of the person” and thus for this society as well. This is due to the family being the place where the person is born into, grows, and dies. This function is not realized in the family by the mere fact of living together. It is necessary that the home be a place of “heartfelt acceptance, encounter and dialogue, disinterested availability, generous service and deep solidarity.” It is necessary

***Why the Family? The  
Family as “School” of  
Humanity***

that family members share, above all, time together; but in the main, family life must be transformed into an experience of communion and participation, through formation in the true meaning of liberty, justice, and love. The true meaning of liberty is important because only in this way the human person can act with the responsibility proper to his or her personal dignity. The true meaning of love is important because one must resolve in his or her relationship with others - to every person - to love them for themselves. The Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris consortio* is particularly significant here. The reminder of the social function of the family and the irreplaceable role of the parents in the education and formation of the children is, however, a constant throughout all the contributions of the Magisterium.

**¶ *What family? The Family Founded in Marriage***

**N**ot too long ago it was understood, without need for any further explanation, the meaning conveyed by the term “family.” It was clear that when one spoke of family, it was understood as having its origin in marriage. It is from this perspective that the Church’s message for the family is to be understood, which in a certain way is summarized in the words of *Familiaris consortio* (n. 17): “Families, become what you are.” The action of the family - and also that done in relation to the institution of the family - in facing the diverse problems confronting it, must always respond to the deepest requirements which have their origin in its “being” and identity. Cultural

changes as of late, however, render it necessary to delineate clearly what is meant by using this term. It is not surprising then that the Magisterium of the Church in the past years has referred to the family with expressions such as “the family based on marriage” and to marriage as the “exclusive and indissoluble union between man and woman.” Affirmations such as these are very present in all documents: at times stated succinctly (for example in the Charter of the Rights of the Family) and at other times in more developed manner as in the *Gaudium et spes*, *Familiaris consortio*, *Gratissimam sane*, and the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

Behind this mode of expression there is dual finality: to speak of the “being” or identity of the family, and also to speak of its mission. This perspective, ever present in those issues already mentioned and pertaining to the family, has a particular importance for the Christian family, due to the sacrament of marriage. As marriage responds to the most intimate aspects of the human person, that is, of man and woman, and as God is the Creator of this humanity - male and female, with the desires inscribed within- it follows thus that God is also the Author of marriage and family. “Marriage and the family are not in fact a chance sociological construction, the product of particular historical and financial situations. On the other hand, the question of the right relationship between the man and the woman is rooted in the essential core of the human being and it is only by start-

ing from here that its response can be found.” (Benedict XVI, *Aloc.*, 6. VI. 2005).

One particularity of the Magisterium in recent years has been considering the family as a responsible and creative protagonist in its own sphere of existence and activity, more than just an “object” that can and should be given attention (Pontifical Council for the Family, “*La familia, sujeto activo y responsable de la evangelización*”). Fundamental there is, above all, the necessity for families to be conscious of their call and well formed, in order to appropriately take on board the demands placed upon them. For this reason the documents of the Magisterium, when they analyze or denounce challenging situations that face families, or the risks and dangers that threaten them, such documents seek to describe and give account to such varied situations, as much as they set forth the necessary perspective to realize the family’s mission. Certainly, the Church elucidates on what must be done in the circumstances being considered, as for example, in terms of the steps that should be taken. Yet above all, attention is drawn to the ultimate root of this mission, of the proposed action. The plan of God, Creator and Redeemer of the family, knowledge of Whom is attainable by reason, but brought to fullness by the light of faith, is always the reference point and axis of the explanation.

Marriage and family are realities that are, in a certain sense, distinct and cannot be considered as identical (in a certain sense only, as mar-

riage can and should be considered as the first form of the family). They are in the design of God, however, so closely linked that they cannot be separated. They mutually need and recall each other, in such a way that, as history has sufficiently demonstrated, to consider one isolated from the other is to have an impoverished vision of both. The family without marriage, namely that so-called “family” that does not have its origin in marriage, and that arises from various forms of cohabitating – such as polygamy, *de facto* unions, trial marriages, etc. – cannot compare to the authentic institution of the family. Furthermore, a marriage that is not motivated towards the creation of a family negates one of its essential properties – indissolubility – and ignores one of its two fundamental ends: the procreation and education of children.

This is the reason that, as regards the Magisterium of the Church, her deliberations concerning families are always coupled with her reflections on marriage, including its origin and source. (cf GS 48). It is from marriage that the family receives its configuration and dynamism.

The secret of the family’s success is linked to the fidelity with which it lives the identity from which it is derived: marriage. This is because, firstly, the family is authentic only when it has its origin in marriage. Also, the necessary solidity and vigor to live and be family are given only through fidelity to the structure received from marriage. In the sacrament of marriage –wherein the family is born– the Christian family

finds the nature of its being and mission. In the measure an form that marriage endures, so does the family. The consideration of the marriage covenant -and which Christ raised to the level of a sacrament- is necessary for the family that wishes to recognize and realize its interior truth, not only relating to its being, but also to its historical realization.

“A man and a woman united in marriage, together with their children, form a family.” (CCC, 2202). The family has its foundation in marriage and the conjugal union. This truth is presented in the book of Genesis, and later confirmed by the Lord: “from the beginning the Creator ‘made them male and female’ and said, ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’” (Mt 19, 4-5). “So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, no human being must separate” (Mt 19, 6). This is the truth of marriage upon which the truth of the family is founded (John Paul II, *Aloc.* 8.X.1995, 3).

Sacred Scripture refers continually to the family as an institution founded upon marriage. With the foundation laid down in the story of creation (Gen. 1-3), the books of the Old Testament set forth characteristics of the family, whose ideal remains constant even through the different moments of Israel’s history. In the New Testament, this consideration of the family is continued along the same line, though at the same time a new perspective is introduced. The Lord openly defends

the institution of the family founded upon marriage. He does this in his preaching when he refers to the family as a model for his disciples and to explain the meaning of the Kingdom of God and the actions of God toward humanity. God is like a father who earnestly pursues the welfare of His children (cf Mt 7, 9), who forgives and receives his child when he returns home (Luke 15, 20-32). The Lord also defends the stability of marriage (cf Mt 19, 1-12). But above all, his presence at the wedding feast of Cana is significant (cf Jn 2, 1-11) and most particularly the act of being born into and passing most of his earthly existence in his home in Nazareth.

The family is not the chance effect of the product of an evolution of natural forces; nor is it a human invention or mere cultural creation. On the contrary, marriage corresponds to the most profound truth of the humanity of man and woman, to the intrinsic constitution of the human person. It was willed by God to realize the vocation of the person to love. It is said, thus, that the family is a society instituted by nature and the first society, which gives origin to society at large.

**A**t this point there is no doubt that when the word marriage is used here, it refers to the exclusive and indissoluble union of man and woman, which makes it singular and different in comparison to other uses of the word. We find ourselves, in effect, in a culture in which, a relativism is promoted, even by legislators themselves. A propensity which gives val-

**¶ *What is Marriage?  
Marriage is “One and  
Indissoluble”***



ue and meaning, not according to the ontological nature of that which is being considered, but to the desires of individuals and society. In numerous legal systems marriage has been designated and recognized as any form of union between persons of the same sex.

The sexual difference and the mutual complementarity given by the Creator is the foundation that lies at the basis of the marital union. This is how the Lord interprets it when, in His dialogue with the Pharisees regarding the indissolubility of marriage (cf Mt 19, 5), where our Lord elucidates God's will for marriage in relation to Genesis 1, 27 (Man and woman He created them) and Genesis 2, 24 (For this man leaves... makes one flesh, etc). Also indicative is God's blessing upon man and woman so that they would transmit human life (Gn 1, 28), showing that procreation, on the basis of this sexual difference, is another finality desired by God and is fundamental to marriage. Though the transmission of life is possible through sexual relations outside of marriage, it is undoubtable that the personal dignity of the child necessarily requires the stable union of marriage. This is the sense conveyed by the affirmation that marriage is an institution of natural origin, or put in juridical terms, of "natural law".

Two consequences, among others, come from this and are very important in terms of the value of the family in general and thus also for the Christian. The first consequence is that the identity and mission of the family are inseparably linked to

its origin, which is the indissoluble marriage between a man and a woman. The dissolution of marriage leads to the destruction of the family, and thus to the destruction of society and persons as well. The second consequence is found in the fact it is only possible to perceive, in an adequate manner, the full value and importance of the family and its mission in the development of the person and society from the perspective of its transcendent or divine origin. "Marriage and family have a transcendent relationship with God [...]. Whichever concept or doctrine that does not have this essential relationship of marriage and family with its divine origin and destiny, which transcends our present human experience, would not understand its most profound reality and could not encounter the precise way to solve its problems" (Paul VI, Aloc., 12.II.1966, Authors own translation). Benedict XVI for his part highlights that "in our time, as in times past, the eclipse of God, the spread of ideologies contrary to the family and the degradation of sexual ethics are connected...just as the eclipse of God and the crisis of the family are linked, so the new evangelization is inseparable from the Christian family." (Address at the Plenary Assembly of the Pontifical Council For The Family, 1.XII.2011).

The history of peoples and cultures show sufficiently that notwithstanding any changes in the manifestation of the forms of family throughout the ages, the fact has remained that the family is not an effect of



chance or the product of some sort of evolution of nature. It is not a human invention, nor is it a cultural creation alone. It is, on the contrary, an institution that responds to the most profound truth of the humanity of the human being. It is based in the given and permanent structures of the humanity of the man and woman that transcends the will of individuals and cultural configurations. For this reason, there is something sacred and religious to it, not externally but altogether innate to it; received not from humanity itself, but rather emanating from humanity's very nature. Humanity's own self-awareness perceives this, as seen through the testimony of the vast majority of people throughout the different ages and eras; and that is the clear teaching of Revelation and the Magisterium of the Church.

## **II. The Inviolable Dignity of the Human Person, Man and Woman, and Human Life**

**R**egarding the human person and human life in its various stages, the most important documents after Vatican II, in chronological order, are: the Encyclical *Humanae Vitae* (1968), the Declaration on Procured Abortion (1974), the declaration *Persona Humana* (1975), the declaration *Iura et bona* (1980), the letter *Homo sexualitatis problema* (1986), the instruction *Donum vitae* (1987), the apostolic letter *Mulieris dignitatem* (1988), the encyclical *Evangelium vitae* (1995) and the instruction *Dignitas personae* (2008).

These documents respond to specific problems and situations, though the doctrine that they proclaim transcends the response required to those facts under consideration. It is thus regarding the origin and initial phases of life present in the encyclical *Humanae Vitae* regarding the regulation of births; the instruction *Donum Vitae*, regarding the respect for nascent human life and the dignity of procreation, which then extends into the instruction *Dignitas personae* and its bioethical considerations; the Declaration on Procured Abortion on abortion; and a substantial part of the encyclical *Evangelium vitae* regarding the inviolable value of human life. The fact that voices today are all the more numerous in pushing for the legalization of so called "mercy killing" is an opportunity that the Church has taken to illustrate the false arguments used in support of this legislation (loss of the sense of pain and suffering; false conception regarding human freedom and autonomy; medical progress being such that the life of those gravely ill can be indefinitely prolonged; etc.), and in doing so, yet again, robustly affirms the sacred value and absolutely inviolable nature of human life. We see this in the declaration *Iura et bona* on euthanasia, and also in the encyclical *Evangelium vitae*, in which a large part is dedicated to the inviolability of human life throughout its existence, not only in its initial and final stages. The remaining documents, dealing less directly with the transmission of human life per se, pertain

more directly with human sexuality and the difference between man and woman: the declaration *Persona humana*, which regards certain questions of sexual ethics; the apostolic letter *Homosexualitatis problema* on the pastoral attention to be given to those experiencing homosexual attraction; and the apostolic letter *Mulieris dignitatem*, on the dignity of the vocation of women. It is clear, however, that these offer crucial insights, without which it is not possible to reach the truth of human love, and thus also, a true notion of marriage and family.

With such documents, the Church is seeking to proclaim the “Gospel of Life”, which is central to the message of Jesus (cf *Evangelium vitae*, n. 1) and thus also central to the mission of the Church. The theme of human life has always been an important issue for the Magisterium of the Church. Albeit in diverse forms, the Magisterium continues with this theme, but in the past years has done so in ways that, in a certain sense, are new. For example, considerations now, on the one hand, fall upon new technological advancements allowing medical possibilities previously unimaginable, and on the other hand, upon the reductionist vision of life due to the loss of meaning of human life and existence. The combination of these two factors can give rise to grave dangers for humanity.

At the root of the Magisterium’s action regarding life, there is always the motivating factor of love for humanity. “Just as a century ago [the XIX century] it was the work-

ing classes which were oppressed in their fundamental rights, and the Church very courageously came to their defense by proclaiming the sacrosanct rights of the worker as a person, so now, when another category of persons is being oppressed in the fundamental right to life, the Church feels in duty bound to speak out with the same courage on behalf of those who have no voice. Hers is always the evangelical cry in defense of the world’s poor, those who are threatened and despised and whose human rights are violated. [...] If, at the end of the last century, the Church could not be silent about the injustices of those times, still less can she be silent today, when the social injustices of the past, unfortunately not yet overcome, are being compounded in many regions of the world by still more grievous forms of injustice and oppression, even if these are being presented as elements of progress in view of a new world order.” (*Evangelium vitae*, n. 5)

The Church speaks out in favor of human life in order to denounce those actions that go against it, but above all to proclaim the inviolable dignity in each and every stage of its development – from its very beginning stages to its natural end. The revelation of the “Gospel of Life” is given in the fullest and most definitive sense in Christ. Only in Christ can humanity receive the possibility to know the fullness of truth regarding human life. (cf *Gaudium et spes*, n.22). However, that same truth, in seed form, is already found engraved upon the heart of every

*§ The Goods of Life  
and Human Sexuality,  
Goods of the Person*

man and woman: the “Gospel of life [...] written in the heart of every man and woman, has echoed in every conscience ‘from the beginning’, from the time of creation itself, in such a way that, despite the negative consequences of sin, it can also be known in its essential traits by human reason” (Evangelium vitae, nn. 29-30).

To inquire as to the meaning of life requires one to first inquire as to the meaning of human existence. It is only possible from this starting point to adequately evaluate, for example, the technical contributions regarding human life in whatever stage it is found. As only in Christ is it given to know the full truth of the human person (cf GS, n.22), thus consequently, only in Him does one find an adequate response regarding the dignity of the person and the value and meaning of life, as the mystery of Christ is the perspective from which the Magisterium speaks of the person and of human life. The human person that the Church contemplates in this respect is the person fully alive, called to be and exist in Christ. This perspective, however, as was previously mentioned in the words of Evangelium vitae (nn.29-30), does not devalue or render useless what is perceived through the light of reason alone.

The Church’s Magisterium speaks from an integrated anthropological perspective when it speaks on the subject of life and human sexuality. The perspective taken is one that considers the person in his or her totality of body and spirit, called to

the supernatural life. This, among other things, “presupposes a proper idea of the nature of the human person in his bodily dimension” (cf Familiaris consortio, n.11), capable of recognizing “man in his unique unrepeatable human reality, which keeps intact the image and likeness of God himself.” (Redemptor hominis, n. 13).

In this vision or idea of the human person, Cardinal Ratzinger underlined the fundamental principle that is required when constructing a viewpoint that is necessary to evaluate and answer problems related to human life and sexuality. It consists in a conception of the human being that affirms the substantial unity of the person. The body is not merely a mass of tissue, but contrarily an essential component of the human person. Changes to the human body affect the diverse levels of the human person. As the human person only exists as man and woman, sexuality is a constitutive dimension of the human being; this “is” man or woman. Sexual difference is not a construction stemming from a decision taken voluntarily by the individual or society. The human person is a unique “I” or physiological/spiritual subject. This is what is expressed by the notion that the soul is substantially united to the body, which is its substantial form.

It is impossible to consider having interaction with a person’s body, and not their person. The body is the visible expression of the person. Even though from a scientific perspective – for example, under the microscope in a laboratory – the

human body can be studied as if it was an animal, there exists between the human person and animals an essential difference that reveals the human person to be on a level that is qualitatively superior. It is not that the human body is more than the body of animal – it is that it is something altogether different.

**A**nother fundamental principle, building upon what was previously mentioned and also upon the idea of Cardinal Ratzinger that the Church never insists too much, is again taken from Cardinal Ratzinger, namely that the human person is endowed with such dignity, that he or she can never be considered as an “object”, but always and only as a “subject”. Thus, with the human person it is never licit to establish a relationship of ownership or of production. Sexuality is a means, a language if you will, by which the person is revealed.

To manipulate the human person in any aspect – that is to say, to exercise a direct dominion over him or her – is to surpass not only limits of the ethical nature but also those of a metaphysical nature in the order of creation. The human soul and personal existence – which is linked to the corporality and physical life – is the exclusive patrimony of God, even if phenomenologically speaking is not clearly ascertainable. The fundamental reason behind the dignity of the body and human life lies in the creative act of God, which is taken altogether to new heights in consideration of its elevation to the supernatural order and redemption. Human reason though, is able to

perceive this dignity.

The fundamental ethical criteria in terms of evaluating considerations or contributions regarding the human person – in any stage of existence – is the respect for personal dignity. The personal character proper to the human being demands that, as one possessing absolute dignity, he or she cannot ever be used or treated as a means to an end. The fundamental rule in ethics is that it is the very human person as such who is the end. This is true not only at the macro level of the human species, but also at the level of the individual person. The person transcends his or her condition as an individual member of a species and is unique, new, and unrepeatable.

This dignity of human life comes with the necessary condition of being received as gift. This is a requirement proper to the personal condition of the human being. Only thus is one treated as a person, in a manner that is “disinterested” so to speak. At its heart the requirement is one of a filial personal condition, which as such can only be welcomed and received as gift. That which the Church affirms regarding quality of life, extraordinary treatments, palliative care, the death penalty, and legitimate notion of self-defense is a definitive call to responsibility for life, particularly for the lives of others.

This respect owed to human life does not close the doors in any way to technical interventions carried out in the body, etc. Medical interventions, surgeries, drugs, etc., are ethically licit means to facilitate the

***Human Life and Sexuality, Goods that are not merely Instruments***

§ *Human Life as  
“an All, an Everything”*

life processes and ends written into nature of the human being, who is composed of body and soul. Those types, however, which go against this nature or respond to a reductionist vision of the body, are not licit.

An underlying question here regards the meaning that is to be given to the expression “human life”, because it must be said the term “life” can be applied to realities that are in a certain sense interchangeable. To identify, for example, human life and animal life in parity without observing essential differences would indicate at least a great lack of scientific rigor.

The same observation must be made in regard to human life itself, which can have a variety of meanings associated to the word “life”. Firstly this word can allude to the indispensable condition or requirement for the human being to exist in the world, speaking here of physical or biological life, which is the first and most basic meaning. A second meaning of “life” has to do with the moments of human existence; that is to say, the situations and continuum of earthly existence of the human being. The word can also refer to the fullness of life – according to the designs of God – towards which each one of the phases of the human person’s earthly existence tends to. Accordingly, in the human person, physical life as a meaning of “life” is neither exhausted in and of itself, nor does it represent its supreme good. The same is said also concerning “life”, understood as a phase or situation of earthly human existence.

Neither the bodily life nor the earthly existence of the human person are absolute ethical or anthropological goods, nor are they the most important values of the human person. They are not the totality of life – not all of human life in its fullness. At times though, it constitutes the most basic and fundamental value of man, and as such, must be absolutely respected. Temporal life, in effect, supports the other values and goods of the person which surface and revolve around it. The ultimate reason of being for these is not found through seeking them in themselves alone, but in the peculiarity, which is in ultimate instance, proper to their relation to eternal life. Earthly life is not an ultimate reality, but rather a penultimate one. From there, along with other considerations, the greatness and relative nature of man’s dominion over his own life are derived. It also follows that when it is said that life has an absolute value and that this must be respected, this affirmation refers to life in its fullest sense.

It is understood then that the meaning and value of human life has its foundation in the fact that it is a journey in personal realization. The plan of God for the human person is not immediately realized. To be fulfilled it is necessary that a free response is given, and furthermore, that this free response take place throughout the entirety of life. The human person has value in his or her most absolute sense, not so much from what he or she already is, but rather, in what he or she is called to be. Life in its full existen-



tial sense corresponds exclusively to the ultimate and definitive state of the human being having given consent to the call of God the Creator. The historical existence of the human person is certainly a form of life, but is not a life that is in an absolute sense good by its own accord alone. If life in its historical temporal sense has value, it is because of its intrinsic connection with the fullness of which it points toward, for by itself it does not have a reason for being, nor intelligibility, nor reason of goodness, or value in and of itself. For this the Church underlines, time and time again, the uniqueness of the human being amongst all other created beings and the relation that man and woman's earthly existence has with eternal life, thus revealing the most profound meaning of human life. Only through this life can the human person arrive to the fullness of life, participating in the very life of God. The conclusion is that to adequately understand the value and meaning of human life – understood in the sense of physical life or the situation in which this can be found – it is necessary not to lose sight of the meaning of that life which permeates the human person's existence, and which corresponds to its all, or to his or her entirety: that is to say, that life which in its origin and in which the human person finds his or her fullness, as willed by the Creator.

This is the reason why the good of human life is only perceived in its fullness from Revelation. The explanation of the characteristics and peculiarity of the intrinsic goodness of

is human life – as declared by Sacred Holy Scripture – are linked above all to the fact that the human being, created “in the image and likeness of God”, has been called to participate in the very life of God. “Because he is made by God and bears within himself an indelible imprint of God, man is naturally drawn to God” (*Evangelium vitae*, n. 35). “The dignity of this life is linked not only to its beginning, to the fact that it comes from God, but also to its final end, to its destiny of fellowship with God in knowledge and love of him” (*Ib.*, n. 38). The revelation of this dignity – proclaimed in diverse ways throughout the entirety of Scripture, as much as in the Old Testament as in the New Testament – finds its meaning in the mystery of Christ. It is Christ who, with his life and word – with his Person – reveals the finality of the salvific plan of God begun in creation. This is to say that the human person becomes a child of God, made to participate in the divine nature, glorifying God in Eternal Life. “How precious must man be in the eyes of the Creator, if he gained so great a Redeemer’ (*Exsultet of the Easter Vigil*), and if God gave his only Son’ in order that man should not perish but have eternal life’ (cf. *Jn 3:16*)!” (*Redemptor hominis*, n. 10)

This meaning of life is lost in an anthropology that is characterized by positivism or materialism. In this view only the biological dimension of human life is taken into account: the only one that can be empirically analyzed. Mechanistic philosophical understandings proceed from this

basis. Once human life is reduced to the biological state, and thus, only to a physiological chemical flow, the human person is reduced to merely organography. To have a good life is equated with having good health, to have what is understood as a healthy life. Suffering and lives understood to be deficient in this respect are lived out without meaning, as they do not fit in any way into this notion of functionality. Arriving at similar conclusions, even if from different points of departure, are anthropologies characterized by dualism that, in considering the body and soul as two realities in conflict, in final analysis devalue the nature of bodily existence. This is what happens when, in the pretext of scientific or medical progress, practices are developed which reduce human to mere “biological material.”

### ¶ *All Human Life*

**H**uman Life is inviolable, that is to say, it can never be treated as an instrument, as a thing or medium through which another good is obtained via the integral good of the person. Human life is absolutely valuable by the very same fact of being human life. This inviolable character – sign of the inviolability of the person – is written in the heart of the human person. This is present in the experience of every person, that, in the depth of his or her conscience, the person is always called to respond to his or her attitude toward life – his or hers as well as others – as a reality that is not absolutely owned by the individual and that cannot be treated in a whimsical manner. This conviction is not one that is exclu-

sive to Christian faith, or that taken from a religious context alone. The Catechism of the Catholic Church recalls, “the covenant between God and mankind is interwoven with reminders of God’s gift [...] The Old Testament always considered blood a sacred sign of life. This teaching remains necessary for all time” (n. 2260). The essential element of this teaching is “the commandment regarding the inviolability of human life (that) reverberates at the heart of the ‘ten words’ in the covenant of Sinai” (*Evangelium vitae*, n. 40). The New Testament, confirms and brings to its fullness the message of the Old Testament, “But the overall message, which the New Testament will bring to perfection, is a forceful appeal for respect for the inviolability of physical life and the integrity of the person. It culminates in the positive commandment which obliges us to be responsible for our neighbor as for ourselves: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself’” (*Ib.*, n.41) Its most profound dimension is encapsulated in the duties of love and respect for one’s own life and the lives of others.

The foundation or reason for this inviolability is found in the reality that, as Revelation teaches, human life is the property of God who is Creator and Father. Only He can say: “It is I who bring both death and life” (Dt 32, 39). “Human life is sacred because from its beginning it involves ‘the creative action of God’ and it remains forever in a special relationship with the Creator, who is its sole end” (*Donum vitae*, Int., n. 5; Catechism of the Catho-



lic Church, n. 2258; *Evangelium vitae*, n. 53). Its inviolability derives from its sacred nature, which is to say the peculiar relation that, from its origin to its end, it has with God. “God therefore is the sole Lord of this life: man cannot do with it as he wills” (*Evangelium vitae*, n. 39).

It must be said at this point that, for some ideologies, the affirmation of the inviolable character of the human being does not mean that each individual human life – all human life – is inviolable, but only the human species as such. In this mode of thinking, the life of each individual person is not valued in and of itself, but rather only insofar as it contributes to the good of humanity as a whole. The utility and wellbeing of the human species, as a whole, would be thus a justification for the suppression of lives considered useless or having defect. This idea is present in the mentality of eugenics, which welcomes human life only under certain conditions, and in its defense of euthanasia as means to deal with lives considered to be without meaning or value, etc.

The life of every human being is unique and unrepeatable and, as such, inviolable and autonomous. Experience illustrates this fact. The human being experiences himself or herself as “someone”, who at no time and in no way can be reduced to any notion less than a “you” and in no way to things or entities that are not endowed with this same interiority. The human being is unrepeatable, and is one and the same throughout the duration of his or her existence.

The respect for the dignity of each human life as a fundamental ethical attitude flows inseparably from the perception of this consciousness. If the human person is not just “one amongst many equals” in the world of created entities, it is evident thus that the person cannot be used as a mere instrument in the service of these realities, be it those realities of an inferior level (those entities considered as “things”) or those realities at an equal level (other persons). Ultimately, the reason for the singularity and value of each human life emanates from the origin of each human life in a creative act of God. Each human person corresponds to a singular and unique call by God, that is, a personal call which represents the personal destiny of the human being that is not possibly exhausted in the notion of a collective destiny alone. When God disappears in the consideration of human life only the relationship to one’s own self and to others remain, and the personal condition and value of human life are entrusted to one’s own discretion or to that of society’s.

To adequately value the inviolability of human life requires, among other things, the affirmation that every human life, - all human life – is absolutely valuable in and of itself, with sovereign autonomy in its development, in each and every stage of its existence. Its value and dignity is not linked first and fundamentally to its “quality”, but to the radicality of the fact that it is a living human being. The anthropological foundation of

*¶ In Each and Every Stage*

this exigency resides in the unity of the human person, that as such, cannot be understood from one of its “co-principles” alone (the body or the soul), nor much less identified by its manifestations (one thing, in effect, is the being of the person and another is the manifestation or realization of the person as such).

From the theological perspective, the inviolability of human life throughout the duration of its existence – once again emphasized – is found in the truths of Creation and Redemption. The actions and above all the life of Jesus reveal the dignity of and the meaning of life to us. Furthermore, it illustrates to us that when life is in precarious or delicate state, or is considered as useless, it remains nonetheless “a gift” and must be jealously guarded as such. Human life, regardless of its condition or stage, represented a true reflection of the image and likeness of God, and as such, maintains the link uniting it to its Creator and Redeemer, which is to say to its origin and end. The plan of God for the human being is to reproduce in his or her life the image of His Son. This is the way to fulfill one’s exist-

ence as an image of God. “It is precisely by his death that Jesus reveals all the splendor and value of life” (*Evangelium vitae*, n. 33).

It is evident therefore, that the eclipsing of the meaning of God inevitably leads to the loss of the meaning life. Thus “at the heart of every culture lies the attitude man takes to the greatest mystery: the mystery of God.” “Where God is denied and people live as though he did not exist, or his commandments are not taken into account, the dignity of the human person and the inviolability of human life also end up being rejected or compromised” (*Evangelium vitae*, n. 96). If the life of the human person remains enclosed within the limits of his or her earthly existence, and the human person is just another one of the living creatures in this world, the very meaning itself of life is called into question. “Life itself becomes a mere ‘thing’, which man claims as his exclusive property, completely subject to his control and manipulation” (*Ib.*, 22).

*Imprimé en France par Romanzin SA*  
*Dépot légal décembre 2014*  
*ISBN*