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Concerning

# THE FAMILY



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by

REV. EDGAR SCHMIEDELER, O. S. B., Ph. D.

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# CONCERNING THE FAMILY

*By*

REV. EDGAR SCHMIEDELER, O.S.B., Ph.D.

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# Some Factors in Family Failure

I FEEL certain that in spite of our modern sophistication, the subject of the family still appeals very much to the great majority of people. I feel equally certain that this majority appreciates in some measure at least the absolute need of the family and realizes its basic importance in a Christian scheme of society, and in fact in any satisfactory scheme of society. I take it also that the generality of people realizes full well that there is much turmoil in our modern domestic world. Even a cursory reading of the daily press will readily convince one that not all is well within the portals of the home. And of course the fact that his late Holiness, Pius XI, thought an Encyclical on Marriage, addressed to the entire human race, timely is proof sufficient that marriage and family life must be in a pretty bad way.

## DISORGANIZING FACTORS

Certainly our own American family holds an unenviable record with its vast amount of disordered domestic life. Hundreds of

thousands of its homes have been in recent decades disrupted by divorce and desertion, by separation and annulment. In 1929 alone, for instance, there were more than 200,000 divorces granted in this country. Then, too, over and above the homes that have entirely disintegrated, there are many more that have become partially disorganized. These limp along in some sort of fashion, not becoming totally incapacitated, it is true, yet not fulfilling their functions in any satisfactory way either. Inherent integration of the home is essential for the fulfilment of its functions. We can, in fact, take it for granted that the more intimately united the members of the group, the better will the home perform its duties, and the more loosely united the group, the less perfectly will it fulfil its obligations. It is unfortunate, therefore, that many modern family groups are so loosely bound together.

The change in family life that has culminated in the present disorganization of the home has, in great part at least, come about during the past fifty to one hundred years, and we may well stop to inquire what some of the fundamental causes of the transition may be. We can at best but hope here to open up this field a little, to indicate briefly

a few of the sources of trouble in our modern family.

There is no question that among the more outstanding factors at work disorganizing our home life today are the following: First of all, there is that far-reaching cause of all our modern social turmoil and change, the industrial revolution. The coming of the machine has greatly disturbed our home life. It has brought about a shift in our civilization from an agricultural regime to a machineofacture culture; that is, a change from a rural to an urban civilization. This very transition itself from country to city life has greatly disturbed the family, and in fact all social relations. There is apparently a close relation between the process of urbanization and of familial decay.

Then there is our modern rationalistic attitude which tends to make us question everything; which tends to make us look upon everything of the past as old-fashioned and valueless, and everything new as good and useful by the mere fact of its novelty — an attitude that has begotten not a little disrespect for authority and has led to other harmful consequences to society and to the home.

Again, individualism, or an exaggerated

spirit of selfishness, has undoubtedly contributed much toward our modern family failure. And quite closely related to this last-mentioned force are two other far-reaching factors, namely, a pleasure philosophy of life — or too much emphasis upon ease and pleasure-seeking — and romanticism — or an altogether too rosy view of life in general and particularly of marital and familial life.

In recent decades these forces have joined hands and have contributed cumulatively toward the ever-swelling tide of family disorganization. Some of them are very closely related and quite naturally go hand in hand. Especially is this true of the three disrupting social forces, individualism, romanticism and a pleasure philosophy of life. And these three have been particularly destructive to the modern family. Let us take a closer look at them, therefore.

### INDIVIDUALISM

Individualism is one of the most far-reaching of all disorganizing social forces. In its extreme form it is practically identical with selfishness. Whether we glibly prate about it in terms of self-realization, self-expression, self-gratification, self-interest,



wherever this individualistic spirit is found in excess, selfishness is of its very essence. Self, rather than the common good of the group, is stressed. Invariably it is a question of selfishness, or self-love, versus altruism, or other-love. The individualist always looks out for Number One. All else is quite secondary to him. Thus in the case of the individualist mother, perhaps her career, rather than the good of her husband and children, comes first. In the case of the individualist father, his own convenience, ease or pleasure, rather than the good of his wife and children or the common good of the whole family group, holds first place.

Now such a spirit is inevitably harmful to family life. A satisfying home, a properly functioning family, requires co-operation; it calls for team work, for unity; a spirit of altruism and of the sacrifice of self. Individualism, however, does not understand such language; it knows no co-operation or team work. It is essentially a divisive, a separative or disruptive force. Inevitably it tends to disorganize the groups in which it makes its power felt. What is divorce, after all, but the climax of an individualistic home?

Certainly, according to the integral Christian view of marriage, parents stand ever ready, out of love of God, to sacrifice their own interests for the common good of the family group. They are not steeped in the notion of self-realization; in fact, the latter plays little part in their lives. And yet, precisely in this sacrifice of self for others, particularly for those who are near and dear to them, these parents experience the greatest self-realization; they experience a joy and happiness quite unknown to the selfish individualist.

But in our modern life this mighty Christian force of charity has greatly lapsed, while the socially destructive spirit of individualism stalks over the land and is to no small extent beyond the pale of social control. It is at work not only in the home but in all social groups. It is the moth in the fabric of family life. It is the *Zeitgeist* of the time, causing untold damage to society and to the home. As long as it shall be allowed to continue within the social organism, disintegration will go on apace. Not only will the general structure of society be affected, but also all of its component parts, including its most fundamental unit, the family.

## PLEASURE PHILOSOPHY

Most closely allied with this unwholesome growth of individualism has been the development of a soft creed and a pleasure philosophy of life, together with a corresponding decrease in self-discipline and in the hardy virtues. We have come very commonly in modern life to place altogether too much stress upon frivolous enjoyment, upon ease, luxury and a soft creed generally, while the virile virtues and a wholesome discipline of life have lost caste.

There can, of course, be no question regarding the harmful effects of such a growth upon society and the home. Group life in society, that is, in company with other human beings, implies a discipline of self rather than a round of thrills. Social institutions, it is true, bring us not a little self-satisfaction, but they do so only at the cost of a certain amount of self-discipline on our part, and the family is no exception. Like other social institutions, it also involves self-abnegation, self-denial. In other words, family life is a job and not a joy ride. It is not surprising, therefore, that our modern attempts to ground the home upon a soft creed

and pleasure basis are ending in increased family failure.

## ROMANTICISM

Another harmful result of the growth of luxury, comfort and pleasure-seeking has been an undue stress upon the romantic side of life, particularly with regard to marriage and the family. Romanticism implies that which is extreme, unexpected and fictitious, rather than that which is ordinary, normal or genuine. It places too great an emphasis upon the more ephemeral and passing elements of affection. The romantic person, consequently, is one who is given to much day-dreaming and castle-building, to dodging difficulties instead of facing them; hence he lacks the character and control which are absolutely necessary as a basis for satisfactory family life. Accustomed to sidestepping difficulties in youth, or constantly taking refuge in dream worlds, he is left unprepared for all the hard realities of life. Led to expect a perpetual honeymoon after marriage, or a life permanently keyed up to a high pitch of ecstatic emotion, he finds himself without sufficient strength for the unescapable tasks of family life that gradually put in their ap-

pearance after the ephemeral enthusiasm of courtship subsides. Quite naturally, such an individual looks upon his marriage venture as an unfortunate one and considers his domestic life a partial or total failure.

A further harmful development that also commonly results in a skeptical and even cynical attitude toward marriage and parenthood as one of the noblest and most beautiful experiences of life, as a climax of existence and one of the highest things to which men and women can aspire, the skeptic and the cynic take the attitude that marriage is but a temporary alliance to be entered upon in doubt and hesitation, with a high expectancy of failure and with a determination to break the contract as soon as difficulties arise. This attitude makes the genuine organization of a family group utterly impossible. It precludes a wholehearted surrender to the marriage contract. Certainly such an attitude bodes nothing but ill to the family. To build a home upon cynicism and skepticism is to build upon shaky foundations indeed. In such cases disintegration of the home becomes the expected thing, and dissolution of the family bond is a foregone conclusion.

How vastly different this unsavory situa-

tion from a truly Christian civilization, in which matrimonial partners are chosen with the utmost care, in which the marital pair put their whole heart and soul into their venture and solemnly promise, with God's help, to carry on their common project until death parts them!

Such are a few of the factors responsible for our modern family failures. The remedies for the situation would seem quite obvious. First and foremost will it be necessary to re-establish again the law of the love of God and fellow-man in place of the selfish pagan individualism that has enthroned itself in the hearts and homes of so many. Here, in fact, is the strategic point of attack upon the modern paganism that has arrayed itself against the family. Nothing else could go so far in stemming the tide of disorganized home life as a whole-hearted return to that fundamental law of Christian love.

Again, the hardy Christian virtues must be popularized and practised. The notions of self-control and self-sacrifice and the acceptance of a discipline of life must be inculcated and accepted anew if the soft creed and the destructive pleasure philosophy of the day is to be effectively counteracted. Only the disciplined individual will whole-

heartedly accept the responsibilities and hardships incumbent upon the family life. Only he will bring himself regularly to make the sacrifices that the marriage state entails.

It is needless to add that this is a large order — far more than a simple task. Its fulfilment, in fact, will require more than human effort. Let us not deceive ourselves. "Unless the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it." Unless God's interests are respected, our homes will continue to fail. Unless Christ reigns as King of our domestic world, our family life will not prosper.

# Family Bonds

THERE have been in the past certain factors so interwoven with family life that they may well be referred to as family bonds. The vast social changes of recent decades, however, and the changed attitudes toward traditional forms of family life have greatly affected these bonds, and in some instances rendered them quite ineffective, inoperative. This undoubtedly accounts in great part for the disordered condition of family life today. Perhaps the most outstanding of these bonds are the industrial and the economic, the recreational and the authoritative, the educational and the protective, and of course the fundamental ties, religion and affection.

## THE EFFECT OF INDUSTRY

Few, I am certain, would question the statement that the great shift in recent years from an agricultural regime to a manufacture culture, the change from rural to urban life, has affected the industrial family bond. There is no doubt that, before the revolution in industry, the family was far



more of a united little world than it commonly is today. In that earlier day, the work of the family members normally centered in and about the home. The homespun and other industries were within the family circle. The mother was the center, the very heart, of the domestic economy; the father, whether in the home or in the field, was always near at hand. All the family members were occupied in and about the home. Their industrial interests were identical. Thus the whole situation naturally made for a spirit of interdependence and co-operation, a spirit that tended to unite the group into one composite whole. An industrial bond was formed that served to tie the family members together.

With the revolution in industry, however, there came a change. The traditional industries passed outside the home to mill, shop and factory. The workers followed them from the home. The workshop was no longer an adjunct to the home; the father's business was no longer a family undertaking with which all the family members were busied. Thus the home has been emptied of its workers. Moreover, the members' work interests differ. They work in different places; consequently, the interdependence and the simi-

larity of interests that linked together the family members of an earlier day, making for a potent home influence, are lacking. In a word, the home's former characteristic of industrial unity is gone, and unquestionably family solidarity has suffered some in the change.

Nor was the home of the past only an industrial unit; it was an economic unit as well. Separate wages for the workers were quite unknown; rather was there a common fund to which all contributed and from which all received according to their needs. Economically as well as industrially, there resulted an interdependence and a spirit of mutual help that tended naturally, automatically, to hold the family workers together. Today, however, the home is far less an economic unit. There is less pooling of family resources; there is the fact of the separate wage. As a result the economic bond of the family, like the industrial, has weakened.

## RECREATION

Recreation, too, exerted an integrating influence in the family life of the past. In the country districts play took place in and

around the home. It was not the commercialized recreation of today. Play was home-made. Consequently, many of the pleasant things of life came from within the home, arousing sentiments common to all. Play served to cement other family bonds, serving as a powerful agency to produce unity of thought, feeling and purpose; it tended to unite the family group; it made for loyalty to home and to family members. There is no doubt that this went far in creating the intense home life so typical of the American pioneer.

But this recreational bond has also been affected by our modern city life. Play, like work, has tended to leave the home. With the growth of cities, the folk games and amusements of households and simpler communities gradually passed away. City congestion drove play from the home. Then, with the passing of the home and neighborhood recreation of the past, commerce came to exploit leisure in the dancehall and theater, and thereby lured the pleasure-seeker from the home. In a word, urban congestion, through the elimination of play space, tended to push play out of the home, while commercialized recreation with its bright lights, its crowds and fascinating

music, lured it away. Between the two forces the modern home has been shorn of a power that it formerly exercised through pleasure and play.

## AUTHORITY AND RELIGION

Another bond that did much to unite the family group in the past was authority. This vital element of the domestic world was far more highly centralized formerly than it is today. Under the old patriarchal system the father was the religious, the legal and the economic head of the home. He was the embodiment of all familial authority. The abuse of his power may have been far from uncommon on the part of the patriarch, but the centralization of authority in his hands undoubtedly helped to unify family life.

Today, authority in the home is no longer so generally centralized in the paternal head of the group. Women very generally have a freedom and independence that they did not have under the old patriarchal system. Children, too, have become far more independent of paternal control than was the case in the past. In some instances, in fact, the father seems to be entirely shorn of his former power. Yet it is equally true that in

not a few families a spirit of love and loyalty, of compromise, has supplanted the more rigorous coercive measures frequently found under the patriarchal regime.

Very influential and powerful among the family bonds of the past has ever been that of religion. Intertwined, as it were, with the other family ties, this fundamental bond has revitalized and quickened them, thus strengthening the entire family fabric and making for cohesion among the members of the little domestic world. The very war cry of the ancient Romans, for example, was "For our altars and for our hearthstones." Even the old pagan ancestor worship of the past served greatly to unite the family group. The Christian religion served both to unify the family members and to refine and uplift domestic life. The Church, the organized expression of Christianity, has promoted a unified home life by pointing to the union of Christ and His Church as the image of the union of the Christian husband and wife; by basing marriage on a permanent vow instead of a dissoluble contract; by other doctrines and moral teachings that promoted cordial relations between family members and produced a sense of responsibility with

regard to marital duties and familial obligations.

There is little need of arguing the point, however, that this particular bond has greatly weakened in the case of many families of our day. When more than half of the American people profess no allegiance to any kind of organized Church, one can readily conclude that religion is not a very vital factor in many of their homes.

### OTHER FACTORS

In more primitive times, education also was more of a family function than it is today, and as such proved to be a unifying force in home life. It gave the family prestige, because the children depended upon the training which they received within the home circle as a preparation for their life work. Today much of this preparation has been shifted to other shoulders, notably to those of the school, and quite naturally the former prestige of the home has suffered, and the educational bond of the past has weakened.

In primitive times, too, even protection served as a family bond. Particularly during the age of untutored barbarism and but half-

disciplined brute force that followed the fall of the Roman Empire, did the protection of women and children within the home fall almost exclusively to the lot of the father. But in our day this protective family bond has practically disappeared. Changed social conditions and highly organized modern governments with their police systems and other protective forces have greatly lessened the need for this protection on the part of the paternal head of the home.

Lastly, we must mention, of course, the fundamental natural bond of affection. Admittedly this force carries with it vitally integrating elements. But there are other elements as well, which if isolated from the love complex, or unduly emphasized, undermine the integrating influence of the affectional bond. With many today, for instance, there is undue emphasis upon the more transient romantic side of love rather than upon the more lasting spiritual side. Or again, in the case of others, the selfish rather than the self-sacrificing elements have been emphasized. Yet it is clearly the latter, that is, the unselfish, rather than the former, the selfish, that serve to bind the family members together. Immorality, for instance, inside or outside the marriage state, has this in com-

mon, that it stresses the separative or selfish side of the love complex and leaves out the finer and more integrating elements, the parental impulses, the spiritual and sacrificial parts. The modern plague of birth control is an outstanding example of this. So also is the mock love called "petting," a low order of love that knows not abiding spiritual affection.

### THE RESOURCES FOR RECONSTRUCTION

Yet in spite of the fact that these family bonds have been affected in various ways today, the family situation is not a hopeless one. If we take careful stock, we will still find many resources remaining within the domestic world by means of which a strong and vital family life can be built, provided only that the effort is put forth to make the best use of them. It is even true, furthermore, that some of the great social changes of recent decades have brought with them gains to the home as well as losses. Thus, while the former industrial bond of the family has been weakened, much drudgery has been removed from the home hearth. This implies greater opportunities for higher, more intellectual and cultural interests with-



in the home. If properly made use of, these opportunities should yield a richer and more satisfying family experience than that of the past.

Regarding the educational bond of the family, the truth remains that the home, and not the school, is in reality the fundamental educational institution. Greater emphasis upon this undoubted fact is much in place today, and it should go far in restoring to the home some of its former prestige. It should also beget a renewed interest in family life that would unite its members as few other forces could possibly do.

In spite of all recreational changes, too, there are still some very real possibilities for the growth of family unity through play, if parents make the most of them. It may be that parents will have to learn to unbend a little more than they have been accustomed to in the past, and take a more active part in their children's recreational activities. But certainly this can be done, and who would question that it is well worth while? More particularly will fathers, who are separated so much from children today, have to make the most of the limited number of minutes that they have with their children. There is no question that fifteen minutes of active

participation by Dad in a child's game will go further toward making the latter loyal to parent and home than a full twenty-four hours of more inactive togetherness.

In many a home the bond of authority needs to be strengthened today if family life is to endure and function properly. It is, of course, not to be regretted that some of the harsher phases of the old patriarchal family system have given place to greater emphasis upon love and upon loyalty to the home. But authority in due measure must retain its legitimate place if the domestic kingdom is to prosper and to fulfil its obligations.

Certainly love, too, or affection, will still be a vital and binding familial force if its integrating instead of its selfish elements are given due stress. Perhaps the main point that deserves attention is that affection must be cultivated today. In the past, this was to no small extent brought about through the common interests of work and play that centered in the home. Today, however, more conscious effort is necessary to bring it about. Undoubtedly one factor in such a cultivation of affection is a community of companion interests. If the family begins with an endowment of companion interests, and new ones are added as time goes on, the growth

of happiness and affection in the home is practically assured.

Finally, there are tremendous possibilities for the family in the religious field if we make use thereof. Certainly religion still has the same integrating power today that it had in the past. Unfortunately, however, there is little evidence of any genuine religious renewal among us.

It is apparent, then, that the more spiritual bonds, that is, the educational, affectional, authoritative, and above all, the religious, rather than the more material bonds, for instance, the industrial, economic, protective and recreational, must be depended upon for the reintegration of the present home world. More conscious effort and more planned cultivation of the family resources that still remain is also necessary. Without greater emphasis upon these, familial disintegration will continue. With due stress upon them, the reconstruction of the home is altogether within the realm of possibility. Even a higher and finer type of home than that of the past may well be evolved.

## Conserving the Family

THE realm of the family is a field that insistently invites action today. This is due in part to the fundamental importance of the family institution, in part to its present critical condition. The former reason has always invited action on behalf of the home; the latter impels it today in order that the family may be conserved. The importance of the family is due to its vital relation to the entire social system. It is the cell, as it were, of society, the heart of the social organism. A vigorous home life means a vital society. A decadent family life implies a decaying social organism.

The latter, unfortunately, is the condition that we see today — a multitude of decadent families and a rapidly decaying society. Hence the need for action for the conservation of the home. That our family life is showing alarming symptoms of disease and unmistakable signs of decay is apparent to all who care to see. The press daily tells its pitiful stories of broken and disorganized homes; the statistician constantly sums up his sickening totals of disintegrated families. Indeed, things have come to such a pass

that the common Father of Christendom has been impelled to call the attention of the entire human race to the critical condition of our domestic world.

There is every reason, therefore, to speak of conserving the family. It is high time for action in behalf of the home. To be really effective, this action will have to seek out the causes of the family's troubles and apply the remedies there. This implies serious study of the family situation before more direct action can intelligently follow.

The influences that are at work disintegrating the home are manifold indeed, and the remedies that might be applied to help and conserve it are not fewer in number. The present family situation is a most involved and complex one. It leaves little room for such simple remedies as spontaneous action, blind instinct and mere intuition. Serious study, a thorough analysis, is a necessary preliminary to intelligent and effective effort to conserve our domestic world. Space will permit our singling out here only a few of the causes and remedies, by way of example; yet this should serve to point the way to further study and remedial activity.

Perhaps the two outstanding causes of our sorry family plight today are the prevailing

pagan tendencies and our changing social order. In what follows we shall call attention particularly to the former of these and only incidentally to the latter.

## FIGHTING PAGAN TENDENCIES

The pagan tendencies of the time are largely embodied in what the modern calls individualism. The latter is truly a pagan force. It is, moreover, a highly disintegrating influence. Excessive individualism enthrones self and worships it; it knows not love of God or neighbor. As such, it is the antithesis of Christianity — a divisive, a separative force in society. Unfortunately this socially destructive influence is abroad in the land today. It is playing the part of the canker-worm within the social system. It is playing the role of the moth within the family fabric. And disintegration is going on apace. Not only is the general structure of society affected, but also all of its component parts, including the most fundamental unit, the family.

Here, then, is the strategic point of attack upon the pagan influences that are bringing about the decay of our domestic life. Here is the logical starting point for any effective

program of action that seeks to conserve the home. The divisive and separative force of selfishness must give way to the binding and attractive influence of altruism if family life is to flourish. The integrating love of God and neighbor must replace the disintegrating love of self if the home is to endure. Individualism must be routed if the family is to be conserved.

### ALTRUISM

The domestic world, the family hearth itself, is pre-eminently the place for such an attack; it is the logical field for action to protect and conserve the home. Nothing is more instrumental in curbing selfishness, nothing more influential in promoting an altruistic spirit, than precisely complete and wholesome living within the circle of the home. This is due to various influences that normally find lodging there.

First of all, there is the fact of parenthood. Normal parenthood directs selfish elements into altruistic channels within the home. Marriage sympathy naturally centers in offspring. The children are the parents' treasures and their main sources of interest. And next to the possession of a treasured in-

terest, there is no richer experience than the sharing of it with another to whom it means much the same. Because they must sacrifice together for their little ones, and must work out their destiny in unison, parents find in them a mutual interest more cohesive than any other binding force within the domestic world. To parents there is nothing more engrossing than the triumphs connected with the development of their offspring. Moreover, the keener their insight into their children's natures, the more engrossing and more successful will their efforts at training be. Parents' natural interest in children opens up, therefore, an immense field for the cultivation of the affections. It draws the family group together. Parenthood is a powerful influence making for the conservation of the home.

Besides the interests immediately connected with parenthood, however, there are many others within the home. These, too, serve to foster an altruistic spirit and thereby help to conserve the family. In fact, if the home begins with an endowment of companion interests, and new ones are added as time goes on, reasonable harmony and happiness within the familial group is practically assured.



## ENJOYING ONE ANOTHER'S COMPANY

Outstanding among the home interests of the past have always been those of play. Play is naturally an integrating force. It tends to bind group members together. It arouses sentiments common to all. It promotes unity of thought, feeling and purpose. It fosters affection within the home circle and makes for loyalty to the family and its members. Unfortunately, however, play no longer centers so extensively within the home today as it did in earlier times. The reason for this is not far to seek. It is to be found in that other far-reaching cause of our family disintegration, our changing social situation. The shift from an agriculture regime to a manufacture culture has tended to drive play out of the home. The transition from a rural to an urban life has brought congestion and lack of play space in and around the home. Commercialized urban recreation has taken on gigantic proportions and constantly lures the pleasure-seeker away from the family hearth. Thus the home is robbed of an integrating influence that it formerly exercised through pleasure and play.

Here again we find opportunity for action for the conservation of the home. With

zealous and painstaking effort, much can be done to develop recreational interests again within the domestic world. Parents can show greater interest in the hobbies of their children. Grown-ups can participate more in the recreational activities of the little ones. Many of the former indoor games can be reinstated. All such measures would serve to foster a spirit of altruism and help to integrate our family world. They would constitute a genuine contribution toward the conservation of the family. Here, then, is another inviting field for action for those who revere the home.

#### CONSIDERATENESS

Then there are also the many apparently trifling attentions toward fellow-members within the family circle. These, too, contain great possibilities for fostering familial affection and for integrating the home. Even the observance of the ordinary courtesies and conventions within the domestic realm can be most influential in developing good-will and sympathetic feeling between the family members, and thus redound to the good of the home.

If we add to all this the fact that home

life holds sway in about nine-tenths of life, that 90 percent of the interests of parents naturally center in their homes and in their loved ones, we have indeed an impressive picture of the possibilities within the domestic world itself for the development of familial love, for action to conserve and integrate the family. Indeed, home life is by far the most effective means for drawing the individual out of his selfish shell and for developing a spirit of altruism within him. The home is the normal arena for action against the pagan forces that threaten it. It offers to the generality of mankind a most inviting place for effort in behalf of the family.

### THE PLACE OF RELIGION

Not only, however, must the love of self be counteracted by the love of neighbor if family life is to prosper; not only must individualism yield to altruism if the home is to endure. Domestic life needs more than human love if it is to remain permanently integrated. Divine love must find a place and play a part within the familial circle if home life is really to flourish. God's interests must reign supreme and Christ must be King with-

in the domestic empire if the family is to remain worthy of its high origin. Nothing less can assure it harmonious unison and permanent conservation. This implies, of course, a lively faith and unfailing religious observance. More than that, it involves religion's presence within the family circle. It implies giving expression to one's faith through the practice of family devotions and the use of sacred symbols within the home.

But here again we find the hampering influence of our changing social order. The latter has contributed in many ways to the decline of common family prayers and to failure in other religious practices. Yet with due care and earnest effort, these too can be reinstated in the home. Even in the most mobile parts of our cities this is not an impossibility. It is true, this will require more effort than formerly. Yet it will be effort well worth while, for these practices foster divine love within the home; they invite God's grace and blessing; they furnish a sacred field for action for the conservation of the home.

The foregoing considerations intimate that the task of conserving the family demands action on the part of the many rather than on the part of the few. They suggest that

without much effort on the part of the generality of families and their members, all other activities in behalf of the home will prove useless and vain. And yet there is also need for action other than that of the individual within his home. There is need, for example, for organized and community efforts to help and protect the home. There is need for the activities of specialists and experts to solve the problems of family life. There is need for the help of social institutions if the home is to be conserved. These are the fields mainly of leaders and professionals, yet the generality can also lend their influence here. All who are intent upon conserving the family will make use of these opportunities too. They will realize that the home is deserving of all their efforts; in fact, that it stands in need of them today.



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