

Return God to the American Home

National Catholic Welfare
Conference
National Family...
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★
Make the American Family an All-time Priority



NATIONAL
FAMILY
WEEK



May 2-9, 1943



**THE CATHOLIC COMMITTEE
on NATIONAL FAMILY WEEK**

1312 Massachusetts Avenue, N. W.

Washington, D. C.

*Unless the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it.
Unless the Lord keepeth the city, he watcheth in vain that keepeth it.*

-Ps. CXXVI. 1-2.



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NATIONAL FAMILY WEEK

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I

A STATEMENT on MARRIAGE and the FAMILY

*Issued in Conjunction With National Family Week
by the
Catholic Committee on National Family Week*

1. Marriage is a divine institution; it is God-made. Man cannot change it.
2. Even as a Natural Law contract marriage is a sacred and permanent union of one man with one woman. Fundamental and essential are its notes of unity, sanctity, and indissolubility.
3. Christian marriage is more than a divinely constituted natural institution. It is a sacrament, a grace-conferring institution. It reaches into the sphere of the supernatural.
4. Under the Christian dispensation too, marriage is a symbol of the union of Christ and the Church, a union that is most sacred and perfect.
5. The husband and father is the head of the home, the wife and mother is its heart. "As he occupies the chief place in ruling so she may and ought to claim for herself the chief place in love."

Husbands should love their wives "as Christ also loved the Church." Wives should be obedient to their husbands as the Church is obedient to Christ. "The husband is head of the wife, as Christ is head of the Church."

6. Marriage and the family are God's chosen ways for furthering the human race. The prime purpose of marriage is the begetting and rearing of children for the glory of God. Another purpose of marriage is the giving of legitimate and rightful expression to natural instincts and affections which God has implanted in man's nature. While the different purposes of married life can be distinguished they are as a matter of fact most intimately related and most closely bound together.
7. The parent is the educator *par excellence*, the child's preceptor appointed by nature and nature's God. Similarly the home is the school of schools. It is the prime educational institution. The school as we understand it today is only an extension of the home.

8. The family is an institution in its own right. It arises spontaneously from nature and has certain inherent rights and duties. The State exists to protect the family's rights. It may not disregard them or do away with them. For instance, the State may not invade the family to the extent of regulating the birth rate or the procreation of children, or dictating the type of education of the children, or winning the children away from their parents. These matters are family rights, parental rights.
9. Not only is it a duty of the State to respect the rights of parent and children, but also to assist the family by assuring it such environmental circumstances as will benefit and not hamper Christian home life.
10. The principle of the family living wage is a highly important one. One of the fundamental rights of man is the right to marry. The right to marry necessarily implies the right to fulfill the primary purpose of marriage, to rear a family. That, in turn, implies the right to a wage that will support a family in reasonable comfort, since the ordinary wage earner has no other source of income wherewith to maintain his family. Hence the family living wage is altogether basic in any consideration of the economic as it relates to family life. Where such a wage is not provided voluntarily by industry the State should demand its payment.
11. The State may also be in duty bound to come to the help of the family in regard to such matters as providing decent housing, assuring able-bodied men employment, exerting control over prices, making provision for children in order that mothers will not be forced into industry, assuring mothers proper maternal, as well as prenatal and postnatal, care.
12. In the matter of preserving the moral order, of insuring decent community conditions, the State also has a duty toward the family.
13. Adequate finances, a multiplication of social services, and satisfactory community conditions alone are insufficient to insure a stable and wholesome family life. Religion is necessary. The supernatural is necessary. The teaching and ministration of the Church is necessary. The merely natural will not suffice.

More specifically is religion—the supernatural—necessary within the home circle itself. The Catholic home should be in reality what St. Chrysostom called it, a little church, a house of God. The need of the day is the re-enthronement of Christ in the home.

II

THE FAMILY *in* WARTIME

1. War thwarts normal family life.
2. War leads to hasty and ill-prepared for marriages.
3. War undermines moral stamina through increased social freedom and unwonted moral laxity.
4. War separates family members.
5. War uproots many families.
6. War exposes children to harmful excitement and anxieties.

THE FAMILY BEFORE *the* WAR

American family life was hurt before the war because of—

1. A weakening of the moral fibre of both family and community.
2. Depressing economic conditions.
3. Unwholesome community conditions.
4. Indifference and a skeptical attitude toward family stability.
5. Deliberate attacks on the family.
6. The submergence of the true purposes of the family.
7. A growing materialism.
8. Neglect of the supernatural.
9. The rejection of the natural law.
10. Disrespect for the divine law.

STRENGTHENING the FAMILY *from* WITHIN

- A. Build strong and vital families by fostering within the home a community of natural interests in the form of hobbies, games, music, reading, recreational and social life generally.
- B. Build strong and vital families by promoting within the home religious activities, by aiming to make of the home, in the words of St. Chrysostom, a little church. More specifically:
 - 1. Have the home blest.
 - 2. Make use of other blessings that relate to the home and family.
 - 3. Consecrate your family to the Holy Family.
 - 4. Consecrate your family to the Sacred Heart.
 - 5. Have a shrine or altar, religious pictures and other religious articles in the home.
 - 6. Observe such religious customs as family prayer in common—grace at meals, the morning offering, etc.
 - 7. Revive the custom of the parental blessing.
 - 8. Practice special devotions within the family circle during certain seasons of the ecclesiastical year and on special feast days.
 - 9. Celebrate in a religious manner such occasions as anniversaries, of baptismal days, wedding days, first communion days, and patronal feast days.
 - 10. Make a family novena (at home), closing it on May 4, the feast of St. Monica, patroness of Christian mothers, or on May 2 or 9, the opening and closing dates of National Family Week.

WHAT THE PARISH CAN DO

Among the many ways in which the parish can help the family in the crisis are the following:

1. By providing social life and recreational facilities on a parish basis for the family members, particularly for the young folks.
2. By helping to uphold the aims of the Legion of Decency.
3. By helping to uphold the aims of the National Organization for Decent Literature.
4. By emphasizing the sanctity of marriage.
5. By stressing the integral Christian view of marriage and family life.
6. By distributing literature on the family.
7. By promoting parent education or preparation for child care and training within the home.
8. By calling attention to parental and filial duties.
9. By encouraging special family practices and devotions.
10. By stressing the fact that genuine family life is a task, and that it calls for self discipline and self denial.
11. By urging the faithful use of the customary means of grace.
12. By cooperating with helpful social agencies in the community.
13. By fostering family communion days.
14. By sermons on marriage and family life.

HELP CENTER ATTENTION ON THE FAMILY

1. By promoting a special "family day":
 - a. in your school
 - b. in your parish
 - c. in your organization
 - d. in your community
2. By means of radio programs.
3. Through the press.



CHAMPION THE RIGHTS OF THE FAMILY

1. By resisting all encroachments on the family domain.
2. By insisting on the principle of the family living wage.
3. By discouraging the unnecessary employment of married women.
4. By working for due social provision for the handicapped and those in straitened circumstances.
5. By demanding decent community conditions.



III

MARRIAGE and FAMILY BRIEFS

A. MARRIAGE IS GOD-MADE

Marriage has God for its Author, and was from the very beginning a kind of foreshadowing of the Incarnation of His Son, and therefore there abides in it something holy and religious; not extraneous, but innate, not derived from men, but implanted by nature.

—LEO XIII, *Encyclical on Christian Marriage*.

Let it be repeated as an an immutable and inviolable fundamental doctrine, that matrimony was not instituted or restored by man but by God.

How great is the dignity of chaste wedlock may be judged best from this that Christ our Lord . . . not only . . . ordained it in an especial manner as the principle and foundation of domestic society and therefore of all human intercourse, but also raised it to the rank of a true and great sacrament of the new law.

—PIUS XI, *Encyclical on Christian Marriage*.

RELIGION AND THE FAMILY

After the public worship of God we will spread two tables in our homes, one with the fare of the body and one with the food of the Holy Scripture; one with the fruits of earth, and one with the fruits of the Holy Ghost. Prayer and teaching in the Church are not enough; they must be accompanied by prayer and reading at home; for the home is a little church, an *ecclesia domestica*.

—ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM.

So long as the sacred flame of Faith burns on the domestic hearth, and the parents forge and fashion the lives of their children in accordance with this faith, youth will be ever ready to acknowledge the royal prerogatives of the Redeemer and to oppose those who wish to exclude Him from society or wrongly usurp His rights.

—PIUS XII, *Summi Pontificatus*.

Quite fittingly, therefore, and quite in accordance with the defined norm of Christian sentiment, do those pastors of souls act who to prevent married people from failing in the above observance of God's law, urge them to perform their duty and exercise their religion so that they should give themselves to God, continually ask His divine assistance, frequent the sacraments, and always nourish and preserve a loyal and thoroughly sincere devotion to God.

—PIUS XI, *Encyclical on Christian Marriage*.

Whenever a man becomes a pagan, he finds himself licentious and hard. —TAINÉ.

Unless things change the human family and State have every reason to fear lest they should suffer absolute ruin. LEO XIII.

That the family may be established and maintained according to the wise teachings of the Gospel, therefore, the faithful should be frequently exhorted by those who have the directive and teaching functions in the churches, and these are to strive with unremitting care to present to the Lord a perfect people. For the same reason it is also supremely necessary to see to it that the dogma of the unity and indissolubility of matrimony is known in all its religious importance and sacredly respected by those who are to marry.

—PIUS XII, *Encyclical "To the Church in the United States."*

MATCHES ARE NOT MADE IN HEAVEN BUT MARRIAGES ARE.

B. THE HOME SCHOOL

The first natural and necessary element in this environment (for the child's training) is the family, and this precisely because so ordained by the Creator Himself. Accordingly that education, as a rule, will be more effective and lasting which is received in a well ordered and well-disciplined Christian family.

—PIUS XI, *Encyclical on Christian Education*.

Outside the family it is impossible, really, to form men.

—DR. GRASSET.

The Church's mission of education is in wonderful agreement with that of the family, for both proceed from God, and in a remarkably similar manner. God directly communicates to the family, in the natural order, fecundity, which is the principle of life, and hence also the principle of education to life, together with authority, the principle of order. . . . The family therefore holds directly from the Creator the mission and hence the right to educate the offspring, a right inalienable because inseparably joined to the strict obligation, a right anterior to any right whatever of civil society and of the State, and therefore inviolable on the part of any power on earth.

—PIUS XI, *Encyclical on Christian Education*.

Home life is the highest and finest product of civilization.

—*The White House Conference on the Care of
Dependent Children*, 1909.

Home life is more than that (the finest product of civilization). It is God's own institution for the care of childhood.

—PAUL H. FURFEY.

We wish to call attention in a special manner to the present day lamentable decline in family education. The offices and professions of a transitory and earthly life, which are certainly of far less importance, are prepared for by long and careful study; whereas for the fundamental duty and obligation of educating their children, many parents have little or no preparation, immersed as they are in temporal cares. . . .

For the love of Our Saviour Jesus Christ, therefore, we implore pastors of souls, by every means in their power, by instructions and catechisms, by word of mouth and written articles widely distributed, to warn Christian parents of their grave obligations. And this should be done not in a merely theoretical and general way, but with practical and specific application to the various responsibilities of parents touching the religious,

moral and civil training of their children, and with indication of the methods best adapted to make their training effective, supposing always the influence of their own exemplary lives.

—PIUS XI, *Encyclical on Christian Education*.

Teaching their children their religion is a subject that lies close to the heart of God-fearing Catholic parents. They realize that the element of religion must permeate the entire educational process if the children are to receive a genuine Christian training. They appreciate the fact that their religion is a matter of the utmost spiritual importance to their little ones, and at the same time that it is a highly constructive force in the training of their characters, in the shaping of their personalities. They appreciate the honored privilege and sacred duty of parenthood, the privilege and the duty of cooperating with God in forming Christ in the souls of their little ones. They know theirs is the lay priesthood in the most glorious form.

—EDGAR SCHMIEDELER, O.S.B., *Childhood Religion*.

YOUTH AND MARRIAGE

The whole category of Christian ideals appeals to youth. The oft-repeated sayings of one of the early Fathers of the Church, that "the human soul is naturally Christian" is applicable here. It is as true today as it was when he first spoke those words. Thus, there are the ideals of Christian marriage. Certainly they are most elevating and beautiful. As the Church has always taught, and of course still teaches today, God Himself has instituted marriage; marriage is a divinely constituted institution. Furthermore, as St. Paul has so beautifully put it, marriage is a symbol of the union of Christ and His Church. And certainly its prime purpose is most ideal—the begetting and rearing of children for an eternity of happiness with God. These are all high ideals. Young folks will unreservedly agree that they are ideals that should and do appeal to them. Indeed, it would seem incredible that a normal, properly-guided youth would reject them for the teachings of those who today would drag marriage and parenthood in the mire.

—EDGAR SCHMIEDELER, O.S.B., in Address to Charleston Youth Council, October 25, 1942.

C. "HEART OF THE HOME"

For if the man is the head (of the home), the woman is the heart, and as he occupies the chief place in ruling so she may and ought to claim for herself the chief place in love.

—PIUS XI, *Encyclical on Christian Marriage*.

The family is the great sphere of feminine action: the home is the principal object of woman's inspiration, solicitude, vigilance and sacrifice. You know the high estate and mission of womanhood. The Gospel emancipated woman from the slavery of paganism and restored her dignity. She has spiritual equality with man and parity of moral rights and duties. In virtue of the matrimonial bond, which is sacred and indissoluble for woman as it is for man, she has a position of stability in her home. But such equality must not destroy or diminish those laws of discipline and order imposed by nature itself, which Christianity wishes to see animated by the most lofty and tender love. . . .

Motherhood, the beginning of life, achieves its glory in the education of children. Through them the mothers are able to shape the destiny of society. The center of such education and direction is the home. Consequently the social importance of the home is incalculable. It is a perverse conception of the home to regard it as a place of isolation, and the woman destined for it as snatched away from society. The truth is quite the opposite: the woman in the home is helping to make society good or bad.

—MOST REV. AMLETO GIOVANNI CICOGNANI, Address delivered at the Convention of the Diocesan Council of Catholic Women, Spartanburg, S. C., October 5, 1941.

Our government has announced that the war emergency makes it necessary to employ an unprecedented number of women in industry. While we are wholeheartedly cooperating with our government in the prosecution of the war, we must, as Shepherds of souls, express our grave concern about the Christian home in our beloved country in these crucial days. When mothers are engaged in industry a serious child care problem necessarily arises. Every effort must be made to limit, as far as necessity permits, the employment of mothers in industry, particularly young

mothers. Due provision in harmony with American traditions should be thoroughly safeguarded. With a full realization of the role which women must play in winning the war and of the extreme measures that our government must take we ask that all try to realize the dangers involved, especially the moral dangers. We urge that there be a wholesome moral atmosphere wherever women are employed.

—THE ARCHBISHOPS AND BISHOPS OF THE UNITED STATES,
Statement issued at annual meeting, 1942.

D. THE FAMILY AND THE SOCIAL ORDER

In the first place, every effort must be made to bring about that which Our predecessor Leo XIII, of happy memory, has already insisted upon, namely, that in the State such economic and social methods should be adopted as will enable every head of a family to earn as much as, according to his station in life, is necessary for himself, his wife, and for the rearing of his children, for the "labourer is worthy of his hire."

—PIUS XI, *Encyclical on Christian Marriage*.

If families, particularly those in which there are many children, have not suitable dwellings; if the husband cannot find employment and means of a livelihood; if the necessities of life cannot be purchased except at exorbitant prices; if even the mother of the family to the great harm of the home, is compelled to go forth and seek a living by her own labour; if she, too, in the ordinary or even extraordinary labours of childbirth, is deprived of proper food, medicine, and assistance of a skilled physician, it is patent to all to what an extent married people may lose heart, and how home life and the observance of God's commands are rendered difficult for them; indeed it is obvious how great a peril can arise to the public security and to the welfare and very life of civil society itself when such men are reduced to that condition of desperation that, having nothing which they fear to lose, they are emboldened to hope for chance advantage from the upheaval of the State and of established order.

But not only in regard to temporal goods . . . is it the concern of the public authority to make proper provision for matrimony and the family, but also in other things which concern the good of souls. Just laws must

be made for the protection of chastity, for reciprocal conjugal aid, and for similar purposes, and these must be faithfully enforced, because as history testifies, the prosperity of the State and the temporal happiness of its citizens cannot remain safe and sound where the foundation on which they are established, which is the moral order, is weakened and where the very fountainhead from which the State draws its life, namely, wedlock and the family, is obstructed by the vices of its citizens.

—PIUS XI, *Encyclical on Christian Marriage*.

It is the survival of the old spirit of home that must be guaranteed. For the family still remains the basis of society as we know it, and must be preserved as an institution if democracy as we have always understood it is to be perpetuated. If we lose the home we are in grave risk of undermining all other elements of stability and strength which contribute to the well-being of our national life.

—FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT, Address in behalf of the 1939
Mobilization of Human Needs.

When the Christian religion is rejected and repudiated, marriage sinks of necessity into the slavery of man's vicious nature and vile passions, and finds but little protection in the help of natural goodness. . . .

Since, then, nothing has such power to lay waste families and destroy the majesty of kingdoms as the corruption of morals, it is easily seen that divorces are in the highest degree hostile to the prosperity of families and States, springing as they do from the depraved morals of a people, and, as experience shows us, opening out a way to every kind of evil-doing in public alike and in private life.

—LEO XIII, *Encyclical on Christian Marriage*.

He who would have the star of peace shine out and stand over society should . . . defend the indissolubility of matrimony; he should give to the family—that unique cell of the people—space, light and air so that it may attend to its mission of perpetuating new life, and of educating children in a spirit corresponding to its own true religious convictions, and that it may preserve, fortify and reconstitute, according to its powers, its proper economic, spiritual, moral and juridic unity.

—PIUS XII, from Christmas Message, 1942.

IV

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Particularly over the past decade or more has an excellent Catholic literature on the family been developed. A brief list of articles and publications follows. A more elaborate bibliography, entitled "Build Vital Families," is available at the headquarters of the Catholic Committee for National Family Week.

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PAMPHLETS

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The Family. The America Press. 5c.

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Pius XII Speaks on Marriage and the Family. In preparation. Contains available pronouncements on the subject by His Holiness. Family Life Bureau, National Catholic Welfare Conference. Probable price, 25c.

BOOK

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LEAFLET

Wedded Couples Are Creators with God. National Catholic Welfare Conference. \$1.25 per hundred.

Just as home life, when the law of Christ is observed, flowers in true felicity, so, when the Gospel is cast aside, does it perish miserably and become desolated by vice: "He that seeketh the law, shall be filled with it: and he that dealeth deceitfully, shall meet with a stumbling block therein" (Ecclesiasticus XXXII: 19). What can there be on earth more serene and joyful than the Christian family? Taking its origin at the Altar of the Lord, where love has been proclaimed a holy and indissoluble bond, the Christian family in the same love nourished by supernal grace is consolidated and receives increase.

PIUS XII, *Sertum Laetitiae*,
"To the Church in the United States."