

# The Catholic Family

## Ideas for the 2015 SYNOD on the FAMILY in the Context of Evangelization

### 1. Family

A family is a man married to a woman in order to be father and mother to their children.

By the power of God the Creator, a father and mother procreate and educate their children who in their turn will grow to be men and women. God's design is to populate the earth and, after a testing time, to populate Heaven with human beings whom He has made “a little lower than the angels”.

### 2. Society

God's plan is that the family be the **primordial society** and the foundation of all human society. The family **begins with and is based on a marriage** of a man and a woman who are henceforth husband and wife, with a view to becoming a father and mother. Of its nature, the family is pro-life.

Larger families offer a richer “group dynamics” and make additional adorers to be happy with God for all eternity. On the other hand, Zero Population Growth (ZPG) promotes a “one child policy”: consequently a child lack socialization by brothers and sisters, cousins, uncles or aunts.

### 3. Catholic family

A Catholic family is a **domestic church** because Christ has raised marriage to the dignity and efficacy of a sacrament, a social sacrament of “communion”. Marriage is a **vocation** from God. It is a work of God's grace, a part of the **supernatural** order of things and, in today's world, quite **counter-cultural**.

### 4. Biology

The opposite sexes of male and female are the foundation of family. Sons and daughters are pro-created and therefore uniquely bonded to father and the mother and to each sibling, so that each family is biologically unique. God “invented” sex, so the Church is pro-marriage, pro-sex and pro-children.

NatPro, Natural Procreation, helps potential parents who have difficulty in conceiving a child.

5. **Complementarity** of the sexes favours fathers as breadwinners and mothers as homemakers.-

... In the entire educational program they [teachers] should, together with the parents, make full allowance for the **differences of sex and for the particular role** which providence has appointed to each sex in the family and in society. *Gravissimum Educationis* n. 8(c)

All men of every race, condition and age, since they enjoy the dignity of a human being, have an inalienable right to an education that is **in keeping with their ultimate goal, their ability, their sex, and the culture and tradition of their country.**

*Gravissimum Educationis* n. 1(a)

Mothers should not be forced to work outside the home: Child-Care centres are **damaging**:-

*Mothering Matters: The sources of love, and how our culture harms infants, women and society* by Dr Peter Cook, psychiatrist

“Parenting” is a unisex word. Often it is better to speak of fathering and mothering. They are not interchangeable.

6. **Sexual identity** is normatively male or female:-

Sexuality affects all aspects of the human person in the unity of his body and soul. It especially concerns **affectivity, the capacity to love and to procreate**, and in a more general way the aptitude for forming **bonds of communion** with others; [CCC n. 2332]. Every man and woman should acknowledge and accept his sexual identity. Physical, moral and spiritual differences and complementarity are oriented towards the goods of marriage and the flourishing of family life. The harmony of the couple and of society depends in part on the way in which the complementarity, needs and mutual support between the sexes are lived out; [CCC n. 2333].

7. **Approximations** to the normative marriage

- unable to have children
- who have adopted children
- or one parent has predeceased the other
- or with step parents after a second marriage.

8. **Aberrations** requiring genuine pastoral solutions which are loyal to truth as well as charity:

- contraception
- divorcees remarried without a Church annulment
- so-called same-sex unions.

9. **Church teaching** on man/marriage/society is grounded in Tradition, Scripture and “natural morality” (PTO).

### Reclaiming Catholic Social Teaching

**Professor Anthony Esolen** explains the Church's bold cure for what ails USA and the world. The back cover says:-

**M**ANY CLAIM that Catholic social teaching implies the existence of a vast welfare state. In these pages, Anthony Esolen pulls back the curtain on these false philosophers, showing how they've undermined the authentic social teachings of the Church in order to neutralize the biggest threat to their plans for secularization — the Catholic Church.

With the voluminous writings of Leo XIII [Pope from 1878 to 1903] as his guide, Esolen explains that Catholic social teaching isn't focused exclusively on serving the poor. Indeed, it offers us a rich treasure of insights about the nature of man, his eternal destiny, the sanctity of marriage, and the important role of the family in building a coherent and harmonious society.

Catholic social teaching, explained Pope Leo, offers a unified worldview. What the Church says about the family is inextricable from what she says about the poor; and what she says about the Eucharist informs the essence of her teachings on education, the arts — and even government. You will step away from these pages with a profound understanding of the root causes of the ills that afflict our society, and — thanks to Pope Leo and Anthony Esolen — well equipped to propose compelling remedies for them.

Only an authentically Catholic culture provides for a stable and virtuous society that allows Christians to do the real work that can unite rich and poor. We must reclaim Catholic social teaching if we are to transform our society into the ideal mapped out by Pope Leo: a land of sinners, yes, but one enriched with love of God and neighbour and sustained by the very heart of the Church's social teaching: the most holy Eucharist.

# Natural Morality

“Natural morality” is the Natural Moral Law described in CCC n. 1954. It is not the “natural” laws of physics or chemistry, but rather the Manufacturer’s Instructions built into our human nature, “written on their hearts” (Romans 2:15). Cicero (106-43 B.C.) said it can never be invalidated by human legislation:-

There is in fact a true law, namely right reason, which is in accordance with nature, applies to all men, and is unchangeable and eternal. By its commands this law summons men to the performance of their duties; by its prohibitions it restrains them from doing wrong. Its commands and prohibitions always influence good men, but are without effect upon the bad.

To invalidate this law by human legislation is never morally right, nor is it permissible ever to restrict its operation and to annul it wholly is impossible. Neither the Senate [of ancient republican Rome] nor the people can absolve us from our obligation to obey this law, and it requires no Sextus Aelius [a famous politician] to expound and interpret it. It will not lay down one rule at Rome and another at Athens, nor will it be one rule today and another tomorrow. But there will be one law, eternal and unchangeable, binding at all times and upon all peoples; and there will be, as it were, one common master and ruler of men, namely God, who is the author of this law, its interpreter and its sponsor.

Cicero, 106-43 B.C. *Republic* III, 22; quoted in CFCDE p. 113

The fantasy masterpiece of J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Lord of the Rings*, upholds natural morality:-

EOMER: “How shall a man judge what to do in such times?” ARAGORN: “As he ever has judged. **Good and evil have not changed since yesteryear**; nor are they one thing among Elves and Dwarves and other among Men. It is a man’s part to discern them...”

Many of the faithful do not realize that all mankind are bound to natural morality, not just Catholics and other Christians.

## Natural Morality and the State

Governments need help to rediscover natural morality and observe the limits it imposes on them:

Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s. Matthew 22:21

Even atheists admit that no law or government can make it right for a man to burn down his neighbour’s house at whim, or to kidnap his children — but they can’t explain why.

Also, **governments exist for people**, not people for governments — hence subsidiarity and solidarity:

\***Subsidiarity** is the higher society helping a lower to fulfil its role without usurping it. **Solidarity** is the lower upholding the higher, for the common good of all. N.B. Subsidiarity is not “subsidiary”, which is the lower existing for the sake of the higher. CFCDE 464-471

See Anthony Esolen’s books (2014) on apologetics and its philosophical underpinning respectively in:-

- *Defending Marriage: Twelve Arguments for Sanity*
- *Reclaiming Catholic Social Teaching: Defense of the Church’s True Teaching on Marriage, Family and the State* (see quotes in the shaded boxes).

## Grace builds on nature

— Natural Morality and Divine Revelation

Man, without Divine Revelation, despite the capacity of his intellect and will, has usually failed to come to the knowledge of the One God, the Creator, let alone to the knowledge of His Will:-

And without faith it is impossible to please him. For whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.

Hebrews 11:6; cf. Romans 1 & 2; Wisdom 13

The Church gives us a simple and profound formulation, that:

<sup>1</sup>God made us <sup>2</sup>to know, love and serve Him here on earth and <sup>3</sup>to see and enjoy Him forever in Heaven.

CFCDE p. 24; CFCDE n. 51

Now 1, 2, 3 express man’s dignity, duty, destiny:

1. **dignity**: God created us in His image and likeness...  
Genesis 1:26-27
2. **duty**: God calls us to make the choice of knowing, loving and serving Him by imitating His goodness...  
cf. Deuteronomy 10:12; also 6:5, 13, 24; 11:13
3. **destiny**: God intends that we go Heaven after a favourable judgement on our choices. Hebrews 9:27; cf. 11:6 *ut supra*

## Morality supernaturally revealed

Revelation re-inforces and clarifies Natural Morality:-

- God’s creation of man;
- in His image and likeness;
- with an immortal soul;
- with dignity, duty and destiny;
- as separate sexes, male and female;
- with bodily powers to pro-create new human beings;
- married and empowered to give a Godly upbringing;
- state of original grace;
- fall into original sin;
- God-incarnate, the Saviour;
- the Paschal Mystery;
- the Mission of the Holy Spirit: the Church and Our Lady.

## Reclaiming Catholic Social Teaching

by Professor Anthony Esolen

We see, then, that for Pope Leo [1878-1903] all these moral principles belong together. We can’t talk about a living wage without talking about labouring families, nor about labouring families without talking about fathers, nor about fathers without talking about youths, nor about youths or anybody else without talking about instruction, both for earthly and for spiritual gain. What do we in America now do? We have unions that are entirely worldly and that do virtually no training of youth; a welfare system that punishes the unwed mother when she marries; a tax system that confiscates property so as to foster dependency among the poor and the growth of the State; an educational system that views children as wards of the State and parents as guardians under State sufferance; a judicial system morbidly suspicious of religion, the only thing that ever gives substance to a culture or a society in the first place; and the worst kind of poverty of all, spiritual destitution, afflicting rich and poor alike, so that the poor are often no closer to God than the rich are, being merely less successful in their selfishness. And we think we are too wise to listen to an old man in Rome... [p. 172]

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