

The Family in the Context of Evangelization

Evangelization to families home visiting by priests and lay apostolate groups.

Home visiting is a Work of Mercy, both spiritual and corporal (cf. CFCDE pp. 103, 107). Note the theme of kindness:-

The Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but **kindly to every one**, an apt teacher, forbearing, correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant that they will repent and come to know the truth, and they may escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will.

2 Timothy 2:24-26; cf. 1 Timothy 3:7

Evangelization by families

Catholic family life is a lay apostolate bringing God and Godliness to everyone:-

Without a vision, the people perish (cf. Proverbs 29:18 KJV):
Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children.

Ephesians 5:11; cf. 1 Corinthians 11:1

1. Family objectives: above all, to practise **courtesy** to all, at all times, and giving and forgiving:

Living together depends, above all, on courtesy. The affection we have for other people should often make us more than courteous but it should never, surely, make us less. Kindness goes beyond politeness; it should not fall short of it. And it is the more important if we have children, for their ideas of politeness will derive mainly from example. The courtesy which they offer to others will be a reflection of what they experience at home. **There is no greater mistake than to suppose that marriage frees us from the need to be polite...**

Mrs Parkinson's Law by Cyril Northcote Parkinson, ch. 2 Marriage

2. Parents and children should smile with **goodwill**, for goodwill is simply being patient and kind.

3. At all times they proclaim the Gospel in **deeds** and, when appropriate, in **words**:

Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they wondered; and they recognized that they had been with Jesus.

Acts 4:13

In your hearts reverence Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to make a defence to any one who calls you to account for the hope that is in you, yet do it with **gentleness and reverence...**

1 Peter 3:15

Evangelization within families

1. Marriage strengthens husband and wife to live and work towards **each others' salvation**:-

Two other sacraments, Holy Orders and Matrimony, are **directed towards the salvation of others**; if they contribute as well to personal salvation, it is through service to others that they do so.

CCC n. 1534

2. **Inspiration from Scripture**

... from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings which are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

2 Timothy 3:15-17

3. **Challenge and Inspiration** from God-incarnate, His Saints and other men of goodwill:-

- the Lord Jesus in the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-11);
- St Paul on Charity (1 Corinthians 13:4-8);
- the Peace Prayer of St Francis of Assisi;
- Rudyard Kipling's poem *If*.

4. **Family prayers** are essential. Presently they vary from very successful to non-existent. Grace before (and even after) meals is a good start. The Rosary is still the most popular and enduring family prayer: it can be enhanced with pictures, lighted candles, and even Scripture verses for each *Hail, Mary* or at least each decade. A family might recite daily the Peace Prayer of St Francis of Assisi.

5. **Family Catechetics and apologetics** are also essential where schools and society are Godless. Even in Catholic schools, children lose their faith. Catechetical betrayals in pulpits and schools have rendered the faithful "naked to their enemies":-

The only purpose of our **instruction** is that there should be **love** coming from a pure heart, a good conscience and a sincere **faith**.

1 Timothy 1:5; cf. Ephesians 4:15

... we must acknowledge the supreme obligation of each Pastor and of every parent to have the Catechism lessons taught to their respective children in the **family**, in the **Church** and in the **School**...

Australian "Old Green Catechism", 1939. Note the order: family first, then church and lastly, Catholic school

Parents should be provided with catechisms written for families.

Rite of Baptism for Children pp. 10-11, 1971

A suitable *catechism for families*...clear, brief and easily assimilated by all.

Familiaris Consortio n. 39

For older boys and girls, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* should be read aloud and discussed.

6. **Home-schooling** bonds a family in family-centered formation. Books/CDs/ DVDs help diffident mothers, fathers or older siblings to be tutors. It fulfils the duty of attending a Catholic school *and* the State's duty of schooling, and has usually proved superior to both.

cf. *Gravissimum Educationis* nn. 3a,b; 6a; 8b,c. See *Handouts* nn. 112, 115.

Marriage Preparation

The best preparation for marriage is growing up in a large family. School sex-education is indifferent or hostile to marriage and should never have been started. We must not surrender to Government imposed immorality and error.

Subsidiarity requires that parents in need of encouragement to fulfil their duties to children should be helped and not usurped. Delicate physical details of the marital embrace should never be taught in school or in groups but always at home by the mother and father of the child, and individually to respect each child's mental privacy and varying readiness in physical, mental, psycho-social, moral and spiritual progress.

Further, from puberty onwards, there needs to be guidance in the discernment for *choosing a vocation in life*, and for the virtues needed to marry and have a family. This must not be left till a young man and woman are already engaged and asking the priest to marry them. **Character formation should be an essential element in school curricula**

Many parents, priests and other teachers are quite capable of planning such character formation and marriage preparation.

Satan's "See, Judge, Act" — Espionage, Subversion, Sabotage

Satan is the Enemy wrecking souls, marriages, families, bishops, priests, Religious, teachers, Catholicism and Ecumenism. He makes war on everything that is true, beautiful, good and Godly.

The snares of the Devil

Satan works through espionage, subversion and sabotage:-

Espionage: he *spies* out the character weaknesses in our moral armourment:-

And that because of false brethren secretly brought in [St Paul meant the circumcisers], who slipped in to **spy out our freedom** which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might **bring us into bondage**.

Galatians 2:4; cf. *The Screwtape Letters* by C.S. Lewis

Subversion: Satan, the Devil, was "a Liar and a Murderer from the beginning" (John 8:44). His lies beguile our minds with error, and our wills with evil, under the guise of good:-

Be sober, be watchful. Your **adversary the devil** prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking some one to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experience of suffering is required of your brotherhood throughout the world.

1 Peter 5:9-10; cf. 1 Corinthians 16:13; James 4:7; 1 John 3:8,10

He subverts our thinking by "modifying our mental genetics", with lies and, even more dangerous, half-lies:-

- His basic weapon is **moral cowardice**, human respect: it takes moral courage to go against bad opinions or behaviour of peers or a mob, and thereby suffer mockery or even assault; yet this is an opportunity to bear witness and give good example.
- He likes false philosophies like (1) *situation ethics*: Bertrand Russell said of Communism: "**Better Red than dead**" and ex-Communist, Alexander Solzhenitsyn countered with: "**Better dead than a scoundrel**"; and (2) *feminism* and its unisex doctrine of the interchangeability of the sexes, promoted by those retarded in their psycho-sexual maturation in masculinity and femininity.
- He distracts minds from substantive issues by *divisiveness*, getting even good people to quarrel over trivia; or worse, insisting on an "either/or" choice by *vitiating a selection with half-truths*: Examples: opposing "direct instruction" to discovery, or doctrinal instruction to life- situational learning, whereas these are often complementary rather than contradictory, like walking and driving.
- He *fosters* faulty logic by *omitting the major premise* of a syllogism when it is patently false or questionable, such as preaching "gentle Jesus" without requiring repentance.
- He promotes a denial of Natural Morality, i.e. natural (moral) law, so that it is misunderstood or rejected, replaced by relativism and the *ego-philosophy* of "self-esteem" in seeking self-fulfilment as a subtle form of self-worship.
- Many of the faithful do not understand why moral law binds all humanity. The mantra of "my rights" really means "my wants" or "I feel that" and even Mass-goers confuse charitable tolerance to persons in error with a "right" to an erroneous opinion. There is little awareness of sin or need for repentance and for the Saviour.
- He subverts souls by *bad company*, whether people, books, internet, CDs or TV: the cure is good company.

- As a Confidence Trickster he invented *verbal engineering* to prevent the teaching of truth by branding legitimate free speech as *hate speech*; to dictate that *man* can't mean a human being (previously, men shared their word with women, a paradigm of male vocation of service, whereas women had and still have their own exclusive word); and to confuse licence, liberty, freedom and free will: so that freedom of conscience is taken as a right to decide morality for oneself — which is to make up one's own morality:-

For you are called to freedom... do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh...

Galatians 5:13; cf. 1 Peter 2:16

Sabotage: Satan, the Evil One, beguiles us to choose self-worship, a death-wish from our own sins!

If any one destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and that temple you are.

1 Corinthians 3:17

Obstacles for families

in the context of the Evangelization

- **Worldliness:** living without God and more or less as an atheist in thinking and choosing, in greed and sloth;
- **Feminist unisex** political-correctness: anti-marriage, anti-family, anti-children, and pro-unisex individualism;
- **Amoral & immoral** attitudes, with no "sense of sin": misuse of sex, speed, sound, dreams, drink, drugs...
- **Never praying**, no interior life; no "rest day" to adore God at Mass and enjoy family and extended family;
- **"Nanny" welfare state** in a growing Big Brother dictatorship and its "bread and circuses" to sedate us;
- **Torturing pre-born babies** to death: tomb-in-the-womb: out of sight, out of reckoning;
- **Despising marriage and family**, the normative human vocation and paradigm of creative celibacy and virginity;
- **Bad companions**, "stranger danger", in media, school, workplace, neighbourhood, even at home;
- **Sinful sex** with pornography, masturbation, fornication, adultery, contraception, sodomy;
- **"Sex-education"** is often sexual-perversion see *Handouts* n. 33;
- **Theft and lies** "only count as sin if found out"(!);
- **Break up of even long-term marriages** with large families from evil influences in society and its pressure groups.

Priests versus Satan

The morale of priests needs building up. They are tempted by Satan towards 'novelty' in doctrine and liturgy, no clerical dress or daily Mass, and towards a moral cowardice (human respect) in not calling sinners to repentance and Confession if it attracts unpopularity, scorn or mockery. Don't pander to "itching ears"...

Preach the word, be urgent in season and out of season, convince, rebuke, and exhort, be unfailing in patience and in teaching.

2 Timothy 4:2; cf. 4:3-4

First Aid and Safety First

Many souls in crisis require spiritual "First Aid" but it often comes too late to repair the damage done.

Far better to avoid crises by pastoral "Safety First": *Prevention is better than cure*. Ordinary life suggests remedies adaptable to the moral life of man: *avoid the occasions of sin*, that is, to have depth in one's moral defences, e.g. against electronic 'stranger-danger' on email, Face Book, pornographic websites, TV and their advertisements.