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GERALD MWENYI NALYANYA WABUKENDA

The reception of the Apostolic
Exhortation *Familiaris Consortio*
by anglo saxon authors

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VOLUMEN 64 / 2016

Mauricio Augusto SOUBHIA

El planteamiento moral de Stanley Hauerwas y su teoría de las virtudes

5-87

Tesis doctoral dirigida por el Prof. Dr. Tomás Trigo

Gerald Mwenyi NALYANYA WABUKENDA

The reception of the Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris Consortio* by anglo saxon authors

89-163

Tesis doctoral dirigida por el Prof. Dr. Jose M^a Pardo

Maria MARTORELL ESTRENJER

Catequética en los Estados Unidos. Cinco autores católicos (1966-1992)

165-229

Tesis doctoral dirigida por el Prof. Dr. Ramiro Pellitero

Baltasar MOROS CLARAMUNT

Las cofradías de la Sangre en el Reino de Valencia

231-291

Tesis doctoral dirigida por el Prof. Dr. Fermín Labarga

Emilio GARCÍA SÁNCHEZ

La Misericordia divina en Juan Pablo II

293-361

Tesis doctoral dirigida por el Prof. Dr. Javier Sesé

Ana M^a ZURITA LÓPEZ

La postura de Malebranche ante el amor puro

363-457

Tesis doctoral dirigida por el Prof. Dr. Juan Luis Illanes

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Presentation

Abstract: The family institution plays a vital role in the whole of society. It is from this place that the person, as a citizen, is prepared to take on the challenges that will he or she will face later on in life. Among the matrimonial and family challenges which require attention, based on truth and mercy from an ecclesial perspective are: the increase in cases of divorce and cohabitation, childhood poverty, illiteracy, juvenile delinquency etc. The Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris consortio* by Saint Pope John Paul II tackles a wide range of issues affecting the marital institution, based on Sacred Scripture and previous magisterial pronouncements. It also makes use of arguments drawn from theological and sacramental reflection. The Pope's intention is to assist not only Christian couples, but all men and women of goodwill. The themes that are most prominent in this document are: the sacramental nature of marriage, the truth and significance of sexuality, unity in marriage and family. Additionally, the document states that parents' role in the education of the children cannot be ignored or sidelined since their contribution is vital for the children's growth. There is a growing consensus that when the family institution is supported and there is cooperation with the State, then both institutions benefit. The principle of subsidiarity works for the benefit of both parties. All this is essential if the Church is to fulfill its role in guiding its faithful towards happiness.

Keywords: Marriage, Family, Church

Resumen: La institución de la familia juega un papel importante en la sociedad. En ella se preparan las personas-ciudadanos para la vida futura. Una de las grandes tareas eclesiales es afrontar desde la verdad y la misericordia ciertos desafíos matrimoniales y familiares: el aumento del número de divorcios y las uniones de hecho, la pobreza infantil, el bajo rendimiento escolar, la violencia juvenil, etc. La exhortación apostólica *Familiaris consortio* del Papa San Juan Pablo II ha afrontado gran parte de las cuestiones que afectan a la institución del matrimonio, basándose en las enseñanzas de la Sagrada Escritura y del Magisterio precedente. Además, ha empleado argumentos tomadas de la reflexión teológica-sacramental. Su intención no es solo ayudar a los matrimonios cristianos, sino a todos los hombres y mujeres de buena voluntad. Las áreas que se han destacado más en este documento son: la sacramentalidad del matrimonio, la verdad y el significado de la sexualidad, del matrimonio y de la unidad familiar. No se puede ignorar el papel que juegan los padres en la educación de los hijos, porque es imprescindible para su desarrollo. Hay un gran consenso en que el Estado y la familia ganan cuando hay apoyo y cooperación entre ambos. El principio de la subsidiaridad es un beneficio para los dos. Todo esto es esencial para que la Iglesia cumpla su deber de guiar a sus fieles hacia la felicidad.

Palabras clave: Matrimonio, Familia, Iglesia

In the Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris consortio*, Saint John Paul II makes a strong call for families to become what they truly are. He explains further that each family finds within itself summons that cannot be ignored, and that specifies both its dignity and its responsibility. The Pope considers the family as the place in which an individual can exist for himself through a sincere gift

of himself. It remains a social institution which neither can nor should be replaced since it is the basic cell of society, as well as a sanctuary of life. For this reason, the family renders the larger human society an absolutely indispensable and priceless service. The family built upon marriage of one man and one woman also expects proper recognition of its identity as well as acceptance of its status as a subject in society. The family has its own sovereignty, albeit conditioned, and it must be respected for what it is. It is the bearer of rights within society that must be honoured.

Pope John Paul II's predecessor Venerable Paul VI, and his successors, Benedict XVI and now Pope Francis, have written and preached on many occasions concerning matrimony and the family, because of the knowledge of the important role that this institution plays both in the social and ecclesial life. St John Paul II has been especially prolific in handling this matter at hand. One of the proofs of this is the Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris consortio* of 22nd November 1981. It is one of the most referred to papal documents when talking about marriage and the family.

In the current situation of the Church, there is a need to revisit its anthropological and theological teachings on marriage and the family, since the challenges continue to grow as time goes by. On pastoral circles, *Familiaris consortio* has been quoted on many occasions. Our study wanted to see if this is the case in the academic circles as well. In this way, it will be possible to see the depth as to how it has been read, interpreted and applied in both of these areas. This exhortation has one clear aim: the proclamation of the Gospel on marriage and the family at a time when these are being attacked with a clear intention of weakening and even destroying them. Saint John Paul II, together with the assembly of bishops, saw the urgent need of proclaiming to the whole world God's original plan on marriage and the family, in order to ensure its vitality as well as its fruitfulness in performing its role.

This study was interested in finding out how *Familiaris consortio* has been received more than thirty years since it was promulgated. The focus has been on the Anglo Saxon authors. The majority of the articles obtained are from the United States of America, Britain and Ireland. The reason behind all this is because the propositions given in the document come from all the five continents, thus giving it a global outlook on the matters at hand. The method of study that we chose was to collect and group the writings of various authors and to see the dialogue they make among themselves following the propositions of the Apostolic Exhortation. We also made use of various documents

of the Magisterium in order to clarify some of the interpretations made by different authors. Sacred Scripture and Tradition have also played a part in understanding all the arguments presented.

The text that we present is an extract of the third of four chapters of the entire thesis which was presented in the Faculty of Theology of the University of Navarre on the 1st of October 2014. It goes in line with the third part of the Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris consortio*, which speaks about the role of Christian families. The teachings of the Magisterium on marriage and the family have centered itself on certain concrete points: equality of the spouses, indissolubility of matrimony, the unitive and procreative significance of the conjugal act and the sacramentality of matrimony. Part of the reason as to why the whole institution of marriage has not been well understood is based on rationalistic idealism, relativism and egoism. This has led to a point where truth is now seen to be something relative and everyone determines what is appropriate to themselves as and when they wish.

When it comes to the roles of the spouses, what was seen before as obvious is no longer the case. The roles of women as wives, mothers and workers need to be reemphasized. The mens' roles as husbands and fathers and providers has also needed to be mentioned in this chapter since it is not as obvious as it may seem. The complementary role of men and women as husband and wife appears with more clarity. This chapter also studies the transmission of life and how the contraceptive mentality has had a negative impact on many families, relying on the teachings of *Gaudium et spes*, *Humanae vitae* and *Familiaris consortio*. Finally the study analyses the family as a domestic church, tracing its origins and to see the impact it has on the entire Church. From all this, it is possible to get a general picture as to role families have to play in the Church and in society as a whole, something that cannot be taken for granted at all.

Index of the Thesis

TABLE OF CONTENTS	3
ABREVIATIONS	7
INTRODUCTION	9
Chapter 1	
HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT ON FAMILY AND MARRIAGE FROM <i>GAUDIUM ET SPES</i> TO <i>FAMILIARIS CONSORTIO</i>	17
1.1. INTRODUCTION	17
1.2. THE FORMULATION OF <i>GAUDIUM ET SPES</i>	18
1.3. THE TEACHINGS OF PAUL VI ON MARRIAGE AND THE FAMILY	25
1.3.1. Circumstances Surrounding the Writing of <i>Humanae Vitae</i>	27
1.3.2. Contents of the Encyclical <i>Humanae Vitae</i>	33
1.3.3. Reactions to the Teachings of <i>Humanae Vitae</i>	36
1.3.4. The Importance and Significance of <i>Humanae Vitae</i>	40
1.4. THE MAGISTERIUM OF JOHN PAUL II ON THE FAMILY AND THE APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION <i>FAMILIARIS CONSORTIO</i>	50
1.4.1. Theology of the Body	51
1.4.2. The 1980 Synod of Bishops on The Role of the Family	57
1.4.3. The Apostolic Exhortation <i>Familiaris Consortio</i>	65
1.5. ANALYSIS OF THE BRIGHT SPOTS AND SHADOWS AFFECTING THE FAMILY	67
1.5.1. The Current Family Situation	71
1.5.2. Human Freedom as a Key to Understanding the Family	73
1.5.3. The Christian Sense of Freedom and its Effect on the Family	80
1.5.4. The Need for Truth for Freedom	85
1.5.5. The Need for Education of Conscience	92
1.5.6. Graduality and Conversion	101

Chapter 2

THE MEANING OF CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE	113
2.1. INTRODUCTION	113
2.2. THE PLAN OF GOD FOR MARRIAGE AND THE FAMILY	114
2.2.1. Marriage as an Institution through Revelation	114
2.2.2. Ideological Propositions on the Institution of Marriage	118
2.3. MAGISTERIAL TEACHINGS FROM VATICAN II TO FC ON MARRIAGE AND THE FAMILY	125
2.3.1. Equality of the Spouses in Marriage	125
2.3.2. Indivisible Unity of Conjugal Communion	127
2.3.3. Indissoluble Communion	127
2.3.4. Union and Procreation	128
2.3.5. Matrimony as a Sacrament	129
2.4. MARRIAGE AS AN INDISSOLUBLE COMMUNION	131
2.4.1. Definition of Marital Indissolubility	131
2.4.2. Biblical Roots of Indissolubility in the Old and New Testament	132
2.4.3. Introduction of Polygamous Practice	134
2.4.4. Decline of Polygamous Practice in the Old Testament	135
2.4.5. Rupture of Indissolubility; Divorce	136
2.4.6. New Testament Teachings on Indissolubility	137
2.4.7. Reactions to the Teachings of <i>Familiaris Consortio</i> on Indissolubility	139
2.5. THE FAMILY AS A COMMUNION OF PERSONS	145
2.5.1. Marriage and the Communion of Persons	147
2.5.2. Children and the Communion of Persons	155
2.6. CHILDREN IN MARRIAGE	160
2.6.1. Children as a Gift of Marriage	161
2.6.2. Arguments For and Against the Need of Children	164
2.6.3. Sterility and Laboratory Generation	175
2.6.4. The Educative Role of the Family	195

Chapter 3

THE ROLE OF CHRISTIAN FAMILIES	213
3.1. INTRODUCTION	213
3.2. WOMEN AND SOCIETY	214
3.2.1. Equality, Complementarity and Difference	215
3.2.2. Is Submission Equivalent to Degradation?	223
3.2.3. Women, Work and the Home	229
3.3. MEN AS HUSBANDS AND FATHERS	237
3.3.1. The Father and the Family	238
3.3.2. Fatherhood as a Vocation	240
3.4. TRANSMISSION OF LIFE, CONTRACEPTION AND THE CULTURE OF DEATH	251
3.4.1. Matrimony and the Transmission of Life, in GS and HV and FC	252

INDEX OF THE THESIS

3.4.2. Roots of the Culture of Death and its Relation to Contraception	256
3.4.3. Objections to and Acceptance of Teachings on Contraception	258
3.4.4. Intrinsic Link between Person and Body	263
3.4.5. Contraception: both Anti-love and Anti-life	270
3.4.6. Reactions to the Teachings on Contraception	279
3.4.7. Complementarity between <i>Humanae Vitae</i> and <i>Familiaris Consortio</i>	282
3.5. THE FAMILY AS A DOMESTIC CHURCH	286
3.5.1. Definitions of Domestic Church	288
3.5.2. Historical Origins of «Domestic Church»	290
3.5.3. Responses to the Teachings on the Domestic Church	296
Chapter 4	
PASTORAL ACTION IN COMPLEX FAMILY SITUATIONS	309
4.1. INTRODUCTION	309
4.2. MIXED MARRIAGE	310
4.3. IRREGULAR SITUATIONS	320
4.4. COHABITATION	321
4.4.1. Arguments Concerning Cohabitation	323
4.4.2. Opinions Supporting Cohabitation	329
4.4.3. Can Marriage and Cohabitation be Equated?	332
4.4.4. Search for Solutions	340
4.4.5. Other Reactions to FC Teachings on Cohabitation	347
4.5. CATHOLICS IN CIVIL MARRIAGES	351
4.5.1. Origins of Civil Marriages	353
4.5.2. Obligatory Situations in Civil Marriages and their Participation	354
4.5.3. Pastoral Action in Civil Marriages	356
4.6. DIVORCED AND REMARRIED PERSONS	359
4.6.1. Can the Divorced and Remarried Receive the Sacraments?	362
4.6.2. Pastoral-Theological Reactions to Teachings on Divorce and Remarriage	364
4.6.3. Canonical Interpretations on Communion for the Divorced and Remarried	379
4.6.4. Is There a Remedy for the Divorced and Remarried?	390
CONCLUSIONS	399
BIBLIOGRAPHY	407

Bibliography of the Thesis

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The Role of Christian Families

1. INTRODUCTION

The family presence in society has experienced numerous challenges over time. Some of the contributing factors have been from a moral, social, political and cultural perspective. Globalization proves to be one of the most recent sources affecting the family, based on interaction by people from different kinds of cultural backgrounds, beliefs and customs. There has also been a change in the way the individual family members' roles are seen and treated. These changes have brought about certain negative conceptions which will be seen in this section. The spiritual dimension of the family is another challenge and necessity that needs to be considered in order to ensure its proper functioning. It is becoming increasingly important to point out what being a man and being a woman properly means, a part from their elementary bodily differences since what was taken to be an obvious distinction of gender roles is not the case today. Some of these aspects have been spoken about by John Paul II in FC in broader detail.

2. WOMEN AND SOCIETY

The roles of the family members in the society they live in need to be considered in order to see how each one contributes to well-being of the family as a whole. Among the situations that have arisen is the perception or the conflict on gender issues where the male-female phenomenon seems to be in a collision path. Questions that have arisen go as far as asking the following; is there a difference between men and women? What significance does motherhood have in women's lives? Should women work outside the home? Is there a class difference between a working woman and a housewife? What contri-

bution do women make in society? It is therefore necessary to look into these matters raised in order to come about with adequate responses.

From a theological perspective, Helman says that many questions raised about the woman could not be sufficiently answered before the 1960s, even though there are some documents beginning in 1880 that discuss about women. She continues saying that before the 1960's, Roman Catholic theology often addressed women's roles and duties as wives and mothers, only rarely venturing into their lives outside the home. When documents did, they addressed women's rights as workers. While this separation of women into their own significant theological category began in the late 1880s, it became more focused in the 1930s with *Casti connubii*, only becoming developed fully after 1960. Starting in the 1960s, the theological language changed significantly, specifically toward defining womanhood, women's roles in the family and in the Church, women's interaction in the world, and how they are to find fulfillment.¹

2.1. *Equality, Complementarity and Difference*

John Paul II reminds his readers that the family should promote, in and through love, the dignity of its members. Family relationships are genuine only to the extent that they recognize and promote the personal dignity of family members as living images of God. He thus takes as the moral criterion for judging the authenticity of conjugal and family relationships the fostering of the dignity and vocation of the individual persons. He then states that men and women possess the same human dignity. This equality is realized in a unique manner in the reciprocal self-giving by each one to the other and by both to the children which is proper to marriage and the family. The dignity of women can be confirmed by the history of salvation, whose testimony is a continuous and luminous one.²

Boyle points out that the self-giving of spouses in marriage is reciprocal and personal. As reciprocal, the self-giving presupposes the recognition of the dignity of the other; and as personal there must be a deep union and intimate sharing, but there cannot be either a surrender of one's own personality or an attempt to absorb the other's personality. For each of these destroys the relationship as a truly personal sharing. In a similar way, genuine cooperation in raising children presupposes recognition of equal dignity and personal responsibility of both of the parents. He argues that John Paul II's main concern

is not to elaborate an argument based on the natural law for the equal dignity of women, but to affirm this dignity on the basis of Revelation as previously seen. This affirmation made is unequivocal.³ Boyle further adds that the Pope makes a clear clarification of the meaning of the expression «equal dignity». To have equal dignity is essentially to have inalienable rights and responsibilities proper to the human person. Equal dignity, therefore, is incompatible with any suggestion that one person is less worthy of respect, less properly an image of God, or less properly human than another. It is not, however, incompatible with recognition of differences in roles or specific obligations.⁴

One of the growing points of concern in current society is on the way in which the concept of equality is confused or misinterpreted when referring to males and females. One of the main points that has been raised by radical feminism is the denial of the fundamental psychic and spiritual distinctiveness of the sexes which then goes down to devalue motherhood and the nurturing role of women in the family and in society. When referring to the Genesis texts on creation, May says that they show that man and woman are equally persons, that God has made them for each other, and that they are complementary in their sexuality. This complementarity is intimately related to their vocation to marriage and parenthood.⁵ Husbands and wives, have the high vocation, the *munus* or noble responsibility, to cooperate with God in handing on human life and in giving to new life the home where it can take root and grow. Even though not all men and women become husbands and wives, fathers and mothers, all men are potentially fathers and all women are potentially mothers. Even though they do not generate children, they are called upon to exercise analogously a kind of spiritual fatherhood and spiritual motherhood in the living out their lives.⁶ The point that comes out from this is that males and females, men and women, embrace within themselves the masculine and feminine, but they embody and manifest these aspects of their personality in differing and complementary ways.⁷

The use of the word «complementary» is viewed by some as having a diminishing effect when referring to women. Cahill reports that many feminist theologians have objected to a complementary model of gender because it seems to limit women's social contributions to motherhood and domesticity within the home while discouraging men from meeting similar responsibilities and finding fulfilment in parent-child intimacy. Of even greater concern, it holds up an ideal of self sacrificial love for women that can result in inequity and injustice in family and social relationships.⁸

Elsewhere, Cahill calls to attention on how John Paul II calls men and women equal in family and society but still defines their personalities and to an extent their roles, in terms of a model of «complementary» male and female natures. This model, she says, reflects to some extent Pius XI's portrayal of gender roles (that is, social roles assigned by sex). She gives an example of how John Paul II teaches that women are said to have an inherently maternal personality and a «special genius» that enables them to be compassionate and to nurture other persons more than men. When women take up roles outside of the family, it should not be at the expense of their true feminine humanity. Meanwhile men are called to relive on earth the very fatherhood of God, and bear the responsibility for overseeing the harmonious and united development of all the members of the family.⁹ She states that the Pope obviously does not intend complementarity to mean that men should dominate over women, nor that women should be confined exclusively to maternal and domestic roles in the home. However, it is at least debatable whether the full equality of women with men in marriage, family, and society is compatible with seeing women primarily as compassionate nurturers and men as representing God and other family members. Moreover, she continues, men are short-changed when their ability to represent in their own lives the compassionate, sacrificial love of Jesus is defined as inherently inferior to that of women.¹⁰

The Church's teaching on complementarity does not make one gender superior to the other. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches that «each of the sexes is an image of the power and tenderness of God, with equal dignity though in a different way. The union of man and woman in marriage is a way of imitating in the flesh the Creator's generosity and fecundity: «Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife and they become one flesh (Gn 1:28)». All human generations proceed from this union». ¹¹ Complementarity therefore has a uniting character rather than a dividing one, which enriches and completes both males and females.¹²

According to Grisez, not all social embodiments of sexual-role differentiation are bad. He observes that since the biology of the reproductive process allows men more opportunities to abuse their role, husbands and fathers often lead the way in irresponsibility by being unfaithful, employing physical violence, exacting services and privileges by implicit or explicit threats, and deserting. Male domination of women has shaped some aspects of every culture and every society's institutions. Abuses of the husband-father role, as well as the corresponding embodiments of the perversion of the wife-mother role,

demand reform. He continues saying that it would be a mistake to try to do away with everything embodying the two roles' differentiation. «Their conscientious fulfilment by both spouses is essential to actualizing the great human good of familial communion. Lacking support from institutions in fulfilling their complementary roles, spouses are unlikely to fulfil them. Moreover, whether or not institutions are supportive, spouses inevitably shape culture in accord with the differentiation of their roles when they fulfil them properly. Therefore, while reform for sexually differentiated roles should be promoted, attempts to minimize these roles should be resisted».¹³ The real question is therefore not whether men and women are different, but how the difference allows each to contribute something to the moral development of their children.

2.2. *Is Submission Equivalent to Degradation?*

The debate continues as to what extent the equality and difference between the two genders has to be. Cahill states that equality of spouses in marriage is now a widespread social expectation in some cultures and has even been accepted by the Catholic Church theologically. Furthermore, earlier tradition about the inequality of women and men had a biblical basis. She makes special reference to two of St. Paul's letters; to the Colossians and Ephesians. In the letter to the Colossians, St Paul exhorts women to be subject to their husbands, and husbands to love their wives. He also exhorts children to obey their parents.¹⁴ The Letter to the Ephesians goes further. It develops these relationships at greater length and especially expands on the nature of marriage by comparing it with the union of Christ and the Church. St Paul writes; «Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Saviour. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her...however, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband».¹⁵

Cahill argues that the implied message does not sit well with many modern women-or men. She further continues saying that the biblical passages commanding the submission of women still have a lingering cultural effect, and they are taken as the rule in some conservative Protestant Christian de-

nominations today. Even when they do not result in outright abuse, they leave women little defence against domineering, selfish, or irresponsible husbands. She adds that Ephesians 5 may command men to love their wives, but compliance is voluntary. The submission of women, on the other hand seems to be enforced by a predetermined family and marriage structure that puts social and ecclesial approval on the side of male authority and leaves women little or no room to protest or take action if that authority is wrongly exercised.¹⁶

When biblical passages are given literal interpretations, the danger that can arise is in its abuse. John Paul II, even though he does not comment on Ephesians 5 in FC, later on does so in the apostolic letter *Mulieris dignitatem*. Here he explains that the exhortation to husbands to love their wives as Christ loved the Church summons not only husbands but all men to be imitators of Christ in their dealings with women. He teaches as follows:

«The author of the Letter to the Ephesians sees no contradiction between an exhortation formulated in this way and the words: ‘Wives, be subject to your husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife’ (5:22-23). The author knows that this way of speaking, so profoundly rooted in the customs and religious tradition of the time, is to be understood and carried out in a new way: as a ‘mutual subjection out of reverence for Christ’ (cfr. Eph 5:21). This is especially true because the husband is called the ‘head’ of the wife as Christ is the head of the Church; he is so in order to give ‘himself up for her’ (Eph 5:25), and giving himself up for her means giving up even his own life. However, whereas in the relationship between Christ and the Church the subjection is only on the part of the Church, in the relationship between husband and wife the ‘subjection’ is not one-sided but mutual».¹⁷

A proper interpretation of this passage does show that it does not approve of male domination, nor does it impose on wives a one-sided subjection to their husbands. The intention of the sacred writer is to call Christian husbands and wives to live their marriage relationship in mutual self-sacrifice, with Christ as the model.¹⁸

As concerns headship of the husband in the family, May states that there is a genuine truth, necessary for the father-involved family at stake. He argues that first of all, there is need for authority in any human community. Authority however, must not be confused with domination and the exercise of power; indeed, domination and the exercise of power are abuses of authority. Authority is rather, a necessary cooperation and thus a role of service to the

community. Marriage and family life involve cooperative action and require unified decisions, and to make decisions is the proper task of authority within marriage and the family, as it is within any human community. He continues saying that authority is not domination, but decision-making. Husbands and wives surely share this authority, which usually entails common deliberation and often results in consensus. At times however decision-making authority cannot be exercised in this way. He gives an example of emergency situations. At other times, consensus may not emerge. Yet, for the common good of the marriage and of the spouses, authority must be exercised by one spouse or the other. Here, he continues, the complementary differences are relevant and that these differences support the view that the husband is the one who is required to exercise this authority. It is important that the identity of the one who is to exercise authority be clear when emergencies arise, and in most of these situations it falls on the husband. The proper exercise of this authority is by no means a matter of domination but rather a gift to the marriage and to the family. In order for the husband to exercise his authority properly, he must be willing to be self-sacrificial and to subordinate his own individual interests to the well-being and good of the marriage and the family.¹⁹

For the marriage partnership to grow and prosper there is need for understanding that it is a union of persons who differ in their sexuality yet complement each other. Both the husband and wife need to give and to receive; both are to image God as the wellspring of the joy of living and the ocean depth of happy rest. But each is to do so in his and her indispensably complementary ways, the husband emphatically giving in a receiving sort of way and the wife emphatically receiving in a giving sort of way. Their marital love, exclusive of others in the intimacy of their partnership of life and their one-flesh union, is the kind of love that is inclusive insofar as it reaches out to others and bear fruit in the world in which they live, as they joyously accept the gift of children and serve the needs of the society in which they live.²⁰

2.3. *Women, Work and the Home*

John Paul II in FC makes a consideration on the relationship between women and society. While he acknowledges on the complexity of the topic, he does not leave it there. He begins by demonstrating his awareness of the long standing tradition that women have almost exclusively had the role of wife, homemaker and mother. With such a role assigned to them by society, public

functions have sometimes been closed to them and reserved only for men. Such a situation is contrary to human dignity and to the proper position of women in society. He goes on to state that equal dignity and responsibility of men and women fully justifies women's access to public functions.²¹ By public functions, the Pope means jobs, professional roles and political offices. It is something that needs to be corrected. His evaluation of this state of affairs is nuanced, when he emphasizes both the woman's right of access to these functions and the special dignity and importance of the role of wife and mother. Equal dignity and responsibility of women fully justifies access to these functions; to say otherwise is to deny that women have a life of their own and with their conscientious judgement.

In as much as the Pope advocates for the creation of equal opportunities for women, he also clarifies that true advancement of women requires that clear recognition be given to the value of the maternal and family role, by comparison with all other public roles and all professions. Furthermore, these roles and professions should be harmoniously combined, if one wishes that the evolution of society and culture be truly and fully human.²² This then raises the question as to whether work at home can be said to be of lesser value than that outside the home. Boyle argues that the Pope does not say that the maternal is better than these other functions, though he does describe this role as being of irreplaceable value. His point is, rather, that the value of the familial role will be ignored and downplayed if women come to see their human fulfilment as lying totally in extra familial activities. He further continues saying that given the central role of the family in the plan of salvation, and in particular, its special role in fostering and carrying out the basic human vocation of love, the loss of proper regard for the person's role in the family is an immeasurable loss and weakening of the human good.²³

Hogan and Levoir express their agreement with this view stating that for the wife and mother, the familial work is first of all a vocation, a path to heaven. The father's familial work is also a vocation for him. His work in the family must take precedence over his work (his job) in the marketplace. However, they add, «it is important to emphasize that it is not only the husband and father who has a job. The wife and mother remaining in the home does much physical labour. She has a job in the same sense as her husband. But her job coincides exactly with her vocational work, i.e., her familial work. In other words, for her, the familial communion of persons corresponds to the communion of persons in the marketplace, i.e., the mother's job is directly related to the family».²⁴

An important point of concern worth noting is that currently, the mother's job is not valued in society as much as it was before because of a general misunderstanding of what work is, especially in the most industrialized countries. Hogan and Levoir argue that for many, work (the job) is not for people, but people are for work. They continue saying that man is not created for work, rather work was created as a means for men, as images of God, to share in the divine creative act. Work then, is for man. However when the belief goes that humanity is for work, human dignity suffers. With this view in place, a worker is not measured by his/her infinite and incomparable dignity, but by how much he/she produces or how much he/she earns. The result is that human beings become subject to things, the opposite of God's plan established in His creative act. They state that two conclusions founded on the (false) principle that people are for work tend to devalue the primacy of the familial work of the mother, but also of the father:

«First, if human persons are for work and for the family, there is a competition between the family and work. Given this view, both mothers and fathers will wish to work in the marketplace and they will value their jobs more than their familial work. As a result, both mothers and fathers will neglect their familial roles. But it is wrong for either the father or the mother to neglect his or her primary vocation, the familial work, for the sake of his or her job. The only solution to this problem is a restoration of the proper view that work (the job) is for man and not the other way round. The second problem is that if people are measured by how much they earn or produce, it is apparent that the job of a wife and mother (or that of a husband or father) in the home will be thought worthless. With this job, she (or he) is not earning money, nor producing anything tangible. Society regards her (his) job in the home as meaningless. This view must change. The job of a wife and mother (or that of the husband and father) in the home is, in a true sense, even more important than any job in the marketplace».²⁵

One way in which an attitude against the woman at home needs to be changed is through education. John Paul II thus teaches that the Church can play a role in this by tirelessly insisting to society that the work of the woman in the home needs to be recognized and respected by all in its irreplaceable value. A good education on this is necessary because it will help eliminate discrimination between different types of work and professions, by making it clear that all people, in every area, are working with equal rights and equal responsibilities. In this way, the image of God in man and in woman will thus

be seen with added lustre.²⁶ Proper education concerning the equal rights and responsibilities of all, no matter what their specific job, will root out the invidious suggestion that some forms of work are really unworthy or beneath the dignity of human beings. The Pope thus calls for a new Theology of work, which can shed light upon and study in depth the meaning of work in the Christian life and determine the fundamental bond between work and the family, and therefore the original and irreplaceable meaning of work in the home and in rearing of children.²⁷

Even though there has been an insistence by the feminist movement and other quarters that the role of the woman outside the home has more value than that in the home, the Pope is emphatic that «the mentality which honours women more for their work outside the home than for their work within the family must be overcome. This requires that men should truly esteem and love women with total respect for their personal dignity, and that society should create and develop conditions favouring work in the home».²⁸

John Paul II proposes that society be structured in such a way that wives and mothers are not in practice compelled to work outside the home, and that their families can live and prosper in a dignified way even when they themselves devote their full time to their own family. Boyle argues that the point the Pope wants to pass across is that the mentality which exalts the work of women outside the home is based on a failure to respect the inherent dignity of women as images of God. Lacking this respect, the women's esteem depends on recognizable achievement which is not found in the work of the home. The need for this kind of recognition is overcome if women's inherent dignity is acknowledged. Once this need is overcome, the true value of both the maternal role and other women's roles outside the home will come into clearer focus.²⁹ In all this the Holy Father calls upon the Church to respect the equal rights and dignity of women. But this does not mean for women a renunciation of their femininity or an imitation of the male role, but the fullness of true feminine humanity which should be expressed in their activity, whether in the family or outside of it, without disregarding the differences of customs and cultures in this sphere.³⁰

3. MEN AS HUSBANDS AND FATHERS

In FC, John Paul II asserts that each family is and ought to become an intimate community of life and love and that each family has been given the mission to guard reveal and communicate love. This means that every man,

and especially every father, is charged with the responsibility of promoting and preserving marital and family love and to seek the common good and the personal well-being of every family member. A question that has been raised goes as follows; who is a good family man and what influence does he have on his wife and children? These and other questions on fatherhood need to be taken into consideration in order to have an enriched vision on what it pertains. There is a need to reemphasize the role of men in family life, based on the many cultural changes taking place in the human society.

3.1. *The Father and the Family*

Having extensively dealt with women's contribution as wives, mothers and workers, John Paul II also dedicates his teaching to speak about men, in their capacity as husbands and fathers. The main focus here is on the duties and obligations towards their wives, their children and their entire families. He points out several aspects of the man's relationship to his wife which complements what he previously speaks about concerning women. Within the conjugal and family communion-community, the man is called upon to live his gift and role as husband and father. The Holy Father begins by giving the biblical account as to how God created the woman when he saw that it was not good that the man should be alone and therefore makes for him a helper (cfr. Gn. 2: 18). In his wife, therefore, man sees the fulfilment of God's intention. Consequently, the man should play his part in developing an authentic conjugal love.

The first requirement for developing this love is profound respect for his wife's equal dignity. Towards his wife, he is supposed to develop a new attitude of love, manifesting towards her a charity that is both gentle and strong, like that which Christ has for the Church.³¹ May comments that the Pope here affirms that the husband/ father has the sublime mission of revealing and re-living on earth the very fatherhood of God and he sketches out some of the principle duties the husband/father must carry out if he is to do this. He adds that although he does not explicitly say that the husband/father is the «head» of the wife and of the household, he clearly assigns to him a leadership role, one emphasizing the husband's service to his family. He likewise implies that the exercise of authority by the husband/father within the family is both proper and necessary.³²In all this, the marital relationship is not that of a master and a slave. It is necessary that the husband and wife develop an intense and

personal friendship, treating each other as equals. Boyle explains that in revealing and reliving the fatherhood of God, the father has a duty to ensure the proper development of all members of the family. He does this by exercising responsibility for the new life that comes forth in the family, by cooperating fully with his wife in educating the children, by doing his work in such a way as never to divide but always to contribute to the unity and stability of the family, and finally, by giving witness before the children of the life of an adult Christian.³³

3.2. *Fatherhood as a Vocation*

The matrimonial bond between a man and woman prepares both husband and wife to be possible parents. Marriage was instituted by God, and it is also a vocation, to those who have been called to it, just as is the call to celibacy. The role the two parents play in the education of their children forms an important base for their upbringing. Studies done on the family continue confirming the importance of both parents in carrying out this task. A growing problem in many places that can be seen currently is in the increased absence of fathers and a growing number of single mother families. There continues to be a general consensus on scientific investigations carried out that the father's engagement positively affects the social, behavioural, psychological and cognitive outcomes of children.³⁴ John Paul II notes the same by stating that experience has shown that the absence of the father causes psychological and moral imbalance in family relationships, as does, in contrary circumstances, the oppressive presence of a father, where a wrong superiority of male prerogative which humiliates women and inhibits the development of healthy family relationships.³⁵

It is precisely, in the family, founded on marriage between a man and a woman that provides big help that children need. Children want to be raised by parents who love each other, and they need to live in, grow with both parents together, since the maternal and paternal figures are complementary in their education and in the construction of their identity and personality. It is necessary therefore that appropriate measures be taken to ensure that the children grow in a stable and united family. The matrimonial couple needs to remember the sacramentality of the matrimonial pact they made and to strengthen it daily, through listening to the Word of God, prayer, mutual self-giving and forgiveness among them. A family environment that is not

serene, or one where separation or divorce has occurred, tends to bring about negative consequences on the children. The Pope adds that it is in revealing and reliving on earth the very fatherhood of God, a man is called upon to ensure the harmonious and united development of all members of the family.³⁶

Being a father entails learning. John Paul II teaches that the man even with all his sharing in parenthood – always remains «outside» the process of pregnancy and the baby's birth; in many ways he has to learn his own fatherhood from the mother. He adds that this is part of the normal human dimension of parenthood, including the stages that follow the birth of the baby, especially the initial period. The child's upbringing, taken as a whole should include the contribution of both parents: the maternal and paternal contribution.³⁷ A man also learns to be a father from his own father. Miller explains that fathers must insert themselves into the bond between mother and child as a second other by an initiative very much like that of adoption. Where this initiative is energetic and winsome «an essential autonomy from the mother is fostered and children of both sexes are significantly helped in orienting themselves to the cultural universe outside the home».³⁸ May explains that the father has the primary responsibility of protecting and providing for his wife and children. He is their guardian. This fatherly task is particularly important during his wife's pregnancy and during infancy, when both his wife and his children are particularly vulnerable and need to have a sense of security rooted in the conviction that he is there to care for them. Only if he is allowed to do so can he do the things a father must do to find his identity. However, this does not mean that the mother's economic input is not valuable.³⁹

When carrying out the educative role, it is necessary for parents to so with authority, which is not the same as authoritarianism. When parents renounce this authority in educating their children, the most likely result will be family conflict. The outcome can be that of having a child who is a tyrant in the family. It can be seen that some parents do not educate their children through the pretext of not wanting to be demanding, or reprimanding them for fear of causing traumas to them. Others are overprotective towards their children, to calm their consciences in trying to make up for the little time they spend together with them. The children then end up growing with a poor conscience, lack of sense of guilt and become egocentric. A contributing factor to this development is the absence of the father in the house.⁴⁰

The early stages of the child's development are crucial for acquiring a sense of identity and direction as to what is expected of him. Many studies

have shown that at the initial growth stages of the child, the mother's role occupies a huge part –almost entire– in the raising of the child. This influence keeps reducing as the child continues to mature. When they reach adolescence, the father's influence is almost one hundred per cent on the son or daughter. It is necessary to have the father figure present, who provides a good example in character and conscience, who can teach them how to be virtuous, responsible, selfless and cordial. Boys learn to be men by looking at their fathers, while girls need a father figure in order to know how to evaluate and relate with men.⁴¹

As boys mature and grow in strength, they ordinarily become much stronger than their mother and their sisters – and their father as well. They may be tempted to abuse their strength by seeking to dominate their mother and sisters; hence they must be taught, and taught by the father, that men who are true to their vocation do not tyrannize women or lord it over them because of superior physical strength. They must be disciplined, and the father is the one chiefly responsible in doing this. The father's daughters need to have a man –their father– affirm them in their femininity and show them, by his faithful love of their mother, that they must treasure themselves as female persons and not allow males to exploit them for their sexual values.⁴²

One of the impediments to fathers' involvement in the education of their children is by the influence of social and cultural conditions they are found in. The result may be the adoption of a hands-off approach or less involvement in the education of their children. Many at times fathers deeply involve themselves in looking for ways and means of providing for the family, neglecting the affective part which they require. In order for boys and girls to develop well as integral persons, they need their father's care. Their fathers must become involved in their families. Part of the education process of the child is seen by the example set by the parents. This requires their active cooperation. A teamwork approach helps the child learn that it is possible to sustain a relationship. If the father is absent, he does not see the same level of intensity and duration in a relationship as he would with an intact married couple for parents. Whatever else the child might see about his mother's relationships with other adults, he will see that his father is for some reason not present. Cooperation between the parents can be very helpful in teaching reciprocity, especially in the area of disciplining and correcting their children.⁴³

Children need to be both accepted and nurtured, to be challenged and held to standards, and mothers and fathers must accept and nurture them,

challenge them and hold them to standards, but they do so in somewhat differing modalities, with the mothers accentuating acceptance and nurture, the fathers challenging and disciplining. A family will be father-involved only if the husband is given the support necessary to carry out his role as provider. If culture ceases to support and encourage through its models, laws and rituals, the sanctity of the bond between a man and his wife and a father's involvement with his own children external forces could take over in favour of a mother-alone family. This will have negative consequences as a result as can currently be seen in certain family environments.⁴⁴ It can be seen that current institutional policies in most countries do not support the increased involvement of fathers in child rearing. Paid parental leave for fathers, fathers' groups and employers supportive of men staying home with their infants and sick children is still difficult to find.

For there to be a better father involvement in the family, there is need for change on how his role is perceived. Atkinson argues that while society rejects the genuine differentiation of reality, and eschews the deeper symbolic nature of masculinity and femininity and relationships that proceed from them, the crisis in genuine paternity keeps growing. He states that the «answer to this crisis lies in the recovery of the vision of fatherhood –not a vision that is constructed on society's prevailing ideologies–, but rather one that is rooted in the biblical vision of reality. It is this vision alone that has the capacity to show to us the genuine nature of man and woman and the spiritual meaning and purpose of fatherhood. To reject this transcendent dimension of fatherhood is to reject fatherhood itself. The great mystery here is that only in accepting the reality of our creatureliness do the concomitant transcendent dimensions begin to unfold. Just as for the mother there is the glory of motherhood, so too for the father there is a unique glory to his vocation to reflect in created reality the caring, loving fatherhood of God Himself».⁴⁵

4. TRANSMISSION OF LIFE, CONTRACEPTION AND THE CULTURE OF DEATH

The marital bond arising from marriage creates an environment in which a new life may be introduced as a result of procreation. The offspring arising from it receives the love and attention of both parents, which is a great help in its development. However it may occur that the spouses, instead of availing themselves to the possibility of being parents, place obstacles which prohibit conception. This is a gateway to the culture of death. The culture of death

refers to deliberate acts by married couples which impede the possibility of giving rise to children. This arises mainly through contraception.⁴⁶

John Paul II in FC makes a strong defence of the Church by stating that it stands for life and is against any activity that goes against human dignity. The Pope notes that the Church's teachings at present are placed in a social and cultural context which render it more difficult to understand and yet more urgent and irreplaceable for promoting the true good of men and women.⁴⁷ Atkinson comments that, by writing about the culture of life and death and its root causes, John Paul II wants to engage secular thought on its own terms, lay bare its faulty foundations, and re-present the authentic Christian witness to the truth about the human person. He adds that the Pope in particular, wants to show that the life and death struggle of the modern era is over the «two irreconcilable concepts of the human person and of human sexuality». FC therefore becomes a paradigm for his confrontation with the modern rationalist mindset.⁴⁸

4.1. *Matrimony and the Transmission of Life, in GS and HV and FC*

From the documents published by the Second Vatican Council to FC, there is a consistent appeal on value of matrimony and its role in transmitting life. The three main documents which we have analysed earlier keep reemphasizing this teaching in different ways. The Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes* declared that «by their very nature, the institution of matrimony itself and conjugal love are ordained for the procreation and education of children, and find in them their ultimate crown».⁴⁹ This is an affirmation, as comments Sarmiento that by its proper nature marriage is ordained at the transmission of life. This was instituted by God «from the beginning» and has been thus understood by tradition as well as the doctrine of the Church, as coming from Revelation and the anthropological consideration of sexuality. Therefore, matrimony is structured towards two ends: the good of the spouses, based on the dignity they have as persons who form a conjugal communion; and openness to life, in their existence as a basic value of being persons.⁵⁰

Paul VI in *Humanae vitae* further explains that married love is not confined wholly to the interchange of husband and wife; rather it also contrives to go beyond this to bring new life into being.⁵¹ This openness to life is therefore considered as a noble and worthy action on the part of the spouses, since it also is a help in expressing and strengthening their union as husband and wife. Paul VI adds that this capacity of generating new life is also as a result of laws

written in the actual nature of man and woman and, if well used, marriage fully retains its sense of true mutual love and its ordination to the supreme responsibility of parenthood to which man is called.⁵²

In FC, John Paul II dedicates much attention to speak about the matrimonial role of serving life, which is among the general tasks a family should undertake. He begins by teaching about the value of each life, explaining that it is a gift. He mentions that a man and woman are called to a special sharing in His love and in his power as Creator and Father, through their free and responsible cooperation in transmitting the gift of life. Thus, the fundamental task of the family is to serve life, to actualize in history the original blessing of the Creator—that of transmitting by procreation the divine image from person to person. He adds that «fecundity is the fruit and sign of conjugal love, the living testimony of full reciprocal self-giving of the spouses».⁵³

Smith comments that while we cannot see directly into the mystery of how God's love created the world, through procreation, as a result of love for God and each other, there is a trace, an echo and image and a sharing in the original mystery by which God created all life out of his love.⁵⁴ John Paul II emphasizes that the fruitfulness of conjugal love is not restricted solely to procreation of children, even understood in its specifically human dimension: it is enlarged and enriched by all those fruits of moral, spiritual and supernatural life which the father and mother are called to hand on to their children, and through their children to the Church and to the world.⁵⁵ In order to remove any doubts on the Church's concern for the family, he makes a clear position of the Church on procreation by stating that «precisely because the love of husband and wife is a unique participation in the mystery of life and of the love of God Himself, the Church knows that she has received the special mission of guarding and protecting the lofty dignity of marriage and the most serious responsibility of the transmission of human life».⁵⁶ From this unanimity of the Church's teaching on the transmission of life, the Magisterium maintains its emphasis that human life needs to be protected against the onslaught of attacks from different human circles that are against it for various motives.

4.2. *Roots of the Culture of Death and its Relation to Contraception*

A major contributing factor to the culture of death can be attributed to the distortion and misinterpretation of the true meaning of human sexuality. This is why John Paul II insists that the Church has an irreplaceable role of presenting

sexuality as a value and a task of the whole person, created male and female.⁵⁷ Later on in further writings he enumerates two root causes of the culture of death. He explains that this culture is rooted first in a mentality which carries the concept of subjectivity to an extreme and even distorts it, and recognizes as a subject of rights only the person who enjoys full or at least incipient autonomy and who emerges from a state of total dependence on others. The second one is rooted in a notion of freedom which exalts the isolated individual in an absolute way, and gives no place to solidarity, to openness to others, and service of them.⁵⁸

May explains that of the two roots above, the first is most relevant for showing the relationship of contraception to the culture of death. «At its heart is the idea that only those members of the human species who enjoy at least «incipient autonomy», i.e. individuals with exercisable capacities of reasoning and will, are truly persons with rights that ought to be recognized by society».⁵⁹ John Paul II points out that this mentality tends to equate personal dignity with the verbal and explicit, or at least perceptible, communication.⁶⁰ May points out that on this view, a «person» is pre-eminently a subject aware of himself as a self and capable of relating to other selves; and not all members of the human species are persons on this understanding of «person». He therefore says that this idea fits in well with the anthropology underlying the acceptance of contraception.⁶¹ Smith attributes this «anti-life mentality» to be as a result of technical dominion over nature, notions of «wrongful life», the consumer mentality, and the tendency of developed countries to export their negative «anti-life» neuroses to other developed or differently developed societies, in programs of contraception, sterilization and abortion.⁶²

4.3. *Objections to and Acceptance of Teachings on Contraception*

Magisterial teachings on the evils of contraception have raised debates in many circles as we have seen earlier in the case of *Humanae vitae*. Even with all this happening, the Church has upheld its stand and continues to do so in its teaching about this matter. John Paul II invites theologians to unite their efforts in order to collaborate with the Magisterium and to commit themselves to the task of illustrating ever more clearly the biblical foundations, the ethical grounds and personalistic reasons behind this doctrine.⁶³

May raises concern on the perception of many people in society that contraception is regarded as «natural», stating that it is the obvious thing to do if there are good reasons for avoiding a pregnancy. He argues that as a

result, to suggest that there is a link between contraception and the «culture of death» is considered outrageous, in particular by married couples who are pro-life, but who nonetheless believe that there is nothing wrong with contraception. He adds that this contraceptive culture has affected many people's way of perceiving reality that they fail to recognize contraception for what it is, thus mistakenly believing that its practice is compatible with a love of life. There are views and arguments made by married couples stating that the unitive and procreative purposes of marriage can still be achieved in the conjugal act, since even though they are not against having children, until later, they would like to strengthen their marriage bond. It is also seen as an intelligent use of reason to control biological nature, as well as a major breakthrough in science, which gives man control over nature. May sees these views to be quite common among many couples, and which is a highly mistaken one.⁶⁴ A common slogan which is made by proponents who justify contraception and abortion, states that «no unwanted baby ought ever to be born». To this proposal, May replies by saying that it instead should be «no human ought ever to be unwanted», which is the truth proclaimed by the Church in the name of Jesus Christ, which is also the truth central to the thought of Pope John Paul II.⁶⁵

The arguments in favour of contraception as Atkinson notes can be traced to a modern rationalist mindset. He argues that the essential conflict between the Christian's and the rationalist's view of man is rooted in the latter's dualistic tendencies. In the modernist perspective, the body is only an instrumental good and the person and the body are not intrinsically linked. This therefore leads inevitably to a serious distortion of the understanding of the human person and the human act.⁶⁶ FC, in contrast, shows that there is a successive intrinsic link between sexuality, the specificity of the person as male and female, and its grounding in the image of God. Every element here is essential if human nature is not to be distorted.⁶⁷ Atkinson observes that what is critical to grasp is that the culture of life and death centres precisely on the meaning of the human body. He adds that as FC shows, the moral confusion over contraception is illustrative of this. When the body ceases to be expressive of, and intrinsically linked to, the person, the fundamental connection between fecundity and marital communion is broken. Therefore, only actions which are respectful of these dimensions of human nature can be considered good for the person, and hence moral.⁶⁸

The relationship between contraception and abortion is also discussed extensively in EV. To the common claim that contraception if made safe and

available to all, is the most effective remedy against abortion, John Paul II replies as follows:

«When looked at carefully, this objection is clearly unfounded. It may be that many people use contraception with a view to excluding the subsequent temptation of abortion. But the negative values inherent in the ‘contraceptive mentality’ –which is very different from responsible parenthood, lived in respect for the full truth of the conjugal act– are such that they in fact strengthen this temptation when an unwanted life is conceived. Indeed, the pro-abortion culture is especially strong precisely where the Church’s teaching on contraception is rejected. Certainly, from the moral point of view contraception and abortion are specifically different evils: the former contradicts the full truth of the sexual act as the proper expression of conjugal love, while the latter destroys the life of a human being; the former is opposed to the virtue of chastity in marriage, the latter is opposed to the virtue of justice and directly violates the divine commandment ‘You shall not kill’». ⁶⁹

Even despite their differences in nature and moral gravity, John Paul II explains that contraception and abortion are closely connected, as fruits from the same tree. He notes that it in many cases contraception and even abortion are practiced under the pressure of real-life difficulties, which nonetheless can never exonerate from striving to observe God’s law fully. He further adds that in many other instances, such practices are rooted in a hedonistic mentality unwilling to accept responsibility in matters of sexuality, and they imply a self-centred concept of freedom, which regards procreation as an obstacle to personal fulfilment. Therefore, the life which could result from the conjugal act thus becomes an enemy to be avoided at all costs and abortion becomes the only possible decisive response to failed contraception. Physical proof that shows the connection in the mentality between contraception and abortion, as observes John Paul II is being demonstrated in an alarming way by the development of chemical products, intrauterine devices and vaccines which, distributed with the same ease as contraceptives, really act as abortifacients in the very early stages of the development of the life of the new being. ⁷⁰

4.4. *Intrinsic Link between Person and Body*

A dualistic understanding of the human person and of human sexuality is at the heart of the defence of contraception. This anthropology regards the body as an instrument of the person, a good for the person insofar as it is a

necessary condition for goods and values intrinsic to the person. May states that the latter, so-called personalistic goods and values are those whose existence depends on their being consciously experienced. This anthropology underlies several key arguments given to support contraception, in particular, the argument defending it as the exercise of intelligent human dominion over nature and that justifying it on the basis that it is in harmony with the nature of human sexuality.⁷¹

According to Atkinson, the burden of FC is to present an integral vision of the human person precisely because of the misrepresentations and distortions that are currently present.⁷² John Paul II explains that:

«In the context of a culture which seriously distorts or entirely misinterprets the true meaning of human sexuality, because it separates it from its essential reference to a person, the Church more urgently feels how irreplaceable is her mission of presenting sexuality as a value and task of the whole person, created male and female in the image of God».⁷³

Atkinson states that it is precisely in the differentiation of humanity into male and female that the specificity of the human person is revealed. Man is not created generically nor in a wholesale fashion but rather directly and immediately by God, and through the human person, the divine image enters into the created sphere. He adds that material/body reality must not be severed from its capacity to express metaphysical meaning. He acknowledges that FC safeguards the authentic vision of man when it states that sexuality is by no means purely biological, but concerns the innermost being of the human person as such (cfr. n. 11). Sexual differentiation is what allows for the *communio* towards which the human person is propelled, for this understanding has profound implications for the issues of present days which seek to redefine the bodily realities of marriage, and to sever in ever more radical ways the connection between generation and the human reality of sexuality as *communio personarum*.⁷⁴ The male-female body structure therefore gives an indicator of each one's vocation. In this way, the body is not extrinsic to or merely instrumental for, the purpose of man, but is rather prophetic of it. Atkinson observes that while FC rarely develops to any great extent the points it makes, it pauses at this juncture to make an explicit crucial anthropological principle:

«As an incarnate spirit that is a soul which expresses itself in a body and a body informed by an immortal spirit, man is called to love in his unified totality. Love includes the human body, and the body is made a sharer in spiritual love».⁷⁵

Atkinson explains that from this it follows that to evaluate the morality of certain human acts, one needs to consider if the act is consonant with and respectful of the structure of the human person as a body-soul unity. He further adds that the totality of the person-body complex is denied by a contraceptive mentality, that the intrinsic importance of the body is rejected in such practices as *in vitro* fertilization, and that the symbolic structure of the body is contradicted by homosexual practices.⁷⁶ John Paul II teaches in FC that human sexuality is never purely biological, but concerns the innermost being of the human person as such. In order to maintain its specific human integrity, it must respect the dignity and value of the total human person. He continues by saying that:

«Conjugal love involves a totality, in which all the elements of the person enter—appeal of the body and instinct, power of feeling and affectivity, aspiration of the spirit and of will. It aims at a deeply personal unity, the unity that, beyond union in one flesh, leads to forming in one heart and soul; it demands indissolubility and faithfulness in definitive mutual giving; and it is open to fertility».⁷⁷

Atkinson concludes that when any of these essential elements—self-gift, sexual differentiation, personal bodily unity, indissolubility and fecundity—are rejected or contradicted by a society, a culture of death will inevitably begin to take root.⁷⁸ This anthropology or understanding of the human person is central to the culture of death. For, if the person is not his or her own body, Grisez explains that «the destruction of life of the body is not directly and in itself an attack on a value intrinsic to the person. The lives of the unborn, the lives of those not fully in possession of themselves—the hopelessly insane and the «vegetating» senile—and the lives of those who no longer can engage in praxis or problem solving become lives no longer meaningful, no longer valuable, no longer invaluable.⁷⁹ May observes that the dualistic anthropology that has led to the justification of abortion on the life thus taken, is not «meaningfully» human or the life of a «person» and to the justification of euthanasia on the grounds that it serves the needs of the «person» when biological life becomes a burden, is thus definitively operative in the ideology behind contraception, even if this is not acknowledged by many.⁸⁰

4.5. *Contraception: both Anti-love and Anti-life*

In order to pass a moral judgement on contraception, it is first necessary to know what it is all about. It is essential to provide an accurate description of the kind of human act an act of contraception is and then to judge whether

or not it is a human act in accordance with right reason, with the truth, and, if not, why not. According to Grisez, Boyle, Finnis and May, contraception can be defined only in terms of the beliefs, intentions and choices which render behaviour contraceptive. They say that to contracept, one must think that; first, some behaviour in which someone could engage is likely to cause a new life to begin, and second the bringing about of the beginning of new life might be impeded by some other behaviour one could perform. One's choice is to perform that other behaviour; one's relevant immediate intention (which may be sought for some further purpose) is that the prospective new life does not begin. They add that to «begin» and to «come to be» refer both to the initiation of the life of a possible person and to the continuing existence of the person. Thus, they conclude, «contraception aims at impeding both the initiation of life and the beginning of the individual whose life would be initiated if not impeded».⁸¹

Paul VI defines contraception as «any action which either before, at the moment of, or after sexual intercourse, is specifically intended to prevent procreation—whether as an end or as a means».⁸² Both definitions are referring to the conjugal act among married couples.

Grisez, Boyle, Finnis and May argue that since contraception must be defined by its intention that a prospective new life not begin, therefore every contraceptive act is necessarily contra-life. Those who choose such an act, they explain, often also intend some further good, for example, not to procreate irresponsibly with bad consequences for already existing persons. But in choosing contraception as a means to this further good, they necessarily reject a new life. They imagine that a new person will come to be if that is not prevented, and they want that possible person not to be, and they effectively will that he or she never is. That will, they conclude, is a contra-life will. Therefore, each and every contraceptive act is necessarily contra-life.⁸³ May adds that spouses cannot contracept merely by taking thought. They do so by choosing to do something to their body-persons, and different contraceptives work in different ways to «impede procreation».⁸⁴ John Paul II therefore affirms, repeating Paul VI's teaching in *Humanae vitae*, that:

«When couples, by means of recourse to contraception, separate these two meanings that God the Creator has inscribed in the being of man and woman and in the dynamism of their sexual communion, they act as 'arbiters' of the divine plan and they 'manipulate' and degrade human sexuality—and with it them-

selves and their married partner— by altering its value of ‘total’ self-giving. Thus the innate language that expresses the total reciprocal self-giving of husband and wife is overlaid, through contraception, by an objectively contradictory language, namely, that of not giving oneself totally to the other. This leads not only to a positive refusal to be open to life but also to a falsification of the inner truth of conjugal love, which is called upon to give itself in personal totality».⁸⁵

In accord to this, Atkinson explains that there is clearly seen a juncture between the several elements constitutive of an authentic anthropology:

- a) The body is truly expressive of the person.
- b) What one does to the body, one does to the person.
- c) To treat the body as an instrument is in effect to instrumentalize the person as well.
- d) The person as a composite body-soul reality is called to the gift of communion precisely in and through his bodily reality.
- e) Metaphysically, this communion requires a fundamental openness to the other which in turn, to be fully human, requires a total self-giving.
- f) In this way, and only in this way, can there be participation in the *imago Dei* which is inscribed in the human person.

Atkinson concludes that only if these principles are respected can any conjugal act be considered to be fully human and therefore moral, since to disrespect these principles is to falsify the plan of God.⁸⁶ May states that contraception is both anti-life and anti-love in accord with John Paul II. He adds that it is utterly incompatible with the «culture of life» and the «civilization of love», but is rather a gateway to the «culture of death».⁸⁷

A question then arises as to whether natural family planning (NFP) is a contraceptive action among the married spouses, since they are avoiding the possibility of conception. To this, John Paul II explains that:

«When instead, by means of recourse to periods of infertility, the couple respect the inseparable connection between the unitive and procreative meanings of human sexuality, they are acting as ‘ministers’ of God’s plan and they ‘benefit from’ their sexuality according to the original dynamism of ‘total self-giving, without manipulation or alteration’».⁸⁸

Grisez, Boyle, Finnis and May point out that in some cases NFP can be used with contraceptive mentality, and in this case the action of the married couple is wrong. They explain that the practice of NFP differs from contraception, not in reason for the choices which are motivated, but in the choices

which that reason motivates and in those choices' relationships to the benefits and burdens which such a reason represents. When contraception is chosen, the choice is to impede the baby's coming to be, in order that the goods represented by that reason are realized, and/or the evils represented by it be avoided. They further add that when NFP is non-contraceptively chosen, the choice is to abstain from the conjugal act which would be likely to result in both the baby's coming to be and the loss of goods and/or occurrence of evils represented by that same reason, in order that the goods represented by that reason be realized or the evils represented by it be avoided.⁸⁹

Grisez, Boyle, Finnis and May further state that a big difference exists when a pregnancy occurs between a couple that uses contraceptives and the one that uses NFP. Since couples who practice NFP non-contraceptively never will a prospective baby's not coming to be, they do not have to change their will toward the new baby to accept or love him or her. They may find the new baby's coming to be emotionally repugnant but, whatever their feelings might be, the baby is not «unwanted» in the sense that counts morally. For, using the word «want» to refer to volitions rather than feelings, the baby does not come to be unwanted. Thus, there is a real and very important difference between not wanting to have a baby as in both cases above, and not wanting the baby one might have as is the case of the couple that uses contraceptives, but not the one using NFP.⁹⁰ This method when used by the married couple as a means to space out having children is a commendable action on their part. Paul VI supports this action saying that:

«If therefore there are well-grounded reasons for spacing births, arising from physical or psychological condition of husband or wife, or for external circumstances, the Church teaches that married people may then take advantage of the natural cycles immanent in the reproductive system and engage in marital intercourse only during those times that are infertile, thus controlling birth in a way which does not in the least offend the moral principles which have been recalled earlier».⁹¹

NFP, when used well serves as an example of responsible parenthood, since it is a decision that is taken between the married couple. John Paul II sees this as a way in which the marital bond can be strengthened when he explains that:

«The choice of natural rhythms involves accepting the cycle of the person, that is the woman, and thereby accepting dialogue, reciprocal respect, shared responsibility and self-control. To accept the cycle and to enter into dialo-

gue means to recognize both the spiritual and corporal character of conjugal communion and to live personal love with the requirement of fidelity. In this context, the couple comes to experience how conjugal communion is enriched with those values of tenderness and affection which constitute the inner soul of human sexuality, in its dimension also. In this way sexuality is respected and promoted in its truly and fully human dimension, and is never 'used' as an 'object' that, by breaking the personal unity of soul and body, strikes at God's creation itself at the level of the deepest interaction of nature and person».⁹²

4.6. *Reactions to the Teachings on Contraception*

The teachings on contraception and the culture of death have received a variety of opinions by different authors.⁹³ Miller in showing disapproval on contra-ception use observes that when the communion of persons is broken it unleashes a dynamic that causes human life to be unwanted, perhaps even annihilated. The contraceptive ethic, in its divorce of the unitive and procreative meanings of the conjugal act, leaps the boundary of biological law and leads to having children outside of the bodily interpersonal communication. Once new human lives are separated from the couple, as happens in artificial reproduction, they are subject to all sorts of injustices, dangers and indignities – as when so called «surplus» embryos are kept frozen, or experimented upon and destroyed. She adds that these atrocities take place because, in the contraceptive ethic, procreation is isolated and distant from the personal self; and thus, in artificial reproduction, the underbelly of contraception, human life is also isolated and distant from the personal self. And once in such isolation, human beings become subject to atrocities.⁹⁴

Selling, while giving a critical reflection on FC, is of the opinion that the official position of the Church on fertility regulation has not been received by the faithful. He argues that «regardless of whether or not one agrees with the teaching on contraception or not, the fact remains that the official position of the Church leadership in the area of sexual ethics has lost a significant amount of credibility, especially among those who are well educated and who have long since taken their own responsibility for dealing with issues in sexual ethics».⁹⁵ He further states that because of loss of credibility on the contraceptive issue, the official Church has little impact on the opinions of large numbers of people on any issue that touches upon human sexuality, including and especially the role of women in the Church. Selling is of the opinion that

the use of the words «divine plan» or «God's design» in FC many times as though it was rather obvious, is a language that can have a place in catechetical instruction, but is hardly one that is theologically nuanced. He continues that in the Church, there certainly exists «constant teaching» when it comes to the core of the faith, the basic dogmas that are summed up in the creeds. But when it comes to many other areas that touch upon decisions and practices that are embedded in history, culture and a specific environment of human construction, namely in the area of morality, Selling says that the teachings of the Church demand study, interpretation, and not the least prayer regarding how men might be able to bring to bear on practical questions and insights that they gain from listening to the word of God. He concludes that the claim that a particular position taken on a highly complex issue such as regulation of fertility constitutes an integral part of the plan of God begs for extensive explanation and reasoned argument. His argument is that John Paul II's response in FC is neither a foundation nor an argument upon which to base the position on regulation of fertility.⁹⁶

Smith expresses agreement with FC's teachings on contraception and affirms that the Church is at the same time teacher of the truth about life and the guide helping to achieve the truth in life. Therefore, regarding the transmission of life, he states that the Church teaches the truth, i.e., the true moral norm that must guide and form correct practice. He reiterates John Paul II's teaching by saying that the Church interprets the moral norms in obedience with the truth which is Christ. The Church is therefore not an arbiter of the moral norm. He concludes by saying that the Church as teacher and mother knows that there cannot be a contradiction between truth and the transmission of life and the truth about authentic married love. Smith supports the NFP apostolate, stating that it can and must respond, as the Church responds – as teacher and mother. In living truth, NFP couples come to the light (Jn 3:21) and they have the right and the duty to share the truth they live with all who want to live the truth.⁹⁷

4.7. *Complementarity between Humanae Vitae and Familiaris Consortio*

From FC, what clearly comes out on the teaching on contraception is that John Paul II reaffirms the teachings of his predecessor Paul VI. He explains that «in continuity with the living tradition of the ecclesial community throughout history, the recent Second Vatican Council and the Magisterium

of my predecessor Paul VI, expressed above all in the Encyclical *Humanae vitae*, have handed on to our times a truly prophetic proclamation, which reaffirms and repropose with clarity the Church's teaching and norm, always old yet always new, regarding marriage and the transmission of human life».⁹⁸

Smith observes that FC acts as a synthesis of the teachings of Vatican Council II, the encyclical HV, and the 1980 Synod on the transmission of life. It is both a reaffirmation of sound doctrine and a clear direction for sound practice. Thus, it not only condemns, as the Church has in every age, the intrinsic evil of contraception, but also proposes, with more specificity than before, the intrinsic good and superior worth of marital chastity, in particular natural family planning.⁹⁹ It can be seen from his teachings that their application will be effective if the virtue of chastity is well lived and well transmitted through continuous education. This virtue is not synonymous with celibacy, but rather a Christian virtue meant for all Christians. It then follows that in Christian chastity, the complete expression of human sexuality is sanctioned by God only in the covenant of marriage.¹⁰⁰

The love between a husband and wife must be fully human, exclusive and open to new life. John Paul II thus reiterates the need to reemphasize the importance of the authentic teaching on birth regulation as has been done especially in HV. He does the same when calling for the need for a right notion of the moral order, its values and its norms and its importance, especially when the difficulties in the way of respecting them become more numerous and serious.

Since this moral order reveals and sets forth the plan of God the Creator, for this very reason it cannot be something that harms man, something impersonal. On the contrary, by responding to the deepest demands of the human being created by God, it places itself at the service of that person's full humanity with the delicate and binding love whereby God Himself inspires sustains and guides every creature towards its happiness.¹⁰¹ Over and over, throughout FC, there is the constant call to virtue, not simply to chastity as a part of the cardinal virtue of temperance, but to all the attendant and connected virtues because the call to marriage is also a call to holiness. Married people therefore are called upon to progress unceasingly in their moral life. FC and HV repeat this call since it is necessary for the strengthening of the family and the marriage bond.

Caldecott argues that to respect life as something is to respect its inner mystery, and in particular the mystery of otherness and freedom present in

every human person. The difference between these two positions is profound, since each determines in a different way the attitude that we take on our existence in the world and the relationships that alone can give meaning to our lives. That is why the popes have spoken so emphatically and repeatedly on contraception, with John Paul II underlining and deepening Paul VI's teaching in HV. In the conjugal act, a fundamental attitude to life and to the other person is inevitably embodied. When steps are taken to render infertile an act that might otherwise come to be, it is effectively an attempt to close off the spiritual dimension of the act in which new life is created, reducing it thereby to a merely biological and psychological process. Employment of barrier or chemical contraceptives tends to change the nature of the conjugal act from a form of true self-giving into a form of mutual use. This attitude extends itself into surrogate motherhood, *in vitro* fertilization and ultimately human cloning, where the living being is treated as the result of a mechanical process and therefore potentially a commercial product.¹⁰²

From the constant attention that John Paul II pays to the Church's doctrine on marriage and contraception, it is a natural result of his view that happy marriages and family life are essential to human well-being. If this is well secured this will help in combating many of the evils to which human life is peculiarly subject to. He thus sees the need in seeking a deeper understanding of this teaching and promoting it.¹⁰³

5. THE FAMILY AS A DOMESTIC CHURCH

The need for couples to be faithful to the truth of their love for one another is best met through an ongoing effort to foster and nourish their love, an effort that needs much prayer to succeed. Maintaining a culture of life is not possible with one's own strength. Supernatural grace is necessary in order to confront the difficulties that may arise and to remain firm in their faith. Parenting cannot be limited only to the begetting of children. The life begotten needs a home where it can be nurtured and educated. Marriage also enables spouses to meet their parental responsibilities and for their love to grow. Christian spouses, by virtue of their baptism are capable of giving to their children a redeeming and sanctifying love. They are given the capacity by their marriage itself or participate in God's plan of human existence. They have a special role to play, since the family is what constitutes the domestic church.

Even though the concept of the family as a domestic church does not originate from FC, however, Cahill acknowledges that the characterization of the Christian family as a domestic church is certainly the most innovative and distinctive contribution of FC to Catholic social teaching. She goes on to say that John Paul II uses it here to envision all families as having an important evangelical role, to make the social justice mission of the family central to its identity, and to ground that mission in a family spirituality. Particularly important and characteristic of Catholic social tradition is the emphasis on the contribution to and participation in the common good, here seen from the perspective of families.¹⁰⁴ Kelly classifies the four concrete aspects of the family's mission as a domestic church that are developed by John Paul II –forming a community of persons, serving life, participating in the development of society and sharing in the life and mission of the Church– into two; the first two «missions» of the family are mainly internal, which deal with the qualitative relationship between the spouses, procreation, and possibly raising and educating children. The third «mission» is mainly external as the family interacts with the society in which it lives. The fourth «mission» has to do specifically with the life and mission of the Church.¹⁰⁵

5.1. *Definitions of Domestic Church*

FC does not give a proper definition of what domestic Church is, but rather explains its function. However, as notes Hunter, the idea of domestic church has been expressed clearly in several Vatican II and post Vatican II documents and in subsequent theological and pastoral documents.¹⁰⁶ According to these works, domestic church:

- a) Is a foundational experience of the Church.¹⁰⁷
- b) Springs from Christian marriage and enables families to make Christ present in day to day life.¹⁰⁸
- c) Stresses the importance of building faith in the family.¹⁰⁹
- d) Emphasizes that families, living out their daily responsibilities and tasks in the context of faith, participate in Christ and are holy.¹¹⁰
- e) Recognizes the Christian family as a centre of faith and mission, a witness to the message of Christ for families of all kinds, and an agent of transformation for the Church and the world.¹¹¹

According to Atkinson, domestic church in essence refers to the baptized family in which, because of baptism the whole family has become a sphere of

eschatological activity. In essence, the life of the Church is lived out concretely in and through the baptized family and the relationships therein. It is more than just a locus for spiritual life. The Christian family, by its very constitution, is a specific realization of ecclesial communion, and hence, because it is the church in the domestic sphere, it must also bear, interiorly, the structure—at least on some levels—of the Church.¹¹²

5.2. *Historical Origins of «Domestic Church»*

This metaphor which has been used to refer to the family is not as new as may be perceived. It was used way back in the early Christianity teachings in the patristic age. It has also been widely used in Vatican II and post-Vatican II teachings. Other metaphors used to speak of the domestic church are; small church, church in miniature or church of the home. Sarmiento states that this expression has its origin in Sacred Scripture. He mentions as an example how St Paul and the Acts of the Apostles give information on how Christian homes were missionary communities and also places of worship.¹¹³ Specific examples of these are; the case of Cornelius the centurion, who was docile to God's, will and whose house gave an opening of the Church to the gentiles (cfr. Acts 10, 24-48); Aquila and Priscilla, who spread the Christian message in Corinth and Ephesus, and by helping St Paul in his apostolic activities (cfr. Acts 18, 1-26); Tabitha, by whose charity gave a helping hand to the needy in Joppa (cfr. Acts 9, 36). In the early Church, this concept can be found in the writings of St John Chrysostom (344-407 AD). In it he speaks of how the family is a model of charity, service and hospitality. In it is found the important elements of the church—the table of the word, testimony of the faith and the presence of Christ. It is also a place in which one can pray.¹¹⁴ St Augustine as well makes reference to the *Ecclesia domestica* in his teachings. He uses this image to speak about the function of the father in the home, comparing it with that of a bishop, since each one of them takes care of a community of faith.¹¹⁵

In medieval Christianity, Hunter explains that emphasis shifted from a view of Christian marriage and family as a manifestation of Christ and the Church to marriage as a formal contract. Most writers in the medieval, scholastic, and Reformation periods focused almost exclusively on the confining, narrow aspects of the marriage contract, and not on the expansive ideas of the family becoming a Church and reflecting the love of Christ which were articulated in the earliest centuries of Christianity.¹¹⁶

In the Vatican II Council, the idea of the Christian family as a domestic church regained prominence. In *Lumen gentium* for example, parents are reminded of their role as the first preachers of the faith to their children.¹¹⁷ In *Apostolicam actuositatem* and *Gaudium et spes* as well, the idea that the Church begins and flourishes in the home is a significant teaching.¹¹⁸ In the post-Vatican II papal writing, Paul VI, in *Evangelii nuntiandi*, declares that the family should be called domestic church, a place where the Gospel is transmitted and from which the Gospel radiates.¹¹⁹ In *Familiaris consortio*, John Paul II re-echoes this teaching when he says that:

«The Christian family constitutes a specific revelation and the realization of ecclesial communion, and for this reason too it can and should be called the ‘domestic church’».¹²⁰

The Pope reiterates that among the fundamental tasks of the Christian family is its ecclesial task and this is better understood when we examine the many profound bonds linking the Church and the Christian family as a «Church in miniature» (*Ecclesia domestica*) in such a way that in its own way the family is a living image and historical representation of the mystery of the Church.¹²¹ Finally, the culmination of this development is reached with the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, in which the Christian family is not only likened to the Church but is said to be a specification and realization ecclesial communion.¹²² Sarmiento points out that the foundation of the consideration of the family as a domestic church is found in the sacrament of matrimony. The Church-family relationship is a sacramental one and not a juridical or sociological one, based on the fact that the members of the family form the Church, in the same way that they are part of society.¹²³

From historical evidence provided, Hunter observes that the concept of domestic church was a significant part of Christian tradition on marriage in the early Church, which is being recovered in the post-Vatican II Church. She adds that in the early Church the idea that the Christian family is the basic unit of the community was possible because Christians made serious commitments to Christ in baptism and carried them out in all areas, including marriage and family life. The marriage of the faithful therefore was the foundation of faith for all family members. In the post-Vatican II writings, theologians and Church officials are trying to recapture these guiding beliefs of the domestic church, which flow from the ancient idea that the Church begins and grows in the homes of the faithful and help families implement them in their lives today.¹²⁴

5.3. *Responses to the Teachings on the Domestic Church*

Being a domestic church, the family is called to participate in the three-fold mission of Christ as prophet, priest and king. This has been expressed in FC when the Pope talks about the family's mission in society and in the Church. It shares in the prophetic mission of Christ by being a believing and evangelizing community in dialogue with God, in its priestly mission by being a community in dialogue with God and in his kingly mission by being a community at the service of mankind. The mission of the family, in other words, is its vocation, the role it should fulfil, the tasks it should carry out. And this vocation, this role, these tasks are rooted in the family's being the sort or kind of reality that is according to the plan of God, the Creator.¹²⁵

The teachings on the family as a domestic church have received a wide variety of interpretations and proposals as to how it can be applied in the Church today. It has also enriched the way in which the family can be better understood. Hunter explains that one of the most significant tasks of the wider Christian community is to help families recognize the guiding beliefs of domestic church and incorporate them into the daily practice of marriage and family and a basic necessity to understanding this is the notion that Christian married life is a sacrament, an efficacious sign of the Christ event.¹²⁶ A way of doing this is by keeping Christ at the centre of their lives through a life of prayer, shared worship and the transmission of faith values to children. The domestic church can transform the entire Church community through its sacramental ministry:

«As a symbol of Christ's life and love, families can extend that love through deed and word. They can be ministers of reconciliation by forgiving and loving as Christ did, and by calling for new paths to forgiveness in each day of life together. They can be Eucharist for each other, calling each other to continuous thankfulness in the name of Christ, and being a source of nourishment for those who need it. Finally, Christian families can witness the meaning and message of marriage and ministry by its very life. They can embody the beliefs about Christian marriage through faithfulness to their married vocation».¹²⁷

Since Christian marriage is a sacrament, and the family that it forms is a domestic church, May states that Christian spouses are thus «vicars» of Christ and the Church. They are to image him and his love in their marriage; and

their marital union, which is already in its inner being a holy and efficacious sacrament, is to mediate to the world in which they live Christ's redemptive, covenantal love. Picking the exhortation by John Paul II in FC, for families to be what they are (cfr. FC, n.17), May adds that Christian spouses, by reason both of their baptism and now of their marriage «in the Lord», are already persons in whose life together the saving union of Christ with his Church is incarnated; thus they are called to and actually empowered to mediate to the world in which they live the saving grace of Christ and his Church and to the image in their married life the redemptive love that Christ bears for his Church.¹²⁸ This emphasis is also repeatedly made by John Paul II when he reminds couples not to forget their matrimonial vows that they made on their wedding day, since through these «depends the domestic church, the quality and sanctity of the family and the education of their children».¹²⁹ The Christian home is the place where the children receive the first pronouncements of the faith.

The family cannot isolate itself, in disregard of the entire Christian community, since there is a bond that joins the Church through the sacrament of baptism. This is the «communion of saints». Roberts mentions that as domestic church, the family is a unit within the total body of Christ. That means that it needs the rest of the Church, and the wider Church needs it. There is thus interdependence between the two. Therefore, both must speak to one another, listen to each other, and serve one another in mutual nurturing and fulfilment.¹³⁰ Another responsibility that the family as a domestic church has is an apostolic one. It has to be a sign, sacrament of Christ to the wider Church and to the world. Roberts proposes six ways to which the family members can respond:

«First, they give witness to their faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour (...). The Word of God, enfleshed in Jesus Christ, is for them the guiding principle and source of inspiration for their decisions both as individuals and as family.

Second, they give witness to the sacrificial love that Christ displayed throughout his life and in his death on the cross. They stretch their arms out in openness and love for one another. They put themselves out for the sake of the other, willing to die to self-centeredness in order to be life for each other.

Third, the family is called to be a sign of Christ's forgiveness. Through their acceptance of one another, their tolerance of the faults and limitations that cannot be changed, and their efforts in loving confrontation to improve

what can be changed, they give visible testimony of Christ who reconciles us through mutual forgiveness.

Fourth, the family sacramentalizes Christ's compassion through their own empathy with the sufferings of others (...). Family members manifest this compassion when they feel each other's pain, resonate with each other's sorrow, and strive to lighten each other's burdens...

Fifth, they give sign to the Gospel values proclaimed by Jesus. This is done especially by living a lifestyle that reflects the beatitude that blesses the poor in spirit and that is based on the priority of persons over things...

Sixth, the family gives testimony to its practical faith and hope in the death and resurrection of Christ. It consciously participates in his death and resurrection by dying to the various pockets of darkness (such as apathy, fear, envy, intolerance) that reside within us in order to live in greater communion with Christ and with one another...». ¹³¹

The ministry of the family as the church of the home is rooted in its identity, mission, tasks and responsibilities. It is therefore necessary to reemphasize again that the Church and the family need each other. They also enliven each other, for the family is as an organic part of the Church as cells are of the human body. They share the same Christian life in the same spirit and truth under the same Fatherhood of God. John Paul II thus emphasizes that the little domestic church, like the greater Church, needs to be constantly evangelized: hence its duty regarding permanent education in the faith. ¹³²

The domestic church accomplishes its prophetic mission in its witness. This role therefore cannot be undervalued, but needs to be cultivated in order that it may benefit the individual family members, the Church and whole of society, since it has vital and organic links with them. Hunter proposes an approach of strengthening of the domestic church through evangelization and catechesis of three groups: married couples, children and people about to be married. In this way the domestic church has the possibility of becoming an agent of transformation by developing itself as a basic Christian community. ¹³³

Having emphasised on the importance of the family and its role as a domestic Church, a question may then arise, on what happens to those who have no families or where kinship springs from a relationship that is not marriage for example a single mother who chooses to raise her child outside marriage. To these situations the Church teaches that they are close to the Heart of Jesus, and encourages families to open the doors of their homes, their domestic

churches in order to accommodate them as well. It further explains that the doors of the large family, which is the Church is wide open to receive them as well, and therefore no one should feel as though without a family in this world, since the Church is a house and family for all, especially for those who are weak and overburdened (cfr. Mt 11: 28).¹³⁴

One of the reasons as to why the teachings on the domestic church have not been well understood can be traced to its history. Atkinson argues that the reintroduction of this term was done with little or no explanation, and also with no developed theological grounding. He observes that the trajectory of its development can be traced in three stages; in the first stage, Atkinson states that it was only tentatively re-appropriated at Vatican II. At that point, the family could only be understood in the relationship to the Church in an analogous manner. The second stage came immediately after the Council when the theological development of this term (as well as its usage) was nothing short of meteoric. During this phase, the fundamental categories of Vatican II (Christocentricism, personalism, and universal holiness) which controlled the Council now acted as a hermeneutical catalyst by which the nature of the family could be fruitfully examined and articulated. He further adds that with the publication of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, came the third stage. In an observable development of doctrine, domestic church moved from an analogous position to an ontological relationship with the Church. This brought the first stage of its developmental trajectory to a conclusion.¹³⁵

Örsy's opinion is that the teaching on the domestic church has not been well diffused. He argues that St Paul's intuitive insight in his letter to the Ephesians¹³⁶ which has led theologians to speak of Christian marriage as the beginning of a small *ecclesia*, within the large gathering of all believers, is an exalted understanding of marriage and family. For that reason, it is often quietly disregarded-and discarded. He adds that it is seen as otherworldly, far from the reality that marriage is, a vision that cannot account for real marriages. Örsy argues that this is a misconception of St Paul's teaching. Since the couple or the family is a small church, it does not follow at all that it is perfect, since the Church was never meant to be perfect on this earth.¹³⁷ Hill is of the opinion that the Church needs to do more in order for the domestic church to become a reality.¹³⁸

One of the critical functions of the term domestic church is that it serves as a means of knowing the truth about marriage and the family. When well

understood, the domestic church is the end for which marriage and the family were created. It needs to be grounded on love. Levis explains that love is dynamic. It moves out from the family members to the ecclesial circle of which the family is a part. The Church then assumes a more homelike dimension, more human and fraternal. «And wider still, love urges beyond the faith to all mankind in which «everybody is my brother and sister» and where the face of Christ is seen in everyone, especially those in want (cfr. Mt. 25). Love places the Christian family at the service of all human persons and of the world, not closed up in itself, but wide open to its responsibility toward the whole of society».¹³⁹ The mystery of the baptized family is that it is called to form an organic part of the body of Christ, to participate in his nature and his salvific mission to the world. Here is here one find's one's true identity and purpose as individuals, as families and as the domestic church.¹⁴⁰

Notes

1. Cfr. I. A. HELMAN, *Women and the Vatican, An Exploration of Official Documents*, Orbis Books, New York 2012, p. 1. In this book, Helman gives a brief historical development of feminism to present day. She then quotes all the Magisterial documents that have been from the 1960s to the year 2010 that speak about women.
2. Cfr. *Familiaris consortio*, n. 22. The Pope further explains here that «in creating the human race ‘male and female’, God gives man and woman an equal personal dignity, endowing them with the inalienable rights and responsibilities proper to the human person. God then manifests the dignity of women in the highest form possible, by assuming human flesh from the Virgin Mary, whom the Church honours as the mother of God, calling her the new Eve and presenting her as the model of redeemed woman. The sensitive respect of Jesus towards the women that He called to His following and His friendship, His appearing on Easter morning to a woman before the other disciples, the mission entrusted to women to carry the good news of the resurrection to the apostles—these are all signs that confirm the special esteem of the Lord Jesus for women». *Ibid.*
3. Cfr. J. M. BOYLE, *The Role of the Christian Family, Articles 17-27*, in M. J. WRENN (ed.), *Pope John Paul II and the Family*, Franciscan Herald Press, Chicago 1983, p. 59.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 59-60.
5. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches on this point that «everyone, man and woman, should acknowledge and accept his sexual identity. Physical, moral and spiritual difference and complementarity are oriented toward 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». n. 2333.
6. Cfr. W. E. MAY, *Marriage, The Rock on which the Family is Built*, Ignatius Press, San Francisco 1995, p. 47.
7. An interesting article which talks of the masculine-feminine difference is by Mary Rousseau, where she states that one uniquely important feature of our material part is our sexuality – the fact that each human person is either male or female, not asexual, and not hermaphroditic. Sexuality is not wholly material but is a feature of personhood, marking the rationality and freedom which enable persons to give themselves in love, to answer to the call to *communio*. She continues adding that sexuality pervades our entire selves. Brain cells taken from woman differ visibly from those taken from a man, as do the cells from any other part of the body. Men and women perceive reality differently, think differently, love differently, and achieve *communio* differently. This difference is what brings about human identity. She further adds that the difference however, is not one that places men and women in two different species. Sexuality constitutes an analogy. Human personhood, she says, is somewhat the same and somewhat different in its two manifestations. These manifestations can illuminate each other. The sameness, revealed in the two creation stories in Genesis, consists in our strictly equality

as persons. Adam and Eve, symbols of all human persons, are equal precisely as rational free beings. Both are superior to the rest of creation, created for their own sakes, not mere means to anything other than themselves. Most profoundly, they are equal images of God. Sexual differentiation is, in some way, what makes human *communio* possible. Cfr. M. F. ROUSSEAU, *Pope John Paul II's Letter on the Dignity and Vocation of Women; the Call to Communio*, in *Communio: International Catholic Review*, 16, 1989, pp. 221-224.

8. Cfr. L. S. CAHILL, *Commentary on Familiaris Consortio (Apostolic Exhortation on the Family)*, in K. R. HIMES (ed.), *Modern Catholic Social Teaching, Commentaries and Interpretations*, Georgetown University Press, Washington D. C 2005, p. 377.
9. Cfr. John Paul II's *Letter to Women*, n. 12 and; *Familiaris consortio*, nn. 23 and 25.
10. Cfr. L. S. CAHILL, *Equality in Marriage, The Biblical Challenge*, in T. A. SALZMAN, T. M. KELLY and J. J. O'KEEFE (eds.), *Marriage in the Catholic Tradition*, The Crossroad Publishing Company, New York 2004, p. 67. Cahill further argues that «today it can no longer be taken for granted that there are clear differences between men and women, in terms of behaviour and personality. Both sexes exhibit a spectrum of traits, and personality differences within each sex are often much greater than the differences between any particular man and woman. It may be true that male and female humans, resembling other species of mammals, have some sex-based tendencies, related to reproductive behaviour and reflecting differences in the brain, hormones, or prenatal environment. However, it is equally true that all women and men are raised in cultures that already have certain patterns of expected or acceptable female and male behaviour. Socialization or 'nurture' plays at least as great a part as 'nature' in creating women's and men's personalities. The exact contributions and interplay of innate tendencies and social expectations may never be sorted out clearly. Yet we can at least say that the equality of the sexes demands that neither sex be strictly assigned to only certain kinds of roles and excluded from others. Neither one should be assigned to roles that carry less social value and bring less freedom, respect, or opportunity for personal fulfilment and social contribution. Hence, in marriage as a basic human and Christian calling, equal respect, partnership, reciprocity, and shared authority should be the rule...». *Ibid.*, p. 68.
11. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, n. 2335. For a philosophical discussion, with a historical background on the complementarity of men and women, see P. ALLEN, *Integral Sex Complementarity and the Theology of Communion*, in *Communio; International Catholic Review* 17, 1990, pp. 523-544.
12. According to Burke, the proper humanizing of the person is severely limited if one does not learn to distinguish between and appreciate masculinity and femininity. «In undermining the growth of the individual, unisexism has negative effects on society as a whole. In order to be truly human, society needs both men and women. A unisex society is bound to be lacking in character and humanity and, noticeably, in cohesion too. The effects of unisexism have particular application to the family, where the basic solidarity of society is developed. A unisex philosophy makes the building of a real marriage or a real family almost impossible, for the unique experience –conducive to personal happiness and fulfilment– that marital or family relationships promise is essentially, not accidentally, tied to the difference and complementarity of sexual roles». C. BURKE, *Sexual Identity in Marriage and Family Life*, in C. BURKE, *Covenanted Happiness*, Scepter Publishers, New Jersey 1990, pp. 2-3.
13. G. GRISEZ, *The Way of the Lord Jesus*, vol. 2, *Living a Christian Life*, Franciscan Press, Quincy, Illinois 1993, pp. 629-633.
14. «Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives and never treat them harshly. Children, obey your parents in everything, for this is your acceptable duty in the Lord. Fathers, do not provoke your children, or they may lose heart. Slave, obey your earthly masters in everything, and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to win their favour, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord». Col. 3; 18-22.
15. Eph 5: 22-25; 32.

16. Cfr. L. S. CAHILL, *Equality in Marriage, The Biblical Challenge*, in T. A. SALZMAN, T. M. KELLY and J. J. O'KEEFE (eds.), *Marriage in the Catholic Tradition*, The Crossroad Publishing Company, New York 2004, pp. 68-71.
17. *Mulieris dignitatem*, n. 24.
18. Lawler also comments on the Ephesians 5 text explaining that «a Christian husband's headship over his wife is in image of, and totally exemplified by Christ's headship over the Church. When a Christian husband understands this, he will understand the Christian responsibility he assumes toward the woman-gift he receives in marriage as his wife. In a marriage between Christians and faith-full Christians, spouses are required to give way mutually, not because of any inequality between them, not because of any subordination of one to the other, not because of human fear, but only because they seek to live in service of one another as Christ lives in service of the Church. Spousal giving way is no more than the total availability and responsiveness to one another required of best friends and lovers to become two in one body... A Christian husband therefore, is instructed to be head over his wife by serving, giving way to, and giving himself up for her. Authority modelled on that of Christ does not mean control, giving orders, making unreasonable demands, reducing another person to the status of servant or, worse, of slave to one's whim. It is of service». M. G. LAWLER, *Marriage and the Catholic Church, Disputed Questions*, The Liturgical Press, Minnesota 2002, pp. 6-7. See also M. SHIVANANDAN, *Feminism and Marriage; a Reflection on Ephesians 5: 21-33*, in <http://www.chris-tendom-awake.org/pages/mshivana/femmar3.htm>, consulted on 17th December 2012.
19. Cfr. W. E. MAY, *The Complementarity of Male and Female*, in *Marriage, The Rock on which the Family is Built*, Ignatius Press, San Francisco 1995, pp. 63-65. Further detailed explanations on the husband-father role in decision making, as well as its limitations can be found in G. GRISEZ, *The Way of the Lord Jesus*, vol. 2, *Living a Christian Life*, Franciscan Press, Quincy, Illinois 1993, pp. 629-633.
20. Cfr. *ibid.*, pp. 65-66.
21. Cfr. *Familiaris consortio*, n. 23.
22. Cfr. *ibid.*
23. Cfr. J. M. BOYLE, *The Role of the Christian Family, Articles 17-27*, in M. J. WRENN (ed.), *Pope John Paul II and the Family*, Franciscan Herald Press, Chicago 1983, p. 60. Boyle's suggestion is that «women, like men, must have a real vocational choice; they must not be constrained by cultural factors in such a way that they have no choice except to be wives and mothers. As the option of religious life makes clear, the Church rejects any such role determination on biological or cultural grounds. No woman has to be a wife and mother. Still, being a wife and mother is a very good thing – most worthy of the full commitment of any woman. Furthermore, if one who is a wife and mother takes on roles outside the family, it is necessary that those roles be harmoniously combined; otherwise, society and culture will not be enriched by the fuller participation of women in public life but weakened by the failure in either or both of the woman's roles». *Ibid.*, pp. 60-61.
24. R. M. HOGAN and J. M. LEVOIR, *Covenant of Love, Pope John Paul II on Sexuality, Marriage, and Family in the Modern World*, Doubleday and Company, New York 1985, pp. 179-180.
25. *Ibid.*, pp. 180-181.
26. Cfr. *Familiaris consortio*, n. 23.
27. John Paul II later on develops a Theology of work in the encyclical *Laborem exercens*. Through an examination of Genesis, he establishes beyond doubt that work is for man. Among the points he speaks about is for the need for the job of wives and mothers in the homes to be recognized by society, either through special grants to them or through a family wage. He speaks of the need of the labour process to be organized and adapted in such a way as to respect the requirements of the person and his or her forms of life, above all life in the home, taking into account the individual's age and sex. He also expresses the need for women to

fulfil their tasks in accordance with their own nature, without being discriminated upon and without being excluded from jobs for which they are capable, but also without lack of respect for their family aspirations and for their specific role in contributing, together with men, to the good of society. True advancement of women requires that labour should be structured in such a way that women do not have to pay for their advancement by abandoning what is specific to them and at the expense of the family, in which women as mothers have an irreplaceable role. Cfr. n. 19.

28. *Familiaris consortio*, n. 23.
29. Cfr. J. M. BOYLE, *The Role of the Christian Family, Articles 17-27*, in M. J. WRENN (ed.), *Pope John Paul II and the Family*, Franciscan Herald Press, Chicago 1983, p. 62. An argument in line with this is one given by Jennifer Roback Morse in her book in a chapter speaking about institutionalizing childhood. She states that «many women, of various beliefs and of all income levels, have been seduced by a peculiarly American ideological mix of left-wing self-esteem feminism and right-wing income maximising capitalism. A woman under the influence of this ideological cocktail might believe that she must prove herself independent of and equal to men. Her self-esteem depends upon the status and income of her job... Some professional women think it is an admission of weakness or defeat to acknowledge that they enjoy taking care of children. We are supposed to believe that child-care is mind-numbing, spirit-killing drudgery, and only work outside the home is fulfilling. These are not reasons for labour force participation that women come to up with spontaneously in the absence of any feminist tutoring. For many feminists, the overwhelming argument in favour of women working is that women with paycheques are more powerful than women without any income of their own... We should not concede this premise readily. We forget that dollar power is not the only kind of power. Losing control over what happens to one's children is, for many women, a devastating loss of power. Surrendering day-to-day contact with one's children, giving up the ability to influence their development and surely count as losses of power from the viewpoint of most parents, fathers and mothers alike. The power of an independent income is important for a person who plans to be financially independent but not nearly so important for a person in an ongoing relationship». J. R. MORSE, *Love and Economics*, Spence Publishing Company, Dallas 2001, pp. 138-139.
30. Cfr. *Familiaris consortio*, n. 23. Another document which later on written by John Paul II which extensively touches on women from different perspectives is the apostolic letter *Mulieris dignitatem* of 1988. In the encyclical *Evangelium vitae*, among the different issues he talks about, the Pope exhorts women to develop and promote a «new feminism» which rejects the temptation of imitating models of «male domination», in order to acknowledge and affirm the true genius of women in every aspect of the life of society, and overcome all discrimination, violence and exploitation (cfr. n. 99). This has led to a rise of proponents of new feminism who ascribe to common principles drawn from Sacred Scripture, Sacred Tradition and Church documents especially the writings of Pope John Paul II on women and the family, such as *Mulieris dignitatem*, the *Letter to Women* of 1995 and *Familiaris consortio*. Other philosophers and theologians whose works are foundational in the development of the new feminism include Hildegard of Bingen, St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Edith Stein. The core principles that guide the new feminism on a practical level include: Male and female are equal, but not identical; marriage as communion; celebration of the family and the home; love and service, not power and domination and; freedom grounded in truth. Cfr. J. G. COBB, «New Feminism» *Shines Light on True Genius of Women*, in <http://www.osv.com/tabid/7621/Itemid/5232/In-Focus-New-feminism-shines-light-on-true-geni.aspx>, consulted on 7th December 2012. See also; M. F. ROUSSEAU, *Pope John Paul II's Letter on the Dignity and Vocation of Women; the Call to Communion*, in *Communio: International Catholic Review*, 16, 1989, pp. 212-232; P. DONOHUE-WHITE, *The Erosion of Civil Society in a Consumerist Culture*, in K. D. WHITEHEAD (ed.), *Marriage and the Common Good*, St Augustine Press, Indiana 2001, pp.

- 125-132; I. A. HELMAN, *Women and the Vatican, An Exploration of Official Documents*, Orbis Books, New York 2012, pp. 167-170, 243-251; M. A. GLENDON, *The Pope's New Feminism*, in *Crisis*, 15, n. 3, March 1997, pp. 28-31.
31. Cfr. *Familiaris consortio*, n. 25.
 32. Cfr. W. E. MAY, *The Mission of Fatherhood*, in *Josephinum Journal of Theology* 9, n. 1, 2002, pp. 41-42. May justifies further his argument on the man's authority asking: «How could he 'reveal' and 'relive' the very Fatherhood of God by ensuring the harmonious and united development of all the members of the family, unless there was some authority proper and exclusive to him as husband and father»? *Ibid.* In agreement with this, Boyle also observes that the «language which the Holy Father uses throughout this article suggests that he recognizes this authority – and its possible abuses. Since authority for the Christian is not to be used for self-aggrandizement but, rather, is a ministry of service, the Holy Father is indicating the service to which men as husbands and fathers are called. This service, although arduous, is not fundamentally a burden, but a blessing. In the blessing of his wife's friendship and of his children's lives, the husband and the father finds his true fulfilment. For this reason, the Holy Father calls the role of the father 'a gift'». J. M. BOYLE, *The Role of the Christian Family, Articles 17-27*, in M. J. WRENN (ed.), *Pope John Paul II and the Family*, Franciscan Herald Press, Chicago 1983, p. 66.
 33. Cfr. J. M. BOYLE, *The Role of the Christian Family, Articles 17-27*, in M. J. WRENN (ed.), *Pope John Paul II and the Family*, Franciscan Herald Press, Chicago 1983, p. 65.
 34. In a study conducted by Sarkadi, Kristiansson, Oberklaid and Bremberg, the authors express the importance of the involvement of fathers for the development and welfare of their children. They note that historically, the father-ideal has gone through different phases; from moral teacher and disciplinarian, through breadwinner and later gender-role model, to the new nurturing co-parenting father. Actively enhancing men's roles in their children's care and development is an important aspect of paediatric work. They conclude that father engagement reduces the frequency of behavioural problems in boys and psychological problems in young women; it also enhances cognitive development while decreasing criminality and economic disadvantage in low income families. When the children live with both parents, they have less adverse behavioural outcomes compared to those children whose mothers live alone. Living with the father sets the stage for involved fathering. They state further that that there is enough evidence from what they have studied to urge both professionals and policy makers to improve circumstances for involved fathering. Cfr. A. SARKADI, R. KRISTIANSSON, F. OBERKLAID and S. BREMBERG, *Father's Involvement and Children's Developmental Outcomes; A Systematic Review of Longitudinal Studies*, in *Acta Paediatrica* 2008, pp. 153-158. See also an article in John Flynn entitled *Las Ventajas de la Familia*, of 19th March 2008 in www.zenit.org and J. R. MORSE, *Love and Economics*, Spence Publishing Company, Dallas 2001, pp. 89-101.
 35. Cfr. *Familiaris consortio*, n. 25. In a study by Fernandez, Mena and Riviera, published in 2010, the authors observe that family instability brought about by separation or divorce, leads to an increase in school dropout rates, abandonment and other problems as compared to those from stable nuclear families. Cfr. M. FERNANDEZ, L. MENA and J. RIVIERE, *Fracaso y Abandono Escolar en España*, Fundación La Caixa, Col. «Estudios Sociales», n. 29. Similar results can be seen in the data presented by the Office of National Statistics of the United Kingdom in the year 2007. Cfr. OFFICE OF NATIONAL STATISTICS, *Focus on Families*, in http://www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme_compendia/fof2007/FO_Families_2007.pdf, consulted on 27th December 2012.
 36. Cfr. *ibid.*
 37. Cfr. *Mulieris dignitatem*, n. 18. Blankenhorn makes an observation concerning parenthood on the saying that mothers are not made by children, but by fathers. He goes on to add that fathers, in this sense are likewise made by mothers. He continues saying that a man can make

a woman pregnant, but he typically can become a nurturant father only with the permission and active support of the mother. In this sense the man auditions for fatherhood, offers himself for fatherhood. The woman then must accept him in order for this to occur. «Thus, the reality of fatherhood extends well beyond the individual man and becomes much more than a purely male vocation. Fatherhood thus becomes clearly metaphysical, in that it becomes inextricably reciprocal and relational, embracing and requiring for its fulfilment not only the child, but also the mother. This understanding of the father's vocation again militates against our misunderstanding of human paternity as the mere unilateral claim and assertion of male power and privilege. It also points out to the certainty of the couple –the union of persons in marriage– as the caretaker and nurturer of the child. And finally, this understanding underscores again the fact that fatherhood is ultimately a metaphysical idea, intimately linked to religious faith and to the search for transcendence». D. BLANKENHORN, *Ten Short Reflections on the Relationship Between Divine and Human Fatherhood*, in K. D. WHITEHEAD (ed.), *Marriage and the Common Good*, St Augustine Press, Indiana 2001, pp. 59-60.

38. J. W. MILLER, *Biblical Faith and Fathering: Why We Call God «Father»*, Paulist Press, New York 1989, p. 57. Cite obtained from W. E. MAY, *The Mission of Fatherhood*, in *Josephinum Journal of Theology* 9, n. 1, 2002, p. 50.
39. Cfr. W. E. MAY, *The Mission of Fatherhood*, in *Josephinum Journal of Theology* 9, n. 1, 2002, p. 52.
40. Sutton explains that social issues such as poverty, chronic welfare dependency, juvenile delinquency and adult crime, violence among youth and adults, premature sexual activity and out of wedlock child-bearing teens, deteriorating academic achievement, depression, drug sales and abuse, and alienation among teenagers and young adults may be seen as direct and indirect effects of fatherlessness. Cfr. P. M. SUTTON, *The Fatherhood Moment: The Rest of the Story*, in K. D. WHITEHEAD (ed.), *Marriage and the Common Good*, St Augustine Press, Indiana 2001, p. 62. From a psychological point of view, Polaino also explains that one of the impediments to the development of a child's personality in many families is the absence of the father. There is formed a vacuum in the child which affects their personality. Cfr. A. POLAINO, *¿Hay Algún Hombre en Casa? Tratado Para el Hombre Ausente*, Desclée De Brouwer, Henao 2010, pp. 13-29.
41. Meg Meeker, referring to the need of fathers in the education of their daughters states the following; «Hombres, hombres buenos: los necesitamos. Nosotras –las madres, hijas y hermanas– necesitamos su ayuda para criar saludablemente a nuestras jóvenes. Necesitamos cada gramo del valor y de la inteligencia masculina que poseen, porque ustedes, padres, en mayor medida que cualquier otra persona, son los que marcan el curso de la vida de nuestras hijas. Su hija necesita lo mejor que hay en usted, su fortaleza, su valor, su inteligencia y su audacia. Necesita también su empatía, firmeza y autoconfianza. Ella le necesita. Nuestras hijas necesitan el apoyo que solo los padres pueden proporcionarles; y si usted quiere ser el guía de tu hija, si desea ser un baluarte entre ella y esa cultura toxica que nos rodea, si pretende instalarla en un lugar más sano y mejor, sin duda se verá ampliamente recompensado». M. MEEKER, *Padres Fuertes, Hijas Felices, Ciudadela*, Madrid 2008, p. 21.
42. Cfr. W. E. MAY, *The Mission of Fatherhood*, in *Josephinum Journal of Theology* 9, n. 1, 2002, p. 52.
43. Cfr. J. R. MORSE, *Love and Economics*, Spence Publishing Company, Dallas 2001, pp. 101-102. For another insight on fatherhood, David Blankenhorn in his book writes about the challenges facing fatherhood today. He also advocates for a change in attitude both by men and society on how to relate with their children. He also argues for the need of recognition and protection of marriage instead of promoting a divorce culture, since marriage constitutes an irreplaceable life-support system for effective fatherhood. The institution of marriage and the norm of marital permanence need not be seen as old-fashioned, beleaguered and suitable for older or boring people. In order for a change to occur, there is need for reconnection

- between masculinity and fatherhood. In order to recover the fatherhood idea, there is need to recreate a marriage culture. Cfr. D. BLANKENHORN, *Fatherless America*, Basic Books, New York 1995, pp. 201-234. See also W. E. MAY, *The Mission of Fatherhood*, in *Josephinum Journal of Theology* 9, n. 1, 2002, pp. 52-53.
44. Cfr. W. E. MAY, *The Complementarity of Male and Female*, in *Marriage, The Rock on which the Family is Built*, Ignatius Press, San Francisco 1995, pp. 58-60. See also D. BLANKENHORN, *Ten Short Reflections on the Relationship between Divine and Human Fatherhood*, in K. D. WHITEHEAD (ed.), *Marriage and the Common Good*, St Augustine Press, Indiana 2001, pp. 58-59; P. CONNER, *Married in Friendship*, Sheed and Ward, London 1987, pp. 33-35. Blankenhorn suggests that because fatherhood is universally problematic in human societies, cultures must mobilise to device and enforce the father role for men, coaxing and guiding them into fatherhood through a set of legal and extra-legal pressures that require them to maintain a close alliance with their children's mother and to invest in their children. Because men do not volunteer for fatherhood as much as they are conscripted into it by the surrounding culture, only an authoritative cultural story of fatherhood can fuse biological and social paternity into a coherent male identity. D. BLANKENHORN, *Fatherless America*, Basic Books, New York 1995, pp. 3-5.
 45. J. C. ATKINSON, *Paternity in Crisis: Biblical and Philosophical Roots of Fatherhood*, in *Josephinum Journal of Theology*, vol. 9, n° 1, 2002, p. 20.
 46. Cfr. W. E. MAY, *Contraception and the Culture of Death*, in K. D. WHITEHEAD (ed.), *Marriage and the Common Good*, St Augustine Press, Indiana 2001, p. 174.
 47. Cfr. *Familiaris consortio* n. 30.
 48. Cfr. J. C. ATKINSON, *Familiaris Consortio: The Biblical and Theological Foundation of an Adequate Anthropology*, in J. W. KOTERSKI (ed.), *Life and Learning XI: Proceedings of the 11th University Faculty for Life Conference*, Washington, D. C., 2002, pp. 252-253.
 49. *Gaudium et spes*, n. 48.
 50. Cfr. A. SARMIENTO, *El Matrimonio Cristiano* (4a. ed.), EUNSA, Pamplona 2008, pp. 399-400.
 51. «Finally, this love is fecund. It is not confined to the loving interchange of husband and wife; it also contrives to go beyond this to bring new life into being. Marriage and conjugal love are by their nature ordained toward the procreation and education of children. Children are really the supreme gift of marriage and contribute in the highest degree to their parents' welfare». *Humanae vitae*, n. 9.
 52. «This particular doctrine, often expounded by the Magisterium of the Church, is based on the inseparable connection, established by God, which man on his own initiative may not break, between the unitive significance and the procreative significance which are both inherent to the marriage act. The reason is that the fundamental nature of the marriage act, while uniting husband and wife in the closest intimacy, also renders them capable of generating new life – and this as a result of laws written in the actual nature of man and woman. And if each of these essential qualities, the unitive and procreative, is preserved, the use of marriage fully retains its sense of mutual love and its ordination to the supreme responsibility of parenthood to which man is called». *Ibid.*, n. 12.
 53. *Familiaris consortio*, n. 28.
 54. Cfr. W. B. SMITH, *The Role of the Christian Family, Articles 28-35*, in M. J. WRENN (ed.), *Pope John Paul II and the Family*, Franciscan Herald Press, Chicago 1983, p. 83. Hogan and LeVoir comment that this trust which God has put in man is something beyond comparison. The incomparable dignity of human persons as made in God's image could hardly be more highly respected; that a mere creature is given a share in creation. Cfr. R. M. HOGAN and J. M. LEVOIR, *Covenant of Love, Pope John Paul II on Sexuality, Marriage, and Family in the Modern World*, Doubleday and Company, New York 1985, pp. 184-185. Similar views can be found in P. CONNER, *Married in Friendship*, Sheed and Ward, London 1987, pp. 37-38.
 55. *Familiaris consortio*, n. 28.

56. *Ibid.*, n. 29.
57. Cfr. *ibid.*, n. 32.
58. Cfr. *Evangelium vitae*, n. 19.
59. W. E. MAY, *Contraception and the Culture of Death*, in K. D. WHITEHEAD (ed.), *Marriage and the Common Good*, St Augustine Press, Indiana 2001, p. 178.
60. Cfr. *Evangelium vitae*, n. 19.
61. Cfr. W. E. MAY, *Contraception and the Culture of Death*, in K. D. WHITEHEAD (ed.), *Marriage and the Common Good*, St Augustine Press, Indiana 2001, p. 178. Following this line of thought, Janet E. Smith describes how this negative attitude spreads in people: «The devaluing of human life and the devaluing of children we have seen in the last several decades has been paralleled by a devaluing of the meaning of human sexuality. When contraceptives became widely available we had the igniting of the sexual revolution which separated babies from having sex. When that separation happened, babies were no longer welcomed as the natural and right outcome of sexual intercourse, but were considered an accident of sexual intercourse, an inconvenient burden, so inconvenient that we argue that we need abortion to keep our lifestyles going». J. E. SMITH, *Children: The Supreme Gift of Marriage; The Dysfunctionality of Modern Thought*, in <http://www.goodmorals.org/smith3.htm>, consulted on 9th January 2013.
62. Cfr. W. B. SMITH, *The Role of the Christian Family, Articles 28-35*, in M. J. WRENN (ed.), *Pope John Paul II and the Family*, Franciscan Herald Press, Chicago 1983, p. 83.
63. Cfr. *Familiaris consortio*, n. 31. Smith explains that the challenge to deepen biblical foundations is not to begin some new search for some single proof text but to attend to principles located in Scripture which influence and shape the doctrine of non-contraception. Thus, some renewed efforts on the purposes of creation, the life-giving love plan; the goods-ends-purposes of marriage which are the required context for the correct use of marriage. Relying on Revelation leads one to know the truth about man. Therefore a united theological effort is needed if the truth it to be told and to be known. God's design can be more completely fulfilled if it is seen for what it is – God's design: the truth about God and the truth about man. Cfr. W. B. SMITH, *The Role of the Christian Family, Articles 28-35*, in M. J. WRENN (ed.), *Pope John Paul II and the Family*, Franciscan Herald Press, Chicago 1983, pp. 86-90.
64. Cfr. W. E. MAY, *Contraception and the Culture of Death*, in K. D. WHITEHEAD (ed.), *Marriage and the Common Good*, St Augustine Press, Indiana 2001, pp.176-178.
65. Cfr. W. E. MAY, *The Sanctity of Human Life, Marriage and the Family in the Thought of Pope John Paul II*, in *Annales Theologici* 2, 1988, pp. 83-87.
66. Cfr. J. C. ATKINSON, *Familiaris Consortio: The Biblical and Theological Foundation of an Adequate Anthropology*, in J. W. KOTERSKI (ed.), *Life and Learning XI: Proceedings of the 11th University Faculty for Life Conference*, Washington, D. C., 2002, p. 253. Another interesting observation as to the cause of some of the current problems is given by Anderson who says that «the societal landscape of the twentieth century was –and our culture continues to be– largely dominated by two competing philosophies: liberalism and socialism. Both philosophies have placed unprecedented pressures upon family life, and both have been rendered all the more potent on a globe connected by technology. The changes in family law, especially in regard to the legalization of divorce and abortion, have brought with them profound and in many ways unintended consequences». C. A. ANDERSON, *Building a Culture of Life Out of the Ruins of Divorce and Abortion*, in *Anthropotes* XXIII, I, 2007, p. 35.
67. John Paul II teaches that: «In the context of a culture which seriously distorts or entirely misinterprets the true meaning of human sexuality, because it separates it from its essential reference to a person, the Church more urgently feels how irreplaceable is her mission of presenting sexuality as a value and task of the whole person, created male and female in the image of God». *Familiaris consortio*, n. 32.

68. Atkinson explains that FC applies this in particular to respecting a woman's cycles. Only in this way is sexuality «never» used as an object. Artificial contraception breaks the «personal unity of soul and body» (FC, n. 32). Cfr. J. C. ATKINSON, *Familiaris Consortio: The Biblical and Theological Foundation of an Adequate Anthropology*, in J. W. KOTERSKI (ed.), *Life and Learning XI: Proceedings of the 11th University Faculty for Life Conference*, Washington, D. C., 2002, pp. 253-254.
69. *Evangelium vitae*, n. 13.
70. Cfr. *ibid.*
71. Cfr. W. E. MAY, *Contraception and the Culture of Death*, in K. D. WHITEHEAD (ed.), *Marriage and the Common Good*, St Augustine Press, Indiana 2001, p. 180. In order to develop his argument, May refers to the «Majority Report» Commission which argues in favour of contraception. He states that those defending contraception consider the biological fertility of human persons and the biological processes involved in generation of new human life as physical or biological givens. To them, human fertility is part of the world of subhuman or subpersonal nature over which personas have been given dominion. Biological givens, such as fertility, confront the person who is to control and regulate them by «assuming» them into the human and personal, i.e., by making use of them when they serve «personalistic» goods and by suppressing or impeding them when their continued flourishing inhibits participation in these goods, whose existence depends on their being consciously experienced. The notion that human biological fertility, is of itself, subhuman and subpersonal is closely related to understanding of human sexuality central to the defence of contraception. Cfr. *ibid.*, pp. 181-185.
72. Cfr. J. C. ATKINSON, *Familiaris Consortio: The Biblical and Theological Foundation of an Adequate Anthropology*, in J. W. KOTERSKI (ed.), *Life and Learning XI: Proceedings of the 11th University Faculty for Life Conference*, Washington, D. C., 2002, pp. 253-254.
73. *Familiaris consortio*, n. 32.
74. Cfr. J. C. ATKINSON, *Familiaris Consortio: The Biblical and Theological Foundation of an Adequate Anthropology*, in J. W. KOTERSKI (ed.), *Life and Learning XI: Proceedings of the 11th University Faculty for Life Conference*, Washington, D. C., 2002, p. 256. On this point, Miller observes that contraception violates the theological significance of the human body. She says that: «Man as male and female forms the very basis of marriage. Genesis 1:27 teaches that man as male and female is created in God's image and likeness. Man and woman not only image God through their spiritual endowments. Man and woman image God through their communion. That two distinct and different beings can freely enjoy communion, forms the basis of marriage as a sacramental sign of God's own union with his people. This union –indissoluble and definitive– exists in the union between the second Adam, Christ and his Bride, the Church... To love one's body as male or female means rejecting no part of it, including the body's procreative powers which are given to man by God as a blessing». M. M. MILLER, *Response to William May's Paper «Contraception and the Culture of Death»*, in K. D. WHITEHEAD (ed.), *Marriage and the Common Good*, St Augustine Press, Indiana 2001, p. 207.
75. *Familiaris consortio*, n. 11.
76. In FC, John Paul II carries out an extensive analysis of the contradictory language of contraception: «To accept the cycle and to enter into dialogue means to recognize both the spiritual and corporal character of conjugal communion and to live personal love with its requirement of fidelity... In this way, sexuality is respected and promoted in its truly and fully human dimension, and is never 'used' as an 'object' that, by breaking the personal unity of soul and body, strikes at God's creation itself at the level of the deepest interaction of nature and person». n. 32.
77. *Familiaris consortio*. n. 13.
78. Cfr. J. C. ATKINSON, *Familiaris Consortio: The Biblical and Theological Foundation of an Adequate Anthropology*, in J. W. KOTERSKI (ed.), *Life and Learning XI: Proceedings of the 11th University Faculty for Life Conference*, Washington, D. C., 2002 p. 257.

79. G. GRISEZ, *Dualism and the New Morality*, in *Atti del Congresso Internazionale Tommaso d'Aquino nel suo Settimo Centenario*, vol. 5, *L'Agire Morale*, Edizioni Domenicale Italiane, Naples 1977, p. 325.
80. W. E. MAY, *Contraception and the Culture of Death*, in K. D. WHITEHEAD (ed.), *Marriage and the Common Good*, St Augustine Press, Indiana 2001, p. 185. In this article, May goes on further to consider the moral methodology employed in the justification of contraception, in particular, contraception by married couples. He argues that this methodology is clearly evident in the argument based on the distinction between individual or «isolated» marital acts and marriage as a whole or totality. This argument acknowledges that procreation is a marital good, and that marriage and children go together. But, this argument claims, the procreative good of marriage is properly respected and honoured even when individual acts of marriage are deliberately made infertile, so long as those acts are ordered to the expression of love and to a generous fecundity within marriage as a whole. This methodology, he says is consequentialistic, since it fails to recognize that the morality of human acts depends primarily and fundamentally on the object chosen by the deliberate will. With respect to contraception that object is not to foster responsible love toward a generous fecundity or to nourish simultaneously the unitive and procreative goods of marriage. He continues saying that the consequentialist moral reasoning used in this central argument to justify contraception is plausible only because it re – describes the object of the choice – contraception – in terms of the hoped – for benefits of contracepting individual acts of conjugal union. Again, the moral methodology employed is a form of consequentialism or proportionalism, one that re-describes chosen deeds in terms of their hoped for benefits, and by so doing, conceals their true nature. This moral methodology is also central in the rationalizations used to justify the killings characteristic of the «culture of death». Thus, abortion is not recognized as the intentional killing of an unborn child, but is rather re-described as an act protecting the mother's health or the family's stability or something of this kind; rather than being called killing, euthanasia is re-described as helping persons to live and die with dignity. Cfr. *ibid.*, pp. 185-188.
81. G. GRISEZ, J. BOYLE, J. FINNIS, and W. E. MAY, *Every Marital Act Ought to be Open to New Life: Toward a Clear Understanding*, in *The Thomist*, 52, 1988, p. 370.
82. *Humanae vitae*, n. 14.
83. Cfr. G. GRISEZ, J. BOYLE, J. FINNIS, and W. E. MAY, *Every Marital Act Ought to be Open to New Life: Toward a Clear Understanding*, in *The Thomist*, 52, 1988, p. 371. For a further incisive perspective on contraception from an ethical, theological and moral perspective, see; J. M. PARDO SAENZ, *Amor y Fecundidad; ¿Realidades en Conflicto?* EUNSA, Pamplona 2010, pp. 179-222; C. BURKE, *Married Love and Contraception*, in C. BURKE, *Covenanted Happiness*, Scepter Publishers, New Jersey 1990, pp. 88-100.
84. W. E. MAY, *Contraception and the Culture of Death*, in K. D. WHITEHEAD (ed.), *Marriage and the Common Good*, St Augustine Press, Indiana 2001, p. 195.
85. *Familiaris consortio*, n. 32. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* makes this teaching its own when speaking about periodic continence. Cfr. n. 2370.
86. Cfr. J. C. ATKINSON, *Familiaris Consortio: The Biblical and Theological Foundation of an Adequate Anthropology*, in J. W. KOTERSKI (ed.), *Life and Learning XI: Proceedings of the 11th University Faculty for Life Conference*, Washington, D. C., 2002, p. 258. In agreement with this, May states that since the contraceptive act is distinct from any conjugal act to which it is related, it cannot be considered a part or element of a conjugal act and justified on the alleged grounds that it is merely a part of a larger whole, for instance, the marital or conjugal act. This, in essence is what those who argue in favour of it want to do, that is, to justify contraception as simply an aspect of a totality of marital acts that nourish both the unitive and procreative goods of marriage. He further states that contraception is not part or aspect of any marital act or series thereof; it is a distinct kind of human act, specified by the choice to impede the beginning of new human life, either as an end or as a means to some further end, one perhaps

- good in itself. Cfr. W. E. MAY, *Contraception and the Culture of Death*, in K. D. WHITEHEAD (ed.), *Marriage and the Common Good*, St Augustine Press, Indiana 2001, pp. 190-193.
87. To argue his case, May gives an illustration; «a person does not put on gloves to touch a beloved one tenderly, unless one thinks that some disease may be communicated. But is pregnancy a disease? And is not the use of condoms, diaphragms, spermicidal jellies and the like similar to putting on gloves? Do husband and wife really become ‘one flesh’ if they must arm themselves with protective gear before ‘giving’ themselves to one another genitally? The answers to these questions are obvious, and they help us to see why the argument that contraception is anti-love and a falsification of the ‘language of the body’ is true. Spouses who must ‘protect’ themselves from one another in such ways are ‘not giving’ themselves unreservedly to one another as bodily, sexual beings even if this ‘not giving’ is outside the scope of their intention». W. E. MAY, *Contraception and the Culture of Death*, in K. D. WHITEHEAD (ed.), *Marriage and the Common Good*, St Augustine Press, Indiana 2001, pp. 195-196. For a similar point of view on this argument, see; J. T. O’CONNOR, *The Plan of God for Marriage and the Family, Articles 11-16*, in M. J. WRENN (ed.), *Pope John Paul II and the Family*, Franciscan Herald Press, Chicago 1983, pp. 39-40; P. CONNER, *Married in Friendship*, Sheed and Ward, London 1987, pp. 40-43.
88. *Familiaris consortio*. n. 32. See also *Evangelium vitae* n. 97.
89. On this point, John Paul II explains in *Veritatis splendor* that «the morality of the human acts depends primarily and fundamentally on the ‘object’ rationally chosen by the deliberate will». n. 78. In the case of where the couple opts to use of contraceptives, the object of the couple is to prevent conception taking place. This thus makes the act morally evil. In the case where the couple knowingly uses NFP as a way of contraception, then the act is morally evil and can be equated with the couple that uses contraceptives. May also argues that «the rationale supporting recourse to the rhythm of the cycle does not judge the morality of human acts in terms of the hoped for results or of the anticipated overall proportion of good and evil that will come about. It holds, rather, that the morality of human actions depends on both the end intended and the object chosen and, because chosen, also intended. It distinguishes between the ulterior or remote end for whose sake one chooses to do this, and the proximate or immediate end, which is precisely the freely chosen object. Both end intended and object chosen must be morally good, i.e., in conformity with right reason; if either is not in accord with the truth, then the entire action is vitiated. But the primary source of the morality of the act is, as noted above, the ‘object’ freely and rationally chosen by the acting subject. This is precisely what one chooses to do. The moral methodology underlying the practice of contraception ignores this object, the immediate end of one’s choice to do this here and now... This consequentialist methodology conceals and keeps hidden from view the precise object of one’s freely chosen act and re-describes it in terms of its hoped-for benefits, the remote end intended by the acting person, the object of one’s ‘further’ intention». W. E. MAY, *Contraception and the Culture of Death*, in K. D. WHITEHEAD (ed.), *Marriage and the Common Good*, St Augustine Press, Indiana 2001, p. 189.
90. Cfr. G. GRISEZ, J. BOYLE, J. FINNIS, and W. E. MAY, *Every Marital Act Ought to be Open to New Life: Toward a Clear Understanding*, in *The Thomist*, 52, 1988, pp. 402-408.
91. *Humanae vitae*. n. 16. Earlier on in the Encyclical Paul VI mentions this aspect of married couple’s decision on not having children at a particular time. He states that «with regard to physical, economic, psychological and social conditions, responsible parenthood is exercised by those who prudently and generously decide to have more children, and by those who, for serious reasons and with due respect to moral precepts, decide not to have additional children for either a certain or an indefinite period of time». n. 10.
92. *Familiaris consortio*, n. 32. See also; P. CONNER, *Married in Friendship*, Sheed and Ward, London 1987, pp. 43-46; R. G. DE HARO, *Marriage and the Family in the Documents of the Magisterium*, translated by W. E. MAY, Ignatius Press, San Francisco 1993, pp. 355-363.

93. We acknowledge that many theses have been written about contraception giving arguments from philosophical, ethical, moral, medical and theological points of view especially when referring to the encyclical *Humanae vitae*. We therefore will not go into details of what many of these authors say since this has extensively been done in many previous studies.
94. Cfr. M. M. MILLER, *Response to William May's Paper «Contraception and the Culture of Death»*, in K. D. WHITEHEAD (ed.), *Marriage and the Common Good*, St Augustine Press, Indiana 2001, p. 206.
95. J. A. SELLING, *Twenty-Five Years after Familiaris Consortio*, in *INTAMS Review* 12, 2006, p.164.
96. Cfr. *ibid.*, pp. 164-165.
97. Cfr. W. B. SMITH, *The Role of the Christian Family, Articles 28-35*, in M. J. WRENN (ed.), *Pope John Paul II and the Family*, Franciscan Herald Press, Chicago 1983, pp. 96-99.
98. *Familiaris consortio*, n. 29.
99. Cfr. W. B. SMITH, *The Role of the Christian Family, Articles 28-35*, in M. J. WRENN (ed.), *Pope John Paul II and the Family*, Franciscan Herald Press, Chicago 1983, pp. 73-74.
100. The emphasis on marital chastity can also be found in *Gaudium et spes* n. 50, *Humanae vitae*, n. 22 and *Familiaris consortio* n. 33.
101. Cfr. *Familiaris consortio*, n. 29.
102. Cfr. S. CALDECOTT, *The Drama of the Home: Marriage, the Common Good and Public Policy*, in *Chesterton Review*, vol. 26, n. 3, 2000, pp. 346-347. For more on John Paul II's affirmations on the teachings of *Humanae vitae*, see J. E. SMITH, *Self-Giving and Self Mastery: John Paul II's Interpretation of Humanae Vitae*, in J. E. SMITH, *Humanae Vitae, A Generation Later*, The Catholic University of America Press, Washington D. C. 1991, pp. 230-265.
103. It is invigorating to see the Church's understanding which finds the genuine meaning of sexuality only in relationship to the whole person, to love and to the plan of God. Morneau contrasts the false with the true meaning of human sexuality when he says that «when sexuality is reduced to physicality, emotionality or pleasure, meaning is lost. *Familiaris consortio* presents a different vision. Here, sexuality is understood as an integral part of the personality. It has meaning only in reference to the person and authentic love. This integral vision provides meaning and allows for prudential decision on how the gift will be used. Vision and virtue help to order this radical power in our lives. Though complex, sexuality is not incomprehensible; though innately powerful sexuality is not uncontrollable... Abundant life flows when this gift of sexuality is used with proper regard for the individual and is an expression of authentic love. Physical, emotional and spiritual life are all enriched. However when sexuality is misused and becomes a form of manipulation or exploitation, few things are as destructive. Death is the consistent effect of unprincipled use of human sexuality. Here truth is abandoned, a lie is lived». R. MORNEAU, *Familiaris Consortio: Themes and Theses, Review for Religious*, July-August, 1982. Citation obtained from P. CONNER, *Married in Friendship*, Sheed and Ward, London 1987, p. 43.
104. Cfr. L. S. CAHILL, *Commentary on Familiaris Consortio (Apostolic Exhortation on the Family)*, in K. R. HIMES (ed.), *Modern Catholic Social Teaching, Commentaries and Interpretations*, Georgetown University Press, Washington D.C 2005, p. 371.
105. Cfr. T. M. KELLY, *Sacramentality and Social Mission*, in T. A. SALZMAN, T. M. KELLY and J. J. O'KEEFE (eds.), *Marriage in the Catholic Tradition: Scripture, Tradition and Experience*, The Crossroad Publishing Company, New York 2004, pp. 147-148.
106. Cfr. J. H. HUNTER, *Domestic Church: Guiding Beliefs and Daily Practices*, in M. G. LAWLER and W. P. ROBERTS (eds.), *Christian Marriage and Family; Contemporary Theological and Pastoral Perspectives*, The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minnesota 1996, p. 60.
107. Cfr. *Lumen gentium*, n. 12, in A. P. FLANNERY (ed.), *Documents of Vatican II*, Eerdmans, Michigan 1984, p. 363.
108. «For as God of old made Himself present to His people through a covenant of love and fidelity, so now the Saviour of men and the Spouse of the Church comes into the lives of married

- Christians through the sacrament of matrimony. He abides with them thereafter so that just as He loved the Church and handed Himself over on her behalf, the spouses may love each other with perpetual fidelity through mutual self-bestowal». *Gaudium et spes*, n. 48.
109. «Christian husbands and wives are co-operators in grace and witnesses of faith on behalf of each other, their children and all others in their households». *Apostolicam actuositatem*, n.11, in A. P. FLANNERY (ed.), *Documents of Vatican II*, Eerdmans, Michigan 1984, p. 779.
110. «By virtue of this sacrament, as spouses fulfil their conjugal and family obligation, they are penetrated with the spirit of Christ, which suffuses their whole lives with faith, hope and charity. Thus they increasingly advance the perfection of their own personalities, as well as their mutual sanctification, and hence contribute jointly to the glory of God». *Gaudium et spes*, n. 48.
111. «Christian spouses, in virtue of the sacrament of matrimony, signify and partake of the mystery of that unity and fruitful love which exists between Christ and his Church (cfr. Eph 5:32). The spouses thereby help each other to attain holiness in their married life and by the rearing and education of their children. And so in their state of and order of life, they have their own special gift among the People of God (cfr. 1 Cor 7:7)». *Lumen gentium*, n. 11, in A. P. FLANNERY (ed.), *Documents of Vatican II*, Eerdmans, Michigan 1984, p. 362.
112. Cfr. J. C. ATKINSON, *Paternity in Crisis: Biblical and Philosophical Roots of Fatherhood*, in *Josephinum Journal of Theology*, vol. 9, no. 1, 2002, pp. 8-9.
113. Cfr. A. SARMIENTO, *El Matrimonio Cristiano* (4a. ed.), EUNSA, Pamplona 2012, pp. 478-480.
114. «El hombre, que va y viene a la plaza y a los juicios, se va desbordado, como por las olas, por preocupaciones externas. En cambio, la mujer que permanece en casa como en una escuela de ascetismo y preserva sus pensamientos, podrá dedicarse a la oración, a la lectura y a otras prácticas de vida cristiana como los eremitas, no tiene nada que le moleste, ya que, al estar en casa, puede disfrutar continuamente de tranquilidad». In, *Juan Crisóstomo: Homilías Sobre el Evangelio de San Juan*, traducido por I. G. BOSQUE, Editorial Ciudad Nueva, Madrid 2001, pp. 16-17.
115. «When therefore my brothers you hear the Lord saying: Where I am there will my minister be also, do not just understand this as referring to good bishops and clergy only. You also, in proportion to your own manner (or position), you minister to Christ by living a good life, by doing alms, preaching, proclaiming His name and doctrine as you are capable so that every father of a family will in this name acknowledge that he owes paternal affection to the family. On behalf of Christ and for eternal life he does the following: he admonishes, teaches, exhorts, rebukes (exercises) benevolence and discipline for all who belong to him. In this fashion in his own home, he fulfils the ecclesial office and in a certain sense an Episcopal one, ministering to Christ so that he will be with Christ himself in eternity». St. AUGUSTINE, *In Joannis Evangelium*, Tr: 51, 13, in *Patrologiae Latina*, vol. 35. Translation obtained from J. C. ATKINSON, *Paternity in Crisis: Biblical and Philosophical Roots of Fatherhood*, in *Josephinum Journal of Theology*, vol. 9, nº 1, 2002, p. 18. In one of his letters St Augustine writes: «We consider your house to be no insignificant Church of Christ...». *Letter 188:3*, in www.newadvent.org/fathers/1102_188.htm. Consulted on 25th January 2013.
116. Cfr. J. H. HUNTER, *Domestic Church: Guiding Beliefs and Daily Practices*, in M. G. LAWLER and W.P. ROBERTS (eds.), *Christian Marriage and Family; Contemporary Theological and Pastoral Perspectives*, The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minnesota 1996, p. 63.
117. «In what might be regarded as the domestic church, the parents, by word and example, are the first heralds of the faith with regard to their children. They must foster the vocation which is proper to each child and this with special care if it be to religion». *Lumen gentium*, n. 11.
118. Cfr. *Apostolicam actuositatem*, n. 11; *Gaudium et spes*, n. 48.
119. Cfr. *Evangelii nuntiandi*, n. 71.
120. *Familiaris consortio*, n. 20.
121. Cfr. *ibid.*, n. 49.
122. «The Christian family constitutes a specific revelation and realization of ecclesial communion and for this reason should be called a domestic church. It is a community of faith, hope

- and charity; it assumes singular importance in the Church, as is evident in the New Testament». *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, n. 2204.
123. Cfr. A. SARMIENTO, *El Matrimonio Cristiano* (4a. ed.), EUNSA, Pamplona 2012, pp. 479-480.
 124. Cfr. J. H. HUNTER, *Domestic Church: Guiding Beliefs and Daily Practices*, in M. G. LAWLER and W.P. ROBERTS (eds.), *Christian Marriage and Family; Contemporary Theological and Pastoral Perspectives*, The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minnesota 1996, p. 64. Hunter also points out that a reason why it is not easy to understand what the domestic church is can be attributed to a narrow view by people of the Church as an institution and marriage as a contract. She continues saying that many people do not see themselves as Church, do not see their marriages as a holy vocation, and therefore cannot comprehend the value of his concept. A challenge for theologians and pastors therefore is to move these noble ideas about domestic church from guiding belief into living practice. Cfr. *ibid.* For more information on the historical development of the domestic church, see; J. C. ATKINSON, *Family as Domestic Church: Developmental Trajectory, Legitimacy and Problems of Appropriation*, in *Theological Studies* 66, 2005, pp. 593-600; F. C. BOURG, *Domestic Church: A Survey of the Literature*, in *INTAMS Review*, 7 (2001), pp. 182-193. In this article Bourg gives a historical summary not only from the Roman Catholic perspective, but from an Orthodox and Protestant one as well.
 125. In FC, the Pope discusses the family's participation in Christ's prophetic office in articles fifty one through fifty four. In articles fifty five through sixty two, he discusses the family's participation in Christ's priestly office. Articles sixty three and sixty four discuss the family's role in Christ's priestly office. In all these he describes the family's process of self-realization and growth in self-knowledge through the fulfilment of its mission. A commentary of this can be found in R. M. HOGAN and J. M. LEVOIR, *Covenant of Love, Pope John Paul II on Sexuality, Marriage, and Family in the Modern World*, Doubleday and Company, New York 1985, pp. 200-209. See also W. E. MAY, *The Christian Family: A Domestic Church*, in W. E. MAY, *Marriage, The Rock on which the Family is Built*, Ignatius Press, San Francisco 1995, pp. 116-119.
 126. Cfr. J. H. HUNTER, *Domestic Church: Guiding Beliefs and Daily Practices*, in M. G. LAWLER and W. P. ROBERTS (eds.), *Christian Marriage and Family; Contemporary Theological and Pastoral Perspectives*, The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minnesota 1996, p. 65.
 127. *Ibid.*, p. 71.
 128. Cfr. W. E. MAY, *The role of the Christian Family, Articles 49-58*, in M. J. WRENN (ed.), *Pope John Paul II and the Family*, Franciscan Herald Press, Chicago 1983, p. 171.
 129. Cfr. JOHN PAUL II, *Homilía en la Parroquia de San Francisco Javier*, in T. LOPEZ (ed.), *Juan Pablo II a las Familias*, EUNSA, Barañain-Pamplona 1980, p. 48.
 130. Cfr. W. P. ROBERTS, *The Family as a Domestic Church: Contemporary implications*, in M. G. LAWLER and W. P. ROBERTS (eds.), *Christian Marriage and Family; Contemporary Theological and Pastoral Perspectives*, The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minnesota 1996, p. 82.
 131. *Ibid.*, pp. 83-84.
 132. *Familiaris consortio*, n. 49.
 133. Cfr. J. H. HUNTER, *Domestic Church: Guiding Beliefs and Daily Practices*, in M. G. LAWLER and W. P. ROBERTS (eds.), *Christian Marriage and Family; Contemporary Theological and Pastoral Perspectives*, The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minnesota 1996, p. 67. Hunter proposes three ways in which the domestic church can be strengthened. The first step is to evangelize married people to its implications by setting forth its vision and providing concrete support systems which will empower and enable families to carry it out. Secondly, local communities can take to foster the notion of domestic church among married couples by implementing already existing family resources, those of taking the needs of families and not simply individuals into account when making societal and church policy and program decisions. Thirdly, local communities must consider how Christian families can serve as resources for the entire Church through evangelization, offering hospitality and serving in leadership positions in the Christian communities. Among the benefits that the community will receive is a fai-

- th renewal which means a transformation of society. The families will transmit the values they have to their children and this will help them grow with attitudes about marriage as a vocation which are enriching. This can have an impact on the entire Christian community. Cfr. *ibid.*, pp. 67-70. See also S. WALES, *The Pulpit and the Hearth: Thoughts on Familiaris Consortio*, in *The Furrow*, vol. 33, no. 9 (September, 1982), p. 561.
134. Cfr. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, n. 1658.
135. J. C. ATKINSON, *Family as Domestic Church: Developmental Trajectory, Legitimacy and Problems of Appropriation*, in *Theological Studies* 66, 2005, pp. 592-593. Atkinson points out three problems regarding the authentic reception of this doctrine: the first is the nature of modern consciousness. As John Paul II points this out in the *Letter to Families*, the mystery of Christ as the Bridegroom lies at the heart of marriage and family, and it is precisely this which is rejected by modern rationalism. It cannot perceive of God as the Bridegroom (cfr. n. 19). Atkinson argues that unless this thinking is challenged, in order to show the reality of the symbolic (i.e. sacramental) value of that which is concrete, the world will be trapped in a materialist worldview incapable of comprehending or even perceiving the spiritual. The second problem raised concerns the legitimacy of this development of the family as a domestic church. Atkinson says that it is clear that to use domestic church as a hermeneutic for the family flows directly from the Church's patrimony and is an outgrowth of the reality of baptism. But little solid work has been done in grounding this work theologically. He adds that John Paul II has sketched out a theology, but further and extensive grounding of this is a necessity. It also means looking at the understanding of the family in the Old Testament, on which the New Testament understanding is predicated. The third problem in understanding this concept is that of appropriation. Atkinson sees a danger in that the real concept of domestic church may become an empty theological tag, used without due regard for its constitutive theological nature. This, in the end can seriously confuse or even wound the authentic nature of the family as the *ecclesia domestica*. This may be done out of a misplaced compassion as people seek to be inclusive. Some find the ecclesial and Christological dimension of family too limiting, and prefer to see family principally as a sociological unit which can affect its own self-definition. For some, the domestic church (as christologically and ecclesologically defined) might appear too restrictive or possibly judgemental. There is need therefore of some boundaries. Cfr. *ibid.*, pp.600-603.
136. St Paul teaches the following: «Husbands should love their wives, just as Christ loved the Church and sacrificed himself for her to make her holy by washing her in the cleansing water with a form of words so that when he took the Church to himself, she would be glorious, with no speck or wrinkle or anything like that, but holy and faultless». Eph 5: 25-27.
137. Cfr. L. ÖRSY, *Faith, Sacrament, Contract and Christian Marriage: Disputed questions*, in *Theological Studies* 43, 1982, pp. 381-382.
138. Hill argues that: «If the domestic church is to ever move from rhetoric to reality, the official Church will have to begin to realize the authentic priestly and ministerial gifts that exist within marriages and families. We will have to move beyond our persistent reluctance to recognize married clergy and beyond our refusal to allow resigned priests to participate in ministry. In addition, the official Church will have to provide much more pastoral care, support and assistance to families than in the past». B. R. HILL, *Reformulating the sacramental Theology of Marriage*, in M. G. LAWLER and W. P. ROBERTS (eds.), *Christian Marriage and Family; Contemporary Theological and Pastoral Perspectives*, The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minnesota 1996, p. 16.
139. R. J. LEVIS, *The Role of the Christian Family, Articles 59-64*, in M. J. WRENN (ed.), *Pope John Paul II and the Family*, Franciscan Herald Press, Chicago 1983, p. 205.
140. In addition to the numerous homilies and discourses that speak about the family, other documents by John Paul II which talk about the domestic church are: *Mulieris dignitatem*, n. 27; *Christifideles laici*, n. 62; *Letter to Families*, n. 11; and *Evangelium vitae* n. 92.

Index of the Excerptum

INTRODUCTION	91
INDEX OF THE THESIS	95
BIBLIOGRAPHY OF THE THESIS	99
THE ROLE OF CHRISTIAN FAMILIES	109
1. INTRODUCTION	109
2. WOMEN AND SOCIETY	109
2.1. Equality, Complementarity and Difference	110
2.2. Is Submission Equivalent to Degradation?	113
2.3. Women, Work and the Home	115
3. MEN AS HUSBANDS AND FATHERS	118
3.1. The Father and the Family	119
3.2. Fatherhood as a Vocation	120
4. TRANSMISSION OF LIFE, CONTRACEPTION AND THE CULTURE OF DEATH	123
4.1. Matrimony and the Transmission of Life, in GS and HV and FC	124
4.2. Roots of the Culture of Death and its Relation to Contraception	125
4.3. Objections to and Acceptance of Teachings on Contraception	126
4.4. Intrinsic Link between Person and Body	128
4.5. Contraception: both Anti-love and Anti-life	130
4.6. Reactions to the Teachings on Contraception	134
4.7. Complementarity between <i>Humanae Vitae</i> and <i>Familiaris Consortio</i>	135
5. THE FAMILY AS A DOMESTIC CHURCH	137
5.1. Definitions of Domestic Church	138
5.2. Historical Origins of «Domestic Church»	139
5.3. Responses to the Teachings on the Domestic Church	141
NOTES	147
INDEX OF THE EXCERPTUM	163