

FAMILY LIFE

THE FAMILY IS THE BASIC UNIT OF SOCIETY.

STRONG FAMILIES MAKE GREAT NATIONS.

THE DISINTEGRATION OF THE FAMILY HAS BEEN THE ROOT CAUSE FOR THE FALL OF MOST GREAT CULTURES.

WISDOM, COMMON SENSE AND HISTORY ATTEST TO THESE THREE STATEMENTS, YET WHAT SEEMS SO OBVIOUS TO US, SEEMS TO BE LOST ON MANY IN SOCIETY TODAY.

OUR ORDER IS WORKING HARD TO SUPPORT HEALTH FAMILY LIFE. FOR THE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS, IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN SO.

WHEN THE VENERABLE MICHAEL J. MCGIVNEY FOUNDED THE ORDER, HE DID SO, AT LEAST IN PART, TO PROTECT FAMILIES IN TIMES OF SICKNESS AND DEATH.

AS A YOUNG MAN HE WITNESSED FIRSTHAND THE CHALLENGES HIS MOTHER FACED AS A SINGLE PARENT RAISING A FAMILY AFTER THE TRAGIC DEATH OF HIS FATHER. IN THE MID 1800'S, SICKNESS OR DEATH OF THE BREADWINNER OFTEN LEFT THE FAMILY DESTITUTE.

JUST AS IT WAS AT OUR FOUNDING IN 1882, A VERY IMPORTANT WAY IN WHICH THE ORDER IS PRO-FAMILY IS THROUGH OUR INSURANCE PROGRAM THAT HELPS MEMBERS PROTECT THE FUTURE WELL-BEING OF THEIR LOVED ONES.

WHEN FATHER MCGIVNEY FOUNDED THE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS, THE INSURANCE FEATURE WAS VITAL. EVEN THOUGH SMALL AND SIMPLE BY TODAY'S STANDARDS. THE FOUNDATION HE LAID IS STILL WITH US.

AS IN THE DAYS OF FATHER MCGIVNEY, TODAY THE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS INSURANCE PROGRAM – WHICH IS AS HIGHLY RATED AS ANY IN NORTH AMERICA – OFFERS OUR MEMBERS THE OPPORTUNITY IN TIMES OF GRIEF AND UNCERTAINTY TO PRESERVE THE INTEGRITY OF THEIR FAMILIES.

IN THIS NEW MILLENIUM, THE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS IS STILL FAMILY-MINDED, BUT MODERN FAMILY LIFE FACES DIFFERENT CHALLENGES.

TODAY, THE FAMILY STILL FACES FINANCIAL THREATS, BUT EVEN MORE SO, THREATS OF A MORAL AND SPIRITUAL NATURE.

TODAY WE SEE THREATS TO THE FAMILY ALL AROUND US. SOME OF THOSE THREATS SEEM TO BE ABATING WHILE OTHERS SEEM TO BE GETTING WORSE.

ON THE PLUS SIDE, TEEN PREGNANCIES AND THE NUMBER OF ABORTIONS HAVE BEEN DECLINING. MOREOVER, THE YOUNGER GENERATION POLLS AS THE MOST PRO-LIFE IN HISTORY.

ON THE OTHER HAND, THE BIGGEST THREATS TO THE FAMILY TODAY COME FROM WITHIN. THE AVAILABILITY AND USE OF PORNOGRAPHY, PARTICULARLY ON THE INTERNET, ATTEMPTS TO LEGALIZE ASSISTED SUICIDE, GENERAL ACCEPTANCE OF COHABITATION AND CHILDREN BORN OUTSIDE OF MARRIAGE, ARE SIGNS OF DECLINE, NOT ADVANCEMENT.

THESE TRENDS, ESPECIALLY CONCERNING MARRIAGE, ARE SYMPTOMATIC OF THE DISINTEGRATION OF FAMILY LIFE.

IN FATHER MCGIVNEY'S TIME THERE WERE SINGLE PARENT FAMILIES, BUT THEY USUALLY RESULTED FROM THE DEATHS OF WOMEN IN CHILDBIRTH OR FROM MEN DYING IN WORK-RELATED ACCIDENTS, OR FROM DISEASES WITH NO CURES, AND OTHER NATURAL CAUSES.

HOWEVER, A BROKEN HOME DUE TO DIVORCE WAS AN EXCEPTION, A RARE TRAGEDY.

TODAY, ALMOST THE OPPOSITE IS TRUE. MORE CHILDREN THAN EVER BEFORE ARE GROWING UP IN SINGLE-PARENT HOMES. SOME RESEARCHERS ESTIMATE THAT VERY SOON AS MANY AS HALF OF YOUNG ADULTS IN OUR SOCIETY WILL HAVE GROWN UP WITHOUT THE CARE AND DAILY PRESENCE OF THEIR FATHERS.

MANY PEOPLE ARE IGNORANT OF THE IDEA OF MARRIAGE AS A COVENANT WHILE OTHERS WANT TO REDEFINE THE VERY NATURE OF MARRIAGE. THE IDEA OF FAMILY – WHICH IS BASED ON MARRIAGE ITSELF – INSTEAD GETS REDEFINED NOT BY NATURAL LAW AND SOLID MORAL VALUES BUT ACCORDING TO ONE’S CURRENT CIRCUMSTANCES.

THE BOTTOM LINE IS: THE FAMILY NEEDS HELP!

THE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS HAS ALWAYS BEEN COMMITTED TO STRENGTHENING THE FAMILY.

IN PREPARATION FOR THE WORLD MEETING OF FAMILIES IN SEPTEMBER 2015 IN PHILADELPHIA, THE ORDER HAS PROMOTED THE PROGRAM, “BUILDING THE DOMESTIC CHURCH: THE FAMILY FULLY ALIVE.”

IN AN INTRODUCTION TO THAT PROGRAM, SUPRME KNIGHT CARL A. ANDERSON POINTED OUT THAT POPE FRANCIS HAS SPOKEN OF CHRISTIAN FAMILIES AS “THE DOMESTIC CHURCH WHERE JESUS GROWS IN THE LOVE OF A MARRIED COUPLE, IN THE LIVES OF THEIR CHILDREN.”

THE SUPREME KNIGHT FURTHER REFERRED TO THE WORDS OF ST. JOHN PAUL II WHO SAID, “WHEN THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY TAKES UP THE TASK ‘TO BE WHAT IT IS’ – A LIVING ICON IN OUR WORLD OF GOD’S OWN COMMUNION – THE FAMILY STANDS AT THE HEART OF THE CHURCH’S MISSION OF EVANGELIZATION. AND WHEN THE FAMILY RESPONDS IN THIS WAY TO THE DESIGN OF THE CREATOR, IT TRULY BECOMES A ‘DOMESTIC CHURCH.’”

THUS, THE SUPREME KNIGHT SAID, “IN THIS INITIATIVE, THE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS TURNS IN A SPECIAL WAY TO THE HOLY FAMILY AND MAKES OUR OWN THE PRAYER OF ST. JOHN PAUL II THAT ‘EVERY FAMILY MAY GENEROUSLY MAKE ITS OWN CONTRIBUTION TO THE COMING OF HIS KINGDOM IN THE WORLD,’ AND ‘THROUGH THE INTERCESSION OF THE HOLY FAMILY OF NAZARETH, THE CHURCH MAY FRUITFULLY CARRY OUT HER WORLDWIDE MISSION IN THE FAMILY AND THROUGH THE FAMILY.’”

OTHER WAYS IN WHICH THE ORDER PROMOTES THE FAMILY IS WHEN IT:

- PROVIDES, SINCE 1987, THE NORTH AMERICAN CAMPUS OF THE JOHN PAUL II INSTITUTE FOR STUDIES ON MARRIAGE AND FAMILY IN WASHINGTON, D.C. WITH FINANCIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT. THE PURPOSE OF THE INSTITUTE IS TO PROVIDE GRADUATE LEVEL TRAINING FOR THE CHURCH’S FAMILY LIFE ADVOCATES AND COUNSELORS.
- STANDS UP AGAINST THREATS TO THE FAMILY BY UPHOLDING THE SANCTITY OF LIFE AND THE MEANING AND DIGNITY OF MARRIAGE;

- FUNDS THE NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING PROGRAMS OF THE BISHOPS OF THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA;
- MAKES SUBSTANTIAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE BISHOPS' CULTURE OF LIFE EFFORTS;
- AWARDS TO KNIGHTS AND THEIR FAMILY MEMBERS EDUCATIONAL AND VOCATIONS SCHOLARSHIPS TO HELP THEM FACE THE FUTURE MORE CONFIDENTLY;
- SPONSORS THE "FATHERS FOR GOOD" WEBSITE AT WWW.FATHERSFORGOD.ORG
- PROVIDES ROLE MODELS BY PROMOTING "FAMILY OF THE YEAR" CONTESTS AT THE LOCAL, STATE AND INTERNATIONAL LEVELS;

FURTHER EVIDENCE OF THE CENTRALITY OF THE FAMILY TO THE ORDER IS THE DEDICATION OF THE SUPREME OFFICE CHAPEL TO THE HOLY FAMILY, THE PUBLICATION AND DISTRIBUTION OF THE BOOK OF FAMILY PRAYERS, AND OTHER FAMILY PROGRAMS.

OUR LOCAL COUNCILS HAVE ALSO BEEN HEAVILY INVOLVED IN THIS EFFORT BY INTEGRATING THE ENTIRE FAMILY INTO AS MANY COUNCIL PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES AS POSSIBLE.

EVEN THE SIMPLEST THINGS WE DO – SPECIAL MASSES, COMMUNION BREAKFASTS, SOCIAL EVENTS, FUND-RAISING, CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES – HELP STENGTHEN FAMILY LIFE.

ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT ARE OUR EFFORTS ON BEHALF OF YOUNG PEOPLE AND YOUNG FAMILIES THROUGH;

- SPONSORSHIP OF ATHLETIC TEAMS
- ESSAY AND POSTER CONTESTS
- COATS FOR KIDS
- FOOD FOR FAMILIES

FINALLY, BUT MOST IMPORTANTLY, IS PRAYER.

WE BELIEVE THAT “THE FAMILY THAT PRAYS TOGETHER STAYS TOGETHER.”

THAT IS WHY SO MANY OF OUR EFFORTS FOCUS ON PRAYING TOGETHER AS FAMILIES. THE STRENGTH OF THE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS IS A REFLECTION OF THE STRENGTH OF OUR FAMILIES.

OUR COMMITMENT TO OUR FAMILIES IS A COMMITMENT OF WHICH WE CAN ALL BE PROUD.

LET US CONTINUE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE BY “BUILDING THE DOMESTIC CHURCH” IN OUR COUNCILS, IN OUR PARISHES AND IN OUR OWN HOMES.

VIVAT JESUS!