

Peace And Unity In The Family

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INTRODUCTION

In Human context, family (from Latin: familiar) is a group of people affiliated by consanguinity, affinity, or co-residence. In most societies it is principal institution for the socialization of children. Extended from the human “family unit” by biological-cultural affinity, marriage, economy, cultural, tradition, honour, and friendship are concepts of family that are physical and metaphorical, or that grow increasingly inclusive extending to community, village, city, region, nationhood, global village and humanism. A family group consisting of a father, mother and their children is called a nuclear family. This term can be contrasted with an extended family.

These are also concepts of family that break with tradition within particular societies, or those that are transplanted via migration to flourish or else cease within their new societies. As a unit of socialization and a basic institution key to the structure of society, the family is the object of analysis for sociologists of the family. Genealogy is a field which aims to trace family lineages through history. In science, the term “family” has come to be used as a means to classify groups of objects as bring closely and exclusively related. In the study of animals it has been found that many species form groups that have similarities to human “family” – often called “packs”

Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called sons of God. Becoming peacemakers is another vital contribution to every couple so as to create an atmosphere of a good family. The objective nature of this paper is to explore on the social teachings of a family towards peace and unity in the family, the measures towards achieving peace and unity in the family and the roles of the three which makes up the family plays in building a sustainable family.

FAMILY TYPES

The different types of families occur in a wide variety of setting, and their specific functions and meanings depend largely on their relationship to other social institutions. Sociologist have a special interest in the function and status of these forms in stratified (especially capitalist) societies. The term “nuclear family” is commonly used, especially in North American and Europe, to refer to conjugal families. Sociologist distinguish between conjugal families (relatively independent of the kindred of the parents and of other families in general) and

nuclear families (which maintain relatively close ties with their kindred). The term “extended family” is also common, especially in North America and Europe. This term has two distinct meanings. First, it serves as a synonym of “consanguinal family” (consanguine means “of the same blood” second, in societies dominated by the conjugal family, it refers to “kindred” (an egocentric network of relatives that extends beyond the domestic group⁰, who do not belong to the conjugal family. These types refer to ideal or normative structures found in particular societies. Any society will exhibit some variation in actual composition and conception of families. Much sociological, historical and anthropological research dedicates itself to the understanding of this variation and of changes in the family that form over time. Thus, some speak of the bourgeois family, a family structure arising out of 16 and 17 century European households, in which the family centres has responsibility for income support, the woman for home and family matters.

According to the works of scholars Max Weber, Alan Macfarlane, Steven Ozment, Jack Goody and Peter Haslett, the transformation that led to modern marriage in Western democracies was “fueled by the religion-cultural value system provided by elements of Judaism, early Christianity, Roman Catholic Canon Law and the protestant reformation”. In contemporary Europe and North America, people in academic, political and civil sectors have called attention to single-father-headed households, and families headed by same-sex couples. Although academics point out that these forms exist in other societies. Also the term blended family or stepfamily describes families with mixed parents: one or both parents remarried. Bringing children's of the former family into the new family. Also in sociology, particularly in the works of social psychologist Michael Lamb, traditional families refers to “a middleclass family with a bread-winning father and a stay-at home mother, married to each other raising their biological children”, and nontraditional under this definition.

In terms of communication patterns in families, there are certain set of beliefs within the family that reflect how its members should communicate and interact. These family communication patterns arise from two underlying sets of beliefs. One being conversation orientation (the degree to which families should emphasize similarities of differences regarding attitudes beliefs and values).

THE ROLE OF THE FAMILY

Taking into consideration that the 1948 declaration was inspired by firmly anchored ethical and anthropological values consolidated by convictions regarding an objective moral order which were well-grounded at that time, and that is responded to cultural, social-economic and political circumstances in a given historical setting, we nonetheless believe that it still maintains its complete

force. The Declaration's ability remains intact to open and encourage an effective and fruitful dialogue with today's world with its questions and challenges in the face of many aspects of the present crisis.

One aspect of fundamental importance for the promotion of human rights is recognition of the “rights of the family”. This implies the protection of marriage in the family life as an objective of every juridical system. The charter of the rights of the family presented by the Holy See implies the conceptions of the family as a subject that includes all its members. The family is thus a whole which should not be divided up when it is being dealt with by isolating its members not even for reasons of social substitution which. Although necessary in many cases, should never put the family as a subject in a marginal position. The family and marriage need to be defended and promoted not only by the state but also by the whole of society. Both require the decisive commitment of every person because it is starting from the family and marriage that a complete answer can be given to challenges of the present and the risks of the future.

Challenges such as threats to survival, the “culture of death”, violence, the lack of safety, under-development, unemployment, migrations, distortions by the communications media, etc can only be tackled successfully based on a conception of human rights that are developed through the family, thereby transforming the society that is generated in and by the family.

WORK AND THE FAMILY

As both a right and a duty, work expresses and fulfills the dignity of human beings. It demonstrates their ability to dominate the world around them; it contributes to the development of their personality, and makes the growth of civilization possible. The whole of society and the organizations and (policies of the states must generate conditions that will lead to making it possible for everyone to work. We cannot forget that “work constitutes a foundation for the formation of family life, which is a natural right and something that man is called to. These two spheres of values one linked to work and the other consequent on the family nature of human life must be properly united and must properly permeate each other. In a way, work is a condition for making it possible to found a family. Since the family requires the means of subsistence which man normally gains through work”.

The specific contribution that a father and a mother offer through their work to society be recognized. What a mother contributes to the family and through it to society deserves greater attention; moreover, this has attracted the attention of some of the distinguished thinkers of our times. This specifically material contribution can be seen more obviously in the area of up-bringing, health,

education, religious formation and all the activities that affect the well being of the family and its members. John Paul II has stressed the importance of his contribution many times. Naturally, emphasis on the mother's contribution should not overshadow the importance of the father's specific contributions are complementary.

Concretely, in a family, a man and a woman complement one another's work and cooperate with one another for the full realization of their conjugal life and the upbringing and well being of their children. Keeping in mind that motherhood-together with fatherhood is part of the most excellent gift from the creator human kind, namely, the transmission of life the organization of society and the laws of the state should make it possible for the structure and the remuneration of work to aid women in fulfilling their vocation as mothers. And in the gestation and upbringing of their children.

Together with our partners, we affirm the faith-based conviction that there is no society without our justice and no justice without peace. As churches, we believe that all human beings have the same value, and therefore the same right to live in peace, as we are all created in the image of God. We also believe that all human beings are called to protect our brothers and sisters, and to love our neighbours as ourselves. This includes also those neighbours in the global village who live in cultures and civilization other than our own.

According to Uche (2009), peace is a household name in the family, it is a state of harmony characterized by the lack of violent, conflict, commonly understood as the absence of hostility. Peace also suggests the existence of healthy or new healed. Peace is the practice of love. In a peaceful society people would live in unity. Where there is no peace, there is a real disorder. Such state of affairs hampers growth in all its forms. It retards the growth of the family in all forms unity.

According to Weheier, Mcintosh, Turnbull and Ashby (2005), unity is the state of being in agreement and working together, the state of being joined together to form one unit. If unity is achieved in family, its members must have shared values. Unity cut across peace, when one talks of peace, unity follows, because when a family is at peace, they are bound to be untied. In other words unity cannot be devoid of peace. Unity is violence free, when there is unity in a family there will be stability of every form.

Social Teaching of the Family Towards Peace and Unity

According to Nzomiwu (1995), Christian marriage is a vocation. It is a legitimate union of man and woman for both physical and spiritual companionship. A

vocation is an invitation by God to a particular service. In fact it is a call to holiness. Couples must bear this in mind every time. Vatican II describes marriage vocation as an intimate partnership of life and love between man and a woman, total and perpetual, rooted in irrevocable personal consent of the spouses and which by its very nature is ordained for procreation and education of the children, it is pertinent to note that marriage beget family; the family originates in a marital communion. Genesis 2:24 expresses also the fact that a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh. The family which result from this union draws its inner solidity from the covenant between the spouses. He continued, marriage is covenant, which signifies partnership, communion and love. It is a covenant of love. Love is and must be the stronger and deeper this mutual love the more stable the family becomes. The couples ought to be vigilant in their family to ensure that this life is cherished and nurtured. This is because lack of stability in most family is as a result of decay of love. The wife should help her husband grow in his appreciation of their marital love and responsibility.

She should be kind, respectful, loving and obedient to her husband. She should really be a helpmate (Gen. 2:23). The husband should be to say of his wife as Adam did. This is the flesh of my flesh and the bone of my bone". Husband and wife should be as united as Christ is united with the church (Eph. 5:26). The husband expects his wife to be dedicated and committed, to be prayerful, chaste, hospitable and disciplined. All these qualities make up stability in a family. She should have a good reputation and be a careful minister of her home. She should be a model clothed with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience and be able to bear with her husband. She should have a forgiving heart (Col. 3:12), because the quality of her family lies in her hand.

Measure towards achieving peace and unity in the family

Some families or couples have little more in common than a marriage certificate and the dwelling they share. Some marriages are casualties of mounting stress and anxiety. Demanding jobs, shift work, and long working hours can sap the emotional reserves of some devoted couples. Love and respect can also be eroded by financial problems, issues with children, job changes and health problems however; the changes that come with the passing of time may create the kind of stress that can push couples apart. Stress and exhaustion leave family members very little time for each other. Some feel as if they were being sucked into a vortex of frustration and alienation. Why are so many families under much pressure? What can one do to achieve peace and unity in the family, to achieve peace and unity, to achieve peace and unity, the most dependable and authoritative map to a sustainable family is provided by the originator of marriage God, His inspired word the Holy Bible. Though, it is not a magic charm,

rather it contains practical direction that a family needs to follow to enjoy a peaceful and united home (Psalm 119:105, Ephesians 5:21-33; 2Timothy 3:16). Odii (2009), states that bible principles can help guide one along a peaceful and united home. Man is imperfect, misunderstandings and differences are inevitable.

Often, however, a peaceful and a united family depends less on compatibility than on how couples deal with incompatibility. Therefore, one of the most essential skills in a family is the ability to resolve disagreement in a loving way, for love binds everything together in perfect harmony. Husband and wife should:

1. Speak respectfully

There exists the one speaking thoughtlessly as with the stabs of a sword, but the tongue of the wise ones is a healing “Proverbs 12:18). Researchers have found that most conversations end the way they started. Hence, if conversations starts respectfully, it is more likely to end that way. Conversely, you know how hurtful it can be when a loved one speaks thoughtlessly to you. Therefore, make a prayerful effort yourself to speak with dignity, respect and affection (Ephesians 4:31). Even though you see each other's weakness, try to respect each other in word and attitude. That has helped some to build a peaceful home.

2. Show humility

Do nothing out of contentiousness or out of egotism, but with lowliness of mind considering that the others are superior. Philippians 2:3 many conflict arise, because marriage mates pride fully try to blame their partner for problems instead of humbly seeking ways to make things right for each other. Lowliness of mind, or humility can help one suppress the urge to insist on being right in a disagreement.

3. Do not hastily take offense

Do not yourself in your spirit to become offended (Ecclesiastes 7:9) try to avoid the inclination to refute your mates' viewpoint or to leap to your own defense if your mate questions something you have said as done. Instead, listen to and acknowledge your expressions. Think carefully before making a reply. Many couples learn too late in life that winning a heart is a greater victory than winning an argument.

4. Listen with empathy

Rejoice with people; weep with people who weep”, Romans 12:15 empathy is indispensable to purposeful communication because it enables one feel his/her spouse's deepest emotions. It can help create an atmosphere in which each one's opinions and feelings are treated with respect and dignity”. When problems are

discussed, spouses should listen very carefully so as to understand the thoughts and feelings. It is right to keep quiet and to listen with empathy.

5. Forming the habit of expressing appreciation

Show yourself thankful (Colossians 3:26). Strong marriages are characterized by husband and wives who make use their spouse feels appreciated. Some couples neglect this vital aspect of communication and merely assume that their spouse feels valued. Wives in particular need their husband's loving reassurance and expressions of appreciation. Husband can do much to improve the health of his family and the well-being as well as himself, by making a point of commenting appreciatively on your wife's positive actions and qualities vice versa.

6. Be quick to forgive

Let the sun not set with you in a provoked state (Ephesians 4:26). In a family, one cannot escape one's own faults or those of your spouse. Consequently, the willingness to forgive is essential. An ancient proverb wisely observed “it is beauty to pass over transgression. A good and peaceful home is impossible without forgiveness. Otherwise resentment and mistrust grow, and that is poison to a family. Through forgiveness, the bonds of family are strengthened and grow closer together. Whenever mistakes are made do not conclude that he or she will get over it. Making peace often require that you do one of the more difficult things by admitting to say something like this “I'm sorry, dear”.

7. Stay committed to your mate and to your marriage

The husband and wife are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together let no man put apart” (Mathew 19:6). You have solemnly vowed before God and man and to each other to remain together. Despite problems that might arise, commitment, however, is not simply a legalistic obligating. Rather, it is motivated by sincere, heartfelt love and is a reflection of respect and honour for each other and for God. So never undermine your sacred marital relationship by flirting; have eyes only for your mate (Matthew 5:28).

8. Self-sacrifice reinforce commitment

Keep an eye, not in personal interest but also in personal interest upon those of the others” (Philippians 2:4). Putting your marriage mate's need and preferences ahead of your own is one of the ways to strengthen commitment. A times husband should help wives in doing some of the domestic charge. With all these measures. Peaceful and united home could be achieved.

9. Role of each party towards enhancing a peaceful and united family

A peaceful and united family is an enviable one in the sense that its component members perform their expected roles. The stability consequent on his is often

extended to the larger society. In this section attention is turned to how the husband/father, wife/mother and children relate with each another.

The Husband/Father

The husband in a family is a father: a father both to his wife and children. He is a man of responsibilities-religious, social, economic, and political. Ejiofor (2001) affirms that “he is the president of the household and the representative of the family in public affairs. He is the pillar security for the members of his family and absorbs all shocks and quarrels coming to the family from outside. Therefore, it is expected of him to be benevolent and tolerant, understanding and impartial in the management of the family affairs”. (p. 34).

The importance of benevolence, tolerance and impartiality as expected characteristics of a father cannot be overemphasized. As the head of the family any visible sign of repression or partiality in relating with the family members would create an unwholesome environment and the consequences would be grave. Favouritism is a terminal disease in a family fabric.

The head of a family relates with the family on religion grounds. He performs religious functions such as offering of sacrifice for his own sake and that of his entire family.

Socially the father is aware that children learn more by imitation than by any formal lecture. What they hear their parents do, what they hear their parents say and how they observe their parents behave so they do, talk and behave. Ejiofor continues, it beloveth the husband/father, therefore, as the family symbol to be an embodiment of virtues rather than vices. Such virtues would include reliability, a sense of decision, precision a sense of adventure and self-reliance. These virtues are of very high divided when imbibed by the children: boys and girls. The father therefore advices the children on how best to live in the home. Parental advice and supervision cannot be neglected as they have tremendous influence on the family. The father as a thin-god and an uncontested symbol of authority has the ability to inculcated good virtues into his family.

Obiefuna (1995) maintains that a husband/father cannot claim to socially relative with his family if he does not make provision for daily food, clothing, housing, education (informal thought) medical attention, love, motivation and inspiration for the family members to achieve great height in the outer society. To neglect these areas is to make the family lose flat in him.

Again every man therefore strives to have a strong economic base. He can be a farmer, a trader or a wine taper. He can also combine many trades to achieve his

purpose. The important thing is that he is the family and the larger society a hardworking and struggling man. He is also the administrative officer of his family. He administers justice in the event of family quarrels, in setting disputes he is expected to be truly impartial. Discord and unhealthy rivalry in the family. The security of his family rest on him. As such no outsider can insult or assault any member of his family without giving him his due respect by first warning the concerned family through him. He is a symbol of unity, an embodiment of love and a tower of encouragement and inspiration for the family. He knows that what he says or does would have lasting effect on the family. He becomes cautious, patient, good humoured, self-controlled, dedicated and principled. At the same time, he disciplines and applies restraint on any who may dance out of tune.

Wife/Mother

According to Obiefuna (1995), the wife is expected to live according to the rules of the present household. To deviate from them is to risk being accused of indulgence in abominable acts capable of attracting both the wrath of the gods and social stigma. The woman owes every respect and obedience. She submits to total conjugal possession of the husband. She bears and rears children and cooperates in the economic well-being of the family. Before just as the family is the primary unit of socialization. The children stay more with her when the father is in the fields. Through the methods of reward and punishment, she approves and disapproves of children's actions. She equally tells them stories that extol virtues of hard work and excellence, a sense of good moral, respect for customs and tradition, loyalty to elders, the mode of greeting, sitting behavior, she takes extra care of the female children who must learn from her the technical skills and moral proprieties necessary to good wives and mothers. The influence of mother on children is encompassing. The children's moral, religious, social, ethnical, economic and intellectual well-being are in mother's hands. Their future destiny is shaped by the mothers. In other words, it can be said that the future of any society lies with the mothers. Good wives/mothers are therefore important for a good society. Ifesieh (2005) states that "just as the family is the seed of the society, so also is the mother the cell of the family is the note of filial passion he concludes, and correctly. She is the heart and opulence of the family.

Wikipedia (2011) wives should try as much to attend to his husband's needs to fatigue, hunger and thirst. Good wives give encouragement of support to their husbands.

Children

From birth to about the age of six, child is living a life of unquestionable obedience. All the children irrespective of the gender stay and sleep with the mother except in some exceptional causes when a child at a very tender age gets

inclined to the father. The children interact freely; they play, bath, work and sleep together. This is a very crucial period in the formation of the children. They learn and are encouraged to live virtuously. All parents want their children to be upright, honest, kind and helpful to others and will spare no pain to instill these qualities. Some children, than to have children, who will bring shame and dishonor in the family. At this primary formative period therefore, parents do not overlook any seeming odd behavior in a child for to do that would be to lose control in the after years. Whatsoever one would be in life can be discerned at this period. Obiefuna (1995) says at about the age of six differentiation sets in. sex becomes the basis for role differentiation. Each male/female child is assigned his/her role in the family. More importantly, the male children are made to imitate their father while the female ones imitate their mother. This differentiation and initiation into different roles in life does not in any way mean disharmony in the family, no. it rather means that when each does his/her expected work in the family will have a function of a closely knit unit. The differentiation makes the male children do jobs that would prepare them for the roles of leadership in the household from the earliest days they themselves as master and superior to the female children who will be married out to the "lower" place of wives. This is the path through which men and spirit attend social and religion functions in the compound. The male children are domestic oriented. As future mothers they keep the house, making it comfortable for all. They cook, scrub the floors and walls and sweep the compound. They receive instructions and directions from the mothers who at times give helping hand. They fetch water for domestic use. It has to be pointed out that in spite of the differentiation, there is no clear-cut separation of duties in family relationships between the male and female children. If anything the separation is only virtual. Any child can do whatever work depending on availability. Nzomiwu (1995) noted that children are called to be obedient, they still have their rights as stipulated in Nigeria constitution, all these rights ought to be safeguarded such like right to education, right to life, right to be protected and so on.

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