



Ordo Franciscanus Saecularis

Consilium Internationale

FAMILY COMMISSION

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CONCLUSIONS OF THE SYNOD ON THE FAMILY

This Chapter talks to us about **family, procreation and education**. We will continue to integrate the richness of the Apostolic Exhortation, *Amoris Lætitia* (AL) and sharing our local realities in order to strengthen our families and accompany our brothers and sisters on the journey. We will read the texts shared with you and then we will talk in fraternity based on the questions we will share (below):

Chapter II

Family, Generativity, Upbringing

The Transmission of Life

62. The presence of large families in the Church is a blessing for the Christian community and society, because openness to life is an intrinsic requirement of conjugal love. In this regard, the Church expresses her deep gratitude to families who welcome children — especially those who are most weak and vulnerable — raise them, surround them with affection and transmit the faith to them.. [...]

A child deserves to be born of that love, and not by any other means, for “he or she is not something owed to one, but is a gift”, which is “the fruit of the specific act of the conjugal love of the parents”.⁸⁸ This is the case because, “according to the order of creation, conjugal love between a man and a woman, and the transmission of life are ordered to each other (cf. Gen 1:27-28). Thus the Creator made man and woman share in the work of his creation and, at the same time, made them instruments of his love, entrusting to them the responsibility for the future of mankind, through the transmission of human life.
AL 81

Generative Responsibility

63. According to the order of creation, conjugal love between a man and a woman and the transmission of life are ordered to each other (cf. Gen 1:27-28). In this way, the Creator made man and woman share in the work of his creation and, at the same time, made them instruments of his love, entrusting to them the responsibility for the future of humankind, through the transmission of human life. Spouses are to be open to life and formed in “a right judgment: let them thoughtfully take into account both their own welfare and that of

their children, those already born and those which the future may bring. For this accounting, they need to reckon with both the material and the spiritual conditions of the times as well as of their state in life. Finally, they should consult the interests of the family group, of temporal society, and of the Church herself” (GS, 50; cf. VS, 54-66). In conformity with a conjugal love based on the nature of the person and a humanly completed act, the just way for family planning is that of a consensual dialogue between the spouses, respect for the times of fertility and consideration of the dignity of the partner. [...]

The Value of Life in All Its Stages

64. Life is a gift from God and a mystery that transcends us. For this reason, life should in no way be discarded, either in its beginning or at its end. On the contrary, special attention to all phases of life needs to be guaranteed. People today, too easily “consider the human being in himself as a commodity, which you can use and then throw away. We have given rise to a ‘throw away’ culture which is now spreading” (EG, 53). In this regard, the family, supported by every level of society, needs to accept unborn life and to care for life in its final stages. With regard to the tragedy of abortion, the Church, above all, affirms the sacred and inviolable character of human life and is committed in a practical way in favour of it (cf. EV, 58). Through her institutions, she counsels pregnant women, supports single mothers, assists abandoned children and is near to those who endured an abortion. Those who work in healthcare facilities are reminded of the moral obligation of conscientious objection. Similarly, the Church not only feels the urgency to assert the right to a natural death, without aggressive treatment and euthanasia, but also takes care of the elderly, protects people with special needs, assists the terminally ill, comforts the dying and firmly rejects the death penalty (cf. CCC, 2258).

Here I feel it urgent to state that, if the family is the sanctuary of life, the place where life is conceived and cared for, it is a horrendous contradiction when it becomes a place where life is rejected and destroyed. So great is the value of a human life, and so inalienable the right to life of an innocent child growing in the mother’s womb, that no alleged right to one’s own body can justify a decision to terminate that life, which is an end in itself and which can never be considered the “property” of another human being. The family protects human life in all its stages, including its last [...] AL 83.

Adoption and Foster Parenting

65. The adoption of orphaned and abandoned children, accepting them as one’s own, in the spirit of faith, becomes a form of an authentic family apostolate (cf. AA, 11), which is repeatedly mentioned and encouraged by the Magisterium (cf. FC, 41; EV, 93). The choice of adoption and foster care expresses a particular kind of fruitfulness in the marriage experience, beyond cases where infertility is painfully present. This decision is an eloquent sign of welcoming life, a witness of faith and fulfilment of love, and restores a mutual dignity to a bond which has been interrupted: spouses without children and children without parents. Consequently, all initiatives aimed at facilitating adoption services need to be supported. The trafficking of children between countries and continents is to be prevented by appropriate legislative action and State control.[...]

Adoption is a very generous way to become parents. I encourage those who cannot have children to expand their marital love to embrace those who lack a proper family situation.

They will never regret having been generous. Adopting a child is an act of love, offering the gift of a family to someone who has none. It is important to insist that legislation help facilitate the adoption process, above all in the case of unwanted children, in order to prevent their abortion or abandonment. Those who accept the challenge of adopting and accepting someone unconditionally and gratuitously become channels of God's love. For he says, "Even if your mother forgets you, I will not forget you" (Is 49:15). AL 179

The Upbringing of Children

66. Undoubtedly, one of the key challenges posed in families today is that of the upbringing of children, made all-the-more challenging and complex by the today's culture and the great influence of the media. Due account needs to be given to the needs and expectations of families who in everyday life are places of growth and places for the practical and essential transmission of faith, spirituality and virtues which shape human existence. One's own family is often the place where a vocation to the priesthood or the consecrated life is born. Therefore, parents are urged to ask the Lord for the priceless gift of a vocation for one of their children. In bringing up children, protection needs to be afforded to the right of parents to freely choose the type of education to be given to their children, according to their convictions, its accessibility and the calibre of education [...]

67. In different cultures, the adults of the family retain an irreplaceable role in the upbringing of children. However, in many areas, we are witnessing a progressive weakening of the role of parents in raising their children, because of an invasive presence of the media within the family, as well as a tendency to delegate or outright relinquish their role to third parties. On the other hand, the media (especially the social media) unite members of a family, even at a distance. The use of e-mail and other social media can keep family members together over time. Furthermore, the media can provide an opportunity to evangelize young people...[...]

[...]“The Church assumes a valuable role in supporting families, starting with Christian initiation, through welcoming communities”. At the same time I feel it important to reiterate that the overall education of children is a “most serious duty” and at the same time a “primary right” of parents. This is not just a task or a burden, but an essential and inalienable right that parents are called to defend and of which no one may claim to deprive them. The State offers educational programmes in a subsidiary way, supporting the parents in their indeclinable role; parents themselves enjoy the right to choose freely the kind of education – accessible and of good quality – which they wish to give their children in accordance with their convictions. Schools do not replace parents, but complement them. This is a basic principle: “all other participants in the process of education are only able to carry out their responsibilities in the name of the parents, with their consent and, to a certain degree, with their authorization”. Still, “a rift has opened up between the family and society, between family and the school; the educational pact today has been broken and thus the educational alliance between society and the family is in crisis”.»AL 84

68. Catholic schools play a vital role in assisting parents in their duty to raise their children. Catholic education promotes the role of the family, ensures good preparation and provides education in the virtues and values as well as instruction in Church teaching. Catholic schools should be encouraged in their mission to help pupils grow into mature

adults, who can view the world with the love of Jesus and who can understand life as a call to serve God. [...]

Questions for further discussion:

- Let us share our family experiences of the transmission of our faith with our children, nieces and nephews, and grandchildren.
- God made us instruments of his love and has entrusted us with the responsibility of the future of humanity through the transmission of human life. How do we prepare ourselves to assume this responsibility?
- During this era of so many means of globalization, what do we understand by family planning? Do we know the Catholic Church's teachings? Do we know the opinions of other cults (religions) on this topic?
- Do we agree that we, as members of the Catholic Church, must emphasize that abortion is not only a problem for women, even if their body is the cradle of that life?
- Are we aware of the educational duty to which we are called by virtue of baptism and, later, by profession? This is a duty that will support but does not replace Catholic parents in the education of their children.
- There are several challenges that Catholic schools must assume in the world today (promote activities of solidarity, work without compensation, promote positive attitudes and couples living together) What other challenges do we think Catholic schools have?

Documents:

http://w2.vatican.va/content/dam/francesco/pdf/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20160319_amoris-laetitia_en.pdf

http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_doc_20151026_relazione-finale-xiv-assemblea_en.html

<http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc/index.htm>

We finish our encounter praying together: the prayer of the Holy Family.

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