



DOMINICAN SCHOOL OF PHILOSOPHY & THEOLOGY
at the Graduate Theological Union

*The Synod on the Family:
Multi-disciplinary Perspectives from the American Context*

DSPT Symposium
2016 Annual Convocation of the DSPT College of Fellows

Much controversy surrounded the 2015 Synod on the Family, as well as the Extraordinary General Assembly of the Bishops on the Family in 2014 – only the third such assembly ever held, and which laid the groundwork for the 2015 Synod. This DSPT Symposium considered the Synod in relation to our American context, exploring the family in the USA from a variety of perspectives, and seeking to make sense of how to more deeply understand the Church's teaching on the family in light of the fruits of the Synod with an aim to discern how to creatively and faithfully apply it in our culture today.

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Executive Summary

1. Preliminary remarks

This symposium began with a presentation of Fr. Robert Christian, OP on the scope and competence of the Synod. He remarked that to maintain doctrinal orthodoxy must mean moving from what has been received through the tradition to a further articulation of that tradition in service to the questions of the day. In pursuing this work, the Synod has not been granted deliberative authority by the Pope but is consultative. It is made up of members of the College of Bishops which serves the church by seeking to conserve the faith intact by proclaiming that faith and judging what is in accord with it. Their task consists in clarifying the *sensus fidei* that belongs to all of the baptized whereby the faith of the Church can be expressed through its pastoral initiatives – in this case, concerning marriage and family.

Father Michael Sweeney, OP then commented on the pastoral challenges occasioned by the Synod. He noted that the final report of the Synod concedes that we lack a language with which to put forward the goods of marriage and family life and suggested that this is due, in part, to the tendency to treat of the family as an object of the solicitude of the hierarchy rather than as a subject of the Church's life and mission. He proposed that there is an urgent need for a theological reflection upon the family as the “domestic Church” which is informed by an articulation of the actual experience of family life and which is best undertaken by the laity.

Father Anselm Ramelow, O.P. offered a brief philosophical reflection on the nature of the family: we will not understand the union of husband and wife apart from the *telos* into which it is to unfold; the one-flesh union is fully realized in their offspring. Children, in turn, need to know their parents for the sake of their own identity; they need to know them as the union that their own genetic material embodies. The contemporary crisis of commitment – of promising – is the crisis of our identity as persons. In marriage we promise not *something*, but *ourselves* and thereby gain a new identity that is inseparable from the family that it founds.

Prof. Russell Hittinger then situated the family in the light of the social teaching of the Church. There are three societies “necessary” for human flourishing: in the natural order, the family and civil society and, in the supernatural order, the Church. The human person, in other words, is a matrimonial-familial animal, a political animal and an ecclesial animal. Whereas much has been said in the Church's magisterium concerning marriage as “the principle and foundation” of domestic society, relatively little has been developed concerning the family itself. The family is the primary site of Christian formation and therefore it is a kind of domestic Church. As such, the family is more sacred than the state and prior to it, and the Church has defended the rights of parents as educators of their children. While a theology of the family has become a major concern for Catholic theology, the revised code of Canon Law mentions “familia” in the substantive only three times. Much work is yet to be done.

2. Applications

Patrick Brennan noted that “the family” is not a fixed or immutable entity, but is rather affected by changing ideas or revolutions, and has been shaped by US laws. He cited the recent *Obergefell v. Hodges* (2015), in which even the late Justice Scalia essentially vetoed “in the name of democratic rule the public bindingness of the true Ruler's true law”, showing what is wrong with U.S. law today

as it concerns the family. Brennan asserted that the family will subsequently be open to further transformations, like an acceptance of polyamory, until “the Constitution no longer makes its Godless self ‘the supreme Law of the Land’”.

Ned Dolejsi proposed the family as a primary instrument of evangelization in the present cultural moment. “It's nature and reality responsibly and effectively proclaimed in the public order ... can both gradually transform our public life and speak to the isolation and yearning for meaning so prevalent in ourselves, particularly our young.” He contended that, in the political arena, we must focus upon on statutory and tax policy, regulation and budget action that stabilizes families, however constituted, economically and socially. We must encourage marriage, relational stability, with a primary emphasis on children and their well-being and articulate parental rights....”

Prof. Nicholas Wolfinger presented an overview of marriage and family demographics in the U.S. While the “overwhelming majority of people desire marriage” education, religious practice and socio-economic background contribute to what he characterized as a “profound marriage gap.” Americans are marrying later in life and 40% of children in the U.S. are now born out of wedlock. Adults with a four-year college education, from a stable family background, who are regular church-goers are most likely to marry and be happy and stable in marriage.

Parenting clearly involves much more than the physical provision for children. Prof. Velma Richmond singled out the significance of reading to children as an essential element of parenting: “pedagogical studies show that the child read to at home has significantly greater likelihood of succeeding in school, and thus in life, not least in creating a family.” Such children manifest greater verbal knowledge, exposure to a range of experiences in stories from different cultures, skill in listening and interacting with others, and development of capacities to be quiet and thoughtful.

Ron Austin considered the distortion of our image of the family due to its depiction in popular media: “The media damage to the concept of the family and ‘family values’ came primarily from the media industry’s desire to capture a ‘youth market’ based on an inherently antinomian adolescent psychology that rejected adult authority. This destructive impulse was inherent in the growth of modernism with its emphasis on individualism and the goal of a virtually autonomous freedom.”

Prof. Philip Bess considered the relationship of family and family life to urban development: “The Family begets, bears, and succors human life. The City exists to promote the best human life, which has substantive content: a life of moral and intellectual virtue lived in community with others.” He suggested that “...good urban design can be a proximate occasion of grace for families, primarily through the classical architectural virtues of durability, convenience, and above all beauty.” The reciprocal relationship of the family to the city might serve as a measure for all of the elements that make up urban design in that “...society is a marital-and-family construct.”

Prof. Michael Naughton asserted that the impact of the family on economic stability and business is too often overlooked. He proposed two fundamental ways in which the family influences economic life: First, “...faith and family institutions limit economic activity so that there is natural space for people to foster right relationships with one another and God;” “Second, family and faith order economic activity and remind business of its purpose by connecting production and consumption to the common good and its participants to their particular vocations.” The economy “...requires strong political stability within a society and a vibrant entrepreneurial environment of innovation and creativity, but what is also needed is the social capital of families to produce such qualities.”

3. Subsequent Conversations and Possibilities for Further Study and Conversation

Following upon the formal presentations, Fellows and others contributed to a lively discussion of social challenges attendant upon a consideration of the family:

Present confusion over what the family is hinders contemporary discourse on the family: What is a home? Has it simply become a shelter? Is a household an economic unit and no more? Should family leave be restricted to biological children? With a focus on the sex of the partners, blood relationship, common mailing address or legal contract as definitions of family, have we forgotten a complex set of relationships, what is owed to one another and what that means within a family and then in the extended community?

Several of the Fellows reflected upon the significance of the family to the phenomenon of poverty in the U.S. “The erosion of the family in the United States is linked to the inherently unstable and unjust economic system which has become even more destructive in its globalist manifestations. Poverty needs to be redefined because there are several forms of deprivation, some, such as the loss of family and community, are at times more deleterious than merely economic poverty.” Again, “I was struck by something that germinated at the Mazatlán Forum on the subject of eradication of poverty. The participants were of all religious and non-religious persuasions and differing political and sociological bents and offered very differing strategies to eradicate poverty. Yet at the end they all pretty much came to the same conclusions that support for the family was crucial to the eradication/amelioration of poverty and the well-being of society.”

Much of our conversation focused upon the double necessity both to esteem the significance of the family for the sake of human flourishing and the fact that the family is significant for the sake of relationships that transcend the family. Thus, for example, “...though it is no longer true of contemporary thinking about cities, in classical (Aristotelian – Vitruvian – Augustinian) urban thought the *telos* of a city is human flourishing both over the course of an entire individual lifetime and over generations. The same is true of families, and true also of the Church even unto eternity. The broad scope of their respective goods and *teloi* distinguish the Family, the City, and the Church from other more limited human communities and their more limited goods and *teloi*.” Accordingly, “in all our necessary attempts to defend the family and its rights as normative, we should not forget that there is also a need for transcending the family.”

Several of the Fellows commented upon the responsibility of Catholics to advance a responsible understanding of the family in relation to social and political life: rather than disengaging from the political debate it is necessary to frame social considerations around considerations of the family.

An Ecclesial Perspective on the Synod – Robert Christian, OP

I have been asked to present “An Ecclesial Perspective on the Synod,” and immediately the ambiguity in those words shows how rich this Convocation might be. The ambiguity can be expressed as follows: Does “an ecclesial perspective on the Synod” refer to *how* the Church understands her synodality, or at least, the organ that we call the Synod of Bishops? Or, does “an ecclesial perspective on the Synod” refer more broadly to how the Church views the debates at the Synod which concluded last October?

Since the Synod has not, up to this point, had a deliberative role, although canon law foresees that the Pope could grant it deliberative authority, it cannot be said to teach with the authority of, say, an ecumenical council; rather, its propositions are forwarded to the Pope in the form of a list of propositions, and it is up to the Pope to promulgate what becomes ordinary ecclesial teaching in the form of a document known as a post-synodal apostolic exhortation.

I imagine that my second interpretation of “an ecclesial perspective on the Synod,” being how the Church views the debates, is more properly the subject that will engross the whole of this Convocation, so I shall say a few words about the Synod as such.

I do so not only as one familiar with the field of Ecclesiology, but also as one who worked in the Vatican’s Synod of Bishops Office for two years before the 1990 Synod of Bishops devoted to *The Formation of Priests in the Circumstances of the Present Day*, which prompted the composition of Pope John Paul II’s Post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores Dabo Vobis (I Will Give You Shepherds)* which is now a foundational text for seminary formation. I was also a *peritus* or expert at that synod.

So let us situate the institution of the Synod of Bishops in its proper place in the Catholic Church.

The Second Vatican Council’s Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, draws an analogy, which it says is not a mediocre one (*non mediocrem analogiam*) between Christ the Incarnate Word, and the Church. “For just as the assumed nature serves the divine Word as a living instrument of salvation inseparably joined with Him, in a similar way the social structure of the Church serves the Spirit of Christ who vivifies the Church for the growth of the body (i.e., the mystical body of Christ)” (LG 8). Thus, if Christ can be called a sacrament of God—the *primordial* sacrament admitting of no discrepancy between what God reveals and what God effects—the Church can likewise be called a sacrament, the *universal* sacrament which “serves the Spirit of Christ” by proclaiming salvific truth in its entirety and by fostering encounters with the Risen Lord which can be relied on to furnish the faithful with salvific graces. Saving truth is thus something that can be known, and *someone* who can be encountered.

Saving truths, however, are truths that humans always ponder. We always ask “Why?” “Why not!?” “What does *that* mean?” and so on. A century ago, the Irish Dominican Vincent McNabb, seeking to explain the infallibility of the papal magisterium to a presumably Anglican readership in England where he was ministering, explained that human curiosity undergirds the notion of the development

in insight, the “crystallization” if you will, of doctrine. So to maintain doctrinal orthodoxy *cannot* mean never changing a word of what has been handed on; it *must* mean moving from what has been received to an articulation of what we have received *means*, in continuity with the past (that *is*, after all, tradition) but of service to the questions of the day.

Therefore, the Church does not have a musty directory of truths that we can consult if we want to know, for example, whether matrimony is by nature a life-long union. She has a teaching office (Magisterium) that seeks to bring ever greater clarity to her doctrine concerning, for example, marriage and the family, by considering questions and opinions about what marriage is by nature; what it means to affirm that marriage between a baptized man and a baptized woman is *always*—or only when explicitly so intended—a sacrament; whether a second marriage entered into when one’s first spouse is still alive is always almost tantamount to an unforgivable sin; and if not, whether holy communion should be offered to such people in order to strengthen them spiritually; and so forth. The assistance of the Spirit is invoked, and the Magisterium then expresses judgments about the questions and opinions considered—which are con-sonant with the faith, which are not, and which need yet more time for study and prayer. The deposit of faith is not *reformable*, and truths of the faith cannot be discarded. But they always need to stand up to new questions, this side of eternity.

Now, we live after the close of the era of Revelation, and we do not have divinely inspired authors in our midst. What we do believe is contained in Jesus’ promise of the Spirit is an assistance by that same Holy Spirit so that the Church might continue to be a pillar and bulwark of the truth. In a sacramental Church, which means a community that we can point to as the *locus* of all the elements of the sanctification and truth that Christ wished to bestow on His people (see *LG* 8), there is in turn a body sacramentally constituted as pointers toward, guardians of, and teachers of, salvific truth.

Almost the whole third chapter of *Lumen Gentium* speaks of these sacramentally constituted teachers as the bishops, who by virtue of their ordination and the sacramental character of Orders, do, if they are in hierarchical communion with the Bishop of Rome, form a body, the College of Bishops, which serves the Church by seeking to conserve the faith intact by proclaiming that faith in every age and judging what is in accord with it.

The College of Bishops cannot be divorced from the body of the Baptized from which they emerge. Indeed, Chapter Two of *Lumen Gentium* notes that the Baptized are endowed with a supernatural instinct for the faith, the *sensus fidei*. The College of Bishops cannot ignore that instinct. Indeed, its job is to clarify the faith of the faithful *for* the faithful! So the Second Vatican Council avoids the bald division of the Church into an *ecclesia docens* (the teaching Church) and an *ecclesia discens* (the listening or receiving Church). Teachers and “taught” are now described as two participations, essentially distinct, in the one Priesthood of Jesus Christ, which are directed toward each other (*ad invicem ordinantur*) (*LG* 10).

Although the College of Bishops teaches with its greatest solemnity in ecumenical councils, such events are rare. Indeed, whereas the Church worldwide has suffered a vocations shortage since

Vatican II, the number of bishops has more than doubled to over 5,100, making the very notion of bringing together that number of people, plus support staff, and supplying the necessary infrastructure, a nightmare.

Enter two important developments: the erection of episcopal conferences in those regions that did not already have them, so that regional pastoral issues could be treated at the same regional level, and the Synod of Bishops for, in general, universally relevant issues, according to the Article 5 of Vatican II's *Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church (Christus Dominus)*.

From the Latin Code of Canon Law (Eastern Catholic Churches have their own synods!):

Can. 342: The synod of bishops is a group of bishops who have been chosen from different regions of the world and meet together at fixed times to foster closer unity between the Roman Pontiff and bishops, to assist the Roman Pontiff with their counsel in the preservation and growth of faith and morals and in the observance and strengthening of ecclesiastical discipline, and to consider questions pertaining to the activity of the Church in the world.

Can. 343: It is for the synod of bishops to discuss the questions for consideration and express its wishes but not to resolve them or issue decrees about them unless in certain cases the Roman Pontiff has endowed it with deliberative power, in which case he ratifies the decisions of the synod.

Can. 344: The synod of bishops is directly subject to the authority of the Roman Pontiff who:

3/ determines at an appropriate time before the celebration of a synod the contents of the questions to be treated, according to the norm of special law;

4/ defines the agenda;

5/ presides at the synod personally or through others.

For decades there has been discussion concerning a reordering of the procedures of a Synod to grant it deliberative authority. Were this to happen, it would be a significant step towards the replacement of ecumenical councils attended by all bishops, by a representative body that would need to be in touch with the rest of the episcopate in order for its deliberations to be patently collegial. The recent synod of bishops, consisting of two sessions, is in line with reforms suggested in the past by the Canadian Bishops' Conference and the Episcopal Conference of Indonesia, to name just two with which I am familiar. Between sessions, the delegates to the Synod are able to consult with their brother bishops and the laity. In the future, a system of electronic voting might be adopted allowing the entire college to vote on specific questions. The Synod, then, is an expression of episcopal collegiality. The Episcopal College is an instrument designed to maintain the whole Church in the truth. The whole Church, anointed by the Spirit, cannot definitively betray the truth, but it does need to articulate it better in each generation. The assistance of the Holy Spirit takes time. Thus, the Synod exists to conserve the orthodox faith in the face of new challenges, and to promote pastoral initiatives of orthopraxis that correspond to the orthodoxy of the faith we have received.

A Pastoral Perspective –Michael Sweeney, OP

The *sine qua non* for effective pastoral intervention must be a profound grasp of the revelation expressed through a theological understanding that is adequate to practical applications. In this regard I must express disappointment with the *relatio*:

There is an assumption, apparent throughout, that the couples and families whose situations the Synod addresses are regarded as passive recipients of the Church's (that is, of the hierarchy's) ministry. We are told that the Church must be solicitous for the sake of couples who are in "irregular" situations with respect to their marriages or for families that are struggling amidst social and financial difficulties; that they are to be welcomed and that a place must be made for them. But we welcome and make a place for strangers, not for co-workers in the Lord's vineyard; that we are, together with them in Baptism, members of the Body of Christ, bearing common responsibility for the Church's mission is too little appreciated. This assumption would result, in my judgment, in a quite different approach to understanding their situations.

There is a concession made to the fact that we lack a language with which to express the goods of marriage and family: "Today more than ever, transmitting the faith requires a language which is able to reach everyone, especially young people, so as to communicate the beauty of love and the family...."

Relying here upon an insight of St. Thomas we should point out that if something cannot be adequately communicated, then neither has it been adequately understood. How, then, can we develop a "language which is able to reach everyone"?

For a start, we must develop greater confidence in the insights that we already possess. For example, some of those commenting the Synod appeared to confuse discipline and doctrine, assuming that to change the discipline of the Church is necessarily to compromise her doctrine. It seems to me that quite the reverse is true: a deeper understanding, a greater confidence in and a more faithful application of the Church's doctrine is precisely the grounds for a possibility to change, in some instances, the Church's discipline.

A second requirement for "a language which is able to reach everyone" is to reflect upon the whole of the tradition. the *relatio* considers only the post-conciliar magisterium.

Third, we must depend upon the witness of those who are married and, for that matter, of those who have unsuccessfully sought marriage, in order to draw directly upon their experience. It is certainly insufficient to articulate norms and then to fuss over the fact that they are violated or ignored on the part of our culture or even to show the dire consequences of violating or ignoring them.

Finally, we must probe much more seriously the relationship that pertains between marriage and family. So, for example, the family which is, according to St. John Paul, a communion of persons, is founded upon the marriage covenant which, again according to St. John Paul, is itself a "communion of persons". But here more work is to be done for, while it is clear that the family is dependent upon the marriage of the spouses, it is also clear --if we are to remain faithful to our tradition-- that marriage is ordered to the family in such a way that it can be neither understood nor adequately appreciated apart from the family.

Philosophical Considerations – Anselm Ramelow, OP

Subtracting an atom from a mere agglomerate of atoms would not change *what* the agglomerate is, but only *how many*. In a molecule, on the other hand, one cannot subtract an element without changing the *identity* of the molecule. Likewise, marriages and families are changed by the subtraction of a member; they cohere by complementarity and by relationships that are constitutive of their identity.

John and Sally’s union in marriage would not be what it is without reference to their offspring, whether potential or actual. Just as we do not understand what an acorn is without reference to the oak tree, so we will not understand the nature of the union of husband and wife without what it is meant to do, without the *telos* into which it is to unfold. . . . Bonding and babies go together: the one-flesh-union that cannot be had literally for the married couple alone, comes about in the offspring. . . . Children in turn need to know their parents for the sake of their own identity; they need to know them as the union that their own genetic material embodies.

Thus, children are stakeholders in the union of their parents and need to be able to trust the marriage vows, i.e., the promise of their parents. Friedrich Nietzsche calls the human person “the animal that can make promises.” In some way, the human person himself is a promise by being that being which can make a promise. Someone who is not reliable in his promises is not reliable as a person. The contemporary crisis of promising is the crisis of our identity as persons (R. Spaemann). Marriage might be a paradigm case, because in marriage we promise not *something*, but *ourselves* and thereby gain a new identity – an identity that is inseparable from the person with whom we have merged our biography and begun a family.

The Family, the Synod, and the Social Teaching of the Church Russell Hittinger

Catholic Social Doctrine speaks of three societies “necessary” for human flourishing. Pius XI states: “Now there are three necessary societies, distinct from one another and yet harmoniously combined by God, into which man is born: two, namely the family and civil society, belong to the natural order; the third, the Church, to the supernatural order.” Leo XIII put marriage first because, while people not “born into” marriage, matrimony is the “principle and foundation” of domestic society. To paraphrase and revise the Aristotelian dictum, the human person is a matrimonial-familial animal, a political animal, and an ecclesial animal. (Pius XI *Casti Connubii* (31 Dec. 1930), §11; Leo XIII *Arcanum Divinae* (10 Feb. 1880), §4).

During the centuries following the Council of Trent (1563), magisterial teachings on matrimony were quite clear and rather well developed in comparison to teachings on the family. This makes sense, among other reasons, because the theological disputes of the Reformation era concerned the sacramental status of matrimony. That children and family are a blessing of marriage was not a church-dividing issue. But the magisterium was not completely silent. It emphasized, for example, that for Christians the sacrament of marriage commissions the parents to participate in the religious education of their children. “By the command of Christ, [they look] not only to the propagation of the human race, but to the bringing forth of children for the Church, fellow citizens with the saints,

and the domestics of God.” (Leo XIII, Arcanum §10). The family is a primary site of Christian formation, and therefore it is a kind of domestic church. As Pius XI made bold to say: “the family is more sacred than the State and that men are begotten not for the earth and for time, but for Heaven and eternity.” (Casti, §69).

In the early twentieth century, this teaching was deepened and made more urgent because of what was called “the school question.” In the face first of nationalism, and then in response to emerging totalitarian regimes, the magisterium defended the rights of parents to be the first educators of their children. Leo XIII approved the decrees of the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore (1884) which launched the largest parochial school system in the history of the Catholic Church.

Although seeds were sown for the doctrine of the family as an *ecclesiola* (little church), its theological development during fell well short of the work of the Second Vatican Council and the magisterial documents of John Paul II – *Familiaris Consortio* (1991) and *Gratissimum Sane* (1994). After two synods devoted to the family (1980, 2014-15) theology of the family has become a major concern of Catholic theology. Even so, given the fact that the revised Code of Canon Law (1983) mentions “*familia*” in the substantive only three times, much work is still be done on the ecclesiastical status of the family.

The Family in US Law – Patrick Brennan

The family isn't what it used to be, and it never was. To these two observations the family as shaped by the laws of the United States is no exception. As Bernard Lonergan observed: "The family, the state, the law, the economy, are not fixed and immutable entities. They adapt to changing circumstance; they can be reconceived in the light of new ideas; they can be subjected to revolutionary change."

The current crest of the revolution in U.S. law concerning the family was marked by the U.S. Supreme Court in *Obergefell v. Hodges* (2015), the case declaring a right to same-sex marriage. The late Justice Antonin Scalia dissented from the Court's declaration of such a right, but an index of what is wrong with U.S. law as it concerns the family is this from Justice Scalia's dissent: "The substance of today's decree is not of great importance to me. The law can recognize as marriage whatever sexual attachments and living arrangements it wishes" Even tradition-minded, devout Catholics, then, are sometimes inclined to imagine that law is whatever "the people" declare in a procedurally regular manner, as Justice Scalia demonstrated in *Obergefell*: "[I]t is not of special importance to me what the law says about marriage. It is of overwhelming importance, however, who it is that rules me. Today's decree says that my Ruler [sic], and the Ruler [sic] of 320 million Americans coast-to-coast, is a majority of the nine lawyers of the Supreme Court." The trouble with Justice Scalia's theory of "law" is that it vetoes, if that were possible, in the name of democratic rule the public bindingness of the true Ruler's true law.

The U.S. Constitution will block an appropriately adaptive yet true law of the family until said Constitution no longer makes its Godless self "the supreme Law of the Land" (U.S. Const., Art. VI, Cl. 2). The reasoning of *Obergefell* paves the way to legal recognition of polyamory.

The Family in US and California Public Policy – Ned Dolejsi

But what's this all got to do with Family and Public Policy? My contention is that family is the instrument of evangelization in the present cultural moment. The nature and reality of family responsibly and effectively proclaimed in the public order and family as a larger metaphor for who we are individually and collectively presented in language in our public life can both gradually transform our public life and speak to the isolation and yearning for meaning so prevalent in ourselves, particularly our young.

In the political arena we now need to shift to a more positive agenda that focuses on statutory and tax policy, regulation and budget action that stabilizes families, however constituted, economically and socially. We must encourage marriage, relational stability, with a primary emphasis on children and their well-being. We must articulate the responsible exercise of parental rights, gently but firmly asking for society to reflect the "in loco parentis" relationship between parents and government.

Without wagging fingers, we should espouse public responses to those children who are and have been damaged by the choices of others - foster children, homeless children, child criminals, children seeking their parents. We must speak out loudly with compassion and programmatic witness. The family must become "the subject of our evangelization" in the culture. While pastorally and catechetically families and children are the object of our efforts, families and children can become the subject of our evangelization efforts in the culture, specifically in the political world. By inviting elected leaders at all levels and our citizen neighbors to see ourselves and the good society through the eyes of individuals, especially children as loved, cared for and flourishing.

The Family in the USA: A Socio-Economic Description – Nicholas Wolfinger

There is a profound marriage gap in America. Among adults aged 18-45, 30 percent of those without four-year college degrees are currently married, compared to 59 percent for those who've completed college. Yet the overwhelming majority of people desire marriage, at least 80 percent will probably marry in their lifetimes. But they'll spend far less of their lives married compared to Americans in previous years.

Forty percent of children are now born out of wedlock. This explains why single mothers are five times as likely to be poor compared to married mothers, a figure that's stood for 35 years or more. This is surprising given women's dramatic gains in the workplace. But 35 years ago most single mothers were divorce women. Divorced women demographically resemble married mothers fairly closely (minus a husband's income). Women who give birth out of wedlock are completely different. They work less, make less money when they do work, have less education, and face innumerable other challenges. They're far more likely to have been poor before they give birth out of wedlock, and often grew up in non-intact families themselves.

Religion produces many positive family outcomes. Regular churchgoers are less likely to give birth out of wedlock, more likely to get married, have happier relationships whether or not they're married, and divorce less. This is the focus of my recent book *Soul Mates* (visit www.soulmates-thebook.com for more information).

The Family and Children's Literature – *Velma Richmond*

Failure to read children's literature is not a typical explanation for today's decline of the family and corollary economic, social, and religious ills. Yet pedagogical studies show that the child read to at home has significantly greater likelihood of succeeding in school, and thus in life, not least in creating a family. The reasons are obvious: greater verbal knowledge, exposure to a range of experiences in stories from different cultures, skill in listening and interacting with others, and development of capacities to be quiet and thoughtful without depending on a barrage of noise, moving pictures, and punching letters. There is also evidence that early delight in reading is essential to future efforts and acquisition of deeper understanding. However, "The Children's Hour" celebrated by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow has become all too rare. Earlier generations retold great medieval literature—knights, ladies, dragons, giants, quests and religious belief—viewed as most suitable—stories for children from the childhood of the nations.

A prime example is Chaucer, whose *Canterbury Tales* refashioned the best narratives available, imagined a group to tell and to listen, and created pilgrims from every estate who journeyed to the shrine of St. Thomas Becket during their "pilgrimage of life." *The Man of Law's Tale*, one of three romances favored for children, records family experience, betrayal and hardship, yet perseverance that leads to a happy ending. It also records the spread of Christianity from Rome to the East and to England. Chaucer teaches and pleases.

J. R. R. Tolkien's "On Fairy Stories" identified the distinction of fantasy / romance as the "Consolation of the Happy Ending," the '*encatastrophe*, a denial of universal final defeat, *evangelium*, a sudden glimpse of Joy beyond the world.' An answer to the great question asked by children, "Is it true?" Reading can be for today's families the Holy Grail.

The Family in Popular Culture – *Ron Austin*

First, the mass media was not wholly responsible for the decline of the American family in the 20th century but was a major contributing factor.

Second, the media damage to the concept of the family and 'family values' came primarily from the media industry's desire to capture a 'youth market' based on an inherently antinomian adolescent psychology that rejected adult authority.

Third, this destructive impulse was inherent in the growth of modernism with its emphasis on individualism and the goal of a virtually autonomous freedom.

The Family and Urban Design – *Philip Bess*

The basic proposition --paraphrased from Aristotle's *Politics*-- is this: *Human beings need families in order to live, but we need cities in order to live well.* Each --Family and City-- is fundamental, and each is unique.

To employ architectural metaphors: The Family is the foundation of human flourishing, The City its pinnacle; *and in something like that order*, because both in life and in building we start from the ground up. The Family begets, bears, and succors human life. The City exists to promote the *best* human life, which has substantive content: a life of moral and intellectual virtue lived in community with others. Both families and cities are singularly important *examples* of such communities, the former our first school of virtue, the latter a community of communities that requires an increasingly demanding extension and perfection of virtues learned initially in the Family. Moreover, the Family and the City exist in reciprocal relationship. Families better flourish in good cities; and a good city over time depends upon its ability to enable and sustain good families. It is true in a (comparatively) trivial sense that, from a sociological and positive law point of view, the Family (and its corollary, marriage) is a social construct. But it is true in a much deeper ontological and existential sense that *society* is a marital-and-Family construct.

Because we are embodied beings, our lives *take place*: better or worse lives, in better or worse places. *Urban design* entails proposals for the physical form of human places at the scale of Hamlets, Villages, Towns, and City Neighborhoods; and *urban planning* is systematic thinking about water, energy, transportation, and land use policies as these facilitate good human settlements. Physically, good urbanism entails networks of blocks, streets, and squares characterized by a hierarchy of spaces and buildings, and a mix of uses within pedestrian proximity -- characteristics of historic urban settlements large and small, from big cities to rural villages. These more-to-less dense traditional settlement patterns are physical manifestations of good stewardship --- practical, beautiful, and socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable; and in each of these ways contrast with post-1950 automobile sprawl patterns of development.

What is the relationship between good and bad urban design and good and bad families? Whatever it is, it is *not* that present-day town-and-city dwellers are thereby morally superior to suburbanites. Nevertheless, many of us harbor an intuition that there is some relationship between good places and good families, between good urban design and good character; though the precise relationship is not quantitative, and often eludes us. Modernist architects implied a kind of environmental determinism: that good architecture and urbanism will make people good, and bad architecture and urbanism will make people bad. (Present-day neo-traditional architects and New Urbanists sometimes seem to make the same argument.) But this is completely wrong; and the language of determinism in considering families and cities is false. Perhaps a better way to understand the effects of good and bad design is suggested by the subtle realism of the old Catholic moral admonition that we should consciously seek to avoid “proximate occasions of sin” – because this instantly raises the possibility of “proximate occasions of grace.” So here I suggest that *good urban design* can be a proximate occasion of grace for families, primarily through the classical architectural virtues of durability, convenience, and above all beauty (and the latter’s sacramental and epiphanic implications). Good urban design is important for families not because good or bad urban design can *cause* families to be good or bad; rather that good urban design can *help* families be better, and bad urban design can *hinder and impede* families from being better. And respecting their reciprocity, it must be said too that good cities are as much the product of virtuous citizens as virtuous citizens are the product of good cities.

The Family in the USA: CST and Business – Michael Naughton

Integral Ecology and Business and the Role of the Family

Introduction: I was asked to address the role of business and its impact on the family within the Catholic social Tradition (CST). I draw upon Francis' term in *Laudato Si*, an "Integral Ecology." This term is related to what CST calls "Integral Human Development" as well as Human Ecology. An Integral Ecology can help us to achieve one of the goals of this seminar namely to "more deeply understand the Church's teaching on the family . . . with an aim to discern how to creatively and faithfully apply it in our culture today." My points are the following.

Challenge: There are lots of ways to describe the challenge of an integral ecology that we face in relation to business, but one of the principal challenges within modern culture is the "thinning out" of institutions, reducing them from a vibrant set of integrated goods to one flat good—universities to career credentialing, religion to emotive experience, marriage to a legal contract between autonomous individuals, and business to shareholder wealth maximization. This reductionism deprives institutions of a transcendent breathing space resulting in a moral and spiritual desert, where all motives are self-interested, all knowledge is empirical and all rationality is instrumental. It is precisely the "goods" of the institution that help us to see how each institution is connected to other institutions and the larger environment.

Integral Ecology and Primary and Secondary Institutions: One way to view institutions is to see them in terms of a primary and secondary relationship. Primary Institutions, namely family and religion are primary in the sense that they have a "primacy" in the meaning of our lives. John Paul II, for example, states that "[t]he first and fundamental structure for 'human ecology' is the family" in which people receive their first formative ideas about truth and goodness, and learns what it means to love and to be loved, and thus what it actually means to be a person." As the first vital cell of society of which economic and politic institutions should be embedded in, the family is the "sanctuary of life," a sacred place, "the heart of the culture of life." The family by itself, however, is prone to tribalism and parochialism, severing itself from the larger good of society. The family needs a transcendent source to resist its tendency to self-absorption and to connect it to the common good. That source is religion and in particular the Church. As the final document of the Ordinary Synod put it, "the Church is good for the family, [and] the family is good for the Church." Mary Eberstadt explains that both "[f]amily and faith are the invisible double helix of society—two spirals that when linked to one another can effectively reproduce but whose strength and momentum depend on one another." The health of one strengthens the other, but the decline of one powers the decline of the other.

Primary Institutions Informing Business: With family and faith as the DNA of the culture, they do two very important things to orient business towards the common good. First, faith and family institutions limit economic activity so that there is natural space for people to foster right relationships with one another and God. Josef Pieper calls this the process of proletarianization. We must "enlarge and widen our scope beyond work." Judaism does this through the Sabbath and Christianity through the Lord's Day. This limit of production and consumption provided by the Sabbath and the Lord's Day gives space for human and religious identity beyond our view as just workers, consumers or citizens or any other identity claim that turns a doing or having into a being. Second, family and faith order economic activity and remind business of its purpose by connecting production and consumption to the common good and its participants to their particular vocations. Pieper explains that deproletarianization not only goes beyond work, but it also widens the notion of work by that which it goes beyond. This widen notion of work informs business to a rich set of

goods that the Vocation of the Business Leader describes as good goods, good work and good wealth. In my presentation I focus on “good wealth” in relation to business and family.

Good Wealth and the Role of the Family: Good Wealth in relation to business is understood in terms of the relationship of creation and distribution wealth (one needs the other) where both enhances an integral ecology and is dependent upon it. There is a complex set of variables need for good wealth to flourish such as strong political stability within a society and a vibrant entrepreneurial environment of innovation and creativity. But what is also needed is the social capital of families to produce such qualities. If the family is the “first and fundamental structure for ‘human ecology’” it makes sense that family structure will have a significant impact on economic concerns. As recent scholars have noted, family structure is too often ignored or discounted when speaking about the economic health of society and in particular business. Besides nature itself, the deepest and most sustainable wealth of a country, which is the insight of a human ecology, comes from the family and its relation to faith. For example, in relation to the creation of wealth, new jobs are not coming from well establish companies but from entrepreneurial (and family business) start-ups. New businesses need entrepreneurs who are willing to take risks, who have access to credit, a reasonable regulatory environment, etc. A healthy human ecology with intact marriages simply have greater capacity to breed such entrepreneurial confidence by teaching virtues of justice and courage as well as diligence and industriousness that those broken or non-existent marriages. In terms of the distribution of wealth probably the number one supporting action for business is to pay a just wage. If families cannot live on the wage given to them and need to get two or three jobs to make ends meet, human ecology will be significantly damaged. Josef Pieper stated in 1947, a living wage is the first defense against proletarianization (worker only) which does serious damage to a human ecology.

Conclusion: This integral ecology will not be easy to implement, although opportunities are all around us. On the one hand, we live increasingly in a technocratic culture, which disconnects us from nature and from the family and supplants human virtuous action with technique. We are prone to underestimate the impact we have on both the natural and human environment believing that somehow we can manage through technology—deniers of the environmental crisis are similar to the deniers of the family crisis in this regard. They both tend to ignore relationships, either because they don’t want to see them or because their own specializations or confidence in technology prevent them from seeing things in relation to each other. On the other hand, the seeds of renewal are found in the most unexpected places, which today look small but may flourish in the future. This flourishing will depend upon renewal of institutions, both Primary and Secondary Institutions. The Church plays a role in the pre-marriage formation but also the on-going formation of marriage and family. This formation is seen in the work of the Economy of Communion (Focolare) as well as through the important role family businesses and entrepreneurial start-ups can play.