

Count your blessings! give thanks to God - and He adds more

EVERY Catholic Home is a domestic Church aimed at peopling Heaven with saints. It is:-

- **"a house of religious formation"**
- akin to a **seminary**
- like a **novitiate**
- and an informal **Marriage Preparation Course**.

OPTIMISM

If your home is imperfect, you can still count your blessings. It is doubtful if the perfect home exists — anymore than the perfect marriage or the perfect child.

Long ago, and only after long experience, some social workers came to the conclusion that even the best institution was not as good as the worst home!

A constructive approach is the AA Prayer: -

Lord, may I accept the things I cannot change,
have the courage to change the things I can,
and Thy wisdom to know the difference.

In brief, think AAA:-

- ACCEPT
- ADJUST
- ACHIEVE

And at least aim for little improvements, bit by bit.

God gives prizes for His most improved pupils!

HOUSE OF RELIGIOUS FORMATION

Through their own covenant of Matrimony, Catholic parents tutor their children to honour them (*Handouts* = HO, n. 65) and to **covenant living**:-

- in the **devout life** (i.e. spiritual life plus good works)
- for a life of **praying** and receiving Sacraments
- for **religious duties** — a Catholic privilege
- for growth in **virtues** and fighting the Devil
- for the **lay apostolate in family, work and society**.

THE COMMON PRIESTHOOD of the laity

Catholic parents have Divine help to prepare their children for "the common priesthood of the laity".

The laity are not priests. The ordained priests activate the common priesthood of the laity. Thus the motif of the original liturgical movement in the 1920s was: "Pray, brethren, that **my sacrifice and yours...**"

Though they differ essentially and not only in degree, **the common priesthood of the faithful** and the ministerial or hierarchical priesthood are none the less ordered one to another; each in its own proper way shares in the one priesthood of Christ. The ministerial priest, by the sacred power that he has, forms and rules the priestly people; in the person of Christ he effects the eucharistic sacrifice and offers it to God in the name of all the people. The faithful indeed, by virtue of their royal priesthood, **participate in the offering** of the Eucharist. They exercise that priesthood, too, by the reception of the sacraments, prayer and thanksgiving, the witness of a holy life, abnegation and active charity.

Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium* §10

INFORMAL MARRIAGE PREPARATION

The Catholic home should give children a non-formalized preparation for God's call to Christianity, and particularly to a state in life, whether marriage, priesthood, nuns or brothers, or the single life.

More particularly, it prepares them for growing up, **doing duties cheerfully, being glad of their sex and respecting the opposite sex, developing their talents** for work, and to grow in the virtues especially needed for husbands and fathers, or wives and mothers, and **avoiding the predominant vices** of their sex.

Ennobling qualities are needed for all states of life, e.g. **refinement** of manners and **sensitivity** for others.

The usual lay vocation is marriage:-

What is the ideal preparation for Christian marriage?

The ideal preparation for Christian marriage is growth to Catholic manhood or womanhood in a Catholic family, praying regularly and going to the Sacraments, and striving to live unselfishly.

Catholic Family Catechism Apostles' Edition 356;
cf. 1 Timothy 5:13-14; 1 John 2:13-17

APOLOGETICS justifying large families

Catholics with large families need a ready answer to the **Zero Population Growth contraceptionists**. For instance, large families often provide celibates and virgins whose **spiritual fatherhood and motherhood** is of great benefit to the Church and the world. They also provide more tax-payers that the ZPGs will need when a future Government idolizing Moloch and mammon decides to 'put them down' like old dogs.

Archbishop Vaughan of Sydney, an English Benedictine (like Polding; and earlier, Ullathorne, who was never a bishop in Australia), was one of thirteen children: three boys got married, three girls became nuns, another seven boys became priests, and our Archbishop Vaughan's younger brother became Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster, while another was a famous Jesuit preacher.

In the wondrous scheme of God's Church, priests, Religious and married people make a great team. Usually it is somewhat flawed, just as were the homes from which they came. cf. HO n. 58 "**Shonky**".

A Catholic home is LIKE A SEMINARY

A seminary is a house of formation preparing young men and older men for the ordained priesthood.

The Catholic family is of vital importance (1) in fostering vocations; (2) in giving initial formation; and (3) of encouraging them to persevere after ordination:-

It is the duty of the Christian community to foster vocations so that the needs of the sacred ministry are sufficiently met in the entire Church. In particular, this duty binds Christian families, educators and, in a special way, priests...

A Catholic home is LIKE A NOVITIATE

A novitiate is house of formation to prepare postulants and novices for living the Religious Life in a community through the three vows of **chastity**, **poverty** and **obedience**.

These evangelical counsels, with adaptations, apply to all the faithful, especially in homes and marriages.

NOBLE AIMS

What if these are not lived up to? Judging by Our Lord's precepts and parables, He foresaw our frailties.

Husbands

- Christlike, sacrificial, non self-serving headship
- welcoming the responsibility of leadership and duties
- especially for the sake of wife and children
- gladly upholding masculinity in speech, dress, deed
- and known for making the more noble choices.

Wives

- daughters of Mary, not self-serving, obedient
- forming husbands & sons in refinement & sensitivity
- subtly encouraging lax husbands to their duties
- gladly expressing femininity in speech, dress, deed
- and known for making the more noble choices.

COUNTER-CULTURAL

Catholic homes are counter-cultural since they **truth, beauty, goodness and God**, and do so in thought, speech, deed, manners, books and **good example**.

They welcome God-given sexuality (CCC 2333) and uphold the complementarity of bread-winner/home-maker as implied in Christian Education §8 (mid-3rd para); and they resist Satan and original sin with mortification and asceticism.

YES, THE OLD PROBLEMS are still with us

- Mixed marriage with a Protestant Christian, etc.
- predominate faults of each sex: selfish? catty?
- tongue & temper, "the vice of the virtuous" (HO 28);
- human respect, hence the cowardice of inaction;
- adultery, which begins with alienated affections;
- impatience with imperfect people;
- impatience with the impatience of others.

Note: The Apostles were slow to accept Christ's orders to go to the non-Jews, pagans, Gentiles. And it took centuries to see that slavery was intrinsically wrong, though St Paul insisted on a new attitude (cf. Moses re the slaves of the Hebrews, unlike the pagan treatment).

There might be a lesson in this for patience with children, adolescents and less spiritual adults.

PLUS NEW PROBLEMS stirred up by Satan

- **Relativism** is a philosophy basic to the Modernism in faith and morals: Pope St Pius X condemned it in 1907. In 1931, Pope Pius XI condemned it in the "social, moral and juridical order". Today's political-correctness has a similar relativistic **rubberiness**: Cardinal Ratzinger was denouncing it long before he became Pope Benedict XVI in 2005.
- **Feminism** rejects the complementarity of the sexes, the husband as bread-winner & wife as home-maker. It cries, "**Unisex!** the sexes are interchangeable!

Deluded clerics and politicians uphold it.

Feminists have little interest and less time for bearing children, bringing them up, and enduring the practical difficulties of being married — hence declining populations, more delinquency, and the word "mother" made taboo (cf. Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*).

Many children are no longer "home-made" (HO 28).

Feminists make a grievance of "man/men/he/him/his: all are taboo." A riposte: "But male magnanimity always shares words with the female! She gets 'her words' all to herself. This is dismissed as male chauvinism; likewise chivalry is an insult!

- Beware of the new form of home-invasion: **bad company** and pornography lurk on the internet, and **bombed out youngsters** with weak concentration are casualties of hypnotic flickering images and blitzkrieg noise of the electronic wonderland.
- **Mumblers at Mass** need others to lead responses.
- Failure to obey instantly also suffers. Without it, obedience is an isolated good deed, not a virtue.

GOOD RESOLUTIONS

Piety

- consider making a Map or **Rule of Life** (cf. de pp 5-7);
- **bedside prayers**, said kneeling;
- **family prayers**, especially the Rosary;
- **weekday Mass**, but not at expense of duties;
- communal **Friday penance** e.g. meatless meals;
- Saturday **confession**, at least monthly.

Study time — at least several times weekly

- home-prep first Penance & Eucharist, Confirmation;
- catechisms (CFC DE, CFC AE, CCCC, CCC);
- theology, philosophy, scripture, history, literature;
- apologetics and psychology of conviction/conversion.

Family practices

- advantages of grandparents and extended family;
- family jobs: "all for one, one for all!"
- early to bed, early to rise: no sloth! conquer self!
- works of community service outside the home;
- making visitors really welcome; reciprocal visits;
- reading at some meals (fiction included);
- board games, ball games, across age-gaps;
- more freedom matching more responsibilities;
- insistence, backed by persuasive measures...

EXHORTATION

We beseech you, brethren, rebuke the unquiet, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient towards all men.

See that none render evil for evil to anyone, but always follow that which is good towards each other and towards all men [...]

But praise all things: hold that which is good.

From all appearance of evil, refrain yourselves.

1 Thessalonians 5:14-15,21-22.

YOU ARE BLESSED if you are in...

...a tough Profession starting with **P**. They involve dealing with People, and People are the Problem! and need much **Patience** and **Prudence**:- **Parents**, **Priests**, **Prelates** (being a bishop's harder!), **Pedagogues** (P-word for teachers), **Policemen**, **Politicians**, **Publicans**, **Public Servants**, **Physicians** (sorry; it doesn't *sound* like P, but doctors have it tough too) ...