

# THE FILIPINO FAMILY IN THE FORMATION OF VALUES IN THE LIGHT OF JOHN PAUL II'S *FAMILIARIS CONSORTIO*

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*Through time, Filipinos highly value their own respective families. A sense of pride is instilled in them each time they talk about their own families. Filipino family values of close family ties, solidarity, religiosity, respect, and affection for the aged have always been the reasons why the Filipino family is considered exemplary. However, today, modernization has impacted the way people perceive their own families. The different effects which modernization has engendered shaped the minds of different individuals. Due to these effects, society has been affected, involving the family, which is the basic unit of society. Some of the effects of modernization on the family are the increasing number of cases of broken families, cases of divorce, annulment, and the improper formation of children. This paper aims to look at this situation of the Filipino family in the light of John Paul II's *Familiaris Consortio*.*

*Moreover, the paper aims to provide a perspective on how one must look into the family in order to preserve its sanctity. It promotes the importance of the family in the formation of an individual to become morally upright citizens. The issues that modernization engendered will be dealt with using the concepts found in the *Familiaris Consortio*.*

## INTRODUCTION

Love and solace - these two emotions, oftentimes, are experienced each time one goes to one's respective home. These two are very evident in the family because one feels connected to their own family members - a connection that engenders tender love and genuine solace. One's parents and siblings always have a special place in one's heart no matter how far or near their distance is from each other. Thus, the family has always been essential, if not all, to almost everyone. With this, somehow, belonging to a family instilled a sense of pride in family members because of the love and solace they experienced.

In the Philippines, the family has been regarded highly because of values that made it exceptional. Filipinos give importance to the family because its sanctity is enriched by tradition and history, which contributed to how Filipinos value family today. Mulder (1997, 21) states, "it is as if to be a member of a family is a Filipino's

most striking quality.” However, the Filipino family is not safe from social challenges brought about by changing times. These social challenges can be rooted in the effects of modernization such as poverty, anthropocentrism, and different factors for the change of lifestyle, which contributed to the engendering of some issues - divorce, adultery, child abuse, and child labor can be seen in today. David (2014) writes, “Almost all the threats that Filipino children confront in our society—corporal punishment, verbal abuse, child labor, child trafficking, sexual abuse, child soldiering, recruitment into criminal syndicates, etc.—are rooted in the poverty and degradation to which at least half of our people have been consigned.” These issues urge one to be aware of the family’s importance.

Hence, it is important to emphasize the role of parents in the survival of the family’s sanctity. For this reason, parents are asked to be responsible and exemplary to their children. However, it is a sad reality that cases of adultery and infidelity in the Philippines are growing (See Gonzales, 2003). These cases are alarming because they can affect child formation. These issues brought by modernization are to be tackled in the light of Pope John Paul II’s *Familiaris Consortio*. This paper looks at the current situation of the Filipino family and highlights its importance in forming the values of an individual and in preserving society.

## TRADITIONAL FILIPINO FAMILY VALUES

Filipinos feel special when they know that they are a member of a family. Mulder (1997, 37) states, “Before anything else, the family commands the Filipino’s loyalty and is considered to be the wellspring of a meaningful existence, identity, and fulfillment. Sanctified by religious representations and ritual, the household-centered, often multigenerational, nuclear family is inviolable and relatively autonomous”. One’s experiences in the family provide a deep connection because family members build a bond that has a significant effect on family members. This bond establishes the Filipino family values of close family ties and solidarity. Dy (2003, 68) explicated that these values are rooted in the Asian characteristic of Filipinos, which value interdependence and harmony, which contribute to their sense of solidarity. These ideas presuppose that close family ties and solidarity make the family a deeply-felt relationship. Mulder (1997, 103) adds that Filipinos are ready to ‘move mountains’ because of their closeness and love for their families.

Also, Nolledo (1988, 114) explicates that “the close family ties that bind the people and adherence by many Filipinos to Christian tenets justify the above constitutional and statutory rules.” This explanation justifies that the Filipino family Filipino’s religiosity contributed to how they value the sanctity of family life. Mulder (1997, 28) describes this predominant religious mentality “as a positive mentality guiding family life. . .Religion idealizes, legitimizes, and sanctifies familial relationships. Its symbols strengthen and express the private and morally binding realm of life.” This way of life of the Filipino family is influenced by their faith in the Holy Family – Joseph, Mary, and Jesus – because their positive aspects such as intimacy, trust, protection, and consolation gave Filipinos an exemplary image for family life (Mulder 1997, 27). Indeed, religiosity plays a significant role in the Filipino family. Apart from

this, Filipinos highly respect the authority accorded to the elders. Dy (2003, 70) explains that the respect the younger generation gives to the elders represents the wisdom of experiences and the indebtedness of life they owe to them. To show love and respect, Filipinos make gestures such as *pagmamano* and saying *po* and *opo*. For this reason, Dy (2003, 71) elaborates that Asians, and Filipinos, tend to their elders because it is an expression of their personal care and affection for the aged that they have a sense of family responsibility.

### Parental Roles

Marriage, as the foundation of the family, establishes conjugal and family life. Abundo (2015) states, “a sacred marriage is a covenant between two who love each other in God and with God, whose joining becomes an expression of the desire of each to love and serve God together.” Before discussing marriage, traditionally, before marriage, the suitor usually does *harana*, *paninilbihan*, and *pamamanhikan*. Medina (2001, 80) explains, “This was to prove to the girl and her family his perseverance and noble intentions. In a way, it was not just the girl he was wooing but her entire family.” The suitor does these Filipino courtship traditions to show if he is ready to work for his beloved. These traditions test his dedication to his lady and a way to convince the parents of the lady to affirm their relationship.

After courtship, the couple can decide to be married if they genuinely love each other. Tagle (1981, 31) explicates that a Filipino wedding does not only unite the husband and wife, but it unites their families. This tradition shows their high regard for family and signifies the approval of both sides. Married couples are challenged to be more committed to their obligations since there is public affirmation between families. This perspective prompts Filipinos to spend money and time on wedding preparations. They view it as a moment where their family will be extended. With this, Filipinos value fidelity among couples and maintain the sacredness of marriage. Tagle (1981, 31) explains, “When a man and a woman marry, they offer each other their “total selves.” These “selves” are, of course, greatly influenced by the personal histories they lived out in their respective families. It can, therefore, be said that two families still “unite” through the couple who vow to love each other for better or for worse.”

The married couples who carry their family histories are expected to be loyal to each other. They are expected that when they make their vows, they are ready to live a life together until death do, they part. Also, because of the significant influence of Catholicism, couples are asked to be faithful like God, who is faithful to the people He made a promise with. In Filipino, faithfulness is translated as *tapat*. Gonzales (2003) discusses that the concept of *tapat* “. . . implies being truthful, willing to do what is good for the other, loving responsibly in small, specific steps, and committing oneself from now on.” Being *tapat* in a relationship not only entails not having a concubine or not committing adultery, but it gives the whole self to the better half. The commitment of the couple means that they need to be honest and true to each other. This prevailing importance of fidelity in a relationship is something that is to be nurtured and sustained.

Moreover, Filipinos are trying their best to fulfill their duties as partners to preserve the sanctity of marriage. Medina (2001, 140) describes the traditional roles of the couple by following the usual gender roles wherein the wife does the domestic

duties at home while the husband is responsible for supporting the family. These traditional roles contribute to their spousal relationship because as long as they stay loyal to their roles, they fulfill the needs of their families. These roles have defined Filipino traditional spousal relationships.

### Perception of Children

Filipinos' religiosity viewed the child as God's gift. Mulder (1997, 21) states, "Children are generally seen as God's blessing and the inspiration of life; an enormous amount of emotion is invested in them. Parents tend to identify with the success and failures of their children, a child becoming their substitute self. No wonder that they may think that they know their child inside out, that it has no secrets to them." This belief makes them special. With this, parents tend to "own" their children and look at them as themselves. David (2014) writes, "In traditional society, the status of the child is determined by the social position of the family from which she is sprung. Indeed, parents "own" their children, a fact that proceeds from the family's basic role as an economic unit."

Indeed, children are regarded as parents' properties, but they mean more than that. Mercado (1979, 83) said that "children bind couples...couples without children easily break off." This is because, among cultural minorities, sterility is the ground for separation. Moreover, Filipinos consider children as economic investments. Mercado (1979, 83) writes, "Filipino parents feel that if one of their children will become successful in the future, then he will make up for the rest of the family." In the Filipino setting, children also help in household chores and running errands. Furthermore, several children give assurance for better assistance to parents when they get old and retire from work.

For Filipinos, a child is also a source of inspiration for parents to work and earn more financially and instills a duty to be moral exemplars so that they will form good citizens in the future. With the belief that children came out of love, it entails that parents must also promote love. A child's formation is essential in the Filipino family because they are God's blessing, a source of inspiration, and an asset. This is why the family's contribution is its holistic formation to the child. Medina (2001, 215) explicates that children are significant because they give structure to the family; this is the reason behind the Filipino term '*mag-anak*.'

In the traditional Filipino family, early Filipinos spend more time with their children so that they build a remarkable close relationship. This remarkable closeness makes it difficult for some parents to let go of their children. This explains why grandparents are commonly seen living with their children in the Philippines. Apart from this, children are known for their respect for elders. Medina (2001, 225) states that children are taught to say *po*, *opo*, and *pagmamano* to teach them as early as possible how to respect their elders properly.

Furthermore, Filipinos discipline their children. They do not tolerate children who fight back and disrespect elders. Even after finishing school, Filipino children are not obliged to get out of their homes unless they want to. In fact, some children stay with their parents before getting married. Usually, at least one child, depending on one's willingness and financial capabilities, stays even after marriage to look after their aging parents.

## SOCIAL CHALLENGES TO THE FILIPINO FAMILY

The changing times brought by modernization changed some of the norms, values, and beliefs that one has. It is inevitable not to have an encounter between traditional and modern Filipino values. One needs to realize that modernization is catching up with the Filipino family. Filipinos are faced with diverse facets of life that challenged them. Even though modernization has positive effects, it has some adverse effects. It increased the poverty rate, which led to the separation of labor from the family dwelling is a common trend to earn a living. The number of Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) increased. With this, some family members live far from one another. This situation is one of the consequences of modernity and poverty. In this regard, one can perceive the difference between the modern Filipino family from the traditional Filipino family. Dy (2003, 69) compares that unlike the traditional family where work and family life were intertwined, the modern family seeks work outside the home wherein even the wife pursues her career to provide for the family, which lessens family interaction.

This situation threatened the traditional Filipino family values of close family ties and solidarity. Dy (2003, 69) explains, “Modernization indeed broadens the human being’s consciousness and freedom of choice, but this increase of consciousness and liberty easily leads to licentious, giving rise to the phenomenon of divorces, pre-marital sex, single parenting, broken homes. The crisis in the modern family is primarily one of solidarity.” Having said this, one can see that the sanctity of the family is being desecrated because of the new outlook in life brought by the fast-paced world. Modernization’s influence made people anthropocentric and broadened the human being’s consciousness and freedom of choice. However, because modernization placed so much faith in the capability of the human being, it resulted in an incoherent world that manifested in some families. Dy (2003, 69) adds:

Modernization, however, introduces secularization in society. The Sacred that once was thought to explain everything unexplainable is now relegated to the background because science and technology can explain what once was thought to be the work of some mysterious power. With secularization, what is important is not the ultimate but the immediate, the instant, the consumable.

Because of the perks that science and technology provided, human beings tend to resort to what is faster to acquire. Before, Filipinos have deep religiosity because of the belief that God is the answer to every problem and endeavor they face. Their deep faith and relationship with God define Filipinos. However, modernization changed this perspective and presented a faster way of doing things that affected the religiosity of Filipinos. Cornelio (2014) said that the younger generation tends to not attending Church anymore and often have misconceptions of their faith, which questioned if Filipinos are losing faith. Filipinos’ character as religious people is now slowly fading (See Cornelio 2014).

Dy (2003, 70) claims that professionalization of education in the country affected

child-rearing. Parents no longer need to teach their children at home because of schools. Herewith, children already gain knowledge without consulting their parents. However, this resulted in some children having no respect for elders. Dy (2003, 70) adds, “The modern youth can now claim that he/she knows better than the parents. The modern youth are now more aware of their rights and can argue with their parents on what is due and what is best for them.” Because children already have knowledge without their parents’ teachings, they tend to look at themselves as higher than their parents.

Modernization raised the standard of living and provided the means to achieve new innovations. However, it widened the gap between the rich and the poor. The *Philippine Statistics Authority* (PSA) released a statistical report on the country’s official poverty rate for the full year of 2015. The PSA report showed a higher poverty incident rate than that of the other years (See Bersales 2016). Poverty drives many families to sacrifice togetherness to earn money. Dy (2003, 70) says that parents spend less time with their family to earn money while other children are forced to work at an early age. The consequences of poverty affected family members because of lessened interaction. The need to earn money has become their priority. Also, family responsibility towards elders is not anymore emphasized because some elders are now sent to geriatric institutions.

### **Challenge on Marriage**

In modern society, Filipinos seem to practice pre-wedding traditions and rituals less. Today, instead of the usual courtship in front of the presence of the woman’s relatives, courtship can be through different avenues. Personal interaction is not needed today due to technological advancements. Medina (2001, 82) writes that young people can now communicate through cellphones and the internet, which diminished the need to woo the girl personally and perform traditional rituals.

Since Filipinos view marriage as a union of families, fidelity is highly expected. However, today, marriage is being desecrated, which led to the slow degrading of the importance of marriage and the rise of cases of infidelity. Gonzales (2003) states, “A common concern emerging from family ministry in the Philippine setting is of a marriage affected by infidelity. Infidelity is the breaking of marital vows.” It is reported that many Filipinos nowadays support divorce in the country (See Taruc 2015). The legalization of divorce is being pushed and supported by many Filipinos because of factors such as infidelity and poverty. Gonzales (2003) writes that male infidelity is an issue in the country since these extramarital affairs are a primary reason for marital separation. Cases of adultery and infidelity in the Philippines are growing (See Gonzales 2003). Despite the statistical figures, records on marital break-ups with finality are not duly listed because of the absence of legal divorce in the Philippines. However, even though divorce is not legalized, infidelity and separation have become an issue.

Another factor cited by Gonzales (2003) on the Filipino male infidelity is the external environments one is in, namely: education, migration, and other challenges which are related to financial difficulties. One way to provide for the Filipino family’s material needs is for some Filipino wives with education and academic achievements to find jobs that deviate from their traditional household chores and nurturing roles as

a wife. Some parents work in the Philippines while others travel abroad to help provide for their families (See Gonzales 2003). These instances result in couples who do not live together due to the need to cope financially, almost result in problems between couples and relationships in the family.

Today, a man may marry and be a father of a family, but he may be incapable of assuming the full responsibilities of fatherhood and leadership in the family and be limited as a provider of material things and monetary allowances. Hence, the father in the family does not really enjoy the company of his family. For this reason, Gonzales (2003) writes in his report that some issues of infidelity are because husbands need pastimes because of the stresses that they get from work. This growing number of infidelities in the Philippines is just one of the adverse effects of modernization.

### **Child Abuse and Child Labor**

The modern child tends to put themselves at the center of everything, which results in some becoming too liberated or rebellious. However, another effect of modernization on children is that children are forced to work at an early age due to the increasing poverty rate. Medina (2001, 234) explicates that the increasing number of street children who work for their families affect their way of living because they were made vulnerable to the crimes that they might encounter in the streets. The cases of child labor not only result from poverty but also from unsuccessful marriages; it is still dependent on the parents on how they will survive and raise their children. Moreover, child abuse is seen in the country. Some child abuse cases are because of sexual abuse, and some are because of violence (See Yap 2016). David (2014) adds:

The modern family, in contrast, sheds off its economic function. And with the spread of public education, it also loses a good part of its educational function. The State assumes the formal obligation to protect and ensure the growth of every child, conferring upon them all those rights that are beautifully laid out in the modern document we call the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The growing number of child abuse should be given attention because the children are supposed to be formed well so that they would be good social beings. The abuses they received are not just physical but also sexual (See Yap 2016). Yap (2016) states that child sexual abuse involves “not only violent sexual assault but other sexual activities, including inappropriate touching, while child sexual exploitation involves some form of remuneration where the perpetrator benefits, according to the United Nations Refugee Agency.” David (2014) says:

Three to 6 million children are reported to be living apart from their OFW parents. Thousands of children are recruited as child soldiers by insurgent groups, or engaged as spies by the military. Every year, tens of thousands of children fall victim to sexual abuse, trafficking and drug abuse. Every renewal of armed conflict in Mindanao throws children out of their homes and into makeshift shanties in evacuation centers. Every

natural calamity victimizes children in numbing proportions.

These problems regarding child formation, child abuse, and child labor are the issues that the modern Filipino families need to face. These problems can also be traced due to solo parenthood. Medina (2001, 229) explicates that solo-parenthood has grown throughout the years, which gives burden to one parent to do both roles in the household while the other parent is working abroad for their families, which in time led to some cases of marital separation. These factors are vital on issues on child and parenting today. These are crucial contributing factors to the landscape of today's Filipino family.

### JOHN PAUL II'S *FAMILIARIS CONSORTIO*

The 1981 Apostolic Exhortation of John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio*, accentuated that the family must be safeguarded in the changing times. The vital role of the family is recognized because it serves a significant role in the fulfillment of the Christian faith. John Paul II explicates that the Church recognizes the contribution of the family in the development of society. With this, John Paul II (1981, 6) states:

On the one hand, in fact, there is a more lively awareness of personal freedom and greater attention to the quality of interpersonal relationships in marriage, to promoting the dignity of the women, to responsible procreation, to the education of children. There is also an awareness of the need for the development of interfamily relationships, for reciprocal spiritual and material assistance, the rediscovery of the ecclesial mission proper to the family, and its responsibility for the building of a more just society.

It is also important to recognize that the family is essential because it is the family that the person encounters first. With this, the formation of faith and character heavily relies on the family. Moreover, the family is important because God Himself put emphasis on the communion of persons. Aguas (2018, 2) explains, "When God instituted the human family through marriage, He endowed it with its fundamental constitution – that of being a community of persons." In the apostolic exhortation, it is stated that because human beings are created in God's own image and likeness, they share the same vocation of God, which is to love. This vocation to love is seen in the mystery of God, which is a mystery of interpersonal and loving communion.

However, due to the changing times, the family experienced challenges. With the social challenges that the modern world showcased, the family must be made aware of the situation. It is a reality that the current situation of the family must have a recognition that there is something wrong, that there are problems that need to be addressed. John Paul II (1981, 6) enumerates, "On the other hand, however, signs are not lacking of a disturbing degradation of some fundamental values: a mistaken theoretical and practical concept of the independence of the spouses in relation to each other; serious misconceptions regarding the relationship of authority between parents and children; the concrete difficulties that the family itself experiences in the



transmission of values; the growing number of divorces; the scourge of abortion; the ever more frequent recourse to sterilization; the appearance of a truly contraceptive mentality.” Different perspectives and change of lifestyle are contributory to the challenge of the preservation of the sanctity of the family. For this reason, everyone needs to recover the fundamental moral values of the family. For society not to be delinquent, the family must not be delinquent. With this, it is necessary to protect the family in today’s modern world. John Paul II (1981, 8) states:

It becomes necessary, therefore, on the part of all, to recover an awareness of the primacy of moral values, which are the values of the human person as such. The great task that has to be faced today for the renewal of the society is that of recapturing the ultimate meaning of life and its fundamental values. Only an awareness of the primacy of these values enables man to use the immense possibilities given him by science in such a way as to bring about the true advancement of the human person in his or her whole truth, in his or her freedom and dignity. Science is called to ally itself with wisdom.

Everyone must realize the wisdom of these values to be aware of society’s development. It is in the education of all their own moral consciences that self-realization will be achieved. In today’s fast-paced society, it is important to find a way to let people realize all of these. The Church offers her help to people in the goal of realization of these values. They must take inspiration from God to have a better life. This is essential because the family that the individual is a part of is a Domestic Church in itself.

As a Domestic Church, the family plays a significant role in forming its members. John Paul II accentuates that it is essential to emphasize the role of the family because it will be the vital cell of the society and the Church. With this, one can draw the important roles of the parents, which is to become a faithful married couple and educators of their children. John Paul II (1981, 11) emphasizes, “For the harmonious growth of these values a persevering and unified contribution by both parents is necessary.” Hence, parents must be able to play their role in the family so that the family will be well-guided.

## **On Marriage**

The Church has always emphasized that the marital bond is sacred. The Catechism of the Catholic Church (1994, 1640) describes this bond as, “This bond, which results from a free human act of the spouses and their consummation of the marriage, is a reality, henceforth irrevocable, and gives rise to a covenant guarded by God’s fidelity.” Its sanctity cannot be violated because of the grace that God instilled in the married couple. Moreover, answering the call to be married is a vocation. It is a vocation to respond to the self-giving love that God instilled in every human being. John Paul II (1981, 11) says, “Creating the human race in His own image and continually keeping it in being, God inscribed in the humanity of man and woman the vocation, and thus the capacity and responsibility, of love and communion.” Thus, the capacity to love an individual is a vocation. It is important, then, to realize that it is

normal for a person to look for a human being with whom one can share the self-giving love that that person has. This is why humans are called to marry. Aguas (2020, 55) explicates this call to marriage by saying, “Based on this, the first human relation or community of persons is the union of man and woman. St. John Paul emphasizes this notion in the series of catecheses that we mentioned earlier – the Theology of the Body. This first community of persons established the unity of marriage and its consequent – the indissolubility of marriage.”

John Paul II developed his idea of spousal love in his pre-pontifical writings. John Paul II or Wojtyla (1981, 78-79) writes, “Spousal love is something other and something more than all the forms of love analyzed so far, both from the perspective of the individual subject, from the perspective of the person who loves, and from the perspective of the inter-personal connection created by love. When spousal love enters in this inter-personal relation, then something other than friendship arises, namely the reciprocal self-giving of persons.” In here, spouses are bonded because they express their self-giving love towards one another. Love urges them to reciprocate the feelings of both. Aguas (2014, 225) explains, “Another essential element of love is reciprocity. This element of love points to the fact that the love of a man and a woman is not just the love of each other for the other but rather, as something which exists between them.”

Moreover, humans must look at marriage as a covenant because it symbolizes the covenant of God to His people. It is essential to realize that faithfulness is vital in marriage because God became faithful to His people. As John Paul II (1981,12) explicates:

Their bond of love becomes the image and the symbol of the covenant which unites God and His people. And the same sin which can harm the conjugal covenant becomes an image of the infidelity of the people to their God: idolatry is prostitution, infidelity is adultery, disobedience to the law is an abandonment of the spousal love of the Lord. But the infidelity of Israel does not destroy the eternal fidelity of the Lord, and therefore the ever faithful love of God is put forward as the model of the faithful love which should exist between spouses.

With this perspective, one must realize that fidelity is vital. The communion that was made between them during their marriage urges them to strive for fidelity. Because marriage is a sacrament, it promotes an indivisible unity and indissoluble communion. John Paul II (1981, 19) states, “The first communion is the one which is established and which develops between husband and wife: by virtue of the covenant of married life, the man and woman “are no longer two but one flesh” and they are called to grow continually in their communion through day-to-day fidelity to their marriage promise of total mutual self-giving.” For this reason, it is important to realize that fidelity is much expected precisely because of their sacramental union. As John Paul II (1981, 19) describes the union as “...men and women who in matrimony give themselves with a love that is total and therefore unique and exclusive.” Hence, fidelity is expected because of the total self-giving and deep commitment that they made.

Apart from this, it is important to note that marriage is not a simple contract but a more profound commitment. It is a commitment by two persons, man, and woman,

who love each other totally and a union that is sanctified by God. John Paul II (1981, 20) accentuates, “Conjugal communion is characterized not only by its unity but also by its indissolubility: “As a mutual gift of two persons, this intimate union, as well as the good of the children, imposes total fidelity on the spouses and argues for an unbreakable oneness between them.” Everyone must realize the unbreakable bond in marriage. There must be a constant effort to remind people to realize this bond. Thus, married couples must realize the importance and sacredness of the bond that was done during their marriage, for it is a manifestation of the faithfulness of God in His covenant with the people.

However, it is also important to take note that married life will present difficulties. As John Paul II (1981, 34) points out, “In such a context, it is understandable that sacrifice cannot be removed from family life, but must be wholeheartedly accepted if the love between husband and wife is to be deepened and become a source of joy.” Therefore, married life will show that it is not easy to be together because life will present difficulties. Marriage, thus, entails not only joy but also sacrifice. In order to remain faithful to one another, the married couples must be reminded of the promise that they made in front of God and maintain the love they have for one another. Hence, married couples must be inspired by the love that the Gospel teaches everyone - a love full of sacrifice and joy.

Moreover, because of humans’ historical nature, they are called to grow and build up themselves. For this reason, even in marriage, there is growth. John Paul II (1981, 34) states, “Married people too are called upon to progress unceasingly in their moral life, with the support of a sincere and active desire to gain an even better knowledge of the values enshrined in and fostered by the law of God.” Hence, married couples must have spiritual and moral growth in their married life. Thus, when they achieve this moral growth, they are called to pass the moral values that they have to their children.

### **On the Family as the Domestic Church**

As the married couple is called for moral progress, they are also called to emulate the moral values that they gained and pass them to their children. One must highlight that one of the essential creative action of the parents is the task of educating their children. As John Paul II (1981, 36) explicates, “The task of giving education is rooted in the primary vocation of married couples to participate in God’s creative activity: by begetting in love and for love a new person who has within himself or herself the vocation to growth and development, parents by that very fact take on the task of helping that person effectively to live a fully human life.”

Since the parents will be the first persons that the child encounters during birth, they become the primal educators of the faith and moral values of the child. John Paul II (1981, 36) adds, “The right and duty of parents to give education is essential since it is connected with the transmission of human life: it is original and primary with regard to the educational role of others, on account of the uniqueness of the loving relationship between parents and children: and it is irreplaceable and inalienable, and therefore incapable of being entirely delegated to others or usurped by others,” This statement explains that love is the root of the family. Love must be seen in the interpersonal relationship between parents and children. This parental love that they have for their

children entails the task of educating their children. The formation of values is rooted in parental love. Hence, this love must be seen in the family for each member to learn the essential values of human life. John Paul II (1981, 37) accentuates, “The family is the first and fundamental school of social living: as a community of love, it finds in self-giving the law that guides it and makes it grow.”

Apart from this, one must realize that the family is also the first encounter of the child to the Church. As Christian parents, it is a responsibility to educate the children with the Gospel values. John Paul II (1981, 38) emphasizes:

A vivid and attentive awareness of the mission that they have received with the sacrament of marriage will help Christian parents to place themselves at the service of their children’s education with great serenity and trustfulness, and also with a sense of responsibility before God, who calls them and gives them the mission of building up the Church in their children. Thus in the case of baptized people, the family, called together by word and sacrament as the Church of the home, is both teacher and mother, the same as the worldwide Church.

As a Domestic Church, the faith and moral development of the family members must always be done. The faith and moral education of the children is the responsibility of all Christian parents. It is important to realize that the first place for evangelization in the family. Hence, parents become the preachers of the Gospel to their children. John Paul II (1981, 39) accentuates, “Furthermore, by praying with their children, by reading the word of God with them and by introducing them deeply through Christian initiation into the Body of Christ - both the Eucharistic and the Ecclesial Body - they become parents fully, in that they are begetters not only of bodily life but also of the life that through the Spirit’s renewal flows from the Cross and Resurrection of Christ.”

Thus, as the first heralds, parents must transmit the Gospel values to their children to fulfill their duty as first educators. Parents are the first ones to teach their children how to pray. Parents are the first ones to develop the faith of the children. Hence, the parents are the first ones to form the character of their children and develop the faith-life of the children. With this, the family fulfills its duty as the Domestic Church. As Bourq (2002, 51) explicates, “The idea of a domestic church may be considered one of the most important recent contributions to our understanding of the public life of the church, for it helps clarify that Christian families are front line agents of the church’s social mission, not simply passive beneficiaries of the church’s social services.”

## **HIGHLIGHTING THE FILIPINO FAMILY IN THE FORMATION OF VALUES**

The Filipino family has been known as child-centered. Parents sacrifice many things and invest well for the betterment of their children. Also, parents always try their best to provide money and properties that can be beneficial to their children until they get old. Apart from this, most Filipinos look at their children as inspirations to be the best version of themselves. With this, parents aim to have a good status and

successful career to provide the best life they can give to their children. Thus, the child becomes a driving force for parents to live a moral life and furnish the craft of their careers. Moreover, Filipinos look at the child as the one that binds the couple more. Medina (2001, 217) explicates:

Many wives believe that one way to hold a man is to have children. When they have children, husbands think twice before deserting the family or separating from the wife. Wives also try hard to keep their marriage intact for the sake of the children. When there is a serious quarrel between husband and wife, children often help bring about reconciliation between them. Children, therefore, indirectly cement the union of their parents by helping strengthen the marital bond.

Thus, children are very important to parents. On the other hand, parents are also important to children because they will be the first teachers that they will encounter in their life. They are the very first persons who gave support, love, and care to the child. Thus, it is expected that the parents will have the greatest influence on the child.

The family is the one who will mostly be responsible for the formation of the child because it is the first place for socialization. The child will indeed meet many people at school, Church, and social media, but it is still in the family that the child will spend more time with. However, today, due to different influences from modernization, some parents often do not live together because one needs to work abroad to satisfy economic demands. Some of those who are not living together result in unsuccessful marriages because not all can withstand the situation of not being together. For this reason, there are cases of solo parenting, in addition to, solo-parenting results from some parents who do not live together anymore due to their situation of being single or unwed, abandoned families, divorced, and legally separated couples and widowed. Thus, this situation asks more from the parent who is with the child, for that parent needs to do more than the usual parental role needed. Hence, it can be seen in this situation that the child will look for a role model.

All these situations are to be pondered in regards to child formation. It is because some children are not formed well because of peer influences and bad parenting. Different ideas and people influence the child as soon as they go out of the home and interact with others. Apart from this, the issue of child formation, there are also two child-related issues today – child abuse and child labor. Medina (2001, 286) states:

One problem with regards to children is child abuse, which includes physical, emotional, and sexual abuse and neglect. It is sad to say that the most abhorrent type of child abuse, which is incest, is usually perpetrated by the father, but the victim is afraid to report the crime because of threats by the abuser. Another form of exploitation is child labor. Many children are in hazardous jobs like quarrying, mining, deep-sea fishing, construction, etc., which is against the law, while others are in domestic work. Also, many urban poor children are on the streets trying to earn a living as hawkers, newsboys, watch-your-car boys, and shoe-shine boys. This is attributed not only to poverty but also to the state of the family

relationships, such as parental separation and remarriage of widowed parents.

These two issues are relevant today because of the on-going reports of cases of both. Some children underwent different types of child abuse – physical, neglect, emotional, and sexual. Some parents inflict physical injury, deprive basic needs, assault their children verbally, and make their children objects of sexual gratification. Thus, children are very much vulnerable in society because they are often looked down on and abused by those who are older and in authority. The children are very vulnerable to different acts of discrimination, abuse, exploitation, and oppressive actions.

On the other hand, another way of child exploitation is through child labor. Medina (2001, 234) says, “Child labor is practiced in economically depressed cities and towns where most parents have either little education or training for any job; therefore, they often ask their children to work.” It is quite clear that parents result in child labor because of the economic demands due to the high cost of living today. Instead of sending their children to school, they send them to workplaces such as factories and streets to earn money to help the family. Therefore, the child will exert effort and time working and away from their parents. The cases of child labor did not only result from poverty but also from unsuccessful marriages. It is still dependent on the parents on how they will survive and form their children well. These child labor cases show the different effects of how the family landscape has changed throughout the years.

After looking at this situation, one can realize that it is crucial to take care of the child to preserve the sanctity of the family and help in the development of society. With this, one can look at this situation using the lenses of John Paul II’s *Familiaris Consortio*. John Paul II (1981, 42) states, “The family has vital and organic links with society since it is its foundation and nourishes it continually through its role of service to life: it is from the family that citizens come to birth, and it is within the family that they find the first school of the social virtues that are the animating principle of the existence and development of society itself.” Hence, it is important to highlight the role of the family in society as the primal educating institution for the children. The family contributes to the holistic formation of the person. Moreover, it is important to highlight that the family must give importance to the child because the child is the fulfillment of the parents’ procreation and education role. As John Paul II (1981, 14) accentuates, “According to the plan of God, marriage is the foundation of the wider community of the family since the very institution of marriage and conjugal love are ordained to the procreation and education of children, in whom they find their crowning.”

Marriage, then, gives parents a sense of responsibility when it comes to education. John Paul II (1981, 37) states, “Even amid the difficulties of the work of education, difficulties which are often greater today, parents must trustingly and courageously train their children in the essential values of human life.” With this, it is important for parents to realize that their primary vocation of parenthood is to instill the essential human values in their children. This task is a ministry in which all parents must participate. Hence, parents must realize that marriage is a lifelong commitment, a process of being and becoming both a couple and educators to the children. This is because the sanctity of marriage points to good conjugal and family life. In the family, it is far more

important to point out that married couples are the main contributors to the family's success. This is because they are responding to the vocation of married life.

Also, John Paul II highlights the role of the family in the formation of values of children so that that family members will be protected from different issues. One needs to realize that whatever happens in the modern world, the family must be the first one to educate, catechize, and safeguard its members. With the proper formation of values, the family can play its contributory role in society. John Paul II (1981, 53) points out, "The family must educate the children for life in such a way that each one may fully perform his or her role according to the vocation received from God." The formation of values and education of faith to the children is a life-long process. Parenting will never be easy, but it will have a great result. Parents must be the first evangelizers of faith and instill values in the children so that it can be reflected in society.

The values that the family will have if properly educated and evangelized can be influential. Family life must help its members to preserve and strive to be better persons. A sense of striving must be made to reach the goal of having a better society. As John Paul II (1981, 54) exclaims, "The future of humanity passes by way of the family." Hence, the family is the hope that society has to develop further. If one wants to make a change in society, the person must start in its own family.

## CONCLUSION

The modern world situations of some cases of adultery, divorce, improper child formation, child abuse, and child labor can be avoided if one looks at the importance of the family in society. In situations of adultery and divorce, John Paul II reminds everyone to be faithful in their married life. The importance of the sacramental bond in marriage must be maintained. It is also important to highlight that married life will never be easy, but it is a challenge for the married couple to stay in love and faithful amid all difficulties. With this, married couples must try their best to protect their conjugal union.

Moreover, in regards to cases of child abuse and child labor, Filipino parents need to realize their important role in the protection and formation of their children. Parents must realize that they need to let their children experience the self-giving love that they have for one another. An atmosphere of love in the family can create harmony. With this, while fostering love, parents must also form the values of their children. One can draw from this that the transmission of the essential values of human life can help in safeguarding the dignity of the children.

Filipino parents, then, must take at their role as a responsibility and a challenge. It is a responsibility because it is part of their vocation to educate their children with values. On the other hand, it is a challenge because different situations will be laid down, yet they must remain faithful to their vocation. Thus, Filipino parents must be reminded to stay focused on their responsibilities to their children because their children are essential in their union. Their children must be seen as blessings, for it is their children who give hope for the next generation and access to what is to come.

Parents must have the realization that since the child is born out of mutual love, they must have a sense of responsibility. The child must be cared for and formed well for them to be responsible beings. The child must not be put into danger and exposed

to bad influences, which can negate the proper formation of the child. It is the duty of parents to be the first educators, for they will be the first persons that will affect the process of socialization of the child. Since the child will be the springboard for the next generation of families, Filipino parents must be reminded that their marriage is not limited to the commitment of husband to his wife, wife to her husband, but the commitment of the couple to the family which they will raise, in turn, their commitment in the society in which they belong to, as active agents of bringing about good citizens from their family, and living as morally upright citizens themselves.

Modernization indeed produced social challenges that led to the loss of some important Filipino family values. Lifestyle change modified the landscape of the Filipino family. Even though some of the traditional values of the Filipino family are deteriorating, there is still a glimpse of hope for these values to be revived. Taking up the salient points of the *Familiaris Consortio*, parents must realize that they have the duty to remain faithful to each other and form their children well. Parents must preserve the sanctity of the marital vows that they made and be obedient to their duty as educators of their children. Hence, it is important for parents to play their role in preserving the sanctity of marriage and family life and the formation of values of their children so that the Filipino family can regain its remarkable character.

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