

CONCLUSION

In this treatise we have considered the theme of "family unity" from a Christian perspective. Although our considerations have been fairly extensive, the intention has not been to give an exhaustive treatment (the notes and bibliography refer to a number of other works which consider some related topics). Rather, the intention has been to consider the theme of "family unity" comprehensively and wholistically. In line with this, the writer has attempted to present in a balanced way what seem to be the most significant aspects of this topic.

The writer believes that it is extremely important to approach married and family life with an integral approach. There exists so much family disorganization today partly because so many people approach life, relationships, difficulties and problems in a confused or distorted or narrow-minded way. Without a truly "catholic" vision and approach, it is no surprise that many people become frustrated and disillusioned.

In this treatise we have considered both causes of division and causes of unity of the family. The disorganization or the unification of a particular marriage and family (or marriages and families) does not just happen. Both positive and negative or good and evil changes and developments have their causes. By becoming more aware of these causes we will be able to contribute more to the building of a true and durable family unity. In the preceding chapters we have considered some concrete or immediate factors of division in today's families (Chapter I), some sources of family divisions and family unity from a Christian theological perspective (Chapters II and III), and some concrete or immediate ways of building family unity (Chapter IV).

In Chapter I we considered some physical, economic, social, ideological, political, and psychological factors of family disorganization, as well as some common forms of irresponsibility and immaturity which exist today. These concrete and immediate factors of division are part of the experience of millions of individuals, married couples and families today. In order to build family unity intelligently and constructively it is important to be aware of these factors. One should always seek to grow in understanding the present situation. Also, one should be aware that some of these factors may change and that the future will bring new developments.

In Chapter II we considered sin (both original and personal sin and their destructive consequences), sources of temptation to sin (the "world", the "flesh", and the "devil"), and false teachers, false prophets, and

"antichrists". These themes are not very popular today, but the Bible considers them in a sober and realistic way. Authentic Christian teaching and theology will neither treat them in a skeptical nor an alarming way, but with a balanced approach. It is important to be aware of these sources of family divisions, the origin of the many evils which afflict people today. By being aware of these sources of family divisions we will realize that true and lasting family unity can not be built without the help of God.

In Chapter III we first of all considered that God is the ultimate source, goal and model of the family. God designed the family and only he can truly heal and unite it. Concerning this we considered the great significance, with regard to marriage and the family, of the Trinity, creation, God's revelation to man, the marriage of God and man, the redemption and healing of relationships, the Holy Spirit as the gift of love and unity, the Church of Christ, and the Holy Family. These sources, instruments and models give us a solid foundation on which to build family unity. The Christian faith gives us an integral vision, enabling us to see family life, its joys and sorrows, wholistically--with a true perspective. But, this vision of faith also needs to be translated into concrete ways of building family unity.

In the fourth and final Chapter of this treatise we considered just that, some concrete or immediate ways of building family unity. We considered to some extent ministry to families, family life, family evangelization, family catechesis, family apostolate, family prayer, and family movements and spiritualities. This Chapter shows that much is already being done to build family unity. But, much, much more needs to be done. Much can be done by those who have ministries to help families, including separated families or families with other difficulties. The members of families themselves, however, in collaboration with God and others, can and should be the protagonists in building their own unity.

In conclusion, it should be emphasized that in whatever situation a given family finds itself in this world, its love, communion and unity can always grow, deepen and mature. If the members of a family are open to God's love and they try to do his will, their unity will grow in this life. Also, their unity with each other, with God and the rest of his family will be brought to completion in the next life and never end.

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