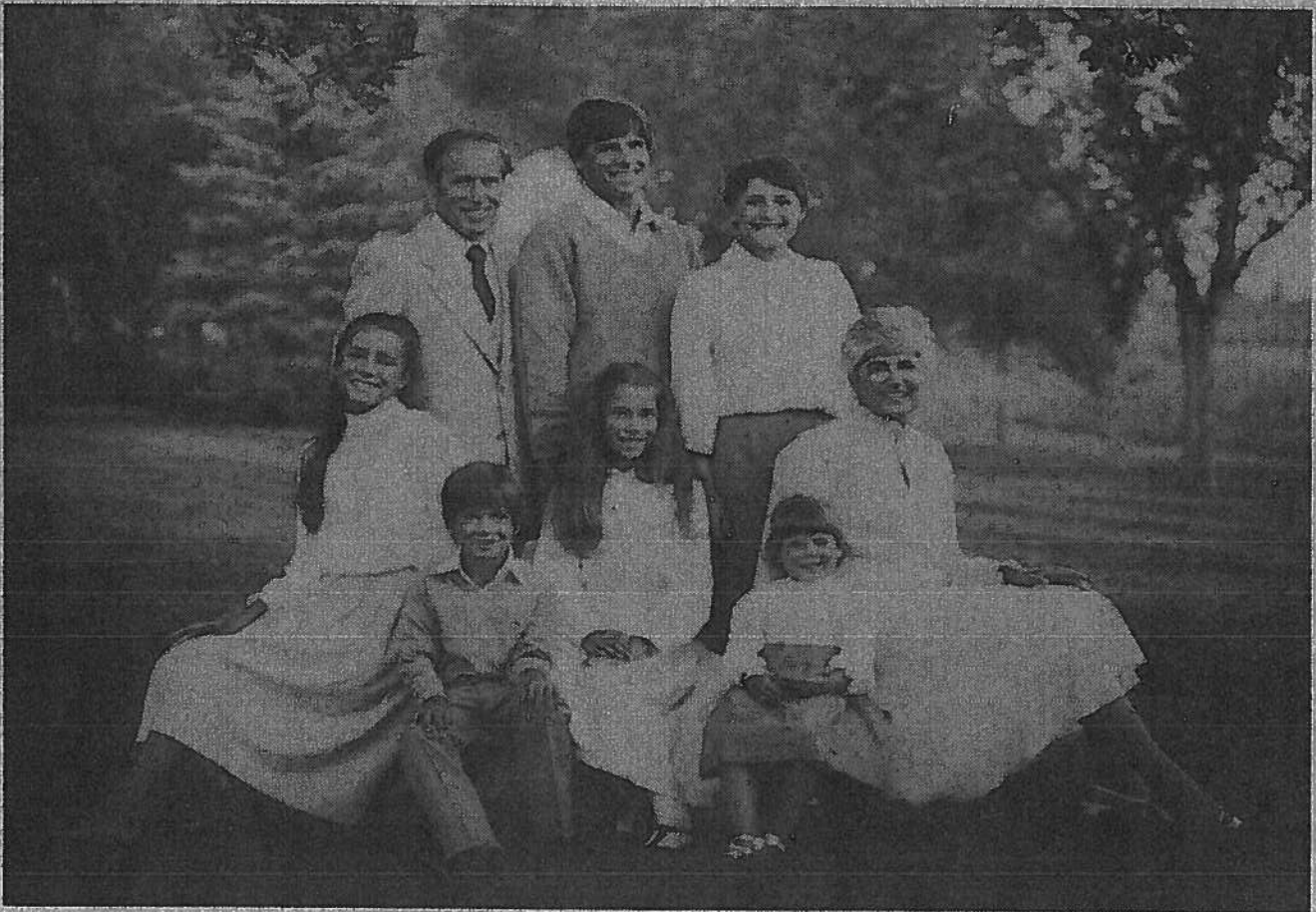


FAMILY UNITY

A CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE

(SECOND EDITION)

PAUL FLAMAN



St. Peter's Press, Muenster, Saskatchewan

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"To the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph"

"Prayer For The Family"

Lord God, from you every family in heaven and on earth
takes its name.

Father, you are Love and Life.

Through your Son, Jesus Christ, born of woman,
and through the Holy Spirit, fountain of divine charity,
grant that every family on earth
may become for each successive generation
a true shrine of life and love.

Grant that your grace may guide
the thoughts and actions of husbands and wives for the good
of their families

and of all the families in the world.

Grant that the young may find in the family
solid support for their human dignity
and for their growth in truth and love.

Grant that love,
strengthened by the grace of the sacrament of marriage,
may prove mightier than all the weaknesses and trials
through which our families sometimes pass.

Through the intercession of the Holy Family of Nazareth,
grant that the Church may fruitfully carry out her
worldwide mission

in the family and through the family.

Through Christ our Lord,
who is the Way, the Truth and the Life
for ever and ever. Amen.

--Joannes Paulus P.P. II

Acknowledgments

The quotations from Scripture in this treatise, unless otherwise specified, are from *The Jerusalem Bible*, general ed. Alexander Jones (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1966).

The quotations from the Constitutions, Decrees and Declarations of the Second Vatican Council used in this treatise are from the translation appearing in *The Documents of Vatican II*, Walter M. Abbott, S.J., general ed. (Chicago: Follett Publishing Company, 1966).

The quotations from Pope John Paul II's Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris Consortio* "On the Role of the Christian Family in the Modern World" (1981) used in this treatise are from the edition published by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, Ottawa, Canada.

I wish to express my profound gratitude first of all to my beloved wife, Maggie. She has shown me much love and understanding, and has patiently encouraged and supported me in the preparation of this treatise. She has also spent many hours helping, typing and proofreading, and has offered helpful suggestions.

I wish to thank, too, Fr. Jordan Aumann, O.P., the director of this treatise (see the Preface to the Second Edition) for his encouragement, suggestions, and helpful advice, as well as my other professors and teachers.

Finally, I wish to express my gratitude to my parents, brothers and sisters (in particular to my sister Janet who typed the first half of the original draft of this treatise), in-laws, relatives and friends, as well as to the other individuals and families, also religious, and Christian communities, who have shown me kindness, hospitality and love, and who have remembered me in their prayers. I have known many married, single and celibate people who have given beautiful witness to the love of God, to Jesus Christ and his Church. Also, I wish to thank those various persons who have shared with me their difficulties and trials, and have helped me to realize more deeply the infinite mercy of God, who is above all a God of love.

List of Abbreviations

- CCCB Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops
- CIC *Codex Iuris Canonici*, promulgated by the authority of Pope John Paul II (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1983). For an English translation see *The Code of Canon Law: in English Translation* (London: Collins Liturgical Publications, 1983).
- DS Henricus Denzinger and Adolfus Schönmetzer, S.J., eds., *Enchiridion Symbolorum Definitionum et Declarationum de Rebus Fidei et Morum* (Rome: Herder, 1976, 36th ed.).
- JB *The Jerusalem Bible*, general ed. Alexander Jones (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1966).
- NAB *The New American Bible*, sponsored by the Bishops' Committee of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Washington, D.C. (Wichita, Kansas: Catholic Bible Publishers, 1974-75 ed.).
- NCCB National [the United States of America] Conference of Catholic Bishops.
- NCE *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 17 Volumes, prepared by an editorial staff at The Catholic University of America (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1967, 1974--vol. 16, and 1979--vol. 17).
- PG Abbé J. P. Migne, *Patrologia cursus completus: Series graeca*, 161 volumes (Paris: excudebat Migne, 1857-1866), Greek texts with Latin translation.
- PL Abbé J.P. Migne, *Patrologia cursus completus: Series latina*, 221 volumes, including 4 of indices (Paris: excudebat Migne, 1844-1855).
- RSV Cath. ed. *The Holy Bible: Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition* (London: Catholic Truth Society, 1966).

- S.c.G. *Summa Contra Gentiles*, by St. Thomas Aquinas
(Rome: Marietti Editori Ltd., 1961--vols. II
and III, 1967--vol. I).
- ST *Summa Theologiae*, by St. Thomas Aquinas
(London: Blackfriars in conjunction with Eyre
and Spottiswoode, 1964, 60 vols.).
- TCT *The Church Teaches: Documents of the Church
in English Translation*, translated and prepared
by John F. Clarkson, S.J., John H. Edwards,
S.J., William J. Kelly, S.J., and John J.
Welch, S.J. (Rockford, Illinois 61105: TAN
Books and Publishers, Inc., 1973).

CONTENTS:

Dedication and Prayer	v
Acknowledgments	vi
List of Abbreviations	vii
Preface to the Second Edition	xii
Foreward	1
INTRODUCTION	3
1. The Situation of the Family Today	3
2. The Many Dimensions of Family Life	6
3. Change and Permanence Regarding the Family	8
4. The Organization of This Study	10
5. Division and Unity Regarding the Family	11
PART ONE: CAUSES OF DIVISION OF THE FAMILY	
CHAPTER I. SOME CONCRETE OR IMMEDIATE FACTORS OF DIVISION IN TODAY'S FAMILIES	16
1. Physical Factors of Family Disorganization	17
2. Economic Factors of Family Disorganization	20
3. Social Factors of Family Disorganization	25
4. The Confusion and Distortion of Truth	34
a) Relativism	
b) Reductionist Ideologies	
5. Political Factors of Family Disorganization	41
6. Psychological Factors of Family Disorganization	47
7. Irresponsibility and Immaturity	53
CHAPTER II. SOME SOURCES OF FAMILY DIVISION CONSIDERED FROM A THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE	75
1. Sin and Various Kinds of Alienation	75
a) Original Sin and its Consequences	
b) Personal Sin and its Consequences	

2. The Real Enemies of Family Unity	81
a) The "World"	
b) The "Flesh"	
c) The "Devil"	
3. False Teachers, False Prophets, and "Antichrists"	86
PART TWO: CAUSES OF UNITY OF THE FAMILY	
CHAPTER III. SOME SOURCES OF FAMILY UNITY	
CONSIDERED FROM A THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE	98
1. God: the Original "Communion of Persons"	
of the Holy Trinity	98
2. Creation and the Origin of Marriage	
and the Family	101
3. God's Revelation in Jesus Christ	
and the Unity of all Truth	105
4. The Marriage of God and Man	108
5. The Redemption and Healing of Relationships	111
6. The Holy Spirit: Gift of Love and Unity	115
7. The Church of Christ and Family Unity	118
a) Apostolic Teaching and Unity of Faith	
b) Christian Brotherhood or Fellowship	
c) The Sacraments and Family Life	
d) The Sacrament of Matrimony in Particular	
e) The Gift of Celibacy and Spiritual Families	
f) Liturgical Prayer and Family Unity	
g) The Communion of Saints	
h) Consummated Heavenly Glory and	
the Perfection of Unity	
8. The Holy Family	130
CHAPTER IV. SOME CONCRETE OR IMMEDIATE WAYS OF	
BUILDING FAMILY UNITY	144
1. Ministry to Families	144
a) An Integral Christian Humanism is Needed	
b) Various Levels of Ministry	
c) Assistance With Respect and Dignity	
d) Education and Counseling	
e) Moral Support and Friendship	

f) Ministry in Some Difficult Situations	
i) Helping People, Especially Young People, Before Marriage	
ii) Helping Families, Couples and Individuals With Special Needs	
iii) Helping Couples and Families in Conflict	
iv) Helping People in Irregular Situations	
v) Helping Those Without a Family	
2. Family Life	168
a) Love	
b) Conjugal Love and Chastity	
c) The Responsible Transmission of Human Life	
d) Education in Love and Responsibility	
e) Loving Communication	
f) Decision Making and Responsibilities	
g) Work and Family Unity	
h) Family Recreation and Celebrations	
i) The Home or Focolare	
3. Family Evangelization	190
4. Family Catechesis	193
5. Family Apostolate	195
a) Various Kinds of Family Apostolate	
b) The Christian Family's Social and Political Role	
c) The Christian Family's Ecclesial Role	
6. Family Prayer and Growing in Unity	200
7. Family Movements and Spiritualities	204
a) In General	
b) The "New Family Movement" in Particular	
CONCLUSION	230
BIBLIOGRAPHY	232
1. Primary Sources	232
2. Secondary Sources	233
INDEX OF SUBJECTS	248

Preface to the Second Edition

The first edition of this study of "family unity" met the requirements for a doctoral dissertation with regard to the degree Doctor in Sacred Theology at the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas in Rome. The first edition was published in 1985. This second edition is substantially the same as the first. There have only been a few minor changes to the text of the treatise. A few additions have been made to the notes and bibliography. An index of subjects has also been added. The page numbering of the two editions, however, is quite different because the text of the first edition was double-spaced, whereas the text of this edition is single-spaced.

Foreword

The theme of "family unity" could be studied from many perspectives. Indeed, today the family is studied by many: sociologists, psychologists, educators, politicians, moralists, theologians, various kinds of ministers, bishops, the Pope, and so on. In this study I propose to treat the theme of "family unity" from a Christian perspective, and more specifically, from a Catholic theological perspective.

A theological perspective looks first of all at God. Theology means "science of God", from the Greek *θεός* (*theos*) meaning "God", and *λογος* (*logos*) meaning "word", "reason". Theology considers man, male and female (the Judeo-Christian faith affirms the equal fundamental dignity of all human beings, male and female persons, created in the image of God--cf. Gen 1:27), and the universe, and thus also the family, in relation to God. The study of theology is normally linked to an analysis of the origins and teachings of an organized religious community. We can speak thus, for example, of Christian theology, of Jewish theology, and of Moslem theology.

A Christian theological perspective will consider the family in light of the revelation of Jesus Christ. Christians believe that Jesus Christ is the definitive revelation of God to man. But we can also speak of various Christian theologies, such as Catholic, Orthodox and various Protestant forms.

A "Catholic" Christian theological perspective, whether Eastern Catholic or Roman (Western) Catholic, attempts to be faithful to Sacred Scripture, Sacred Tradition and the magisterium of the Catholic Church.

A Catholic theological perspective affirms the unity of all truth. True science cannot contradict true faith. Faith, a gift from God, accepts with certainty what God has revealed to man. The same God who has fully revealed himself in and through Jesus Christ has also created the entire universe, including man and his mind. Therefore, the genuine truths that the mind of man discovers about himself and the universe (compare the various scientific disciplines) will always be in harmony with the authentic truths of revelation.

A Catholic theologian studying the family will first of all consider the family in the light of divine revelation. But he or she will also consider the genuine findings regarding the family of the other sciences, such as biology and the social sciences. Sometimes it may seem that a certain "finding" of a scientist or scientists contradicts a truth of faith. The believer may never doubt his (or her)

faith, but should realize that he may not understand it as well as he should. Also, many "findings" of science are not at all conclusive, but mere opinions or theories of finite human beings. A seeming contradiction between faith and science can and should call one to grow in maturity in both one's faith and scientific knowledge.

The word "catholic" means comprehensive or universal. It comes from the Greek *κατά* (*kata*) meaning "according to", and *ᾠλος* (*holos*) meaning "whole". A truly "catholic" perspective of the family is, therefore, a wholistic or an integral perspective of the family. It will not exclude or devalue any of the genuine aspects of human or family life. Rather, it will consider man and the family in their totality, considering all the dimensions of human life: corporal, psychological, economic, social, political, spiritual and so on.

In this study I hope to make a genuine theological contribution regarding one of the biggest problem areas for the Church in our age--the widespread breakdown of the family, the basic unit of both society and the Church. I hope to make a positive contribution regarding the building of a deeper and more mature "family unity", in whatever situation one finds oneself or a particular family--with an already good marriage or a poor one, with parties in great tension or already separated, with parents and children getting along well or not, and so on.

There are various branches of Catholic theology today. A theology of the family (which has received special attention in recent years) draws from many traditional branches of theology and related studies. For example, a Catholic theologian studying the family should consider related areas of scriptural exegesis, dogmatic, pastoral, moral and spiritual theology, as well as canon law. This study which is concerned with building "family unity" will give special attention to a pastoral or moral and spiritual theology of the family.

In this Foreword I do not propose to explain fully what "family unity" means. That will be developed in the course of this dissertation. Suffice it to say that the basic conviction running through this thesis is that it is true love which builds "family unity", in whatever situation one finds oneself. In speaking of the great or first commandment and the second commandment, on which the whole Law and the Prophets depend, Jesus calls us to love the Lord our God with our whole heart, soul and mind, and to love our neighbour as ourself (cf. Mt 22:37-40). If we seek truly to live these commandments of love in all their profundity, which is God's will for us, we will grow in unity with God, with each other, and within ourselves.