

The Incredible Mission of Catholic Families and Their Call to Respect Life

- **From Pope John Paul II's Encyclical - *Familiaris Consortio*:**

"The family has the mission to guard, reveal and communicate love, and this is a living reflection of and a real sharing in God's love for humanity and the love of Christ the Lord for the Church His bride.

Every particular task of the family is an expressive and concrete actuation of that fundamental mission. We must therefore go deeper into the unique riches of the family's mission and probe its contents, which are both manifold and unified.

Thus, with love as its point of departure and making constant reference to it, the recent Synod emphasized four general tasks for the family:

- 1) forming a community of persons;
- 2) serving life;
- 3) participating in the development of society;
- 4) sharing in the life and mission of the Church." [no. 17]

"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." [no. 37]

"The social role of the family certainly cannot stop short at procreation and education, even if this constitutes its primary and irreplaceable form of expression.

Families therefore, either singly or in association, can and should devote themselves to manifold social service activities, especially in favor of the poor, or at any rate for the benefit of all people and situations that cannot be reached by the public authorities' welfare organization." [no. 44]

"The Christian family is thus called upon to offer everyone a witness of generous and disinterested dedication to social matters, through a "preferential option" for the poor and disadvantaged. Therefore, advancing in its following of the Lord by special love for all the poor, it must have special concern for the hungry, the poor, the old, the sick, drug victims and those who have no family." [no. 47]

Familiaris Consortio also has a long list of rights for families that includes "the right to emigrate as a family in search of a better life." [no. 46]

- **Excerpt from *Caritas in Veritate*:**

"The Church forcefully maintains this link between life ethics and social ethics, fully aware that 'a society lacks solid foundations when, on the one hand, it asserts values such as the dignity of the person, justice and peace, but then, on the other hand, radically acts to the contrary by allowing or tolerating a variety of ways in which human life is devalued and violated, especially where it is weak or marginalized.'" [no. 15, quoting from *Gospel of Life*]

- **Bibliography suggestions:**

Familiaris Consortio (http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_19811122_familiaris-consortio_en.html).

Justice For Immigrants Campaign (www.justiceforimmigrants.org)

Washington State Catholic Conference (www.thewsc.org)

- **Family Pledge of Nonviolence:**

From the IPJ website (<http://www.ipj-ppj.org/Pledge%20of%20Nonviolence.html>) – "You are free to make copies of the pledge as long as you keep the Institute for Peace and Justice name and contact information on the copies."