

# *The Catholic Family*

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***Catholic Teaching on  
Family and Married Life***

# Family is primary from the days of the Apostles and St. Paul

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“The early Christians understood that they were the offspring of a **new worldwide family of God**...Christians staked their lives on the belief that God is our Father...they put God first. They believed the Church is our mother. They believed their bishops and priests were their spiritual fathers and that through the sacraments they were made children of God, or ‘partakers of the divine nature,’ as Peter said.”

Archbishop Charles J. Chaput, OFM Cap.

## **A love letter from Hilarion to his pregnant wife Alis (circa 1 BC)**

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*“Know that I am still in Alexandria. And do not worry if they all come back and I remain in Alexandria. I ask and beg you to take good care of our baby son, and as soon as I receive payment I shall send it up to you. If you are delivered of a child [before I come home], if it is a boy keep it, if a girl discard it. You have sent me word, “Don’t forget me.” How can I forget you. I beg you not to worry.”*

# Infanticide

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- Greco/Romans sanctioned and encouraged infanticide
- Infants were left exposed to the elements at day old – if someone else wanted them they could have them
- Girls were most likely the victims – “more than one daughter was practically never reared”
- Delphi inscriptions of over 600 families – only 6 raised more than one daughter
- Discovery at the dig at Ashkelon

# Abortion, contraception and adultery

Then	Now
Abortion was very common	Abortion is very common
A wide range of contraceptives were available, both physical and chemical	A wide range of contraceptives are available, both physical and chemical
Men could legally compel any woman in his household (wife, daughter, slave) to have an abortion without her consent.	Our culture compels women to have abortions rather than looking at alternatives.
Adultery was common for men – strictly forbidden for women	Adultery is common for men and women.
Low birth rate throughout the pagan world	Low birth rate throughout the western world

# **Christians reject abortion, infanticide and contraception**

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- Christians “had to change” and reject the culture around them
- Why?

## **Pope John Paul II on Family**

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God in His deepest mystery [the Trinity] is not a solitude, but a family, since He has in Himself fatherhood, sonship, and the essence of the family, which is love.

*Puebla: A Pilgrimage of Faith*

# Theology of family

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- 4<sup>th</sup> Commandment – Honour your Mother and Father
- Only commandment with a promise
- Not about perfect families
- All of us are part of the Church family

**Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.**

# Teaching on Family

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- Mission from God
- Domestic Church
- Lead members to holiness (all of society)



# Pope Benedict XVI

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“(H)is family is always present ...  
inculcating in him the sense of his dignity  
and uniqueness --- a chief task of all  
parents, brothers and sisters” (Let God’s Light  
Shine Forth: The Spiritual Vision of Pope Benedict XVI by  
Robert Moynihan. Doubleday :2005.)

# Teaching on Family

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- Autonomy and dignity of the family
- Precedes and is the foundation of all societies – primary cell
- Based on marriage of man and woman
- Society must strengthen and protect the family

# Marriage bond

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- Marriage – Good of spouses and procreation of children
- “Grave responsibility to set a good example”
- Children contribute to holiness of parents



***Parental Duty:  
Evangelize and Educate***

**And, fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.**

**Ephesians 6:4**

# Prayer and Catechism

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- **TEACH YOUR CHILDREN TO PRAY**
- Daily Prayer – meals, morning, bedtime, Rosary
- Mass
- “Daily” Scripture Reading



# Education

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- Church defends the right of parents to determine and provide for the education of their children
- Must extend to moral education and spiritual formation
- Catechism of the Church
- Speaking about your faith

# Discipline

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- **He who loves his son will not spare the rod....He who disciplines his son will profit by him. – Sirach 30:1-2**
- As Jesus was obedient to the Father, so children must be obedient to their parents
- Basis for all just authority
- Train to be a good person
- Discern vocation - guidance

# *Gifts and Fruits of the Holy Spirit*

# Gifts of the Holy Spirit

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- Wisdom
- Understanding
- Counsel
- Fortitude
- Knowledge
- Piety
- Fear of the Lord

# Gifts of the Holy Spirit

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- Wisdom → see reality from God's point of view
- Understanding → deeper meaning of faith
- Knowledge → see how God is working in your life and world
- Counsel → helps us form our conscience
- Fortitude → strength to follow our convictions
- Piety → respect Lord with praise and worship and dignity of others
- Fear of Lord → concern of reality of sin in our life

# ***Fruits of Holy Spirit***

**By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.**

# Fruits of the Holy Spirit

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- Charity
- Joy
- Peace
- Patience
- Kindness
- Goodness
- Generosity
- Gentleness
- Faithfulness
- Modesty
- Self-control
- Chastity