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The Family

The family is the cradle of civil society. Pope Leo XIII states this in his encyclical, "Sapientiae Christianae," because families are what make up this society. It is the "cradle" because in a family, all its members learn to love one another, which allows them to be inclined to be charitable and just towards others as well. Because charity and justice are the foundations of human society, the family is thus crucial to the ongoing of civil society. When this family is founded upon marriage, one of the Seven Sacraments instituted by Christ, it becomes a Christian family. At the head of this is the father, the authority and protector, who is accompanied by his wife, his partner and also the heart of the family. They must be open to children, which are symbols of love between a couple. It is also the couple's duty to raise these children to be able to support themselves in the world alone, and to be practicing Catholics.

In order for children to be able to support themselves and become practicing Catholics, they must be brought up correctly. It is the duty of the parents to promote the child's growth, health, and education. This is done by the parents' example, direct instruction, and encouragement. Their children must be trained in the body, their physical education; the mind, which is their intellectual education; and their will, which is their moral education. Christ even ordered his apostles to "preach the gospel to all men." It is the duty of the parents, therefore, to also instruct their children in the Catholic faith. They can do this by acts of worship to God, such as saying the rosary or attending daily mass with their child. This is the instruction of their children by example and action. In addition, the parents must teach their child about the

Catholic faith in order that they might know God better. Mary and Joseph of the Holy Family carried out their obligations of parenthood by instructing, protecting, encouraging, and guiding the Child Jesus. The Holy Family is thus the highest model of a true Christian family. It is a sin for the parents to neglect the upbringing of a person they themselves brought into the world. Because all men are to reach heaven, and their attaining of heaven first rests on their early upbringing, it is a strict duty of parents to be responsible for the proper guidance of their children.

In return to duties of parents to their children, the children have duties to fulfill towards their parents. First, they should have reverence towards their parents, because they have taken part in God's creation of them. Another duty is love for their parents. It is proper that children show a deep love for their parents who are their physical origins. Also, children must readily be obedient to their parents' commands, provided they are not sinful. Many are guilty for failing to be obedient, and some even intend to defy the command of a parent. Another obligation of children towards their parents is their duty to support their parents when needed. If their parents become ill, old, injured, or even in debt, it is the duty of a child and also his or her siblings, if any, to aid them in such crises. It is only proper for a child to have these duties because their parents share common blood with them. A child who truly loves its parents will fulfill these obligations, sometimes even superfluously. It would not be logical or just for a child to avoid these obligations because the parents devote their time to the child's upbringing. If a child steers away from these obligations, they will not learn obedience to others including superiors such as managers in employment.

Though children will be free of this duty of obedience to their parents when older, it is a wise choice for them to heed the advice given to them by parents such as for choosing a certain state of life. If they fail to heed the commands and also the advice of their parents, they also will fail to carry out the duties they will have towards children of their own. Therefore, it is necessary that children have obligations in return to the obligations of parents toward them, and also that they fulfill them.

If the parents decide against instructing their children themselves, the teachers in the school the children are sent to have authority over and also duties towards the pupils. It is the obligation of the teachers that they fulfill their duty according to their teaching profession to instruct the children well and as best they can. The duties of the parents regarding instructing and also protecting the children are given over to these teachers when the children are in school. A teacher who gives a halfhearted attempt at instructing children deprives them of what they must know in order to be successful and a practicing Catholic. An example is a struggling student in a class. If the teacher is only disappointed in the student's progress and refuses to help the child, or does not make a full effort, he is guilty of neglecting a problem he can help himself. Teachers are also guilty if they fail to protect their pupils in danger if it is possible to. A teacher who jumps out of a school window to run and hide from an armed man in the building violates his duty to protect the pupils in the classroom. On December 14, 2012, an armed gunman entered into Sandy Hook Elementary School. The school teachers fulfilled their duty by making their best effort to protect the pupils from the armed perpetrator. For the pupils of the teacher, they also have duties to fulfill toward their teacher. With regard to education, the pupils must obey, respect, and love their teachers, as the teachers are their instructors put in place of their own parents. Thus, as the alternative to direct parental instruction, teachers are

given serious duties toward their pupils. These children must in turn give their teachers their deserved respect, love, and obedience.

The family preserves civil society. With the husband as its head and his wife as its heart and soul, they together look after the children they bear, and preserve society by doing so by preparing them to support themselves in the real world. In addition the children will have learned how to perform acts of charity and justice, the two foundations of society. In return these children must show their obedience, love, and reverence for their parents who have devoted all their time towards the success of their children. When replacing the instruction of the parents, teachers must take on all the responsibilities which the parents had beforehand. The children must give them their love, attention, and respect in turn. Without the Christian family, society would crumble because a family not open to children has no symbol of the couple's love. In addition, a family whose husband and wife do not adequately prepare their children will injure the future society. Therefore, the Christian family truly is the "cradle of society."