

Culture-forming character of the heritage passed on by the family based on the Exhortations *Familiaris consortio* and *Amoris laetitia**

Kulturotwórczy charakter dziedzictwa przekazanego przez rodzinę
na podstawie adhortacji *Familiaris consortio* i *Amoris laetitia*

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Abstract: By its vocation and heritage, family includes itself into the area it creates, that is culture. Family, being a social group, has many structural features, by which interpersonal communication by means of signs is performed in an easy, lasting and creative manner. Pope Francis stresses in his *Amoris laetitia* that the family is in a way a fundamental source of human and Christian culture. It is a culture-forming institution. The most important condition is the one that the parents are aware that they transmit the culture of their nation, society and at the same time they can create their own family culture. This cultural heritage message is richer if the families participate in a wide scope of the culture of their society. Conditions such as spiritual climate, life stability, overcoming difficulties, participation of both spouses in the marital life as a whole, bonds with befriended families, ability to celebrate or spend leisure time, openness to spiritual and supernatural values also play their roles in the process of socialisation.

Keywords: culture, family, interpersonal communication, cultural message, culture-forming

Streszczenie: Rodzina zdrowa moralnie swoim powołaniem i dziedzictwem włącza się w tworzony przez siebie obszar, jakim jest kultura. Rodzina, będąc grupą społeczną, ma wiele cech strukturalnych, dzięki którym komunikacja międzyosobowa za pomocą zna-

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ków dokonuje się w sposób łatwy, trwały i twórczy. Papież Franciszek podkreśla w *Amoris laetitia*, że rodzina jest poniekąd podstawowym źródłem kultury ludzkiej i chrześcijańskiej. Jest instytucją kulturotwórczą. Najważniejszym warunkiem jest ten, aby rodzice mieli świadomość, że przekazują kulturę swego narodu, społeczeństwa, a jednocześnie mogą tworzyć własną kulturę rodzinną. Ten przekaz dziedzictwa kulturowego jest bogatszy, jeżeli rodziny uczestniczą w szerokim zakresie w kulturze swojego społeczeństwa. W procesie socjalizacji ważne są także uwarunkowania, takie jak: duchowy klimat, stabilność życia, pokonywanie trudności, uczestnictwo obojga małżonków w całości życia małżeńskiego, więź z zaprzyjaźnionymi rodzinami, umiejętność świętowania czy spędzania wolnego czasu, otwartość na wartości duchowe i nadprzyrodzone.

Słowa kluczowe: kultura, rodzina, komunikacja międzypersonalna, przekaz kulturowy, instytucja kulturotwórcza

Introduction

Culture can be generally defined as a distinctive system of interaction characteristic of a group, society, or more broadly of a nation or civilisation, which refers to a complex of laws, customs, products and interactions. The groundwork for all this is provided by the family, and therefore one can speak of the elementary role of the family in the formation of human and Christian culture.

Every person is introduced into culture through their family. All the functions of the family and all its roles begin with the formation of the marital and family community. The culture of creating a true community of persons in the family is the cornerstone of both the family itself and its broadly understood culture (Dyczewski 2003, 27-48).

The cultural transmission fits first into a person's way of thinking, into their entire learning process, in which values, standards, norms are passed on to future generations. This transmission can also be called good socialisation. Socialisation consists in the acquisition and formation of specific skills from an early age, gaining the indispensable knowledge, internalising the established system of values, which allows for functioning in a given society.

The cultural preferences of the family environment render the world of spiritual and material products available to man in a more or less rich manner. This has been in progress for generations, since the family is that special place for the introduction of man into social life and for the transmission of cultural heritage, values, norms and principles. It is the fundamental environment for the transmission and development of human and Christian culture.

In *Familiaris Consortio*, John Paul II referred to the family as the first environment for education, "«because the Creator of all things instituted marriage as the beginning and foundation of human society», the family became

«the first and vital cell of society». The family has a vital and organic bond with society, since it is its foundation and constantly nourishes it through its task of serving life. After all, citizens are born in the family, and in it they find the first school of those social virtues which determine the life and development of society itself. Thus, by virtue of its nature and vocation, far from closing in on itself, the family opens up to other families and to society, taking up its social task” (John Paul II 1981, 42).

The aim of this publication is to show the family, which with its heritage and vocation is involved in the area which it creates, namely culture. The family, being a social group, has a number of structural features that make interpersonal communication through signs permanent and creative. The Catholic Church systematically develops an in-depth theology of the family in magisterial documents, especially in the Exhortation *Familiaris consortio* of John Paul II and the Exhortation *Amoris laetitia* of Francis, pointing to the family as the fundamental source of human and Christian culture. For this reason, the primary theological source of this study will be the cited papal enunciations.

I. The family as a natural, primal, fundamental and universal social group

Amoris laetitia introduces readers to the issue as follows “So we cross the threshold of that serene home where the family sits around the festive table. At its heart, we meet the father and mother with their entire love story. In them the original plan is fulfilled, which Christ himself forcefully recalls «Have you not read that from the beginning the Creator created them male and female?» (Mt 19:4). The Book of Genesis recalls «Therefore it is a man who leaves his father and his mother and unites himself with his wife so closely that they become one body» (2:24)” (Francis 2016, 9).

It is commonly known that the family, being closely related to human nature, has existed since the beginning of man and in all societies, although its forms are very diverse. It is not organised in the same way as any association or institution is organised. It is formed as a result of human development (Dyczewski 2003, 27-28). Family life is characterised by its specific uniqueness as well as distinct internal and external differentiation.

The family is, in a way, the fundamental source of human culture. It is there that man learns to live, to think, to decide. It is in it and by virtue of it that he assimilates values and shares them with others. The family, compared to other groups and social institutions, has few members. This applies to the contemporary so-called nuclear family. With such a small number of members, however, there is a great variety of positions and social roles in the family. Thus there

are positions and roles of a husband-father, a wife-mother, parents concurrently, a daughter-sister, a son-brother, children, a father-in-law, a mother-in-law, a grandfather, a grandmother, a son-in-law, a daughter-in-law, a grandson and a granddaughter-in-law, and increasingly often there are also great-grand-children and great-great-grandchildren. This arrangement of positions and roles in the immediate family, as if at its core, becomes even richer when it is extended to include uncles and uncles-in-law, uncles and aunts, as well as uncle and cousin siblings. The number of contacts and their diversity in such a small social group as a family are thus large enough to create a dynamic and content-rich system of symbolic communication (Dyczewski 2003, 9).

Every family, despite many features and functions common to other families, clearly distinguishes its own physical and spiritual space. In the past, a hut or a tent was this family space. Today it is most often a flat in a collective building or a house with a garden. The home is always one of the basic elements of not only material but also spiritual culture. This space is clearly distinguished and marked with the name of a particular family, most often placed on a plate which informs everyone that this is the space of a particular family. No stranger is allowed to enter without an invitation, or at least the permission of the hosts. In this space, the family lives, increases and decreases the number of its members, accumulates the achievements of their actions, arranges it in their own way and can pass it on to whomever it wishes, with all belongings in it. The ownership and privacy of this family space is protected by customary and statutory law of the community in which the family lives (Dyczewski 2003, 30-31).

Amoris laetitia justifies the beauty and depth of family life in theological terms “The couple who love and give birth to life is a true living «figure» (but not any of those made of stone or gold, as prohibited by the Decalogue), capable of manifesting God the Creator and Saviour. Therefore, fruitful love becomes a symbol of God’s intimate reality (cf. Genesis 1:28; 9:7; 17:2-5.16; 28:3; 35:11; 48:3-4). For this reason, the Book of Genesis narrative according to the so-called «priestly tradition» is permeated with several genealogical sequences (cf. 4:17-22.25-26; 5; 10; 11:10-32; 25:1-4.12-17.19-26; 36). Indeed, the human couple’s capacity to give birth is the path through which salvation history unfolds. In this light, the fruitful relationship of spouses becomes an image for discovering and describing the mystery of God contemplated by Christians who recognise God the Father, Son and Spirit of love in the Trinity. The Triune God is a communion of love and the family is its living reflection. Saint John Paul II said «The persons of our God, in their innermost mystery, do not remain alone, but form a family, because fatherhood, sonship and the very essence of the family, which is love, are embraced in this mystery. The Holy Spirit is the love in this divine family». The family is therefore not some-

thing alien to the very essence of God. This Trinitarian aspect of the married couple takes on a new form in Paul's theology when the Apostle links it to the «mystery» of the union between Christ and the Church (cf. Eph 5:21-33)” (Francis 2016, 11).

For the formation of the family as the basic unit of society, it is important that the individuals who make up the family are with each other in an enclosed space on a daily basis and constantly meet face to face. These contacts are direct and non-institutional. They deal with serious and trivial matters, which concern each and every one of them. These contacts are usually emotional and involve the whole person and span from birth to death. It is therefore impossible to escape from the family, even if one abandons it. There are also indirect contacts within the family through various means and contacts of an institutional nature, such as the handover of a flat or a house to a child by parents.

The diversity of contacts (direct and indirect, non-institutional and institutional) distinguishes the family from other social groups and is the basis for the specific dynamics of symbolic communication occurring within it. On the one hand, it guarantees a far-reaching individuality and variability of these contacts, on the other hand, it stabilises them to a great extent and renders their continuity.

Amoris laetitia adds to this by noting that “«faithful to Christ's teaching, we look to the reality of the family today in all its complexity, with both its lights and shadows [...]. Anthropological and cultural changes in our times influence all aspects of life and require an analytical and diversified approach». In the situation of the decades before, the Bishops of Spain pointed to greater space for freedom in domestic reality: «with an equitable distribution of burdens, responsibilities and tasks, [...] by valuing more the personal communication between spouses, it is possible to contribute to the humanisation of family life as a whole. [...] Neither the society, in which we exist, nor the direction towards which we are moving, allow the forms and patterns of the past to continue unwisely». However, «we are aware of the fundamental orientation of the anthropological and cultural changes, because of which people are less, than in the past, supported in their emotional and family life by social structures»”(Francis 2016, 32).

Following the reasoning of Pope Francis in *Amoris laetitia*, one can see that “«we live in a culture that exerts pressure on young people to refrain from starting a family owing to the lack of prospects for the future. And that same culture offers so many options to others that they too are dissuaded from starting a family». In some countries, a number of young people «often postpone marriage for economic reasons, because of problems with work or studies. Sometimes there are other factors, such as the influence of ideologies that diminish the importance of marriage and the family, the experience of the fail-

ure of other marriages, to which they do not wish to expose themselves, the fear of something they consider too powerful and sacred, the social amenities and economic benefits that come with cohabitation, a purely emotional and romantic conception of love, the fear of losing their freedom and independence, the rejection of something seen as institutional and bureaucratic». We must find words, motivations and testimonies that would help us to touch the deepest recesses of the hearts of young people, where the most abundant sources of their capacity for generosity, commitment, love and even heroism are, in order to encourage them to accept with enthusiasm and fortitude the challenge of marriage” (Francis 2016, 40).

With a view to partially finding motivations for the challenges of marriage, the basic cognitive abilities and positive choices and risks are to be analysed in the family.

2. Basic formation of the cognitive abilities and positive choices

The family forms in its members, especially in children, the ability to perceive reality, to see problems, to pose questions and to seek answers to them. It therefore influences the way of cognition and the style of formulating what is being learned. It is important here to shape an attitude directed towards truth, goodness and beauty, towards the three basic values of each culture, as well as towards other values crucial to personality development. Communicating values to the individual by the family, experiencing and implementing them within the family, frequently determines the way in which the individual understands, experiences and implements them in the individual and social life.

Finally, the family shapes in its members, the image of the world, primarily the image of man and social life. Their attitude towards people and society depends most on this image (Dyczewski 2003, 32-33). In the family, a person acquires the ability to understand themselves, the world, but also acquires the sense of responsibility for themselves and others. The family has considerable freedom in shaping such cognitive abilities in its members.

The control of the immediate environment and the state over what and how the family communicates is weak or non-existent. Parents and other family members perform their tasks in this area to the best of their ability and as they wish. They are free, and thus bear great responsibility for the image of the world, of man and of social life, of the attitude to truth, goodness and beauty that they pass on within the family, especially to the younger generation. According to psychologists, the fastest development of a child’s cognitive abilities takes place between the age of 3 and 8. During this period, parents, in the interests of the child’s proper development, should talk to their child as much

as possible and gradually introduce the child to an increasingly wider circle of people, to an increasingly complex world of values, events and things. The child himself demands this, at this age by posing countless questions to his parents and other family members (Dyczewski 2003, 33-34). The adolescent age of children raises new problems. Similarly, old age in its own way fits into the life of the whole family and its structure. All this, however, indicates the uniqueness and abundance of family life.

A threat to the complete development of the family today, according to *Amoris laetitia*, is “«the growing danger posed by an exaggerated individualism that degenerates family bonds and leads to treating each member of the family as a solitary island, making dominant in some cases the idea of a subject who creates himself according to his own desires treated as an absolute». «The tensions caused by the exaggerated individualistic culture of possession and pleasure give rise to instances of intolerance and aggression within families»” (Francis 2016, 33).

In addition, “attention must be paid to the pace of contemporary life, stress, and the organisation of social and working life, as these are cultural factors that pose a threat to the sustainability of decisions. At the same time, some ambiguous phenomena are encountered. For example, personalisation that draws attention to authenticity rather than the reproduction of prescribed behaviour is valued. This is a value that can promote various abilities and spontaneity, but misdirected, it can create attitudes of permanent distrust, escaping from commitments, enclosing oneself in comfort or arrogance. Freedom of choice means that one can plan their life and nurture the best in themselves, but if there are no noble goals and personal discipline, it degenerates into an inability to give of oneself wholeheartedly. Indeed, in numerous countries where marriage rates are declining, more and more people are choosing to live alone or cohabit. Likewise, a laudable sense of justice can be emphasised. However, if it is misunderstood, it transforms citizens into clients demanding only the provision of services” (Francis 2016, 33). One can remain only in this temporal dimension, far from noble goals, from personal discipline, and can exist in the context of the individualistic philosophy so characteristic of the West. For the complementarity of family life and the culture-forming role of the family, Christian faith is needed and required.

3. The continuing importance of the Christian faith for the completeness of family life

There is no culture without religion. To put it more precisely, there is not, and cannot be, a complete Western culture without Christianity. The saying that

a tree without roots dies has been known for centuries. Such a statement does not invalidate everything that this philosophy of man and philosophy of culture say that is positive and important, but rather points to the necessity of its supplementation, to its acute imperfection.

In the third part of St. John Paul II's apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris consortio*, one can easily find the weighty issue of first making people aware that the family was created "as a profound community of life and love" (John Paul II 1981, 50) and is to become ever more a community of life and love in a "quest" that will find its ultimate fulfilment in the kingdom of God. The Pope went on to state that, in a perspective that draws on the very roots of marital and family reality, "the essence and tasks of the family are ultimately defined by love" (John Paul II 1981, 17). From this the fundamental task of the family arises; this is the mission of welcoming, "guarding, revelation and transmission of love" and faith (John Paul II 1981, 17). There is nothing more important for the Christian family. This is the purpose for which it exists. From this fundamental task of the Christian family the four specific tasks that are emphasized in *Familiaris consortio* emerge.

They read as follows:

- creating a community of persons,
- serving life,
- participating in the development of society,
- participating in the life and mission of the Church.

If the family does not perform these tasks, it means that it does not understand who it should be or only pretends to be a family. Thus, it can be noted that awareness but also time are required to fulfil these tasks (Wolański 2022).

Joseph Ratzinger conceded that "the sidelining of Christian roots has nothing to do with a supreme tolerance that respects all cultures in the same way, without wishing to privilege any of them, but is an absolutization of thinking and living that, inter alia, radically opposes other historical human cultures. The real contradictions that characterize the world today are not between different religious cultures, but between the radical emancipation of man from God, the detachment from his life roots on the one hand, and the great religious cultures on the other hand. When a clash of cultures occurs, it will not be the result of a clash between the great religions (which have always fought against each other, but in the end were also able to live side by side), but of a clash between this radical emancipation of man and the great historical cultures. Thus, the rejection of reference to God is also not the manifestation of tolerance which wishes to protect non-theistic religions and the dignity of atheists and agnostics, but the manifestation of awareness which would enjoy the complete erasure of God from the public life of humanity and relegate

Him to the subjective realm of the surviving cultures of the past” (Ratzinger 2005a, 10).

“In this way, relativism, which is the starting point of all this, becomes a dogmatism that purports to have a definitive knowledge of reason and can consider all the rest only as an already overcome stage of a mankind that can also be adequately relativized. This, in fact, means that we need roots in order to survive and that we cannot lose sight of God if we do not want to lose our human dignity” (Ratzinger 2005b, 9-10).

In this context of great moral relativism and its effects on family life, the Christian faith and its profession in family life take on new significance.

Joseph Ratzinger has repeatedly stressed that Christianity “as the religion of the persecuted, as a universal religion, existing beyond the various states and peoples, has negated the right of the state to consider religion as part of the state order, thus postulating freedom of worship. It has always defined human beings, all people without exception, as creatures of God and the image of God, and proclaimed their dignity, recognising this as a principle applicable within the prevailing social order. In this sense, this enlightenment has a Christian source and was generated, not coincidentally, in the very bosom of the Christian faith that is where Christianity, contrary to its nature, had become a tradition and a state religion. Although philosophy, as the search for rationality (including our faith), has always accompanied Christianity, it has too much restrained the voice of reason. The merit of the Enlightenment was that it re-proposed these original values of Christianity and gave its own voice to reason. The Second Vatican Council, in its Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, re-emphasized this profound relationship between Christianity and the Enlightenment in an attempt to conciliate a genuine consensus between the Church and modern thought, which constitutes a rich heritage to be safeguarded by both parties” (Ratzinger 2005a, 10-12).

In the much-needed dialogue between non-believers and Catholics, Christians must be very vigilant in remaining faithful to this fundamental orientation: to live a faith that comes from the Logos, from a Creative Reason that is likewise open to all that is truly rational. With this in mind, it is worth emphasising that faith, despite being Grace, is also, and should be, passed on within the family.

One cannot build a meaningful and dignified personal and social life through the effort of creating human things to the total exclusion of God. Such an approach is increasingly leading contemporary man towards the edge of the abyss, towards the complete marginalisation of man. Therefore, the axiom of the illuminists should be reversed and it should be said that even the one who cannot find the way to accept God should try to live and orient their life *veluti si Deus daretur*, as if God existed. This is the advice that Pascal gave to

his non-believing friends; this is the advice that we also want to give today to our non-believing friends. In this way, no one will be restricted in their freedom, but all our things will receive the support and the criterion they urgently need.

Speaking of the transmission of faith in and through the family, it is clear at this point in history that what is needed most of all is that people's faith, enlightened and lived, should make God credible in this world. The negative testimony of Christians, who spoke of God and at the same time lived against him, darkened the image of God and opened the gate to unbelief. "We need people who remain gazing at God, learning from Him true humanity. We need people whose intellect is enlightened by the light of God and to whom God will open the heart, so that their intellect can speak to the intellect of others and their heart can open the heart of others. Only through people who have been touched by God can God return to people. We need people like St. Benedict of Nursia, who in a time of decay and decline went into complete solitude and managed, after all the purifications he had had to undergo, to rise to the light, to return and found Monte Cassino, a city on a mountain that, amidst so many ruins, united the forces shaping a new world. Thus St. Benedict, like Abraham, became the father of many nations. The recommendations given to the monks at the end of his rule are indications that also show us the way upwards, beyond crises and rifts. «Just as there is the fierceness of evil, which leads away from God and leads to hell, so there is the zeal of good, which leads away from sins and leads to God and eternal life. Let this zeal, therefore, distinguish monks in their life of fervent love so that they may be ahead of one another in showing reverence (Roman 12:10). Let them bear with patience their spiritual and bodily infirmities. [...] Let them show to one another a brotherly love, pure in intention. Let them fear God because they love him. [...] May nothing ever be more important to them than Christ, who deigns to lead us together to eternal life»" (Ratzinger 2005b, 12-13).

Viewed from the practical side, it is worth recalling Pope Francis' words in *Amoris laetitia* about how "the weakening of faith and religious practice in some societies affects families and makes them more reclusive with their difficulties. The synod fathers concluded that «one of the greatest miseries of today's culture is loneliness, the product of the absence of God in people's lives and the fragility of relationships. There is also a general sense of powerlessness in the face of socio-economic reality, which often leads to the destruction of families. [...] It is common for families to feel abandoned due to a lack of interest and little attention from institutions. The negative consequences from the point of view of social organisation are obvious: from a demographic crisis to educational difficulties, from the difficulty of accepting a life that is being born to perceiving the presence of older people as a burden, to the spread of

emotional disorders, sometimes leading to violence. It is the duty of the state to create the legislative and labour conditions to ensure a future for young people and to help them in their plan to start a family»” (Francis 2016, 43).

It is a well-known fact that man, who by nature is inclined to explore the world and form bonds with other people, yearns to know this world of meanings. The first and most important people who introduce us to this world of meanings are parents and other people in the family. This is perfectly visible in the case of a child who, while getting to know the outside world and himself, constantly asks adults questions such as “what is this?”, “what is it called?”, “what does it mean?”. These and similar questions are first answered by the family. “The family is the first to teach that a smile and outstretched hands signify openness and friendliness, while a furrowed brow and a frown signify tension, a bad mood, an obstacle to interpersonal communication, that the black colour signifies sadness and mourning, while white signifies joy and a wedding, that the three letters forming the sign «yes» signify consent and approval, while the two letters forming the sign «no» signify prohibition and negation. The world of meanings into which the family introduces the child may be more or less abundant, more or less conscious” (Dyczewski 2003, 34-35).

The family, by introducing the child and adults to the world of meanings, plays towards them the role of a kind of doorkeeper to the cultural world of their national, religious group and wider cultural circles. The greater resource of meanings acquired in the family allows them to understand the culture of these diverse circles better and experience it more deeply, and then enrich it with their own creativity. Therefore it is difficult for an adult Pole to understand, experience and develop the whole symbolism of the items and behaviours of Christmas, which are an important element of Polish culture, if, as a child, he or she did not decorate a Christmas tree, did not break a wafer, did not arrange a Nativity scene, did not sing Christmas carols, did not offer wishes and did not experience any emotions during the Christmas Eve supper. Unfortunately, the number of such Poles is increasing. For them, Christmas, very rich in symbolic elements and behaviours, is boring because they do not understand it. Therefore they stop celebrating it, but only relax, and thus loosen their bond with the cultural heritage of Christmas, so typical of Polish culture (Dyczewski 2003, 35). *Familiaris consortio* summarizes the tasks of passing on the faith in and through the family as follows “The Christian family has among its essential tasks also an ecclesial one. It is called to build up the Kingdom of God in history by participating in the life and mission of the Church. To understand better the foundations, contents and characteristics of this participation, it is necessary to study the manifold and powerful bonds which unite the Church and the Christian family, creating from them, as it were, a «Church in miniature» (*Ecclesia domestica*), and which make it a kind

of living reflection and historical representation of the mystery of the Church. The Church Mother, above all, gives birth to, educates and builds up the Christian family, carrying out in it the salvific mission received from the Lord. In the preaching of the Word of God, the Church reveals to the Christian family its true identity, what it is and what it ought to be according to the Lord's plan. In the celebration of the sacraments, the Church enriches and strengthens the Christian family with the grace of Christ, so that it may be sanctified for the glory of the Father. By proclaiming with renewed force the new commandment of love, the Church inspires and guides the Christian family in the service of love so that they may imitate and live out that same love of self-giving and self-sacrifice which Christ nourishes for all mankind" (John Paul II 1981, 49). The Church creates the climate for Her mission and the conditions for the family to create family culture and, in turn, to continue to participate in this culture-forming process.

4. Conditions conducive to the creation and communication of culture by the family

There are some families that play an excellent role as conveyors and creators of culture, some that play it less well, and some that play it inappropriately and contribute to a decline in the level of culture. Many factors are at play here. The most important prerequisite is that family members, above all parents, are aware that they pass on the Christian culture of their nation, their society, their Church, and at the same time can create their own family culture. Obviously, both the transfer of cultural heritage and the creation of new cultural elements are richer if families participate to a sufficiently wide extent in the culture of their society, if they are aware of the essential elements of its culture and are able to combine them with the culture of other societies, if they pass on to the younger generation the overall heritage of the groups to which they belong, and if they do this in a holistic process of socialisation. Of other determinants, already typical of the family, Leon Dyczewski points to seven basic ones (2003, 45):

- 1) the internal atmosphere of the family, that is, the spiritual climate reflected in living family relationships. The more positive it is, free of permanent conflict, based on mutual trust and imbued with a bond of affection, the more and more fully the generations pass on the Christian culture to one another.
- 2) the permanence and stability of family life and the ability to overcome difficulties in life. All forms of disorganisation of family life, especial-

ly divorce, as well as too frequent changes in the living environment, hinder and even disrupt the family's cultural-forming function. The creation and transmission of culture require peace and quiet, although creative inspiration itself is the effect of the creator's spiritual impetus. The antecedents already stated that "where the guns sound, the muses are silent". This observation is fully confirmed by research on the contemporary family (Dyczewski 2003, 46).

- 3) appropriate participation in the entirety of the family life of both spouses and generations. Each of them, because of their different psycho-physical characteristics and life experiences, their different nature of work, activity and aspirations, emphasises distinct elements of the general social and family culture. The domination or, the worse, complete exclusion from the transmission and creation of culture of one of the spouses of parents, grandparents or children impoverishes the culture-forming processes in the family. Then both the creation of family culture and its transmission are incomplete.
- 4) the bond with the families of origin, with relatives and with befriended families. The culture-forming role of the family requires a wealth of content and forms. This richness is all the greater and more varied if parents and children have more frequent and positive contact with relatives of various degrees and with befriended families. This is particularly important in big cities, where young people are drawn to and where they start families. In these cases they should not isolate themselves and lose contact with their former environment. On the contrary, they should cultivate family bonds despite spatial or social distance. They should also establish lasting contacts with some of the families of their new environment, which will help them to fulfil their culture-forming function.
- 5) an adequate level of housing and living conditions. In order to appropriately fulfil its culture-forming function, a family needs adequate housing conditions and a sufficiently high income. Financial poverty or very difficult housing and living conditions hinder or even disable the transmission of cultural heritage and its enrichment with new creations. Studies on family budgets show that as family income decreases, the family first reduces spending on culture. Families, defending their existence, then allocate money primarily for food, housing and clothing, and thus for satisfying basic needs, whereas there is no sufficient amount for developmental needs (Dyczewski 2003, 47).
- 6) the ability to celebrate (style of celebration) and make creative use of leisure time. If during holidays and spare time, understood here as family time after work and after satisfying basic needs, family members

relax together, are open and have time for each other, talk to each other, exchange information, do something, develop their interests and hobbies then the family performs its culture-forming function fruitfully.

- 7) openness to spiritual and supernatural values, to sacramental life. The presence of spiritual values in family life broadens and deepens the family's interests and experiences, and provides deep motivation to do the good for one another, to live in truth and to seek beauty. The presence of supernatural values in the family broadens its interests and adds profundity to its activities, enriches experiences and roots the family in a vision of future life (Dyczewski 2003, 47-48).

The optimal situation for the family to fulfil its culture-forming role occurs when the aforementioned conditions appear jointly in the family.

In conclusion, it is worth recalling that the world in its present form, as a historical fact, enters into the divine plan. Being one of the essential elements of the Christian vocation, it is at the same time the field in which the evangelical message is being implemented (Nagórny 1997, 47).

This message, in order to be heard by particular families and people of particular epochs, must be proclaimed to them by the word and testimony of Christians involved in the matters of this world. And for this mission, which is the mission of the whole Church, to be accomplished, it is necessary that the Christian be aware of the characteristics of the world of his time, that he bear witness to it with his faith and his life. The moral life of the Christian must indeed be shaped by the need to respond to the problems of the here and now. This happens inclusively with the transmission of culture in families. The characteristics of the contemporary world, different from those of the world of yesterday, constitute a kind of call to the Christian's ethical action. These characteristics belong to God's plan, to the definition of God's calling, defined by the moral mission of the Christian.

In a specifically Christian ethic of responsibility for the family and responsibility within the family, it should never be forgotten that historicity is an essential dimension of human existence. Man has a history, he himself is history, in which he directs his destiny and shapes his course of life and that of his fellow men. This always happens in the family or in family-like relationships. Human experience is always the mediation between past and future. The current moment is truly a presence before God and mutually with oneself when man gives creative direction to what he has received from the past as a common heritage. In a fundamental way, this is the heritage of culture which the family passes on.

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