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Th e **A**ssociation
of the
Holy **F**amily

Family Life Section
Social Action Department
N. C. W. C.
1312 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D. C.

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The Abbey Student Press
St. Benedict's College
Atchison, Kansas

INTRODUCTION

It is apparent to all who care to see that our family-life today is showing alarming symptoms of disease and unmistakable signs of decay. Indeed, things have come to such a pass that the common Father of Christendom has been impelled, through his Encyclical on Marriage, to call the attention of the entire human race to the critical condition of our modern domestic world.

The causes of this deplorable situation are many. Outstanding among them, however, are unquestionably the pagan ideals of the day. These have made deep inroads into the modern home. Masses of families outside of the Church have felt their baneful influence. Many within the fold have not been left unaffected. It is all but a practical commentary on the words of the psalmist: "Unless the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it."

Already in the days of Leo XIII had this neo-paganism begun to show itself. Eager to check its ravages within the home, this far-seeing Pontiff established the *Association of the Holy Family*, a league in which he wished all Catholic families enrolled. Approved in 1892, this organization spread to various parts of the world, including the United States. Unfortunately, however, it has long since become inoperative in our midst. This is much to be regretted today when theories subversive of the Christian ideals of marriage have become even more prevalent than in the days of Leo, and when the forces of evil and of error

have become much more bold in their efforts against the Christian home.

Confident that the Association is still in our day a most practical and effective answer to the dangers that threaten the home and hopeful that it may be speedily re-established in our midst, this brochure has been prepared to serve as a guide to those who may be interested in furthering such a worthy project. The booklet briefly indicates the nature and purpose of the organization, its chief rules, and the privileges and indulgences that are offered its members. A short citation from the Apostolic Letters of Leo XIII approving the organization and several excerpts from a pastoral letter establishing it in one of the dioceses of this country are also included.

—Rev. Edgar Schmiedeler, O.S.B., Ph.D.,
Director, Family Life Section, N.C.W.C.

The Association *of the Holy Family*

I.

Purpose

THE purpose of the Association of the Holy Family is set forth in the first statute, as follows: "The purpose of this pious Association shall consist in this, that Christian families consecrate themselves to the Holy Family of Nazareth, pay homage to it, and hold it up as a model by means of daily prayers recited before its image and by conforming their lives to the exalted virtues of which it gave an example to every social class and particularly to working men."

II.

Officials

The statutes of the Association provide for officials at Rome, namely, a Cardinal Protector and his advisors in the Sacred Congregation of Rites, and for a Director in each diocese. Pastors serve as Moderators or Directors in their respective parishes.

III.

A Summary

of the Rules and Regulations of the Association

i. Heads of families are to apply for enrollment in the Association of the Holy Family.

2. Admission to the Association is to be sought from the pastor of the congregation of which the applicant is a member.

3. The consecration of families should take place in accordance with the formula prescribed and approved by the Supreme Pontiff, Leo XIII (see p. 10). This can be done by individual families or by a group of families assembled for the purpose in their parish church in the presence of their pastor or someone delegated by him.

4. The prayer, "O Most Loving Jesus" (see p. 10), should be said every day. Its omission, however, does not deprive of membership.

5. The indispensable conditions for membership are: a) Enrollment in the Association; b) The presence of a picture or statue of the Holy Family in one's home; c) The daily recitation of a prayer before a picture or statue.

6. The prayers of the Association may be said in church, but before a picture of the Holy Family.

7. Other prayers to the Holy Family may be permitted with the approval of the Ordinary.

8. While the rules of the Association of the Holy Family do not bind under pain of sin, the neglect of their observance deprives of the indulgences that might otherwise be gained.

9. It was decided by the Sacred Congregation of Rites (February 13, 1892) that students in seminaries and colleges and members of religious communities may be enrolled in the Association.

10. The diocesan Director should annually transmit to the central organization at Rome information regarding the number of families that have joined the Association.

IV.

*Indulgences**Granted to the Pious Association of the Holy Family*

A. Plenary Indulgences

TO each and every member of the Association of the Holy Family who, after a sincere confession and the reception of the Holy Eucharist, shall visit a church or public chapel and there pray for our intentions there shall be the right of gaining a plenary indulgence on the following days:

1. On the day of their entrance into the Association, after they have recited the Act of Consecration approved by us through the Sacred Congregation of Rites. (See p. io)

2. On that day of the year when a general meeting is held (according to the custom of the place where the Association exists) for the purpose of renewing their promises.

3. On the feasts of Our Lord Jesus Christ:

a) The Nativity; b) The Circumcision; c) The Epiphany; d) The Resurrection; e) The Ascension.

Also on the following feasts of the Blessed Virgin:

f) The Immaculate Conception; g) The Nativity; h) The Annunciation; i) The Purification; j) The Assumption.

Also on the following days:

k) The feast of St. Joseph, the spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary—19th day of March; l) The Patronage of St. Joseph—third Sunday after Easter; m) The Espousal of the Blessed Virgin Mary—23d day of January.

4. On the titular feast of the whole Association.

5. On any day of each month, which is left to the free choice of the sodalists, provided they shall recite during the month in their families, before a picture of the Holy Family, the prescribed prayers.

6. To those on the point of death, and unable to make their confession and receive the Holy Eucharist,

but who shall have sorrow for their sins and call upon the holy name of Jesus, either with their lips, or, if unable to speak, with their hearts.

B. Partial Indulgences

1. Each and every member of the Association of the Holy Family who, with at least contrite heart, shall visit the church in which the Association has been established, or some other church or shrine, and there pray to God for the well-being of Christendom, can gain the partial indulgence of seven years and seven quarantines:

- a) On the Visitation)
- b) On the Presentation) Of the Blessed Virgin.
- c) On the Patronage)

d) On whatever day these same associates, with their families who have been enrolled, shall gather together before a picture of the Holy Family and recite with contrite heart the prescribed prayers.

e) On the days on which the associates shall attend the meetings.

2. These same associates may gain an indulgence of three hundred days as often as they shall repeat with contrite heart (in any language) before a picture of the Holy Family the prayer that has been prescribed for daily use (see p. io).

If, however, there are members who, on account of infirmity or some other reason, cannot recite this prayer, they will be able to gain the same indulgences by devoutly saying the Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory be to the Father, five times.

3. The members of this Association can gain once a day an indulgence of two hundred days by repeating (in any language whatever) the following ejaculation:

“Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, enlighten us, aid us, save us. Amen.”

4. Members who endeavor to get other families to become members of this pious and all-embracing Association can gain one hundred days' indulgence.

5. An indulgence of sixty days can be gained by the members of the Association as often as a) they devoutly

assist at the holy sacrifice of the Mass and other divine sendees in the parish church in which the Association is established; b) as often as they recite the Our Father and Hail Mary five times for deceased members; c) as often as they shall endeavor to or succeed in reconciling family differences; d) as often as they shall strive to lead back to the way of salvation those families who may have strayed from the path of righteousness; e) or exercise their zeal in instructing children in Christian doctrine; f) or perform any other pious work that may redound to the well-being of the Association.

All these indulgences are applicable to the souls in purgatory.

V.

Privileges Granted

To the Pious Association of the Holy Family

A. To Members in General

The Mass offered up for a deceased member, at any altar whatever, has all the benefits of a privileged altar.

B. To Parish Priests

1. They enjoy the benefits of a privileged altar on any three days of the week they choose, provided they have not the benefits of a privileged altar for some other reason.

2. According to the schedule appended, they have the faculty to bless outside of Rome beads, rosaries, crosses, crucifixes, small statues, and medals, and to apply to them all the indulgences which the Sovereign Pontiff usually grants. This faculty, however, is only to be exercised for members already received into the Association: a) on the day when they become members; b) on the day when they solemnly renew their act of consecration.

VI.

Approved Prayers

An Act of Consecration

To be Recited by Christian Families Who Consecrate
Themselves to The Holy Family

O JESUS, our most loving Saviour, Thou Who wast sent down from heaven to enlighten the world by Thy teaching and example, and Who didst will to pass the greater part of Thy holy life in lowliness at Thy home in Nazareth, subject to Mary and Joseph, and thereby didst hallow the household which was to be the pattern for all Christian families, do Thou in Thy goodness receive our household, which this day consecrates itself to Thee; protect and guard us, strengthen us, in Thy holy fear, establish in our hearts the peace and concord of Christian charity, so that each one of us, becoming like to the divine model of Thy family, may be sharers of eternal joy.

O Mary, most loving Mother of Jesus Christ, our Mother, through thy love and mercy intercede that Jesus receive this act of consecration and pour out upon us His graces and blessings.

O Joseph, most holy guardian of Jesus and Mary, help us by thy prayers in all our necessities both of body and soul, that, together with the Blessed Virgin Mary and thyself, we shall praise and thank Christ Jesus, our divine Redeemer.

A Prayer

To be Said Every Day Before a Picture of The Holy Family

O MOST loving Jesus, Who didst hallow by Thy surpassing virtues and the example of Thy home life the household Thou didst choose to live in whilst upon earth, mercifully look down upon this family, whose members, humbly prostrate before Thee, implore Thy protection. Remember that we are Thine, bound and conse-

crated to Thee by a special devotion. Protect us in Thy mercy, deliver us from all danger, help us in our necessities, and impart to us strength to persevere always in the imitation of Thy holy family, so that, by serving Thee and loving Thee faithfully during this mortal life, we may at length give Thee eternal praise in heaven.

O Mary, dearest Mother, we implore thy assistance, knowing that thy divine Son will hearken to thy petitions.

And do thou, most glorious patriarch, St. Joseph, help us with thy powerful patronage, and place our petitions in Mary's hands, that she may offer them to Jesus Christ.

VII.

The Association of the Holy Family

(Taken from the Apostolic Letters of Leo XIII, June 14, 1892)

“EVERYONE realizes that the well-being of the individual and of the State depends in great measure upon the institution of the family. The more deeply virtue strikes its roots in the home, the more carefully the souls of children are fashioned in accordance with the precepts of religion through the word and example of parents, the more abundant will be the fruit that will redound for the common good. Consequently it is a matter of prime importance that domestic life not only be holily established, but that it also be regulated by sacred laws and that the spirit of religion and the Christian plan of life be diligently and constantly promoted within the home. This is precisely why the merciful God, when He decreed the work of human reparation which had been awaited for so many centuries, so arranged the plan and order of this undertaking that its very beginnings might bring to the attention of the world the imposing sight of a divinely constituted family in which all might see the most perfect domestic society and the model of all virtue and of all holiness. Such was the family of Nazareth in which, before the full light shone forth to all peoples, the Sun of Justice, namely, Christ God our Saviour, was hidden with the Virgin Mother and with St. Joseph, who discharged

the office of father towards Jesus. There is no doubt that the highest of those praiseworthy qualities which in social and domestic intercourse grow out of the mutual duties of charity, of the holiness of morals and of the practice of piety, shone forth in that Holy Family which, although it came after some, served as a pattern to the rest. By a kindly design of Providence, it has been so constituted that all Christians of whatever condition or place, if they direct their attention towards it, can readily find therein a motive and an inducement to the practice of every' virtue. Fathers of children possess in St. Joseph a complete model of vigilance, for Joseph, too, was bound to provide for the necessities of the day by means of his toil. The Most Holy Virgin Mother of God is for mothers an enviable example of love, modesty, the spirit of submission, and of perfect faith. In Jesus Himself, who was subject to them, children have a divine pattern of obedience to admire, reverence, and imitate. . . ."

VIII.

Excerpts from a Pastoral Letter
Establishing the Association

Rev. Brethren and Dear Children:

Deeply concerned in the welfare of the souls committed to our charge, we deem it our sacred duty to address you, at the beginning of the holy season of Lent, on a most important subject, namely:

The Family

We do this in accordance with the Apostolic Letters of our Holy Father, Leo XIII, issued June 14, 1892. "All men know," says the Sovereign Pontiff, "that prosperity, public and private, depends chiefly upon the constitution of the family;" and no mere human organization is of greater importance. The constitution of the family is the direct work of God; it is not the result of human wis-

dom, nor the result of certain peculiar circumstances, such as were favorable to the formation of communities or of states, but it proceeds immediately from His hand. God created Adam, the first man; He formed Eve, the first woman; both resplendent with innocence and holiness; and He gave Eve to Adam, and blessed their union. Thus the family was instituted as the foundation of communities and states, but ever superior to them. It is established on holiness as its foundation, and by its very nature it is a religious union. God has surrounded the family with such simple and powerful safeguards, that no civilized state or community which undermines its foundation, or interferes with its God-given rights, can long survive such violation.

The Family as Continued by the Church

The Church continues the family as established by God Himself, and upholds it in the face of all opposition, whether coming from passions or ignorance of individual persons, petty tyrants or powerful nations. The Christian man and the Christian woman enter on married life in holiness, that is: in the state of grace. For this purpose they worthily receive the sacrament of penance. They are married at Mass, receive a special blessing at the hand of the Church, and their union is sealed with the blood of Christ, whom they receive in Holy Communion. Thus the family, as continued in the Church, is a sacramental union, representing in the flesh that ineffable spiritual union between Christ and His Church, as St. Paul teaches: Marriage "is a great sacrament.... in Christ and in the Church," Eph. 5,32. All the graces and blessings for both soul and body are thus placed within the reach of the married couple, and a holy offspring is the fruit of a family, which is true to its character of holiness.

Dangers to the Family

It is necessary, dear brethren, to recall to mind the truths, the Almighty has made the very foundation of the family, which in our days is assailed on all sides by "the old serpent, the devil, who is a liar from the begin-

ning.” He has succeeded by various artifices to undermine the family. He persuades the people to consider marriage as a mere human contract, which may be entered into at pleasure, for worldly reasons, and without any regard to religion and the eternal welfare. Divorce and mixed marriage are another evil design against the family. Divorce has become alarmingly prevalent, as thousands of disrupted families prove; mixed marriages are becoming so numerous that thousands of Catholic families lament the spiritual death of sons and daughters with their offspring. In consequence of these and other artifices of the devil, Catholic homes have been invaded by worldliness, and the spirit of piety and prayer is banished from them; the children of such families generally grow up in ignorance of the faith and its holy practices, and of the means of their eternal salvation, ever putting the temporal above the eternal. Beloved children, you know of these dangers to the Christian family and the Christian home; you see the spiritual ruin of thousands sprung from Christian parents, whose names are blotted out of the book of life, as they disappear from the records of the holy Church. . . .

The Family of Nazareth. The Pattern for Christian Families

Holiness and happiness reigned supreme at the home of the Holy Family of Nazareth, the pattern for Christian families. Pope Leo XIII says in his Apostolic Letters: “Fathers of children possess in St. Joseph a complete model of vigilance and paternal foresight, for Joseph, too, was bound to provide for the necessities of the day by means of his own toil. The most holy Virgin, Mother of God, is for mothers an admirable example of love, modesty, the spirit of submission and of perfect faith. In Jesus Himself, who was subject to them, ‘children have a divine pattern of obedience to admire, reverence and imitate’.” For the purpose of bringing back into the Christian home the spirit of piety and prayer, our Holy Father has established the League of the Holy Family to be intro-

duced all over the Catholic world, on whose members he showers an abundance of blessings. He requires the bishops to appoint diocesan directors, and the parish priest is made the local director for the members of his respective mission.

Obligations of the Members of the Holy Family League

The chief obligation which the members take upon themselves is to say their family prayers in common, that is, the family should pray together morning and night, before and after meals, adding a prayer to the Holy Family in the evening before a picture of the same. On the day of their reception into the League they will say the prayer of their consecration to the Holy Family and renew it once every year on the day appointed by the priest in charge of the respective congregation. This League, being confined to the home, will not interfere with any sodality or society already established in the respective congregation, but will greatly aid them. Every family should procure a little book, containing the rules, prayers and the list of indulgences granted to the members, and a picture of the Holy Family to be obtained either through the priest or a respectable book dealer appointed by him; the picture, however, shall first be blessed. We sent to each of the priests in charge of congregations a sample copy of the little book. . . .

How to Establish the League of the Holy Family

After the reading of our Pastoral the parish priest will ascertain the number of books and Holy Family pictures needed, which he will procure either himself or through a respectable book dealer. After this he will appoint a certain Sunday during the holy season of Lent for the confessions and communions of those who intend to join the Holy Family League on that day, and at a suitable hour enter their names on the book previously prepared. The act of consecration to the Holy Family will then be read in public, before a picture of the same, and, wherever

possible, the exercise should terminate with benediction of the most holy sacrament. Thus every parish priest will endeavor by instruction, public or private, to bring his flock to Nazareth, that is: to receive all his families into the League and introduce and keep up family prayers.

Catholic Pictures in Catholic Homes

The Holy Family League has this other advantage of bringing a beautiful and edifying picture into Catholic homes. In many of these we find pictures which are neither edifying nor beautiful, placed there for the want of anything better; in others we find scarcely a sign of their Catholicity. Edifying and pious pictures should be in Catholic homes.

The Diocesan Director—Conclusion

The Holy Father orders the appointment of a Diocesan Director, to whom the number of families received during the year must be forwarded in the month of May, to be sent to Rome. We appoint to this important office the Rev.----- . He will attend to all matters of the Holy Family League and place himself in communication with the Reverend Clergy.

The local directors enjoy great privileges, for instance the privileged altar several times a week. Thus his Holiness desires to interest both Clergy and people in spreading this League in order to bring about the great results for Church and State, which he aims at, and of which he says: "All who know and who deplore, as we do, the depravation and corruption of Christian morals, the extinction within families of the spirit of religion and of piety, the uncontrolled rising of the desire for earthly things, will eagerly desire to apply to evils, so great and so many, some timely healing. And nothing could be conceived of greater help and assistance for Christian families, than to set before them the example of the Holy Family, wherein are contained the perfection and completion of all the virtues of home."

