

Reviews

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Review of the monograph entitled *Strong Families – Strong Societies* Elżbieta Osewska (Ed.) Kraków 2019, pp. 243

Issues related to the nature of the family, its constitutive features and the implemented tasks are currently one of the most frequently discussed topics in a society as well as the subject of scientific research of numerous disciplines belonging to various fields, especially to social sciences, humanities and theology. Such a great interest in the family results, first of all, from the significance of this natural community in human life and in the achievement of temporal and eschatological goals. The second reason for the interest in the family is its crisis, especially in western culture. However, it is not only about the increasingly smaller number of concluded marriages and the rapidly growing rate of divorces, but, above all, about the revaluation of the very essence of the family. This is undoubtedly a severe social problem that endangers the foundations of states and nations as well as a religious one. From the Christian point of view, marriage and family constitute the basic vocation of a human being looking from the perspective of salvation.

For the above reasons, it is satisfying to observe the creation of a monograph prepared by several authors and entitled *Strong Families – Strong Societies*, prepared under editorial supervision of a well-known and respected specialist in the

field – Prof. Elżbieta Osewska. The authors of individual chapters are scientists and therapists from various countries, mainly from Poland and Slovakia, and from various scientific centres. As the title itself proves, the monograph has been written entirely in English. This solution is the most appropriate and desirable from the point of view of dissemination and internationalisation of the published reflections. The English language of the reviewed monograph gives reasonable hope that this publication will reach a wide audience, both interested in scientific reflection as well as practical care for contemporary families.

The issue of the monograph primarily concerns the complex interactions between family and society; it somewhat constitutes a development of the theses formulated by John Paul II in *Familiaris Consortio* (FC 42-43), where the family was referred to as the first and vital cell of society whereas family life as an experience of communion and participation. Special emphasis was put on transferring values in the family and showing the lasting influence of families on shaping entire societies. Not only do the authors of individual chapters analyse the problems and challenges that families face, but they also focus on their advantages, prospects and opportunities.

The reviewed monograph has been divided into two parts. The first of them focuses on promoting marriage and the strengths of the family. In the second one, various problems observed in contemporary families and proposals for their therapy are the subject of analyses. In the first part, Józef Stala analyses the meaning of conjugal love in building a permanent marriage. In turn, Richard Kucharčík cites the most important reasons for supporting the natural model of marriage. After 50 years since its publication, Nadia Delicata returns to the interpretation of the encyclical *Humane Vitae* from a new perspective, and Alena Mátejová and Pavol Tománek characterise the Slovak family as well as social and legal means used in its functioning. Yet another author, Antoni Świerczek, analyses the role of the family in the formation of humanity. This part is closed by the reflection of Magdalena Syga who, based on the example of Polish emigrants in the Netherlands, predicts factors for adaptation to the life situation. In the second part of the monograph Christian Gostečnik, Robert Cvetek, Tanja Pate, Tanja Valenta, Barbara Simonič and Tanja Repič Slavič analyse the cyclical repetition of physical violence. Kristina Greif and Sara Jerebic write about sexual abuse against minors, and Drago Jerebic analyses the problem of addictions and its determinants. Saša Poljak Lucek and Tadeusz Michalik focus their reflections on corporal punishment and more broadly understood violence against children and young people.

The wide spectrum of authors and the variety of environments from which they originate naturally result in a certain variety of styles. All chapters, however, are logically connected with one another and consistently strive to solve the main issue of the monograph. It was not a simple task, due to the fact that it was necessary to develop the works of many authors in a unified way. However, the editor fulfilled this task in an exemplary way. The applied methodology, expressed in the elaborated sequence of individual chapters and paragraphs, is logical and transparent and proves the competence and methodological reliability of the editor.

The substantive level of the conducted reflections should be considered very high. This is mainly manifested by deep analyses of premises and convincing syntheses of conclusions. All authors also refer to current and reliable research results as well as very rich, meaningful and multilingual literature on the subject proving credibility to the theses as well as the authors' great erudition. A multidimensional and holistic approach to solving problems and weaknesses of contemporary families and societies should be considered as the great value of the monograph.

The monograph *Strong Families – Strong Societies*, prepared by several authors in English and presented for review, is a serious scientific work with high methodological, substantive and formal standards, worthy of promotion on the Polish and international arena. I therefore conclude that this monograph may be published in a prestigious scientific publication.