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The family in dialogue with God

Abstract

Marriage and family are a remarkable truth of human person and his community; a *communio personarum*. In the New Covenant, marriage and the family took on, aside the interhuman and natural dimensions, a relation and dialogue with God in Jesus Christ and in the power of the Holy Spirit. The family, as the fundamental cell of social life, possesses its place, duties, and purpose in the community of the Church. The Christian family as a domestic Church, is the natural and fundamental school of faith. The reception by Christian of the sacrament of marriage signifies a radical alteration in their life, their path to salvation, their dialogue with God. The sacrament of marriage is the source of the spiritual life both for the spouses and for the family as for it imparts its supernatural spiritual unity and makes it a divine institution. The truth is the foundation of marital and family dialogue with God. The family stands as the domestic Church and is present, at once creatively and dynamically, in the universal Church. On the way to holiness the family undertakes a prophetic, priestly, and royal mission.

Keywords

family, sacrament, domestic Church, holiness, marriage, dialogue

1. Introduction

The abundant variety of directions the human, as well as Christian vocation may take, most frequently assumes the form of marriage and family life. In relation to God, a particularly interesting category is dialogue. The analysis of the vision of the family as a domestic Church, with the indication of the prophetic, priestly and royal mission, cannot be omitted here either. This is a path to the realization of one's own humanity in the natural sense, while for the baptized it is the way to holiness. In the dynamics of the process of striving for holiness, it is necessary to point especially to the Eucharist and prayer, both of an individual and of the community, even communal.

It is also an intensely interesting sign of faith, hope and love with respect to God and neighbor, as well as to oneself.¹ Marriage and family are, moreover, a remarkable truth of the human person and his community, quite simply, a “*communio personarum*.”² In the entirety of the reflection, must be emphasized a personal aspect of the family as a community in its dialogue with the personal God.

2. The sacramentality of marriage – the basis of the family

In the New Covenant, marriage and the family took on, aside the interhuman and natural dimensions, a relation and dialogue with God in Jesus Christ and in the powers of the Holy Spirit. It is a matter of a dialogue which is the transcendental reflection of the dialogue among the persons of the Blessed Trinity and also a salvific dialogue of God with man in the Old Testament, as of Jesus Christ in the New Covenant, which constitute the successive phases of the history of salvation. God initiated a dialogue with man by means of revelation, to which man responds with religious faith, remaining himself in his proper mode of thinking and reacting. The eternal dialogue of the Word of God with God the Father found its maximal “carnal” expression in Jesus Christ.

The marital Covenant, through which man and woman form between themselves a community of their totality of life, finds its strength in the procreative

¹ A. F. Dziuba, *Być świadkiem*, “*Collectanea Theologica*” 72(2002), no. 4, pp. 105–122.

² *Stolica Apostolska, Karta Praw Rodziny*, Città del Vaticano 1983, preambula.

act, but for the baptized it was raised by Christ to the dignity of a sacrament.³ Furthermore, in itself, marriage places the spouses in the presence of a creative dialogue with God. The sacramental dignity of marriage is recognized by the Church in her awareness of the mind of Christ, and particularly in his dialoguing approach to man. The moment in which marriage was exalted to the dignity of an effective sign of grace was the paschal mystery of Christ itself, the fullest expression of His giving of Himself to His Spouse, the Church.⁴

The sacramentality of marriage is not something simply added onto marriage.⁵ What is more, marriage itself is the sacrament insofar as within it one lives in the perspective of faith in Christ and in creative union and dialogue with Him. The marital community of life and love becomes an effective sign of Christ's union with His Church.⁶

By the will of Christ, the very act of contracting a marriage bond between two baptized persons becomes a sacrament. The sacramentality of marriage also has a Christological and ecclesiological significance.⁷ Marriage is a recognizable sign of grace: the visibility of its sign is expressed adequately by the fact that here it is concerned with a marriage bond. A marital union without an external emphatic expression of the internal decision will be ineffective, for in the very nature of the union contracted there is the element of its self-evidence, and also a sacred sign directly concerned with holiness and sanctifying grace. This direction of a dialogue with sacramentality, holiness and the permanence of the marital bond ought to fill the heart of every man and woman living in marriage.

Through this sacrament, Christ confers upon the Christian family his assistance and care. This sacrament is a particular communitarian communion, a source of grace and holiness. In marriage Christ holds the place of primacy and endows it with a sacral and sacramental dignity. Ultimately, it is one of the sacraments instituted by Christ the Lord for the sanctification of man and woman

³ Jan Paweł II, *Encyklika "Redemptor hominis"*, Città del Vaticano 1979, no. 10.

⁴ P. Adnes, *Le mariage. Le mystère chrétien. Théologie sacramentaire*, Tournai 1963, pp. 140–141.

⁵ S. Czerwik, *Najnowsze wypowiedzi magisterium Kościoła o sakramentach*, "Ateneum Kapłańskie" 56 (1965), no. 334, pp. 287–293; B. Przybylski, *Teologia sakramentów*, "Ateneum Kapłańskie" 56 (1964), no. 334, pp. 260–268.

⁶ Paweł VI, *Encyklika "Humanae vitae"*, Città del Vaticano 1968, no. 8.

⁷ K. Wojacek, *Sakramentalność małżeństwa jako podstawa organizacji duszpasterstwa małżeństw*, "Roczniki Teologiczno-Kanoniczne" 1990, vol. 37, no. 6, pp. 17–18; Cz. Bartnik, *Sakrament małżeństwa*, "Roczniki Teologiczno-Kanoniczne" 37(1990), no. 2, pp. 101–108.

living in the community of marriage and the family. The Church is responsible for this particular community.⁸

3. The family as a domestic Church

The family, as the fundamental cell of social life, possesses its place, duties, and purpose in the community of the Church.⁹ This union is not merely external and accidental. Simply put, the Christian family is a symbol and compendium of the universal Church. And, moreover, is founded on the same rock. Therefore, this, as it were, miniature Church, closed within its domestic walls, thrives along with the great Church at-large and develops with her. The Church is to be found wherever the baptized gather in the Name of Lord and persevere with Him in a dialogue of love, and more so when they are united with themselves in a sacramental marriage and in the family. The family, by its very nature, enters the created order, but only faith and the sacrament of marriage elevate it to the salvific level on which are to be found the ecclesial roots of the family as well as its openness to dialogue with God.

The Church gives birth to, educates and builds the Christian family, fulfilling in its behalf the saving mission entrusted to her by Jesus Christ. The Church preaches the Word of God which reveals to the family its Christian identity, that which it is and ought to be, in keeping with the plan of the Creator and always remaining open to it. The Church confers the sacrament through which the family is enriched and strengthened with the grace of Christ so as to sanctify it to the glory of the Father.¹⁰ The Church preaches the new commandment of love through which the family is called and inspired to the service of love, that it might imitate and experience that same love, dedication and sacrifice,

⁸ J. Grzeškowiak, *Misterium małżeństwa. Sakrament małżeństwa jako symbol przymierza Boga z ludźmi*, Poznań 1993, pp. 15–19; J. Kłys, *Małżeństwo drogą do świętości*, in: F. Adamski (ed.), *Miłość – małżeństwo – rodzina*, Kraków 1985, pp. 139–182.

⁹ Jan Paweł II, *Adhortacja apostolska "Christifideles laici"*, Città del Vaticano 1988, no. 40; M. Marczewski, *Małżeństwo w świetle współczesnego rozumienia Kościoła*, "Zeszyty Naukowe KUL" 18 (1975), no. 4, pp. 15–26; J. Mariański, *Nauczanie Jana Pawła II o rodzinie a przemiany społeczno-moralne w Polsce*, "Ethos" (2004), no. 67–68, pp. 161–182.

¹⁰ Jan Paweł II, *Adhortacja apostolska "Familiaris consortio"*, Città del Vaticano 1981, no. 49; B. Mierzwiński, *Elementy teologii praktycznej małżeństwa i rodziny*, in: K. Majdański (ed.), *Teologia małżeństwa i rodziny*, vol. 1, Warszawa 1980, pp. 157–277.

which Christ offers to all mankind. On the other hand, the Christian family is in the Church and participates in her salvific mission, and itself makes manifest and real the body of the Church, possessing in her its own proper duties and purposes.

The Church appreciates the value of the family “for itself”. Nevertheless, one must not forget that the domestic church is not merely a microcosm of the universal Church. The title of domestic church is applied to the community of marriage and family chiefly because it is a specific focus for the realization of the fundamental functions of the Church, through which the Church itself realizes itself, thus becoming a sign of Christ in the world.¹¹ The Church is realized and builds up herself through the fulfillment of those functions and missions, which Christ fulfilled, namely, those we term, prophetic, priestly, and royal.¹²

Christian spouses, engrafted onto Christ by the sacrament of Baptism – onto Christ who is Prophet, Priest, and King – and by the power of the sacrament of marriage, included as a twofold unity in the spousal bond of Christ with His Church, are in a specific manner duly entitled and obliged to fulfill the functions proper to the whole Church.¹³ The spouses attain salvation in their own community through a dialoguing realization of Christ’s threefold mission. In realizing the prophetic, priestly, and royal mission in their family circle, they contribute to their and their children’s salvation, as well as the salvation of others.

Christian spouses and parents become, first of all, prophets to each other mutually and to their children and to the society in which they live. Above all else, the prophetic mission requires of Christian spouses and parents, an obedience in faith, of which a peerless example is Abraham.¹⁴ The sacrament of marriage presupposes and demands the existence of faith, hence, in practice, an openness

¹¹ *Familiaris consortio* 49; B. Czapliński, *Przemówienie w Radio Watykańskim (11.11.1963). Troska społeczeństwa chrześcijańskiego o powołania kapłańskie*, “Orędownik Diecezji Chełmińskiej” 14 (1963), no. 11–12, p. 267; M. Żurowski, *Rodzina “Kościołem domowym”*, “Chrześcijanin w świecie” 10 (1978), no. 12, pp. 44–70.

¹² J. Laskowski, *Małżeństwo i rodzina w świetle nauki Soboru Watykańskiego II*, Warszawa 1982, pp. 267–277.

¹³ *Familiaris consortio* 56.

¹⁴ Jan Paweł II, *Encyklika “Redemptoris Mater”*, Città del Vaticano 1987, no. 14; A. F. Dziuba, *Dynamika wiary*, Częstochowa 1997, pp. 21–37; J. K. Nagórny, *Teologiczna interpretacja moralności Nowego Przymierza*, Lublin 1989, pp. 354–356; R. Schnackenburg, *Nauka moralna Nowego Testamentu*, Warszawa 1983, pp. 311–316.

to dialogue with God. The Christian family as a “domestic church” is the natural and fundamental school of faith.¹⁵

Jesus Christ, the Messiah sent by the Father, became the one and eternal Archpriest of the New Covenant.¹⁶ The Church participates in the priesthood of Christ. The priestly dignity assigns the family a special place in the Church. It is an autonomous place which no one else can assume or occupy.¹⁷

The priesthood of the Christian family differs in essence from the hierarchical priesthood.¹⁸ In other words, participation in the priesthood of Christ is accomplished in a different manner and is directed in its duties in a way which is different from the ministerial priesthood, although its dialoguing reference to Christ is similar. The assigned role of the ministerial priesthood with respect to the priesthood of the family is expressed chiefly through service, including an openness to God. It is a particular accompanying of the family on its path in this world through the administration of the sacraments and prayer, the preaching the Word of God, and the example of evangelical witness of life, to the end that the family finds in priests the directors and teachers of life.¹⁹

The royal function of the family, its participation in the regality of Christ and the Church, depends on an attitude of service with respect to members of the family and to everyone else, to various strata of society and to all creation, in an openness to dialogue. This attitude is inspired by the dialogue of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, poured out on the hearts of members of the family by the Baptism of water and the Spirit.²⁰ It is a service of a dialoguing openness

¹⁵ *Familiaris consortio* 86; R. Laurentin, *La famiglia di Nazaret: il suo segreto*, in: A. S. Panimolle (ed.), *Famiglia*, Bologna 1986, pp. 109–120.

¹⁶ *Lumen Gentium* 5, 21; *Presbiteriorum ordinis* 1, 2, 12, 13; *Katechizm Kościoła Katolickiego* 1544–1545; *Gaudium et spes* 22; Jan Paweł II, *Dar i tajemnica*, Kraków 1996, passim; A. Vanhoye, *La nuova alleanza nel Nuovo Testamento*, Roma 1984, pp. 647–650.

¹⁷ *Familiaris consortio* 36; E. Ozorowski, *Kapłaństwo małżonków i rodzin*, in: E. Ozorowski (ed.), *Słownik małżeństwa i rodziny*, Warszawa Łomianki 1999, p. 182.

¹⁸ Jan Paweł II, *List do rodzin “Gratissimam sane” z okazji Roku Rodziny*, Città del Vaticano 1994, no. 6, 7; *Gaudium et spes* 24; *Katechizm Kościoła Katolickiego* 2205.

¹⁹ *Lumen Gentium* 10; *Gaudium et spes* 10; *Familiaris consortio* 64; M. Lena, *Chrześcijańskie wychowanie powołania*, in: B. Bejze (ed.), *Religia w życiu społecznym*, Warszawa 1995, pp. 240–256.

²⁰ Jan Paweł II, *Encyklika “Dominum et vivificantem”*, Città del Vaticano 1986, no. 56; *Presbiteriorum ordinis* 1; G. Helewa, *Alleanza nuova nel Cristo Gesù*, “Rivista di vita spirituale” 1976, vol. 30, pp. 5–31.

toward all people, in keeping with what Christ did and commanded his disciples to do.²¹

The best school of interhuman love is marriage and the family, for they are to teach man true and natural love, that is, the sacrifice of self for the good of the loved one, liberating the spirit from the natural inclination to egoism and the egocentric vision of only oneself.²² Along the path of everyday life, love in marriage and the family leads to growth and development, passing through various phases and being manifested in seeking for the good of another, while at the same time, giving to the other all that which is to be found in self-sacrifice.²³

4. The family as a community of holiness

The reception of the sacrament of marriage by the Christian, signifies a radical alteration in their life, their path to salvation, their dialogue with God. Hitherto they strove for salvation individually. From their wedding day onward they will be mutually responsible for their salvation.²⁴ Marriage, as a sacrament, is a special vocation to live in love and in a community of two, and successively, in a community increased by progeny; a life that constitutes a special participation in the realization of the divine plan of creative love. The family is the fundamental school of a life that is religious, hence a lifegiving openness to God. The family is a school of characters, capable of sacrificial love, and above all, directed to holiness which is the fruit of dialogue with God.²⁵

²¹ A. F. Dziuba, *Miłość*, in: J. Nagórny, K. Jeżyna (eds.), Jan Paweł II. *Encyklopedia Nauczania Moralnego*, Radom 2005, pp. 327–333.

²² Jan Paweł II, *Ojcostwo i macierzyństwo w zamysle Bożym. Przemówienie do uczestników Tygodnia Studiów nad małżeństwem i rodziną* (27.08.1999, "L'Osservatore Romano" 1999, vol. 20, no. 11, pp. 11–13; *Gaudium met spes* 48.

²³ *Familiaris consortio* 43; *Stolica Apostolska, Karta Praw Rodziny* 7; Jan Paweł II, *Encyklika "Laborem exercens"*, Città del Vaticano 1981, no. 10, 25; Benedykt XVI, *Przemówienie do pierwszej grupy Biskupów polskich. Problem chrześcijańskiego wychowania* (26.11.2005), in: Benedykt XVI do *Polskich biskupów. Przemówienia wygłoszone z okazji wizyty "ad limina Apostolorum"*, Poznań 2005, pp. 5–9; *Gaudium et spes* 61.

²⁴ *Gaudium et spes* 48; W. Skrzydlewski, *Chrześcijańska wizja miłości, małżeństwa i rodziny*, Kraków 1982, pp. 121–126; A. F. Dziuba, *Spowiedź małżeńska. Życie małżeńskie a sakramentalna posługa pokuty i pojednania (Zagadnienia wybrane)*, Kraków 2002, pp. 13–33.

²⁵ *Lumen Gentium* 32; Jan Paweł II, *List apostolski "Novo millennio ineunte"*, Città del Vaticano 2001, no. 31; Benedykt XVI, *Przemówienie do drugiej grupy Biskupów polskich*.

The human being's sanctification is accomplished on the vertical and horizontal stage in a dialoguing openness.²⁶ This is carried out in relationship to God and the human community. It follows then, that the family will become a school of sacrificial love, a cradle of holiness, which reaches its earthly summit and apex in dialogue with God in Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.²⁷

The source of the spiritual life of the spouses as well as of the of the family is the sacrament of marriage, for it imparts its supernatural spiritual unity and makes it a divine institution.²⁸ The Christian family, built on the sacrament of marriage as instituted by Christ, draws strength and help from this source, while the grace of this sacrament increases, empowers and reaffirms sanctifying grace, that particular sign that binds one to God.²⁹

The sacrament of marriage is joined with the Eucharist in an external liturgical ritual, but that is not all, for the Eucharist deepens its sacramental character, for it is the very source of Christian marriage.³⁰ The interior bond of marriage and the Eucharist are manifested as a covenant, a community of dialogue and mission.³¹ The Eucharist and the sacrament of marriage celebrate each in its own way the mystery of nuptial espousal – espousals with Christ and Christ with His Church in the commemoration of the Eucharistic sacrifice and the sacramental nuptials of Christian spouses. The mystery of Christ's espousal with the Church is consummated in the Paschal mystery and made present in the Eucharist. The

Odważna troska o zachowanie katolickiej i narodowej tożsamości, 3.12.2005, in: *Benedykt XVI do Polskich biskupów*, pp. 21–23; L. Pawlak, *Biblijne podstawy duchowości rodziny w adhortacji apostołkiej "Familiaris consortio"*, "Sprawy Rodziny" (2002), no. 10, pp. 49–54; S. Bolero, *Per una teologia della familia*, Roma 1992, pp. 18–48.

²⁶ J. Buxakowski, *Refleksje teologiczne nad celem duszpasterstwa rodzin*, "Studia Pelplińskie" 1973, vol. 3, pp. 204–208; S. Witek, *Teologia życia duchowego*, Lublin 1986, pp. 218–220.

²⁷ *Gaudium et spes* 48; Jan Paweł II, *Encyklika "Veritatis splendor"*, Città del Vaticano 1993, no. 107; *Familiaris consortio* 3; J. Salij, *Małżeństwo jako udział w Paschalnym Misterium Chrystusa*, "Ateneum Kapłańskie" 75(1978), no. 369, pp. 17–28.

²⁸ *Dei Verbum* 21; *Apostolicam actuositatem* 11; *List do rodzin* 18.

²⁹ *Katechizm Kościoła Katolickiego* 1664; *List do rodzin* 7; Jan Paweł II, *Encyklika "Evangelium vitae"*, Città del Vaticano 1995, no. 43.

³⁰ *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 78; Jan Paweł II, *Encyklika "Ecclesia de Eucharistia"*, Città del Vaticano 2003, no. 34; A. Scola, *Il mistero nunziale. Matrimonio e familia*, Roma 2000, pp. 155–168.

³¹ *Katechizm Kościoła Katolickiego* 1324; *Lumen Gentium* 11; *Gaudium et spes* 48; *Familiaris consortio* 57; E. Ozorowski, *Rodzina jako Kościół domowy*, in: K. Majdański (ed.), *Teologia małżeństwa i rodziny*, Warszawa 1990, vol. 2 pp. 41–49.

Eucharist and marriage are, moreover, together included in the Paschal mystery of Jesus Christ in a dialoguing manner.³²

The Eucharist remains a mystery of faith, a sign of dialogue with God, thus requiring a humble submission and a firm adherence to Divine Revelation and its defense against rationalism.³³ The Paschal mystery fully permits us more expressly to take note of the dialoguing union of marriage and the family with the Eucharist that flows from the sacrificial character of both sacraments. Marital love cannot exist without sacrifice. Personal dedication in the daily family life is expressed in conscious personal dedication of self that embraces the totality of the spouses' lives. In the sacrifice of the Mass, man offers that which is most dear, he offers the gift of himself, of his freedom.³⁴

The Eucharist plays a significant role in forming the family community and the children too. It should open itself in dialogue to others. It is important to indicate and demonstrate the unity of Holy Communion with the offering of Holy Mass, to introduce the child to the sacrifice of Christ the Lord and to teach the importance of small daily sacrifices. A child offering himself to the Father with the whole Church should unite with Christ's self-offering, bringing forward some gift, especially one linked to love of neighbor.³⁵

The family fulfills its priestly mission not only in the celebration of the Eucharist and the other sacraments and personal sacrifice offered to God's glory, but also by a life of prayer, and by a prayerful dialogue with the Father through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit.³⁶ Prayer is that dimension which introduces truth into the home, thus making it possible for all members of the family to sense a fraternal bond in begging God's forgive-ness for their respective failings,

³² *Presbiteriorum ordinis* 5; *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* 1, 13; *Redemptor hominis* 20.

³³ *Katechizm Kościoła Katolickiego* 1322,1374; J. Krasieński, *Przez wiarę i nadzieję ku cywilizacji miłości*, Sandomierz 1987, pp. 453–472; A. Hiebert, *The Foundations of Paul's Ethics*, in: J. Gaffney (ed.), *Essays in Morality and Ethics*. The Annual Publication of the College Theology Society, New York 1980, pp. 53–56.

³⁴ Benedykt XVI, *Encyklika "Deus caritas est"*, Città del Vaticano 2004, no. 14; *Veriatis splendor* 4; J. Salij, *Małżeństwo jako udział w Paschalnym Misterium Chrystusa*, pp. 17–29.

³⁵ Jan Paweł II, *List apostolski "Dmnicae cenae"*, Città del Vaticano 1980, no. 5; *Gravissimum educationis* 3; B. Mierzwiński, *Formy Duszpasterstwa rodzin*, in: E. Szczotok, A. Lisowska (eds.), *Komisja Episkopatu Polski Duszpasterstwa Ogólnego, Ewangelizacja wspólnoty małżeńskiej i rodzinnej. Program duszpasterski na rok 1993/1994*, Katowice 1993, pp. 403–416.

³⁶ *Lumen Gentium* 10; Jan Paweł II, *Modlitwa we wspólnocie rodzinnej*. Rozważanie przed modlitwą Anioł Pański (12.10.1980), in: E. Weron, A. Jaroch (eds.), *Jan Paweł II, Nauczanie papieskie*, vol. 3,2 (1980), Poznań–Warszawa 1986, pp. 461–461.

attaining therefrom peace of heart. It is a dialogue of hope.³⁷ From personal prayer is born the common prayer of the spouses and, then, family prayer. In keeping with Jesus Christ's assurance, such prayer reaffirms His presence and strengthens the hope that our prayers may be heard, and that our thanks may be in the future given.³⁸

The sense of the spouses' prayer and that of the entire family most profoundly expresses the description: "life of prayer", signifying that between prayer and life there exists a strict relationship. In such prayer is summarized all the wealth of Christian prayer, especially adoration, making us aware that at times it is difficult for us to decipher that which God wants of us. In summary, this stable, dialoguing contact with God, forms the personality and lifestyle of the community of the spouses and the entire Christian family. Prayer prepares them to become masters of the spiritual life in their family.³⁹

The process of educating family members to prayer is founded on positive experiences of prayer by the individual members of the family, especially by the children.⁴⁰

A child reacts to prayer in his own way and according to his own reasoning and will come to accept and embrace the great divine mysteries. In a prayerful climate a child is capable of experiencing even more profoundly than an adult person the presence of God in his life, then enter into dialogue with Him. Seeing his parents praying, a child may not yet know the words of prayer and understand them, but he will imitate his parents in what they are doing, and this will be his own dialogue with God.⁴¹

³⁷ *Gaudium et spes* 52; *Benedykt XVI, Przemówienie do trzeciej grupy Biskupów polskich. Od parafii do wolontariatu – laikat gotowy śpieszyć z pomocą potrzebującym, gdziekolwiek się znajdują* (17.12.2005), in: *Benedykt XVI do Biskupów polskich*, p. 33; J. Alfaro, *Chrześcijańska nadzieja i wyzwolenie człowieka*, Warszawa 1975, pp. 19–39; A. F. Dziuba, *Nadzieja*, in: J. Nagórny, K. Jeżyna (eds.), *Jan Paweł II, Encyklopedia Nauczania Moralnego*, pp. 342–348.

³⁸ *Familiaris consortio* 62; *Katechizm Kościoła Katolickiego* 2565; *Apostolicam actuositatem* 4; *Novo millennio ineunte* 43; Jan Paweł II, *Msza św. dla ludzi pracy na Zaspie* (12.06.1987), in: *Jan Paweł II w Polsce 2–10.VI.1979; 16–23.VI.1983; 8–14.VI.1987. Przemówienia i homilie*, Warszawa 1981, pp. 655–662.

³⁹ *Gaudium et spes* 50, 78; Jan Paweł II. *Encyklika "Dives in misericordia"*, Città del Vaticano 1980, no. 15; *Familiaris consortio* 59–62; I. Werbiński, *Modlitwa rodzinna*, in: E. Ozorowski (ed.), *Słownik małżeństwa i rodziny*, pp. 279–281.

⁴⁰ *Familiaris consortio* 60.

⁴¹ Jan Paweł II, *Przekroczyć próg nadziei*, Lublin 1995, pp. 100–102; *Familiaris consortio* 55, 74.

5. Conclusion

The correct dynamic of discernment of the family places it as the most fundamental structure of social life. It needs to be strongly underlined also from the anthropological point of view. It is the sign of the natural building of human relationships, in this instance the relationship between a man and a woman, united in a permanent and stable bond, which Christ raised to the dignity of a sacrament. This sacrament is a particular expression of the dialogue between spouses and then parents with God and God with them. This truth is the foundation of marital and family dialogue with God.

The family stands as the domestic church, at once creatively and dynamically present in the universal Church. This category of “ecclesiality” is very important in the correct view of the Christian family. It is important as it assumes prophetic, priestly, and royal mission. Such are the particular notes of its dialogue with God, which in their specificity place the family in a special relation to God and its members to each other. Thus understood, it is a particular focus of sanctification. Together then, marriage and family are the foundation of a “**communio personarum**”, marked by an emphatic relation to the Eucharist and to prayer.⁴² The proposed analyses clearly show that the category of dialogue in relation to the relationship of the family with God is an important theological and anthropological factor.

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