

# PARENTING THE CHURCH: MOTHERS, FATHERS, AND ROMAN CATHOLIC SOCIAL THOUGHT

Michael J. Schuck  
Department of Theology  
Loyola University Chicago  
[mschuck@luc.edu](mailto:mschuck@luc.edu)

## Abstract

This paper investigates what official Church social teaching could gainfully incorporate from the moral experience of faithful mothers and fathers who mightily endeavor to follow Jesus Christ in their marriages and family lives. The paper argues that primary among the lessons for official Church social teaching from the experience of Christian mothers and fathers is the moral significance of covenant living. After a brief orientation on covenant, the paper proceeds to the moral experience of covenant living in Christian marriage and family life. Here, nine moral practices (attachment, inclusion, acceptance, childbearing, equanimity, story-telling, authoritativeness, self-restraint, dissent) are discussed as witnessing to three dimensions of covenant living: fidelity, generativity, and spaciousness. The discussion then moves to a single, social-moral principle of covenant offered as an enrichment of official Church social teaching. As an example of this enrichment, the paper suggests how the principle of covenant adds moral strength to the Church's longstanding social-moral principles of human dignity, common good, and subsidiarity. It is in this sense that the paper asks the Church to see parenting as not only a gift mothers and fathers give each other and their families--the "Ecclesia domestica" of Lumen Gentium--but also a gift mothers and fathers give the guardians of official Church social teaching--the "Ecclesia docens" and "Ecclesia descens" of *Gaudium et spes*.

## Text

One of many remarkable features in *Gaudium et spes* is the trust it places in dialogue as an appropriate mode of Church-world engagement. "Everything we have said about the dignity of the human person, and about the human community and the profound meaning of human activity," claims *Gaudium et spes*, "provides the basis for dialogue."<sup>1</sup> Notable too is the document's admission that the Church has been teacher and learner in this dialogue. The Church "gratefully understands," continues *Gaudium et spes*, "that in her community life no less than in her individual sons, she receives a variety of helps."<sup>2</sup>

Drawing on the spirit of these frank acknowledgements in *Gaudium et spes*, this paper contributes to one form of Church-world dialogue: the mostly subtle, but always vital interaction between the guardians of official Church social teaching and the lay faithful immersed in the day-to-day activities of the world. More specifically, this paper investigates what official Church social teaching could gainfully incorporate from the

moral experience of faithful mothers and fathers who mightily endeavor to follow Jesus Christ in their marriages and family lives. This, too, resonates with *Gaudium et spes*, the document that first nominates the family a “school of deeper humanity” and identifies “marriage and family” as its leading topic of “special urgency.”<sup>3</sup>

This paper argues that primary among the lessons for official Church social teaching from the experience of Christian mothers and fathers is the moral significance of covenant living. While the idea of covenant surely animates the theological and liturgical life of the Church, the actual practice of covenant living scarcely survives in society today outside the daily joys, hopes, griefs, and anxieties of Christian marriage and family life. Unlike the rational-legal ‘habitus’ guiding life within most contemporary social institutions, the living faith of Christian mothers and fathers creates a covenant environment that delicately alters the practices of marriage and family life. These practices constitute a rich and untapped source of moral insight for official Church social teaching.

Coalescing these practices into a single, social-moral principle of covenant, this paper further asserts that by adding this principle to official Church social teaching, the overall moral wisdom of that teaching is enhanced. It is in this sense that the paper asks the Church to see parenting as not only a gift mothers and fathers give each other and their families--the “*Ecclesia domestica*” of *Lumen Gentium*--but also a gift mothers and fathers give the guardians of official Church social teaching--the “*Ecclesia docens*” and “*Ecclesia descens*” of *Gaudium et spes*.

After a brief orientation on covenant, the paper proceeds to the moral experience of covenant living in Christian marriage and family life. Here, nine moral practices (attachment, inclusion, acceptance, childbearing, equanimity, story-telling, authoritativeness, self-restraint, dissent) are discussed as witnessing to three dimensions of covenant living: fidelity, generativity, and spaciousness. The discussion then moves to a single, social-moral principle of covenant offered as an enrichment of official Church social teaching. As an example of this enrichment, the paper suggests how the principle of covenant adds moral strength to the Church’s longstanding social-moral principles of human dignity, common good, and subsidiarity.

Three caveats are required before moving to the body of the paper. First, it must be noted that treatments of covenant in the theological and ethical literature of Judaism and Christianity are legion. Within Christianity itself, Protestant speculation on and experimentation with covenant is especially vast. This paper claims no mastery over these resources, only an apprenticeship. The paper culls select elements from covenant resources and links them to an existential consideration of Christian marriage and family life. Would subsequent discussion of this paper indicate value in any of these links, more thoroughgoing research into Jewish and Christian covenant traditions (and contemporary Christian marriage and family life) would be needed.

Secondly, when Christian marriage and family life is referred to in this paper, the reference is to households where members are lead by a however faltering, self-

conscious, active desire to follow Jesus Christ.<sup>4</sup> There may be many married people and families who take little or no operative, day-to-day interest in Jesus Christ, yet still vaguely align themselves with Christianity. These latter households are not the focus of this paper.

Finally, generalizations about contemporary Christian marriage and family life contained herein are no doubt affected by the author's male, Caucasian, middle-class, and North American reality. With as much critical self-consciousness as he can muster, the author hopes these influences make for neither idiosyncratic, nor harmful generalizations.

### Brief Orientation on Covenant

As an idea, covenant has been ubiquitous in Jewish and Christian theology. As an experience, it has been awe-inspiring. To early Israelites, the covenant experience (at least in its Sinai manifestation) is one of astonishing peculiarity. Undeservedly called out by a steadfast, loving God, the community accepts God's peaceful, healing embrace and takes up God's challenge to build a kingdom of justice. As the Israelite community probes this riveting experience, its imagination so often works in threes: God, us, strangers; promise, response, task; a 'hesed' that doesn't let go, a 'shalom' that reconciles; a 'sedaqah' involving "fidelity to the demands of a relationship."<sup>5</sup> Yearning for renewal of this Divine-human wonderment, the psalmist distills everything into one poetic line: "Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet; righteousness and peace will kiss each other."<sup>6</sup>

Interpreting their own remarkable experiences, early Christian communities assume this rich covenant language. Regarding one of their most puzzling experiences, Christians write:

And he took bread, and when he had given thanks he broke it and gave it to them, saying, 'This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' And likewise he took the cup after supper, saying, 'This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood'<sup>7</sup>

Like their Israelite forbearers, early Christian communities find covenant-inspired triads close to the heart of their experience: father, son, spirit; faith, hope, love; invitation to discipleship, reconciliation in acceptance; building the Kingdom of God. Though lacking the psalmist's eloquence, the author of the *Letter to the Hebrews* encourages a persecuted Christian community by succinctly evoking the covenant:

Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you might do his will, working in you that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.<sup>8</sup>

Premodern Jewish and Christian communities enjoyed the reinforcing, yet changing, energies of this covenant idea and experience. For modern Jews and Christians, however, nearly everything but the idea has evaporated. When modern, rational-legal institutions began displacing more communally-based political, economic, cultural, and religious structures in the West, the social agar necessary for the society-wide experience of covenant living gradually withered.<sup>9</sup> George Mendenhall and Gary Herion concur:

. . . as a practical form of social organization and behavior, covenant-based relationships in the West have become almost obsolete, the fragile institution of marriage remaining the most noteworthy vestige of such relationships.<sup>10</sup>

Increased legal recognition of pre-nuptial agreements in the West has made marriage an even more vestigial remnant of covenant living.<sup>11</sup>

Mothers and fathers who mightily endeavor to follow Jesus Christ in their marriages and family lives are a remnant of Christian, covenant living in the world today.<sup>12</sup> *Gaudium et spes* is the first modern Church document to give this fact theological expression. “The Christian family, which springs from marriage as a reflection of the loving covenant uniting Christ with the Church” is, according to *Gaudium et spes*, a “participation in the covenant.”<sup>13</sup>

### The Moral Experience of Covenant Living in Christian Marriage and Family Life

Theologically honoring the family as participating in--and uniquely articulating--God’s covenant with humanity was a landmark development at the Second Vatican Council.<sup>14</sup> Proceeding from this development, one may further ask: what is the graced, moral *réalité* inside this near-extinct, yet theologically salient, covenant relationship? The lineament of a response to this question is offered below in nine day-to-day moral practices of Christian marriage and family life. Each practice is located within one of three broad dimensions of covenant living, they are called here “fidelity,” “generativity,” and “spaciousness.”

#### *Fidelity*

Covenant living in Christian marriage and family life is rooted in the oscillating, yet reliable, zeal family members have for one another’s well-being. This faithful caring can be further described through the moral practices of attachment, inclusion, and acceptance.

The moral practice of attachment may conjure images of effusive, reassuring hugs between family members. Hugs there may be, but the day-to-day practice of attachment entails something far more elementary. Family attachment calls everyone to cooperate in such basic tasks as: procuring, processing, and distributing food; cleaning dishes and disposing waste; procuring, distributing, and cleaning clothes; procuring and maintaining shelter; cleaning floors, toilets, and appliances; procuring and maintaining transportation;

providing instruction in personal hygiene; monitoring personal hygiene; providing special attention to the physical needs of infants and elders; providing basic health care.

By performing these tasks, family members meet what Abraham Maslow names the physiological ‘deficiency needs’ of human life.<sup>15</sup> In salvation history, God met the deficiency needs of God’s covenant people through the extraordinary grace of raining “bread from heaven” and having Moses strike a rock “that the people may drink.”<sup>16</sup> The persevering, mostly unconscious, and often contentious, commitment family members make to allay one another’s deficiency needs may be the single most extraordinary grace of covenant living.

The moral practice of inclusion is best expressed in the word “hospitality”. One marker of an intentional Christian family is a home where an extra plate can always be set and an extra bed can always be readied--not just for aunt Alice, but for the old school friend, the new employee at work, the exchange student, the orphaned child, the bag lady from the back of church, or the homeless guy standing on the corner every Saturday morning.<sup>17</sup> Christian mothers and fathers active in their faith hear God’s covenant reminder:

The stranger who sojourns with you shall be to you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God.<sup>18</sup>

So, too, Jesus’ covenanting act of meal sharing stimulates family imagination as members grope to satisfy their often complicated, but never extinguished, desire to include others in their midst.<sup>19</sup>

Sometimes strangers are not family visitors, but family members. Husbands, wives, teenagers, grandparents--all eventually become estranged over one another’s weaknesses. Families in dialogue with Christ strain to accept weakness. As Søren Kierkegaard explains about Christian love,

. . . to be able to love a man in spite of his weaknesses and errors and imperfections is not perfect love; it is rather to be able to find him lovable in spite of and together with his weaknesses and errors and imperfections.<sup>20</sup>

This moral practice of acceptance is extremely difficult. The reality of covenant living includes raised voices, arm waving, and weeping as family members confront each other’s weaknesses. Even God struggled over accepting human weakness. At Genesis 6:6, God “was sorry that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart.” Were it not for God’s decision to make a covenant with Noah, the story would have ended with weakness having the last word. But it does not; neither for God, nor for Christian families who--between raised voices, arm waving, and weeping--pray for strength to love one another with each other’s weaknesses.

*Generativity*

Covenant living is life giving. Christian mothers and fathers experience life's inevitable pain, but also perceive both life's giftedness and the significance of giving life back to God. In Christian families, the generativity of receiving and giving back life is evident in the moral practices of childbearing, equanimity, and story-telling.

Christian mothers and fathers do not reproduce, they procreate. In bringing forth new life, these parents do more than preserve the species; they cooperate with God in creating new souls. Adoptive Christian parents exercise the same 'cure d'âmes' role. Indeed, says Ted Peters, adoptive parents may sense most poignantly the truth that we must love children not because they belong to us, but because they belong to God.<sup>21</sup>

In bearing children, Christian families express hope. Margaret Farley calls childbearing "one of the greatest acts of radical hope and signs of belief in a possible world (both a future that transcends this world and a future within this world)."<sup>22</sup> After her surprising Annunciation, Mary thanked God for the great thing done to her, seeing in it a realization of her own covenant hopes: "He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his posterity forever."<sup>23</sup> Christian mothers and fathers share Mary's gratitude and hope.

A person's life-giving needs vary with physiognomy, personality, and life experience. A major challenge in Christian family life is addressing these needs with equanimity. In meeting their children's life-giving needs, parents soon discover that this cannot be done by giving each child equal treatment. In families, equality rarely means equivalence. Rather, needs must be met with attention to each child's "différence." By respecting differences, each child is given treatment as an equal.<sup>24</sup> The distinction between equal treatment and treatment as an equal is most evident in families with severely handicapped children. In order to respect a handicapped child's equality in the family, everyone must forgo the expectation of equal treatment.

Jesus' Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard employs this notion of treatment as an equal to explain how God's knowledge of our varying deserts affects entry into the Kingdom. On its face, the parable is hard to accept. The laborers who "worked only one hour" were paid the same as the laborers who had "borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat."<sup>25</sup> But just as God sees varying deserts within God's covenant people, parents see varying needs within their children. Meeting these needs with equanimity is one of the knottiest, yet important, moral practices of covenant living in Christian families.

In a 1999 letter to the elderly, Pope John Paul II praises senior citizens as "the guardians of our collective memory." A key way the elderly guard community memory is by telling stories. Families with story-telling elders are blessed. Children particularly need to hear their elders' stories. From a developmental perspective, James Fowler observes,

. . . capacity for and interest in narrative makes the school-age child particularly attentive to stories that conserve the origins and formative

experiences of the familial and communal groups to which he or she belongs.<sup>26</sup>

For Christian families, story-telling is not only a genealogical necessity, but also a spiritual necessity. A Christian family walks with Jesus on the road to Emmaus, “talking with each other about all these things that have happened,” finally joining Jesus in a covenant meal at the end of the day.<sup>27</sup> Without necessarily being aware of it, mothers and fathers who unfailingly live the Church’s liturgical calendar with kids in tow, share the generative, moral practice of story-telling with their children.<sup>28</sup>

Spaciousness

As a participation in God’s covenant with humanity, Christian marriage and family life is a comforting structure to grow in. Jewish scholar David Hartman describes the same comfort in terms of contemporary Jewish covenant life:

Contrary to what one may believe initially, structured frameworks allow for the growth of spontaneity, flexibility, and a relaxed psychological atmosphere in interpersonal relationships.<sup>29</sup>

A covenant environment provides life a certain spaciousness and is enabled by the moral practices of authoritativeness, self-restraint, and dissent.

A measure of guilt washes over every Christian parent when Colossians 3:21 is read in church: “Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.” All mothers and fathers know the importance of authority for healthy family life--and all know the experience of failing at it. Yet, Colossians may be warning parents not so much about occasional, provoking misjudgments, as about becoming a routinely provoking parent.

According to research psychologist Diana Baumrind, a non-provoking style of parenting is “authoritative.” An authoritative parent speaks and listens to a child while directing the child’s behavior to a coherently stated, rational standard of behavior. An authoritative parent states the consequences for bad behavior and acts on it. Baumrind’s research shows that authoritative parenting increases the likelihood that a child will internalize rationally negotiable, mature standards of behavior.

Unlike an authoritative parent, an “authoritarian” parent is disinterested in open communication and controls child behavior to an absolute, often non-rational, standard. Consequences for bad behavior typically match the authoritarian parent’s anger level and punishment is often physical. Authoritarian parenting increases the probability that a child will be externally obedient in the parent’s presence, but release internal frustrations through abusive behavior when away from the parent.

Unlike either the authoritative or authoritarian parent, the “permissive” parent usually over-communicates with the child, seeking acceptance from the child for the parent’s suggested standards of behavior. Permissive parents overprotect their children, shielding

them from punishments of teachers or other outside authorities. With permissive parents, consequences for bad behavior are usually unclear and rarely acted upon.<sup>30</sup>

Neither authoritarian nor permissive parenting styles are consistent with a covenant environment. In the exercise of authority, faithful Christian parents aspire to the same thing as God: “this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel, I will put my law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts.”<sup>31</sup>

The moral practice of self-restraint in family life is subtly distinct from the authoritative skills described above. With self-restraint, parents encourage the child’s freedom to explore and learn by resisting the temptation to prevent every one of the child’s impending mistakes. Again, says David Hartman, the model is God. At creation, God made “a being capable of saying no to divine commands.” So, too, in establishing covenants, God “limits his power so as to permit human development within the context of freedom.” Parents living a covenant relationship follow God’s example and understand that, “[l]ove for one’s child often demands self-restraint even in the face of failure and errors in judgment . . . noninterference is often a requirement of love and concern”<sup>32</sup>

A tart fruit of parental self-restraint is the moral practice of dissent. Christian mothers and fathers want their children to speak, though what is said is not always easy to hear. Family therapists find that healthy dissent in families is sometimes stifled by parents who cannot differentiate their children’s thoughts from their feelings. Non-differentiating parents believe “If my child thinks that, they must not love me.”<sup>33</sup> Healthy covenant living includes parents who can differentiate--and stomach robust, yet loving, debate.

The early Israelites understood the importance of dissent. In Genesis 18:20-33, Abraham haggles with God over the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah:

Wilt thou indeed destroy the righteous with the Wicked? . . . Far be it from thee to do such a thing, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so the righteous fare as the wicked! Far be that from thee! Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?

In Jewish midrashic tradition, Abraham is practicing the ethics of ‘chutzpah’, an audacious--but righteous--dissent of the weak against the strong.<sup>34</sup> Though not inducing a ‘chutzpah’ ethic, *Gaudium et spes* recognizes that as “living members of the family, children contribute in their own way to making their parents holy.”<sup>35</sup> A spacious, covenant environment facilitates this contribution, even if it comes in the form of dissent.

### A Principle of Covenant and Official Church Social Teaching

The many moral practices Christian families exercise for the sake of faithful caring, life-giving, and structured growth are a testimony to God’s ongoing covenant with humanity. As a lived expression of the Jewish and Christian idea of covenant, these practices provide a rich source of moral insight for official Church social teaching.

One way to make this source available to official Church social teaching is by drawing the spirit of these practices together into a single, social-moral principle of covenant. The principle might then be inserted into official Church social teaching, bringing with it the covenant spirit of fidelity, generativity, and spaciousness. On the basis of the moral experience of covenant living in Christian marriage and family life, a principle of covenant may be described as the value of group-based, affectively-committed, and historically-rooted, moral action for society as a whole.

Official Church social teaching is known for providing universal moral precepts drawn from reason's reflection on the nature of humanity and the world. The confidence official Church social teaching has in humanity's God-given rationality and its ability to probe God's created order is a tremendous legacy. What a principle of covenant adds to this legacy's emphasis on universality is an in-principled focus on human particularity. Similarly, to the teaching's longstanding stress on reason, the principle of covenant adds an in-principled emphasis on moral affectivity. Finally, to the teaching's traditional accent on nature, the principle of covenant contributes an in-principled focus on history. In short, creation and covenant would be fruitfully joined in official Church social teaching by inserting this new social-moral principle.<sup>36</sup>

The enhancement of official Church social teaching by a principle of covenant can be briefly suggested by noting the moral strength this principle could add to the longstanding social-moral principles of human dignity, common good, and subsidiarity. The locus classicus for human dignity is Pope John XXIII's *Pacem in terris* 9:

. . . every human being is a person, that is, his nature is endowed with intelligence and free will. Indeed, precisely because he is a person he has rights and obligations flowing directly and simultaneously from his very nature.

Here, the principle of human dignity is clearly rooted in the Church's longstanding emphasis on universality, reason, and nature. What a principle of covenant adds to this creation-centered approach to human dignity is the fact that dignity is not only inscribed by nature, but also gained in experience through such faithful moral practices as attachment, inclusion, and acceptance.<sup>37</sup>

Pope John XXIII's well-known definition of the common good appears in *Mater et magistra* 65. The common good is "the sum total of those conditions of social living, whereby men are enabled more fully and more readily to achieve their own perfection" As with human dignity, the principle of the common good has long been linked to the universal, rational, and natural law claims of official Church social teaching. What a principle of covenant adds to this creation-centered approach to the common good is the fact that the common good is not only a goal to be achieved, but also an action to be performed through such faithful moral practices as childbearing, equanimity, and story-telling.<sup>38</sup>

In *Quadragesimo anno* 79, Pope Pius XI calls the principle of subsidiarity “a fundamental principle of social philosophy, fixed and unchangeable.” As such,

. . . it is an injustice and at the same time a grave evil and a disturbance of right order, to transfer to the larger, higher collectivity functions which can be performed and provided for by lesser bodies.

Like human dignity and the common good, the principle of subsidiarity is universal, rational, and based on the natural law. What a principle of covenant adds to this creation-centered approach to subsidiarity is the fact that subsidiarity identifies not only a structure to be copied, but also a process to be enacted through such faithful activities as authoritativeness, self-restraint, and dissent.<sup>39</sup>

Though only briefly applied to a few principles, enough is shown to suggest how the addition of a principle of covenant to the social-moral lexicon of official Church social teaching would enhance the overall moral wisdom of that teaching. If so, the moral experience of Christian families could be said to substantively contribute to the ongoing development of Church social teaching.

The idea and practice of covenant has a central place in the histories of the Jewish and Christian communities. Mothers and fathers who mightily endeavor to follow Jesus Christ in their marriages and family lives are a remnant of Christian, covenant living. The goal of this paper has been to acknowledge the moral significance of their lives for the teaching of the Church. *Gaudium et spes* says the Church “must rely on those who live in the world.”<sup>40</sup> Hopefully, this paper has made a small step toward seeing parenting as not only a gift mothers and fathers give each other and their families, but also a gift mothers and fathers give the guardians of official Church social teaching.

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<sup>1</sup> *Gaudium et spes*, 40. All quotations from *Gaudium et spes* are taken from Walter M. Abbott, S.J., ed., *The Documents of Vatican II* (New York: The American Press, 1966). The upper case word “Church” is used in this paper as a pronominal short form for “Roman Catholic Church,” with no judgment against other Christian churches implied.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 44.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 52.

<sup>4</sup> The focus in this paper is on the situation of a husband and a wife who share Christian marriage in a household including at least their child or children. This focus is not meant as a judgment on other situations where an adult or adults share their Christian faith in a household including at least one of their children. As Michael Lawler remarks in *Marriage and the Catholic Church: Disputed Questions* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2002), 200, for Christians, “grace is embedded not in a particular family structure . . . but in the following of Jesus.”

<sup>5</sup> John R. Donahue, S.J., “Biblical Perspectives on Justice,” in *The Faith That Does Justice: Examining the Christian Sources for Social Change*, ed. John C. Haughey (New York: Paulist Press, 1977), 69.

<sup>6</sup> Ps. 85:10. All quotations from scripture are taken from the revised standard version, Herbert G. May and Bruce M. Metzger, eds., *The New Oxford Annotated Bible with the Apocrypha* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977).

<sup>7</sup> Lk. 22:19-20.

<sup>8</sup> Heb. 13:20-21.

<sup>9</sup> Max Weber’s study of bureaucracy and rationalization in *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*, part III, chap. 6 remains a classic description of this process.

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<sup>10</sup> *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 1<sup>st</sup> ed., s.v. “covenant.”

<sup>11</sup> In pre-nuptial agreements, each party fully discloses *before* marriage, the property, income, inheritance, alimony, and child support they expect from the other party in the event of future divorce or separation. See Katherine E. Stoner and Shae Irving, *Prenuptial Agreements: How to Write a Fair and Lasting Contract* (Berkeley, CA: Nolo, 2004).

<sup>12</sup> Intentional Christian family life is not the *sole* remnant of covenant living in the West. The organizational structures of some Christian denominations follow a covenant model rather than a rational-legal model. Within the Roman Catholic Church, many religious orders pattern their constitutions--and charisms--on a covenant model.

<sup>13</sup> *Gaudium et spes*, 48.

<sup>14</sup> During the Second Vatican Council, this use of covenant language was vigorously opposed by a significant block of council fathers. These fathers wanted the object of spousal consent to be referred to not as a covenant, but as a contract. Contract language had been preferred for many centuries of Church teaching. As the object of spousal consent, the contract was an agreement husbands and wives made over the right to sexual intercourse with each other. For this conciliar debate and how *Gaudium et spes* marks a “crossroad in the history of Catholic thought on marriage”, see Theodore Mackin, *What is Marriage?: Marriage in the Catholic Church* (New York: Paulist Press, 1982), 248-82.

<sup>15</sup> See Abraham H. Maslow, *Motivation and Personality*, 3rd ed. (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1987).

<sup>16</sup> Ex. 16:4; 17:6.

<sup>17</sup> On covenant inclusivity, see Margaret A. Farley, *Personal Commitments: Beginning, Keeping, Changing* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1986), 128-29.

<sup>18</sup> Lev. 19:34.

<sup>19</sup> On this point, see Julie Hanlon Rubio, *A Christian Theology of Marriage and Family* (New York: Paulist Press, 2003), chap. 10.

<sup>20</sup> Søren Kierkegaard, *Works of Love: Some Christian Reflections in the Form of Discourses*, trans. Howard and Edna Hong (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), 156.

<sup>21</sup> See Ted Peters, *For the Love of Children: Genetic Technology and the Future of the Family* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996).

<sup>22</sup> Margaret A. Farley, “The Church and the Family: An Ethical Task,” *Horizons* 10 (1983): 60.

<sup>23</sup> Lk. 1:54-55.

<sup>24</sup> On this distinction, see Ronald Dworkin, *Sovereign Virtue: The Theory and Practice of Equality* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000).

<sup>25</sup> Mt. 20: 12.

<sup>26</sup> James W. Fowler, *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1995), 136.

<sup>27</sup> Lk. 24:14.

<sup>28</sup> On the centrality of story-telling for Christian families, see Stanley Hauerwas, *A Community of Character: Toward a Constructive Christian Social Ethic* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981), chaps. 8-9.

<sup>29</sup> David Hartman, *A Living Covenant: The Innovative Spirit in Traditional Judaism* (New York: The Free Press, 1985), p. 40.

<sup>30</sup> Baumrind’s research is discussed in William Damon, *The Moral Child: Nurturing Children’s Natural Moral Growth* (New York: The Free Press, 1988): 57-64.

<sup>31</sup> Jer. 31:33.

<sup>32</sup> Hartman, p. 24.

<sup>33</sup> On differentiation and non-differentiation in family therapy, see Murray Bowen, *Family Therapy in Clinical Practice* (New York: Jason Aronson, 1978).

<sup>34</sup> For a discussion of this “ethic of spiritual audacity,” see Darrell J. Fasching and Dell deChant, eds., *Comparative Religious Ethics: A Narrative Approach* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2001), chap. 6.

<sup>35</sup> *Gaudium et spes*, 48.

<sup>36</sup> The first official Church document to recognize the importance of creation *and* covenant for Roman Catholic social thought is the U.S. National Conference of Catholic Bishops’ *Economic Justice for All: Pastoral Letter on Catholic Social Teaching and the U.S. Economy* (Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, 1986): chap. 2, sec. a.

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<sup>37</sup> Richard Gula discusses the relationship between covenant and human dignity in *Reason Informed by Faith: Foundations of Catholic Morality* (New York: Paulist Press, 1989), 91-99.

<sup>38</sup> Eric Mount discusses the relationship between covenant and the common good in *Covenant, Community, and the Common Good* (Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 1999).

<sup>39</sup> Terence Nichols discusses the relationship between covenant and subsidiarity in *That All May Be One: Hierarchy and Participation in the Church* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1997).

<sup>40</sup> *Gaudium et spes*, 44.