



Capital Comments: Honor thy Mother and Father: Tools and Threats to the Family in the Texas Legislature

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Mother's day and father's day provide us with an opportunity to think about the importance of our family, both for us as individuals and also on society. For those of us blessed with a caring and compassionate family, we understand that the family, also called the domestic church, plays an important role in the formation of the minds of youth, as well as a comfort and source of security for people of all ages. Even those who feel far from family can understand the importance of having ties to loved ones and a support network for times of joy or sorrow.

The Catechism teaches that "in our own time, in a world often alien and even hostile to faith, believing families are of primary importance as centers of living, radiant faith." Indeed our Church teaches that the family is "the original cell of social life....Family life is an initiation into life in society."

If we work to strengthen the family, we strengthen society. That's why it's important to support legislative efforts that promote the good of the family. This legislative session the Texas Catholic Conference is supporting several family-friendly bills that do many things such as: create an outreach campaign to increase a fathers' involvement with their children before birth by providing them with information on making healthy lifestyle changes, basic infant care, co-parenting strategies, and the mother and child's prenatal health; allow pregnant moms in college to receive a tuition payment credit if she needs to drop a course; promote adoption over abortion; increase funding for school breakfast programs and Children's health insurance; and raise awareness for and strengthening pre-kindergarten programs.

However, there are several bills, however, that hurt the confidence and trust of the family. One would promote allowing minors to purchase contraception, or teach inaccurate information in human sexuality classes. Another advocates for domestic partnerships or same-sex marriage threaten the fundamental nature of the family, which at its core involves a husband and wife giving themselves in love and in the gift of life. One even creates contracts for "gestational agreements" which would allow an individual or individuals to contract with a surrogate, which removes the act of conception from the natural union between man and woman, and also contradicts our Catholic teaching that children have a right to be raised by their parents. Pre-marital sex devalues the bonds of marriage, while in-vitro fertilization turns a child into a right or a product, rather than a gift from God. Attacks on immigrants often divide families, separating children from their parents, and blurring the line between humane and inhumane treatment.

Family life should not have to be considered a luxury. Together, we can act as faithful citizens to promote the family by supporting health care, educational opportunity, family unity, and the basic right to life.

Let us pray for strength for all families that may receive God's blessings as the domestic church and mimic the love that we find between the Holy Family.

For more information, visit www.TXcatholic.org.