



## FAMILY – A DIVINE INSTITUTION

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Every individual has a family of its own. No matter who you are, all of us are borne to a family. I am sure that all of us perceive that the Divine Institutions apply to all of mankind, be it a believer or unbeliever for these are meant to stabilize all of human society. Family is one of the four Divine Institutions that God has set up, the rest of which are free will, marriage and nationalism. God gave these institutions for the entire human race and it is not only basic to civilization but particularly to the Christian civilization for that matter. According to Col. Theme, the family is the institution set up to raise and train the children as far as respect for authority, for the rights of others, for the privacy of others, to respect common law, to respect the property of others plus many other principles. As written in the book, "Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church", the Family is founded on marriage between a man and a woman, which is important both for natural reasons, as the principal place of interpersonal relationships and also for supernatural reasons, as a divine institution. It is therefore the superior educator and provider of "Godly values."

From the day an individual is born and has stepped into this world, he has become a part of a family. It is considered to be our first school where we learned love, care and family relationship. It is not only a place where we are cocooned in safety but an environment where a person is honed to be a matured individual. We are nurtured with all the love, care and understanding and are raised by our parents to be a God-fearing child. We are then molded into a sensible and virtuous person and the likes of which that we are now. Moreover, we create our perceptions, basis of actions and values in a family, thus, giving us an identity as a person.

A family is a special relationship between brothers and sisters, the love of children for their mother or father, the devotion of a mother for her child and the special relationship between a grandmother and grandfather and their grandchildren. The family contains the beautiful memories of our childhood to adulthood. Just as the earth goes through seasons, so does a family in the course of time endures seasons. It is also during times of crisis and hardships that families stay close together, to help each other out and endure what are sometimes the frigid winds of change. We undergo a lot of difficulties and changes. These phases of life are akin to the four seasons that we experience. Our life is full of seasons and transitions which are best experienced with the support of friends and most especially the family. As we live these momentous events in our life, particularly the trying times, we can call on our family members to come together and support one another.

Memories of our family and childhood are what shape our personality and who we are now. We take the traditions we grew up with us into adulthood. The family bond created will last forever and our family will always be our true home and the home against which all future homes will be judged. I guess you will agree with me that ... OUR FAMILY IS OUR HAVEN AGAINST ALL ODDS IN OUR LIFE.

Questions for discussion:

1. What is the real meaning of a family?
2. How can one say that the family as a divine institution play a very significant role in the society?
3. Can you describe in your own perception what a family is?
4. Does friction in relationships alter the way you conceive a family?
5. Can you identify what kind of a family do you belong to? Elaborate further.