Editor's Note: The following is an edited transcript of a lecture delivered at the 2018 *Catholic Family News* "Weapons of Our Warfare" Conference. In honor of Father's Day, we will be running the full transcript of this lecture (Part 2 coming soon), the focus of which is the dignity and sanctity of marriage and family life. Audio CDs of the lecture are available for purchase from CFN (call 1-800-474-8522). We wish all of our readers and their families a blessed and joyous Father's Day!

"For this cause I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of Whom all paternity in heaven and earth is named…" ~ Ephesians 3:14-15

*****

"Weapons of Our Warfare"

Let me begin by quoting the Scripture passage that inspired the theme (and provided the title) of this year's conference. It is found in St. Paul's Second Epistle to the Corinthians (emphasis added):

> "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For *the weapons of our warfare* are not carnal but mighty to God, unto the pulling down of fortifications, destroying counsels and every height that exhalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every understanding unto the

Copyright © catholicfamilynews.com. All rights reserved.

> obedience of Christ, and having in readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience shall be fulfilled." (2 Cor. 10:3-6)

My dear brethren in Christ, St. Paul tells us that *we are at war*. And he explains in his Epistle to the Ephesians that "our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the world of this darkness, against the spirits of wickedness in the high places" (Eph. 6:12) – in other words, against the devil and his minions. "Therefore," he continues,

> "take unto you the armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and to stand in all things perfect. Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of justice. And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. In all things taking the shield of faith, wherewith you may be able to extinguish all the fiery darts of the most wicked one. And take unto you the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit (which is the word of God). By all prayer and supplication praying at all times in the spirit; and in the same watching with all instance and supplication for all the saints…" (Eph. 6:13-18)

The armor of God: *truth*, *justice*, *peace*, *faith*, *salvation*, *the word of God*, and *prayer*. These are some of "the weapons of our warfare," weapons that are "mighty to God, unto the pulling down of fortifications, destroying counsels, and every height that exhalteth itself against the knowledge of God." How do we obtain these weapons? And from whom do we learn how to wield them? Ultimately, of course, they come from God; but God, in His infinite wisdom and providence, has ordained that souls receive them *through the Church* and learn to employ them *in the family*.

These two societies – the Church and the family – were both founded by God and are intimately related by His design. Consequently, the health and vitality of one affects the health and vitality of the other. The Church, as a *supernatural* and *perfect* society ("perfect" in the sense of "containing within itself all the resources needed for attaining its end"[1]), is by nature superior to the family and is not, strictly speaking, dependent upon it (on the contrary, the family desperately needs Holy Mother Church, her sacraments, and her infallible teachings for support). However, since the universal Church is made up of individual families, it stands to reason that if a majority of those families are spiritually and morally weak, the Church (in her human element) will likewise be weakened and much less effective in fulfilling her divine mission to convert all nations. Hence, the title of this talk:

Copyright © catholicfamilynews.com. All rights reserved.

"Holiness at Home: The Importance of the Family."

"The Final Battle" Foretold by Our Lady

As we are all well aware, the state of marriage and the family in the modern world is far from healthy (truth be told, it is *abysmal*). This is so because marriage and the family are *under attack* – in fact, they are suffering *unprecedented* diabolical attacks *from without* and *even from within* the Church. Fr. Michael Rodriguez, a friend of *Catholic Family News*, spoke about this reality in a talk he recorded this past January 7 on the Feast of the Holy Family entitled "Christmas and the Sacredness of Marriage and the Family". He said: "We very much need prayer, and we very much need to consecrate our families to Jesus and to the Holy Family of Nazareth because we are living in a time of the most *horrific*, *diabolical* attacks against the sanctity of marriage, life, and the family."

Fr. Rodriguez goes on to identify some examples of these attacks: divorce, contraception, abortion, sodomy, radical feminism, and absent husbands/fathers. He emphasizes:

> "The men of our time, and, profoundly more tragic, the *vast*, *vast* majority of *Catholics* of our time, no longer *know* or *live* the true meaning of marriage and the family, and many don't care. Still worse, the *vast*, *vast* majority of Catholic *bishops* are no longer teaching the true meaning of marriage and the family."

To put this last statement in slightly different terms, the *vast*, *vast majority* of bishops are not actively *exposing* and *condemning* the diabolical attacks against marriage and the family. And more specifically, the *vast, vast majority* of them are not publicly resisting the errors of Pope Francis (as expressed in *Amoris Laetitia* and other places) concerning divorce, so-called "remarriage", and the worthy reception of the sacraments.

I addressed this topic in a recent article of mine entitled "Onward, Catholic Soldiers: Resisting Pope Francis, With or Without the Hierarchy". You may recall that on New Year's Eve 2017, three bishops of Kazakhstan issued a six-page document – a "Profession of the Immutable Truths about Sacramental Marriage" – in which they respectfully but firmly oppose the errors emanating from *Amoris Laetitia*, errors which, according to the bishops' statement, are being propagated not only by "various bishops…at local, regional, and national levels", but also by "the supreme authority of the Church" – in other words, the Pope himself. As I mentioned in a corresponding footnote, of the roughly 5,400 living Catholic bishops worldwide, *only eight of them* (including the original three) have chosen to sign this profession affirming *basic* truths of the Faith that *every* bishop is bound by God to

Copyright © catholicfamilynews.com. All rights reserved.

defend unto death – *eight* out of 5,400! That equates to *0.15 percent*.

Although it is painful to witness this terrible crisis in the Church and the family, the fact that it is occurring should come as no surprise. Our Lady told us it would happen. During one of Her apparitions to Mother Mariana de Jesus Torres (1563-1635) in Quito, Ecuador (Jan. 20, 1610, under the title of Our Lady of Good Success), She revealed the following crisis of marriage and the family, which She indicated would take place in our times:

> *"As for the Sacrament of Matrimony, which symbolizes the union of Christ with His Church, it will be attacked and profaned in the fullest sense of the word.* Freemasonry, which will then be in power, will enact iniquitous laws with the aim of doing away with this Sacrament, *making it easy for everyone to live in sin and encouraging the procreation of illegitimate children born without the blessing of the Church.* The Catholic spirit will rapidly decay and the precious light of Faith will gradually be extinguished until it reaches the point that there will be an almost total and general corruption of customs. Added to this will be the effects of secular education, which will be one reason for the dearth of priestly and religious vocations. … *Innocence will almost no longer be found in children, nor modesty in women. In this supreme moment of need of the Church, the one who should speak will fall silent."*[2] (Emphasis added)

Much more recently, Sister Lucia dos Santos (1907-2005), the oldest of the three Fatima seers, related a strikingly similar prophecy to the late Cardinal Carlo Caffarra (1938-2017) in the early 1980s, when he was beginning his work as the founding president (1982-1995) of the Pontifical John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and Family. In response to then-Father Caffarra's brief letter asking for prayers, Sister Lucia sent a lengthy hand-written reply (now kept in the Institute's archives) which included the following revelation: **"The final battle between the Lord and the reign of satan will be about marriage and the family."** (Fr. Rodriguez likewise quoted these prophecies of Our Lady in his talk.)

Why Satan Hates Marriage and Family

In order to understand why "the final battle" is being waged over marriage and the family – in other words, why satan hates marriage and the family so intensely – we need to spend some time reflecting on the *sanctity* of marriage and family life. The devil does not waste his time attacking and subverting insignificant things, especially when he knows his time is running out. He knows full well the purpose and power of Holy Matrimony. Do we?

Copyright © catholicfamilynews.com. All rights reserved.

The Roman Catechism (ordered by the Council of Trent, edited by St. Charles Borromeo, and published by decree of Pope St. Pius V), which remains the universal and dogmatic catechism of the Church, teaches the following about marriage:

> "…*marriage is gifted with great and divine blessings*, so much so as truly and properly to hold a place among the other Sacraments of the Catholic Church, and as its celebration was honored by the presence of our Lord Himself [referring to the wedding at Cana, cf. John 2:2], it is clear that this subject should be explained, particularly since we find that *St. Paul and the Prince of the Apostles have in many places minutely described for us not only the dignity but also the duties of the married state*. Filled with the Spirit of God (these Apostles) well understood the numerous and important advantages which must flow to Christian society from a knowledge and an inviolable observance by the faithful of the sanctity of marriage; while *they [also] saw that from ignorance or disregard of (its holiness), many and serious calamities and losses must be brought upon the Church*.
>
> The nature and meaning of marriage are, therefore, to be first explained. Vice not infrequently assumes the semblance of virtue, and *hence care must be taken that the faithful be not deceived by a false appearance of marriage, and thus stain their souls with turpitude and wicked lusts*."[3] (Emphasis added)

Regarding this "false appearance" of marriage, the Roman Catechism emphasizes that "the desire of family" (meaning *the desire for children*), as well as companionship, is *essential* for a valid and holy marriage. "Hence," the catechism says,

> "the Angel [St. Raphael], when informing Tobias of the means of repelling the violent assaults of the evil demon [referring to an episode in the Book of Tobias], says: *I will show thee who they are over whom the devil can prevail; for they who in such manner receive matrimony as to shut out God from themselves and their mind, and to give themselves to their lust, as the horse and mule which have not understanding, over them the devil hath power*. He [Raphael] then adds: *Thou shalt take the virgin* [Sara] *with the fear of the Lord, moved rather for love of children than for lust, that in the seed of Abraham thou mayest obtain a blessing in children* [Tobias 6:16-17, 22]. It was also for this reason that God instituted marriage in the beginning [i.e. procreation and education of children]; and therefore married persons who, to prevent conception or procure abortion, have

Copyright © catholicfamilynews.com. All rights reserved.

> recourse to medicine, are guilty of a most heinous crime—nothing less than wicked conspiracy to commit murder."[4] (Emphasis added)

We will return to the Roman Catechism later, but for now I want to share with you a profound insight from Fr. Malachi Martin (1921-1999) concerning the sacred purpose of marriage and the family. As many of you surely know, Fr. Martin was the renowned Irish Jesuit priest and Scripture scholar who served in the Vatican under Cardinal Augustin Bea (just prior to and during the Second Vatican Council) and was privy to the full Third Secret of Fatima. During roughly the last decade of his life, Fr. Martin recorded a series of interviews with Canadian journalist and publisher Bernard Janzen. Those interviews have since been transcribed and published by Mr. Janzen and are available from his media company, Triumph Communications. During one of those interviews, entitled *The Eternal War*, Fr. Martin stated the following about the sacred purpose of marriage and the family, as well as certain diabolical attacks against them (take special note that his remarks were made in the context of discussing the New World Order):

> "*Satan's new world order is ultimately a way of destroying the presence of the Trinity. The human family is supposed to replicate the family of God: God the Father, God the Son, and the love of the Holy Ghost between Them.* That is the heavenly image, according to which the family on earth should be built. Husband and wife have between them a covenant with God, within which they produce children according to the laws of God. *Christianity taught men to create and rear families in imitation of the divine order.* The Trinity was perpetuated on earth by grace, doctrine, Our Lord, Our Lady, and the entire gamut of Christian revelation. Today, that is being liquidated. … *The ultimate idea of satan is to bring the human race to the point of being a flat, level society of equals, all equal in their misery and without the Trinity. That explains why the new world order doesn't want Christian education and Christian marriage. That explains why it will foster the homosexual way of life as an alternative lifestyle and give homosexuals rights in every way possible.*"[5] (Emphasis added)

To sum up, satan hates marriage and the family because they were designed by God to reproduce in the world two divine realities: **(1)** the union of Christ with His Church and **(2)** the inner life of the Most Holy Trinity. This is why he viciously attacks and seeks to destroy marriage and the family, because he understands (as the Roman Catechism teaches) "that from ignorance or disregard of (its holiness), many and serious calamities and losses must be brought upon the Church." Christian marriage is *holy*. The Christian family is *holy*.

Copyright © catholicfamilynews.com. All rights reserved.

Therefore, we must understand that marriage and the family are *powerful weapons* that *we must utilize* in our Christian warfare. In a very real way, the health and restoration of Holy Mother Church depends upon it.

Restoring the Church through Marriage and Family

Let us dwell for a few moments upon this theme of restoring the Church by restoring marriage and the family. Recently, I've been reading a book called *The Three Marks of Manhood* by Dr. G.C. Dilsaver, a Catholic psychologist who calls upon men to embrace their God-given role as head and leader of their families. He writes in the book's Introduction:

> "*The Christian family is a patriarchal hierarchy. So teaches the Catholic Church in Scripture, in the Roman Catechism, and in modern encyclicals.* As a patriarchal hierarchy it reflects the hierarchy of the Church; it also reflects the hierarchy of the divine government itself, which is manifest not only in God's rule over His creation, but in the relationships of the Trinity, whose absolute unity derives from the subordination of the Son to the Father."[6] (Emphasis added)

Dr. Dilsaver goes on to ask why "this teaching [is] such a hard saying for modern ears", citing *hyper-egalitarianism* and *feminism* as two major factors. He then offers some very astute and timely commentary:

> "*It is characteristic of lay Catholics of a traditional or conservative bent to be ever in search of an explanatory analysis of what went wrong with society and the Church.* Most of the explanations they find, valid as they may be, are in areas out of their influence or competency, such as liturgical or ecclesiological issues. Hence *it is also characteristic of such Catholics to feel a deep frustration. But there is one area that the laity have full competency to reform and make as Catholic as they wish*, and this area is the key to all the other besetting problems. *It is the family.* Order the home and the rest will follow."[7] (Emphasis added)

A few pages later, in Chapter 1, he gets more specific:

> "If there is to be a wholesome future for the West, if Christianity is once again to make inroads into a heathen world, then *the Christian family must be miraculously restored. For it is the family that will produce the saints of*

Copyright © catholicfamilynews.com. All rights reserved.

> *tomorrow: be they bishops, priests, religious, fathers, or mothers.* And it is the Christian family that is on the front lines of today's conflict between good and evil: it bears the brunt of that battle ["the final battle", to use Our Lady's words] as the very last defense against the total domination of the secular and the profane. …
>
> Though many factors have facilitated the destruction of the family, the final and proximate cause is to be found in the jettisoning of its essential structural order; that is, the rejection of the patriarchal hierarchy of the family, in the name of emancipation and egalitarianism. *Therefore, the restoration of the family, indeed the restoration of ecclesiastical leadership and Christendom itself, is only possible with the advent of a new Christian patriarchal order: the fatherly rule of family, community, and Church*."[8] (Emphasis added)

The Family as the Domestic Church

And now we come to the heart of this talk, namely, *the restoration of the Christian family* – what that restoration looks like and what *we, the faithful, must do* to contribute to its realization, with the help of God's grace and Our Lady's intercession. I intend to demonstrate the way in which God calls us to *understand* the family and to *utilize* it as a powerful weapon in the battle we presently face.

Let's begin by returning to a point I emphasized earlier: Both the *Church* and the *family* are societies founded by God and *intimately related* by His design; so much so, in fact, that in Scripture the Church is called "the house of God" (1 Tim. 3:15) and her members "the domestics of God" (Eph. 2:19). As promised, we now return to the Roman Catechism for further instruction. In the section concerning the article "I believe in the holy Catholic Church" of the Apostles' Creed, we learn:

> "Many names, moreover, which are replete with mysteries, have been used to designate the Christian body. Thus, by the Apostle [St. Paul], it is called *the house and edifice of God*. *If*, says he to Timothy, *I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of truth* [1 Tim. 3:15]. The Church is called a house because it is, as it were, one family governed by one father of the family, and enjoying a community of all spiritual goods."[9] (Emphasis added)

Copyright © catholicfamilynews.com. All rights reserved.

"The Church is…one family governed by one father of the family…" *The Church*, the one Mystical Body of Christ, *is the family of God!* He is our heavenly Father; we are His beloved children in Christ! "Behold what manner of charity the Father hath bestowed upon us," St. John the Apostle proclaims, "that we should be called and should be the sons of God. … Dearly beloved, we are now the sons of God…" (1 John 3:1, 2). If the Church is the family of God, what does that make our individual families? Listen again to the Roman Catechism:

> "Portions of the Universal Church are usually called churches, as when the Apostle mentions the Church at Corinth, at Galatia, of the Laodiceans, of the Thessalonians.
>
> *The private families of the faithful he also calls churches.* The church in the family of Priscilla and Aquila he commands to be saluted [cf. Rom. 16:4]; and in another place, he says: *Aquila and Priscilla with the church that is in their house salute you much in the Lord* [1 Cor. 16:19]. Writing to Philemon, he makes use of the same word [cf. Philem. 1:2]."[10] (Emphasis added)

(I would add that St. Paul also uses "church" in reference to a private family in Colossians 4:15.)

The Catholic Church is the *family of God*; the Catholic family, in turn, is the *domestic church* – a sort of microcosm or extension of the universal Church. This *does not* mean the family can somehow replace or do without *the* Church founded by Christ on St. Peter and the other Apostles (as I said earlier, the family depends upon the Church for the sacraments, sound doctrine, and general support). It *does* mean, however, that the family, as a hierarchical society of baptized persons (father, mother, and children), is called to reflect the hierarchical structure and life of the Church in the home – specifically, the roles of *teaching*, *governing*, and *sanctifying*, which I'll discuss in more detail.

See here for Part 2.

Notes

[1] Fr. Austin Fagothey, S.J., *Right and Reason: Ethics in Theory and Practice*, Second Edition (Rockford: TAN Books and Publishers, Inc., 2000), p. 352.

[2] Marian Therese Horvat, Ph.D., *Our Lady of Good Success: Prophecies for Our Times* (Los Angeles: Tradition in Action, Inc., 2006 ed.), p. 46.

Copyright © catholicfamilynews.com. All rights reserved.

[3] *Roman Catechism*, Part II (The Sacraments), Matrimony (Rockford: TAN Books and Publishers, Inc., 1982), pp. 338-339.

[4] *Ibid*., p. 344.

[5] Bernard Janzen, *The Eternal War: Interview with Malachi Martin* (Wellesley: Triumph Communications, 2004), pp. 13-14.

[6] G.C. Dilsaver, *The Three Marks of Manhood: How to be Priest, Prophet, and King of Your Family* (Charlotte: TAN Books, 2010), p. vii.

[7] *Ibid*., p. viii.

[8] *Ibid*., pp. 2, 3.

[9] *Roman Catechism*, Part I (The Creed), Art. IX, p. 98.

[10] *Ibid*., p. 101.

Copyright © catholicfamilynews.com. All rights reserved.