

The Hand that Rocks the Cradle!

By

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Back in 1910, the renowned author G. K. Chesterton wrote a book called *What's Wrong With the World*. He said that what is wrong is that we do not ask what is right. Being the mother of eight children, I am in constant need of God's grace to be able to discern and know what is right. Our Holy Church teaches us how we can receive this grace in three ways: Pray for grace. Receive the Sacraments worthily. Try to do what is right.

A mother knows that her greatest task is to get her children to want to be good and to get them to heaven. She knows that to be a good mother in the home is what is right with the world. My three oldest children are married and the oldest son has only four children. After the last two babies his wife was asked, "What are you, a baby machine?" My second oldest has only two children but fourteen months apart and people often ask her things like, "How do you do it?" My third child has a fifteen-month-old and is pregnant for her second child and was told by a perfect stranger, "I'd kill my husband if he did that to me." This is really sad. These people make children seem like terrorists. Obviously children are repulsive to them. They seem to despise what Blessed Mother Teresa said, "Give us the babies, we want them." She also said, "How can you say that there are too many children; that is like saying there are too many flowers." Jesus said, "See that you never despise one of these little ones." (Matthew 18, 10-11). Recently I heard a professor from Notre Dame University say on Catholic radio that there are three "isms" which are destroying our families and our society. They are secularism, individualism and relativism. Secularism is only concerned with the affairs of the world — not concerned with the spiritual. Individualism is a social theory favoring the free action of individuals. Relativism claims no absolute truths. I would like to add feminism to this list, but in truth, the feminists of our day entail all of the above.

The good mother in the home, that kind, loving hand that rocks the cradle, teaches her children about the evils of all of these "isms" every day. She does so for the cause of truth and goodness and what is right. She counters secularism early. Why? Because she is at home to do it. She starts with her little toddler and begins by teaching him about God and how to pray by guiding his tiny hands through the Sign of the Cross at meals. She teaches him his prayers by repetition in morning prayers and the daily family rosary. She surely teaches her children about Jesus' Mother Mary, and asks her to wrap her mantle around her family because she knows that Mary will always bring us to the feet of Jesus. Mother Teresa said to the woman who had a problem with how we give honor to Mary: "No Mary- no Jesus." We must have Mary.

Individualism is so destructive to our society and so completely selfish, I believe the word "choice" got its popularity from the abortionists. In truth, the only real choices we have to make are the right ones. Most good choices are easy to teach to the young child. The good mother in the home will begin quite early to teach her child what our Holy Church teaches about right choices. She, by her vigilance, will form her children's consciences, enabling them to make choices that conform to Church teachings. She will train her children to dress with modesty and dignity from infancy. She will say to both the girls and boys, "You always dress to conceal rather than to reveal the body, no matter what the fashion is." She will also say: "I, I, I and me, me, me is selfish, my child."

The good mother will teach her children the way of the saints and how, instead of the instant gratification, they chose penance, mortification and self denial. She will be a shining example herself because she is in the home watching and praying and living the faith herself. Individualism says, "I have a right. I can do what I want, when I want and how I want." Mother says: "The only right you have is to do right no matter whether you are 8, 18, or 98 years old." She guides the child minute by minute into adulthood on a day to day basis. Relativism is an evil trap. It leaves many youth and adults confused and clueless because they are left with no objective truths— just their

feelings. They think that anything goes and that they have all the answers. Ultimately they end up not believing in anything. I have been to family reunions where teens and young adults do not believe in any kind of objective truth. They only care about what they “feel.” They are their own God. They are indifferent to religion. They say that if you believe something is true, then it is true for you. You cannot debate someone who believes in nothing. The good mother at home teaches her children about truth and that Jesus is all goodness and kindness and mercy. She teaches him that a well-formed conscience is upright and truthful. She teaches him that it is correct to have the mind of Christ no matter what you feel. This is the full truth.

I know of one good, once contented, conservative, homeschooled girl who went off to college to pursue a career, followed the crowd, and now wears purple hair. These secular, individualistic, relativist, and feminist philosophies that most college professors are shoving onto the students are sheer murder to family and society — all in the name of education. The good mother in the home teaches her children to think for themselves, but to think with common sense and to do the right thing. Indeed, Chesterton tells us that “The trouble with common sense today is that it is no longer common.” Here we are a century later, and we still lack a great deal of common sense.

Can you see the message here? Can you see now the great importance of having the mother in the home to protect her family from the evils of our day? To guard the souls of her children and to instill goodness and order in our world. This should be the common sense of our day.

Where are the mothers? Recently, I heard statistics that 70% of women work outside the home and a large percentage put their children in daycare centers. This is tragic. The most formative years of a child’s life are spent away from his home, away from Mom and Dad. Is that love? Is that motherhood? Is that good parenting? Do you suppose that even 10% of these women really have to work? I doubt it. Blessed Mother Teresa said that America’s greatest poverty is her “lack of love.” We contracept and abort our babies because we are not open to life. We put them in daycare as early as six weeks, we put them in pre-school, then they’re off to twelve years of education. Then often another four or more years of college. And to top it all off, we even put our loving parents away in nursing homes. How can we? Where is the love? Where is the compassionate heart of Christ-like people? What happened to the home that is supposed to nurture and protect the family? Has the god of education taken the place of charity?

Are we too busy gaining the whole world (career) and losing our souls? No wonder Christ said to take the narrow road. Do you see the direction to which our children are headed? Are the daycare centers and the schools and the colleges teaching and guiding these souls to goodness and to God? We need to re-define common sense. It is at the mother’s “knee” that our children learn about God and what is right or wrong and good or bad. It is the good mother in the home that creates the Christian culture for her family, and that in turn, makes the world a better place. But, how can she do this if she is not even home to rock the cradle, to soothe, love, and guard her children?

I am certainly not leaving the father out of the picture. He has a most vital role to play too, but even though the ideal would be that he would make his living from the home, the majority of fathers are away at work, while mom is trying to do the noble task of forming the conscience and character of the children. Mother’s role concerning father is to love, honor and obey him, and to regard his headship and leadership in the home as of the greatest importance. Since he is the head of the family and she is the heart, the two will be united in both teaching and example. They will put the Holy Eucharist up as the source and summit of the faith by participating in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass frequently. The two will teach by their word as well as by their examples. They stop and make visits to Jesus in the Most Blessed Sacrament and make holy hours of adoration. But mother must always respect and speak well of Dad, especially to the children, or else say nothing lest she becomes a devil herself. She will consistently pray for his headship and certainly never allow her children to talk against their father. Because peace in the home is so important to the good mother, she is never bothered by submission. Her goal is to secure loving peace and to promote harmony. The good mother in the home will use the lives of the saints for teaching character. She will remind her children often that we are all called to be saints. She will remind her children that, “A soft answer turns away wrath.” (Prov. 15, 1). This means that a mild answer calms wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.

To the boys she will say, “It takes a real man to be calm in adversity.” To the girls she will say, “Your gentle words and smile are precious to God.” Oh, what a great privilege it is to be a good wife and mother in the home helping prepare souls for heaven. I recently heard a priest on Catholic radio give a talk concerning the Holy Father’s document on women, *Mulieris Vitae*. I was quite disappointed to hear him make the statement: “He’s not saying that women need to stay home.” This was not the statement of the Holy Father. It was this priest’s opinion of the matter. I found his statement to be offensive to our good mothers at home. These mothers choose to be home because they know they are the heart and that it is the right place to be. What’s wrong with the mother in the home? Not a thing. Rather, we should say again, “She’s what is right with the home.” Perhaps if that good intentioned priest had a chat with Chesterton, he would see the home from a different perspective. It is precisely because the mother is NOT home that we have all the many ills in our society today. If she does not return home to her place of freedom, honor and integrity, her husband and children and grandchildren will reap even greater ills and so will our society. We do not need more women CEOs and lawyers and whatever. The need is for true mothers in the home. The home is where the heart is, mother; the home is where we learn to live and to love; the home is our refuge; the home is where we want to be when we die; the home is the exact place where mother needs to be. It is precisely at “mother’s knee” that children learn about their Father in heaven and that is where many priests and nuns have received their vocations. Yes, it is truly the “Hand that rocks the cradle that rules the nation, and the world.”

My hope and prayer is that many mothers and fathers of today have not lost the vision of true motherhood. Not only do we not hear parents promoting a vocation of “mother in the home,” they are actually afraid of what the world will think if their daughter does not get an advanced balanced education. What is more balanced and true to life than mothering? Who knows more about life than mother? What’s “right” with a daughter staying home and helping mother with schooling and learning virtues from her own mother and learning the gentle needle arts? Just about everything. What great *Works of Mercy* she practices when she does this.

Consider St. Thérèse the Little Flower. After the death of her mother Zélie, her sisters became loving mothers to her. Quoting Blessed Mother Teresa again: “God does not call us to be successful; He calls us to be faithful.” To be full of faith is Godly. To be full of success is worldly.

It is said that if you corrupt a man, you corrupt a man. But if you corrupt a woman, you corrupt society. Yes, it is good and right to do this job of such enormous importance. It is good and right to be the good mother in the home. It is the mothers of families that regulate and stabilize this world’s affairs.

G. K. Chesterton brilliantly states in *What’s Wrong with the World* how very important the home is. He says: “Women were not kept at home in order to keep them narrow; on the contrary, they were kept at home in order to keep them broad. The world outside the home was one mass of narrowness, a maze of cramped paths, a madhouse of monomaniacs.”

Mothers Teach Everything

Then Chesterton describes the great gift of motherhood: “It is not difficult to see why ... the female became the emblem of the universal Nature... surrounded her with very young children, who require being taught not so much anything as everything. Babies need not to be taught a trade, but to be introduced to a world. To put the matter shortly, woman is generally shut up in a house with a human being at the time when he asks all the questions that there are, and some that there aren’t. It would be odd if she retained any of the narrowness of a specialist. Now if anyone says that this duty of general enlightenment...is in itself too exacting and oppressive, I can understand the view. I can only answer that our race has thought it worthwhile to cast this burden on women in order to keep common sense in the world. ...How can it be a large career to tell other people’s children about the Rule of Three, and a small career to tell one’s own children about the universe? How can it be broad to be the same thing to everyone, and narrow to be everything to someone? No. A woman’s function is laborious, but because it is gigantic, not because it is minute. I will pity Mrs. Jones for the hugeness of her task; I will never pity her for its smallness.”

How is that for common sense? He is simply saying that if you take the mother out of the home, you are tearing out the child's whole universe, tearing out his heart because his mother is his everything. I know that there are many mothers that are good, holy and love the home and they know exactly what Chesterton means because they live it. I pray that these good mothers will be truly wise enough to pass this great gift on. I pray they will work hard to be home and not on the go so much for it creates much unrest in all the children when they go, go, go. I pray that many parents have not lost their way. I hope that they have not become so distracted, materialistic and swept away with education that they have forgotten that their goal is heaven—not college. Do you know what the good and holy Bishop Fulton J. Sheen had to say about education?

“Education once seemed the gateway to heaven on earth for everyone. Now we have tried it, and we know that schooling alone will not save our society. Never before was there so much education, and never before so little arrival at the truth. The twentieth century is the century of the greatest attempt at universal education in the history of the world—and yet is the century of the most terrible conflagrations of history. We have stuffed our children’s minds with facts, and neglected to teach them how to live.”

There you have it. He says we have neglected to teach our children how to live and all in the name of education. The holy priest of *Boys Town*, Father Flanagan said, “There is something lacking in the kind of education which teaches a youth how to make a living, but which does not teach him or her how to make a life.”

A very wise man said, “We cannot *will* back the Christian culture, we must *live* it back.” We must teach our girls how to make a home, how to pass on goodness and kindness so that we can extend and pass on these virtues to the next generation and the next. Yes, it begins in the home and with embedded mothering skills. This must come from the heart, the mother, the hand that rocks the cradle. We cannot build a Christian culture if mothers are sending their daughters off to procure careers. They must learn by our example.

Chesterton said that when a mother works in the home she is drudging for people she does care for; when she works out of the home she drudges for people she does not care for.

Homeschooling is to Learn How to Live

The primary goal of the homeschooling family is to learn how to live, how to be good. It is more important to be good than to be smart. Wisdom is greater than knowledge.

Mother and poet/author, Olga Masters said: “Many people have said to me, what a pity you had such a big family to raise. Think of the novels and the short stories and the poems you never had time to write because of that. And I looked at my children and I said, ‘These are my poems. These are my short stories.’” Isn’t that beautiful? Thank God for mothers such as she.

Christian author Frank Schaeffer wrote: “The greatest hope in this society is the woman who has decided not to listen to the feminist propaganda of self.... The people who are putting the raising of children first are molding the future of this country in a way that has been completely dropped by the people who are putting other things first. And the fact of the matter is that if there is any hope, where I see it most is in a return by many, many intelligent, articulate women to an understanding that raising children and not placing them in daycare centers is a Christian ministry. If that is all they ever do, they have done more than every neuropsychologist laid end to end from here to the moon.”

The most radical thing that will set you apart as a raving revolutionary is to be a woman at home with your children, bucking the whole system of materialism, bucking the whole system of secularism ... and saying “I’m not interested in me, myself, and I, my body, or whatever. I am interested in eternal things because what these children are, are the only things in this life that I can take with me to heaven. And so they are the only investment.”

Pass Good Mothering to the Next Generation

It is vital and it is our duty before God to pass good mothering to future generations. Career is not where we should be leading our daughters. It seems to me that motherhood is normal and career is abnormal. It is quite a normal thing for a mother to teach her daughters how to be the loving heart of the home. She needs to pass on the gentle arts of sewing, quilting, knitting, crochet and many of the other fine needle arts. These are the works that keep the female heart with a contented spirit.

Modern day video games and TV are destructive to the female's gentle spirit. Mothers who have not learned the womanly skills of these gentle arts from their own mothers would do well to take lessons and teach them to their daughters. These skills help to make her dainty. Despite the tough, independent spirit that the world throws onto our young girls today, everyone admires and highly respects the sweet, kind, woman because this exemplifies her great dignity and shows her true feminine nature.

Our industrial world and department stores have taken away much from our young ladies. It has robbed them of many hours of healthy creativity and self accomplishments. It is just so very important not to be taken up with the world's ideology of life which puts motherhood on the back burner. Motherhood is the most important thing that we can do for the country and our families.

Until our good priests and bishops and parents and grandparents recognize the need of the mother in the home and then preach it from the rooftops, we will lose the heart and soul of the American family. Edmund Burke said, **"All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing."**

Every woman knows how much good she does when she is in the home, tending her flock and teaching goodness. Even on her bad days she is doing much good for she can teach well from her mistakes if she is humble.

The French philosopher, Alexis de Toqueville, once came to America because he wanted to find out what was so great about it. After his study he said: "America is great because America is good. When America ceases to be good, it will cease to be great!" How true. And THAT is what motherhood is all about, teaching our children about how God wants them to be good and training them to that end.

Mother in the Home is the Answer

The mother in the home is the answer to this culture war. When mother leaves the home for work, she becomes less loving to her family; she puts herself and family in danger by mingling with other men and waiting on them at the office. There, too, is the recipe for sexual harassment and/or probable divorce. Husbands should try to avoid these intimate types of jobs also. It would be better for him to quit his job than to work in constant temptation and end up losing his spouse and perhaps his soul.

The good men of today should be leaders in their homes and protect the wife and children from the dangers in the work place. He should not let his wife work unless they are destitute. If she has a higher education than him, she still has the duty to be the humble wife and mother first. She should never belittle him or insult his intelligence. She should not probe him to let her work, and he should not probe her to go to work. She should "let" him be her leader and protector.

A woman who wishes to be happy will want to be obedient to her husband because that is the plan of God for her. We have all read what St. Paul says about submission and we should not try to read it to suit our views. Even if a woman thinks she is smarter than her husband she needs to look to the reasons she married in the first place, and remember that the "main purpose of a sacramental marriage is to help one another get to heaven."

1 Samuel, Chapter 15:22: "Obedience is better than sacrifice and submission than the fat of rams." Now

surely Samuel is not disapproving of sacrifices but rather speaking of heartfelt obedience. That is the role of the good wife/mother in the home. Obedience and submission are so very liberating to the mother in the home.

From my point of view, it is much harder to lead than to follow. I have seen that by watching my husband. He has a very noble job to do and my submission is the best example I can pass on to our children. Submission is not a frightening word to me. It is not always easy to submit, but I don't look at it as a negative. I see it as the better part, for Jesus said, "Learn from me for I am meek and humble of heart."

For our boys, it is to their dad that they look for this good training. And only he can make men out of our boys with his leadership. He does his part and I do mine and the children see the unity. My children know that I will always yield to the decisions of their father even if I don't always personally agree. I always tell them not to underestimate the wisdom of their father and that God's grace works through his headship. My children have a high respect and regard for their father and without my submission we would have little harmony in our home. Surely I have my pride, but that goes without saying. Certainly our children know that we are both human and they hear our differences, but they also see us striving for virtue and receiving the sacraments of Penance and Holy Eucharist regularly.

The effects of the leadership roles women have taken up in the competitive work force has caused much unrest and has squelched the true feminine nature. Take note of the cold, stiff, hurried words of many working women who answer the business phones. And let us not forget, we all get the same twenty-four hours in a day. If we do not like what we did for the last hour, we cannot take it back. Every working woman needs to look back on her many hours of work and evaluate their importance for the sake of her home. Her husband and children usually think it more important to make the money to keep up with the world, but once the bills pile up both parents feel they must work to keep up, and the vicious cycle continues.

The competition in the work force causes the woman to become rigid and hurried. The contented spirit of her femininity is lost in the shuffle and she passes this on to her husband and family. She loses the kind, gentle mothering spirit that nature endows most women with. Instead of being the heart of the home, she becomes the head, because she feels that she has as much right to the money as he does since she works too.

This then causes them to become independent of each other and soon she does not need him for anything. He would be stupid to deny her the money in fear that she would quit her job or leave him. The money becomes so important that having more children becomes a liability. Then contraception becomes a must and her frazzled, disordered lifestyle becomes a chore. She is liberated in her eyes. But she has lost so much. She has lost her time for her husband and children. She has lost her time for God and the spiritual life. She has lost her own unique femininity and that soft, sweet, loving hand that once rocked the cradle.

Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta gave advice to women who wished to be liberated: "***Every woman is the heart of the family, since no man can ever really love in the same way as a woman. So that by trying to become somebody else, women lose something, and because of that loss, the world is what it is today. My advice to women is simple: Stay home. A woman's first responsibility is to be the mother, the heart, the only one who can keep the family together. We are liberated only when we live our life to the fullest as a woman. And that is the greatest liberation of all.***"

Lest I paint the wrong picture, the good mother in the home knows she is not perfect. She knows she has many faults of her own and is many times sorely tested. She has cried the tears of love and joy and of disappointment. She always keeps a prayer in her heart and begs God for grace to begin anew each day.

We mothers seem to be obscure, little elves working away in the quiet of the home; but in truth we are really

winning the great race. What a great privilege and honor to be there as the heart of their lives.

A good father of twelve children once shared with me that someone had asked him quite frankly, "Why in the world did you want to bring so many children into such a terrible world?" His answer was simple. He said, "To help make this world a better place." How true.

We mothers are winning the souls of our families when we stay home and do our good part. We are doing so very much good for the world we live in that we are surely winning the soul of our nation. Slowly and steadily we are transforming our world and making it a better place. As one good priest put it, "God has given mothers the necessary role for populating heaven." What a grace!

Yes, it is in the home, from good example and good advice, that these little souls will learn to serve the heavenly Father, and so reach that eternal home where we will be joyfully awaiting them one day. It is the good loving mother in the home who lives her life for Him, and hopes and prays she will one day stand before God and hear him say, "Well done, my good and faithful servant."