

When Father is Not the Head

INTRODUCTION

Recently a father of a family came to me for counseling. He said, "We are having a serious family problem. I have several daughters and a twelve-year-old son, who is out of control. He does not obey or show respect."

After asking the man a few brief questions I responded, "The problem is not your son. The problem is that you are not acting as the head of your home. You have allowed your wife to rule over you."

With that introductory case, and details to which we shall return later in this pamphlet, I continue this presentation. It tells what happens when the primacy of love and the primacy of authority become confused in their roles.

The above case could be multiplied millions of times over in various shades and colors among families within the United States. The cause in these cases? Wives are dominating the home. The families are not living according to God's intentions. The family cannot work unless it builds on the foundation as God established and intended; this means the family must have but one head and that be the father.

Women have been deeply influenced by the feminist movement and don't know it. Women are undercutting their husbands as head of the family without realizing it. They consider themselves good wives and mothers. They say that they are working hard to compensate for the failures of their husbands. They are the ones, who try to control the children, give the children orders, etc. "If I don't do it, it won't get done."

The result? The family is in crisis. The children are rebelling, jumping fences, turning off religion, rejecting moral values. Unity is lacking in such families. A family without one head is a disaster, even a monstrosity.

Now the mothers and fathers I am talking about are usually nice people. If Catholic, the couple may even go to Mass every Sunday. They may pray the Rosary daily. They may go to the Sacraments regularly. Still, there is crisis in their homes. Usually they don't know why. They wonder why their children often turn out so badly. They have been deeply affected by the feminist propaganda, often to the degree of making wimps of men.

Let us look at some terminology. Feminism is the doctrine and movement that advocates granting to women the same social, political, and economic rights as those granted to men. On a moral and psychological level, feminism is the existence of pronounced male characteristics in women. Note that those women engrossed in feminist activities often act with and have masculine qualities. They dress in a masculine way. In fact, many girls growing up today have been accustomed to male-like clothing and feel uncomfortable in dresses. Dressing similarly to boys, they act like boys. In family life there results a confusion of roles, a denial of God's intention for human society. Wives work, take on masculine qualities and dominate the home scene. They claim economy has forced them to work. [Some other of our pamphlets can answer these objections].

Webster's dictionary regarding feminism says: 1 : the theory of the political, economic, and social equality of the sexes. 2 : organized activity on behalf of women's rights and interests.

Admittedly, as human beings, the Creator created us equal in the image and likeness of God. He did not give us all the same role in life or in the vocations to which we are called.

St. Paul the Apostle spells all this out in of 1 Corinthians chapter 12. "Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit: and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of working, but it is the same God who inspires them all in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to

another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit . . ." (1 Cor.12:4-11).

If the Creator gives one person a certain gift on the natural level or the supernatural level as St. Paul is speaking about, still it is for the common good of all, and one does not have the same function as another. The Apostle continues:

"For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body - Jews or Greeks, slaves or free and all were made to drink of one Spirit.

"For the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot should say, 'Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,' that would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear should say, 'Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,' that would not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? But as it is, God arranged the organs in the body, each one of them, as he chose . . . (1 Cor. 12:12-19).

St. Paul is speaking in 1 Corinthians about the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ, the universal Church. Christ Jesus is the head of this universal Body, the Church. The Pope is the **VISIBLE** head on earth as Jesus Christ himself is the **INVISIBLE** head in the glory of heaven to which he destines us. The one visible head has for its purpose **UNITY** under the guidance of its Soul, the Holy Spirit. We are the members. The Spirit is the Soul. Jesus Christ is the ultimate one Head.

Now the family, the basic unit of society, is the domestic Church. The family is a miniature Mystical Body of Christ. The father of the family is the head and chief representative of Christ. The mother represents the body of the Church and the children the members. The role of each in the Spirit is noble and great and each must live its role. There must be no confusion of roles to maintain harmony, avoid crisis and disaster.

Fathers and mothers of families would do well to meditate carefully on the word of God in its entirety of Ephesians 4, in preparation for Ephesians 5, which teaches what I am trying to teach in this pamphlet. After stressing that all do not have the same vocation and roles, the Apostle writes:". . . Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every joint with which it is supplied, when each part is working properly, makes bodily growth and up builds itself in love. . ." (Ephesians 4:9-16).

"Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave Himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. . . Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives, be subject to your husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ, is the head of the Church, His body, and is Himself its Savior. As the Church is subject to Christ, so let wives also be subject in everything to their husbands. Husband, love your wives as Christ loved the Church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that he might present the Church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. Even so husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no man ever hates his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, as Christ does the Church, because we are members of His body. 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one.' This is a great mystery, and I mean in reference to Christ and the Church; however, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband" (Eph. 5).

Now husbands and wives must translate that into practical language and examples for themselves. There is no other way the above Word of God can be interpreted but that the husband is head of the wife, head of the family and the wife must in practical actions and from her heart respect that role just as he must love and respect her role. The wife must be submissive to the husband and the husband must live his role. That's part of God's creation and God's intention, His plan in placing the human race upon this earth, beginning with our first parents, Adam and Eve. God made the family the basic unit of society.

Immediately after the fall of our first parents God promised a Redeemer through the cooperation of the Woman, whom is revealed in the fullness of time to be the Blessed Virgin Mary: "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers" (Genesis 3:15). To the woman God said of the man, "He shall be your master." (Gn. 3:16). There are various translations for the man's role over the woman, (Gn. 3:16) besides the above from the New American Bible. The Douay version translation has: "He shall have dominion over thee." Something to ponder, The husband cannot stop his wife from being submissive, but the wife can stop her husband from leading. God's plan must be desired by the woman if it is to be achieved. Submission is a gift the wife freely gives her husband (*out of reverence to God*), not something that he takes from her.

God's Plan for the Family Works

Society is seriously in trouble. Secular society has become corrupt. Why? Because of the crisis of the family. Why is there a crisis in the family today? Because God's plan is for the husband and father to be the head, spiritual and physical head, and for the wife and mother to be submissive to her husband. In millions of cases this is not lived in our homes. The feminist movement, which has saturated society, has distorted the thinking of a majority of people, even those who consider themselves good Christians and good Catholics. It has even affected the thinking of many priests who no longer teach on the family as they should. I could point out to you priests who are highly educated and articulate, but who do not realize that they too have been victims of secularized feminist thinking and propaganda. Thus many priests say nothing to women or to husbands about God's rightful plan for the family with the man as head and representative of Christ in the domestic church. Many of them are afraid to teach that the wife is to be submissive to her husband as if that somehow was degrading.

Cardinal Ratzinger, when head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, not long before he succeeded Pope John Paul II as Pope Benedict XVI, spoke for one-half hour at a wedding ceremony he performed. He did not hesitate to teach the full truth about the family. He taught the role of the woman to be submissive to her husband. He taught too that the man's form of submission lies in his duties of working to support his family and exercising his role as father, not an easy task. It is not easy to use manly authority firmly, lovingly, uncompromisingly, and tenderly, all at the same time. The man has to work hard if he is to obey God's laws of increasing and multiplying and to support wife and family. That is his form of submission to God the Father from whom, scripture says, "all paternity is named." But it must be done if there is to be order in the family. For order there must be an active head that does not compromise and is recognized by every member of the family, the wife first.

Previously in this pamphlet I quoted from 1 Corinthians 12 to make the point that whereas we are equal as children of God, belonging to the same Mystical Body of Christ, equal does not mean the same. It does not mean we have the same roles. Motherhood is among the most glorious vocations on this side of heaven. But Motherhood is not Fatherhood or vice-versa. Those of you who have read my autobiography, *A Priest is a Priest Forever* will recognize the very high regard I had and still have for my own Mother and for my sisters who also are mothers. You will recognize too that I obeyed my bishop even when I did not like his decisions. Wives must obey their husbands.

Let us go to first Corinthians chapter 11. There you can read what St. Paul says about celebrating the Holy Eucharist, the Sacrifice of the Mass, which perpetuates the Cross, and he does so in the context of husbands and wives . . .

"For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when He was betrayed took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it, and said, 'This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of Me.' In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.' For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes."

"Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be

guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord. Let a man examine himself, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment upon himself . . ." 11:23-32.

Family Roles and the Holy Eucharist

Now when St. Paul speaks clearly to women about their prayer life and having submission to their husbands he has in mind all this relative to the Eucharistic mystery, the source and summit of the Christian life. In relationship to the Holy Eucharist, the Real Presence of Christ among us, and the perpetuation of His Sacrifice of the Cross in the Mass, the Apostle, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, is going to talk about the roles of husbands and wives. They must worship God through the Eucharistic Sacrifice with proper dispositions of heart and soul and proper relationships to each other. How so? Well! Let's back up some more within that same chapter of First Corinthians 11 and read this:

"But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a woman is her husband, and the head of Christ is God. Any man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head, but any woman who prays or prophesies with her head unveiled dishonors her head - it is the same as if her head were shaven. For if a woman will not veil herself, then she should cut off her hair, but if it is disgraceful for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her wear a veil. For a man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man. For man was not made from woman, but woman from man. That is why a woman ought to have a veil on her head, because of the angels. Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man nor man of woman; for as woman was made from man, so man is now born of woman. And all things are from God. Judge for yourselves; is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered? [Remember, this is written in the context of the Holy Eucharist and official Church worship if you read chapter 11 from the beginning]. Does not nature itself teach you that for a man to wear long hair is degrading to him, but if a woman has long hair, it is her pride? For her hair is given to her for a covering. If anyone is disposed to be contentious, we recognize no other practice, nor do the churches of God" (1 Corinthians 11:3-16).

What about the case in the introduction of this pamphlet: "We can't handle this twelve-year-old boy. He's out of control. He does not obey or show respect."

As noted I said to the father: "The problem is not your twelve-year-old son. The problem is that you are not acting as the head of your home. Your wife is ruling you." The man then suggested that both he and his wife should hear what I had to say. I encouraged him in this and he disappeared returning within ten minutes with his wife.

As soon as she sat down, I asked her: "Do you wear the veil when you go to church?"

"No" she answered.

"Do you know the meaning of the veil worn to church for prayer?"

"No" she answered.

I explained that it was a sign, first of all of reverence for God, submission to God and then of submission to her husband and respect for him as head as explained by St. Paul.

She replied, "I've lost respect for my husband some time ago. I lost respect for him because he hit me." Note, this was said to influence me against her husband, to put him down, to show how terrible he is, thus justifying her breaking God's decrees.

I asked the husband, "Did your wife nag you so that you lost self-control with her lack of respect and frequent nagging, putting you down as the father and head of your home, and she led you to the point that you lost control and struck her?"

He answered, "Yes."

I had been a parish priest for forty-eight and a half years and was aware of the patience and endurance that is required of men when the woman dominates. Their wives, not infrequently, put them down, nag, humiliate and diminish their role and unfortunately, after years of taking that, if one or both

of them ever end up before a priest, even the priest does not get the whole picture. He too puts the husband down, put him under more pressure for the sake of the sweet defenseless wife, the weaker sex. There is good reason why the Word of God in Genesis, giving the account of creation of the world and of man, as well as the fall, makes it clear, it was the woman who fell first and led the man to sin.

A day after the above encounter with the couple that at first thought their family problem was an unruly son; I met a woman, who told me she had a "domineering" mother. I replied, "Yes, the feminist movement has had the effect on many."

"Oh! But my mother was not a feminist." She quickly responded. Did she consider a feminist to be only one who carried signs of protests and marched in parades? She did not realize just how much both she and her mother were influenced by the feminist movement.

The mother of the twelve-year-old "uncontrollable" son said to me, as I quoted scripture that the wife should be submissive to her husband, "Oh! I am submissive." Doubtlessly she believed that. But further questioning revealed her actual position. She did not respect her husband. Consequently, why should her children respect and obey their father?

To my great happiness this particular woman was willing to listen. She doubtlessly was in many ways a good woman as he was a good man and wanted to be a good father. Still, she was failing in her first vocation as wife and mother and, like Eve, was leading her husband to fall. The woman explained that she really wanted her son to be close to his father, but the son did not want to be with his father, he would rather be with his mother and sisters. It was easy to see that the mother, doubtlessly without thinking it through, had manipulated the children, and the son in particular to favor her over the father. The mother, lacking the proper feelings herself toward her husband, could not communicate good relations to her children? She actually said that the only time they were intimate was during sexual relations. "But that's the extent of it." A situation she unknowingly caused.

Love Primacy & Authority Primacy Confused

She mentioned they stopped having children after five. "Did you have a serious reason?" I asked. "We have a serious reason for this," she said with great assurance. "Can you tell me what it is?" "Yes. The serious reason is because there lacks love in our family."

But what about the guilt for the lack of love? The wife, the mother of the home is to have the primacy of love in the family circle. The husband, the father is to have the primacy of authority. The mother is to be the heart of the home. The father is to be the head. These are not just poetic descriptions. These are the roles of wives and husbands. These are the roles of mothers and fathers. Confuse these roles and you are outside God's plan. The primacy of love must respect the primacy of authority in the family if the primacy of authority is to be effective. The primacy of love must permeate her total family, each and every child from little on, in that direction; practice it, live it. The primacy of love must let the primacy of authority flourish, for the love's primacy to blossom. Authority's primacy must operate with strength, uncompromising kindness but firmness over all as a service, which is really the husband's submission to God. Head and Heart must each have their role and place, and then both parents and children will live in love, harmony, and unity.

In reality it was the wife, I believed, who had the greater need to express sorrow to her husband in the all too typical case I have been describing. Yet, the man as head should give the example; take the lead imperfect though it may be. I asked the husband to tell his wife he was sorry for his failures, in particular for the time he struck her. He took her hand and tenderly said, "I'm sorry." Her immediate reaction was stiffness with some few words to the effect that he really didn't mean it. If her mind and heart had been open and humble she would have rather added: "I led you to it. I'm sorry too." I personally believe he did mean it and wanted with all his heart to have reconciliation. He wanted desperately to have a warm ongoing relationship, not only with his wife but also with his children.

The father said to me: "I've really wanted all these years to have a good Catholic family. Each morning, before leaving for work I have gathered the children, prayed with them, read a life of a saint,

etc. But if I am unable to do this, perhaps for having to leave for work very early, [He manages a building construction firm], she then did not have the prayers with the children." It was obvious to the children that their mother was not standing behind the father in his efforts to be a spiritual head as well as the physical head who worked hard to make a living for his family. What the father did his wife did not value or back up. Her actions spoke louder than words, as did her lack of action.

Not Knowing the Father-Mother Roles

There is no doubt that this mother wanted to be a good mother, thought she was being a good mother, and thought she was obligated to compensate for the failures of her husband. She did not realize that she herself was undermining her husband's authority in the eyes of her children because she herself was not respectful or obedient to their father, her husband. She did not understand the true God-intended roles of the father and herself as mother and wife. She merely saw herself as working overtime to be a good mother to make up for the failures of her husband, failures that she herself did much to bring about.

Now both had been praying for the conversion of their partner. It seemed their prayers were not answered. How could they be? A conversion was needed within themselves.

I explained that regular Sunday Mass, perhaps even daily Mass, daily Rosary, consistent family prayers were not enough and would not form the children in good faith and morals if mother and father did not live a family life according to God's plan. This meant the father as head, the mother as helpmate, submissive to her husband. It's God's way. You just can't do it any other way. The perverted feminist mentality has permeated all of society, and has so affected civilization that people are blind to the root causes of the crisis in the family.

Sad to say, many home-schooling families are having the same problems described above. Why? Because the home-schooling mother like the rest of the world has chosen to abandon submission and dominate, driving both father and children to the brink of hatred and despair. Sad, is it not?

Mothers Undercutting Fathers

I asked the husband to explain what he especially finds discouraging in his wife. He answered, "She undercuts me." The wife was not contradicting anything her husband said and I could read on her face that she was asking herself some very serious questions by now about her role as wife and mother *for the first time*.

When I asked for an example of his wife's undercutting he said, "On Thanksgiving Day, I tried to lead the meal prayer for the family. I asked that each member of the family state what they felt each especially had to be thankful for. But it never got off the ground. My wife stopped it from progressing any further."

How sad, that a wife and mother could not see the deep negative effect that such an action on her part would have in her children, not only toward their father but toward God. Did she not know what that action said to the children?

It was obvious to me that if I had not remained in control and kept clarity of mind in guiding our research to the root causes of their family problems, that the wife would simply have dominated the conversation to convince me she was right. Women are extremely good at this. She had presented several side-kicks to throw attention off herself and accusingly against her husband. She was a master of this after years of practice in the home. However, as stated above, with the help of the Holy Spirit, she did finally seem to listen.

I think it was the Holy Spirit that guided and prompted me, when that father mentioned about his uncontrollable son, (and before his wife arrived, of whom no problem was mentioned) to say to him: "The problem is not your son. . ."

After talking to both the husband and wife for an hour and a half I said: "I think now it is time to get your son and let us talk to him."

The son arrived, a husky handsome boy. I talked about light things for a time, told a joke, gave him an opportunity to relax and get to know me.

The boy held the position that neither his mother nor father loved him. He would say bluntly to each: "You do not love me." I reminded the boy of the sacrifices his parents make for him. Then I said, "You are manipulating your parents and that is why you say they don't love you. Do you know what I mean by manipulate?" He answered, "No."

"I mean, you tell your parents they don't love you to work around them, con them to let you get and do just what you want."

Tears began to flow from the boy's eyes. "Oh! I see tears coming into your eyes. Come here. I want to give you a hug." [He did come and the father gently patted him on the back affectionately as I held the boy while he got control.] "Now, give your father a hug." The boy and father hugged each other affectionately. The mother looked on in silence.

"Now, I want you [father] and you [son] to do something together, one on one, at least once per week at the least. Do you know what I mean by 'one on one'?"

He replied "Yes."

I told the father, you don't ask him if he wants to go with you. If he hesitates you say, "I am your father. You are to obey me. Now come."

I had another question for the boy. "When you go to confession do you ever confess, 'I disobeyed my father and mother?'"

The boy looked at me in amazement and it was obvious that such had never before entered into his conscience. He had never thought of confessing such a thing. He obviously did not have a correctly formed conscience relative to his parents. How could he, when the mother did not have a correctly formed conscience toward her husband and the father of her children? He shook his head that he had never accused himself of such. I told him that if he disobeyed he should confess it in the future.

Early that evening the father came to see me again. He had some items for his family, which he wanted blessed. I gave him a small St. Benedict Cross and one for each of the family. The father told me things were pleasant between him and his wife for the rest of the day after they left me.

Later that evening this couple was seen happily talking and laughing together. God's ways are truly loving and good.

I had explained that twenty years of mistakes would not be easily overcome. The mother not being submissive out of love, and the father not being in control as head, would take some time and much effort to correct.

"A great deal of humility will be needed on the part of both of you in your relationship with each other," I advised them. They nodded their heads in agreement.

There is only one way for family to bond and succeed as happy families. Each parent must actively live the role God has given each. That evening when the father came back to me privately, he looked at me somewhat astonished when I said to him: "You know, I fear that what we've had developing here has all the earmarks of a future homosexual. He has distanced himself from his father; his mother says he favors to be with her, yet he claims neither of you love him. You need to get him into your world, into a man's world. Besides doing something together at least once a week, like going out for a pizza, take that son at times to work with you. Give him small duties around the construction site, like picking up, cleaning up things, etc. Let him feel that he is a part of your world, a man's world."

"There are many things he can do while he witnesses the men's world of work, and of give and take. I've known of men with family and work backgrounds similar to your own. They have had their sons go with them to help with small things already at the age of seven or eight. He needs to feel a part of your life. You decide and insist he obeys. You are a home-schooling family, yet you have allowed the feminists to have more influence over your wife than you have."

To the wife I said: "Your husband is a good man. He does not drink. He has always been faithful to you and his Lord. He has lived the meaning of the wedding rings, 'a pledge of fidelity'." She agreed.

"Do you know," I asked, "that many women have driven their husbands to infidelity?" She looked at me astonished.

"By putting their husbands down, by not recognizing their manhood, by failing to respect their God-given authority in the home, they have stolen away their husband's dignity and finally self-respect. He has admitted, your nagging at him, telling him of his failures, putting him down so that he felt without the dignity of manhood and fatherhood, all this has, at least on one occasion, so overcome him, to the point of anger, that he acknowledged, 'I struck her.'"

The wife looked at me in amazement and was silent. She had admitted her lack of respect for him. Yet, she long resented that he showed a lack of respect for her. She harbored resentment of his failures while ignoring that she herself, even in the presence of the children, had torn his dignity to shreds.

Battered Wives and Battered Husbands

"Battered wives." We hear much of that in the public media and in no way am I attempting to justify men who have used physical abuse on their wives. But would it not be interesting, if an intensive objective study could be made to determine how many of these wives drove their husbands to this condition? Many husbands have been driven to despair, to loss of self-respect, to anger, by their wives not being submissive as God says wives must be in respect to their husbands. God never intended the individual family to have two heads. Of course the wife must be respected, as well as her views and desires. However, for the husband to lead, he must have the goodwill and support of his wife.

What God has ordained in creating the human race cannot be set aside or substituted by a lifestyle fashioned by a corrupting society. Children can see, they can feel, when there is love and respect between their parents. The husband kissing his wife as he leaves for work and returns home is a reassurance to the children. The couples that show admiration and affection for each other communicate a great message of love and unity to their children.

Many wives complain they are not happy. Their happiness will be found **only** when they live their roles as submissive wives and mothers. They must recognize and treat their husbands as head, as the chief representative of Jesus Christ in the home, if they are to attain this desired happiness. The fruit of prayer, especially of worship through the Holy Eucharist will bring couples peace and happiness and an abundance of grace, only when both husbands and wives truly live their God-given roles in the family.