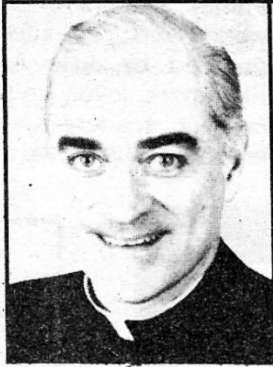


Focus on Family

This is the "Year of the Family." It gives us an opportunity to focus on the husband-wife relationship because that is the basis of a happy family life. We must find a way to use all the resources at our disposal to support every marriage in our society.



Couples need to be reminded to pray every day for the grace they need to do what they otherwise could not do without grace. And they must pray every day. Prayer is very much like breathing. Yesterday's breath will not serve you today. You must breathe every day to stay alive and so too you must pray every day for strength and courage to carry out your responsibilities.

The United Nations has established this year's theme as "Family: Resources and Responsibilities in a Changing World." This attempt to support family life all over the world has addressed three broad issues which are being used as the starting point for identifying priorities:

- a) strengthening the family's ability to meet its own needs (prayer is the key);
- b) clarifying and understanding the balance between how the family can satisfy its needs and what it can expect through public provision of services;
- c) recognizing the effect of societal ills on family relationships, acknowledging that government policy intervention may be needed to counter the abuses of family life.

The drug subculture is certainly one such societal ill, so too is the degenerating moral climate which saps our communities and our families of moral

courage. We have a huge job before us if we are to follow St. Paul's advice: "Overcome evil with good." (Romans 12:21)

The U.N. is taking an international perspective on this important subject by establishing the following objectives for the International Year of the Family: a) to increase awareness of family issues among governments; b) to encourage nations to promote policies which increase respect for families; c) to enhance the effectiveness of local and regional programs for improving family life.

The Pope's Council for the Family issued this statement in support of the Year of the Family: "The Year represents a unique opportunity to promote the family as the basic unit of society, and to aim at encouraging a "family friendly" movement for and with families themselves. The year 1994 should not stand as a closed event. On the contrary, it must be a starting point for a dynamic process which is open to hope for the family and society in general."

To keep these words from becoming mere rhetoric, we have to do everything in our power on the local level to help families stay together. Father Patrick Peyton of happy memory started the Family Rosary Crusade more than 50 years ago with the slogan, "The family that prays together stays together." How many families actually engage in family prayer once a day? Families should pray together every day for the spirit of unity and peace.

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