

Mieke en Luk Adriaens

Marriage Encounter, Belgium

The Basic Characteristics of Church as Reflected in the Domestic Church

If we admit that the universal Church is one, holy, catholic and apostolic, in what sense do these characteristics apply to a sacramental couple, i.e the domestic church? In Marriage Encounter, we define the community experienced between husband and wife as follows: the couple is a 'relational place' where we can experience that 1. we are one in diversity, 2. we are called to develop one another's potential; 3. we are called to love the full person of our partner, without being selective, 4. the love we experience as a couple is a gratuitous gift, and that we are called to pass on this gift to our children and further on to society. These four aspects give flesh and bones to the concepts one (1), holy (2), catholic (3) and apostolic (4). All four aspects can be experienced in the crucial domains of marital relationship, such as the sexual relationship.

Ștefăniță Barbu

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Local Church, Primacy, and Orthodox Diaspora: An Unsettled Ecclesiology

Orthodox Theology has become a champion in defending the ecclesiological importance of the Local church. Theologians as N. Afanasiev and J.D. Zizioulas are accounted among the great names of the new wave (since 1960s) of ecclesialogists who rediscovered the intrinsic ecclesiological value of the local church. Their names are praised by both Protestants and Catholic theologians alike. However, their vision of the relation between the local church and the universal church betrays significant differences which find their practical expression in the issue of Orthodox Diaspora. Our paper will concentrate its attention, in the first part upon the significant differences existing between Afanasiev's and Zizioulas' view on the relation between the local and the universal church, as well as on their understanding of primacy, continuing in its second part with the presentation of the Orthodox Diaspora's situation and the ecclesiological implications. We will argue that the debate over the Diaspora is the expression of two ecclesiological tendencies existing within the bosom of the Orthodox Church, one which gives priority to the universal church over the local church, and

understands the primacy more in terms of "papal primacy" (Greek – Constantinople) and another one which accentuates the local church over against the universal church and which regards the primacy as nothing more than a "primacy of honor"(Russian and other national Patriarchates).

Vasyl Bilash

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The Concept of Domestic Church in the Orthodox Tradition Today (with special references to the Ukrainian Church)

Today the Church is continuously challenged by the contemporary world and its secular society, not just as an institution but within the internal life of every Christian family and every particular person. In most troubled times the Church always survived in the Christian families which were real "domestic Churches". It happened in the early Church's time and in history many other examples can be observed as well. What about the Church's and families' resemblance and ministry today? The Orthodox tradition has always insisted on the resemblance of the Christian family to the Church in miniature. The Ukrainian Church of the beginning of the 20th century consisted of millions of Christian families as the educated and nurtured domestic Churches in the Orthodox (Byzantine) tradition. Thus the Soviet Communist regime, intending to destroy the Ukrainian Church, clearly understood that it would not be enough only to destroy the institutions of the Church (bishops, priests and clergies), and so they destroyed millions of Ukrainian families by organised starvation in 1932-1933. However today the challenge to the Church is more hidden, because Christian families are destroyed not physically but spiritually. The Roman Catholic theology of the family, according to Cardinal Marc Ouellet, even with the huge contribution of Pope John Paul II, is still in its infancy today. The paper explores how a theology of Christian families can be developed and how its ministry can be strengthened. The question of the pastoral strategy of the Church, the development of its dioceses and parishes must be raised here as well. Nevertheless, the most important thing is to start with the theology of the Christian family as domestic Church and the centuries' experience of the Orthodox tradition will help to find the right track.

Rosalind Birtwistle

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Strange Bedfellows? Households of Different Faiths

In the past it was often assumed that marriage to a non-Christian would weaken or dilute the Christian's faith. From the early centuries, Church leaders warned against these relationships, yet they persisted, even when formal marriage attracted severe penalties. Given the claims of those in inter-church relationships that life with someone of a different Christian tradition helps them become better Christians themselves, and the observations of people involved in inter-religious dialogue this gives them new insights into other faiths and consequently their own, can we begin to think about inter-faith marriages in a more positive way? There is no inter-faith dialogue more complete than that between married couples, where the issues have to be lived through, not simply talked about. Christians with partners of different religions can feel marginal in church, or spiritually lonely because they cannot easily share their religious experiences, questions and doubts. Yet many claim that their marriages have stimulated them to explore their own faith. Some testify that their partners support and encourage their spiritual life, or that they have learned about prayer and meditation, trusting God and ethical values from their partner's faith. Concern about the children of these marriages is frequently expressed in discussions of inter-faith marriage and the religious identity of these 'spiritually bi-lingual' children is explored. Finally, these marriages, which are increasing rapidly, are posing new questions to the churches - about marriage, belonging, and inter-religious communication. Can they also help answer those questions?

Angelo Cardita

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From the Holy Family's Devotion to a Worshipping Household: A Case Study on "Lex orandi, lex credendi"

This paper will focus on the Liturgical Feast of the Holy Family, employing the axiom "lex orandi, lex credendi" as heuristic tool. Such option has effects on both method and content: paying attention to the historical and socio-cultural dynamics of the rising of the Holy Family's Devotion, it will be argued that the dialectical

relationships between liturgy and doctrine are more complex than usually acknowledged in the current interpretations and applications of the axiom. This case study will provide an example of a devotional and liturgical process giving rise to a particular understanding of the Christian family, a process from which the appeal to liturgy as mean to implement an idealized family model is not absent. In this way, the heuristics of the axiom "Lex orandi, lex credendi" will serve to disclose the ideological distortions when using liturgy in function of a doctrinal agenda. It will be proposed, in alternative, that in itself, as source and summit of the church's life, liturgy may pave the way to an understanding of the church as worshipping Household, insofar as it encompasses all kinds of human relationships within which human person rises up to the stature of Christ.

Damien Casey

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The Dangerous Idea of the Domestic Church

If we take the idea of the domestic church seriously, it has implications for our understanding of the Christian family, the sacrament of marriage and sexual ethics. As church, the family has an eschatological orientation that cannot simply be understood in terms of a natural order. This paper will draw upon Irigaray's critique of Hegel as suggestive for a critical understanding of the family as the "domestic church". Irigaray is intrigued by Hegel as "the only Western philosopher to have approached the question of love as labour". But Hegel betrays his own rhetoric in his consideration of the family as an undifferentiated and natural unit. The heart of the family however is sexual difference. Irigaray's argument for an ethics of sexual difference has been welcomed by some admirers of the work of John Paul II as a bulwark against those feminist theologians who have sought to minimize sexual differences in favour of sexual equality. However, Irigaray's critique of Hegel can also be applied to John Paul. Above all, Irigaray has criticized the lack of historical consciousness in John Paul's thought on the family and a presumption that the ideal state of affairs is simply given in nature, that it is sacred because it is natural. Both Hegel and John Paul II, it would seem, have a basic intuition about what is at stake, but are unable to overcome some of their basic presuppositions about the apparent givenness of sexual difference. The labour of love is for Irigaray is the work of incarnation requiring negotiation and dialogue,

mediation and transcendence. Natural law unconsciously privileges a prelapsarian Adam and Eve as the model. This contrasts with what should be a Christian model inspired by the Risen Christ, through whom we are drawn into the very life and love of the Trinity.

Eliana Corbari

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Domestic Theology for the Domestic Church

The history and traditions of the Church are in constant growth. Vernacular theology is one of the traditions stemming from the medieval Church which differed from both the scholastic (from the universities), and the monastic (from the monasteries). Vernacular theology is currently less known, but was then, probably, more wide-spread than the other two; moreover, unlike her two sisters, vernacular theology was a shared language of conversation between religious and laity, as well as between women and men. I suggest that, if the language of the domestic church is to grow between and beyond the physical place of the local household, it would benefit from a shared theological language of conversation; and, taking inspiration from the medieval tradition, I suggest naming such theological language “domestic theology”. This paper will discuss some of the characteristics of vernacular theology and suggest that vernacular theology – grown into and renamed domestic theology – can become a model for the contemporary Church. If the Church is domus Dei, then to speak the language of domestic theology (from the Latin domus) is arguably the truest form of theology.

Lawrence Cross OAM

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Exercising the Presbyterate in the Domestic Church: Married and/or Celibate?

Both clerical celibacy and clerical marriage in the Churches of the Roman Patriarchate historically have been dominated by ascetic, moral, and theological pious considerations, but rarely have they been seen as reflecting developing and competing ecclesiologies. In an historical survey of the factors which governed the

imposition of clerical celibacy and the demise of the married presbyterate, a correlation will be suggested between the demise of the domestic Church and the rise of a corporate ecclesial model, between the gradual abolition of the married presbyterate and the rise of a power ecclesiology. Finally the paper will attempt to answer the question of which model of presbyterate has the better chance of succeeding in a restored domestic-centred Church.

Andrzej Dańczak

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Family in Dialogue: An Experience of a Polish Family Movement

The aim of the paper is to show the importance of the dialogue in the life of the married couple. Dialogue being a fundamental dimension of many human activities is also an essential element of life in the family. It helps first of all to improve the most important thing of the common life which are reciprocal relations. It is a constant task of every married couple to develop and to deepen the bond of unity to which they were called. Many aspects of everyday life depend from the ability to conduct a sincere and efficient dialogue. A lack of (sometimes basic) communication is one of the major reasons for the high level of divorces in the developed countries. The life of a couple is sometimes rather a phenomenon limited to a simple living together but not a real sharing the common life in its totality. The pastoral experience of the family part (The Domestic Church Movement) of the Polish Light-and-Life Movement is based among other things on the presence and permanent development of the skill of the dialogue within the couple. This dialogue being the pillar of the inner integrity of the couple has a real influence on the life of the whole family. This experience is shared with others within circles formed by the couples of the Movement. It has also its influence on the presence of the Movement in the pastoral activity of the parish community and in single cases also of the local church (e.g. family counselling).

Peter De Mey

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How Do Children Become Active Subjects within the Domestic Church? Reflections on a Neglected Aspect within Roman Catholic Ecclesiological Discourse on the Domestic Church.

In this paper a number of official magisterial texts with a universal and a more regional scope are being reread in which references are found to the family as “domestic church” in order to find out whether they pay any attention to the role of children as active subjects within the domestic church. As far as Vatican II is concerned, only GS 48 explicitly turns its attention to the children as well. “As active members of the family (ut viva familiae membra), children contribute in their own way to the sanctification of their parents.” The postsynodal apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (Paul VI, 1975) contains a very powerful passage about active participation of children within the domestic Church. Generally speaking, the Church documents seem to be aware, especially when speaking about evangelization and education in the family, that the parents are also to be educated and formed by their children. With the exception of a 1993 pastoral letter of the American bishops (“Follow the way of love”: pastoral message to families), however, this has not been developed in great detail. Attention for this aspect is also quite absent in recent publications on the domestic church such as the very valuable 2004 monograph by Florence Bourg, *Where Two or Three Are Gathered. Christian Families as Domestic Churches*. Hopefully, in future monographs on the same theme, we will be able to find more constructive input on how children can become active subjects within the domestic church.

Kit Dollard

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The Family Meeting: A Model for Building Community and Improving Collaboration and Communication

Improving collaboration and communication amongst the People of God are pressing priorities for the Catholic Church today. The domestic church too, through the family, struggles with similar issues especially in a world where change is a constant pressure, (internally from growing children, externally from the world

culture and environment). In the family a ‘facilitative approach’ is essential to maintaining, building and forging relationships. Family meetings are a simple yet effective way of communicating and building consensus within the family. They involve a commitment from each family member to meet once a week to discuss subjects of common interest. There are a number of variations in the format but common constituents include the rotation of the chair, the agenda dictated by the participants and rigid time keeping (usually no more than 30 minutes.) The meeting concludes with a short time of prayer and a blessing. David Kantor, the family systems therapist, has evolved his four player system, more recently developed by William Isaacs, which is essential to an understanding of focused conversations, and which provides a useful methodology to the mechanics of family meetings. Amongst other beliefs, Kantor says that when voices are not heard they become ‘disabled.’ – This paper is grounded in the principles of Practical Theology and will aim to engage in a dialogue with the texts balanced against the practical experience of communication in family meetings as a model for improved collaboration and communication in the parish community and specifically Parish Pastoral Councils and Diocesan Councils.

Sahayadas Fernando

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Domestic Church, a School of Peace: Relevance of the Teachings of John Paul II in Times of Persecution in the Multi-religious India

Family as *school of peace* is one of the least explored themes in the magisterial teachings of John Paul II. Scattered among numerous thoughts on family, his theology envisions a three-fold contribution of *Ecclesia domestica* to global peace: creating formative ambience, transmitting peace-related values, and bearing witness to peace. Unfortunately, the education to peace is turning out to be one of the most daunting challenges for the Christian families in India in the wake of recent persecution of Christians and the ever-growing religious fundamentalism. Consequently, the domestic church in India, naturally ingrained in peaceful coexistence, has a new Himalayan task at hand – building up a peaceful multi-religious society. Despite many limitations, the reflections of John Paul II offer a valid contribution not merely to the *little church* but to all the families of God in the subcontinent. A critical perusal of the documents of FABC [Federation of Asian

Bishops' Conferences] on family serves as a complementary and contextualised source of inspiration for commitment to peace.

Mark Grundeken

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“A Jan Steen Household”¹ : the Domestic Church in the Shepherd of Hermas

Just as the paintings of the Dutch Master Jan Steen (1626-1679), the Shepherd of Hermas portrays a rather disorderly household of a husband with adulterous thoughts (Vis. 1.1.2), a loose-tongued wife (Vis. 2.2.3) and misbehaving children (Vis. 1.3.1; 2.2.2). This household (oikos) is not to be considered as merely a literary fiction, but as reflecting something of the situation in Hermas' actual house church (including his own family as well as other members). After reassessing some of the major positions in the literature on Hermas, it is argued that the author's views on the community life of the Christian household are not as “positive” as some have argued. The idea that Hermas knows nothing of female submission (Osiek-Balch) goes too far. As paterfamilias, Hermas is expected to keep his wife and children under control (Vis. 1.3.2; 2.3.1). His failure to do so (Vis. 1.3.1; 2.3.1) reflects his struggle to act according to the traditional, patriarchal, cultural expectations. Further, the text's restrictions on (re)marriage (Man. 4) as well as its call to syneisaktism (Vis. 2.2.3) indicate that Hermas reflects the development of a less-than-positive attitude towards the married state. A study of all relevant familial and anti-familial aspects of Hermas' household will attempt to show that the text casts doubt on the idyllic character of the early Christian domestic church.

¹ “A Jan Steen household” is a Dutch proverbial expression that is used to refer to a disorderly household.

Joann Heaney Hunter

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Words Matter: “Domestic Church” – A Meaningful Metaphor for the Contemporary Church?

While the phrase “domestic church” has its roots in the early church, it was popularized in the twentieth century by John Paul II's 1981 document *Familiaris Consortio*. Since that time, critics have questioned its usefulness as a term to describe the contemporary family. Some argue that Jesus himself eschewed family relationships in favor of the broader relationships of disciples and friends (Mk 3:31-35). Others argue that it is unhealthy to compare families to the Church, especially in light of its often authoritarian, unyielding, and sexist structures. Moreover, they note that likening a family to a church structure cannot speak to those that embrace an egalitarian model of life. These critics propose that the only logical course of action is to reject the language of domestic church completely and eliminate it from the discussion of family life today.

Despite these criticisms, the reality of a faith-filled family is important for many who profess to be religious. The home, for example, can be the first place where people discover faith. In the home, faith traditions can be supported, prayers may be taught, spirituality may be lived, spirituality may grow, and religious behavior can be fostered. Diverse families of faith find that their homes are at the heart of their faith.

Regarding domestic church, therefore, we are confronted by a dilemma of language. For some critics, the language of “domestic church” is problematic terminology that may offend, restrict, or misrepresent. On the other hand, experience shows that faith in the home is a reality that must be expressed. The purpose of this essay is to explore alternative language to “domestic church” and to discuss ways of expressing families in the context of the contemporary church.

George A. Kilcourse, Jr.

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Interchurch Families as ‘Domestic Church’: The Improbable Grace

This paper integrates three concerns: (1) The characteristic dynamics in an Interchurch Family's life as “domestic church”; (2) A reflection upon ecumenical

lacunae in the USCCB's November 2009 pastoral letter, "Marriage: Love and Life in the Divine Plan; and (3) The spirituality of interchurch families as an ecclesial expression of Trinitarian models of reciprocity and unselfish love. (1) Interchurch families engage in unprecedented ecumenical "gift exchanges" from two distinct ecclesial traditions, necessarily shifting emphasis to ongoing interactive dialogue and mutual processes of reception. (2) The underlying ecclesiology of the USCCB's November 2009 pastoral letter on Marriage eclipses the Roman Catholic Church's ecumenical commitment, effectively marginalizing the possibility that interchurch families constitute a "domestic church"; the bishops disingenuously idealize Catholic-Catholic marriages with narrowly selective excerpts from the Vatican's 1993 Ecumenical Directory and the pastoral responses it extends to interchurch families. (3) A spirituality of interchurch families invariably expresses Trinitarian models of reciprocity and unselfish love as a model for ecclesial life; ecumenical visions of the Church as "communion of communions" find experiential confirmation in the lives of interchurch families as "domestic church." *Conclusion:* While many consider that the quest for unity has arrived at an impasse because of doctrinal and ethical divisions, interchurch families personify a *kairos* moment and new hope for the ecumenical future. The Roman Catholic Church's retrieval of the understanding of the "domestic church" presumed exclusively Catholic-Catholic couples and their family. In an ironic way, the Roman Catholic Church has improbably encountered more than it originally bargained for or expected. Interchurch families demonstrate how they thrive and flourish as real and true expressions of the "domestic church."

Thomas Knieps-Port le Roi

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Is There a Genuine Type of Spirituality in the Home?

The concept of domestic church does not carry a subversive potential because of its being a prolongation of the Church universal into its smallest local unities. Its real explosive power lies in the types of committed relationships such as intimate partnership, parent-child-relations, friendship, neighbourhood and more extended social networks, which are said to foreshadow a different and so far unseen pattern of ecclesial life. But what qualifies the domestic realm of households and families to become the place of an ecclesial and spiritual mission while the

recognized standards for spirituality are set by the official church community and its organizing of religious life in the public arena? In this paper I draw on Kees Waaijman's division of the field of spirituality into three main forms (spirituality of schools, counter-movements and primordial spirituality) to show that the domain of family life constitutes a genuine type of spirituality which is in no way competing with the spirituality of the official religious community but simply covers a different field of human and religious experience. The paper then sets out to argue that recognizing the spiritual potential of local households and families as complementary to the official form of spirituality would enable the church to overcome a number of unhealthy dualisms such as clergy versus laity, religious experts versus spiritual amateurs, official religion versus individual spirituality, belonging versus believing etc.

Elisabeth Kropf

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Work, Love and the Domestic Church

The Apostolic Exhortation 'Familiaris Consortio' assigns specific weight to the (nuclear) family as the Domestic Church by seeing it as the revelation and the realisation of ecclesial communion. In order to actualise the Domestic Church the Exhortation in no. 23 (which has been criticised because of the connection of family and femininity) demands equal access to public duties and to employment as well as appreciation of the familial duties. According to the document both should be based on well-grounded theological reflections. The active need for a theology that is able to reintegrate the two specific human modes of existence – working and loving – into a holistic approach is also reflected by the results for the Austrian part of the European Value Study. This survey – which was carried out for the third time in 2008 – showed that Austrian women and men have three wishes: „Firstly: to be in a solid relationship which allows security and confidence. Secondly: to work in a manner that provides a sufficient income as well as meaning. And thirdly: to be able to combine the first and the second wish.“ Almost thirty years after the Apostolic Exhortation was released and now looking at the Austrian part of the European Value Study I consider it as a good point in time to present the results that have been achieved so far in the search for a 'Theology of Work and Relationship'. In doing so I am focusing on Dorothee Sölle's approach of loving

and working which she defines as participation in creation. In a next step I will look at it from a pastoral theology point of view. This should lead to further enquiry concerning the concept of Domestic Church.

Marco Lazzarotti

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How The Universal Becomes Domestic: An Anthropological Case Study of the Shuiwei Village, Taiwan

The notion of household is one of the most basic concepts of Chinese culture. The concept of household is deeply linked with concepts such as ancestors' worship, kinship, inheritance, and so on. Inside the complex Chinese cosmology, all these concepts continually influence each others. More particularly, the domestic architecture reflects beliefs about the supernatural as well as the identity of the owner of the house.

In this paper I will try to show out how important the concept of household is for Taiwanese Catholic people, at least for the Catholic community of Shuiwei village, a little village in the Taiwanese countryside where I am currently doing my anthropological fieldwork. Catholic faith arrived in Shuiwei more than one hundred years ago. Since that time a flourishing local Church developed and preserved the Catholic identity of the community, despite a very strong presence of Taoism, Buddhism and Folk religion in the surrounding communities. I will argue how in this context, "Catholicization" of household represent a way for self determination of family groups in Shuiwei. By displaying symbols of the Catholic faith, the Shuiwei Catholic community – consisting of two large family groups, Zhong and Li – preserved up to this day its identity as family and Catholic community. It is thank to this process of localization that the universal principles and the ecclesiastical institutions take on a concrete and practical meaning. In other words, in Shuiwei's case, we can say that the "Domestic Church" is an essential requirement for the existence of the "Universal Church".

Jean-Baptiste Lipp

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Interchurch Families: An Indispensable Microcosm in the Macrocosm of the Church?

Reason for not supporting a ministry to interchurch families: It would be an illusion to think that interchurch families could be an ecumenical motor. What can « the cell » (or « little bunch of cells »!) do to promote the unity of a « body » which is supposedly ill ? Also, just as children should not carry the weight of their parents' divorce, it is not up to mixed homes suffering from the division of their churches to be charged with a fundamentally impossible mission, the « reunification of the parental couple ». Ecumenism is too serious a matter, institutionally and theologically, to be left to mere lay people. Interchurch families have no original contribution to make to the ecumenical movement!

Reason for supporting a ministry to interchurch families: « Acting as if » is not, in the long run, worthy of a Gospel which calls us to truth, light and testimony. But this Gospel also calls for new conversions, new deaths and new resurrections. And the truth which will soon be inescapable to the eye – but which many eyes are still voluntarily closed to - is that growing interfaith mixity in our populations must, sooner or later, have implications for the theology of each individual church, and particularly its ecclesiology. This thesis is defended, among others, by Father René Beaupère, a pioneer in the francophone ministry to interchurch families. Our churches « act as if » their tissues were homogeneous, which they are less and less. While the Catholic Church tends to view mixed marriages as problematic, without having many more solutions to offer in the name of a strong and self-satisfied ecclesiology (particularly in the area of Eucharistic hospitality), the Reformed churches tend to view the problem as no longer existing, in the name of a weak but also self-satisfied ecclesiology. However, it has become increasingly unbearable for interchurch families who are conscious of their identity as ecumenical ecclesiolae, or domestic churches (according to the patristic expression), to lack complete recognition by some of their full ecclesiality, and to have others trivialize the pertinence of an ecclesiological debate. Although the Eucharistic question is not an issue for Protestants but remains one for Catholics, Protestants cannot say it is not their problem. As long as the issue is problematic for the one, as such, it involves the other. When a parental couple has separated, no dispute is the responsibility of one member only. Both churches together should

then seize the opportunity of conversion and renew their efforts to address the BEM issue and pending questions. Interchurch families and their associations will never be more than secondary characters or mere extras, in the great and long drama of the ecumenical movement, but they do have a role to play, and it is - no more and no less - life-size!

Jeevaraj Lourdhu

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The Catholic Teachings on “Family as Domestic Church”: An Impulse to Empower Spouses against Domestic Violence in India

Domestic violence is invariably prevalent in all societies of the world although its frequency varies. The term ‘domestic violence’ includes violence between the spouses and siblings and violence against children and elders. In this presentation we refer only to violence within the couple (conjugal violence). In the Indian context, according to NFHR–3, women (37%) and men (1%) are subjected to domestic violence. Although women are mostly victimized in domestic violence we aim for various reasons at empowering both woman and man in the context of India. In India, vertical dimensions of family life has been playing a vital role in domestic violence. Thus, we are in need to develop another paradigm to empower couples against domestic violence. Therefore, we refer to the Catholic teachings on family. Since Vatican II family is perceived as *Ecclesia Domestica* (e.g. *Evangelii Nuntiandi, Familiaris Consortio*). The images of the Church are applied to the family, such as ‘people of God’, ‘body of Christ’, and ‘community of love’. As a result, it is apparent that the Church has condemned all forms of violence in the family. They are considered as injustice and contrary to the sacred nature of the family (African Bishops’ Synod, no. 59) and God’s intent (GS, no. 29). Thus, based on the Catholic teachings we intend to develop a paradigm that emphasis on the net of love, relatedness and togetherness. This paradigm should be carried out through some pastoral applications: pre-nuptial catechesis, on-going formation for the couples and theological formation to the priests and religious.

Philip Mamalakis

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Eastern Christian Perspectives on the Church of the Home

In this paper, I will explore Eastern Christian perspectives on the domestic church. Building off the Eastern Christian theology of marriage, from St. Paul in the 1st century, through St. John Chrysostom in the 4th century, to more contemporary theologians of the 20th century Russia and Greece, I will present how the theology of marriage, and by extension, the spiritual life, shapes the eastern Christian understanding of the Church of the home. The Christian East has always maintained the homogenous nature of the spiritual life, rejecting any distinctions between lay and monastic spirituality (Evdokimov, *Agnes of Spiritual Life*, 2002 SVS Press). Far from being an inferior path that obstructs spiritual growth, “the Fathers use the language of marriage to speak about the relationship between the soul and God.” (Arch. Vasileios, *The Spiritual Life as True Marriage*, 1999, Alexander Press). Marriage is considered a spiritual path and the monastic path is considered to be a marriage. Bringing this understanding to the 21st century, I will draw from the latest research in child development to fully explore the implications and applications of this theology of domestic church for the daily life of the home, and by extension, for the larger church.

Mary Marrocco

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Communion Among Divided Churches: The Inter-Church Couple as Domestic Witness

The question of inter-communion among Christian churches has long been difficult ecclesologically, theologically and pastorally. A prime work of the modern ecumenical movement has been to remind churches not to be content with the present situation of division, but to remember that it is scandalous and painful. For inter-church couples, it may be harder to forget the pain of division than to remember it, especially if both partners are strongly connected in their own denominations, or even when their families are. When two people marry, as priest-psychiatrist George Freemesser has said, two universes collide. And when

two Christians of different denominations marry, two churches come face-to-face, simultaneously in communion (through the marriage) and out of communion (ecclesially). The result is not only that the couple is setting out on a dangerous journey in little-charted waters, but also that they are explorers whose adventures and discoveries can change and benefit their communities.

This paper will draw on three sources to examine the inter-church couple as domestic witness to communion among divided churches: first, reflections of inter-church couples themselves, through personal interview; second, contributions of couple-dynamic studies in family-systems theory; third, some basic concepts in communion ecclesiology, as reflected in the Decree on Ecumenism of the Second Vatican Council and subsequent Catholic ecumenical reflection.

Sandra Mazzolini

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Church as Family of God: An ecclesiological view

Over the 2,000-year course of the Church's history some descriptive definitions of the ecclesial community have been formalized that have sometimes placed their main emphasis on the mystical-theological dimension, or, on the contrary, on the societal-institutional dimension of the *eκκλῆσία*. Vatican Council II did not limit itself to identifying the ecclesial identity as a complex reality; it also made an effort to describe it, using the language of images and symbols (cf. LG 6-7), and specified the criteria of interpretation that must guide every descriptive definition of the Church.

The elaboration of my contribution will be divided into two sections. The first section will take into consideration some preliminary questions concerning both the possibility and the implications of the use of ecclesial images, symbols and models. The second section will explain the descriptive definition of the Church as Family of God; this reflection will articulate on three levels: 1. the family as an ecclesial image. A particular attention will be paid to the elements which are constitutive of the notion of "family"; 2. the family as an ecclesial symbol. The symbolic interpretation of the image of the family emphasizes, for example, same values which characterize in an essential way the ecclesial communion; 3. the model of the Church as Family of God. The attention will be paid to the relationships among the different ecclesial subjects; the ecclesial communion will

be here analyzed in the perspective of the concrete articulation of the ecclesial community.

Michael Muonwe

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The Phallogocentric Hierarchical Model of the Family in Igbo (Nigerian)

Context: Towards a More Egalitarian Family Model in the Light of the Theology of 'Domestic Church'

What one witnesses in most Christian families in Igboland is, in some important respects, at variance with what Christian families are called to be – "domestic churches." This ancient characterization of Christian family, no doubt, challenges its members, among other things, to embody Christ in their daily lives, and become an 'incarnation' of love, justice, equality, peace and prayer. But Igbo culture is still, to a large extent, so strongly tied to phallogocentric moorings that women hardly have a voice within the family setting. One important concern that this paper addresses, is how the Church can navigate through its seeming incapability to address the situation for over hundred years of its existence in Igboland. How, one wonders, can the Church preach against gender injustice and oppression of women within the family when women do not fare better within the wider Church community? If the Church's structure is seen to be more aligned to favour male headship, how would it prove to the people that its plea for equality within the family, especially as embodied in the theology of the "domestic church," is genuine? Moreover, is Christianity, in alliance with colonialism, not among the major factors that helped to debilitate the viable socio-political structure – *umuada* – through which Igbo women make their own contributions in matters affecting them in the community? In view of all this, we strongly propose that, for the Church to achieve any meaningful impact in this regard, it must first and foremost be prepared to correct the injustices within itself, otherwise, it remains a suspect, thus, re-enforcing the tight grip of male-domineering family structure. We argue that the Church must toe the part of humility and self-critique embodied in genuine inculturation, if it hopes for any success. If not, the implication of Christian family as a "domestic church" in this respect might remain a pie in the sky and a mere theological jargon devoid of much concrete relevance within the Igbo society.

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Domestic Church and the (Mal-)Practice of Dowry in Contemporary India: A Challenge to Marriage and Family Ministry in India

Dowry is a social evil existing in the Indian culture irrespective of caste, religion and race. The amount of paying dowry differs depending upon the status and economic conditions of the family. It has to be regarded as evil because the practice of dowry portrays the inhuman practices against married women and their families. At times, dowry practice leads to burning or killing of the bride. In spite of a growing awareness and efforts of social movements this malpractice is still prevalent in present India. The practice of dowry plays a pivotal role in threatening the entire family. Christians believe that family is a 'Domestic Church', which is the sanctuary of God's love and communion (LG no.11). God instituted the human family for loving communion and fellowship. However, dowry threatens love and communion between the spouses and the entire family. In order to make the family a domestic church with love, communion and fellowship as main ingredients we need to bring attitudinal change among the Indian people. This paper argues that only a combination of women's determination, supportive parents and a change in India's perverted culture will end this malpractice. Thus, women need to be enlightened not to give and receive dowry and a strong public opinion has to be created to condemn its practice. Different agents such as BECs, SHGs [Self Help Groups by the Catholics] and Kudumba Sree (Govt.) have to be mobilized to eradicate this malpractice and construct families as domestic church.

Claude Nonis

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Recognition and Participation of Women in Family and Church in the Context of Sri Lanka: A Need for Affirmation of the Dignity of Women

The unparalleled contribution of women as wives and mothers towards the family in all respects and as lay women and women religious towards the Church in limited spheres is a noteworthy reality in Sri Lanka. It is questioned, however, whether the dignity and rights of women are safeguarded against harassment by men in family life and whether potential charisms of lay women and women

religious are utilized, exploited or sidelined in ecclesial structures. There have been significant attempts to voice their grievances. The equal partnership in marriage has become the need of the hour. It has become necessary to empower women in the face of inequality and injustice, to conscientise men about their obligations towards women and to facilitate women to have reasonable involvement and also leadership roles in Church organizations (Apostolicam Actuositatem, 9; Ecclesia in Asia 34; Vita Consecrata, 34). In Jesus' movement, many women were collaborators (Mulieris Dignitatem, 13) and Jesus treated them "with openness, respect, acceptance and tenderness" (John Paul II, Letter to Women, 3). The Church has clearly proclaimed the necessity of societal egalitarian nature over and against all types of discrimination (GS 29). Feminist thinking is critical of androcentric biblical passages and also traditions which have given rise to distorted connotations in theological, liturgical and canonical sources by stressing the functions of mother and wife and excluding them from mainstream activities in building the Church. It is opportune that a campaign is carried out (Letter to Women, 6) for the empowerment of women, networking, conscientisation of all about the dignity and rights of women, strengthening of women's commissions, joining hands with similar social organizations, promoting inclusive, gender-sensitive growth centres, more participation of women in decision making processes of the Church and women resource centres in Sri Lanka. All in all, our objective is to articulate a new pastoral paradigm in way of creating space for lay women, i.e. equal partnership in family life and reasonable representation of both lay women and women religious in the parish pastoral councils and thereby to make use of their inborn talents for the welfare of the community. Besides, ongoing formation programmes may be organized for laity, women religious and clergy at the diocesan, deanery and parish levels for the realization of the same.

Gregory Obanado

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Domestic African Church Surviving with Other Religions: A Diocesan Example

The idea of Christians living and accepting other religions could raise a question of authenticity. A sizeable number fear other religions to the point of paranoia. The church as a family could survive in an environment that considers other religions

as members of an extended family because of close collaboration with them. The Catholic Church was introduced to Afemai diocese of Nigeria 1871, and has remained a solid Catholic enclave from that time in the mid-western region of Nigeria. This place is also a bastion of Islam. One important and visible manifestation of religion in this area is the close collaboration between followers of Catholicism and Islam. It began with the Schools established by Catholic Missionaries that pupils of all religions attend. Secondly, individual families share both religions and live together in the same house with no reference to religious difference. Thirdly and most importantly, this family connection promotes the fact that problems within churches are never hidden from the Muslim communities; consequently, solutions are provided by both religions. One important fact is that this type of religious collaboration between the Catholic Church and Islam exists in most parts of Southern Nigeria; this however raises the question of religious authenticity. This essay is set to underline the minor fact yet overlooked, that there are Christians who cannot imagine their existence without the active presence and cooperation with Muslims and other religions, and that the church cannot have a real existence without other religions. Whatever affects one eventually affects the other in more or less degree. Could this local illustration be taken as an example of a domestic church pragmatic presence to itself and other religions?

Ignatius Obinwa

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The Universal Church and a Wider Notion of the Domestic Church: A Perspective from the African Extended Family System

The Second Vatican Council describes a family as “a domestic sanctuary of the Church” (Apostolicam Actuositatem, no. 11). By that is meant that the life of mutual love and praying together which Jesus Christ taught his Church is first and foremost lived in the various families that form the local Churches. Interestingly too, many early Christian Communities or local Churches began as “family Churches,” assembling in families, e.g., of Prisca and Aquila (1Cor 16:19), and of Mary (Acts 12:12). Though all those local Churches were autonomous, they somehow recognised themselves as forming one big family under Christ, and also regarded the Church in Jerusalem as a kind of mother Church. Thus the Churches in Macedonia and Achaia had to make collections to help other Christians outside

their group (Rom 15:26). Again the dispute in the Church of Antioch was sent to Jerusalem for resolution, with James and Peter presiding (Acts 15). The article then argues that the project of ecumenism and the efforts towards achieving Christian unity will be made lighter if, in the light of the African extended family system, the various Christian confessions, are taken to stand for the ancient “family Churches,” the domestic Churches. – In the African extended family system, various off-shoot families are hooked to a mother-family known as the obi in some African societies, whose first-born male is also known as okpala. The mother-family and the okpala are simply primus inter pares among the other families and the other first-born males, but they respectively act as rallying point and as chairperson; symbols of unity. In Christianity, Peter, the first bishop/shepherd (Jn 21:16-17) can then be regarded as the okpala, and since he is said to have worked and died in Rome, his See there can also be regarded as the obi (overlooking the negative influence of the Greco-Roman world on the Church). The various Christian confessions will then be like the many families making up an extended family, with our common ancestry in Christ as the symbol of invisible unity while the See of Peter and his successor serve as symbols of the visible unity of the Church.

Bernard P. Prusak

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The Ecumenical Household as Domestic Church: Ecclesial Threat or Pastoral Challenge and even Resource?

Lumen gentium (11) used the term “domestic Church” in reference to the family, in which “the parents [presumed to be Catholics] are to be the first preachers of the faith for their children by word and example.” The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* has further expounded this concept. In section 1655, it affirms that “[f]rom the beginning, the core of the Church was often constituted by those who had become believers ‘together with all [their] household.’ When they were converted, they desired that ‘their whole household’ should also be saved. These families who became believers were” islands of Christian life in an unbelieving world.” Section 1656 then declares “In our own time, in a world often alien and even hostile to faith, believing families are of primary importance as centers of living, radiant faith. It is in the bosom of the family that parents are ‘by word and example . . . the first

heralds of the faith with regard to their children.” This paper will consider the shared life of two spouses in an ecumenical household. That is a family in which we have a Catholic spouse and a baptized non-Catholic spouse. For liceity (but not for validity), the Catholic spouse would have requested permission to enter such a marriage “for a just and reasonable cause.” Canonically, such permission is given if the Catholic party has fulfilled the following conditions: “he or she is prepared to remove dangers of defecting from the faith and is to make a sincere promise to do all in his or her own power so that all offspring are baptized and brought up in the Catholic Church;” and the other party is “informed...about the promises that the Catholic party is to make, in such a way that it is certain that he or she is truly aware of the promise and obligation of the Catholic party” (Code of Canon Law, Canons 1124 and 1125, Sections 1 & 2). The official Church’s somewhat ambiguous view of such marriages is evident from the pertinent sections of the *Catechism*. Section 1634 asserts that “[d]ifference of confession between the spouses does not constitute an insurmountable obstacle for marriage, when they succeed in placing in common what they have received from their respective communities, and learn from each other the way in which each lives in fidelity to Christ. But the difficulties of mixed marriages must not be underestimated. They arise from the fact that the separation of Christians has not yet been overcome. The spouses risk experiencing the tragedy of Christian disunity even in the heart of their own home.” The *Catechism* does acknowledge that “[t]hrough ecumenical dialogue Christian communities in many regions have been able to put into effect a *common pastoral practice for mixed marriages*. Its task is to help such couples live out their particular situation in the light of faith, overcome the tensions between the couple’s obligations to each other and towards their ecclesial communities, and encourage the flowering of what is common to them in faith and respect for what separates them” (section 1636). Reviewing pastoral initiatives by various local churches, this paper will propose a way in which the lived experience of ecumenical households might be considered an ecclesial resource.

Toni Rowland

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The Church as Family and the Family as Church: A South-African Experience

How has the encouraging image of Church-as-Family-of-God of the 1994 African Synod been realised in church life in this corner of Africa? Aylward Shorter stated “If the Church in Africa is to be truly a family than the Church and the family which presents its model must reflect God’s priorities.” Is this more a reality 15 years later or is it still a pipe dream? My work in MARFAM, a Marriage and Family Renewal Ministry and subsequently in coordinating the Family Life Desk of the SA Catholic Bishops’ Conference is specifically concerned with this. Clergy and laity in particular as family people need to have adopted a stronger family focus. The paper will briefly outline some of the work, successes and challenges, leading up to the recent production of a manual entitled “Family as Church – Church as Family. An Introduction to Parish Family Ministry.” – When I am told so-and-so parish is doing great work for families because they have a post-abortion support group and a homosexual support group, my reply is, “Great, but what are you doing to help ordinary families deepen their understanding that family moments are faith moments and their homes are little churches? That is the way to promote the parish’s vision of itself as a community of families.” The day-to-day realities around marriage and family relationships, the brokenness of family life in post-apartheid society, particularly of African families, African spirituality, the extent of the HIV/AIDS pandemic and catechesis with a family focus are some factors to be explored. The jury is still out with their final verdict but the conscientisation continues.

Karen Somers

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Meaningful Relationships as Key to God’s Love and as Well of Faith

“What type of relationship does the Church need?” In this paper we will first try to answer this question with the help of some theoretical concepts and then develop a concrete vision of Church. The paper starts by referring to Emmanuel Levinas who emphasizes the importance of the ‘other’ and the other’s transcendence. If we

reduce the other to ourselves, we lose both the other and ourselves. It is only in the face of the other that morality is possible. From here Christ's complete, self-giving love will be dealt with. Christ's disciples have to be as unconditional in their love as He was. It is anyway not possible to love God who cannot physically give anything in return if one cannot love another human being who can give something back if he or she wants to. The importance of the capability to "grow in relationship" will be addressed next. We need relationships but we also have to work on them. Couples who enable each other to do this are fundamentally 'catholic'. Then we will develop a vision about the 'workability' of true, deep, and loving relationships. Partners living this kind of relationship are sacraments to each other as they bring the Christian task for loving relationships to life. They build a 'loving church'. These couples can be married or not. So any couple that embodies the above mentioned principles of transcendence, unconditionality and growth potential, can act out God's love and build the Church. Thus the answer to the first question can be formulated: any relationship that enables couples to respect each other's difference, is unconditional on both parts and enables people to grow is a finding place of God.

Ray Temmerman

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Interchurch Families as Domestic Church: Familial Experiences and Ecclesial Opportunities

The vast majority of published material on the domestic church deals almost exclusively with marriages where couples are from the same Christian tradition. Today, however, many couples are marrying across denominational lines. If we take marriage seriously, we must also consider their reality as domestic churches, explore the obstacles they face in their call to unity, and the ecclesial opportunities and responsibilities their active participation in the life of the Church entails. Drawing on research carried out in 2008 with members of the American and British Associations of Interchurch Families, through surveys of their members and interviews with couples at their respective conferences in Louisville KY and Swanwick England, and working through the lens of a laboratory of Christian unity, this paper explores the lived experience of interchurch families as domestic church. Using the voices of the couples themselves, it presents the hopes and

difficulties of living their vocation of marital unity within divided churches, and asks questions which the churches must find answers for if there is ever to be true Christian unity. Equally, however, it suggests ways these domestic churches may be gifts to the churches of which they are members, living a foretaste of the eventual reunion of all Christians.

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Discerning Gods' Spirit in Local Households: Popular Religiosity and Syncretism

There seems to be an ocean wide divide between doctrinal and ecclesial faith on the one hand, and what English theologian Don Cupitt identifies as "a new religion of life in everyday speech" on the other hand. For a growing body of contemporary Christians the Church's sacramental life does not appeal as it did for their forebearers. They rather find connections to other spiritual sources that are detached from mainstream religion or religiosity. From culturally specified forms or religiosity, sometimes combined with elements taken from Christianity – e.g., the use of church incense – they construct new forms of religiosity, underpinned by ritual practice. While the Church may consider these forms as syncretistic by nature, for the people involved in practicing their religious rituals they are a matter of 'life-and-death'. One distinct way in which some of the new religious forms find expression is in the use of home altars in what is considered a sacred domain. I will refer to this compartment as 'inhabited sacred space.' The critical question becomes: to what extent can one discern the dwelling of Gods' spirit in the inhabited sacred space? A subsequent question I shall deal with will briefly examine the extent to which the local household can deepen and enrich the pastoral life of the domestic church.

International Conference

The Household of God and Local Households: Revisiting the Domestic Church

Catholic University of Leuven, 10 – 13 March 2010

Paper Sessions

(in alphabetical order)

Claire Wolfeich

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Rethinking the Desert: Implications of Domestic Church for Models of Spiritual Renewal

How might the theology of the domestic church inform and transform practices of spiritual nurture and renewal? Dominant models of spiritual renewal within Roman Catholic traditions have tended to emphasize the desert experience of withdrawal and retreat. While these contemplative models can offer an important counter-voice to cultures obsessed with productivity, they also minimize the possibilities of quotidian renewal with the home and family. Rather, they imply that spiritual growth requires separation from family. This has implications for laity, and particularly for caregivers (especially women) of young children, for whom such separation is not possible or not compatible with the demands of their vocation. This paper will set up the problematic—identifying dominant models of spiritual renewal in the tradition and their continuing influence in contemporary contexts of spiritual renewal. I also will show the gap between these models and the realities of family life. I then will counter-pose theologies of the domestic church as a way of critiquing those dominant models and opening space for alternatives. Next, I will look to Jewish and Christian traditions for voices (e.g., Francis de Sales and Jeanne de Chantal) and practices (e.g., Jewish rituals of Sabbath keeping) that can help to build practices of renewal that are consonant with a theology of the domestic church. Finally, I will propose a practical theology of spiritual renewal for the domestic church. This will involve an authentic dialogue between contemporary contexts and spiritual traditions, with the aim of transforming the practices of spiritual formation and renewal in families and in the church as a whole.