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# JOHN PAUL II'S CHARTER OF THE RIGHTS OF THE FAMILY. THE SOCIAL DIMENSION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN LIGHT OF NATURAL LAW

*Families and homes go together. This makes us see how important it is to insist on the rights of the family and not only those of individuals. The family is a good which society cannot do without, and it ought to be protected.*

His Holiness Francis, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*, No. 44.

## INTRODUCTION

On October 23, 1978, when becoming the Bishop of Rome, Saint John Paul II addressed a letter to the Polish people. This letter is not a diplomatic letter; instead, it reveals the joy of a man touched by the mission awaiting him and by having to leave his homeland. In the letter he wrote: “*Love of our country unites us and must unite us above all divergences. . . . [It] springs from the law of the human heart. It is a measure of man’s nobility: a measure that has been put to the test*”

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*many times during our difficult history.” And he urged his fellow countrymen to “oppose everything that conflicts with human dignity and degrades the morals of a healthy society, that may sometimes threaten its very existence and the common good, that may diminish our contribution to the common heritage of humanity, of Christian nations, of the Church of Christ” (John Paul II, 1978).*

I would like to focus on two issues resulting from this fragment. The first is that the love for the homeland results from the “law of the human heart,” which is another way of saying “natural law.” The second is that respect for the human person is aimed at the common good and the health of society.

The teachings of Saint John Paul II in connection with the family in general and the Charter of the Rights of the Family in particular focus on the social dimension of human rights in the hermeneutic key of natural law and the common good. The Charter starts with a preamble containing this assertion: “*The rights of the person, even though they are expressed as rights of the individual, have a fundamental social dimension which finds an innate and vital expression in the family*” (Pontifical Council for the Family, 1983).

I will now elaborate on why this approach is necessary and what its importance is for an appropriate philosophy of human rights.

## HUMAN SOCIABILITY AND THE COMMON GOOD

The law is an accidental reality whose substance is the human person. The human person is a corporeal-spiritual being endowed with the superior powers of comprehending and choosing; as the Psalm goes, the human person is “a little lower than the angels” (Psalm 8, 5). The flourishing of these superior powers of the human being demands an adequate means: sociability or, in other words, solidary existence with the rest of human beings. Sociability and the political nature of the human being rest on this profound reality of his existence: The human being is a political animal (*zoon politikon*) because he is a rational animal (*zoon logotikon*), and the other way around (Herrera, 2013).

This is so much so that, strictly speaking, the “individual” existence of a human being is unconceivable. In fact, solitary or individual human life is impossible not only due to reasons that have to do with corporeal subsistence or procreation. Even if these challenges could be overcome somehow, the solitary existence of the human person, like that of a shipwreck survivor or other mammals living on their own, is not possible and there is no historical record that such an existence has ever occurred.

Shipwreck survivors go crazy and end up dying out of sadness or throw themselves into the sea out of despair. Other cases of isolation usually end up in

death.<sup>2</sup> The human being can only fully develop himself within his own social and political framework; that way, he can exercise his powers and reach a successful and happy life. In addition, an isolated being would lack the language necessary to develop his intellectual and volitional capacities and, therefore, would die without exercising his very human powers: he would not flourish.

The importance of language in the development of the person has already been noted by Aristotle (2013, I, 2) when he said that speech can express good and evil, just and unjust, and the association of living beings who have this sense makes a family and a state. This assertion by Aristotle is particularly relevant these days, when there is concern about the imposition and manipulation of language based on ideology, sometimes through laws and regulations, for example on gender issues, with the resulting violence entailed by that imposition.

The triple order of human inclinations condensed under the *Summa Theologiae*, I-II, q. 94, a2, covers not only the tendencies on which contemporary ius-naturalism bases usually recognized human rights such as life, property, family, freedom of worship, but also their sociability.

The social calling of man is expressed by means of multiple societies such as the nuclear society, i.e. the family, and the most perfect nuclear society: political society. The political society is necessary because it allows us to take part in the common good; without the political society, we cannot reach a full life.<sup>3</sup> Throughout history, the political society has adopted multiple accidental forms: the Polis, the Empire, the Kingdom, and now the State (Montejano, 1981).

From the point of view of metaphysics, the State is an accidental entity, which belongs to the relationship accident. It is a reality made up by a set of relationships occurring in community human activity aimed at the common good. This is not a mere addition of individuals who wish to form the State, but they constitute a unity resulting from the natural interaction by individuals towards the common good (see Montejano, 1981, p. 31).

2 People react to isolation in different ways. It has been established that solitary confinement in prison may have serious psychological, psychiatric, and sometimes physiological effects, including insomnia, confusion, hallucination, psychosis, and worsening of existing health issues. Solitary confinement in prison is also related to a high number of suicides. People who are still developing face serious risks that isolation may cause irreparable physical and mental harm (see World Medical Association Statement, 2019).

3 Those who cannot exist without the other are necessarily united for procreation, such as man and woman. This community constituted naturally to satisfy daily needs gives rise to the home. The first community made up by several homes with a view to non-daily needs is the village. Last, the perfect community of several villages is the city, which, so to speak, is absolutely self-sufficient and which emerged due to the needs of life, but now exists to live well (see Aristotle, 2013, I, 2, 1252 b a 1353 a).

## INTERMEDIATE SOCIETIES AND THE PRINCIPLE OF SUBSIDIARITY

Human sociability does not end with the State; instead, human sociability requires a plurality of societies. The social nature of man is expressed by means of multiple ways of infrapolitical social life, the first and most important of which is the family (Pontifical Council for the Family, 1983, Preamble, D), and then there is an array of supplementary associations, such as the municipality, the school, the university, the trade union, and NGOs with their varied purposes.

For the effective enjoyment of human rights, infrapolitical societies play a fundamental role, as they are more successful than the declarations with which individualism tried to replace them (see Montejano, 1981, p. 37). There is historical evidence that the best guarantee for the defense of human rights is not the existence of declarations and conventions, but a political system having respect for infrapolitical societies.

To attain that purpose and for those societies to succeed in their own activities, a legal and political regime is necessary which secures and harmonizes unity in diversity, and which balances the need for authority at different levels, recognizing and respecting the specific freedoms of persons, families, and intermediate social groups, both at the territory level and representing economic and social life (Garat, 2020).

The way of attaining such just regime is by means of the principle of subsidiarity. This entails, first, respecting the activities of individuals, families, and intermediate societies (whether educational, productive, or religious) with discretion and reservation in all the activity of higher bodies regarding those of a lower rank.<sup>4</sup> Second, regarding its active aspect, assuming activities based on political common good reasons or supporting intermediate societies in their activities (Graneris, 1973).

Denying the principle of subsidiarity is denying human rights, the most basic freedoms and the natural sociability of man. This denial entails a dehumanization of existence in the anonymity of the mass controlled by the powerful by means of a bureaucratic State and the means of communication.

4 Saint Thomas Aquinas (2007) has said, "For a political community may be so united that it will cease to be one, or if it barely survives, it will be a worse one. This is as if one should equate harmony with one note, or rhythm with one beat." (p. 101).

One cannot ignore the Social Doctrine of the Church on this matter. The principle appears in several documents, such as the encyclical letters *Mater et Magistra*, *Rerum Novarum*, and *Centesimus Annus*. In *Mater et Magistra*, published more than one hundred years ago and citing *Quadragesimo anno*, the position of the Church was the following: "Just as it is wrong to withdraw from the individual and commit to a community what private enterprise and industry can accomplish, so too it is an injustice, a grave evil and a disturbance of right order, for a larger and higher association to arrogate to itself functions which can be performed efficiently by smaller and lower societies. Of its very nature the true aim of all social activity should be to help members of the social body, but never to destroy or absorb them." In the Anglo-American world, this principle is known as a Catholic principle, but this is not true of Europe. In Germany, the principle is considered a *überigens deutsch-rechtlichen Grundsatz* (highest German legal principle). In the European Union, this right has been formally included in the Maastricht Treaty and ratified and specified by the Lisbon Treaty.

## MODERN INDIVIDUALISM AND THE MAGISTERIUM OF THE CHURCH

This is the reason why any anthropology denying the essential note of human sociability is conceptually mistaken and empirically counterfactual.

However, in our western culture the myth<sup>5</sup> has spread of the lonely man in the forest, like Tarzan. This myth comes from Indo-European antiquity and is nothing but a fantasy. We are discussing something that can be “imagined,” but cannot be “thought of” in a realist manner.<sup>6</sup>

However, in modern thought, the idea has spread like a “virus,” i.e. something invisible and affecting an ordered structure, that the narrative is real, transforming our vision of the human person. In fact, it has been asserted that the social and political way of life is not “natural” or “essential” to the human being, but an artifice or convention.

Such is the degree of fantasy of this assertion that there are no major differences between a fantasy such as “The Jungle Book” by Rudyard Kipling<sup>7</sup> and texts like “Discourse on the Origin and Basis of Inequality Among Men” by Jean Jacques Rousseau<sup>8</sup> or the “Leviathan” by Thomas Hobbes (1651). In Rousseau, man is a pacific animal; in Hobbes, a fierce animal, but never a social or political animal. This is even so in the “Second Treatise on Civil Government” by John Locke,<sup>9</sup> which follows more closely the central western tradition due to the influence of Richard Hooker’s Thomistic thinking, in which the political society is not considered natural but artificial.

The origin of this error has to do with many causes. Such changes in the culture can never be explained based on a single fact or the ideas of a thinker, no matter how influential the thinker may be. Gnosticism, the guiding thread in our culture for ages, and the destructuring of thought by nominalism and the Protestant reform are important elements in this process (Gallego Pérez de Sevilla, 2019). Gnosticism in modernity is expressed by means of the denial of every natural order, mathematicism, and empirism, and ultimately by means of transhumanism (Lamas, 2020; Voegelin, 2014, p. 106–107).

But as the human person is “a little lower than the angels,” the power of his intelligence or will, even if mistaken or motivated by vices, is actually powerful; man

5 Here, the term “myth” is not used in the sense of a narrative explaining aspects of human life through symbols, but in the sense of a narrative assigning people or things qualities they do not have.

6 This should be understood in the sense of conceiving something based on the adequacy of our intelligence to reality.

7 The Jungle Book, published in 1894, is a collection of stories written by the Englishman born in India Rudyard Kipling (Mumbai, 1865-London, 1936).

8 Published in 1755.

9 Published in 1689.

has tried to turn into a reality that story sunk in the haze of the myth. In a way, it was an attempt to satisfy that desire to “be like God” (Genesis 3, 6)—an individual on his own, perfect and self-sufficient, capable of his own realization.

The consequences of the resulting individualism cannot even be listed exhaustively. These consequences are theological, philosophical, educational, and economic in nature. A large part of western legal and political theory, even in Catholic thinking, is imbued with this individualism. Individualism, I repeat, is usually invisible. It is so entrenched in our culture that we can even assert that all of us are, in one way or another, individualists. Along the same lines, we could say that no man before modernity could have fully been an individualist.

Those of us who come from the Americas, especially Latin America and the United States, were born into political life as independent nations with this modern individualism. Individualism is part of our family history; we must acknowledge and accept it, and overcome it if we want to. The same is true of the European continent where this myth grew and developed. If we want to recover the Christian roots of our civilization, as Saint John Paul II insisted, this is a very important step in the recovery (for example John Paul II, 1982, 2003).

But it should not be understood that when discussing individualism I am only considering “American legal conservatism,” “originalism of the natural rights of the American founding era,” “legal liberalism,” or “libertarianism.” “Living constitutionalism” from the left-liberal legal academy, and even Marxism and neo-Marxism, including gender perspectives, are also part of the same philosophical and theological individualist matrix.

This is the modern revolution whereby man is exalted over God. Individualism is actually a denial process: first of metaphysics (nominalism), then of the Church (Protestantism), then of Christ (rationalism), then of God (empirism, materialism), then of speculative Truth (idealism), then of moral Truth (relativism), then of Beauty (meaningless art), and then of man himself, turning man into an epiphenomenon of the economy, of the State, and ultimately of technology (Casaubón, 1966, p. 32–35).

I believe I am not mistaken in asserting that this explanation I just gave is a correct conceptual framework for the development of human rights as a western legal and political reality. Human rights would then be a gnostic concept, which denies the social and political dimension of the person, of any truth, and the person’s essential dependence of God.

But it is also true that the declarations of human rights in constitutions and international treaties which emerged in the political life of the West were also inspired by the knowledge of natural law as progressively recognized throughout the centuries, especially by the Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition. Many of the men who

have taken part in the political processes for the recognition of human rights both in Europe and the Americas, before and after the Second World War, as early as the end of the 18th century until the beginning of the 20th century, were part of this tradition. Therefore, there is a hermeneutics of continuity between the tradition of natural law and human rights, which may be identified as mixed, just like the wheat and the tares, with the gnostic and individualist tradition.

The Catholic Church has voiced its concern regarding these ideas from the outset, and also regarding the multiple schools of thought resulting from these ideas, including the declarations of rights and the concept of human rights. Then, in a hermeneutics of continuity, the Church recognized the importance of human rights in our social and political organization. We must approach the notion of human rights, human dignity, and, especially, Saint John Paul II's Charter of the Rights of the Family with these hermeneutics, caveats, and warnings.

In connection with this topic, the Church's Magisterium since Pope Leo XIII has maintained a consistent position throughout all pontificates to this day, as follows: (1) highlighting the concern for individualism and the need for a social and political organization aimed at the common good, (2) rescuing the respect due to the human person given his privileged stead in the creation and in the history of salvation expressed in human rights, and (3) the defense of family as a natural consequence of this dynamic.<sup>10</sup>

10 This is the logic to be used when reading the Church's magisterium which started with Pope Leo XIII in connection with human rights and the social question with encyclicals *Libertas Praestantissimum* (1888) and *Rerum Novarum* (1891), which form a unity among themselves (this pope has also authored the encyclicals *Diuturnum Illud* of June 29, 1881 and *Immortale Dei* of November 1, 1885, which are relevant for the subject matter of this study; his successor Pius X, along the same lines, has authored the encyclical *Pascendi* of September 8, 1907). And the defense of family appears at this time and in this historical context through the encyclical *Arcanum Divinae Sapientiae* (1880).

Something similar happens with Pope Pius XI who, in opposing the totalitarianisms of the 20th century, at the same time elaborated on the social question in the encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno* (1931), advocated human rights with the encyclicals *Non abbiamo bisogno* (1931), *Mit Brennender Sorge* (1937), and *Divini Redemptoris* (1937), and defended the family in the encyclical *Casti Connubii* (1930).

This is why when Pope John XXIII issued his last encyclical *Pacem in Terris* (1963), he continued this magisterium dating back to the 19th and 20th centuries, also using what Pope Pius XII had communicated during the Second World War. This encyclical permanently unites legal recognition with the idea of duties, reminding of the dimension of justice as a duty both at the personal and social levels.

This line continued in the Second Vatican Council with the constitutions *Dignitatis Humanae* and *Gaudium et Spes*, and *Apostolicam Actuositatem*. Finally, Pope Paul VI authored the encyclical *Populorum Progressio* (1967) and the great *Humanae Vitae* (1968).

Saint John Paul II has continued with this approach. The concern for the social question in *Laborem Exercens* (1981), *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (1987), and *Centesimus Annus* (1991) is followed by the fight against individualism and relativism in *Veritatis Splendor* (1993), and *Fides et Ratio* (1998). And the beautiful *Evangelium Vitae* (1998) contains a concern for the care of all human lives.



But during the long pontificate of Saint John Paul II, the agenda of denial of man had already unleashed furiously, and that agenda is still active to this day. Saint John Paul II called for a Synod in Rome in 1980, as a result of which the Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris Consortio* was published in 1981,<sup>11</sup> in 1982 the Pontifical John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and Family was established, and in 1983 the Charter of the Rights of the Family was published.

## A SOLIDARY CONCEPTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

The 20th century has offered a diabolic dialectic relative to human rights and the family for Catholics. If modern individualism is against human nature and the most essential theological truths of faith, so is the oppression of totalitarian political movements.

This is a false dichotomy, as if we Catholics had to choose between individualism promoting a minimum State or a strong or soft totalitarianism of the multiple versions of Marxism and the political projects of the liberal left. These are categories of the world, but we Catholics are in the world, yet we do not belong to the world (John 15, 19). Jesus Christ is the Truth that sets us free (John 8, 38) and he shows us with his passion, death, and resurrection the solidary nature of our existence: sin came to the world through one man, and one man is giving us salvation (Romans 5, 12–19). We are discussing solidarity in sin, solidarity in salvation. The social and political relevance of the human person as noted by philosophy ends up being confirmed by the Revelation and is an essential part of the Church's Magisterium and Christian doctrine.

This solidarity is first expressed in the family (Pontifical Council for the Family, 1983, Preamble, E and F). Therefore, the denial of the human being in the modern revolution is specifically realized by destroying the family. The family is destroyed by breaking the indissoluble bond between spouses through divorce (Pontifical Council for the Family, 1983, article 6) annulling their fertility through contraception and abortion (Pontifical Council for the Family, 1983, articles 3 and 4), establishing social and economic structures which make family life impossible (Pon-

11 In that document the Pope expressed his concern for the wide-ranging, deep, and quick attacks suffered by the family in modern times. His assessment leaves no doubt regarding how urgent the issue is: "At a moment of history in which the family is the object of numerous forces that seek to destroy it or in some way to deform it, and aware that the well-being of society and her own good are intimately tied to the good of the family, the Church perceives in a more urgent and compelling way her mission of proclaiming to all people the plan of God for marriage and the family, ensuring their full vitality and human and Christian development, and thus contributing to the renewal of society and of the People of God" (John Paul II, 1981, Introduction, 3).

tifical Council for the Family, 1983, articles 1 and 9), and dispersing family members by means of gender ideology, which puts women against men and children against parents (Pontifical Council for the Family, 1983, article 5). On this point, liberal individualism and Marxism in their different expressions match perfectly.

Let us take Soviet communism as an example (Kos-Rabcewicz Zubkowski, 1961). The codes establishing the regime for family relations in 1918 and 1926 provided for free divorce, established separate property for spouses, recognized domestic partnerships, removed the duty of fidelity, established free abortion with the argument that it was better to have abortions legalized instead of resorting to illegal abortions due to financial problems. In the case of children with unknown parents, collective paternity was allowed when the mother did not know who the father was. There was even a proposal of the total abolition of the legal regulation of family life, proposing free love and care for and education of children by the State.

Soon it was evident that the State could not assume the education of children without parents or family; also, in practice, women ended up being responsible for all tasks in single-parent households. Finally, in 1935 the Soviet Union passed a Constitution which deplored family disintegration and which provided that family was the “basic cell of the social organism.” In 1936, abortion was outlawed and in 1944 domestic partnerships were no longer considered valid and a complex procedure for divorce was established.

The experiment had failed: it did not last more than twenty years.

In the west, materialist hedonism and the current consumerist capitalism are some of the most serious expressions of the corruption of the social body. This is the decadence of a skeptical and hopeless West which, in denying its own roots, has committed suicide, as denounced by Alexander Solzhenitsyn (1979). Almost a century after the Soviet experiment, its agenda is being followed almost verbatim and respect for human rights is used as an argument.

The Charter of the Rights of the Family by Saint John Paul II is showing us how to avoid this tragedy.

A first step is to recover the understanding of human rights, whose conceptual framework is the very concept of law in the sense of “ius.” The nature or essence of law, as any human practice, is the purpose sought. The purpose of the law is nothing but attaining the common good. Therefore, the ultimate purpose of human rights is also the common good. The Latin root “iu” is in a series of words which mean “union,” “order,” and “adequacy”: *iuberi* (to be orderly), *iugare* (to link, to join), *iungere* (to connect), *iugum* (yoke). Human rights, understood as “ius,” structure our mutual relationships, our solidary living; they are not a tool to defend oneself against another. Once we recover this basic notion, we will also recover the

notion of “duty” for the legal world. The ideas of Simone Weil (2000, p. 19), Josef Pieper (1980, pp. 189–194), or Benedict XVI (2006, No. 13, 2009, No. 43) are especially enlightened in connection with this claim.<sup>12</sup>

And after a realist conception of human rights is recovered, the family has to be recognized as a universal institution, as it is inherent in human nature (Pontifical Council for the Family, 1983, Introduction). Family is of such preeminence that the rights of family members must be coordinated with the good of the family and the society, which recognizes that family is the essence of social life (Jiménez Valencia, 1998).

Family expresses the essentially social dimension of rights of a person (Pontifical Council for the Family, 1983, Preamble, A); family is where the generational encounter takes place as well as mutual help promoting the harmonization of individual rights with the demands of social life (Pontifical Council for the Family, 1983, Preamble, F). Family is a community of love and solidarity, which cannot be replaced in teaching and transferring the essential values for the development and well-being of individuals and the society (Pontifical Council for the Family, 1983, Preamble, E). Family is the environment where the human being starts with his education and training, where he develops his personality, and where virtues are acquired and transmitted which will guide interpersonal relations in political life (Pontifical Council for the Family, 1999, 15).

## CONCLUSION: A COMPASS IN THE MIDST OF DISORIENTATION

Among the addressees included in the Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris Consortio* and the Charter there seems to be special concern for those families that “. . . have become uncertain and bewildered over their role or even doubtful and almost unaware of the ultimate meaning and truth of conjugal and family life. Finally, there are others who are hindered by various situations of injustice in the realization of their fundamental rights” (John Paul II, 1981, Introduction).

That uncertainty, discouragement, and perplexity have to do, among other causes, with the alarming degradation of fundamental principles such as “a mistaken theoretical and practical concept of the independence of the spouses in relation to each other; serious misconceptions regarding the relationship of authority between parents and children; the concrete difficulties that the family itself experiences in the transmission of values; the growing number of divorces; the scourge of abortion; the ever more frequent recourse to sterilization; the appearance of a truly

12 I have reviewed the ideas of these and other authors in connection with this topic – see Maino, 2016.

contraceptive mentality” (John Paul II, 1981, First Part, The Situation of the Family in the World Today).

The Charter is a prophecy, as the situation has only worsened in the last 40 years.

To end with, I would like to highlight some aspects which are very relevant these days or which affect us more; these aspects help us find orientation in the midst of so much inequity:

1. Resorting to a “charter of rights” does not prevent showing a conception of law understood as what is due to another in accordance with certain measure of equality. This way, the Church is adopting the language of modernity to be understood, without relinquishing the truth. The Church adopts the language of legal instruments in force which are internationally recognized and accepted, but the charter does not entail a defense of the claims of an entity entitled to rights. On the contrary, this is about what is due to the family in accordance with justice and anything aimed at the common good (Pontifical Council for the Family, 1983, Preamble H, I, J, and K; articles 1, 3, 9, 10, and 11).

2. While now it is common to speak of different models of family, the Charter details the notions of family and marriage, and the purpose of marriage.

3. The Charter states that the family has the right to exist and condemns the serious evil of divorce, which “attacks the very institution of marriage and of the family.” Sadly, this is a debate that has been abandoned for many decades and which should be recovered if the multiple peoples want to have legal orders which are truly just (Pontifical Council for the Family, 1983, article 6).

4. Contrary to the usual practice in international organizations and the so-called “new world order,” the Charter establishes that international assistance can never be conditioned on the acceptance of contraception, sterilization, or abortion programs (Pontifical Council for the Family, 1983, article 3).

5. Families must be able to avoid the “throwaway culture” of the consumer society regarding the elderly, orphans, migrants, and the disabled, so just social and economic structures must exist which ban abortion and euthanasia. This conception also entails that the assistance of the State should not be discarded in light of the principle of subsidiarity, when circumstances so demand (Pontifical Council for the Family, 1983, articles 4, 9, and 12).

6. Family is the natural educational environment. Education is, then, a primary, original, and unalienable right of the parents. The State cannot encroach upon this right on moral and religious questions, including advocating sexual education or imposing secular education. The idea is not “leave us alone” or a duty not to interfere, but the State must also ensure that everyone can educate their children

in accordance with those convictions, as a comprehensive education promotes the common good (Pontifical Council for the Family, 1983, article 5).

7. Finally, some comments are appropriate in connection with the last articles in the Charter. It is important to state this clearly: What family can enjoy these rights if the parents do not have a job? What family life can there be in a home where the parents work all day and barely see their children? What solidarity can there be in families with no stable place where to live their lives, whether they be children, adults, or old people? Is it not true that natural law demands rights and duties in connection with the specific protection of family life which enables the education of children, the transmission of values, and domestic coexistence? There can be no family life in empty homes where people only sleep. On this point, we cannot settle for “leave us alone.” The principle of subsidiarity and the common good demand that the State promotes economic and social organizational conditions which allow for a “human” life, where work at home is valued, especially regarding women, and where both spouses can live their paternity without unjust social or economic conditioning (Pontifical Council for the Family, 1983, articles 8, 9, and 10).

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# JOHN PAUL II'S CHARTER OF THE RIGHTS OF THE FAMILY. THE SOCIAL DIMENSION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN LIGHT NATURAL LAW

## SUMMARY

The teachings of Saint John Paul II in connection with the family in general and the Charter of the Rights of the Family in particular focus on the social dimension of human rights in the hermeneutic key of natural law and the common good. The author of the article explains why such an approach is necessary and what its importance is for an appropriate philosophy of human rights.

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