

*What ever Happened to Large Catholic Families?*

Genesis 1:28 tells us, “*God blessed mankind saying, “Be fertile and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it.”* We easily see two things here; children are a blessing of God, and God commands us to fulfill His master plan to *multiply our children as the stars of heaven.* (See also Nehemiah 9:23)

In the last generation or two, we Catholics have lost this insight from God’s wisdom. We have rejected God’s vision and bought into the pagan philosophy concerning a good life. We have convinced ourselves that worldly selfishness is the key to quality of life, forgetting that all true quality of life, all happiness, and fulfillment, can only be found in what our Creator designed us for in the first place. Accepting all the children God wants to give us is central to success. To not even want God’s total gift of children is to reject God’s love. The same evil spirit of people-hate that drives abortion is also the demon that drives unthankfulness for children and the child-hate population myths of modern society.

It is not only in personal success but also with nations, and civilizations where the rise and fall is in accordance to the adherence to God’s plan. Marriage, sex and family, in God’s will, are at the heart of matters. They are the foundation stones in the building of lives, of society and the Kingdom to come. There are eternal as well as practical consequences in ignoring God purpose. Retirees, for example, in the next generation will have scant working population to support them. The devaluing of children in society leads to child abuse, to the devaluing of motherhood and most of the many social ills we suffer from today. Christian civilization is disappearing in Europe and America precisely because non-Christians are out-populating us while we are ignoring God’s good plan to increase and multiply and fill the earth. Selfish people tell us the world is already too full, but as Christians we let God decide that. Quality and quantity are not opposed to each other. They are on the same side. Humans are created for each other and we cannot have the good life selfishly. Deliberate limited families are a curse to our society and ourselves. Our Heavenly Father really does know best. This is not a put-down for those who truly cannot have children. God simply has a different calling for them.

Adults from large families rely on their siblings in a crisis and enjoy a closeness they can find no where else, yet today they deny their own children this precious gift. As Catholics we need to pray for motherhood, fatherhood and a love for all the children God has ready for His world. We need to pray for the grace to surrender excessive individualism and embrace the fullness of family life.