

### 3. Formation of the Laity for Family Ministry

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Both clergy and laity are involved in family ministry.<sup>1</sup> Among the laity, the Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris Consortio* mentions doctors, lawyers, psychologists, social workers, advisers, and other specialists who are involved in the structures of pastoral families (cf. FC 75; DPC 43). The Pontifical Council for the Family underlines that the people working at different levels of family ministry should be conscious of the mission that they have received from the Church. Among them, there should be no lack of experts in medicine, law, and psychology, who must be prepared to fulfill their mission (PSM 42).

Before working in family ministry, laypeople should be properly formed. This formation is defined as an activity aimed at shaping consciousness, convictions, and attitudes that capacitate lay family ministry workers for the Christian life, in accordance with their recognized vocation. In the Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*, Pope Francis emphasizes the need to provide this formation “with the help of teachers and counselors, family and community physicians, social workers, juvenile and family advocates, and drawing upon the contributions of psychology, sociology, marital therapy and counseling” (AL 204). The Pope also notes that “professionals, especially those with practical experience, help keep pastoral initiatives grounded in the real situations and concrete concerns of families” (*ibid.*). Therefore, the emphasis should be on helping the future family ministry workers to develop a mature personality, to deepen their Christian life, and to fulfill the Church’s mission (cf. GE 2; ChL 57).<sup>2</sup>

The program should include intellectual formation, shaping practical skills, and apostolic formation. In this way, the formation of family ministry workers can lead to effectiveness in activities at the service of marriage and the family.<sup>3</sup>

#### *The intellectual formation of family ministry workers*

The intellectual formation of family ministry workers is intended to instruct them in different scientific fields.<sup>4</sup> It seeks to shape their personality as pastoral workers of families and gives them the theoretical and practical knowledge in the area of pastoral care of families, based on the Church’s teaching (LG 12, 28).

Their intellectual formation is interdisciplinary. It should, however, be subordinated to the principle of theological ordering and include primarily theological content, while benefitting from knowledge in the secular sciences (cf. GS 48). Both the formation of family ministry workers and instruction in the field of theology are linked to the faith.<sup>5</sup> Knowledge in the field of theology of marriage and family and teaching about the pastoral care of families are complemented by secular disciplines that deal with marriage and family. This complementarity makes it possible to give family ministry workers normative content while helping them to understand contemporary man, to prepare to work in a specific pastoral reality and to meet the challenges of conjugal and family life.<sup>6</sup> The transmission knowledge intends to properly prepare family life advisers (cf. DPC 38). Strengthening their knowledge includes instruction on anthropological, biblical, theological, psychological, and biomedical topics.

The teaching about anthropology must include the dignity of the human person, human freedom, education for love, and living in community. The moral aspects related to the conscience and the respect for human life, as well as the responsibility for both, are also important.<sup>7</sup>

Man has an inalienable personal dignity. Human dignity is linked to the person’s freedom to make decisions concerning life, goodness, and truth (see VS 65). God gave man the possibility of determining and controlling his actions, and to pursue his perfection by accomplishing them (see GS 17). The teaching about

<sup>1</sup> Cf. J. Wilk, “Czym jest duszpasterstwo rodzin?,” HD 2:1998, 32–42; K. Wojaczek, “Koncepcja duszpasterstwa rodzin w *Familiaris Consortio*,” in: A.L. Szafranski (ed.), *Małżeństwo i rodzina w świetle nauki Kościoła i współczesnej teologii*, Lublin, 1985, 288.

<sup>2</sup> M. Fialkowski, *Formacja chrześcijańska katolików świeckich w świetle nauczania Kościoła współczesnego. Studium teologiczno-pastoralne*, Lublin, 2010, 22; G. Pyżlak, *Formacja świeckich pracowników duszpasterstwa rodzin. Studium z duszpasterstwa rodzin w świetle badań doradców życia rodzinnego i absolwentów diecezjalnych studiów rodziny*, Lublin, 2013, 25.

<sup>3</sup> See M. Maciel, *La formazione integrale del sacerdote*, Rome, 1991, 63–5.

<sup>4</sup> Commission for the Family of the Polish Bishops’ Conference, *Projekt organizacji diecezjalnego studium rodziny*, Warsaw, 1984, 1.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. K. Wojaczek, *Kształtowanie katolickiej koncepcji małżeństwa w diecezjalnym studium rodziny. Studium pastoralne*, Opole, 1997, 303.

<sup>6</sup> Commission for the Family of the Polish Bishops’ Conference, *Projekt organizacji diecezjalnego studium rodziny*, 3–10.

<sup>7</sup> See W. Granat, *Personalizm chrześcijański. Teologia osoby ludzkiej*, Poznan, 1985, 567–8.

anthropology should give particular importance to the conscience (cf. GS 16). Through it, God wants to form man, by calling him to choose and do good.<sup>8</sup>

Lay family ministry workers must also learn to respect the human person from conception to natural death. This is furthered by the awareness that life is a gift of God and must, therefore, be transmitted responsibly (cf. HV 10). Concern for human life also implies respect for the elderly, the sick and the dying.

An important issue in the formation of family ministry workers is the education for love. Solid knowledge about human sexuality, including the biological, psychological, and personal dimensions and the orientation towards love, marriage, and procreation, must show that man can give others love and become a selfless gift for another person.<sup>9</sup> Love is given in the community where a person lives, develops and realizes his or her calling.<sup>10</sup>

The theological teaching about marriage and family is also important in the intellectual formation of family ministry workers. This teaching should be based on biblical sources and the Church's magisterium. Marriage, as a community of life and love, was established by the Creator and is regulated by His laws.<sup>11</sup> Jesus Christ raised marriage to the dignity of a sacrament (CC I p. 24). From the sacrament of marriage, the married couples draw supernatural strength to fulfill their duties and tasks faithfully and with holiness until death.<sup>12</sup> The knowledge about theological problems concerning marriage and the family constitutes the foundation of the intellectual formation of family ministry workers. Their formation, based on theological premises, should above all develop a consistent concept of marriage, consistent with the Church's teaching.<sup>13</sup> Seeing marriage and the family from the theological viewpoint is the basis of marriage and family counseling conducted as part of the Church's action.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, the presentation of theological matters should be included both in the preparation of advisers and in the ongoing formation family ministry workers.

An important area of the theological issues related to family ministry is the moral life of spouses and families. In the theological and moral formation, it is good to emphasize the themes of love, marital purity, and responsible parenthood. The Church has an integral vision of parenthood as conception, care, and education (cf. FHP 18). Teaching about responsible parenthood should include topics such as biological processes and their functions, generosity towards God the Giver of life, and the attitude of receiving and educating each child. At the same time, it concerns the spouses' discernment of physical, economic, psychological, and social conditions in planning the best moment for conceiving a child or postponement of conception (GS 50; HV 10; AL 167).<sup>15</sup>

Theological-moral formation should also include the assessment of abortion and contraception, issues related to medical progress regarding the beginning of life, artificial insemination, and the moral obligations implied in education in the family. The statement that abortion is the intentional destruction of a human life conceived in a mother's womb and still unable to live outside her organism—in other words the murder of an innocent person—is crucial. It is also important to show the truth about contraception as an attitude and a collection of methods and means for preventing pregnancy. The attitude and practice of contraception, which perpetuates an egoistic and irresponsible attitude towards the human person and love, is an expression of the instrumentalization of human sexuality and the rejection of fertility. It is, therefore, opposed to marital purity, which is based on the respect of the inseparability of the two-fold function of marriage (HV 12; GS 12). Moreover, it can lead to addiction, wounds, and even crime (cf. HV 10, 17).<sup>16</sup>

In the context of theological formation, new phenomena related to medical progress that touches the beginning of human life should also be discussed. This includes prenatal diagnosis—also known as pre-natal or antenatal diagnostics—which provides data on the health of the fetus while it is still in the womb.

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<sup>8</sup> B. Mokrzycki, "Formacja chrześcijańskiego sumienia," in: PD 1995/96, 292.

<sup>9</sup> I. Dec, "Jana Pawła II wizja integralnej godności ludzkiej," AK 2000, no. 5, 108–9.

<sup>10</sup> Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Instruction *Libertatis conscientia* on Christian freedom and liberation, 22 March 1986: [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc\\_con\\_cfaith\\_doc\\_19860322\\_freedom-liberation\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_19860322_freedom-liberation_en.html).

<sup>11</sup> GS 48; FC 3, 11, 13; CCC 1603; cf. Z. Grochowski, "Sakrament małżeństwa: fundament teologiczny prawodawstwa kościelnego," *Prawo Kanoniczne* 40:1997, nos. 1-2, 177–8.

<sup>12</sup> Pontifical Council for the Family, "Małżeństwo sakramentem," *ŻM* 25:1976, no. 6, 98–9; J. Krucina, "Rodzina—miejsce ewangelizacji," in: J. Krucina (ed.), *Ewangelizacja*, Wrocław, 1980, 302–3.

<sup>13</sup> See Commission for the Family of the Polish Bishops' Conference, *Projekt organizacji diecezjalnego studium rodziny*, 3–4; cf. K. Wojacek, *op. cit.*, 303, 324–5.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. P. Landwójtowicz, *Duszpasterskie poradnictwo małżeńskie w Polsce. Studium pastoralne*, Opole, 2010, 259–68.

<sup>15</sup> A. Bławat, "Wielodzietność," SMR 466.

<sup>16</sup> S. Witek, "Cięża, Aspekt teologiczno-moralny," EK vol. 3, col. 453-5; L. Niebrój, *U początków ludzkiego życia*, Kraków, 1997, 70–1.

Alongside theology, a proper moral discernment is also required with regard to artificial insemination.<sup>17</sup> When learning about moral life in marriage and the family, it is useful to conduct group exercises related to the moral theology of marriage and family that allow greater involvement and personal work with sources texts, i.e., Church documents, the papal magisterium, and texts published by the local Church. For the development of the students' moral judgment, it is helpful to deal with specific questions.

Topics in the field of canon law should also be among the issues discussed. Knowledge about marital consent, forms of marriage, obstacles, and reasons for the invalidity of the sacrament of marriage, as well as the conditions of separation, should be conveyed. In addition, the regulations for mixed marriages and the concordat marriage should be included in their formation.<sup>18</sup> The area of juridical and ecclesiastical issues must be thoroughly presented in the formation of family ministry workers, mainly for practical reasons.<sup>19</sup>

The intellectual formation of family ministry workers must deal with psychological and pedagogical issues, including male and female psychology, communication between spouses, and basic issues of prenatal psychology. They should also know what constitutes the partners' physical, legal, mental, psychological, and social maturity.<sup>20</sup> The presentation of theoretical and practical issues of interpersonal communication allows students to discover the importance of communication between spouses and, in the future, to help spouses to establish the direct, close, and intimate contact necessary for the development of love and of the conjugal relationship. Knowledge of the basic problems of prenatal psychology makes it possible to understand that a child is a human being from the moment of conception, and that deep psychological bonds can already be established with him or her during the prenatal period.<sup>21</sup>

Among the pedagogical issues, family ministry workers should first and foremost learn about the purpose of Christian education (cf. GE 2). Education is a mission that God Himself entrusts to parents (GS 61). It seems useful to present the educational tasks to be accomplished during the different periods of human development, including education to love, marriage, and family.<sup>22</sup> It is also necessary to teach family ministry workers how to support families in difficult situations.<sup>23</sup> This kind of assistance is often expected from advisors who help engaged couples, spouses, and parents to solve interpersonal tensions and build a healthy relationship.<sup>24</sup>

Instruction in the areas of biology and medicine must also be included in the preparation of family ministry workers. This instruction should cover the anatomy and physiology of the female and male sexual systems as well as the topics of human sexual life and its enactment in a marriage. It is also important for them to learn about the difference of the psychological experiences of the woman and the man during sexual intercourse, the influence of the natural regulation of conception on the harmony of conjugal life, and the value of periodic abstinence.<sup>25</sup> Biological-medical knowledge is essential for understanding and using the natural regulation of conception.<sup>26</sup>

Acquiring competences in the field of natural birth regulation is one of the key objectives of the intellectual formation of family ministry workers, and the knowledge of NDP methods can serve as a tool for family life advisers. This should pay off when the knowledge is transmitted to young people, fiancées, and spouses. Advisors should share their belief in the effectiveness of these methods and their contribution to a deeper conjugal relationship and to responsible parenthood.<sup>27</sup> Someone who does not know these methods well should not be allowed, under any circumstances, to work as a family life adviser. Moreover, family life advisers must always be kept up to date on NFP methods and the reasons for their application.

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<sup>17</sup> Cf. A. Katolo, *Contra In Vitro*, Warsaw, 2010, 17–29.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. J. Krukowski, "Małżeństwo konkordatowe," EK vol. 11, col. 1104–6; W. Góralski, *Kościelne prawo małżeńskie*, Warsaw, 2006, 182–98.

<sup>19</sup> G. Pyżlak, *Formacja świeckich pracowników duszpasterstwa rodzin*, 352.

<sup>20</sup> M. Ryś, *Psychologia małżeństwa. Zarys problematyki*, Otwock, 1997, 24–27.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. D. Kornas-Biela, *Wokół początku życia ludzkiego*, Warsaw, 2002, 90–111; J. Goleń - K. Urbańczyk, "Więź matki z dzieckiem w okresie prenatalnym," *Życie i płodność* 1:2011, no. 14, 95–114.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. TMHS 77-111; J. Goleń, *Wychowanie seksualne w rodzinie. Studium pastoralne*, Rzeszów, 2006, 127–44.

<sup>23</sup> Pope Francis points out that the Church wants to reach out to families and help them to overcome their difficulties. He notes that family pastoral care should not only give families norms but offer values from the Gospel that respond to the deepest desires of the human person. AL 200-201.

<sup>24</sup> E. Sujak, *Poradnictwo małżeńskie i rodzinne*, Katowice, 1988, 77–8.

<sup>25</sup> Commission for the Family of the Polish Bishops' Conference, *Projekt organizacji diecezjalnego studium rodziny*, 8.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 9–10.

<sup>27</sup> See E. Wójcik, "Odpowiedzialne rodzicielstwo w oczach lekarza," SR 1991, no. 25-26, 47–58; C. Lanctôt, "Przegląd badań nad nowoczesnym planowaniem rodziny," in: A. Szafrńska (ed.), *Zadania rodziny chrześcijańskiej w świecie współczesnym*, Warsaw, 1986, 41–4.

The motivation for their use should above all be positive and based on the Church's current teaching (cf. HV 21; FC 33-34).

In the intellectual formation, it is also important to include teaching about the prevention and treatment of sexual dysfunctions that may be accepted from the viewpoint of Catholic conjugal and family ethics. Lay family ministers should learn about the genetic, physical, and psychological development of the human being in the fetal stage. It is necessary for them to know the causes and types of infertility, its treatment, and the experience of menopause. Likewise important in the biomedical area is the care for pregnant women, including during pregnancy, delivery, and the postpartum period.<sup>28</sup>

In the formation of family ministry workers, there should also be no lack of discussion about sexual dysfunctions, sexually transmitted diseases, and sexual and conjugal conflict. The harmfulness of contraceptives, the morning-after effects, the impact of abortion on both physical and mental health as well as on the conjugal and family community should be shown. It is necessary to speak about sterilization and artificial insemination,<sup>29</sup> as well as prenatal children's diseases and prenatal diagnosis.<sup>30</sup> The fact that these biological-medical and moral issues are often dealt with in the pastoral practice is a powerful stimulus for learning about them.

### *Practical Training of Family Ministry Workers*

Properly formed lay family ministers can help engaged and married couples as family life advisers, in cooperation with the pastors of the Church (CIC, can. 228 § 2).<sup>31</sup> The first of the practical skills to be highlighted is the ability to give family counseling, including communication skills, and methodological skills, and the capacity to efficiently carry out undertaken tasks.

When preparing family ministers for family counseling, attention should be paid to their personal maturity, kindness, openness in dialogue, and willingness to help. Lay workers should also have appropriate personal qualities, knowledge, and skills, and motivation to help others. When giving assistance, they must be able to create and maintain the helping relationship, based on the ability to listen and understand others and to inspire change.<sup>32</sup>

In forming practical skills of lay ministers, the focus should be on the tasks that the adviser will have to fulfill. These tasks include strengthening in the engaged and spouses the conviction about the value of the sacrament of marriage and showing the marriage of the baptized as an effective sign of grace constantly at work in the married couple. Furthermore, the adviser has the duty of helping the engaged and spouses see the marital community as a domestic church.<sup>33</sup>

The tasks of family life advisers also include strengthening pro-family attitudes, especially among adolescents and fiancés (DPC 39). The advisers should be prepared to lecture during pre-marital catechesis, at meetings with fiancés, and in family counseling centers. Another important task of the family adviser is teaching the principles of responsible parenthood and informing people about the methods of fertility recognition.<sup>34</sup>

When developing practical skills, the future adviser should learn to help spouses to deal with crises situations, conflicts, and educational problems (cf. DPC 39). It is also advisable that they have information about recourse to specialized clinics, so that, if necessary, they may direct individuals or couples to specialists.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> M. Wójcik, "Biologia płodności ludzkiej," SMR 35–6; H. Bartel, *Embriologia*, Warsaw, 2012, 31–67; F.M. Guy, "Cud życia ludzkiego," in: A. Szafrńska (ed.), *op. cit.*, 35–9.

<sup>29</sup> DPC 39, 53; Polish Bishops' Conference, O wyzwaniach bioetycznych, przed którymi stoi współczesny człowiek (5.03.2013). Tarnów 2013, 20–3; D. Kornas-Biela, *Psychologiczne problemy poradnictwa genetycznego i diagnostyki prenatalnej*, Lublin, 1996, 23–83.

<sup>30</sup> Commission for the Family of the Polish Bishops' Conference, *Projekt organizacji diecezjalnego studium rodziny*, 9.

<sup>31</sup> Commission for the Family of the Polish Bishops' Conference, *Zadania pracowników duszpasterstwa rodzin* (20.12.1984), SR 2:1985, 19–20. The Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* specifies that proactive preparation as well as longer accompaniment should convince the engaged to enter into marriage as a vocation that requires a firm and realistic decision. After taking this decision, the spouses are to be ready to go through the trials and difficult times of common life. At the same time, it would be useful to indicate to the engaged places and people, consultants or families, where they may find help. See AL 211.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. W. Okła, *Poradnictwo terapeutyczne*, Lublin, 2013, 91–4.

<sup>33</sup> H. Krzyszczyk, "Pomoc duszpasterska w przygotowaniu do małżeństwa i towarzyszenie rodzinie," in: B.J. Sowiński (ed.), *Rodzina w świetle psychologii pastoralnej*, Łódź, 2007, 263–6.

<sup>34</sup> HV 10, 12; cf. FC 32–3. The spouses union is connected with the responsibility for one's own actions, for the spouse's gift, and for the gift of conceived life. GS 12.

<sup>35</sup> B. Perzanowska, *op. cit.*, Lomianki, 2010, 134–5.

The family life adviser should also be able to make contacts and work with others (cf. DPC 40). Knowledge of the principles of interpersonal communication and communication skills are indispensable for family ministry workers for engaging contact with the listener or client of the service and transmitting information and bearing witness. The skills used in counseling include the free expression of one's thoughts, beliefs, emotions, and experiences. In the process of advising, it is important to be able to listen with understanding, to exchange information and give feedback, to stimulate action, arouse the motivation for changes in the client's life, while assuming the appropriate position in the relationship and correctly assessing the client's self-image.<sup>36</sup> The formation of advisers in the field of communication should also include the skills and ways necessary for dealing with difficult situations. Moreover, advisers should be able to present important solutions, showing their clients the most beneficial choice for them but without exerting any pressure on them.<sup>37</sup> The acquisition of communication skills requires exercise, communication training and workshops, that let the students personally engage and experience situations and so develop their own resources (AL 204).

In the preparation of lay family ministry workers, their counseling skills and methodologies should be developed in view of conducting meetings with young people, speaking in the course of marriage preparation and before wedding ceremonies, and at encounters with engaged and married couples.<sup>38</sup> The family adviser's work also includes conducting individual conversations and teaching methods of birth control.

Counseling skills are acquired through didactic methods, modeling, coaching, and training under the direction of the teacher of individual skills. Role-playing and assuming the counseling role and tasks under supervision is also a good way to gain personal experience.<sup>39</sup> Methodological skills are used through a variety of exercises: preparing lectures for the engaged, fieldwork with parents, especially on education to love, chastity, marriage and the family, home liturgy, and educational problems. In the preparation of advisers for work in the pastoral care of families, it is good to teach them how to run meetings with the parents of catechized children. The development of methodical skills is intended to prepare the future advisor to give lectures, thematic talks, to facilitate group meetings<sup>40</sup> and discussions, and to get the audience involved.

In the preparation of family ministry workers, an appropriate number of class hours should be devoted to the working methods of family ministry and their levels. In addition, it is useful for the students to do internships, apprenticeships, and exercises, during which they can acquire the necessary methodological skills for working with families.<sup>41</sup>

### *Apostolic Formation of Lay Family Ministry Workers*

The apostolate is a contribution to the Church's saving mission, through participation in her teaching, priesthood, and royal office. In general, its goal is to build the Kingdom of God on earth.<sup>42</sup> The apostolic formation consists in bringing a person's faith to maturity and helping him to grow in love and become like Christ. This is done in through religious education in different environments, above all in the family, the parish, and the diocese (cf. ChL 14). Lay family ministers, as baptized in Christ, should be aware that their ministry is apostolic.<sup>43</sup> Faith gives the contemporary Church the conviction that God's plan for marriage and the family must be proclaimed to all people (cf. FC 20, 70-71). The service of family pastoral workers is built on in-depth apostolic formation. It requires forming their faith, a consistent Christian attitude, and the will to commit themselves to the apostolate.<sup>44</sup>

The faith of lay family ministers is matured through the sacramental life, prayer, and spiritual formation, which imply listening to the Word of God and learning about the Church's teaching, the practice of prayer, use of spiritual direction, and reading the signs of the times.<sup>45</sup> Their formation should lead them to develop

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 6–7.

<sup>37</sup> B. Parysiewicz, "Warunki skutecznego prowadzenia rozmów indywidualnych," *Zwiastowanie. Pismo Diecezji Rzeszowskiej* (special edition), 14:2005, no. 1, 154. 155–6.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. B. Perzanowska, *op. cit.*, 128.

<sup>39</sup> W. Okła, *op. cit.*, 96.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. K. Wojaczek, *op. cit.*, 326–32.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 330–2.

<sup>42</sup> E. Weron, "Apostolstwo," LTP 61.

<sup>43</sup> F. Macharski, "Cele apostolskiej działalności katolików świeckich," AK 71:1968, 291; John Paul II, *All are called to be Apostles*, Speech at Osijek Airport, 07 June 2003.

<sup>44</sup> B. Mierzwiński - J. Wilk - R. Bieleń, "Duszpasterstwo rodzin," in: R. Kamiński (ed.), *Teologia pastoralna*, vol. 2, 431–2.

<sup>45</sup> J. Mikołajec, *Formacja duchowna teologów świeckich. Studium teologiczno-pastoralne*, Opole, 2010, 94–114; cf. S. Kulpaczyński, "Formacja katechetów," EK vol. 5, col. 390.

a life of prayer.<sup>46</sup> The systematic nature of prayer helps to deepen the faith. An irreplaceable element of formation is the participation in the celebration of the Eucharist and the reception of Holy Communion, but also Eucharistic adoration. A personal encounter with Christ present in the Blessed Sacrament serves to permeate one's daily life and ecclesial service with His presence (SC 71).<sup>47</sup>

National, diocesan and deanery formators should see to the quality of the apostolic formation of the family ministers during training meetings. The celebration of the Eucharist is an essential part of all formation meetings, together with the preaching of homilies and sermons, thematically related to conjugal and family life and the apostolate in the field of pastoral care of families.<sup>48</sup> Active participation in the liturgy of the Eucharist has formative value. Practice confirms both the higher effectiveness of the apostolic formation conducted by priests who know the issues faced in the pastoral care of families and have experience this field and the effectiveness in the apostolic formation of the contribution made by members of movements and communities of families, with their the testimonies.

In the process of forming the faith of family ministry workers, the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation and the celebration of the liturgy of the hours are of importance (cf. ReP 21). Through the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation, Christians experience the merciful love of God, who raises man up from his weakness.<sup>49</sup> The celebration of the liturgy of hours, on the other hand, combines the spirit of prayer with the meditation of God's word. The deepening one's own religious formation is furthered by participation in diocesan, regional or deanery meetings, retreats and days for family ministry workers.<sup>50</sup> Diocesan pastors of families and family life advisers should regularly organize quarterly diocesan or deanery days of formation and training as well as retreats for family life advisers, during which the Holy Mass with a homily is celebrated, time is dedicated to personal and common prayer, lectures, exercises, and the exchange of experiences. During these days of recollection, it is good to allow the participants to receive the sacrament of penance and to engage family life advisers in the liturgy and leading prayers.<sup>51</sup>

Forming a consistent Christian attitude implies making an effort to develop one's faith, caring for the Christian character of everyday life, and preparing in the best possible way for the ministry.<sup>52</sup> Family ministry workers should manifest their faith exteriorly, as the source inspiring their life and principles (GS 43). The practice of personal spiritual direction, thanks to which believers are led individually in their spiritual development by someone prepared to do this, can ensure their proper formation.<sup>53</sup> The tasks of priests include helping in the formation of a spiritual attitude of trust in God and explaining doubts with regard to the faith. Diocesan study of the family only partially shapes the consistent Christian attitude. It is, therefore, also necessary to offer reliable ongoing apostolic formation for family pastoral workers. The content of retreats and days of recollection for family ministry workers should motivate them to develop a consistent apostolic attitude, and their participation should be obligatory.<sup>54</sup>

In forming a consistent Christian attitude, it is also important to live the Christian life daily in the spirit of faith (ChL 59). Lay workers in the pastoral care of families witness to Christian life through their commitment to their vocation in marriage and the family, involvement in political, economic and cultural life, as well as in the life of their neighborhood and local environment (see DPC 37; AL 201).<sup>55</sup>

The formation should shape the apostolic attitudes of the family ministry workers.<sup>56</sup> An essential part of their apostolic formation is the development of human maturity, expressed in the ability to make decisions, faithful to ideals and obligations, guided by justice, honesty and responsibility as well as integrity and

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<sup>46</sup> J. Przybyłowski - E. Robek, *Teologia modlitwy*, Part 1, Ząbki, 2004; cf.: K. Dyrda, *Modlitewna formacja katechetów*, Tarnów, 2008, 137–99.

<sup>47</sup> S. Urbański - W. Gałązka (eds.), *Świętość chrześcijańska*, Warsaw, 2012; L. Grygiel, *Świętość dwojga: pierwsza błogosławiona para małżeńska*, Warsaw, 2002.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. K. Wojaczek, *op. cit.*, 323.

<sup>49</sup> A. Derdziuk, "Potrzeba łaski pojednania w małżeństwie," in: M. Wyzlic - A. Czaja (ed.), *W trosce o owocowanie sakramentu małżeństwa*, 51–64.

<sup>50</sup> Commission for the Family of the Polish Bishops' Conference, *Zadania pracowników duszpasterstwa rodzin*, 32.

<sup>51</sup> G. Pyżlak, *Formacja świeckich pracowników duszpasterstwa rodzin*, 371.

<sup>52</sup> M. Fiałkowski, "Formacja katolików świeckich," RPK 2009, vol. 1 (56), fasc. 6, 42.

<sup>53</sup> Spiritual direction constitutes assistance on the path to sanctification, focused primarily on the dialogue of the directed person with God, on prayer, and on the bond with God. W.A. Barry - W.J. Connolly, *Spiritual direction in daily life*, transl. by P. Samerek - J. Oniszczyk, Kraków, 1992.

<sup>54</sup> G. Pyżlak, *op. cit.*, 373–4.

<sup>55</sup> See J. Klys, "Rodzina katolicka i środowisko jako teren apostołstwa świeckich," in: PD 1993/94, 327–38; T. Cuber, *Apostolat rodziny chrześcijańskiej w świetle dokumentów Kościoła współczesnego 1965-2013. Studium teologiczno-pastoralne*, Sandomierz, 2013, 227–91, 375–405.

<sup>56</sup> E. Weron. "Apostolat świeckich. W nauce i praktyce Kościoła," EK vol. 1, col. 803–4.

fairness.<sup>57</sup> Family ministry workers have the apostolic task of contributing to the shaping of Christian attitudes in young people, the engaged, married couples, and parents.

To accomplish these apostolic tasks in the Church, they need a permanent and integral formation “so that they can meet the demands of their vocation and mission” (PPŚ 14). Christian apostolic formation usually takes place in the parishes that are “the ecclesial place of Christian formation” (PSM 29). In the formation of family ministers, an important role is played by the rector of the parish where the family life advisers work and from which students of diocesan family study centers and students of the family sciences departments come.<sup>58</sup>

Pope Francis, speaking specifically about family ministry in the Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*, draws attention to the need for “more adequate formation of priests, deacons, men and women religious, catechists and other pastoral workers.” This is particularly true in the case of priests who lack appropriate formation to address the complex problems of modern families. Pope Francis adds, as an option, that “the experience of the broad oriental tradition of a married clergy could also be drawn upon” (AL 202).

The apostolic attitude can also be developed in Catholic groups, associations, and movements (ChL 62). Furthermore, the experience of the apostolate is transmitted in associations of Catholic families, where the call to marriage and family life is lived out.<sup>59</sup> The membership in religious movements positively influences the preparation for apostolic tasks.<sup>60</sup> It is, therefore, good to encourage and motivate family ministry workers to join ecclesial movements and communities and be formed by them (cf. AL 229).

The Catholic universities are an important place for acquiring specialized knowledge and social skills. The teaching at Catholic universities serves to deepen apostolic skills and the ability to act on the basis of the latest results of scientific research.<sup>61</sup> A similar role in the development of the apostolic attitude of lay Catholics is played by formation centers. These centers are intended to deepen the spiritual, intellectual, human, and apostolic formation of believers. They prepare people for ministry in a specific, current cultural context.

### *Forms of Preparation for Lay Family Ministry Workers*

Among the forms of preparation for workers in the pastoral care of families, the study in diocesan family centers and universities stands out. There, candidates can receive a thorough preparation for working with families.

The main form of preparation for lay workers in the pastoral care of families is that proposed in diocesan family study centers. The studies intended to prepare future advisers includes intellectual formation, the acquisition of practical skills, and apostolic formation. Formation in the family sciences should teach them to address the clients’ problems on the basis of the acquired knowledge and an appropriate world-view.<sup>62</sup>

The formation in the diocesan family study centers lasts 2 to 3 years and is usually for external students who come for one or two days of presential classes. The study program can range from several dozen hours to several hundred.<sup>63</sup> The classes are given monthly or even several times a month. Lectures cover a variety of thematic blocks, including selected topics in theology, psychology, pedagogy, social sciences, pastoral care of families, biology, and medicine, as well as methods of natural regulation of conception.<sup>64</sup> The subjects concerning on the family and related practices presented in the lectures are worked on in class as well as in workshops and seminars. In this way, students acquire the necessary knowledge and methodological skills. After participating in the classes, the students take exams. During the last year of studies, students are required to prepare a final paper, and the whole is crowned by the final exam.

Family ministry workers are prepared in universities (see FC 70). There, studies in the field of family sciences and pastoral care of families is focused on their intellectual formation and practical skills. The family sciences program lasts five years and includes full-time undergraduate and graduate studies. The first cycle of studies lasts six terms. This program includes almost 2,300 hours of didactic classes, including lectures,

<sup>57</sup> Cf. K. Dyrek, *Formacja ludzka do kapłaństwa*, Krakow, 1999, 78–9, 98–9; M. Fiałkowski, *Formacja chrześcijańska katolików świeckich w świetle nauczania Kościoła współczesnego*, 251.

<sup>58</sup> G. Pyżlak, *op. cit.*, 375.

<sup>59</sup> W. Śmigiel, “Apostolstwo świeckich w zrzeczeniach religijnych,” RPK 2009, vol. 1 (56), fasc. 6, 60.

<sup>60</sup> G. Pyżlak, *op. cit.*, 376–7.

<sup>61</sup> Cf. M. Fiałkowski, “Szkoly i uniwersytety ośrodkami formacji katolików świeckich,” RPK 2011, vol. 3 (58), fasc. 6, 386–91.

<sup>62</sup> T. Kukulowicz, “Kształcenie pracowników duszpasterstwa rodzin,” in: T. Kukulowicz (ed.), *Troska Kościoła o rodzinę w Polsce*, 26.

<sup>63</sup> See G. Pyżlak, *op. cit.*, 421–2.

<sup>64</sup> The organization of diocesan family study centers should take into account general indications, include the index of particular subjects, and the project of a detailed timetable. Cf. Commission for the Family of the Polish Bishops’ Conference, *Projekt organizacji diecezjalnego studium rodziny*, 3–10.

exercises, discussions, workshops, and seminars, and over 300 hours of practice. The second cycle of studies last four terms. The program includes over 1,000 hours of instruction and 80 hours of practice. During the studies, the students deepen knowledge about marriage and family and receive instruction in the fields of the psychological-pedagogical, sociological-legal, biomedical, and philosophical-theological sciences as well as in mediation and social communication.<sup>65</sup>

In addition, some universities conduct four-year doctoral studies in the field of pastoral care of families. At the end of the second year, the students take the bachelor's examination required by canon law. After passing this examination, they can to present a doctoral thesis and then write and defend a doctoral dissertation. The study program includes lectures, seminars and class discussion. The themes concern theology and pastoral psychology, the theology of marriage and family, marriage and family psychology, family pedagogy, family sociology, marital-family counseling, family law, and biological-medical issues. The universities offer the most complete intellectual formation and practical preparation for future family ministers.<sup>66</sup> The studies there are, therefore, recommended for priests preparing for the family ministry in the dioceses (see FC 70) and often required of future family life advisers.

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These pages about the formation of lay family ministry workers may seem too succinct. This formation was spoken about in general, without a clear distinction of its different stages. Our study focuses mainly on the stage of formation in the diocesan family study centers, with references to the formation of permanent advisers. A separate, detailed discussion of the permanent formation of advisers would necessarily deal with the pastoral practice and the guidelines of the particular Churches, but that was not our intention here.

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<sup>65</sup> Cf. W. Wierzchorek, "Założenia programowe Instytutu Nauk o Rodzinie KUL Jana Pawła II," in: G. Koszałka - M. Stopikowska (eds.), *Nauki o rodzinie. Tradycje i perspektywy edukacyjne*, Gdansk, 2007, 34–44.

<sup>66</sup> Cf. B. Mierzwiński, "Elementy teologii praktycznej małżeństwa i rodziny," in: K. Majdański (ed.), *Teologia małżeństwa i rodziny*, vol. 1, Warsaw, 1980, 157–275.