

Family Wage and Domestic Work: From *Rerum Novarum* to *Amoris Laetitia*

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I. Introduction.

Ringrazio infinitamente al Centro di Ricerca “Markets, Culture and Ethics” per essere stato accettato in questo colloquio romano per parlare di un tema di grande importanza nei nostri giorni: “The Heart of Work”. Purtroppo, la conoscenza di questa bellissima lingua italiana è per me limitata, ragione per cui dovrò continuare la conferenza in un’altra lingua ugualmente bella: la lingua inglese. Prometto che nelle future occasioni mi rivolgerò a Voi nella vostra lingua, a meno che gli organizzatori dell’evento decidano d’includere anche lo spagnolo nella lista degli idiomi accettati per i nostri dialoghi.

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Every magisterial document that confronts the key social issues of our contemporary culture should become a compulsory reading for many, especially those researchers who reflect on the centrality of the family in the lives of every human being and of society at large. The great ideologies that emerged from the *Liberal* movement, mainly *Capitalism* and *Socialism*, have flooded our current perception of who we are and who we want to become, not without being questioned by some of the brightest minds of our times –such as Karol Wojtyła– who identified their common weakness: *they both tend to “instrumentalize” the human person*. They see us as simple “means” to an end, not as an “end” in itself.¹ At the same time, a considerable number of magisterial documents of the Catholic Church –both encyclicals and apostolic exhortations– pinpointed the moral obligation of every political order to serve and protect the human family in all its fullness, both in the spiritual and the material realms. Even more specifically, they are eager to clarify the obvious: when a man and woman freely chooses to become a marriage and, eventually, a family with children, they need to be part of a fair economic system that guarantees they well-being, respecting they dignity and their God-given mission.

In that sense, many thinkers, both academics and protagonists of the political realm, have discussed what is known today as the *work-family* dilemma, providing practical knowledge with its correspondent theoretical base.² There’s a lot to go through, both in books and

¹ Cf. Juan Manuel BURGOS, *El Personalismo*, Palabra, Madrid, 2003; Karol WOJTYŁA, *Amor y Responsabilidad*, Palabra, Madrid, 2008, p. 36.

² Cf. José Andrés GALLEGÓ y José PÉREZ ADÁN, *Pensar la familia*, eds. Palabra, Madrid, 2001; Ángela APARISI y José BALLESTEROS, *Por un feminismo de la complementariedad. Nuevas perspectivas para la*

academic studies, if one is to fully grasp the social implications of the contemporary *work-family* relationship in order to provide a practical solution to this global problem.³ There is a growing number of research centres and political institutions that have contributed to expand the relevance of such topic in the lives of real people.⁴ From their expertise, the *Social Teachings of the Catholic Church* have always been ahead of the times when exploring the contemporary every-day life of families. More recently, in the middle of a broad discussion that has provided a cumulus of “bright spots and shadows” in the generalized controversy behind the publication of the Apostolic Exhortation, *Amoris Laetitia*, two relevant issues await to be explained to the faithful in our current cultural settlement: *the family wage* and *the domestic work*, both of them clearly addressed in various pontifical documents back in the XIX and the XX century. The purpose of this paper is to go over the key points of such documents around these two relevant topics, starting with the *Rerum Novarum* and finishing with *Amoris Laetitia*, aiming to identify their common grounds and explore their own particularities.

II. Antecedents: from *Rerum Novarum* to *Quadragesimo Anno*.

Before moving forward, let us go back to 1891, the year Pope Leo XIII published the renounced encyclical *Rerum Novarum*. The new economic challenges that accused the family in the middle of the emerging industrialized culture were putted forward here. Confronting both the *Capitalists* and the *Marxist* approach to the concept of the *homo-oeconomicus*,⁵ Pope Leo argued in favour of the inseparable relationship between work, family and the new liberal economic system. The true economy, the document states, would come primarily from the family home, making both husbands-fathers and wives-mothers their key protagonists.⁶ Every other form of economic activity would have to be articulated in favour of the domestic realm, parting from the need of every family of hold their own *property* and a sufficient *family wage* to fully support all its members. The land would have to be worked by the family, giving way to subsequent economic ways to ensure their survival, such as formal and informal commerce. The key to a fair economic growth would

familia y el trabajo, eds. EUNSA, Pamplona, 2002; Domènec MELÉ, *Conciliar trabajo y familia: un reto para el siglo XXI*, coord. EUNSA, Pamplona, 2004; Nuria CHINCHILLA y Consuelo LEÓN, *La ambición femenina*, Aguilar, Buenos Aires, 2004; Nuria CHINCHILLA y Maruja MORAGAS, *Dueños de nuestro destino: cómo conciliar la vida profesional, familiar y personal*, Ariela, Barcelona, 2009; Carolina, MONTORO, *Familias con dos sueldos y tres trabajos*, coord. Instituto de Ciencias para la Familia-Universidad de Navarra, Pamplona, 2011; Catherine HAKIM, *Work-Lifestyle Choices in the 21st Century: Preference Theory*, Oxford University Press, United Kingdom, 2000; Arlie HOCHSCHILD, *The Outsourced Self. Intimate Life in the in Market Times*, Metropolitan Books, New York, 2012; Brian ROBERTSON, *Forced Labor. What’s wrong with Balancing Work and Family*, Spence, Dallas, 2002; Carolyne GRAGLIA, *Domestic Tranquility. A Brief Against Feminism*, Spence, Dallas, 1998.

³ Cf. Nuria CHINCHILLA, Maruja MORAGAS and Aline MASUDA, *Balancing Work-Family: no matter where you are*, HRD Press, Massachusetts, 2010.

⁴ In Mexico: *Centro de Investigación de la Mujer y la Alta Dirección* (IPADE); in Spain: *Centro Internacional Trabajo y Familia* (IESE); in USA: *Center for Work and Family* (Boston College). With a more domestic approach: *The Home Renaissance Foundation* (London) y *The International Organization for the Family* (USA).

⁵ Cf. Miguel Alfonso MARTÍNEZ-ECHEVARRÍA, *La Teoría Económica de la Rerum Novarum*, in “Anuario de Historia de la Iglesia”, 12 (2003), pp. 59-70; Allan CARLSON, *Family, Economy and Distributism*, in “Communio”, 37 (2010), pp. 634-642.

⁶ Cf. LEO XIII, *Rerum Novarum*, 1891, N. 14.

have to be manifested in terms of the family well-being, of property ownership and sufficient means to upbringing the young. The document states:

If a workman's wages be sufficient to enable him comfortably to support himself, his wife, and his children, he will find it easy, if he be a sensible man, to practice thrift, and he will not fail, by cutting down expenses, to put by some little savings and thus secure a modest source of income. Nature itself would urge him to this. We have seen that this great labour question cannot be solved save by assuming as a principle that private ownership must be held sacred and inviolable. The law, therefore, should favour ownership, and its policy should be to induce as many as possible of the people to become owners.⁷

At the same time, *Rerum Novarum* argued in favour of the economic work division between men and women. The new industrial society promoted –like no other– the massive incursion of women into the labour market in the name of equality between the sexes (as *Suffrage Feminism* observed). In a few years, women quickly adapted to the emerging demands of the free market, not without toil and frustration, specially in those professions that required her special attention to detail, such as the textile industry, but also putting new pressures to the new “double-income” family such as the increase of the cost of living and the insufficiency of salaries.⁸ In contrast, *Rerum Novarum* insisted in the promotion of a true family economy that treasures the domestic work performed mostly by women, as well as the care and nurture of children:

Work which is quite suitable for a strong man cannot rightly be required from a woman or a child. And, in regard to children, great care should be taken not to place them in workshops and factories until their bodies and minds are sufficiently developed. For, just as very rough weather destroys the buds of spring, so does too early an experience of life's hard toil blight the young promise of a child's faculties, and render any true education impossible. Women, again, are not suited for certain occupations; a woman is by nature fitted for home-work, and it is that which is best adapted at once to preserve her modesty and to promote the good bringing up of children and the well-being of the family.⁹

Such brave enunciation was subject of unjust criticism, like the one made by the French economist Paul Leroy-Beaulieu, who wrote against the notion of a “family wage” in 1896, labelling it as a “socialist” initiative that would be impossible to accomplish in practice.¹⁰ At the same level, the proto-feminists disqualified it as a new “patriarchal” attempt to subdue women to men’s power.¹¹ In contrast, John Daniel Callahan, a Jesuit theologian, labelled the *family wage* as an imperative of “commutative justice” and as a right that every

⁷ Cf. LEO XIII, *Rerum Novarum*, 1891, N. 46.

⁸ Cf. Brian ROBERTSON, *Forced Labor. What's wrong with Balancing Work and Family*, Spence, Dallas, 2008, pp. 100-104.

⁹ LEO XIII, *Rerum Novarum*, 1891, N. 33.

¹⁰ “The theory of a family wage is nothing less than a socialist theory of wages related to requirements. It leads straight to collectivizing because it cannot be applied by private persons and can only be put in place by the state”; Nicole QUESTIAUX and Jacques FOURNIER, *France*, in S. KAMERMAN and A. KAHN, *Family Policy: Government and Families in Fourteen Countries*, Eds., Columbia University Press, New York, 1978, p. 129.

¹¹ Cf. Brian ROBERTSON, *Forced Labor. What's wrong with Balancing Work and Family*, Spence, Dallas, 2002, pp. 98-100.

father should demand.¹² He promoted the Divine-Given relationship between institutional marriage and the procreation of children, one that comes from the natural law. For that matter, a remunerated job is meant to provide sufficient material means for every member of the family to thrive. In that sense, it can be said that Pope Leo understood that the family would be in a position to overcome the new challenges of the industrial society if: 1) the household maintains its economic autonomy in front of the free market's ambitions, remaining as a place for *salary redistribution*, and 2) parents uphold their authority over their children and be fully responsible for their upbringing and primary providers of their well-being.¹³

During the next two decades there was a bit of a confusion between theologians and prelates about the social implications of a family wage.¹⁴ Eventually, a few catholic entrepreneurs decided to accept *Rerum Novarum's* challenge in a period of interwar and despair. A French manager of *La Joya Engineering Works* in Grenoble, M. Romanet, developed a certain family subsidy scheme in which the male workers would receive a complementary salary based on the number of children to provide for. By the end of the First World War in 1918, similar subsidy schemes were implemented in the railroad and mining sector, as well as various divisions of the public sector in France.¹⁵

Forty years after the publication of *Rerum Novarum*, Pope Pius XI's *Quadragesimo Anno* ratified the former document's thesis about the centrality of the family in the new economy, now putting an emphasis on a fair distribution of property, in order for the family to be able to increase her material assets, such as tools and equipment for domestic food production and gardening. In the matters of women's work outside the home, Pope Pius made a very strong claim about the tendency to force mothers to work for the cause of a "low wage" – paid to her or her husband–, an injustice that should be abolished at all cost:

The worker must be paid a wage sufficient to support him and his family [...] Mothers, concentrating on household duties, should work primarily in the home or in its immediate vicinity. It is an intolerable abuse, and to be abolished at all cost, for mothers on account of the father's low wage to be forced to engage in gainful occupations outside the home to the neglect of their proper cares and duties, especially the training of children. Every effort must therefore be made that fathers of families receive a wage large enough to meet ordinary family needs adequately. But if this cannot always be done under existing circumstances, social justice demands that changes be introduced as soon as possible whereby such a wage will be assured to every adult workingman.¹⁶

III. Consolidation: from *Laborem Exercens* to *Familiaris Consortio*.

After the publication of *Quadragesimo Anno*, the catholic faithful had to wait up to 50 years to hear more about the urge of a *family wage* that would allow parents to keep up with

¹² Cf. John Daniel Callagan, *The Catholic Attitude Towards a Familial Minimum Wage*, The Catholic University of America Press, Washington DC, 1936.

¹³ Cf. Allan CARLSON, *Family, Economy and Distributism*, in "Communio", 37 (2010), pp. 635-636; G. K. CHESTERTON, *What's Wrong with the World*, Serenity, Maryland, 2009.

¹⁴ Cf. John RYAN, *Just wages and Rerum Novarum*, in "America", 45 (1931), pp. 105-106.

¹⁵ Cf. Hubert CALLAHAN, *The Family Allowance Procedure: an Analysis of the Family Allowance Procedure in Selected Countries*, The Catholic University of America Press, Washington DC, 1948.

¹⁶ PIUS XI, *Quadragesimo Anno*, 1931, N. 71.

domestic work. By the end of the fifties, a new world was risen from the ashes of two World Wars, the new Communist order (with its own Cold War) and the emergent Sexual Revolution. But it was the first Polish Pope in history, Sain John Paul II, the one who brought new hope to families who were victims of the work-family drama through the publication of two magisterial documents: *Laborem Exercens* and *Familiaris Consortio*, both published in 1981. It wasn't the first time John Paul II was interested in this specific aspect of the now known "marriage and family crisis."¹⁷ However, he never referred to the connection between work and family in such a crystal-clear way as he did in *Laborem Exercens*, paragraph 19, stating that the family wage was a natural right owed to the "head of the family" (specifically, the husband-father). At the same time, the Polish Pope encourage society to legislate in favour of a *family wage* that every adult who is responsible for a family with children must earn. As a consequence, the *work of the home* (and the care for children) performed by the mother would be a real choice for women, and not a luxury. The document clearly states:

Just remuneration for the work of an adult who is responsible for a family means remuneration which will suffice for establishing and properly maintaining a family and for providing security for its future. Such remuneration can be given either through what is called a family wage –that is, a single salary given to the head of the family for his work, sufficient for the needs of the family without the other spouse having to take up gainful employment outside the home –or through other social measures such as family allowances or grants to mothers devoting themselves exclusively to their families. These grants should correspond to the actual needs, that is, to the number of dependents for as long as they are not in a position to assume proper responsibility for their own lives.

Experience confirms that there must be a social re-evaluation of the mother's role, of the toil connected with it, and of the need that children have for care, love and affection in order that they may develop into responsible, morally and religiously mature and psychologically stable persons. It will redound to the credit of society to make it possible for a mother – without inhibiting her freedom, without psychological or practical discrimination, and without penalizing her as compared with other women– to devote herself to taking care of her children and educating them in accordance with their needs, which vary with age. Having to abandon these tasks in order to take up paid work outside the home is wrong from the point of view of the good of society and of the family when it contradicts or hinders these primary goals of the mission of a mother.

In this context it should be emphasized that, on a more general level, the whole labour process must be organized and adapted in such a way as to respect the requirements of the person and his or her forms of life, above all life in the home, taking into account the individual's age and sex. It is a fact that in many societies women work in nearly every sector of life. But it is fitting that they should be able to fulfil their tasks in accordance with their own nature, without being discriminated against and without being excluded from jobs for which they are capable, but also without lack of respect for their family aspirations and for their specific role in contributing, together with men, to the good of society. The true advancement of women requires that labour should be structured in such a way that women

¹⁷ Cf. Rafael HURTADO, *La Paternidad en el Pensamiento de Karol Wojtyla*, EUNSA, Pamplona, 2010.

do not have to pay for their advancement by abandoning what is specific to them and at the expense of the family, in which women as mothers have an irreplaceable role.¹⁸

During that same period, the Synod of Bishops took place in Rome with the strong purpose of discussing the role of the Christian family in the midst of the new modern culture. Their conclusions gave birth to the famous Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris Consortio*, the *summa* –according to Jean Laffitte– of the teachings of the Church in the matters of life, tasks, responsibilities and the mission of marriage and family in today’s world.¹⁹ As a whole, the document can be seen as Saint John Paul II’s invitation to every husband-father and wife-mother to reflect on the own vocation to married life and how to live it in a world that invites them, among other things, to live according to the new free-market economic standards. To that account, paragraph 23 closely relates to *Laborem Exercens*’ paragraph 19 but taking the issue much further, up to the point of denouncing the contemporary necessity of working on a renewed “Theology of Work” that would bring new lights to the work-family controversy. The document states:

The true advancement of women requires that clear recognition be given to the value of their maternal and family role, by comparison with all other public roles and all other professions. Furthermore, these roles and professions should be harmoniously combined, if we wish the evolution of society and culture to be truly and fully human.

This will come about more easily if, in accordance with the wishes expressed by the Synod, a renewed "theology of work" can shed light upon and study in depth the meaning of work in the Christian life and determine the fundamental bond between work and the family, and therefore the original and irreplaceable meaning of work in the home and in rearing children. Therefore the Church can and should help modern society by tirelessly insisting that the work of women in the home be recognized and respected by all in its irreplaceable value. This is of particular importance in education: for possible discrimination between the different types of work and professions is eliminated at its very root once it is clear that all people, in every area, are working with equal rights and equal responsibilities. The image of God in man and in woman will thus be seen with added luster.

While it must be recognized that women have the same right as men to perform various public functions, society must be structured in such a way that wives and mothers are not in practice compelled to work outside the home, and that their families can live and prosper in a dignified way even when they themselves devote their full time to their own family.

Furthermore, the mentality which honours women more for their work outside the home than for their work within the family must be overcome. This requires that men should truly esteem and love women with total respect for their personal dignity, and that society should create and develop conditions favouring work in the home.

With due respect to the different vocations of men and women, the Church must in her own life promote as far as possible their equality of rights and dignity: and this for the good of all, the family, the Church and society.

¹⁸ SAINT JOHN PAUL II, *Laborem Exercens*, 1981, N. 19.

¹⁹ Cf. Jean LAFFITTE, *L'insegnamento della Chiesa sulla famiglia dalla Familiaris Consortio ad oggi*, in *XX Assemblea Plenaria del Pontificio Consiglio per la Famiglia*, Villa Aurelia, 29 November 2011, p. 2.

But clearly all of this does not mean for women a renunciation of their femininity or an imitation of the male role, but the fullness of true feminine humanity which should be expressed in their activity, whether in the family or outside of it, without disregarding the differences of customs and cultures in this sphere.

It is clear that *Familiaris Consortio* opens up a tremendous path for academic discussion, aiming to clarify the intrinsic relation between: 1) work and family life at home; and 2) domestic work's impact on social life. It would be necessary to answer these two inquiries, first of all, from the true necessities of a family to thrive and then to articulate the answers in terms of the needs of civil society and its intermediate institutions for healthy and mentally-stable citizens. Ten years later, the *Centesimus Annus* was consistent with all the previous documents, more specifically in the issue of the *family wage*, pinpointing the urge for developing countries to treat their workers as more than just a commodity of the free-market.²⁰ Yet again, these topics were putted on hold for the next 18 years until finally retaken during the short papacy of the German Pope, Benedict XVI.

IV. Novelty: from *Caritas in Veritate* to *Amoris Laetitia*.

Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI dedicated various public speeches to the topics of married love and the family institution during his pontificate (2005-2013), giving continuity to the magisterium of his predecessor. In 2009 he signed the publication of his third encyclical *Caritas in Veritate*, where he resumed the concept of work and its relation to family life in the same direction as every other document so far explored. However, it can be said that there are a few hints of change that are to be considered. So far we've recollected the teachings of Leo XIII, Pius XI and John Paul II, where all three of them challenged liberal economics by promoting a new social order that would: 1) allow a *family wage* owed to the head of the family; 2) protect *domestic work* and the rearing of children at the home; 3) guarantee the right to property and ownership of material resources for a family to thrive. Curiously enough, *Caritas in Veritate* paid little attention to these radical topics, although they weren't denied or putted into question. In sum, they weren't explored with the same rigour and amplitude as the past documents. However, paragraph 63 suggests that eventually every member of society, men and women, might eventually joint the labour market. Benedict also referred to the dignity of human work, as in a free-chosen activity that benefits society at large:

No consideration of the problems associated with development could fail to highlight the direct link between poverty and unemployment. In many cases, poverty results from a violation of the dignity of human work, either because work opportunities are limited (through unemployment or underemployment), or "because a low value is put on work and the rights that flow from it, especially the right to a just wage and to the personal security of the worker and his or her family". For this reason, on 1 May 2000 on the occasion of the Jubilee of Workers, my venerable predecessor Pope John Paul II issued an appeal for "a global coalition in favour of 'decent work'", supporting the strategy of the International Labour Organization. In this way, he gave a strong moral impetus to this objective, seeing it as an aspiration of families in every country of the world. What is meant by the word "decent" in regard to work? It means work that expresses the essential dignity of every man and woman in the context of their particular society: work that is freely chosen, effectively

²⁰ SAIN JOHN PAUL II, *Centesimus Annus*, 1991, N. 38.

associating workers, both men and women, with the development of their community; work that enables the worker to be respected and free from any form of discrimination; work that makes it possible for families to meet their needs and provide schooling for their children, without the children themselves being forced into labour; work that permits the workers to organize themselves freely, and to make their voices heard; work that leaves enough room for rediscovering one's roots at a personal, familial and spiritual level; work that guarantees those who have retired a decent standard of living.²¹

It is clear that this part of the encyclical does not make explicit reference to *domestic work*, which has been traditionally embodied by the feminine charisma, in contrast with the past documents already explored. In any case, *Caritas in Veritate* promotes a “decent” concept of work: one that every man and women should freely choose, as long as they are not subjects of discrimination or unfair wages that would encourage children to work instead of being schooled. Having said that, the last statement indicates that Pope Benedict is well-aware of the current cultural trends that have settled for the *two-career model* as the social norm. Add to that, the word “family” is mentioned in the document more than ones, although used in a more general manner –such as “the great human family” or “matrimonial family”– but slightly away from the economic focus of the encyclical.

Also, it can also be read in *Caritas in Veritate*, paragraph 15, the central argument of Paul VI’s *Humanae Vitae* –the unitive and procreative significance of the sexual act– without making any clear references to the economic responsibilities that parents have to assume when giving birth to their children.²² However, in paragraph 44, Pope Benedict comments on demography policies and points out a connection between low birth rates and economic difficulties in many countries, to which answers:

These situations are symptomatic of scant confidence in the future and moral weariness. It is thus becoming a social and even economic necessity once more to hold up to future generations the beauty of marriage and the family, and the fact that these institutions correspond to the deepest needs and dignity of the person. In view of this, States are called to enact policies promoting the centrality and the integrity of the family founded on marriage between a man and a woman, the primary vital cell of society, and to assume responsibility for its economic and fiscal needs, while respecting its essentially relational character.²³

Later on, Benedict XVI would retake these topics in the *VII World Meeting of Families*, Milan 2012, bearing the title: *Family: Work and Celebration*. It shouldn’t be surprising to learn that the previous works of the meeting took place in 2011, in the context of the thirtieth anniversary of the publication of *Familiaris Consortio*. The seventh catechesis, paragraph 4, shows a clear advancement to paragraph 63 of *Caritas in Veritate*, calling it “unfair” to fully charge domestic work to women. At the same time, the German Pope exhorts the full participation of all family members, husbands and children, in such work with true commitment. Nevertheless, he also refers to both fathers and mothers who follow the *two-career model* and begs them to find creative ways to avoid long absences from

²¹ BENEDICT XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, 2009, N. 63.

²² Cf. BENEDICT XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, 2009, N. 15.

²³ BENEDICT XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, 2009, N. 44.

home, however –he adds–, the constant need to provide for a family nowadays impedes many parents to choose wisely on this front.²⁴ Why would Pope Benedict stopped using the term *family wage* as the previous encyclicals did, but still refer to all its practical challenges? Why he reminds us of the importance of *domestic work* without exalting the supremacy of women-mothers who perform it? It is clear that domestic work, home-keeping, home-making and the rearing of children and the care of the elderly and the sick are more meaningful and humanly fulfilling –even professionally, as Saint Josemaría would have agreed–²⁵ than most socially-recognized professions,²⁶ as *Familiaris Consortio* clearly stated it. What Pope Benedict did say about women was pretty much in alignment with classic-moderate Feminism, praising women’s irreplaceable contribution to family life and the development of society at large, a contribution that awaits to be fully recognized and treasured by many.²⁷ This last statement could be understood as a hint of what was brewing in the years to come, for which the Church had to wait another 4 years since celebration of the World Meeting of Families in Milan. In 2015, the Synod of Bishops gathered one more time to rethink marriage and family in our challenging culture, aiming to issue a new Apostolic Exhortation what would focus entirely on the joy of love in the family. The final draft of the text was signed by the first Latin-American Pope in history, Francis, on the 19th of March 2016 (onomastic of Saint Joseph), with the title: *Amoris Laetitia*.

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“The desire to marry and form a family remains vibrant, especially among young people, and this is an inspiration to the Church.”²⁸ This is how the Pope Francis starts his new message families, filling the faithful with desires of hope, in the context of the Jubilee Year of Mercy starting on December 2015 and concluded in November 2016. Perhaps the later confirms the intrinsic motive of *Amoris Laetitia*: to declare the urge of promoting a stronger pastoral care for all Christians in order to build “sound and fruitful homes in accordance with God’s plan.”²⁹ To do so, Francis dedicated two hundred and seventy two pages (three times more than *Familiaris Consortio*) to deliver a healing message to all contemporary families, setting the basics for a new pastoral agenda that puts in the centre of its dialogue the emerging “irregular situations” that abound in our current cultural perplexities around married and family life.³⁰

Concerning the importance of a *family wage* and its connection with *domestic work*, Pope Francis makes very relevant contributions in chapter II, emphasising the challenges still ahead for women who decide to glow socially and professionally outside the home. The rationale of this new approach is made explicit by quoting the *Spanish Bishops’ Conference (Matrimonio y Familia, 1979)*, which states that contemporary families “have come to

²⁴ Cf. PONTIFICIO CONSEJO PARA LA FAMILIA, *La familia: el trabajo y la fiesta*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Citta di Vaticano, 2012, p. 72.

²⁵ Cf. SAINT JOSEMARÍA ESCRIVÁ, *Conversaciones*, Rialp, Madrid, 1958, N. 87.

²⁶ Cf. Rafael HURTADO, *Reflexiones sobre el trabajo en el hogar y la vida familiar*, EUNSA, Pamplona, 2013, pp. 51-67.

²⁷ Cf. PONTIFICIO CONSEJO PARA LA FAMILIA, *La familia: el trabajo y la fiesta*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Citta di Vaticano, 2012, p. 65.

²⁸ Francis, *Amoris Laetitia*, 2016, N. 1.

²⁹ Francis, *Amoris Laetitia*, 2016, N. 6.

³⁰ Cf. Francis, *Amoris Laetitia*, 2016, N. 305.

enjoy greater freedom through an equitable distribution of duties, responsibilities and tasks [...] Neither today's society nor that to which we are progressing allow an uncritical survival of older forms and models."³¹ To which "models" is this assertion referring to? Is the Pope making a case against *Patriarchy* and correlating it with the term "models of the past"? Are these "models" the ones that prevailed in the times past encyclicals such as *Rerum Novarum* or *Laborem Exercens*? In any case, *Amoris Laetitia* is also determinant in its warning against the risks of radical liberalism for family life:

Equal consideration needs to be given to the growing danger represented by an extreme individualism which weakens family bonds and ends up considering each member of the family as an isolated unit, leading in some cases to the idea that one's personality is shaped by his or her desires, which are considered absolute [...] When these factors affect our understanding of the family, it can come to be seen as a way station, helpful when convenient, or a setting in which rights can be asserted while relationships are left to the changing winds of personal desire and circumstances.³²

It is true that *Amoris Laetitia* pinpointed the actual need for families to acquire a suitable home for all its members to prosper, because –Francis adds– “families and homes go together.”³³ He even revisits the common topic of past social encyclicals –family and work– by making a plea to all civil society to promote “an adequate family policy on the part of public authorities in the juridical, economic, social and fiscal domains.”³⁴ Francis also comments on the current free-market rationality, precarious and selective, particularly for teenagers who have to put up with long workdays, aggravated in the big-cities' lifestyle, not helping all members of the family to see much of each other and enrich their relationships.³⁵

We can draw from this statements that Pope Francis is well aware –same as Pope Benedict– of the challenges ahead for the *two-career-model* families and its promotion as the social norm. Even though, it is strange not to read more about the need for a *family wage* as a political and economic solution that lightens the family of today's economic burdens, allowing parents and children to invest more time in being together and make their family time to grow. What *Amoris Laetitia* does mentioned is the impact of this lifestyle is having in the young: “In many cases, parents come home exhausted, not wanting to talk, and many families no longer even share a common meal. Distractions abound, including an addiction to television. This makes it all the more difficult for parents to hand on the faith to their children.”³⁶

Referring to *domestic work*, Francis makes a very strong claim to traditional masculine and feminine roles: “masculinity and femininity are not rigid categories. It is possible, for example, that a husband's way of being masculine can be flexibly adapted to the wife's work schedule. Taking on domestic chores or some aspects of raising children does not

³¹ Cf. Francis, *Amoris Laetitia*, 2016, N. 32.

³² Cf. Francis, *Amoris Laetitia*, 2016, NN. 33-34.

³³ Francis, *Amoris Laetitia*, 2016, N. 44.

³⁴ Francis, *Amoris Laetitia*, 2016, N. 44.

³⁵ Cf. Francis, *Amoris Laetitia*, 2016, N. 44.

³⁶ Cf. Francis, *Amoris Laetitia*, 2016, N. 50.

make him any less masculine or imply failure, irresponsibility or cause for shame.”³⁷ To which kind of “wife’s work schedule” is the Pope talking about? Is he referring also to the responsibilities implied in domestic work? Is he talking exclusively of waged labour outside the home? Why does the document explicitly remind fathers to take responsibility of domestic activities without asking mothers to do the same? As explored before, *Familiaris Consortio* was very clear about today’s urge to recognize and treasure domestic work performed by women for its irreplaceable worth. Why *Amoris Laetitia* does not revisit this topic with this clarity? Perhaps it is here where the document shows its own charisma, one that is taken further in paragraph 54, revealing women’s challenges in a still negligent “chauvinist” culture:

Unacceptable customs still need to be eliminated. I think particularly of the shameful ill-treatment to which women are sometimes subjected, domestic violence and various forms of enslavement which, rather than a show of masculine power, are craven acts of cowardice. The verbal, physical, and sexual violence that women endure in some marriages contradicts the very nature of the conjugal union. I think of the reprehensible genital mutilation of women practiced in some cultures, but also of their lack of equal access to dignified work and roles of decision-making. History is burdened by the excesses of patriarchal cultures that considered women inferior, yet in our own day, we cannot overlook the use of surrogate mothers and “the exploitation and commercialization of the female body in the current media culture”. There are those who believe that many of today’s problems have arisen because of feminine emancipation. This argument, however, is not valid, “it is false, untrue, a form of male chauvinism”. The equal dignity of men and women makes us rejoice to see old forms of discrimination disappear, and within families there is a growing reciprocity.³⁸

* * *

To my understanding, both the *family wage* and *domestic work* were not explored with the same intensity and rigour in *Amoris Laetitia* compared with the past social encyclicals of the past two centuries. This is not saying the Magisterium of the Catholic Church has changed or is becoming contradictory. Nevertheless, from *Rerum Novarum* to *Laborem Exercens* (and *Familiaris Consortio*), the Church stood up for universal truths drawn from the life of families who suffered the social changes of Liberalism, Industrialization and Marxism, all three eager to change family life as we know it, especially the image of the mother who becomes a “home-maker,”³⁹ who eventually became the target of Betty Friedan’s Feminism.⁴⁰ At all times, Popes and Catholic intellectuals understood that the true heart of the economy should remain close to the family, not the individual, aiming to promote a new social order that puts domestic dignity up high. This was true for all social classes and all cultural settlements. In the end, it appears that *Amoris Laetitia* stands for the

³⁷ Francis, *Amoris Laetitia*, 2016, N. 286.

³⁸ Cf. Francis, *Amoris Laetitia*, 2016, N. 54.

³⁹ Cf. Brian ROBERTSON, *Forced Labor. What’s wrong with Balancing Work and Family*, Spence, Dallas, 2002; Carolyne GRAGLIA, *Domestic Tranquility. A Brief Against Feminism*, Spence, Dallas, 1998; Alice von HILDEBRAND, *The Privilege of Being a Woman*, Sapientia, USA, 2002.

⁴⁰ Cf. Betty FRIEDAN, *The Feminine Mystique*, W.W. Norton & Company, New York, 2013.

new image of modern families, where roles and tasks are more flexible, not sexually defined or performed, but still needed for a healthy upbringing of children.⁴¹

Perhaps *Amoris Laetitia* did not focus in binding *domestic work* and motherhood for the fact that talking about the image of the “house wife” in our days has become a *tabú* topic. As stated before, this is not suggesting that the Catholic Social Teachings have radically changed, but it is true that the private-public nexus between the family home and society’s development is still waiting to be brought back to the public discourse. It is known that women’s employment has grown dramatically over the past 50 years, including young mothers.⁴² With the exception of a few conservative religious groups (not only Catholic), many women in the West are eager to find their way through the labour market at any cost (up to the extreme of including abortion, childcare and contraception in their political agendas), while Contemporary Feminism has continued their revolution to promote the new image of the “working woman.”⁴³ At the same time, the promotion of new policies that allow women to have “equal pay for equal work,” free access to day-care services, maternity leave and flexible work schedules occupies the central stage of the discourse, aiming to a new social order dominated by the 50-50 rationality in every structure of society.⁴⁴ Also, over the past five decades, the new image of modern women has labelled the need of domestic work, or the yearning for a family wage, a topic of misogyny or bigotry.⁴⁵ It is true that Pope Francis reminds families of their God-given charisma to *tame the world*, make it domestic.⁴⁶ He also comments on the “specifically feminine abilities” of motherhood, ones that “grant duties, because womanhood also entails a specific mission in this world, a mission that society needs to protect and preserve for the good of all.”⁴⁷ But the question remains: to what sort of “duties” is the text referring to? To domestic work as well or not? Apparently, it is not easy to answer these questions from *Amoris Laetitia*’s perspective.

V. Conclusion.

It cannot be denied that both *Caritas in Veritate* and *Amoris Laetitia* can be seen as an attempt to reconcile the Social Magisterium of the Catholic Church with the social and economic challenges of the contemporary *two-career-model* families. It seems that the traditional image of the home-protector father and the home-maker mother was not promoted as they were in past documents such as the *Rerum Novarum* or the *Laborem Exercens*. I believe this variation could have been saved if chapter II of *Amoris Laetitia* had added the difficulties experienced by full-time mothers to cope with domestic work in a culture that rejects them, that calls them “parasites”, or even intendeds to make them “illegal.”⁴⁸ One

⁴¹ Cf. Francis, *Amoris Laetitia*, 2016, N. 175.

⁴² Cf. Catherine HAKIM, *Work-Lifestyle Choices in the 21st Century: Preference Theory*, U.K., Oxford University Press, 2000.

⁴³ Cf. International Women’s Strike-USA: <https://www.womenstrikeus.org/our-platform/>.

⁴⁴ Cf. “Women in the Changing World of Work: Planet 50-50 by 2030”; <http://www.unwomen.org/es/news/stories/2017/2/statement-ed-phumzile-iwd-2017>.

⁴⁵ Allan CARLSON, *Third Ways*, ISI Books, Wilmington, 2007, Ch. 2.

⁴⁶ Cf. FRANCIS, *Amoris Laetitia*, 2006, N. 183.

⁴⁷ Cf. FRANCIS, *Amoris Laetitia*, 2006, N. 173.

⁴⁸ See the recent declarations made by the Australian articulist Sarah Le Marquand: <http://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/rendezview/sarah-le-marquand-it-should-be-illegal-to-be-a-stayathome-mum/news-story/fbd6fe7b79e8b4136d49d991b6a1f41c>

cannot deny a certain degree of silence about such fundamental issues that is becoming one of the great challenges in our days, one that surely victimises mothers, fathers, but also children.

At the same level, *Amoris Laetitia* favours a charitable family model that is meant to prevail in the middle of the new social reengineering, one who is much closer to contemporary feminist ideals.⁴⁹ In sum, it seems that the Social Magisterium of the Catholic Church has gone from defending the traditional image of the family –where the home-maker mother is presented as essential for the good sake of the family and the transmission of the faith– to promote the emerging *two-career model*, which is favoured by both liberal and socialist ideologies. This is not saying that the traditional model is out of date or no longer valid. Nevertheless, if the Catholic Church has accepted that families should no longer aspire remain close to the previous model, based on the right for property, family wage and domestic work, new lines for pastoral care should be implemented for those families who actually live according to that image. For that purpose, it would certainly be of interest to explore new academic initiatives that remain strong to the promotion of a “better life” at home, such as *The Home Renaissance Foundation* based in London, or *The International Organization for the Family* in the U.S. Let’s hope these essential topics are not left behind in future encyclicals for good-sake of the contemporary family.

⁴⁹ Cf. Francisco, *Amoris Laetitia*, 2016, N. 54 & N. 173.