



## FAMILY LIFE

- ✓ We affirm marriage, which unites a woman and man with each other and any children born to them, as the basic foundation of society. We advocate for children's right to be in a stable family.
- ✓ We advocate for work, tax policies, welfare, foster care and adoption policies that focus on the wellbeing of children and enhance family unity and stability.
- ✓ We support the fundamental right of parents to make the best decisions for their children.

### **STRONG FAMILIES ARE ESSENTIAL FOR SOCIETY**

*“It is from this first formative community that we learn to take care of others, for the good of the other and to love the harmony of creation and to share and enjoy its fruits, by fostering reasonable, balanced and sustainable consumption. To support and protect the family so that it educates in solidarity and respect, is a decisive step in moving towards a more equitable and humane society.”*

*Pope Francis*

*Virtually all of the increase in child poverty in the U.S. since the 1970s can be attributed to family breakdown.*

*Isabel Sawhill  
Brookings Institution*

History shows us that stable families are essential to a positive, flourishing and hospitable society. Our current public reality is challenged by too many fatherless and motherless children. Public policy must not intentionally encourage the creation of single parent families.

Current social science research is more extensive and confirms this: "Children who live absent their *biological* fathers are, on average, at least two to three times more likely than their peers who live with their married, biological (or adoptive) parents to be poor, use drugs, experience educational, health, emotional and behavioral problems, be victims of child abuse, and engage in criminal behavior." (National Fatherhood Initiative, 2008)

Family friendly policies include tax considerations for families raising children, flexible work hours and family leave for caretaking of family members.

When families fall into the state's social safety net, it is imperative that their dignity and unity be preserved while all efforts are made to help them recover their financial independence. When the misfortune of divorce hits a family, public policy must ensure that the children's wellbeing is the first priority. Children in foster care must be placed with stable, healthy families.

Our Catholic parishes, social services, schools and health care witness the human consequences of separating families when parents and spouses are deported. Public immigration policies and practices must address family unification.

Parents are the first and foremost educators of their children. Their home is the first school forming those social virtues in children which benefits us all. Whenever possible, children have the right to live safely with their biological parents.

For more information, visit [www.cacatholic.org](http://www.cacatholic.org) or contact Maria Jose Flores, [mflores@cacatholic.org](mailto:mflores@cacatholic.org), 916.313.4012