

# JUSTICE

THE SOURCE OF HARMONY AND PEACE IN OUR HOMES

## THE VIRTUES

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*“Justice consists in the firm and constant will to give God and neighbor their due.”*

Catechism of the Catholic Church #1836

## JUSTICE IN THE FAMILY

By John Bosio

*“One day when walking on the beach, a mother crab told her baby: ‘Son, don’t drag yourself sideways like that. It is not good for you. It is better to stroll forward!’ To which the baby replied: ‘I will, mom, as soon as you show me how! Watching you, I will do what you do.’” (Aesop)*

The story reminds us that children are always watching us, their parents, and they do what we do.

Parents have an obligation, out of justice, to teach their children with their example.

**“The family is the first school of those social virtues that every society needs.”**

St. John Paul II

### WHAT IS JUSTICE?

According to the Catechism the virtue of Justice is *“the firm and constant will to give God and neighbor their due.”* (CCC1836)

The Catechism explains that the virtue of Justice prompts us to respect the rights of others and in so doing we promote equity and harmony in the family and in society.

**Justice is the source of harmony and peace in our homes.**

This article is about the practice of Justice among the members of the family: between husband and wife; between parents and children; and between adult sons and daughters and their parents.

### WHAT SPOUSES PROMISE

Justice in the family begins with husband and wife giving each other what they promised with their wedding vows.

Do you remember what you promised on your wedding day?

**“I promise to be true to you in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health. I will love you and honor you all the days of my life.”**

*Rite of Marriage*

We act justly when we keep these promises. We act unjustly toward our spouse when:

- We fail to do what we said we would.
- We lie, mislead or hide the truth.
- We put our work and career ahead of our spouse’s needs.
- We make disparaging remarks about our spouse, or are verbally or physically abusive in private, or in front of the children.
- We hold on to resentment to get even or to punish our spouse.
- We betray or abandon our spouse.

### OBLIGATIONS OF PARENTS

One of the first obligations of parents is to spend time with their children. Pope Francis in one of his General Audiences lamented the absence of today’s fathers from the life of their children. He said that many of today’s children are orphans, even if they live

*(Continued next page)*

## THE CARDINAL VIRTUES

*“Moderation and prudence, justice and fortitude... nothing in life is more useful than these.” Wisdom 8:7*

**Prudence – Justice – Courage – Temperance**

**CONVERSATION STARTERS**

**For Couples**

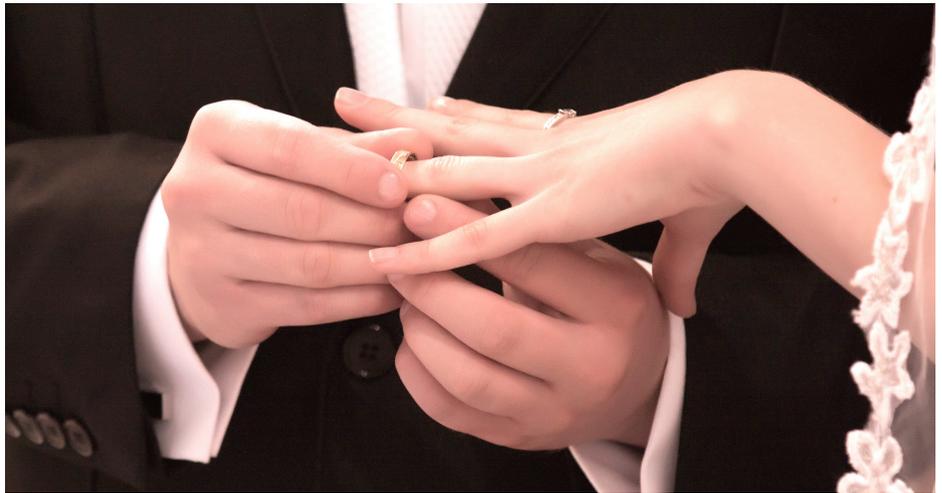
**Directions**

**For a Fun Conversation**

1. Read the article on this flyer.
2. Review the questions below and together choose three to talk about.
3. As you talk, be respectful of each other's thoughts and feelings.
4. Agree on a word or phrase that you will say when one of you is uncomfortable and wants to stop the conversation.
5. If later you want to review some skills for resolving conflicts, read the short article at:

<http://www.happy-together.net/the-virtues-a-program-for-couples/skills/>

1. Justice in the family begins with husband and wife giving each other what they promised with their wedding vows.
  - What do you remember most vividly about your wedding?
  - What words do you remember from your wedding vows?
2. What has been your most memorable wedding anniversary?
3. Think about your childhood. What are some of the most memorable times you spent with your parents or grandparents growing up?
4. What did you learn from your parents about marriage?
5. What is the most important life lesson that you want your children to learn from you?
6. Are your parents still part of your life? If so, are you in regular communication with them? How close are you to them?
7. What do your parents need from you at this point in their life?
8. How does your faith help you be fair with the people in your life?



in a family, because parents are often absent. (January, 2015)

Reflecting on the words of the Pope, here are some points to consider.

- Am I present in the life of our children? If they are young, do I spend time playing with them?
- Am I too lenient with them, to the point that I fail to correct them, or am I overly strict?
- Do I cater to their every whim?
- Do I complain about my spouse to our children?
- Do I verbally put them down, or physically hurt them?
- Do I set a good example of responsible behavior?
- Do I practice our Christian faith and do I share it with them?
- When I am wrong do I tell my children that I am sorry?

**“The family is where we are formed as people.”**

Pope Francis

**RESPONSIBILITIES OF CHILDREN TOWARD THEIR PARENTS**

Our elderly are a group of family members that today are easily forgotten: our parents and our grandparents.

Pope Francis reminds us frequently about the responsibilities we have to care for our elderly.

Pope Francis said: *“Abandonment is... the greatest injustice they can suffer.”* (March, 2015)

We act unjustly toward our elderly when we do not stay in contact with them, do not visit them, and do not help them provide for their own needs.

**“There is no peace without justice, and no justice without forgiveness.”**

St. John Paul II

**THE GUIDANCE OF OUR FAITH**

When seen through the eyes of faith justice becomes no longer an obligation. It is an act of self-giving love that we learn from Jesus. We grow in the virtue of Justice through the example of the Saints, and through the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Reparation and forgiveness restore Justice, and Justice promotes peace in the family and in society.



See directions for your conversation on the top left of this page.

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