

Fatherhood

The father is the source of authority in the family.

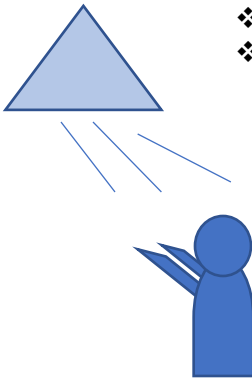
He has the primary power because he shares in God's procreative activity. The authority of the mother is only complementary and dependent on the father's.

Today, the father is removed from the family, a structure meant to be a whole. There are even those who consciously aim at doing this. As a result, family life as a whole disintegrated, is torn apart, divided; a sound, living structure – the family – is destroyed.

... the disappearance of the father and, therefore, [means] the disappearance of paternal authority (Father J. Kentenich, 1951).

The importance of the father's authority [lies in two facts.]

1. *Fatherly authority provides both the individual and the community with a strong support.* First, it gives the individual a firm hold. Fatherly authority is simply one of the conditions for a child's, for a young person's existence. It gives the child, whether girl or boy, an instinctive awareness of authority and hence the experience of security. It provides children with the experience of spiritual shelter, a shelter that affects life (Ibid).
2. *Fatherly authority [brings about] a creative tension between the father and the mother.* A twofold function of the father leads to this creative tension:



- ❖ [It is his function to] help the mother be a true mother; and
- ❖ without the mother's complementation, he cannot function as father.
 - The mother needs the father. The father needs the mother. The husband and wife need each other.

The mother needs the father's authority in order to be able to be a true mother...

If fatherliness is to develop, it calls for genuine motherliness, without which it cannot mature. With respect to the father's authority, the function of authentic motherliness is one of complementation...

It is a wife's task or function to complement her husband, the father...

In his wisdom God did not embody the complete idea of the human being in one type but in two, and these two types are meant to complement each other (Ibid).

To become genuine fathers, we need to first become genuine children!

Among Religious and Clergy:

...let us shed a little light on our Catholic circles, on our Catholic priests, on our Catholic educators. Don't you think that, on the whole, we have to say that to a certain extent we too have been infected by this separatistic way which increasingly does away with the father of the family? (Father J. Kentenich, 1951).

In the normal course of events religious authority, a certain supernatural fatherly authority, will come to life only where there is a foundation in the natural order, in natural fatherliness (Ibid).