Introduction to the Special Issue “The Role of Religion in Marriage and Family Life”

Urszula Dudziak

Department of Family Sciences, Institute of Theology, The John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, 20-950 Lublin, Poland; urszula.dudziak@kul.pl

Every human being functions and has the ability to establish relationships with others on four levels: somatic, psychological, spiritual, and social. This truth is particularly highlighted by humanistic psychology (Maslow 1954), logotherapy (Frankl 1959) and the philosophy of personalism (Mounier 1936; Wojtyla 1969). Research conducted by doctors, psychologists, theologians, and sociologists allows us to delve into the realms of the human body, psyche, spirit, and social bonds. The most difficult to explore is the spiritual realm. For this reason, the opening of a section titled “The Role of Religion in Marriage and Family Life” in the journal *Religions* is especially valuable. The articles contained in this section enabled the publication of this book. The authors of the respective sections are specialists from various fields and different denominations. All of them, in various ways, demonstrate how valuable and useful a person’s spiritual life and the religion they embrace are for them, and how precious and necessary these are in all interpersonal relationships. The role of religion is to shape appropriate relationships with God, but also to highlight fundamental goals, aspirations, principles of conduct, and specific actions in various situations for both young and older people. Religion aids in moral education, motivates personal development, encourages mutual expressions of love, and fosters responsibility towards God, others, and oneself.

The first three chapters of this book: “Preparations for Marriage in the Jewish and Catholic Traditions,” by Walter Homolka and Andrzej Pryba; “Support for Engaged Couples in Preparation for a Catholic Marriage,” by Urszula Dudziak; and “Volunteering as an Instrument for Preparing Young People for Christian Marriage and Family Life,” by Wiesław Przygoda, present the need, usefulness, methods, and forms of assistance provided by the religious community in preparing engaged couples for marriage.

The authors of the fourth chapter, Atila Kartal, Kemal Şimşek, Emine Atmaca, and Haktan Kaplan, describe the rituals of “bride retrieval” in Anatolian weddings.

The fifth chapter, written by Elżbieta Osewska and Józef Stala, highlights the promotion of peace through Christian upbringing within the family.

The sixth chapter, authored by Marcin Skladanowski, Andrzej Szabaciuk, Agnieszka Lukasik-Turecka, and Cezary Smuniewski, discusses marriage and family in Putin’s Russia, focusing on the state ideology and the discourse of the Russian Orthodox Church along with it.

The role of the virtue of religiosity in preparation for marriage and in the engagement and marital bond is presented in the seventh chapter by Tomasz Goździewicz. One expression of religiosity is the consequential parameter. Therefore, it is worth acquainting oneself with the description of religious and moral attitudes of the contemporary young generation presented in the eighth chapter by Grzegorz Polak and Adam Szromek.

The authors of the ninth chapter, Banu Güzelderen, Ünsal Yılmaz Yeşildal, and Fatih Düüzgün, analyze the factors influencing the choice of a child’s name. They examine the relationship of this choice with the religiosity of interfaith marriages, taking into account spouses of Orthodox Christian and Muslim faiths.
Among the issues of family life, one should mention the experienced illnesses, accidents, injuries, and the resulting disabilities of some family members. Conversations with these individuals allowed Krzysztof Mikołajczuk and Katarzyna Zielińska-Król to present the role of religion in the lives of disabled people in the tenth chapter. The authors noted that faith and religious practices give disabled individuals a sense of life’s purpose, help them overcome weaknesses, and motivate them to accept their lives. Moreover, they provide the remaining family members with the strength to care for and show love to the sick. Old age is a challenging stage in human life. Mirosław Brzeziński, the author of the 11th chapter, points out its value in the teachings of Pope Francis. This teaching is a sign and a form of assistance provided to seniors and their families.

Religious aspects can also be observed in the experience of the death of a loved one. Aleksandra Kłos-Śkrzypczak writes about the situation of women and families experiencing the miscarriage of a child. The author emphasizes the role of faith and religious life as factors offering support in mourning. Bogdan Kulik also deals with the topic of mourning and the role of faith in its experience by individual family members. In the last chapter of the book, the author draws attention to theories of annihilation, reincarnation, and spiritism, which contradict the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church. By quoting mourners, he presents the stages of grief and the role of faith in Jesus Christ in this experience.

Throughout different periods of life, from preparation for marriage, through the wedding ritual, naming children in the family, daily life in a specific society, to experiencing difficult situations such as disability and the death of a family member, the authors of this book present the role of religion in the experiences of its followers. This multi-author work may interest specialists from various fields: psychologists, theologians, sociologists, and employees and students of medical and nursing faculties, health sciences, and family studies, as well as engaged couples, spouses, parents, and grandparents. Encouraging you to read, I wish the readers of this book the usefulness of the acquired knowledge in their professional and private lives.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

References

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