



ST. PHILIP
PARISH
HAŻ-ŻEBBUĠ

A note from the editor

Dear readers,

This issue is dedicated to the family. Included are articles explaining the meaning of the Christian family, as well as a real family experience. A special prayer for those who are living far away from their loved ones, for those who are single and for irregular families, as we are all brothers and sisters in the same community!

Elizabeth

Archpriest's
Message



Dear families, I urge you to place your families **first**. Care for your families. Spend time together, laugh together, cry together. Most of all pray with and for your families. Keep God at the heart of your families. Prayer increases strength and spiritual unity of the family. This inner strength is necessary in family life, especially at its critical moments. Turn your hearts and thoughts towards God so that you will draw from that source the power to be continually renewed in love. Love can be deepened and preserved only by Love -that Love which is poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit . Persevere for 'love endures all things'.

God bless you all.

Fr. Daniel Cardona

Connection

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The Christian Family

The family is definitely the topic of the day. It is being discussed by the State, the Church, political parties and the civil society at large. Somehow or other this subject has attracted a lot of attention; on one hand, some are defending it at all costs, while on the other hand, some are attacking it with all force.

The family is not a human invention. It is a divine creation, therefore man cannot re-create the family. The family is a reality which is given to us from above and we just have to accept it and welcome it. The main characteristics of the family, as given to us in the natural law, are:

The family is made up of **a husband and a wife**. The family which is based on marriage, is composed of the union of one man and one woman. Nowadays this dimension is seriously attacked, because some argue: *'Why can't a family be composed of two males or of two females?'*. The Church is not against homosexuals, but their union cannot be called a family, because the term family applies specifically to that union of husband and wife.

The second characteristic of this union is that it is **open to life**. This is what is called the procreative dimension. Love does not enclose the couple in itself, but it naturally opens the couple to new life. It is the union of husband and wife that offers the best place and the right environment for the upbringing of children. Today, the procreative dimension is being seriously challenged by what is known as 'the culture of death', dominated by the use of contraceptives, sterilisation and abortion.

Finally, the third characteristic of family, is that this union is **forever**. In the book of Genesis, we find, that 'man leaves his



father and mother and clings to his wife and the two of them become one body' (Gen 2,24). Again today, this dimension is seriously threatened by the idea of divorce. Divorce is wrong not because the Church says so, but it is wrong because it is harmful to the family, to the children and to society at large.

These three characteristics are the foundation of the family. The family is the unit which gives us the energy and the strength we all need to go on in life. It gives us the reason to live. As one author once said, 'One can live without knowing why, but one cannot live without knowing for whom'. The family is precisely that reason for whom we are all living.

The family is the basic unit of society. A strong family means healthy individuals and as a result we will have a strong society. If the family breaks down we will not have healthy individuals. Children will not have the benefit of the love of both parents. Nations will be literally poorer, less healthy and less happy. This is all based on sound social science.

Hence, let us work for the promotion of the family, for nothing can replace the family. The family is, by far, the most precious gift we have all received

Fr. Joseph Mizzi, Director "Cana Movement"

Parish web site: www.parroccazebug.com

My Family Experience in Malta *by Stephanie Samson*

My husband and I, both of French nationality, moved to Malta over two years ago, and don't regret our choice! It was definitely a life changing event after living in London. Our two boys, Nicolas, aged four and Thomas, aged six, welcomed our decision with enthusiasm. The idea of living on an island in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea was a very appealing one!

During our first visit to Malta in 2007, we searched the island from north to south, and fell completely under the charm of *Haż-Żebbuġ*, a typical Maltese village with beautiful houses of character. It fitted in with our desire to have a quieter family lifestyle and hopefully to integrate quickly in our new country of adoption. We settled our nest right in the heart of *Haż-Żebbuġ*, just behind the police station.

When we moved in, the neighbours were very welcoming. I was pregnant and could not do my shopping without meeting them on my way home offering their help! We had never experienced this elsewhere before. We were completely thrilled by the discovery of the little bakery around the corner. After a couple of days of smelling a lovely odour of fresh bread, our senses finely lead us to this little place of paradise...if one likes Maltese bread...and we love it! We also discovered the small grocery store. We had never experienced such dedication to customers. How convenient for a busy mum not to have to go to a large supermarket! For fresh vegetable and fruits, the market is a real delight. One can really find everything one needs!

Our third child, Emilie, was born in January 2008 and was baptized at St. Philip Parish Church. Fr. Daniel



At the time of the banquet he sent his servant to tell those who had been invited, 'Come, for everything is now ready.'
- LUKE 14:17 NIV

Reflect...

"The great **danger** for family life, in the midst of any society whose idols are pleasure, comfort and independence, lies in the fact that people close their hearts and become selfish."

Pope John Paul II



organized a private ceremony which was fantastic. Thomas also received his First Holy Communion in the Parish that year. The boys grew up speaking English, so it was easy to make friends with Maltese children. They attended a private school to keep English as the teaching language. The school children were so warm and friendly. Thomas, celebrated his birthday soon after starting school and invited the whole class to his party! It took time for our children to get used to homework, but it is always completed.

We were keen on learning Maltese and the boys followed Maltese lessons just like the others. However methods were not adapted to foreigners, and after two years, though Thomas had learnt vocabulary and grammar, he could not converse or understand texts well enough. Thomas gave up Maltese in fifth grade and focused on English, which it seems is what most foreigners do. I think Maltese should be taught as a foreign language too. Following the Maltese curriculum is difficult and it would have been better to keep it as a foreign language, than just give it up completely. We easily enrolled the kids in sport activities and overall maintain a healthy balance of life.

It is true that Malta is such a small island but it offers so much to experience and visit. Our lifestyle here is very family friendly and we still have a long list of places to discover!

Quote of the Month

"In some families, please is described as the magic word. In our house, however, it was ~ sorry"

Margaret Laurence

Appreciating Lorenzo Gafa's Artistic Works in Our Parish

Historical Corner



The great courageous initiative and decision of our beloved Archpriest Fr. Daniel Cardona and his aides, thoroughly backed by the sheer enthusiasm and financial generosity of the *Haż-Żebbuġ* parishioners, to restore the belfries and whole façade of our parish church dedicated to St. Philip of Agira, prompts us to remember and appreciate the various Architect Lorenzo Gafa's artistic works adorning our village.

This church's façade has been designed, around 1689, by this great Vittoriosa (*Birgu*) born architect, the brother of famous sculptor Melchiorre Gafa. But this is not the only Lorenzo's artistic deed, culturally enriching *Haż-Żebbuġ*'s heritage.

Lorenzo Gafa (1638 – 1703) is also the author of various other project's designs for our church and parish. The columnar monument surmounted by a cross, dominating our church's square, is another of his works for *Haż-Żebbuġ*. As is the design of the Main Altar in our parish church, which again witnesses Lorenzo's great artistry.

Lorenzo Gafa was also involved, in 1662, as the main sculptor of the stone apse (*arzella*) in the Choir area (behind the Main Altar,) again in our parish church. An apse which later (i.e. during the 19th century) experienced some alterations by sculptor Angelo Busuttil.

Appreciating Lorenzo Gafa's works in *Haż-Żebbuġ*, besides his other numerous works around Malta, one can safely conclude that his designs and architecture are perhaps more Baroque than that of any other architect working in Malta before him. As a great artist who started his life as a stone carver, he consequently developed and established himself as one of the most talented Maltese architects.