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"Rodzina suwerenna : Kościół domowy : w nurcie współczesnej myśli prawnej Kościoła powszechnego i Kościoła w Polsce", Wojciech Góralski, Andrzej Pastwa, Katowice 2015 : [recenzja]

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Wojciech Góralski, Andrzej Pastwa,  
*Rodzina suwerenna — Kościół domowy*  
*W nurcie współczesnej myśli prawnej*  
*Kościła powszechnego i Kościła w Polsce*, 182 pp.  
Katowice: Wydawnictwo  
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A new book on marriage, by two prominent scholars—experts on marriage and the family, draws the attention of the researcher and the reader with its original and interesting title: *Sovereign Family—Home Church*. Both elements of the seemingly complex title are a logical synthesis of a phenomenon of one, indeed one, original in its kind, reality that includes the divine and human components and elements at the same time. Indulging in a careful reading, even if only looking through the chapter titles of the book, one cannot fail to notice that the authors decided to pay special attention to emphasizing those aspects of both institutions which determine their fundamental values.

The first chapter, written by Rev. Andrzej Pastwa, describes and justifies, chiefly based on theological and legal conditions, the constitutive act of marriage, which has rightly received the title of a “holy knot,” which is not only due to the source of its origin, but also owing to its anthropological value and dignity, which is inseparable from its origin. For only on this basis the well-being of the spouses, which is inspired by their mutual love—*amor coniugalis* and which gives rise to the family, can be implemented, which the author brilliantly develops and proves (pp. 18–19).

The second chapter bears an original title: “Family as a Sovereign Institution.” Its author, Rev. Wojciech Góralski, by founding his deliberations and

reflections on the study of the highest authorities, that is, on the Magisterium of the Church, and in particular, on the teachings of Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI, in an original way justifies the attribute of sovereignty of the family, which—as he emphasizes—has its origin in the natural and free act of spiritual and moral power of a man and a woman. This authority, as the author highlights, finds its expression in the act of marriage, and is further continued and completed in the premise and the objectives of the family (p. 30). This sovereignty, as the author accentuates, is characterized by a sovereignty that distinguishes it from other institutions, for instance, from the one that characterizes the state. This is because it has its foundations in the natural law, and as such is indeed necessary for the implementation of the life project, inscribed in the nature of man. As a consequence, as the author once again underlines, this sovereignty in a natural way remains ahead of the sovereignty of the nation and the state (pp. 30–33). It is worth noticing that the author confirms his thesis in an interesting way, among other things, with the help of such documents as: the Apostolic Exhortation of Pope John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio*, which is deeply rooted in the doctrine of the Second Vatican Council, the Charter of Rights of the Family, and the Letter to Families (pp. 33–35). Embedded in the sovereignty and the autonomy of the family that is built on it, as Wojciech Góral ski further justifies, is the source of a number of fundamental rights and duties, which, owing to their significance and importance, should enjoy special legal protection, care, and concern of the Church and the State (pp. 36–38).

Chapter three, entitled: “The Family—a Cradle and a School of Faith,” touches upon a substantial and vital family issue, which in the first place is fundamental for the spouses and in the second—for the offspring. The author, with his unusual intuition and comprehensive knowledge of the facts, founding his study on the documents of the Magisterium, shows and discusses a cardinal importance and impact of faith on the formation of a marriage, on its growth and development that emanates from the abiding fidelity and mutual love of married couples, which is crowned with the offspring (p. 43). Within this context, the author makes references to the well-known adhortation, *Familiaris Consortio*, where John Paul II states that “the family is the cradle and most effective means for humanizing and personalizing society” (pp. 43–44), and “through education in the faith [the human being] is introduced into the family of God, which is the Church” (p. 47). The above forms the essence of the third chapter of the present book.

The subsequent chapter four (the most extensive of all, because forty-five pages long), penned by Wojciech Góral ski, bearing the title “The Family in the Resolutions of the Post-Conciliar Polish Synods,” comprises a kind of a compendium of knowledge on the current state of the family in Poland; its legal status and its present-day condition. In light of the common and particular

legislation, the author presents, the current state of the Polish family along with their problems and expectations, in the form of the Resolutions of Polish Plenary Synod (pp. 61–69), First Provincial Synod of Kraków, as well as diocesan synods (pp. 69–102). Thus, the author significantly enriches the native and world canonical literature with new solutions as regards the vista of matrimonial and family law.

Chapter five of the book, whose title Andrzej Pastwa renders a conciliar, deeply theological title of a family, namely the “Home Church”; in its original depiction, under the title: “Around the Idea of ‘Home Church,’” the author presents an image of the family, as a priceless, indispensable, and irreplaceable community of life and love, which draws its vital force from the Church that is a community of communities. That is why the family received a beautiful and a theologically justified title of “Home Church.” The author, referring to the statement by the post-conciliar Magisterium of the Church, especially to the numerous statements by John Paul II on this subject (pp. 105–111)—one can say in a masterly way shows and divinely exhibits—the human dimension of the family, which not only deserves, but also constitutes the Home Church for all members of the family. By revealing the grandeur and beauty of the family, the author did not fail to make allusions to unhealthy, unnatural phenomena, having their source in various shades of ideologies, dangerous for the family, and thus for the existence of man and the whole human community (pp. 113–115). The author, however, concludes his reflections with an optimistic note, quoting also the positive experiences and observations from the native, Polish ground of the Church in our homeland (pp. 117–118).

Chapter six, as it becomes clear from the complex meaning of its title, “The Idea of ‘Home Church,’” is a paradigm of modern identification of the rights of the family. The Polish synodal law context is conceived—as it seems—as a kind of summary of studies and analyses carried out in previous chapters of the book. A method of repetition and the relevant conclusions adopted by the authors of the book to critical analyses and conclusions herein discussed; the characteristics of the standards of the common and particular legislation concerning marriage and family, as well as finally elaborated conclusions, provides an excellent recapitulation of their creative and fruitful work in the service of the family, the Church, and the nation.

Therefore, in addition to the words of a deep appreciation for the valuable work of both authors, a sincere gratitude should be expressed for taking up this very topic that is so current at the time when ideologies concerning marriage and family, worth to be compared to myths and tales from the land of *One Thousand and One Nights*, appear in front of our eyes.

This valuable and interesting work, a testament of not only a thorough knowledge on marriage and family, but also a testament of the authors’ realistic view of the wonderful work of creation, by all means deserves special attention

of all those for whom marriage and family are the greatest gifts that were ever given to man.

Therefore, let the valuable effort undertaken by both authors, Wojciech Góralski and Andrzej Pastwa, which resulted in a new and original work, find the widest recognition and acceptance it deserves.

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