

THE BRANIFF GRADUATE SCHOOL  
OF THE  
UNIVERSITY OF DALLAS

FR. HEINRICH PESCH, S. J. AND THE IMPORTANCE OF THE FAMILY IN FOSTERING  
AND PRESERVING THE MUTUAL INTERDEPENDENCE OF THE INDIVIDUAL AND  
THE NATIONAL ECONOMY

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A thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the University of Dallas in partial fulfillment of  
requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in the Department of Politics

FEBRUARY 17, 2024

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“The unit of an ancient society was the family, of the modern society, the individual.”<sup>1</sup>

- T. W. Allies

In his five-volume work, *Lehrbuch der Nationalökonomie*, first published between 1905 and 1926, Fr. Heinrich Pesch, S. J. presents a thorough analysis of the history, function, and purpose of the economy based on Catholic social teachings and complemented by the thoughts and ideas of Catholic as well as non-Catholic economists. In addition to scientifically outlining how economies throughout history work, he also presents an ethical model of how an economy ought to function. This system he calls “the Solidarity of Human Work” or “Solidarism,” and it is offered as an alternative to the individualistic Capitalist system and the socialistic Communist system. Within this system, neither the individual nor the community are seen as the ultimate purpose and end of the economy, rather, there is an understanding that the individual and the community mutually benefit, and are interdependent upon, each other. At the heart of this mutual interdependence is the family, the seed of society and original economic unit. Although the family has been replaced by enterprise as the economic unit, Pesch argues that the family maintains its importance within the national economy since it is within the family that men first learn and practice the solidarity and mutual interdependence that can and ought to imbue the rest of society. Whenever the family is fragmented by individualism or is further dissolved by socialism, the national economy suffers, the individual becomes disenfranchised, and society itself loses its cohesion. The national economy ought always to look to the benefit of the family and where it fails to do this it has undermined its own purpose. Pesch believes that in order to return to a virtuous and ethical economic disposition, the family must be protected from further economic and societal degradation and erosion, and where this has already occurred it ought to

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<sup>1</sup>Allies, T. W. *Church and State*, Christ the King Library, Coppell, Texas. 2021. Print. Pg. 50.

be restored to its prior dignity and stability. It is in the family that Pesch finds the origin and seed of economic and societal life, and it is in the family that society and the economy must again find its strength and vigor.

Although the economics of the family have changed in recent centuries, its social importance has not, and the family maintains its role as the balancer between the interests of the individual and the society at large. The family is not only the historical point of departure for economics, it remains the point of departure for modern economics since it is the seed of society and the heart of the national economy. In nations without strong, stable family life, the extremes in society are exaggerated and tend toward the dissolution of communities through the atomization of individualism or its coagulation of individuals into the collective force of oppression that so often is embodied by the collective Communist state. It is in the family that the principles of solidarity and subsidiarity find their nexus and it is upon the family that these principles depend for their development and preservation in society. To better understand these crucial principles of Catholic Social teaching, their definitions should be provided. Pesch defines solidarity as: “[s]ocial interdependence, the actual mutual dependence of people on one another,”<sup>2</sup> and in *Quadragesimo Anno*, Pope Pius XI says of the principle of subsidiarity:

Just as it is gravely wrong to take from individuals what they can accomplish by their own initiative and industry and give it to the community, so also it is an injustice and at the same time a grave evil and disturbance of right order to assign to a greater and higher association what lesser and subordinate organizations can

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<sup>2</sup> Pesch, Heinrich. *Lehrbuch der Nationalökonomie/Teaching Guide to Economics, Volume 1: Foundations for Economic Life (Book 1)*, Trans. Rupert J. Ederer. The Edwin Mellen Press, Lewiston, New York. Print. 2002. Pg. 36.

do. For every social activity ought of its very nature to furnish help to the members of the body social, and never destroy and absorb them.<sup>3</sup>

Without the family, men and women cannot learn or preserve the rights and obligations of individuals towards others (violation of solidarity), and the dependence upon larger and more artificial institutions will increase in order to maintain the needs of individuals and the community (violation of subsidiarity).

### Man as lord of the world through work.

In order to analyze the importance of the family for society and the economy it is necessary first to understand the importance of the economy and society for man. Both society and the economy aid man in his role as “lord of the world according to God’s ordinance.”<sup>4</sup> The dominion of man “over the world is undeniable,”<sup>5</sup> says Pesch, yet

the actual affirmation and determination and development of the concrete configuration of man’s dominion over the material world takes place in a protracted process, and often by slow, painful progress moving all of the way from bare survival to the more highly developed contexts where materials and energies are forcefully harnessed.<sup>6</sup>

In other words, man must be economical, that is, well-ordered in the management of his affairs.

For Pesch, “Human nature is not a product of history, but of creation.”<sup>7</sup> This means that even the

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<sup>3</sup> Pius XI, *Quadragesimo Anno*. Sec. 80.

[www.vatican.va/content/pius-xi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_p-xi\\_enc\\_19310515\\_quadragesimo-anno.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/pius-xi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xi_enc_19310515_quadragesimo-anno.html). Accessed Oct. 15, 2023.

<sup>4</sup> Pesch, Heinrich. *Lehrbuch der Nationalökonomie/Teaching Guide to Economics, Volume 1: Foundations for Economic Life (Book 1)*, Trans. Rupert J. Ederer. The Edwin Mellen Press, Lewiston, New York. Print. 2002. Pg. 1.

<sup>5</sup> Pesch, Heinrich. *Lehrbuch der Nationalökonomie/Teaching Guide to Economics, Volume 1: Foundations for Economic Life (Book 1)*, Trans. Rupert J. Ederer. The Edwin Mellen Press, Lewiston, New York. Print. 2002. Pg. 2.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

intricate organizations of society, which reach beyond the initial endeavors of the individual, find their origin in human nature and man's innate dominion over nature. However, this principle of rational organization within human nature does not belong to man as an isolated figure. As a rational animal, man interacts with God, with other members of his species, and with nature through his intellect and the exercise of his free will. Since there are other men with intellects, wills, and varying shares in the role of dominion over the world, man does not find himself as the sole ruler of the world or as the sole possessor of the rational powers of communication and domination of nature.

For Pesch, "Rational nature is the common property of all mankind. That is why all persons alike are called to participate in one way or another in enforcing man's dominion over the natural environment."<sup>8</sup> It is in the context of man's shared vocation of world dominion and shared possession of the rational exercise of that vocation that man engages with others and the world. "By the same token, all must be enabled to share in the fruits of this dominion which is in fact based on man's rational nature."<sup>9</sup> This means that man exists and works in the context of society and society exists for man's dominion over nature and his communal goal in this respect. The society in which man finds himself can either be a family, a city, a nation, the whole human race, a varying collection of each, or all at once. The common rational principles of dominion held by society require proper management for the society to run well, and this is where economizing occurs.

Pesch draws from the Greek concept of "*oikos*" as the "sound management of the household"<sup>10</sup> to define economizing and how it aids man in his exercise of dominion over nature

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid. Pg. 15

and the world. Since he says “[h]uman nature is not the product of history, but of creation,”<sup>11</sup> and “man is compelled by his nature and by the nature of his environment to subject the earth to his service in a purposeful and continuous manner,” a form of economic management is required, “since it is only in this way that he can achieve the satisfaction of his wants and assure his being able to continue doing so on a continuing basis.”<sup>12</sup> Since man is not the sole possessor of world dominion, he must involve or be involved with other men in the enterprise of fulfilling his nature and living out the purpose for which he was made. This inevitably brings about an interdependence of one man upon another which in its best form is a kind of economic partnership between members of the human race and at worst it is a form of domination of some men over others for the sake of personal enrichment at the expense of those deprived of the fruits of their labor. It is only concerning the proper form of this interdependence, solidarity, that we are concerned presently.

Man does not work out his dominion as a self-sufficient entity but he is dependent upon his environment for the sake of his sustenance. His dominion is meant to be a tenancy that benefits others and the world but primarily is meant to serve his needs. For instance, man cultivates and raises crops primarily out of his need for sustenance and this also is meant to have a positive effect on his community and the environment in which he does the cultivation. The seeking of benefits from man’s environment is what Pesch calls the “satisfaction of wants.” He says, “[A]ll human beings are entitled and called to participate in an appropriate manner in the progress of material culture by an increased or improved satisfaction of wants.”<sup>13</sup> It is by economizing or by managing “material culture” that man brings about the satisfaction of wants. It is for this reason that Pesch says, “Economic life is the basis for everything else... That applies

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid. Pg. 2.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. Pg. 3.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. P.4

to nations as well as to individuals.”<sup>14</sup> This should not be taken to mean what it does for Marxists, that the material and economic basis of life is all that there is, but simply that, without the material means to live, men cannot have the higher things of life and culture. Since economics is, in the sense Pesch outlines, the basis of everything else, it is not hard to see how people’s orientation toward economics will affect and determine their orientation toward everything else.

### Work and its purpose

In order to explain how man fulfills his needs and lives out his vocation of dominion over his environment, Pesch analyzes and defines the principles of human work. He says, “Man, who is ordained and empowered to be the lord over his environment, accomplishes his dominion and makes use of it by his work.”<sup>15</sup> The achievement of his goals and the satisfaction of his wants is attained by man solely through work, and “The law of work is as all-encompassing as the law of death. All persons must work, and work purposefully, until they return to the dust from which they came.”<sup>16</sup> It is for this reason that St. Paul says, “If anyone will not work, let him not eat.”<sup>17</sup> Since man shares in the responsibilities and obligations to work, man's right to the goods of the earth and of human industry is also contingent upon his involvement in the efforts to satisfy the wants of himself and the community.

“Work,” says Pesch, “is the systematic application and expenditure of human energy to produce or acquire a good or utility. Work, therefore, is a human and therefore a personal

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<sup>14</sup> Pesch, Heinrich. *Lehrbuch der Nationalökonomie/Teaching Guide to Economics, Volume 1: Foundations for Economic Life (Book 2)*, Trans. Rupert J. Ederer. The Edwin Mellen Press, Lewiston, New York. Print. 2002. Pg. 303.

<sup>15</sup> Pesch, Heinrich. *Lehrbuch der Nationalökonomie/Teaching Guide to Economics, Volume 1: Foundations for Economic Life (Book 1)*, Trans. Rupert J. Ederer. The Edwin Mellen Press, Lewiston, New York. Print. 2002. Pg. 10.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid. P. 11.

<sup>17</sup> *The Holy Scriptures*: Revised Standard Version. 2 Thess. 3:10.

activity... in the service of the human individual or social personality.”<sup>18</sup> Work is, therefore, personal as the action of the individual but social in that it is meant to benefit the individual as a “social personality.” It is man’s work in the context of the community that helps make work “not merely and generally a matter of bitter necessity for man. It is also his honor and his joy.”<sup>19</sup> Man’s fulfillment of his responsibilities and obligations adds dignity to his work and “increases the person’s interest in it.”<sup>20</sup>

It is through “Economic work” that man most fully actualizes his natural capacity for work and fulfills his vocation as master of the world. “Economic work,” says Pesch, “is activity directed toward providing man with the material means needed to satisfy his wants.”<sup>21</sup> Within the category of economic work are the following activities, as listed by Pesch, “extracting raw materials, shaping and altering the form of raw materials, making goods available for use in the proper place and at the proper time,” and “[u]sing up goods is included in the concept of *economizing* or under the concept *consumption*.” These economic activities are almost always divided up among men into specialized tasks. Individual men perform one or the other task while leaving the rest of the activities to other men in order to increase efficiency and aid one another in their work. Man cannot work economically on his own, for in all senses, including the economic sense, God was right when he said “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.”<sup>22</sup>

Even in the earliest pages of his work, Pesch refers to man’s engagement with the world as one which inevitably and naturally involves others. Phrases like “all human beings”<sup>23</sup> and

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<sup>18</sup> Pesch, Heinrich. *Lehrbuch der Nationalökonomie/Teaching Guide to Economics, Volume 1: Foundations for Economic Life (Book 1)*, Trans. Rupert J. Ederer. The Edwin Mellen Press, Lewiston, New York. Print. 2002. Pg. 10.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid. P. 11.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid. P. 11.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid. 12.

<sup>22</sup> *The Holy Scriptures*: Revised Standard Version. Gen. 2:18.

<sup>23</sup> Pesch, Heinrich. *Lehrbuch der Nationalökonomie/Teaching Guide to Economics, Volume 1: Foundations for Economic Life (Book 1)*, Trans. Rupert J. Ederer. The Edwin Mellen Press, Lewiston, New York. Print. 2002. Pg. 2.



“common property of all mankind”<sup>24</sup> show that, for Pesch, there is no discussing human nature outside the context of the universal human race and particular human communities. The individual is at all times a member of the race and the human family is at all times composed of countless individuals. It is this understanding of man in the context of society that will be the basis for Pesch’s solidarist system of human work and his conception of the principle of solidarity. He bases his understanding of man in the context of society upon the Sacred Scriptures, Catholic Social teaching, and Aristotelian principles of man’s political nature.

The necessity of a family according to Pesch and Aristotle for man to exercise this dominion properly: “To live day-by-day.”

For Pesch, the family is the original society and the most natural form and basis for all other communities. It is in the family that all social and economic structures find their origin. As has already been mentioned, Pesch’s understanding of the economy and “the economic principle” is drawn from the Greek origin of the word. He says,

The word ‘economy’ (from the Greek, *oikos* and *nomos*) was already found in Xenophon, and it referred to sound management of the household. But home economics will be good if it sees to the adequate and continuing provision of the material goods required to satisfy household needs effectively and adequately, and if it also uses these in a manner which assures the well-being of the house and of its members.<sup>25</sup>

Aristotle also used this same wording when laying out his view of the origins of political societies in his *Politics*.<sup>26</sup> The household and the management thereof is something that

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<sup>24</sup> Pesch, Heinrich. *Lehrbuch der Nationalökonomie/Teaching Guide to Economics, Volume 1: Foundations for Economic Life (Book 1)*, Trans. Rupert J. Ederer. The Edwin Mellen Press, Lewiston, New York. Print. 2002. Pg. 2.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid. P. 15

<sup>26</sup> Aristotle. *Politics*. Trans. Carnes Lord. Second Edition. The University of Chicago Press. Chicago. 2013. Print. 1252b, 29-30. Pg. 3.

originated with family living. “Aristotle,” says Pesch, “designated the family as the original community (*koinonia*)”<sup>27</sup> and he “defined the family as a natural community for the purpose of living together day-by-day.”<sup>28</sup> It is from this original familial household and its management that Pesch derives his definition of the economic principle. “By and large, he says, “the ‘economic principle’ consists simply in the application of a universal law of practical reason in the area of economics.” “Practical reason” and man’s shared possession of rationality are at the core of the economic process and this process began in the home among the members of the family. It was not as an isolated member of the nation, or even as a member of some enterprise of conquerors or businessmen that man first found himself as a natural member of a society. It was within a society created by God himself to remedy man’s isolation that man first came to an understanding of his place in the world and his relation to others. Only from this first society could others develop, whether as their natural outgrowth or as their unnatural distortion, as is apparent from the history recounted in the book of Genesis of the varying ways in which mankind fulfilled or rejected God’s ordaining purpose for man in the world in the context of society.

After outlining the importance of this source and bedrock of civilization, Pesch defines the family very much in line with Aristotelian parameters<sup>29</sup> as “an agglomerated society. Specifically, it is comprised of a community of: 1) a man and a woman; 2) parents and children; 3) masters and servants.”<sup>30</sup> The agglomeration of the members of the family is one that allowed a stratification of responsibilities and obligations of its own from which greater communities

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<sup>27</sup> Pesch, Heinrich. *Lehrbuch der Nationalökonomie/Teaching Guide to Economics, Volume 1: Foundations for Economic Life (Book 1)*, Trans. Rupert J. Ederer. The Edwin Mellen Press, Lewiston, New York. Print. 2002. Pg. 87.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid. P. 194.

<sup>29</sup> Aristotle. *Politics*. Trans. Carnes Lord. Second Edition. The University of Chicago Press. Chicago. 2013. Print. 1253b, 9-10. Pgs. 5-6.

<sup>30</sup> Pesch, Heinrich. *Lehrbuch der Nationalökonomie/Teaching Guide to Economics, Volume 1: Foundations for Economic Life (Book 1)*, Trans. Rupert J. Ederer. The Edwin Mellen Press, Lewiston, New York. Print. 2002. Pg. 194.

learned and developed. Within the household, the three separate forms of relationships are defined by Aristotle as relations of “mastery, marital rule (there is no term for the union of man and woman) and thirdly procreative rule.”<sup>31</sup> These relationships and hierarchy within the household inform the community, consisting of other families, and eventually lead to the formation of cities, nations, and states. The household management of a people is foundational for the development of civil and social management. This is especially true with respect to the way power and authority are to be exercised in smaller as well as greater communities by those who rule, and how obedience and docility ought to be practiced by those who do not. Since all three relationships hinge primarily upon the mastery of the father, Pesch says, “We may define [the family] as a community of those persons who are subject to one and the same paternal authority.”<sup>32</sup> It is for this reason that civilizations have almost always developed patriarchally and it is from this understanding that the concepts of fatherland, *pietas*, and *patria* all flow.

Pesch says this conception of the family applies to several forms of extended family units which may all live under the same roof or at least “live together in an economic unit under the same head”<sup>33</sup> or patriarch. As was mentioned above, Pesch notes that “Aristotle defined the family as a natural community for the purpose of living together day-by-day.”<sup>34</sup> This day-by-day living implies a closeness and a bond that establishes love and mutual interdependence upon one another, a familial solidarity in the living of everyday life. Pesch says that the family “is supposed to provide for people all of their daily needs.”<sup>35</sup> This indicates the subsidiary principle present within the family unit. Because man’s nature requires interdependence on others, and that

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<sup>31</sup> Aristotle. *Politics*. Trans. Carnes Lord. Second Edition. The University of Chicago Press. Chicago. 2013. Print. 1253b, 9-10, Pgs. 5-6.

<sup>32</sup> Pesch, Heinrich. *Lehrbuch der Nationalökonomie/Teaching Guide to Economics, Volume 1: Foundations for Economic Life (Book 1)*, Trans. Rupert J. Ederer. The Edwin Mellen Press, Lewiston, New York. Print. 2002. Pg. 194.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

is most naturally and primarily fulfilled in the family, the family unit helps satisfy the needs that the individual member of the family could not fulfill on his own. This also reveals the role the family must play with respect to the daily living of men and women. Society should not, as the norm, fill in for the family by aiding men in all aspects of daily living. When subsidiarity is violated, solidarity is eroded.

Pesch also says, “With reference to the primary purpose of marriage, we should also be permitted to mention that the family is the natural and sensible arrangement for propagating (procreating and educating) the human race in a responsible way befitting human dignity.”<sup>36</sup> The family then serves as the great bulwark of sexual morality for the defense of procreation against the immoral decadence or deviancy that so often emerges in societies. In societies where family life is not possible for many, overly difficult, or simply discouraged, the sexual energies of whole peoples are often misdirected and squandered. The importance of sexual morality also must not only be a concern of the family but one of the nation as a whole. Economic means for having a family ought to be the chief concern of the national economy and anything in society which sullies the morals of the people ought to be seen as an affront to the basis of society and the economy as well.

In his chapter on the three pillars of society, namely, 1) the Family, 2) the State, and 3) Private Property, Pesch says,

The family is the first society rooted in human nature itself, which binds people together on the basis of reciprocal rights and obligations. As such, it turns out to be the basis of the physical, intellectual, and the moral existence of the human race, and the basic cell unit of all natural social life. It was the historical starting point for all socio-organic structures in

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

the natural order, up to and including the state; and it will always continue to be that, as well as the stable foundation for happiness and well-being.<sup>37</sup>

It is from this paragraph that we can begin to see Pesch's view of the true meaning and awesome dignity of the institution of the family. Society not only draws its original vigor from the family structure, but the family remains and always will remain the source of stability for societies, even of those societies that do not consciously give to the family the honor and respect it is due. As far as a society departs from defense and cultivation of the family so far will it depart from "the stable foundation for happiness and well-being."<sup>38</sup> Pesch says that for a family to have the stability necessary for itself and for the sake of the development of greater communities and posterity, it ought to be a stationary rather than a nomadic family. He says it is more natural for a family to tend toward stationary living, and therefore stationary communities are only capable of growing out of the life shared by these naturally inclined families that settle in one place. He says, "The need to provide food, clothing, and shelter for a number of persons in a common economy naturally inclines the family to settle down in a stable situation; and it leads to the establishment of a home which, in turn, binds it solidly to the homeland, the fatherland."<sup>39</sup> With a quote from Max Wolf, Pesch carries home the point,

There have indeed been nations which burst onto the historic scene with primitive force, and they won battles, and toppled and destroyed empires; but they were first able to accomplish something lasting after the savage horsemen and hunters carved a real homestead for themselves out of the forests and deserts, or built one for themselves in conquered territory. Wherever a nation, like the nomads of former times or the Indians of America, did not have ambition to take root in native soil and build houses for their

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid. Pg. 193.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

families, it was insignificant in the pages of history. With the establishment of the home, you get the beginning of culture; and with domesticity, civilization begins.<sup>40</sup>

Pesch rejects out of hand the ideas of those he calls the “writers of fantasy (Spencer, Lubbock, Morgan, among others,) who have taken pains to tell us” that “[i]nstead of marriage, what prevailed was total freedom and promiscuity in sexual relationships - the *vagus concubitus*”<sup>41</sup> He says, “History knows nothing of that.”<sup>42</sup> He does not believe in any Rousseauistic myth about marriage or the family being a societal construct. Instead, he believes, “[T]he *firmly established* family is by no means some recent development of civilization; *it existed already at the lowest level of cultural development and without exception.*”<sup>43</sup> While acknowledging the historical reality of other familial structures besides monogamy, such as polygamy and polyandry, he defends the Christian view on monogamy,

Only where the wife has the same right to an exclusive claim on her husband as the man has over the wife can there be talk of a family in the full and true sense. In terms of the law, there is no way that the woman can waive her equality and her right to an exclusive claim on the husband; and that is because, while it is possible for the marriage partner to make a marriage contract, he or she cannot alter the nature and the natural destiny of the familial order.<sup>44</sup>

It is for this reason that civil laws respecting marriage ought to seek to preserve the marriage bond. The bonds of families were and are the first human bonds, which, growing outward from the family, bind men and families together and eventually lead to the development of cities and nations. For a State to permit, upon the simple wish of one or both parties, the severing of the

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid. Pg. 194.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid. Pgs. 194-5.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid. Pg. 195.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

marriage bond, would be to permit the disintegration of the nation, for the principal unit of society, the family, would not be stable or safe from disruption. For the State to best preserve itself it ought to preserve the nature of the institution from which it sprang. With respect to Christian marriages, the State has no authority to judge whatsoever. As Pope Leo XIII said, “Neither, therefore, by reasoning can it be shown, nor by any testimony of history be proved, that power over the marriages of Christians has ever lawfully been handed over to the rulers of the State.”<sup>45</sup>

This leads to Pesch’s rejection of the Platonic and Communistic ideal of a universal “community of wives.” He relates this to the view of the “writers of fantasy” and says of such a condition, that were it attempted,

Any semblance of the family would be wiped out in such a situation; and, given the lack of certitude about who is the father, there is no way in which the love and care of both parents toward their children or the respect and love of the children toward their parents which is needed for the well-being of the human race, could survive. Indeed, there can be no talk of a proper upbringing of the children. Nor could public care and raising of children by the state in any way substitute for the familial bond.<sup>46</sup>

This reveals the necessary role the family plays, not only in the development of society and the state but in the preservation of it. Patriotism and the love of one’s fatherland are doubtless bound up in the love of one’s father, and the idea of rendering all citizens fatherless or children of communal fathers would destroy any sense of filial piety as well as patriotism. Likewise, he points again to the “familial bond,” that first solidaristic principle which is the basis of all others,

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<sup>45</sup> Leo XIII, *Arcanum Divinae*.

[https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_l-xiii\\_enc\\_10021880\\_arcanum.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_10021880_arcanum.html). Accessed February 17, 2024. Sec. 24

<sup>46</sup> Ibid. Pg. 194.

and says that the state can in no way violate subsidiarity in an attempt to take up the role which only the family can fulfill. There is no substitute for the family.

### The Economic Function of the Family.

After establishing the importance of the family and tracing the outline of its existence throughout history, Pesch then addresses the economic function of the family. He begins with the most basic and oldest form of a domestic economy. “The family, as the original and smallest social economic unit, ranks as the one which has to provide directly for the corporal needs of its members.”<sup>47</sup> We see here his revisiting of the definition from Aristotle and his agreement with him that the first society was the family and that it was established for the sake of aiding its members in acquiring the daily needs of life. In further agreement with Aristotle, he explains the need the family most often has of other families and larger communities to aid the family in its living and surviving. “The separation, isolation, and self-containment of individual domestic economies has, in fact, never been a totally absolute one.”<sup>48</sup> Just as the individual needs members of a family to aid in his everyday living, the family needs a society larger than itself to aid it in its functionality. While a family can often remain self-contained, “Exchange took place in the most ancient circumstances, as can be demonstrated, even if it was just an occasional occurrence.”<sup>49</sup> This means that what could not be produced by the family would often be exchanged for surplus items with other families or individuals to satisfy the corporal needs of the family, not to mention when trade involved luxury goods. In essence, the goods produced, consumed, and enjoyed by the family can be deemed goods of “use-value,” and whatever is reduced to the level of fluid exchange, be it through barter or monetary exchange, can be deemed

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid. Pg. 197.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.



goods of “exchange-value.”<sup>50</sup> While families often produced the vast majority of their goods of use-value, they also partook in exchange to satisfy other wants that they could not satisfy on their own. In this way, the family acts both as the source of production and maintenance of “use-value goods” as well as the source and end of “exchange-value goods.” “In addition, there were definite social and economic connections and interactions among broader groups like the clan, the tribe, the village, the market association; and also ties with manor lords, etc.”<sup>51</sup> This is the basis of economic exchange and the origin of city economies, national economies, as well as international trade. Pesch makes clear that “[b]y and large, however, the natural focal point of economic life was, first of all, the domestic economy which, as the immediate self-contained economy, had to provide the requisite means to take care of its own needs.”<sup>52</sup> Under these conditions, the focus of the economy was the production of non-commodity, use-value goods. “Gradually, as commerce broadened and became more lively in terms of extension, regularity, and constancy, the ancient unity of the family as an economic production and consumption unit gradually began to loosen more and more, at least as a universal phenomenon.”<sup>53</sup> The gravitational center of the economy, in other words, moved from the production and maintenance of non-commodity use-value goods to the production of commodities, that is exchange-value goods.

This shift is not criticized by Pesch, only outlined and explained. The dramatic change in the purpose of the family, however, cannot easily be overlooked. While remaining the unit of society, the family gradually loses its role as the fundamental unit of the economy. Eventually, as history unfolds, it will be almost completely replaced by enterprise as the primary unit of the

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid. P. 198.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid. P. 198.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid. P. 198.

economy.<sup>54</sup> “In the cities of our time (1923), especially among the more prosperous classes, the man’s efforts to make a livelihood has been almost completely separated from the family as a consumption unit.”<sup>55</sup> Pesch quotes Friedrich Kleinwächter, an influential Austrian economist of the nineteenth century, on the family situation from his day, and it is worth quoting in full in order to see how things were and just how much has changed since Pesch’s time,

The man, as the saying goes, pursues his career, i.e., the man seeks his income outside the home; and if he carries on his occupation inside the house, it does not occur in the dwelling place, but in separate rooms, offices, work-rooms, shops, etc. The wife and children do not, as a rule, engage in the line of work which the man is involved in, so all that takes place in the domestic circle is the consumption part of the domestic economy. And the consequence of this is the fact that, in the affected classes, the 'family' has become a small thing. As a rule, the family consists of a husband and a wife, such children as are still dependent, and a servant or two. In any case, however, the family continues even then to be an economic unit; and, to be sure, the smallest one. And even there, we continue to find a surviving element where production and consumption are still not completely separate, despite everything that has happened; but they are directly connected in the manner in which they occur. The meals are prepared and eaten in the house; linens or other articles of clothing are produced as individual units by the wives for use by the members of the family; many repairs and cleaning operations are performed within the family circle, etc.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>54</sup>Pesch, Heinrich. *Lehrbuch der Nationalökonomie/Teaching Guide to Economics, Volume 1: Foundations for Economic Life (Book 1)*, Trans. Rupert J. Ederer. The Edwin Mellen Press, Lewiston, New York. Print. 2002. Pg. 198-99. / Friedrich Kleinwächter, *Lehrbuch der Nationalökonomie* (1902) 169. Paul Jedzink, *Einzelwirtschaft, Gesellschaftsbildung und Religionsübung in ihren wechselseitigen Beziehungen* (1908).

<sup>55</sup> Ibid. Pg. 198.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid. Pg. 198. / Friedrich Kleinwächter, *Lehrbuch der Nationalökonomie* (1902) 169. Paul Jedzink, *Einzelwirtschaft, Gesellschaftsbildung und Religionsübung in ihren wechselseitigen Beziehungen* (1908).

It cannot be denied that even in 1902, when Kleinwächter wrote the above quote, or when Pesch was writing the *Lehrbuch*, the family was struggling to maintain its importance as anything more than “a very small thing”<sup>57</sup> within the national economy and by extension, in society. As the working man’s world became more and more focused on enterprise, his ability to prioritize his family became increasingly strained. What had not yet occurred fully in Kleinwächter’s or in Pesch’s time, although it had been occurring in industrial countries to greater or lesser extents in urban areas, and has been nearly accomplished today, was the movement of much, if not all, of female work out of the home. This will be addressed at greater length in another section.

Not all families were or are as equally affected today by this shift of economic focus to the enterprise. Pesch says, “Only families where domestic industry takes place, like in the small artisan middle-class families and farm families, have more or less retained their original economic importance as unified close-knit economic production and consumption units.”<sup>58</sup> Even today many middle-class families run small businesses along with their spouses and even their extended families. The familial nature of man cannot be entirely eradicated from the economy just as the family itself can never be eradicated. What is possible and what has occurred to a great extent, is the overall shift of focus away from familial economizing, initially in production and later in consumption, on the part of advanced industrial economies throughout the world. Pesch does not advocate a return on the part of all families to a family-based economy, but it does seem apparent from his work that he believes it is necessary for a great many families, if not the majority, to remain units of production as well as consumption units of the economy.

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Pesch, Heinrich. *Lehrbuch der Nationalökonomie/Teaching Guide to Economics, Volume 1: Foundations for Economic Life (Book 1)*, Trans. Rupert J. Ederer. The Edwin Mellen Press, Lewiston, New York. Print. 2002. Pg. 198.

It was the Marxists who honed in on the extreme strain that industrialism caused to the family by making production occur outside of the family, but they went further in advocating a total abolition of familial economizing, even down to the regulation and consumption of goods. Alexandra Kollontai and Leon Trotsky, writing just a few years before the final volume of Pesch's *Lehrbuch* was published, advocated the severing of all economic bonds within the family. Due to the heavy burdens on men and women and the growing needs of society, Kollontai says, "The family is ceasing to be necessary either to its members or to the nation as a whole."<sup>59</sup> In other words, the Aristotelian view that the household was the basis of the city has been done away with and the city or nation no longer needs the family. Kollontai says that due to women's labor outside of the home, "she has learned to earn her own living, to support her children and not infrequently her husband."<sup>60</sup> For Kollontai, greater dependence on the community is offered in exchange for the dependence on the household (a violation of subsidiarity). "What was formerly produced in the family is now produced by the collective labor of working men and women in the factories."<sup>61</sup> She predicts the end of housework and says, "[T]he working woman will surely have no cause to regret this."<sup>62</sup>

Trotsky echoed this hope when he said "that as soon as 'washing [was] done by a public laundry, catering by a public restaurant, sewing by a public workshop,' 'the bond between husband and wife would be freed from everything external and accidental.'"<sup>63</sup> The external and accidental was never something Aristotle or Christians would have viewed as working against the bonds of man and wife but as complementary to, if not inseparable from, the nature of

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<sup>59</sup>Kollontai, Alexandra. "Communism and the Family." *Communist Internet Archive*, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/kollonta/1920/communism-family.htm>, Accessed Nov. 1 2023.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Goldman, Wendy. *Women, the State and Revolution: Soviet Family Policy and Social Life, 1917-1936*. Cambridge University Press. 1993. Print. Pg. 6.

marriage and the household. Trotsky was simply carrying Rousseau's myth of the original man and the artificial constructs of the family formed by society to their logical conclusion. Rousseau theorized that men and women lived apart from each other and only came together to live as a gradual process of history. While Rousseau believed the marriage bond and the externals and accidents of "hut" living did create undesirable chains, he saw them as intimately connected.<sup>64</sup> He does not outline how man and wife could or would develop "[t]he first developments of the heart"<sup>65</sup> without the externals and necessities of circumstance. Instead, he says the developments of the heart were "the result of a new situation (the externals and accidents) which united husbands and wives, fathers and children in one common habitation." It is unclear how Trotsky or Kollontai thought men and women would develop or maintain the same familial bonds of emotion without the economic "externals" and "accidents" that had historically been integral to household life.

Pesch does acknowledge the ground that was being lost as the family surrendered one function after another to the business enterprise. The family community is no longer a domestic economy in the earlier sense, or a productive organ with division of labor; but it is merely a limited type of economy confined to regulating consumption, and even that is now in danger of being stripped of its importance.<sup>66</sup> Even in the face of such a danger to the original state of the family, Pesch insists that there is no justification for the socialist insistence that the family is to be set aside and abolished by the historic change taking place in the world of work. The family continues to have functions and purposes in abundance; and these can, in fact, be accomplished

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<sup>64</sup> Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. *"Discourse on the Origin and the Foundations of Inequality Among Men"* (1782) or *"The Second Discourse"*. Translated by Ian Johnston. Public domain. Pg. 31.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid. Pg. 34.

<sup>66</sup> Pesch, Heinrich. *Lehrbuch der Nationalökonomie/Teaching Guide to Economics, Volume 1: Foundations for Economic Life (Book 1)*, Trans. Rupert J. Ederer. The Edwin Mellen Press, Lewiston, New York. Print. 2002. Pg. 198-99.

better as it is relieved of other economic burdens. Can the Individual, and can society do without the family?<sup>67</sup>

Pesch is certainly right in saying that individuals and society cannot do without the family but it may be worth asking more forcefully now, can the family do without its role as an economic unit and can individuals and society as a whole do without it? After 100 years of furthering this gradual shift away from the original economic purpose of the family, should we not ask, how the family has fared in its role as foundation and bulwark of society and whether it has performed its social “functions and purposes in abundance” while it has continued to cede its role as the economic locus of society? The great question facing nations, economies, and individuals is, if the family is no longer economically necessary, how can the family remain socially necessary, much less socially practical? Is it possible for the family to live up to its original calling and purpose for society if it does not have an economic purpose beyond mere consumption, if even that?

Pesch quotes Gustav Friedrich Schmoller, leader of the “younger” German School of economics, on the danger of letting society step in to fill the role of the family in all matters:

He who sends every hungry person to the corner tavern, every pregnant woman to the birth clinic, and every child from birth to full manhood to a succession of day-care institutions, such a person changes society into a conglomeration of pleasure-seeking, egotistical vagabonds whose neuroticism and unrest will make all too many of them candidates for insane asylums....The more mobile our population becomes nowadays.... the more urgent it becomes to have a secure, narrow circle that is closed to the outside, where there is love, trust, and relaxation as only the family can provide these....Not in the

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid. Pg. 199.

destruction of family life and in the family economy, but in the proper reconstitution of it lies the future of nations and the true emancipation of the woman.<sup>68</sup>

It would certainly be well worth considering how the erosion of the economic importance of the family and its near-total replacement by enterprise has led to the modern pandemic of mental health, isolation, and anxiety cases.

In order to preserve family life in spite of its loss as an economic unit, Pesch points out the social functions and necessity of the family regardless of its economic importance. He says, “All social functions are found in the family, as in the seed and in the incipient bud. Authority, relationships between subordinates and superiors, the awareness of rights and obligations, the common good, solidarity and love, work and ownership, briefly, all of the essential elements, supports and foundations of the larger social organs are present there in the family.”<sup>69</sup> Yet even here he mentions “work and ownership” among the “essential elements” of the family. Nonetheless, it is apparent that many other responsibilities fall to the family and since the family has not been eradicated and mankind has not achieved the ever-elusive Socialistic or Platonic Utopia, these essential elements are certainly being carried out by countless families throughout our nation and the world. The issue, however, is that not enough families are living up to their high calling as the source of social cohesion and dynamism. Such a condition is lamentable and is seen in the fulfillment of Schmoller’s prophetic quote above. “The preservation of healthy family life,” says Pesch, “is, in fact, not required solely by the interests of the members of the families, but it is also a social benefit of the greatest importance.”<sup>70</sup> When families suffer, all suffer.

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid. Pg. 199. / *Gundriss I*, 255, 257

<sup>69</sup> Pesch, Heinrich. *Lehrbuch der Nationalökonomie/Teaching Guide to Economics, Volume 1: Foundations for Economic Life (Book 1)*, Trans. Rupert J. Ederer. The Edwin Mellen Press, Lewiston, New York. Print. 2002. Pg. 199.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

### Christianity, the Family, and the Problem of Divorce

One of the greatest factors in the preservation of family life, according to Pesch, is the Christian religion, “The most exalted kind of support for family solidarity..., the surest protection against any violation of this closest kind of living arrangement that is possible among human beings, is provided by the Christian teaching which presents marriage as a sacrament.”<sup>71</sup> No other bond offers such stability and permanence to the most basic cell of society. “It is the sovereign God who blesses the contract which two people make; and He seals the bond between man and wife into something which is indissoluble. What God has joined together, let no man dissolve.”<sup>72</sup> The shift away from the sacramental view of marriage by the state and society as a whole proportionately affects the cohesion of society and the stability of the state.

In shaking up “the durable bond of the family,” Pesch says “we rob mankind not only of what is one of its most beautiful and necessary blessings, and we not only destroy the idea of home and fatherland and the vital source of traditional morality, but we actually go beyond all of that to strike at the very dignity of the human person.”<sup>73</sup> Nothing, then, could be more detrimental to individuals and society as a whole than if the family is made dissolvable. It leaves individuals from broken families with frayed roots, and society itself suffers from a lack of individuals with a sense of solidarity because the most basic form of solidarity, familial solidarity, has been undone. Natural solidarity, as found in families, while in many instances has proven to be enough to build up societies, is not enough, however, to preserve, sanctify, and elevate them. This is only something that can be achieved through Christian charity and true religion.

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid. Pg. 200.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid. Pg. 200-1.



Pesch says,

Whoever shares the conviction that the family is the 'root and exemplar for all human communal ties, with the subordination and coordination that is proper to them (Moy), and whoever sees in the family the necessary requisite, the natural point of departure, the firm foundation of all broader social units, such a person has to hope, in the interest of the state itself, that religion and the family will remain closely connected. 'Family and religion make up the double ring which engulfs all of the peaks and valleys of human life, the natural as well as the divine;'<sup>74</sup> if one divides this double ring and severs the bond - then barbarism, revolution, death, and destruction will be the lot of human society. *Leges sine moribus vanae!* (Tacitus) Only religion, not law, provides and preserves for the family its moral character, sanctifies the marriage bond, fortifies and clarifies all of the close ties in family life between the marriage partners, between the children and the servants.<sup>75</sup>

Religion must be restored if family life is to be restored, and family life must be restored if nations are to be cured and set again on firm foundations of solidarity, mutual goodwill, and brotherly concern for one's respective nation.

#### How Things Are and How Things Ought to Be

For Pesch, it would not be possible for the family to preserve its dignity and purpose in either the individualistic or socialistic systems of economics for very long. It could do so, however, under a solidaristic system of human labor. This system requires that some, if not most families remain economic units of production, and women find their role in the home, not in

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid. Pg. 206. / (19) Konstantin Frantz, *Naturlehre de Staates* (1870) 129: 'If the state is to be in a sound condition, then the family must remain in good condition; but if the family is to enjoy the kind or order it deserves, then people have to obey the law of God.'

<sup>75</sup> Ibid. Pg. 201.

enterprise. Seeing how far removed our economy and society are from such a system leaves us with a sense of dread as to the discovery of a way to rectify the situation and it may even hold us back from seeking a solution at all. However, Pesch did have an answer in his day. He said, “The economist is therefore consistent only when he combines the knowledge of what is with the knowledge of what ought to be.”<sup>76</sup> Seeing that the crucial issue is the preservation of the family as the unit of society once it is no longer the economic unit of society, we will need to further examine Pesch’s description of his solidaristic system as well as his belief in the prominent role of the family in such an economic system if we hope to understand our current situation and find a solution to the economic and social ills of the day.

As has been said, the family was, according to Pesch and Aristotle, the first economic unit, yet Pesch admits that “if we take the family as representing the most original form of communal economy, then we still have those others stemming from the wants of given communities within the national economic organization.”<sup>77</sup> Pesch says that “[Aristotle] regarded [the family] as the seed from which the state grew.”<sup>78</sup> Not only does Pesch believe the state grew from the family but based on his conception of the principle of solidarity, the state and the family are interdependent upon one another. Pesch notes, however, that “[s]ome of the older sophists already saw things differently. The Epicureans, for example, saw the individual person as the cell unit of political society, and they held that the state originated in a free decision and contract among its members.”<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Pesch, Heinrich. *Lehrbuch der Nationalökonomie/Teaching Guide to Economics, Volume 1: Foundations for Economic Life (Book 2)*, Trans. Rupert J. Ederer. The Edwin Mellen Press, Lewiston, New York. Print. 2002. Pg. 312.

<sup>77</sup> Pesch, Heinrich. *Lehrbuch der Nationalökonomie/Teaching Guide to Economics, Volume 1: Foundations for Economic Life (Book 1)*, Trans. Rupert J. Ederer. The Edwin Mellen Press, Lewiston, New York. Print. 2002. Pg. 74-75.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid. Pg. 87.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

The other extreme views of man's origins, as well as the origins of society, are the views of Plato and that of Roman law. Pesch says that "Plato's teaching... was carried all the way to explicit communism," and "Roman jurisprudence could not arrive at a proper understanding of social life below the level of the state."<sup>80</sup> Both were a violation of the principle of subsidiarity, and as "Bruder said,<sup>81</sup> 'Roman law developed at a time when there was little social development, or when what there was was unfree, with a sharp dichotomy between public and private law,'" and "[t]he concept of political power at the time of the Caesars was one of absolute power. Absolutism is irreconcilable with the custom of vigorous social stratification,"<sup>82</sup> or, in other words, the practice of subsidiarity. We see in the ancient conceptions of Plato and the absolutism of the Caesars what, arising under different modes, would in the modern era become communism and authoritarianism. Whether it be Epicurus or Rousseau who miss the community for the individual or the Communists and Statists who miss the individual for the community, it is the family that is missing as the balancer and moderator of their views. With the family as the origin and lynchpin of society and the economy, the extreme tendencies towards individualism or communism will be guarded against. This is because the family is the place where true solidarity and subsidiarity are learned and outsourced, it is the place where men first learn functional responsibility in the context of community. The individual knows his importance as well as his obligations, first within the family, and then carries such an understanding out into the greater communities he is a part of.

In addition to a focus on the family as the institution needed to properly order society, there is another institution established by God which Pesch says must be given its proper place

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid. Pg. 87.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid. Pg.93 / (2) *Staatslexikon der Görres-Gesellschaft* II 822. Bruder-Ettlinger, article: "Gesellschaft," etc. *ibid.* II, 554.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid. Pg. 87-88.

and honor as well if the extreme tendencies mentioned above are to be moderated. Pesch says that in addition to the family, the Church moderates the absolutist tendencies of the state, since it is “the highest and most perfect form of society, since God Himself originated it” and “thus the state is not the be-all and end-all of social life.”<sup>83</sup> The Christian view also guarded man against tendencies towards individualism because “it saw the state as stemming from the family, and also because of its insistence on the solidarity principle which stands opposed to every kind of mechanical-individualistic concept of society.”<sup>84</sup> Since “[h]uman nature is not a product of history, but of creation,”<sup>85</sup> and the family is a part of that nature, the family and the Church, both institutions established by God, are the societies that balance the tendencies toward individualism, which would atomize men apart from families and society on the one hand, and against absolutism on the other which would absorb men and families into its own power. Pesch says, that through Christianity:

both the independence and the dependence of the life of the individual and of social life within the state were properly defined. ‘What is it that ultimately holds the state and society together’<sup>86</sup> their vital principle in each case is solidarity, i.e., the commitment of the individual to the whole and of the whole to the individual.’ But the whole does not devour the individual; the state does not absorb society.<sup>87</sup>

This “vital principle” is learned and maintained nowhere else in nature except in the family and it is elevated to a supernatural principle for the good of society only within the Church.

For Pesch, “The family is the first society rooted in human nature itself, which binds people together on the basis of reciprocal rights and obligations.”<sup>88</sup> Here we see within the family

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid. Pg. 88.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid. Pg. 93. / (3) J. J. Roszbach, *Geschichte der Gesellschaft* VIII (1875) (224.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid. 88.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid. Pg. 193.

the first example of the principle of solidarity, expressed as “reciprocal rights and obligations.” Pesch says that “[w]hen we speak of solidarity with regard to social life, we have in mind in a most general sense, first of all, social interdependence, the actual mutual dependence of people on one another.”<sup>89</sup> The social interdependence found within the family is the seed out of which social interdependence grows and develops into the state as well as other legitimate communities of men. “This reciprocal dependence on the well-being of other persons in society is therefore no mere *de facto* relationship. Inasmuch as the reciprocity and community of interests has its foundation in man’s rational nature as one of its imperatives, *solidarity* also represents a moral relationship between man and his fellow man.”<sup>90</sup> In other words, man’s moral choices within the family and other communities are rational and therefore take into account what is good for himself and others.

Even if the downfall of another is to one’s benefit, one is not permitted to wish for this, let alone bring it about. Social intercourse is supposed to be a benefit and a blessing for mankind, not a curse and a source of its corruption. Thus, even though an individual may look after his own interests, he must at the same time have regard for the legitimate interests of others, who as human beings, have an equal claim to happiness, well-being, and the benefits to be derived from social living.<sup>91</sup>

The first place where this rational decision to benefit oneself and others is found is in the family, which Pesch says,

turns out to be the basis of physical, intellectual, and the moral existence of the human race, and the basic cell-unit of all natural social life. It was the historical starting point for all socio-organic structures in the natural order, up to and including the state; and it will

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid. 36.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid. 36-7

<sup>91</sup> Ibid. 37

always continue to be that, as well as the stable foundation for happiness and well-being.<sup>92</sup>

Therefore, the solidarity of the family is the source of all other solidarity. Whatever grew out of the family, including the state, developed upon the same premises of familial solidarity. Higher communities are not, however, the same as families, and as societies grow the family cannot be replaced, at least not in a healthy way. Plato's attempts to describe a society where this occurs in his *Republic* and the absolutist tendencies of states throughout history reveal an exaggeration of the solidaristic principle which only is checked by the principle of subsidiarity, which also finds its origin and maintenance within the family.

### The Family and Subsidiarity

As the first form of community and “the most original unit for social living,”<sup>93</sup> the family is essential to the development of greater communities which, on the basis of subsidiarity, “emerged because of the need to unite for the kinds of purposes which families did not have the capacity to accomplish.”<sup>94</sup> What could not be accomplished by the family was to be accomplished by the community, and yet the community did not absorb or begin performing tasks that could and should remain within the capacity of the family. Concerning “the welfare of the whole” in a nation, Pesch says that “[t]he activity of local communities cannot be pre-emptive; but it must rather be subsidiary in nature, filling in where the ability of citizens and occupational groups are not up to performing the task, or fail completely to do so.”<sup>95</sup> As the intermediary institutions between the family and the state, communities function both as buffers

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<sup>92</sup> Ibid. Pg. 193.

<sup>93</sup> Pesch, Heinrich. *Lehrbuch der Nationalökonomie/Teaching Guide to Economics, Volume 3: Economic Systems and the Nature and Dispositional Causes of the Wealth of a Nation (Book 2)*, Trans. Rupert J. Ederer. The Edwin Mellen Press, Lewiston, New York. Print. 2002. Pg. 357.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid. Pg. 358.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid. Pg. 366.

between usurpation of power on the part of the state and fill in for the neglect of societal roles that families cannot be expected to perform.

In healthy families, children learn over time what tasks they are capable of performing on their own, what goods can be acquired by their own initiative, what responsibilities they have toward other family members, and what obligations other family members have towards them. The moment when a child is old enough to tie his own shoes, wash his own dishes, and make his own bed, it becomes a violation of subsidiarity and a hindrance to the child's development for parents or siblings to continue to do for the child what he can and ought to do for himself. Likewise, children should not be expected to step into paternal or maternal roles beyond their capacity except in dire circumstances. This creates a distortion of the roles and responsibilities found within healthy family life. For children to be children on the way to adulthood and for parents to be parents is the essence of familial subsidiarity. Whatever can be done at a lower level and by the individual member of the family, ought not be performed by another sibling or parent in the family.

Thus it becomes apparent that the reason the family is the foundational cell-unit of society is because the two social principles, solidarity and subsidiarity, are both found there. The family is the nexus of solidarity and subsidiarity, and when these principles are applied in communities and the state they must always be applied with the family in mind. Wherever these principles are neglected or violated in society, the family is being neglected or its role is being usurped by institutions which can in no way replace the social function of the family.

Fertility, Population Problems, and Solidarism

Another great threat to a nation's development and maintenance is a drop in fertility and a decrease in population. While many, including Malthusian and Neo Malthusians, concern themselves with the perceived threat of overpopulation, Pesch points out that historically speaking, it is more often a problem for nations when they fail to reproduce than it is a problem for them when they produce too many offspring. "There have been times when," says Pesch, "because of the great political and economic importance of the size of the population, public authorities have had to give special attention to the question of population increase."<sup>96</sup> In ancient Rome, there was a growing concern that many Roman families were failing in their obligations to produce offspring for the empire.

Augustus already campaigned against the upper class' disdain for the married state in the 18th year B.C. He did so by his *Lex Iulia de ordinibus maritandis*, which was joined to the *Lex Papia Poppaea*. Penalties were imposed on the single state, but for marriages which produced children public and private law advantages were proposed. The measure did little good. Romans had by then succumbed to the craving after creature comforts and lacked the moral stamina required to assume the cares and responsibilities of child-raising.<sup>97</sup>

There are countless other instances in history where moral decadence has led so many to avoid the social responsibilities and natural goods of family life and in so doing have denied themselves and their nations the children who would have carried on the task of preserving and uplifting civilization.

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<sup>96</sup> Pesch, Heinrich. *Lehrbuch der Nationalökonomie/Teaching Guide to Economics, Volume 2: Economic Systems and the Nature and Dispositional Causes of the Wealth of a Nation (Book 2)*, Trans. Rupert J. Ederer. The Edwin Mellen Press, Lewiston, New York. Print. 2002. Pg. 126.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.



According to Pesch, the population and fertility situation in the Middle Ages was quite different from the conditions in ancient Rome. “[T]here was no need for public encouragement of population growth, since conditions were themselves conducive to population increase. Yet the many wars and feuds did reduce the population.”<sup>98</sup> Despite wars, famines, and plagues, great tracts of land made it possible for new families and communities to form and develop with plenty of means for sustenance and population growth. Freedom granted to serfs with respect to marriage as well as the Church’s defense and administration of the sacrament made the married state desirable and beneficial for most. The moral condition of the people in the Middle Ages greatly strengthened the fabric of society, and after the decline and fall of Rome eventually produced a people with the “moral stamina” to raise children.

In the modern era, there have been attempts, in response to Malthusian and Neo-Malthusian projections about fears of overpopulation, to reduce or stifle population growth. Many of the efforts to restrict the growing population in modern times were used “[i]n primitive times, where there were backward cultures,” when

under favorable circumstances, or during periods of prolonged peace, less disease, good geographic endowments, good cultivation, technical advancement..., at such situations in cruder eras, infanticide, killing the aged, abortion, sexual vices of all kinds, in other words, the most brutal artificial measures to limit life were resorted to.<sup>99</sup>

Such measures can in no way be practiced in conformity with healthy family life or with a solidaristic view of the national economy in mind. Also, Pesch opposes any efforts on the part of the state to restrict the number of marriages, since “the right to marry is a clear uncontestable *fundamental human right*,” and since concubinage and the number of illegitimate children

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid. Pg. 128.

increases under such circumstances.<sup>100</sup> “Now illegitimate children are a far greater threat to society, because they are neglected to a larger extent in their upbringing than an even considerably larger number of legitimate children, even though these may be poor.”<sup>101</sup> The way Pesch believes marriages are to be encouraged and cultivated in order to produce individual children who are a help and not a burden on society is outlined in a quote he analyzes from Schmoller.

The lower classes must adopt middle class values with regard to marriage and children; and they are likely to do that, to the extent that we elevate their status morally, economically, and intellectually by proper social reform measures. Thus, the greatest danger stemming from overpopulation will also be forestalled, namely, the prospect of the living standard of the lower half of the population being drastically reduced. On the other hand in the middle and upper classes the failure to marry, marriages based on monetary considerations, prostitution, and all similar developments which are immoral consequences of overly rapid population densification, have to be opposed in every way possible. That is, to be sure, not easy in times when the prospect of riches coming with economic prosperity encourages luxury, consumerism, and dissolute living among wider circles of the population. Yet, it is not impossible so long as good example is provided from the top on down, and abuses and various forms of degeneracy are opposed.<sup>102</sup>

In other words, it is not a reduction in marriages per se, but an increase in the quality of marriages and an improvement of economic and social conditions for families that is necessary for the benefit of the common good and individuals.

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid. Pg. 132.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid. Pgs. 131-2. / Schmoller, *Grundress.* I 187.

“Even less so,” says Pesch, “should the lower classes be persuaded to adopt the disgraceful two-child system”<sup>103</sup> (a system proposed by some European states during Pesch’s time, meant to restrict the growth of the population. The Chinese one-child system, which was implemented much later, would of course also be rejected). The dangers implicit in such policies are, according to Pesch, made clear by “[t]he lessons of history and the experiences of our own time... *The ancient world fell victim to the failure to reproduce.*”<sup>104</sup> With respect to the declining birth rates in Europe during his time (which have continued to decline up to this very day), Pesch said, “It isn’t a case of marriages being too few or too late; there are just not enough children. The reason lies in the will of the population, and the nation bears the responsibility for that kind of national suicide (Krose).”<sup>105</sup> And while he concedes that early marriages can be advisable for some individuals, “[o]nly premature marriages, which are good neither for the individual nor for the general welfare, ought to be minimized and avoided.”<sup>106</sup> Apart from “*public and social police measures to restrict marriage*,”<sup>107</sup> which Pesch explicitly condemns, he says it is necessary to dissuade individuals from entering into marriages without a concept of the gravity of the endeavor or an awareness of one’s responsibility to their offspring and the society as a whole. “What is called for actually,” says Pesch, “is continuous material, intellectual, and moral elevation of the workers so as to bolster his personal, cultural, and social status.”<sup>108</sup> Pesch then makes a point which is very important in evaluating the intrinsic versus extrinsic conditions of society on the family. To the question of whether or not it was the poor intrinsic nature of proletarian families which were leading to the breakdown of families in urban areas or the

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<sup>103</sup> Ibid. Pg. 132.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid. Pg. 201.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid. Pg. 204.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid. Pg. 132.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid. Pg. 132-3.

external conditions such families faced, he argues that it is the externals that pose a greater threat.

The last thing we wish to do is infer that the working class has been guilty of letting itself be steered into marriage by passion. Far more often it has been extrinsic conditions which have robbed the family and the formation of families of their healthy foundation.<sup>109</sup>

Likewise, when conditions in society and the national economy are conducive to healthy family living, families and individuals benefit greatly. The breakdown of morals so greatly affects the cohesion of families, that their preservation ought to be maintained at all cost. Pesch refers to Franz Walters who summarizes the issue as follows:

The crux of the whole matter for civil society lies not in having as many marriages as possible, as the foes of celibacy argue, but in having as many good, morally solid marriages as possible. The vitality of a nation lies not in some absolute high population level, but in civil virtue, in moral character.<sup>110</sup>

Without healthy families, a growing population will become increasingly burdensome and detrimental to the well-being of society and the economy but with them, a growing population will be a great benefit. In response to Malthusian and Neo-Malthusian efforts at population control, Pesch says, “Thus, we may say, *where care has been taken to safeguard the quality of a nation’s people, generally there will be no need for concern about their quantity!*”<sup>111</sup>

Issues in industry that led to premature marriages were criticized by Pesch, who believed that had industrialism made good on its initial promises to make life easier, it ought to have led the worker to be more cautious with respect to beginning a family. He believed that

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<sup>109</sup> Ibid. Pg. 133.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid. Pg. 133. / *Staatslexikon* IV. 720ff.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid. Pg. 193.

improvements in factory work and the social conditions of families would lead to an improvement for workers and industry as a whole.<sup>112</sup> “Such advance,” says Pesch,

will be much enhanced once the worker no longer sees his wife and children as means for gain, when the married woman no longer has access to the factory, and when child labor for pay in industry is legally forbidden. Even then, such means will have to be resorted to which ‘improve the situation from within.’ (Schmoller) The sense of responsibility which parents feel toward their offspring must be bolstered considerably. No work is more important and difficult than raising a human being. Yet no task is undertaken more lightly than precisely that one, undertaken by young boys and girls who are themselves still in need of upbringing. Along with the material, intellectual and moral elevation of the working class, the cultivation of the children of the workers will become better, so that the costs which the worker has to incur for their education will also increase considerably. This factor too will impress upon the young worker that marrying and establishing a family is a most serious step, and it may help to avert his entering into marriage frivolously.<sup>113</sup>

The great responsibility of marriage and family life is not to be discouraged by authorities, rather, Pesch believes extrinsic conditions ought to be altered in such a way that individuals will be more free to embark upon the great role of fatherhood and motherhood within the context of holy matrimony and in the context of society. Instilling in individuals the gravity of married life while also aiding as many as possible in the undertaking of the marital vocation, by working out beneficial reforms to detrimental elements of modern work situations, is something society and the state ought to aid the Church in bringing about. As has already been said, all benefit from

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<sup>112</sup> Ibid. Pg. 134.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid. Pg. 134.

healthy families and there is no greater benefit to the national economy than for the members of working families to have at their disposal all the necessities of life and the means for self-improvement and advancement. A situation in which the life of the worker and his family is stagnant at best and reveals no prospect of advancement or improvement beyond bare subsistence will not lead to high productivity on the part of the workers, nor will it inspire the next generation of workers who marry with a desire to work well for the advancement of the national economy if it seems as though the national economy does not have the interest of their families at heart. Either marriage will be discouraged and put off for longer than needed, if not indefinitely, or those who work will find less and less fulfillment in work and will see it not as the dignifying exercise of man's first vocation, but as the tedium of wage slavery.

### The Feminist Issue

Another serious problem facing families and the national economy during Pesch's time, which today has advanced to the point of becoming a scourge to nations and home life, is "The female problem or the Feminist issue."<sup>114</sup> While acknowledging the unique situation many women faced after WWI, Pesch sees as problematic the fact that "[a] significant percentage of all women remains unmarried." Due to the death of many men in the war, and the great number of widows, "The saying - the woman belongs in the home - also falls short even though in itself it is a fine and a correct one."<sup>115</sup> The same could be said today due to many of the economic and social ills that plague young men and women and make marriage unfeasible or unattainable. Pesch continues, "The number of those who cannot marry and who cannot expect the parental home to go on supporting them has become quite significant in present circumstances. And the number of single persons will also quite probably increase in the decades ahead."<sup>116</sup> Whether he

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<sup>114</sup> Ibid. Pg. 135.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

believed single people would increase as a demographic due to further repercussions felt by the war or if the ills of modern economics and society were expected to further contribute to this is initially unclear. He first addresses the issue of war widows, but then moves on to the change women's role in economics has faced in industrial nations. It appears, based on the many years of peace since the World Wars, that, in the long run, the latter issue was more to blame than the war.

He addresses the issue head-on, "Married women and daughters living at home with older parents nowadays go out of the home to seek work far more than in earlier times."<sup>117</sup> Today, this shift has been carried so far that it is now almost a universal norm. "Why don't they work at home in the family household?" asks Pesch and countless defenders of tradition to this very day. The answer given is that "[s]pinning and weaving, sewing and washing, baking and butchering are activities which have been more and more removed from the household. Instructing and educating have been assumed increasingly by society at large."<sup>118</sup> It cannot be hard to see why women no longer work in the homes. Beyond the elimination of domestic female production as a necessity and it's being rendered uneconomical, even the loftiest purpose of a mother's role no longer is kept at home, the role of teacher of her children. Pesch says, "The energies of women are required far less in the household than formerly, although a really good housewife can seldom complain that she does not have enough to do."<sup>119</sup> Doubtless, the situation is the same for many good housewives today, just as good workers today cannot complain of having too little to do even though work has been altered for the vast majority in developed countries. Inventions meant to free up time never seem to eliminate the need for work and often become the origin of new jobs and tasks that must be fulfilled. Work is inescapable.

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<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

For women as well as for working men, “modern developments with mass production and the changed social environment, we are told, has set free many energies that were formerly preempted.”<sup>120</sup> How these new energies are used for the benefit of society and the national economy if they are not devoted to traditional domestic work is something of great importance for Pesch. He believes that “the not insignificant part of the female population which does not find its life-work in the family must not be lost to itself and the community, along with its energies and capacities, but rather that it insists on and finds its proper place among the factors which go to make up the wealth of a nation.”<sup>121</sup> Pesch does not believe women’s default or primary role is outside of the home but only believes that in light of modern advancement and the circumstances of the post-WWI era, women ought to contribute in ways that before would not have been possible or beneficial for society. It is unlikely he would have favored the extreme to which the feminist movement carried so many women away from the life-work of family life and into the life-work of enterprise once the equilibrium disrupted by war had been reestablished.

Pesch steers clear of addressing the whole feminist movement and focuses solely on the role of women in economics and the family. “We refer to a *feminist movement*,” says Pesch, “because that is what we are dealing with here, not with some merely theoretical discussion.”<sup>122</sup> To address this very real movement he draws heavily from “capable and knowledgeable women, among others, who have devoted their talents to the female problem.”<sup>123</sup> He traces the economic origins of the feminist movement to the “[e]conomic pressures facing middle-class women and ladies from ‘good families,’ who were “for the most part the starting point for the movement.”<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid. Pg. 136.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.



The movement began “when people began drawing public attention to the plight of so many female persons who deserved better than their lot.”<sup>125</sup> A simple enough beginning for what became such a complex and difficult problem. As more and more women were granted opportunities in the workforce or were required to work in factories due to the necessities of industrial urban life, women were bound to need legal protections in an ever-changing environment.<sup>126</sup> That at least was the economic and legal basis of the feminist movement up until Pesch’s day.

In further analyzing the reasons for the movement of women more and more into the sphere of enterprise and political activism, Pesch examines the female worker issue in the industrial nations of Western Europe in the last decades of the 19th century.<sup>127</sup> It was an issue “which had nothing to do with the lack of employment,”<sup>128</sup> says Pesch.

[O]n the economic side [the political women’s movement] could see the enlargement of employment opportunities as only a partial solution of the female problem. Here female work was freed of all obstacles, however. And it was precisely because of this freedom that a great number of difficulties arose first of all for the increasing number of women who went to work in industry, where they were heartlessly exploited, and then for men in the workforce who suffered from the wage competition which working women brought about, and then especially for the family. Combining the role of mother with employment outside the home had to lead to problems which now were brought to the fore by the sought for equal rights for men and women.<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid. Pg. 140

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

Pesch then says that an effort to divide labor between the sexes was attempted based upon the “particular aptitudes of males and females, and which therefore also took into account the woman’s responsibilities as wife and mother.”<sup>130</sup> Whereas Eve was made by God to be a helpmate in the garden, and for centuries the woman’s role in this respect was kept, industrialism made men and women no longer allies in the home but adversaries in the workplace. The strain placed upon both by the movement of the locus of society in politics and economics further and further away from the home brought about an inversion of male and female relationships that was “not the unmixed blessing that was envisioned.”<sup>131</sup> Since, by working outside the home, women are often hindered in their roles as helpmates to men in domestic labor, they are often overburdened, are viewed as burdens by their husbands, or are competitors for wages in the workplace. With both spouses sharing the role of breadwinner the hierarchy of the home, as well as the concept of wealth and ownership residing in the husband and father, is undermined.

Another scholar who weighs in on the issue of male and female roles in the economy and how they have changed is Alasdair MacIntyre. In *After Virtue*, he analyzes Jane Austen’s view of the new economic elements of marriages in her era to explain the great shift that occurred due to industrialization. He says,

We learn somewhere in all her novels about where the money of the main characters comes from; we see a great deal of the economic self-seeking, of the *pleonexia* (avarice) which is central to Cobbett’s vision. So much so indeed that David Daiches once described her as a ‘Marxist before Marx.’ Her heroines must, if they are to survive, seek for economic security. But this is not just because of the threat of the outside economic world, it is because the *telos* of her heroines is a life within both a particular kind of

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<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid.

marriage and a particular kind of household of which that marriage will be the focal point... But why is marriage so important?

It is finally in the eighteenth century, when production has moved outside the household, that women no longer for the most part do work not very different in kind or work-relationship from that of men, but are instead divided into two classes: a small group of leisured women with no work to fill the day and for whom occupations have to be invented – fine needlework, the reading of bad novels and organized opportunities for gossip, which are then thought of by both men and women as ‘essentially feminine’ – and a huge group of women condemned to the drudgery of cosmetic service or to that of the mill or factory or to prostitution. When production was within the household the unmarried sister or aunt was a useful and valued member of the household; the ‘spinster’, not surprisingly, did the spinning. It is only at the beginning of the eighteenth century that the expression becomes denigratory; and it is only then that the woman who does not marry has to fear expulsion into the drudgery as her characteristic lot. Hence to refuse even a bad marriage is an act of great courage, an act that is central to the plot of *Mansfield Park*.<sup>132</sup>

Such a shift in the view of marriage was bound to result in backlash from the radical Marxists who would seek to liberate women from such dire necessity by abolishing marriage, legalizing divorce, and advocating women’s rights and political liberation as the remedy. Rather than solving the problem raised by the shift in economics outside the home, such methods provide only the solution of nihilistic rejection of family life where its healthy restoration ought to have been pursued.

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<sup>132</sup> MacIntyre, Alasdair. *After Virtue, Third Edition*. The University of Notre Dame Press. Notre Dame, Indiana. 2007. Print. Pg. 239-240.

After considering the many healthy ways women in modern society could engage in enterprise or professions outside of the home, Pesch returns to “[t]he natural and most common vocation of the woman.” This, he says,

will obviously be in the domestic and maternal role; and that holds for the future as well as for now. At the same time, that is also the most important vocation from the cultural point of view if only both sexes would once again take their proper places in the family!<sup>133</sup>

Both for the individual woman and for culture at large, there is nothing that can replace or usurp the mother’s role. It is not, however, a requirement only for most women to return to their proper place in society and the family. Men must be the kind of men whom women will wish to undertake such a strenuous vocation with. Pesch quotes Herman Schell on this point, who tells us,

Modern culture suffers, in the social areas where it prevails, from effeminacy among men and from selfishness among women. Men want to separate pleasure from the sacrificial effort which goes along with paternal obligation; and the modern cultured lady fears and avoids motherhood and shies away from the sacrificial life of love and service and suffering for others and for the whole.<sup>134</sup>

Should it not also be considered however, that just as Pesch did not wish to blame the proletariat for following passion blindly into premature marriages as much as the extrinsic circumstances that led to such decisions, that men and women’s avoidance of the responsibilities of marriage and family life is the other side of the same coin? Societal and economic conditions are as much,

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<sup>133</sup> Pesch, Heinrich. *Lehrbuch der Nationalökonomie/Teaching Guide to Economics, Volume 2: Economic Systems and the Nature and Dispositional Causes of the Wealth of a Nation (Book 2)*, Trans. Rupert J. Ederer. The Edwin Mellen Press, Lewiston, New York. Print. 2002. Pg. 148.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid. Pg. 148 / Christus (1903) 107.

if not more to blame, for the hyper-rational avoidance of responsibility. Due to the fear of the undue burden felt by families in modern industrial societies as well as the moral weakness incurred by members of a decadent society, individuals are less likely to embark upon the founding of families. Perhaps the extrinsic and intrinsic problems developed and occurred at the same time, but if the former problem is blamed more on extrinsic circumstances then the latter could just as easily be blamed on them as well. Is the continued avoidance of the sacrament of marriage today by many merely the result of the selfishness of men and women, or is an equal or greater blame not to be laid at the feet of an economic system and society that considers family life to be a luxury, a burden, or an afterthought?

In response, Pesch says, “Without a doubt prosperity, inasmuch as it encourages an egotistical life-style, is a major factor in reducing the number of children”<sup>135</sup> (While marriage and having children are by no means necessarily equivalent, Pesch, as cited above, viewed the sacrament of marriage as the bulwark of healthy family life and a supernatural remedy to many social ills). Although the externals affecting the proletariat’s entrance into premature marriages and that of decadents who put it off or hinder marital fruitfulness are drastically different, those who enjoy (or perhaps suffer) the effects of decadence are more culpable for their lack of self-control. Either way, it cannot be denied that the environment has more than a small part to play in the formation of people and society. Where sin and vice are often associated with the destitute and the poor workers, it manifests itself to no lesser degree in more well-to-do classes and nations. Likewise, decadence reduces the moral vigor of people and leaves them incapable of the practice of the austere virtue required to raise children. The ego is too often satisfied with creature comforts for it to endure the sacrificial nature of motherhood or fatherhood. Concerning the failure to reproduce on the part of the decadent and well-to-do, Pesch believes,

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<sup>135</sup> Ibid. Pg. 204.

The fault here lies... with that moral decadence which associates itself all too readily with purely material welfare, and which gives way entirely to the quest for material gain. And it is also crafty enough so that, by illicit sexual conduct, it can at one and the same time satisfy both the basest sexual urges and crass self-interest in a manner which corrupts the family and the individual... It is precisely here that our guiding principle once again becomes relevant: *See to the quality of the population, and there will be little to fear regarding its quantity.* To improve the quality of your people in a proper manner, while at the same time pursuing good economic and social policy - that, in essence, is the best population policy.<sup>136</sup>

A return to the responsibilities of family life is something Pesch believes is necessary to reverse any decadent behavior which opposes the blessings of children for mothers and fathers as well as for the nation as a whole, but he is careful in his call for a return to motherhood not to say that every woman must be a mother. He says,

Just as entry into the married state does not represent law incumbent on each individual but only on the human race as such, one cannot simply equate womanhood and motherhood in the sense that physical maternity is viewed as the fulfillment of true womanhood, and as providing the only real fulfillment of the female nature.<sup>137</sup>

A similar argument is made by him concerning agriculture and the need to preserve the rural farming class to preserve a healthy national economy and society. He by no means advocates the need for all men to be farmers, but based on the initial requirement of mankind to labor as Adam did after the fall, as a farmer, it seems that some men, if not most, ought to maintain some intimate connection with the land and farming if society is to remain healthy. When few men are

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<sup>136</sup> Ibid. Pg. 205.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid. Pg. 148.

farmers the question arises, how can men keep before their eyes the purpose of their labor, that is, to earn their daily bread by the sweat of their brow? A farmer, by working closely with the land and animals that produce his own food, finds it less difficult to understand the immediate purpose of his activities than it often can be for those who work in other trades and are often alienated to greater or lesser extents from the more immediate modes of procuring their daily bread. Likewise, when fewer and fewer women are becoming wives and mothers, the question of the purpose and nature of women proportionately will rise.

### Technology and Combatting Decadence

The issue that is being raised here is the question of how, with an increase in economic prosperity, a nation can maintain virtue and good morals in light of the ever-growing temptation to slide into decadence. Again, the place where this is most easily protected and where the failure to guard against it is most deeply felt is within the family. Pesch says,

We concur with Franz Walter, when he says: “Only if economic conditions do not present great obstacles can one hope to improve the morals of a nation with any degree of success.” And as A. Düttmann says: “The movements underway toward moral improvement can only have a lasting beneficial effect under present conditions if they are reinforced by improving the economic lot of families that have many children.” At the same time, any healthy development in the matter of the size of the German population [or any nation’s population for that matter] is out of the question without a moral regeneration of our people.<sup>138</sup>

If a nation is going to maintain a good outlook on its population, there must be economic incentives for individuals to raise large, but more importantly, healthy and morally strong families. If economic incentives exist instead for those who remain single vagabonds who are

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<sup>138</sup> Ibid. Pg. 206.

merely cogs in the machinery of industry, or due to cramped and impoverished situations, the moral formation of many is lacking, such that many choose to enter prematurely into marriage, then family life will decline and suffer along with the nation itself.

“The ‘worm in the rose,’” as Pesch calls a decreasing birth rate in decadent societies, “moves in where moral progress has not kept pace with material progress.”<sup>139</sup> It is necessary for societies and nations to pace themselves with respect to their technological and economic advancements in order to ensure that they do not outrun their own best interests and leave their virtues far behind in the wake of their newfound *techne*. Some pause ought to be given to innovations and thought should be given to prepare men and women for the impact such innovations will have on family life and the ways in which individuals will be expected to interact with one another. Two examples of innovations that have drastically altered human life are the automobile in Pesch’s day and the smartphone in our own. Both provided irrefutable conveniences but the manner in which they altered human interactions and expectations caused a change that few could contest happened far faster than modern man’s moral development could keep pace with. Many other advances in technology, such as medical and agricultural advances, have made it easier for populations to increase despite declining know-how on the part of a nation’s people. Virtue often is neglected as technology provides all the means of subsistence that virtue used to be necessary to obtain. It is clear that Pesch is no Luddite, but only sees the need for a nation’s virtue to keep pace with its *techne*. Virtue cannot be exchanged for the goods of technological advancement or else technology will cease to be a tool for the welfare of individuals or nations and will instead become the toys of vice and decadence. The tendency for decadent societies to fail to reproduce, much less produce moral citizens is of the greatest concern for nations.

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<sup>139</sup> Ibid. Pg. 207.



If we cannot close the gap [between moral and technological progress], then population growth will inevitably fall behind the capacity to support any population, and any progress made in increasing population will lag behind the available means of subsistence. That is a far greater danger than overpopulation and pressure against the checks presented by the means of subsistence. Then, however, Germany will also - like France, according to the testimony of Clemenceau, despite the victory - no longer regenerate itself. Rather it will be a slowly “dying nation.”<sup>140</sup>

Moral decline coupled with technological advancement is far worse, in Pesch’s estimation, than overpopulation or the strain on the means of subsistence because a people who are dysfunctionally irresponsible cannot maintain the level of moral virtue necessary to preserve their civilization. Civilizations are built by the functionally responsible, that is, men of virtue and moral competence, whereas civilizations are lost by the morally incompetent. Icarus may have flown higher than other men due to his father’s *techne*, but he also fell faster than other men because he lacked his father's prudence. The same is true of America or any developed nation in our current era. If morality and virtue are not sought through the vocational means of functional responsibility, no amount of technological advancement and security will be enough to fill the cribs with the children who will later fill the ranks of the nations when all the egoists of our decadent society die. Who then will tend the machines we have made to replace the economic and social benefits that only families and local communities once provided? We cannot expect everything from industry and enterprise and we cannot embrace the final usurpation of the family’s subsidiary role in society, namely the role of procreation. Technology may allow much with respect to “reproduction” that was before unimaginable but here lies a perfect example of

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<sup>140</sup> Ibid. Pg. 207.

the way in which man's technological advances have outrun, if not encouraged a decline in, his moral virtue.

### Procreation and Contraception

What was seen during Pesch's time and what has become an even greater problem in our own, is a further turning away from family living and the fruit of family life, namely marital procreation. The two factors that contributed to the Neo-Malthusian resistance to maintaining healthy birth rates and the call for mankind to propagate the species were, in Pesch's day, the miserable living conditions of the cities on the one hand and the selfish resistance to parenthood brought about through decadent living. Pesch says,

Living conditions in the cities... present difficult and insurmountable obstacles not only among poor families but even for middle class families with a lot of children, especially in housing and in employment. But even after we have indicated, on the other hand, how wealth is one of the causes of birth decrease, it is better to attribute this to the enervating consequences of modern high-living than to wealth itself. People enjoy pleasures and want to enjoy more of them. The blessings of children get in the way of that, however. It is said that living according to one's station-in-life requires too much; and add to that: vanity, convenience, the quest for pleasure and for tidiness.<sup>141</sup>

The two pronged dilemma that faces industrialized nations, with respect to procreation, comes from the crushing threat and reality of destitution on one end and the moral decline of the decadent on the other. The ones who face the procreation situation most directly, be it under the influence of decadence or the blight of destitution, are women. Pesch says of women in his day,

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<sup>141</sup> Pesch, Heinrich. *Lehrbuch der Nationalökonomie/Teaching Guide to Economics, Volume 4: The Satisfaction of a Nation's Wants as the Purpose of the National Economy and Production (Book 1)*, Trans. Rupert J. Ederer. The Edwin Mellen Press, Lewiston, New York. Print. 2003. Pgs. 413-14.

It is asking too much of the modern lady to undergo the pains of child-bearing, and to give up her pleasures. That is not merely the point of view of one or the other woman, when we have a leader in the modern feminist movement before the War praising that ‘knowledge’ which teaches women to avoid the blessings of motherhood: ‘From now on women will no longer groan under fertility as under a curse; by physiological know-how she is once again in charge of her own body, and her own destiny.’ In fact the decrease in the urge to procreate is not to be found merely in poverty, in the confining circumstances of city life, in tax burdens and inflation, and also not only in the employment of women in factories and offices, or in the neurasthenia that exists in the man’s world, etc. The main cause has to be found in the decrease in faith and morals. Where religious conviction and morality still prevail, the blessings of children will not be lacking.<sup>142</sup>

A crucial part of the return to family life is the return to sacrificial and responsible living, and as always religion is the best teacher of both. So long as decadence and convenience are the goals of individuals, the contraceptive approach to sex will continue to poison the nature of male and female relationships and will destroy any efforts to restore to mankind its natural dignity within the family and the nation. Pesch quotes Max Sering on the great threat posed by contraception to individuals, particularly women, and to the nation as a whole. Sering says,

A writer has also spoken wisely about these matters, one from whom we would scarcely expect this, namely Malthus, in Book IV, Chapter 2: “The effect of anything like a promiscuous intercourse, which prevents the birth of children, is evidently to weaken the best affections of the heart, and in a very marked manner to degrade the female character.....” Women owe it to themselves to avoid practices which make them mere

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<sup>142</sup> Ibid.

objects. It appears to me that they have the calling to protect the nation from suicide, inasmuch as to defend their own honor.<sup>143</sup>

Again, the survival of the nation is ensured within the family and in the most basic and fundamental function of family life, the raising of children. Both the dignity of the father and mother are at stake and where it is preserved, the dignity and survival of the nation are ensured. Where their dignity is impaired, the nation is undermined and its survival is brought into question. If modern nations are to be saved or destroyed it will depend greatly on the number of married couples who are active in the undignifying act of preventing the birth of the next generation.

This decline in the birthrate and the continued refusal to propagate the species, much less ensure the survival of the nation, is directly the result of the extreme move away from the family as the purpose of the national economy. When acquisitiveness is the sole purpose of economic and social activity, it is no wonder that the uneconomical and increasingly unsocial domestic life is made to suffer and then enters into a steep decline. As Pesch so eloquently summarizes,

Nothing demonstrates the decline of family life so clearly as the progressive decrease in the number of births. Still, the family is the microcosm of the nation. In it the nation renews and rejuvenates itself. The functions of the family which control the rise and fall of nations cannot be replaced by anything else. The family is ‘the most important vital organ, more important than the state and the acquisitive economy.’ It is the vital moral community in which all of the basic elements of the bodily and intellectual qualities of the person are created, which are indispensable for the well-being of the nation. It is the organ for generating wealth and preserving it, the living organ for tradition etc., the

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<sup>143</sup> Pesch, Heinrich. *Lehrbuch der Nationalökonomie/Teaching Guide to Economics, Volume 4: The Satisfaction of a Nation's Wants as the Purpose of the National Economy and Production (Book 1)*, Trans. Rupert J. Ederer. The Edwin Mellen Press, Lewiston, New York. Print. 2003. Pg. 414.

loving community, the means for ennobling and unifying. All great questions of national life: education, the housing problem, the vocation of women, etc., come back to the family and cannot be resolved without it. If family life sickens, then society and the state will also ossify and die out. The deepest and most pervasive social evils are traceable always and everywhere eventually to the decline of family life.<sup>144</sup>

Little more can be added to such a summary by Pesch. The family is the answer to the issues of the economy and the nation because the family is the origin and life of both the economy and the nation. When men and women again see themselves as having functional responsibilities to one another and to their communities, an integrated approach to family life and economics will be seen not only as a worthy undertaking, but it will become the natural outgrowth of such responsible and sacrificial souls. No longer will the desire of the ego and the absolutism of the state or mega-corporations be the basis of economics, morality, or family life. The principles of solidarity and subsidiarity, as natural principles found in and developed from the family, will again take their place in the hearts of men and the laws of nations.

### Private Property

Another important focus of Pesch is on the need for workers and families to own private property and to obtain through their labor a certain level of self-sufficiency from their wages so that wage work does not become wage slavery and workers are capable of participating in the mastery of the world through ownership of some of the goods of the earth. Within Solidarism and Catholic social teaching, private property is understood to be a foundational principle of civilization and remains a bulwark of all social institutions. And of course, the conception of private property first found its origins in the family and patriarchal systems of early mankind where the father of a family or tribe was the one who owned the goods which belonged to the

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<sup>144</sup> Ibid. Pg. 415.

family or community collectively. The rejection of this familial understanding of communal ownership and the universal destination of goods by its expansion to the state and nation is the equivalent of the Platonic or Marxist idea of communal ownership. That concept of communal ownership is, however, bereft of any familial view of property, even at a state level. Only as comrades without economically independent father figures in the home and the goal of having no ruler above the nation is the idea of communal ownership accepted by the enemies of private property. This is the case in theory but as history proved, even the communists could not wither the state away or do without a single ruler. The State proved to be as much a part of human nature as is private property.

The necessity for men to obtain some degree of ownership from the wages of their work is explained by Pesch and is seen in light of the patriarchal notion of a man obtaining goods that are intended primarily for himself and his family and only secondarily as beneficial to any greater communities he is a part of. He says,

It is unnatural when the greatest accumulation of possessions arises from the absorption of what others own. It is unnatural when the personal dignity and freedom of those persons is disregarded who expend their energies in the service of others and for the benefit of others. It is unnatural when work no longer supports the worker, and when it does not provide him with the means to fulfill his obligations as the father of a family, and if citizens who work in the service of others are not able to arrive at a guarantee for their own survival.<sup>145</sup>

Depriving a laborer of his wages is certainly unnatural, but preventing men from being able to obtain or maintain ownership is also a hindrance to the fulfillment of a father's obligations to his

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<sup>145</sup> Pesch, Heinrich. *Lehrbuch der Nationalökonomie/Teaching Guide to Economics, Volume 2: Economic Systems and the Nature and Dispositional Causes of the Wealth of a Nation (Book 2)*, Trans. Rupert J. Ederer. The Edwin Mellen Press, Lewiston, New York. Print. 2002. Pg. 349-350.

family. If through low wages or creative destruction, men are dispossessed and rendered more and more dependent on corporations or the state for their sustenance and the well-being of their families, men will be more and more disinclined to begin families. This is due partly to the recognition that they are no longer the patron or patriarch of the members of their family or their community. Instead, some impersonal institutions, be it a corporation or the state itself, have begun to render their economic responsibilities and former abilities as fathers and community leaders obsolete by stepping in and fulfilling the role historically held by fathers. This violation of subsidiarity is at the heart of the crisis in economics, society, and in the family.

The necessity of defending fatherhood by upholding its economic role in the family and society is of the utmost importance. While Marxists focus solely on the material basis and economic accidents of society as the way to analyze and resolve problems, the equally detrimental approach would be to over-spiritualize or idealize the role of fathers without also advocating the protection of the economic and material basis of fatherhood and patriarchy. Without a proper understanding of both the material and spiritual dilemmas facing fathers and families, nations, and individuals will find themselves looking only at one half of the map and will be incapable of finding where we are, how we got here, and where we must go if we are to set families and nations again upon a sound footing for the preservation and restoration of the economic and social goods of individuals and communities.

The importance of the family in Pesch's "*social system of human work*" cannot be overly emphasized. It is from the family that all communities find their roots and from which they are all maintained. Pesch says,

Our *social system of human work* also calls for community: not for a human community of things or of the means of production, but for a community of human beings. 1. As

members of the human family, all men are brothers. And this human community constitutes the most deep-seated basis, the unifying bond in all relationships and dealings in the family, in our working and service relationships, in the state, in corporations, in all of private and public life, in the international relations of nations to one another. It is not only a fact, but it also involves a mandate - a law for the structuring of these relations, these dealings, these bonds of unity: the law of charity coupled with justice. 2. The narrower family bonds which embrace parents and children in the most intimate manner constitute the basic narrower community which, in our time requires a higher degree of respect and stronger inner solidity, a community, must still come to bear insofar as its constructive importance for the organism of political society is concerned, as opposed to the individualistic principle of the social contract which still persists.<sup>146</sup>

In order to bring about the alternative to the communist socialization of the means of production, Pesch advocates the socialization of people through true community. To get to a proper understanding of mankind as members of one family under the Fatherhood of God, the community of the family under the fatherhood of individual husbands and fathers is essential. We cannot get to the Universal Source of all paternity if there is no example of paternity in particular families. In order to institute principles of solidarity amongst mankind and within nations, the principle of subsidiarity must be implemented especially on the familial level, and fathers must be given their rightful roles as masters of their households. Only then will individuals learn the meaning of community and mutual responsibility which is needed for society, a nation, and for international relations. Without the restoration of the family, only individual self-interest will prevail in economics and national policies where other men and nations are only seen as aids to one's personal benefit at best or as one's adversaries at worst.

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<sup>146</sup> Ibid. Pg. 357.



### Solidaristic Reform Versus Communistic Revolution

Likewise, the need for personal and local reforms in religious outlooks is also necessary to bring about the national and social changes that many are longing for. Rather than seek to revolutionize the world from without, as Marxists do, to make it correspond to personal interior desires and expectations, the Solidarist approach is to alter man's interior disposition so that individuals see themselves not so much as atomized economic units but as members of communities and families that mutually depend upon one another. This is the revolution from within which will manifest itself outwardly as a reform of the world around us. Secularly this would simply be understood as reform, but from a Christian perspective, it is known as conversion. For this reason, Pesch argues that Christianity is the most beneficial spiritual approach for the individual, as well as for society, since it begins with the heart and works its way outward to the world. As Pesch says, "From the Christianity of the soul, we can arrive at the Christianity of the world!"<sup>147</sup> Rather than demanding the world be conformed to the corrupted desires of the human heart, as the revolutionaries and communists propose, Christianity has and always will do its work within the confines of the human heart and from there, as a self-diffusive gift, will bring about a transformation of his environment and his fellow men. Through conversion, the Christian subjects himself to the circumstances in his life, including the economic ones, and, along with his use of industry, right reason, and charitable concern for his fellow man, he can aid God in the gradual conversion of the world to a more just order of things.

Solidarism conforms with Christianity's proper understanding of freedom within the context of a community based on order. The individual maintains his dignity and is not lost in the all-encompassing power of the state, but he also is not lost to the arbitrariness of his own will or

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<sup>147</sup> Ibid. Pg. 358.

the will of others at the expense of the less fortunate. It is within the family that people first learn that “[i]t is not freedom but order which provides the basis for society.”<sup>148</sup> and that within order freedom is given its strongest protection and is enlivened with its greatest vigor. As Pesch says, “Right order in no way abolishes freedom to pursue self-interest, but it introduces instead the condition of *true* and *universal* freedom. For, freedom without the kind of responsibility arising out of social solidarity is, in fact, arbitrariness.”<sup>149</sup> And in fact, Pesch argues that no individualist society could defend freedom absolutely because they “had to make allowance for the universal “law:” *No community without solidarity.*”<sup>150</sup>

### From Domestic Economies to Enterprise Economies.

Concerning the origins of economics and its contrast to modern economies, Pesch says, “In former times, the family was the economic unit in which the economic activity of individuals took place.”<sup>151</sup> This is in keeping with the teaching of Aristotle in his *Politics*, and it reveals that it is around the economic activity of the household that the first communities were formed. Our communities still develop based on and in connection to our activities, especially around economic activities but much of the reason the family is no longer the locus of society, or it continually loses this role, is because the economic process of production and even of most consumption has been taken up outside the home. In contrast to the original state of economics, Pesch says,

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<sup>148</sup> Pesch, Heinrich. *Lehrbuch der Nationalökonomie/Teaching Guide to Economics, Volume 2: Economic Systems and the Nature and Dispositional Causes of the Wealth of a Nation (Book I)*, Trans. Rupert J. Ederer. The Edwin Mellen Press, Lewiston, New York. Print. 2002. Pg. 290.

<sup>149</sup> Pesch, Heinrich. *Lehrbuch der Nationalökonomie/Teaching Guide to Economics, Volume 3: Economic Systems and the Nature and Dispositional Causes of the Wealth of a Nation (Book I)*, Trans. Rupert J. Ederer. The Edwin Mellen Press, Lewiston, New York. Print. 2002. Pg. 8.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid. Pg. 9.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid. Pg. 42.

Today, however, in the times of more highly developed commercial economies, enterprises are the specific, organized, economic units in which the reciprocal efforts of people take place, and whereby, in the framework of the enterprise and even closer network of cooperation among individual economic forces, in a carefully determined division of labor, with people working alongside, in authority, and subordinate to others, gets to operate in the service of the economic needs and the objectives of the citizens and of the nation.<sup>152</sup>

In other words, economic activity is done outside of the home. While this can be done in service of home life, and quite often this has been the case, very often the tendency to make the family and individual the servant of the needs of the enterprise system has left families and individuals in situations where families are made disposable, violable, and excessively mobile. Just as it was detrimental for capitalists and communists alike to see man no longer as the object of the economy but as the subject and servant of capital, once the family was seen as the subject and servant of enterprise, the breakdown of family life and the loss of its social importance for a nation was inevitable.

“The Enterprise,” says Pesch, “is the product and result of historical evolution.”<sup>153</sup> To better understand this evolution and eventual devolution of the economic process, Pesch outlines the history behind the move from the domestic economy to the enterprise economy. In his description of “The self-sufficient domestic economy,” Pesch says, “Let us put ourselves back in the times of the natural domestic economy, the ancient *oikos* economy and the medieval manorial economy.”<sup>154</sup> Such households were the basis of economics and politics as described by Aristotle and lived by people in his day and by those in the Middle Ages in Europe. Pesch continues, “Let

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<sup>152</sup> Ibid.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid.

us observe the single and common patriarchal, extended family within which the entire economic process from the production of goods, all of the way to the final preparation for their use was all contained. Even there, all contact with the outer world was not lacking.”<sup>155</sup> Some exchange took place and some work was done outside the home on behalf of and in union with other economies, “[b]ut in the process, self-sufficiency and the independence of the domestic economy had still not been surrendered.”<sup>156</sup> The domestic economy “remained dependent on itself alone, without being in an essential way dependent on external relationships.”<sup>157</sup> Any enterprising or exchanging with other economies did not destabilize domestic independence so long as the economic purpose remained that of earning one’s daily bread as Christians saw it, or “living together day-by-day”<sup>158</sup> as Aristotle saw it. Pesch says,

The internal organization of the family, the cooperation of their members, and the kind of division of labor which remained confined to this narrow circle, the authoritative leadership in production and of the household - all of this served and sufficed for the purposes of providing in a modest way for what the members of the family needed in food, clothing, and shelter.<sup>159</sup>

Historically, the shift came when economics moved primarily into the endeavor of wealth-getting and accumulation of goods beyond what is necessary. The eventual complication and evolution of economics, which made families more and more dependent on external enterprises and exchange, “all came about very gradually.”<sup>160</sup> The shift occurred, according to Pesch, as follows,

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<sup>155</sup> Ibid.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid. Pg. 43.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid.

<sup>158</sup> Pesch, Heinrich. *Lehrbuch der Nationalökonomie/Teaching Guide to Economics, Volume 1: Foundations for Economic Life (Book 1)*, Trans. Rupert J. Ederer. The Edwin Mellen Press, Lewiston, New York. Print. 2002. Pg. 194.

<sup>159</sup> Pesch, Heinrich. *Lehrbuch der Nationalökonomie/Teaching Guide to Economics, Volume 3: Economic Systems and the Nature and Dispositional Causes of the Wealth of a Nation (Book 1)*, Trans. Rupert J. Ederer. The Edwin Mellen Press, Lewiston, New York. Print. 2002. Pg. 43.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid.

The evolution and the development of the enterprise entered into its first preparatory phase only when the domestic economy began to strive for surpluses beyond what were needed to serve the needs of the family itself, so that such surpluses were offered in exchange with strangers, and when, after the universal means of exchange - money made its appearance, one began to produce surpluses in a deliberate, planned manner so as to increase profits. Briefly, this happened once the mercantile, speculative, commercial spirit invaded the family economy, and once the prospect of profit moved in and provided the psychological impulse and motivation for economic activity, replacing the traditional aim of simply trying to cover the family's needs.<sup>161</sup>

As he explained, this was a gradual process and was by no means one which developed as the conflict between the principle of providing sustenance and the principle of accumulating surplus. Enterprise, mercantilism, and exchange were all seen originally as aids and servants of the domestic economy. "It would be wrong," says Pesch, "to represent the rise of the enterprise as if it emerged from the domestic economy universally with a sudden, total destruction or dissolution of the family economy by the enterprise."<sup>162</sup> These principles only became opposed to one another when enterprise became all important and the domestic economy, or at least its members, were expected to be servants of enterprise. Initially, enterprise was a secondary economic activity but "[f]inally one came to rely more and more on the production of certain goods which could be sold profitably, while other goods which the family used to produce for itself were now bought from others."<sup>163</sup>

This shift has been taken to its extreme and while the accumulation of goods increases perpetually and men seek to build bigger and bigger barns, as was described by Our Lord in His

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<sup>161</sup> Ibid.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid. Pg. 44.

parable,<sup>164</sup> men have neglected the original purpose of economizing. With an economy geared toward the constant effort to procure more than what is necessary, many have found themselves unable to provide for the other necessities of family life (especially the social and spiritual necessities) and have been kept instead at the service of abundance. Rather than enjoy and maintain the ways in which men and women are meant to live together day-by-day, men and women often live apart day-by-day and are sundered further from their natural and supernatural purposes.

It was during the rise of capitalism that the acquisitive spirit surpassed completely the spirit of moderate sustenance. Pesch says,

Beginning in the period of early capitalism, the capitalistic tendency progressed until, during the period of large-scale enterprise in the time of high-capitalism, the capitalistic orientation achieved its full effect. Looking upon capital with a view to generating capital had now become the economic be-all and end-all (*telos*) of the enterprise... The be-all and end-all divorces itself from the person. The quest for profit thus becomes unlimited. What you get is an increase of working capital by profit, ever more careful organization and intensification of the labor force overall so as to increase profits, and, by this, an increase in the capital of the independent business structure, the enterprise. Capital must constantly give rise to more capital *in indefinitum*. Serving the needs of the nation, in the sense of the national welfare, no longer controls the private economic *telos*; but it all too often becomes the means to serve private economic ends.<sup>165</sup>

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<sup>164</sup> *The Holy Scriptures*. Revised Standard Version. Luke 12:16-21

<sup>165</sup> Pesch, Heinrich. *Lehrbuch der Nationalökonomie/Teaching Guide to Economics, Volume 3: Economic Systems and the Nature and Dispositional Causes of the Wealth of a Nation (Book I)*, Trans. Rupert J. Ederer. The Edwin Mellen Press, Lewiston, New York. Print. 2002. Pg. 65.

It can easily be seen that the change of the *telos* in the national economy has and always will negatively affect the original unit of the economy, the family. If the *telos* of the private economy was the maintenance of life for the members of families and communities in order to live and live well,<sup>166</sup> then any shift toward a view of work and economics as serving the process of enterprise, acquisition, and capital will inevitably be opposed to domestic life which naturally views itself as more important than enterprise and exchange. In *After Virtue*, MacIntyre outlines this process as follows,

One of the key moments in the creation of modernity occurs when production moves outside the household. So long as productive work occurs within the structure of households, it is easy and right to understand that work is part of the sustaining of the community of the household and of those wider forms of community which the household in turn sustains. As, and to the extent that, work moves outside the household and is put to the service of impersonal capital, the realm of work tends to become separated from everything but the service of biological survival and the reproduction of the labor force, on the one hand, and that of institutionalized acquisitiveness, on the other. *Pleonexia*, a vice in the Aristotelian scheme, is now the driving force of modern productive work.<sup>167</sup>

While Pesch certainly is not opposed to enterprise, he is opposed to the exaggeration and hyper-focus on the principle which inspires it. A proper balance ought to be maintained between the domestic economy and the national economy to ensure that no economic imperialism sets in to eradicate domestic economics, and, by extension, the social benefits offered by domestic life

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<sup>166</sup>Aristotle. *Politics*. Trans. Carnes Lord. Second Edition. The University of Chicago Press. Chicago. 2013. Print. 1252b, 29-30. Pg. 3.

<sup>167</sup> MacIntyre, Alasdair. *After Virtue, Third Edition*. The University of Notre Dame Press. Notre Dame, Indiana. 2007. Print. Pg. 227.

to society. When what can and ought to be done at a lower and more foundational level of the economy is continually turned over to larger and more efficient institutions then those smaller and lower institutions lose not only their economic importance but also their social importance. When the family and other more basic institutions become uneconomical in light of the capitalistic enterprise system, those institutions also become increasingly unsocial. It is not that they are anti-social, because they are not anti-economical, but they simply cannot perform the social functions they used to provide because the activity which enlivened them has been outsourced to more efficient and more economical enterprises, more economical, that is, in the perpetually acquisitive sense. In short, what is rendered economically inefficient becomes socially insignificant. People simply spend more time outside of the home and are kept busy working elsewhere and so their social bonds are formed in the places where they spend the most time.

The socialist call for the end of all uneconomical and unsocial institutions grew out of the changes described above. The reason Socialists call for their abolition instead of their restoration, says Pesch, is that “family and nation, mean nothing” in respect to their “endeavors too, community.”<sup>168</sup> Marxism, says Pesch, is impracticable because ““society without community is not viable.’ Therefore, it is necessary that we ‘move backwards to community, instead of moving on to mere socialization,’ as radical Marxism proposes.”<sup>169</sup> What is needed is a restoration of what is natural for the sake of families and communities instead of their abolition for the sake of what is economically and socially expedient. Pesch says,

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<sup>168</sup> Pesch, Heinrich. *Lehrbuch der Nationalökonomie/Teaching Guide to Economics, Volume 4: The Satisfaction of a Nation's Wants as the Purpose of the National Economy and Production (Book 1)*, Trans. Rupert J. Ederer. The Edwin Mellen Press, Lewiston, New York. Print. 2003. Pg. 11.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid.



We recall, for example, the emphasis which the solidaristic system placed on the restoration of the basic cell-unit of human society, the family, which has been so weakened in the capitalistic era... In what follows, we shall yet see how the national economic purpose governs the entire national economic process, how the provision of the whole nation with material goods will find its fulfillment by assuring the support of families in keeping with their station in life.<sup>170</sup>

Here, Pesch's words make up what is likely the best summary of this thesis, that the fulfillment of the purpose of the national economy is the support of families. In so far as economics departs from this purpose it fails to fulfill its task and undermines itself and society. Without a balance struck between the family and enterprise as the locus of economics, it is unlikely a balance will be struck between them both as the locus of society. As it stands, enterprise is the locus of both and to salvage our sense of community a significant return must be made to the family.

### The Family Wage

The issue of wages will be the final issue to be addressed in relation to the family and the economy and is one of the most crucial since its proper reform would have the greatest effect on the greatest number of people throughout the world. For all those who are not farmers or independent domestic industry owners, the wage is the means of receiving compensation for the labor exercised on behalf of another. The vast majority of individuals in Pesch's time, and an even greater proportion of men and women today, are wage earners. Pesch argues for what he and Catholic Social teachers call "the family wage." This is offered as the just alternative to what most capitalists call the "living wage." The living wage is meant to satisfy the needs of an individual man or woman living alone, and often such a situation requires both a husband and

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<sup>170</sup> Ibid. Pgs. 11-12.

wife to work in order to provide for themselves and a family. The family wage, on the other hand, is a wage given to the father of a household that is sufficient for the provision of a wife and children. Pesch says,

The designation, ‘family wage,’ can be misleading inasmuch as the wage is not paid to the family of the worker but to the worker. However, that term at least brings to the forefront of the discussion this important question: whether the level of the wage must be sufficient to provide for the necessary support of the worker’s family for the specified time period, or whether it is acceptable if the wage simply provides for the support of the single worker, in other words, if it is a personal or individual wage.

To be more specific, the advocates of the family wage insist that the wage must be sufficient for the man, and taking into account that the wife may make only a minimum contribution (since she has to devote most of her energy to the household), that it must provide for the support of both the man and his wife along with 3 or 4 children. That is the figure one works with, as an average, since we know from experience that about half of the children who are born die in infancy (In 1923). If the wage exceeds that amount, so much the better.

In other words: the *limit* below which the wage may not drop in normal circumstances is measured by the *generally required* level of living of the *normal worker family*.<sup>171</sup>

The family wage is not only a matter of justice for the laborer but it is also important for the upholding of the common good and the benefit of the national economy. “From the point of view,” says Pesch,

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<sup>171</sup> Pesch, Heinrich. *Lehrbuch der Nationalökonomie/Teaching Guide to Economics, Volume 5: General Economics III (Book 2)*, Trans. Rupert J. Ederer. The Edwin Mellen Press, Lewiston, New York. Print. 2003. Pg. 96.

of the political welfare of the state and of the civil well-being of the community, we may, therefore, undoubtedly regard as most desirable a level of wages for the married worker which provides for the support of the worker's family and for the upbringing and education of his children. In fact, we may even say that such a wage is necessary. *Positive legislation*, as Kulemann says, is therefore even entitled to take up the family wage as a part of *labor law*. That is all the more so since the 'white death,' the decrease in the number of people caused by unnatural birth prevention, has also put in its appearance in the ranks of the working class. And, on the other hand, the health of a nation and its restoration are out of the question unless the family is re-established on a sound basis and its survival is assured.<sup>172</sup>

If for the vast majority of workers the possibility of a return to a more healthy and self-sufficient economizing within homesteads or domestic-run industries is not possible, the focus of economics still ought to be placed upon the family. Those who earn a wage for their labor ought to be given enough of an income that the majority of the use and consumption of goods can take place within the domicile and that there be enough of these goods that families are well provided for.

### Conclusion

While several examples have been given of the ways in which nations and their economies have neglected family life and how the national economy itself often works against the good of families, there are countless other examples given by Pesch and more that have occurred since his time which could be discussed. This has only been a cursory analysis of the

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<sup>172</sup> Pesch, Heinrich. *Lehrbuch der Nationalökonomie/Teaching Guide to Economics, Volume 5: General Economics III (Book 2)*, Trans. Rupert J. Ederer. The Edwin Mellen Press, Lewiston, New York. Print. 2003. Pgs. 97-8.

situation with brief recommendations given by Pesch and the Solidaristic perspective about how families and economies could be returned to a sound footing. What is certain, since the economic and social errors outlined by Pesch have, for the most part, been taken much farther in our day than they were in his, is that the current situation is dire and the entire basis of economic and social life is based upon an entirely different *telos* than the *telos* of a Solidaristic economy or society. This situation is unsustainable in that it is leading families and nations toward dissolution, decay, and irrevocable collapse. Seeing that the orientation of our modern economic and political institutions is geared toward this self-destruction, Solidarism is truly offered not merely as a new way of ordering old institutions, it is a call to conversion for individuals as well as society, and as such it will likely be ignored and rejected by many who see it as impractical and idealistic. It need not discourage the reader, however, that the ideals discussed are not immediately implementable. As Pesch says, “The economist is therefore consistent only when he combines the knowledge of what is with the knowledge of what ought to be.”<sup>173</sup> Simply because injustice and greed are the norm does not mean that it must always be so and it is well within our capacities, and, in fact, is our duty as Christians, to chart a course toward a more just and well-ordered society. This cannot happen overnight through a revolution of a certain class of people against the powers that be but it can occur gradually through the conversion of individual hearts who are members of families. From those families, the cell-unit of both the economy and society, the just civilization of the future will be formed. A return to healthy family life and its proper ordering within the national economy will be a benefit to all who undertake such a reform and it will bear fruit in the decades and centuries to come as well as in the immediate lives of those who undertake the work of solidarity.

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<sup>173</sup> Pesch, Heinrich. *Lehrbuch der Nationalökonomie/Teaching Guide to Economics, Volume 1: Foundations for Economic Life (Book 2)*, Trans. Rupert J. Ederer. The Edwin Mellen Press, Lewiston, New York. Print. 2002. Pg. 312.

What Pesch and Solidarism offer to economics is not a system of scientific precision by which the errors of the free market can be ironed out and the alchemical speculations of capitalist investors can be accurately predicted and explained by perfect laws, such as Smith's laws of supply and demand. Neither does Solidarism offer a revolutionary plan for the end of all inequality through the means of a solely materialist explanation of all the errors in society and economics, as was done by Marx and his material basis of economic theory and the prediction of the inevitable revolution of the proletariat. Instead what Pesch offers is a return to an ethical approach to the social science of economics. We must stop treating economics as merely a science that ought not to concern itself with ethics. It is certainly a science but it is a social science and is not merely bound by inexorable laws like the laws of Newtonian physics. It is also bound by human actions and is therefore within the realm of morality and ethics. So long as economics as a science remains divorced from an ethics rooted in objective morality, the scientism of Capitalist and Marxist economics will continue to be used to excuse injustice and exploitation. The invisible hands described by Adam Smith can empty our pocketbooks, yet ethics is rarely discussed since the law of supply and demand is often deemed absolute. Likewise, the brutal materialism outlined by Marx accounts only for what is visible, producible, and consumable, and neglects any consideration of ideals and moral principles and so its economics is cut off from ethics. Solidarism steps out of the superficial dichotomy of Individualism and Communism and seeks an ethical orientation of men toward one another and toward their work in the economic process. Man must again see himself as the object of the economy and see the means of production or capital as the subject and servant of man, who is lord of the world through his labor. Capitalism and Communism both invert this order and make man the subject and servant of capital, the new object of the economy. Solidarism seeks to

resolve the problem of Individualism on the one hand and Collectivism on the other through socialization, not of the means of production, but of human beings. An ethical view of man's economic activity in the context of society and with his fellow man is the basis of the Solidaristic system. Love of neighbor is the response to greed of all kinds, be it Capitalistic or Communistic.

For those who are slow to see in Pesch's "Solidarism," or "The Social System of Human Work," a system worthy of implementation and instead remain in the exclusive camps of individual liberty or tyrannical socialism, it may be helpful to frame the conflict of Individualism and Communism as simply the warring forces within the City of Man. Whereas, according to St. Augustine, Cain and Abel represented the conflict between the City Man and the City of God, there are often conflicts, like that of Romulus and Remus, which simply typify the conflicts within the City of Man. The advocates of both Socialistic Communism and Individualistic Capitalism are ultimately concerned with self-interest, and like Romulus against Remus, are bent on the elimination of their adversary. Our Lord, however, said to the man who expected his brother to share with him the inheritance, "Take heed, and beware of all covetousness; for a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions,"<sup>174</sup> that is, an abundance owned by one man or another, by individuals or by the community. To those, however, who see in the ethical and Christian approach to economics the proper response to our problems, let them take for their examples Joseph of Egypt in his practical applications and St. Augustine in systematic theorizing.

Joseph of Egypt was the victim of familial injustice as well as injustice from within the society of Egypt, which was pagan and opposed to God's justice in many ways. Like him, many today must strive to apply the principles of justice and charity in familial and societal situations where both principles are absent or weakened. His situation, like our own, was in great part out

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<sup>174</sup> *The Holy Scriptures*: Revised Standard Version. Luke 12:15.

of his control and seemed in every way to be working against his benefit, but his justice and trust in God raised him to the top of the ungodly Pharaonic system and made him the tool of righteousness, the organizer of the Egyptian national economy, the restorer of justice and charity within his family, and the savior of the just and unjust alike. Another seemingly unlikely organizer of a civilization, though his efforts bore fruit after his life instead of during, was St. Augustine, who, facing the cataclysmic fall of Rome, laid out in his writings the basis of Christian civilization for centuries to come. Perhaps Fr. Heinrich Pesch, like another St. Augustine, standing at the time of a no less cataclysmic collapse of civilization, laid out for posterity a system which will be the basis for a Christian civilization yet unestablished, the system of economic justice and charity. And perhaps there will arise another Joseph of Egypt who will implement systems which for many have remained only the inscrutable dreams of theorists.

Whereas St. Augustine's system, through his *City of God*, laid out the proper relationship between Church and State, it may be that Pesch's system will be remembered for its reordering of the relationship between the family and enterprise. Where there has been a divorce between Church and State there has certainly been a divorce between the family and economics. It may be that before a proper reunion of Church and State can be realized a reordering of the family and economics must occur. To bring about the reunion of either "requires the subordination of what is material to the spiritual-moral order."<sup>175</sup> Regardless of which restoration occurs first or if they occur simultaneously, it is certain that the restoration of the proper order between the family and economics would be to the benefit of all, to states as well as to the Church, to individuals as well as their communities.

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<sup>175</sup> Pesch, Heinrich. *Lehrbuch der Nationalökonomie/Teaching Guide to Economics, Volume 2: Economic Systems and the Nature and Dispositional Causes of the Wealth of a Nation (Book 2)*, Trans. Rupert J. Ederer. The Edwin Mellen Press, Lewiston, New York. Print. 2002. Foreword, Pg. iii.

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