



Strengthening Families: Reducing Poverty

"Economic and social policies as well as the organization of work should be continually evaluated in light of their impact on the strength and stability of family life." – US Catholic Bishops, Economic Justice for All

We all have a stake in supporting families.

All of us have a stake in strong, stable families; yet, as a society, we do too little to help couples stay together and work things out during the inevitable times of stress and conflict. While many single parents struggle heroically to provide the love and care that normally require two parents, who can doubt that growing up in a secure environment with both parents generally gives children a head start?



Social and economic realities now confirm values which the churches have long taught—that the economic, emotional, and spiritual well-being of children is significantly diminished by divorce and out-of-wedlock birth, and that the negative consequences for children's futures, the lives of women, and for society at large are numerous and pervasive. The facts are that family structure remains an important predictor of economic standing in society, and two-

parent families generally are the most effective units for raising children. Public policy must be designed to help families

stay together, to enhance their capacity for child-rearing and for passing on moral and social values to their children, and to reinforce parental responsibilities.

While keeping families together is our goal, we recognize the widespread tragedy of divorce and the realities of violence and destructive behavior within some families. We are not advocating that people remain in relationships which seriously endanger or harm members of a family. We do advocate that laws recognize the frequently devastating consequences of divorce on children.

Excerpted from "Putting Children and Families First, U.S. Catholic Bishops, 1991