

From the Editor

The multiplicity of the concept of a relationship described as the family is the subject of lively discussions, often with heavily polarized opinions. However, both advocates of understanding the family as an indissoluble union of a man and a woman, and those who opt for alternative to traditional family models, that is partnerships, appreciate the role of the next generation in the life of this basic social institution. Although there is not today a universal consensus regarding the formerly started idea that a couple becomes a family only when there is a child born and abandoning the thesis is justified by anti-discrimination reasoning, the values of the child/children in the family cannot be overestimated. If the couple without much difficulty can conceive and then give birth to a man, such a condition is treated as a normal one. The situation is radically changed when the efforts aimed at the occurrence of a child in the family fail. The persistence of this situation for a long time is referred to as infertility and is one of the hardest existential experience for the family. The other extreme position is occupied by individuals who intentionally make relationship “free from kids”, stressing that they do not want to be referred to as childless, because it is a negative description and it suggests a certain lack, not a voluntary choice.

The above problem is covered by this volume of the magazine entitled “Family and children”. Even a cursory reading of the contents reveals that the successive articles essentially raise complex, irregular and difficult issues, but it is hard to find those positively describing the treasure which is the presence of the child in the family. Traditional terminology speaks of giving birth as of procreation, that is participating in creation of a new man, and today it speaks rather of the reproduction or even – biologically clearly – of human reproduction. Not discussing the correctness of each of these terms, it is worth noting mental differences in the approach to fertility. Although the first approach to procreative problems sees in them the decision of the Creator, who “did not give the child” as a gift, the other one comes down to the technical question of what and how to do in order to give birth to a new baby. It is also important that having a child in a family or relationship just begins the path of development of the young mem-

ber of the community, the path that has its twists and turns in life, with factors favoring and impeding the personality progress with more or less responsible guidance on this journey.

Undoubtedly, individual aspects of the issue that are touched in the articles of "Family Forum" will require deepening in the form of further volumes dedicated to them. However, a thematic review proposed to Readers in this edition of "Family Forum" shows that some areas have conclusive sense. First, there is a question about the possibility of conception and giving birth to a child along with various forms of assisted reproduction and a question about the effects of medical interventions taken around conception. Another area is represented by irregular parental situations in which both children born and their parents or carers operate. The quality of the original family environment, combined with the unique socio-economic conditions write a possible scenario for the future of the growing-up man. An appropriate or pathological educational interaction and a correct (whatever it means) transition through adolescence have a significant impact on the development of the child. Although the content of this volume does not cover directly the issue of domestic violence and it only fragmentary takes up the extensive problems of addictions and their impact on the young generation, it can be assumed that these are also significant elements of the "life puzzle" that adults put together with the children subjected to their care. It is good that along with the analysis on the family-children interaction there appears a particularly traumatic issue of bereavement, that is the child's fatal departure shaking the foundation of the family. It is striking that mourning the loss of a child loses none of its drama, regardless of the cause and time of death. Bereaved parents and sometimes siblings and extended family with equal pain mourn the loss of a child who died in the womb of the mother and the newborn, who took the "sudden infant death syndrome", or a small child who died due to an accident or after the devastating lethal illness.

A graphic layout of the journal each time indicates the substance of the volume in its colored square. From the first volume of "Family Forum" this concise factual message is transmitted by a system of intertwined strings in different colors, which is defined as a symbolic illustration of the family, as well as research problems which they must face. In the current volume, attention has been focused on the "Family and children" issue. On the one hand, the center of attention is family seen and painted by a child whose presence significantly influences the shape and functioning of this basic community. Therefore, the image of the family in the classic shape (2 plus 2) has been selected. On the other hand, the tenor of the texts proposed to the Readers differs from the ideal of the family and the family that dominates there is marked by family dysfunctions

and problems. Thus, the graphic announcement of the volume with both slightly lopsided picture sketched by a child and the fact that people are, indeed, together as a family, but they do not hold hands, as if they lacked contact and communication between each other, indicated that the ideal in the field of parenting rarely correlates with the everyday life. Not surprisingly, the schematic figures have sad faces, marked by a problem. The arrangement of strings (a graphic hallmark of the magazine) also reflects the complexity of problematic parenting. It is done using two knots and a knot in most cultures is the archetype of questions, difficulties and human dilemmas.

The creation of this volume of the journal is, as always, the fruit of a collective reflection on a given topic of research, in which participated both recognized scientists from Poland and abroad, and young researchers from different scientific communities. Their scientific research has produced an interdisciplinary picture of the particular problem with enriching international perspective. The quality of the presented texts is watched with great commitment by professional Reviewers whose intellectual effort I would like, on behalf of the Editorial Board, to recognize and appreciate. I would like to express my gratitude both to all Authors presenting their articles, scientific reviews and reports and to all Reviewers on behalf of volume Readers, Editors of “Family Forum” and the Institute of Family Sciences (the editor of the journal). The respectable Scientific Council of “Family Forum”, which is comprised of eminent scientists from different disciplines and from different countries of Europe, determines the quality of the journal. At this point I would like to thank them for the fruitful cooperation. Similar words of appreciation and gratitude are sent to Thematic Editors of “Family Forum” from various research centers. The high substantive quality of the journal is also the merit of its Translators, Proofreaders, Technical Editor and the Publishing Editorial of the Faculty of Theology whom, on behalf of the Editorial Board, I express my big thanks. We also share a joy from the fact that subsequent evaluations of the journal recognize the growing importance of “Family Forum”, which information can be found on technical pages of the periodical.

On behalf of the Scientific Council and Editorial Board of “Family Forum” I would like to invite all the interested to the debate on further current problems on the family topic, informing at the same time that the sixth volume of the journal will address issues related to gender identity and transsexualism. We wish everyone a fruitful and inspiring reading.

Piotr Morciniec

The chief editor of “Family Forum”

