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Feast of the Presentation of Our Lord

To those considering the Family Conquest program:

I have served as a parish priest for over thirty years. I have also served for nearly twenty-five years as a catechetical consultant and reviewer of texts for the Office of the Catechism of the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops. I know first-hand the challenges faced by faith formation program creators as they try to engage families amidst the onslaught of distractions, priorities and problems posed by modern society. As a Church, we are playing catch-up to find ways to reach people today with the truths and values that will transform them into the joyful, hopeful, and loving children that God desires all people to be. We know that the family holds the privileged place for encountering our living and loving God and assimilating the truths of our Catholic faith.

Though the path of family formation is our clear answer, parish priests face the challenge of parents who are overwhelmed and who feel ill-equipped to engage in the simplest of efforts to educate their children in the faith. Additionally, those few parents who do take up the challenge struggle to find doctrinally sound resources that they can use at home that will engage their children and themselves in a way that makes the faith relevant and catechesis enjoyable enough to persevere in the effort.

I have been impressed by the Family Conquest program and its creative use of YouTube videos. The Family Conquest program makes these entertaining videos the backdrop for teaching the truths of the faith. In his day, Jesus captivated crowds by telling parables that could be understood at different levels by all ages while conveying the mysteries of the Kingdom. Following this methodology, Family Conquest presents short videos to families on an array of human experiences as memorable stories that become vehicles to teach in a fascinating way God's truths which are embedded throughout creation. The questions and answers that accompany the videos make it easy for parents to enter into conversation with their children and learn together how to see the deeper meanings God desires to reveal.

The fact that parents feel comfortable using this program and are able to easily incorporate it into the rhythm of their family schedule allows for a regular opportunity for parents and kids to not only spend time together learning, but also growing in faith and growing in loving relationship with one another. *This last part cannot be emphasized enough!* We know that the warmth of the

parent-child relationship correlates highly with children adopting the faith and values of their parents. In fact, the church teaches that *"The definitive aim of catechesis is to put people not only in touch but in communion, in intimacy with Jesus Christ: only He can lead us to the love of the Father in the Spirit and make us share in the life of the Holy Trinity."* (*Catechesis in Our Time*, 5). That intimacy must first be experienced and nurtured in the family in order for children to even begin to believe that God is a tender Father who loves them personally and deeply. The fact that the Family Conquest program facilitates parent-child interaction most enthralls me to support it becoming a staple of Catholic family living today. Just getting parents into deepening relationship with their children, discovering together the mysteries of God and the tenderness of loving family life, is a monumental step forward in the renewal families need today and which the Church greatly desires.

Lastly, as a pastor, I face the daily challenge of finding effective means to capture my parishioner's attention and then draw them into the truths I preach. I know parents face that same formidable obstacle when seeking to pass on the faith to their children. This program places at parent's fingertips engaging videos that captivate and thereby accelerate a family's conquest of the meaning and purpose of life. The opening prayer of each Family Conquest Guide speaks to the zeal that this program can ignite within a family that discovers the thrill of a life lived with, in, and for God: "To fall in love with God is the greatest romance, to seek Him the greatest adventure, to find Him, the greatest human achievement."

I heartily encourage families to take up Family Conquest to expedite their own pursuit of the Heart of God. I exhort benefactors and grantors to step forward and fund this program to make it available for free to all families.

Sincerely in Christ,

Fr. Daniel J. Mahan, STL