

Christian families fight. Our families are like most others --We disagree. Sometimes we respect each other, sometimes we're ugly. And sometimes fighting actually benefits the family, especially when what we fight is not one another, but a society that robs our values.

Sure, America has some good values--liberty, justice, equality. But America preaches consumerism; to live here we must buy, we must use, we must dispose, and then we must buy again. We treat things that way, and before long we treat people that way. We use them for a while, then dispose them and use someone else. When we're in the habit of using people, we're better prepared to use things, and the cycle continues.

The Christian family is called to be different, the Christian family fights the culture. We respect life, even when it won't serve a useful purpose--that includes the unborn, persons with disabilities, and the aged.

In a culture where time and money are so important, Christian families go to church, they pray before meals, they visit the sick, they give away money to the needy, they place persons ahead of things. Christian families are bad for the economy.

Many of us don't want to be revolutionaries. In fact, the culture itself coaxes us to conform. But in some ways, the more stable our economy becomes, the more we need to be on guard for our Christian values, to use wisely our blessings.

Forty days after Jesus was born in Bethlehem Joseph and Mary brought him to the temple in Jerusalem. We hear the story today. In this brief account, Luke describes Jesus in ten different ways. Some are quite ordinary: He calls him the first-born male, and the child. Luke also talks about Jesus' relation to God: He calls him consecrated to the Lord, the Anointed of the Lord, and God's saving deed. And Luke describes Jesus' relation to us: He is the consolation of Israel, the light to the Gentiles, the glory of Israel, and the downfall and rise of many in Israel. But the most striking title of all is one that Simeon gives Him: He calls Jesus a sign that will be opposed. Jesus will have enemies, Jesus will have to fight.

My brothers and sisters, we are the Body of Christ. We are the sign that will be opposed. We will have enemies, and we will fight. The Christian family will be a sign of respect for life, the Christian family will be a sign of simplicity. Like Jesus, we may also be called consecrated to the Lord, Anointed of the Lord, and God's saving deed, if we are a sign that will be opposed.