

December 31, 2017 Mrs. Miniver Homily: In 1942, the Minister of Propaganda for the German Third Reich, Joseph Goebbels, penned a review of a motion picture that had recently been released by a major Hollywood film studio, the multiple award winning “*Mrs. Miniver*”. This splendid drama features an upper middle class English family under extreme duress in a time of war. Their steadfast devotion to their Country, strong family ties and an exemplary Christian witness in trying circumstances made the fictional family respectable and even greatly admired in the eyes of a war weary nation, not to mention families in crisis around the world. They were capable of behaving with such extraordinary grace under unseemly pressure. Goebbels rightly feared the impact of the film on public opinion. Indeed, the then Prime Minister of England, Winston Churchill, was moved to comment that the film’s propaganda value was worth a dozen battleships! Family life matters!

The recently beatified Pontiff, John Paul II, once wrote that the future of the world and of the Church passes through the family. If the family is in crisis, as it obviously is today, both church and society suffer the baleful consequences. In the battle to preserve Christian civilization the first line of defense is always the integrity of the family.

Early on, the Holy family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph suffered the indignities of persecution and deprivation. Having been hounded by a deranged Emperor, Herod, they were, by necessity, compelled to leave their Homeland for Egypt. They represent all the families of the world, past and present, who are under constant attack by the agents of destruction and the enemies of the traditional family. Today, the family is under constant siege. Social media outlets, our secular schools, legislatures, the advertising and entertainment industries, all conspire to weaken the family unit or even to change radically the very meaning of what constitutes a family. Sadly, we are beset by confusion and chaos! The many social maladies of our time mostly stem from the demise of the family in the Western world!

The late Fr. Patrick Peyton of Family Rosary fame is, at present, a candidate for canonization by the church. He is perhaps best remembered for two memorable aphorisms regarding the family. First, “The family that prays together stays together, and second, “A world at prayer is a world at peace”.

“Every family is always a light, however faint, in the darkness of the world”, declares our present Pope, Francis.

Surely, it was prophetic of the Church to reserve a feast in honor of the Holy Family. Today, more than ever, we are called to be inspired by their Holy example and follow in their footsteps. With the help of God, all things are possible to those who believe. Such was one of the lessons taught by Mrs. Miniver and her family.

Amen!