As Catholics, we recognize and promote the family as **the fundamental cell of society**. The USCCB, in laying out the seven themes of Catholic Social Teaching, states that "**Marriage and the family are the central social institutions** that must be supported and strengthened, not undermined.” In 1986, Pope St. John Paul II highlighted the central role of the family in society: **“As the family goes, so goes the nation, and so goes the whole world in which we live.”**

**We are proud to announce, therefore, that promoting intact families will be one of the five Voice of the Poor legislative priorities in 2020.** The Voice of the Poor Committee will support legislative policies that encourage intact families and oppose those that do not. While we are aware of the sad reality that not every marriage will be successful, we cannot ignore the indisputable link between poverty and the breakdown of the intact family.

Since it has been a few months since the **Poverty, Family Structure, and the Way Forward** event last September ([click here to watch the videos, view the socioeconomic data, and view the list of sponsors](https://svdpstlouis.org/intactfamilies)) we want to update you on some additional exciting developments:

* In October, we brought together our team of diverse and prominent partners to begin creating a **branded campaign** to promote marriage and intact families.
* We have created an inspiring WHY statement to guide our efforts: **“To promote, strengthen, and celebrate marriage and family so that every person in our community can flourish.”**
* We have identified our five spheres of activity for our strategic plan: **Public Mobilization, Churches, Schools, Community, Policy.**
* With our emphasis on hope and flourishing, we are promoting the far-reaching benefits of marriage in the following categories: **benefits to children (**less likely to experience poverty, better physical and emotional health outcomes, greater academic success, less likely to use illicit substances, etc.**); benefits to spouses** (happier, healthier, and wealthier, etc.);and **benefits to society (**lessviolence, more engaged workforce, less reliance on governmental assistance, and a populace with greater educational attainment, etc.).

Imagine the power of unleashing your creative energies and those of your fellow Vincentians (3,800-strong) as key drivers of this initiative, done in the Vincentian spirit of sharing truth in the fullness of love. Here are five actions you can take right now:

1. **Pray** for strong marriages, strong families, and the success of this initiative
2. **Witness** to the power of marriage and family in your life
3. **Learn** the essential information by watching the videos and studying the data at the link above
4. **Share** what you learn with family, friends, and your pastor
5. **Join** in on our branded campaign in a formal way – I would love to hear from you!

There is a lot to be excited about as we change the marriage narrative for the better in the St. Louis region!

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