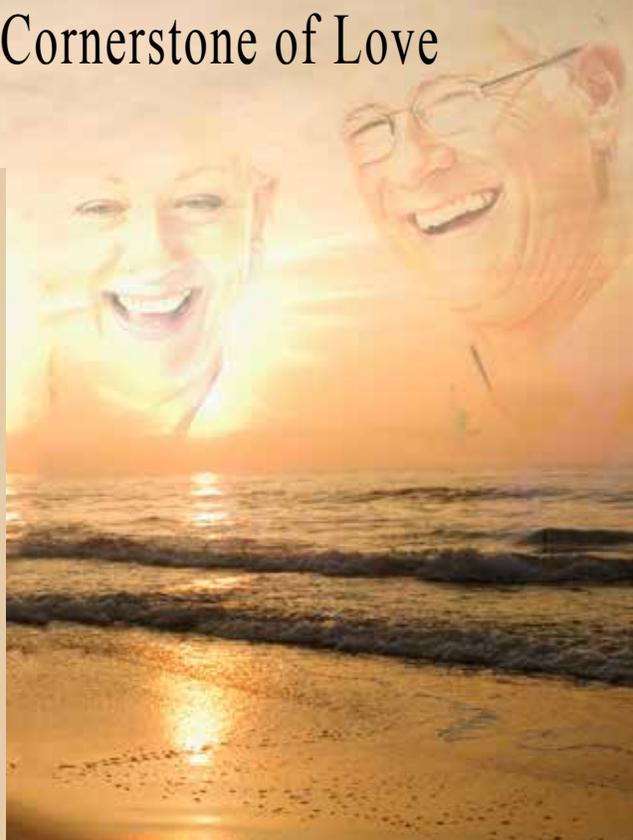


A Way of Life: The Cornerstone of Love



The[♂]ology
of the BO[♀]dy for families
& single people
plus Family Chastity Formation in Virtue & Purity of Heart

Universal Truths about Human Sexuality for People of All Ages
With extensive references to the official teachings of the Roman Catholic Church

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Chapter Two

Building on a Rock Foundation: The Cornerstone of Love

God the Father's Love: Source and Summit of Life

94 God is love. In Jesus Christ we also know that God is our Father, so God's love is at heart always a deeply personal and fatherly love. Every person was created as a child of the heavenly Father, and so each one of us will only find the fullness of love, joy, and peace in the heart of the Father: "Man would not exist were he not created by God's love and constantly preserved by it; and he cannot live fully according to truth unless he freely acknowledges that love and devotes himself to His Creator."⁴⁴ It is not enough just to acknowledge God as our Father; it is also necessary to be devoted to and adore Him with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength. To love others according to His plan, we must first live and love *fully according to the truth*.

95 God the Father's love is the source and the summit, the beginning and the end, of all life and all of our relationships of love. As children, we are not able to love fully if we do not obey His laws for love. Christ confirmed that the

Old Testament could be summed up in two commandments of love: "The first is this: 'Hear O Israel! The Lord our God is Lord alone! You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'"⁴⁵

96 Then, at the Last Supper, as He prepared to sacrifice His body upon the altar of the cross in an act of total self-giving love, Jesus instituted the Eucharist and the new commandment of love: "As I have loved you, so you also should love one another."⁴⁶ In the Eucharist, the Father's new commandment of love is something we, as His children, can clearly see demonstrated and receive in our hearts and souls, so we truly can love others as Jesus loved us. During the Sacrifice of the Mass, while looking at the crucifix and hearing the words of consecration, "This is my body, which will be given up for you,"⁴⁷ we can understand the depth of the love we should have for others. Like Jesus, we are to love by making a complete gift, a pure sacrifice, and a total consecration of ourself to God and to our spouse.

⁴⁴ Second Vatican Council, Pastoral constitution *Gaudium et Spes* (GS), 19.

⁴⁵ Mk 12:29-31.

⁴⁶ Jn 13:34.

⁴⁷ Lk 22:19.

97 God the Father's love, made visible in the Eucharistic Christ, is at heart a spousal love which reaches perfection in a sacrificial and total gift of self for the sake of the beloved. This divine love has been called *agape* love. Pope Benedict XVI recently defined *agape* love as "descending, oblation love,"⁴⁸ that is, a spiritual and sacrificial love that is poured out from above as a gift entirely for the good of the beloved.

98 From the beginning, God intended this spiritual divine love to be poured out and embodied in the love of spouses, in the flesh and body of a man and a woman. Through the sin of Adam and Eve, men and women lost the capacity to share in the fullness of divine *agape* love in their bodies. This capacity was restored when the Father created the sinless, immaculate body of the Blessed Virgin Mary in order to receive the fullness of divine love when the Word became flesh in her womb. Through Jesus and Mary, men and women can once again share in the fullness of divine love. The Word truly became flesh not just one time and only in the Virgin Mary at the Incarnation, but instead divine *agape* love comes down to us every day for us to receive in the Holy Eucharist.

99 God created man and woman and their spousal or marital union of love in the image of His divine love.⁴⁹ We are just beginning to understand the beauty and mystery of this truth about the holiness of spousal love with the help of Pope John Paul II's luminous teachings on the "theology of the body." He showed that

God's love is reflected and revealed in the very bodies of men and women in what he called the "nuptial (spousal) meaning of the body." The nuptial meaning of the body means that every man and woman is designed to find the fullness of God's fruitful, *agape* love by making a total gift and pure sacrifice of oneself, body, heart, and soul, to a beloved. Every person then is called by God to spousal love, either by making a virginal gift of oneself to God alone in consecrated virginity, or to one's spouse in holy matrimony. Understanding the theology of the body is so important that Pope John Paul II said that everyone, especially those called to marriage, endeavor "first of all, to make this theology of the body...the content of their life and behavior."⁵⁰

100 But what about *eros* love which involves the body, the senses, sexual desire, physical attraction, and the marital act of love? Can *eros* be a part of the Father's plan for chaste and holy love? Pope Benedict XVI reflected that *eros* love seeks not so much to give, but to receive and to take to oneself, so he recently defined it as "ascending, possessive, or covetous love", and after pointing out that Scripture often images God's love as possessive, jealous, and passionate, he explained how *eros* love interacts with *agape* love in God's plan for love:

The more the two, in their different aspects, find a proper unity in the one reality of love, the more the true nature of love in general is realized. Even if *eros* is at first mainly covetous and ascending, a fascination

⁴⁸ Pope Benedict XVI, Encyclical *Deus Caritas est* (December 25, 2005), 7.

⁴⁹ Cf. Gen 1:27.

⁵⁰ Pope John Paul II, Marriage in the Integral Vision of Man, for General Audience (April 2, 1980).

for the great promise of happiness, in drawing near to the other, it is less and less concerned with itself, increasingly seeks the happiness of the other, is concerned more and more with the beloved, bestows itself and wants to “be there for” the other. The element of *agape* thus enters into this love, for otherwise *eros* is impoverished and even loses its own nature. On the other hand, man cannot live by oblation, descending love alone. He cannot always give, he must also receive. Anyone who wishes to give love must also receive love as a gift. Certainly, as the Lord tells us, one can become a source from which rivers of living water flow (Cf. Jn 7:37-38). Yet to become such a source, one must constantly drink anew from the original source, which is Jesus Christ, from whose pierced heart flows the love of God (Cf. Jn 19:34).⁵¹

101 Pope Benedict XVI summarizes in one paragraph the mystery of God’s love, the source and summit of which is found in the heart of Christ. To love one another as Christ has loved us in marriage and family life, we must first draw near to His heart to take and receive the gift of love which flows from the body He has given up for us, especially in the *Sacramentum Caritatis*,⁵² the Sacrament of Love. In the Eucharist, God desires to attract and embrace everyone with the fullness of His Fatherly love, so that, as one family, each person can share in a full communion of life and love with Him and with His beloved spouse, the Church. We must first adore and love Him with all of our

heart, mind, soul, and strength in order to truly love our neighbor, our spouse, and our family as He has loved us, since we cannot give what we have not first received. And to fully receive and transmit His love, we must be chaste, since “only a person who knows how to be chaste will know how to love in marriage or in virginity.”⁵³

Love for the Catholic Church

Catholic truth is *the* necessary foundation for the formation of right conscience which leads to right thinking and right action. On this rock foundation of Catholic truth, God’s blueprint for chastity in love can be integrated into the hearts, minds, and souls of married couples, their children, and all the members of the family of God.

Fatherly Love and Authority in the Family of the Catholic Church

102 As a loving Father, God calls each of His children by name to come home to share in the blessings of a full communion of life and love with Him and His family. This family consists of all mankind who, in different degrees, are related to the eternal communion of love that exists in the union of His Son and His one and only beloved Spouse, the Catholic Church.⁵⁴ Since the Catholic Church shares fully in Christ’s love and authority, she alone proclaims the fullness of truth in regard to God’s plan for marriage and family life. Full communion with the Catholic

⁵¹ *Deus is Caritas*, 7.

⁵² This is the title of Pope Benedict XVI’s Apostolic Exhortation on the Eucharist as the Source and Summit of the Church’s Life and Mission (February 22, 2007).

⁵³ TMHS, 68.

⁵⁴ Cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC) 2d ed. (Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference, Inc., 1997), 830, 836, 839.

Church is one of the rock foundations upon which a family home will be solidly built up in love. The Father's full authority and love was given to Jesus Christ, who, in turn, gave full authority and love to Peter and his successors to extend the Father's rule over all the nations until the end of time: "All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit,⁵⁵ teaching them to observe all

that I have commanded you.⁵⁶ And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age."⁵⁷

103 When Jesus Christ appointed Peter to represent Himself as head of the Church, He gave him fatherly authority to teach, govern, and sanctify her in His name: "And so I say to you, you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church,⁵⁸ and the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven.⁵⁹ Whatever you bind

⁵⁵ [19] Therefore: since universal power belongs to the risen Jesus (Matthew 28:18), he gives the eleven a mission that is universal. They are to make disciples of all nations. While all nations is understood by some scholars as referring only to all Gentiles, it is probable that it included the Jews as well. Baptizing them: baptism is the means of entrance into the community of the risen one, the Church. In the name of the Father... holy Spirit: this is perhaps the clearest expression in the New Testament of trinitarian belief. It may have been the baptismal formula of Matthew's church, but primarily it designates the effect of baptism, the union of the one baptized with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

⁵⁶ [20] All that I have commanded you: the moral teaching found in this gospel, preeminently that of the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7). The commandments of Jesus are the standard of Christian conduct, not the Mosaic law as such, even though some of the Mosaic commandments have now been invested with the authority of Jesus. Behold, I am with you always: the promise of Jesus' real though invisible presence echoes the name Emmanuel given to him in the infancy narrative; see the note on Matthew 1:23.

⁵⁷ End of the age: see the notes on Matthew 13:39 and Matthew 24:3; Mt 28:18-20.

⁵⁸ [18] You are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church: the Aramaic word *kepa*—meaning rock and transliterated into Greek as *Kephas*—is the name by which Peter is called in the Pauline letters (1 Cor 1:12; 3:22; 9:5; 15:4; Gal 1:18; 2:9, 11, 14) except in Gal 2:7-8 ("Peter"). It is translated as *Petros* ("Peter") in John 1:42. The presumed original Aramaic of Jesus' statement would have been, in English, "You are the Rock (*Kepa*) and upon this rock (*kepa*) I will build my church." The Greek text probably means the same, for the difference in gender between the masculine noun *petros*, the disciple's new name, and the feminine noun *petra* (rock) may be due simply to the unsuitability of using a feminine noun as the proper name of a male. Although the two words were generally used with slightly different nuances, they were also used interchangeably with the same meaning, "rock." Church: this word (Greek *ekklesia*) occurs in the gospels only here and in Matthew 18:17 (twice). There are several possibilities for an Aramaic original. Jesus' church means the community that he will gather and that, like a building, will have Peter as its solid foundation. That function of Peter consists in his being witness to Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of the living God. The gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it: the netherworld (Greek *Hades*, the abode of the dead) is conceived of as a walled city whose gates will not close in upon the church of Jesus, i.e., it will not be overcome by the power of death.

⁵⁹ [19] The keys to the kingdom of heaven: the image of the keys is probably drawn from Isaiah 22:15-25 where Eliakim, who succeeds Shebna as master of the palace, is given "the key of the house of David," which he authoritatively "opens" and "shuts" (Isaiah 22:22). Whatever you bind...loosed in heaven: there are many instances in rabbinic literature of the binding-loosing imagery. Of the several meanings given there to the metaphor, two are of special importance here: the giving of authoritative teaching and the lifting or imposing of the ban of excommunication. It is disputed whether the image of the keys and that of binding and loosing are different metaphors meaning the same thing. In any case, the promise of the keys is given to Peter alone. In Matthew 18:18 all the disciples are given the power of binding and loosing, but the context of that verse suggests that there the power of excommunication alone is intended. That the keys are those to the kingdom of heaven and that Peter's exercise of authority in the church on earth will be confirmed in heaven show an intimate connection between, but not an identification of, the church and the kingdom of heaven.

on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”⁶⁰

104 Holding the keys to the Father’s house, Peter is entrusted with the authority to preserve, guard, and defend the virginal purity of the Church, teach her children, govern God’s family, and lead them to holiness in love and prayer. Thus, he is rightly and affectionately called “papa” or Pope and “holy father.” This fatherly authority over the family of God was shared with the Apostles who “transmitted all they received from Christ and learned from the Holy Spirit to their successors, the bishops, and through them to all generations until the end of the world.”⁶¹ Therefore, authentic interpretation of the Sacred Deposit of the faith, contained in Sacred Scripture and Tradition, has been entrusted “to the successor of Peter, the Bishop of Rome, and to the bishops in communion with him.”⁶²

105 Aware of the grave danger of division in the family, Christ’s priestly prayer at the Institution of the Eucharist in the Gospel of John extends four full chapters,⁶³ wherein He implores the Father to preserve the unity of the Church in charity. He then offers His body up in sacrifice on the cross to establish His presence in the Holy Eucharist as the source and guarantee of a communion of love within His family. This teaching was so fully established

in the early Church, that, about the year 106, St. Ignatius of Antioch went to his martyrdom defending the truth of the Catholic faith against those who “refuse to admit that the Eucharist is the flesh of our Savior Jesus Christ,” reminding them that “Where there is Christ Jesus, there is the Catholic Church.”⁶⁴ He testifies to the importance of this family unity established by the Father in the Catholic Church writing: “We should regard the bishop as the Lord himself,”⁶⁵ and “Defer to the bishop and to one another as Jesus Christ did to the Father in the days of his flesh, and as the apostles did to Christ, to the Father, and to the Spirit. In that way we shall achieve complete unity.”⁶⁶

Jesus Christ and the Catholic Church: Forever One in Spousal Love

106 The family of the Catholic Church not only shares in the fullness of the fatherly love and authority of God in its patriarchal and hierarchical structure, but she also, as a living body and a bride, shares in the fullness of spousal love in a perfect marital union with her head and Bridegroom, Jesus Christ. It was God the Father who established the union of Jesus Christ and the Catholic Church as a perfect and chaste marriage union which no man can rend asunder. Therefore, Jesus Christ and the Catholic Church will forever share one love, one heart, one mind, one soul, one body, and

⁶⁰ Mt 16:18-19.

⁶¹ *Compendium, Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCCC)*, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (March 2006), 12.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 16.

⁶³ Cf. Jn 14-17.

⁶⁴ St Ignatius of Antioch, Letter to the Smyrnaens, 8.

⁶⁵ St Ignatius of Antioch, Letter to the Ephesians, 6.

⁶⁶ St. Ignatius of Antioch, Letter to the Magnesians, 13.

speak with one voice; and it is the Father's will that, through her, Jesus extend His reign over all things.⁶⁷

107 This indissoluble marriage made in heaven was established to be fruitful and to bring children into the family of God the Father and is the model for understanding God's plan for chastity in love within all marriages and families. Each *domestic church*, or family, is called to be one in heart and mind in Christ and is designed to be built up on the rock foundation of the Catholic faith. The domestic church is presided over by a holy marriage, governed by a holy father, and sanctified by prayer and love so that, when it too is besieged by the attacks of the world, the flesh, and the devil, the gates of hell will not prevail against it.

108 Love for and obedience to the Catholic Church's teachings on sexuality, marriage, and family life is an essential cornerstone of God the Father's plan for life and love. Orthodoxy (right belief), chastity (sexual purity), and charity (love) are so intimately connected,⁶⁸ and the Catholic truth about sexuality so essential to the renewal of God's plan for love, that Pope John Paul II said, it "must be absolutely clear" that all the members of the Church "are totally committed to the fullness of Catholic truth on matters of sexual morality, a truth as essential to the renewal of the priesthood and the episcopate

as it is to the renewal of marriage and family life."⁶⁹

Love According to the Natural Law: Our Father's Plan for Marriage

Then God said: "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." ...God created man in his image; in the divine image he created him; male and female he created them. God blessed them, saying: "Be fertile and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it." ...God looked at everything he had made, and he found it very good.⁷⁰

God Designed Life so that it Doesn't Work without Him

109 Everything our Heavenly Father created is ordered by divine science to accomplish its intended purpose through obedience to His design for love. As DNA can be studied as the genetic blueprint of life, so God's master blueprint for love can be discovered immanent within creation and is also "written and engraved in the soul of each and every man."⁷¹ This blueprint is the *natural law* present in every human heart and is established by reason.⁷² It matures and "increases with the progress of moral conscience,"⁷³ and provides a "solid

⁶⁷ Cf. CCC, 792.

⁶⁸ Cf. CCC, 2518.

⁶⁹ Address of John Paul II to the Cardinals of the United States (April 23, 2002), 3.

⁷⁰ Gen 1:26-31.

⁷¹ CCC, 1954; Leo XIII, *Libertas praestantissimum*, 597.

⁷² Cf. *Ibid.*, 1956.

⁷³ Address Of His Holiness Benedict XVI to the Participants in The International Congress On Natural Moral Law (February 2007), 12.

foundation on which man can build the structure of moral rules to guide his choices. It also provides the indispensable moral foundation for building the human community.”⁷⁴ “This law has as its first and general principle, ‘to do good and to avoid evil,’”⁷⁵ and every person is capable of understanding and obeying it.⁷⁶

110 God’s *Fatherly love* creates, sustains, and governs all life; and His *natural law* provides *structure* and order within His creation. It is a fatherly design for right order and is first and foremost *patriarchal*, a word which comes from the Greek *patria* meaning father and *arché* meaning rule, beginning, or origin. From the first sin of Adam and Eve,⁷⁷ fallen human nature tends to reject the Father’s authority, patriarchal order, and the laws that govern life. Rejection of God the Father’s plan is still the root cause of disorder within the human person, between men and women, in the family, and in nature.

111 Fatherly love and authority come from the very heart of God and accepting His paternal plan is necessary for peace, unity, love, and right order within marriage, family life, and society. Every man and woman is a child of the Father and has the natural law written in their hearts. Although this truth may be obscured, at heart, all people inherently possess the natural law and have it written in their hearts, for instance, that one man and one woman form a marriage union for the purpose of being fruitful

and forming a family. Rejecting the natural law and, especially the nature and purpose of the marital act, always leads to disorder.

Natural Law and Order in Marriage

112 God’s *Fatherly love* creates, sustains, and governs all life; and His divine and natural laws establish a patriarchal structure that preserves right order within His creation. The first cornerstone for right order in relationships is to accept and follow God’s paternal plan for right order and chastity in married love. He calls every husband and wife to an intimate and exclusive communion of love with one another and with Him that is always open to the gift of new life in obedience to His natural law and order in creation. His fatherly and creative love is designed to flow through parents in transmitting life and in forming their children as a family. Pope John Paul II said this “family community was willed by God in the beginning,” with the creation of man and woman, for the good of humanity. Christ refers to this ‘beginning’ when the Pharisees attempted to distort its structure (Mt. 19:3-12). Man is not empowered to change the Creator’s original design.”⁷⁸

113 God’s plan for married love is that the two become one for life; therefore, the exclusive, mutual love of the spouses must be indissoluble and naturally ordered to the procreation and education of children within

⁷⁴ CCC, 1959.

⁷⁵ See footnote 43.

⁷⁶ *Summa Theologica*, First Part of the Second Part, Question 94, Article 4, Paragraph 2.

⁷⁷ Gen 3:1-7.

⁷⁸ Message of John Paul II to the Pontifical Council for the Family on the 20th Anniversary of the Post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris Consortio* (FC), 2.

the family. Marriage in the *natural law* is a creation and manifestation of the fatherly love of God, and while the two become one body in mutual subjection to one another,⁷⁹ the man was created to be the head of the woman while she was created to be the heart of their one body. This order within marriage means the Father designed man in His own image with the fatherly capacity to give life, the duty to provide for and protect it, and the authority to rule or govern it as the head of a marriage and family. Woman was created in the image of God “out of” and for the man⁸⁰ as a helpmate and with a motherly capacity to receive and nourish life as the heart of a marriage and family. In short, God provides particular graces for husbands and fathers in fulfilling their duties and responsibilities just as He provides wives and mothers with particular graces that are unavailable to husbands and fathers. Thus, when spouses joyfully accept the Father’s paternal plan for right order, these spiritual graces unite and become one in the marital covenant in a complementary manner reflected physically in the unity God ordained as the two become one flesh.

114 Of this right order in marriage, Pope Pius XI said, “For if the man is the head, the woman is the heart, and as he occupies the chief place in ruling, so she may and ought to claim for herself the chief place in love. Again, this subjection of wife to husband in its degree and manner may vary according to the different conditions of persons, place, and time. In fact, if

the husband neglects his duty, it falls to the wife to take his place in directing the family. But the structure of the family and its fundamental law, established and confirmed by God, must always and everywhere be maintained intact.”⁸¹

115 Our first parents, Adam and Eve, wounded the original model of marriage when they ate the forbidden fruit.⁸² Their choice to disobey God’s fatherly plan for life damaged their relationship with Him, brought death where there was life, caused division in their marriage, violence in their family, and the loss of their home. They could do nothing to repair the disorder and damage caused by their disobedience. Only God could redeem, and restore, all that had been lost and damaged by original sin, including marriage.

116 God the Father’s plan was to restore the purity of His original design, so, in the fullness of time, He “sent his Son as the Redeemer and Savior of mankind, fallen into sin, thus calling all into his Church and, through the work of the Holy Spirit, making them adopted children and heirs of his eternal happiness.”⁸³ From the beginning, the Father intended to redeem marriage, and now it is through Jesus Christ that human sexuality, marriage, and family life are redeemed and restored to right order by means of the sacramental graces flowing through and from the Catholic Church.

⁷⁹ Eph 5:21.

⁸⁰ Cf. Gen 2:20-22.

⁸¹ Pope Pius XI, Encyclical *Casti Connubii*, On Christian Marriage, (December 31, 1930), 27-28.

⁸² Cf. Gen 3:6-7.

⁸³ CCCC, 1.

Love of Husband and Wife in the Sacrament of Matrimony

The sacrament of Matrimony establishes a perpetual and exclusive bond between the spouses. God himself seals the consent of the spouses. Therefore, a marriage which is ratified and consummated between baptized persons can never be dissolved. Furthermore, this sacrament bestows upon the spouses the grace necessary to attain holiness in their married life and to accept responsibly the gift of children and provide for their education.⁸⁴

Married Love Redeemed

117 The restoration of right order in marriage begins with baptism, “the basis of the whole Christian life,” the pathway to living in the Spirit and “the door which gives access to the other sacraments. Through baptism we are freed from sin and reborn as sons of God; we become members of Christ, are incorporated into the Church and made sharers in her mission.”⁸⁵ Once baptized, all Christians who unite in a valid marriage receive the supernatural graces of the sacrament of Matrimony.

118 In Holy Matrimony, marriage is elevated to a supernatural level, so that Christians must look to heaven to receive the grace to understand and live the *great mystery* of their married love which is called to be a reflection of the mutual love between Christ, the Bridegroom, and His Bride, the Church. Marriage remains an intimate, indissoluble, exclusive, and fruitful union according to natural law, but it is also given the fullness of supernatural grace to honor and purify it so it can manifest the beauty of its heavenly design.⁸⁶ The Father’s plan for right order in marriage is that grace build upon nature by elevating and perfecting it in God’s love.⁸⁷

119 Remembering how Christ loved us, right order in marriage means a man should rule as a servant ready to sacrifice his life in carrying out his duty, unlike the rulers of the world, who “lord it over” others by wanting to “make their authority over them felt.”⁸⁸ St. Peter tells husbands to “live with your wives in understanding, showing honor to the weaker female sex, since we are joint heirs of the gift of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.”⁸⁹ A wife, St. Paul says, “should respect her husband,”⁹⁰ and St. Peter tells wives to “be subordinate to your husbands, so that, even if some disobey the word, they may

⁸⁴ Ibid., 346.

⁸⁵ CCC, 1213.

⁸⁶ Cf. Ibid., 1641-42.

⁸⁷ Cf. Ibid., 1960.

⁸⁸ Cf. Mt 25-28.

⁸⁹ 1 Peter 3:7; [7] Husbands who do not respect their wives will have as little success in prayer as those who, according to Paul, have no love: their prayers will be “a resounding gong or a clashing cymbal” (1 Cor 13:1). Consideration for others is shown as a prerequisite for effective prayer also in Matthew 5:23-24; 1 Cor 11:20-22; James 4:3. After all, whatever the social position of women in the world and in the family, they are equal recipients of the gift of God’s salvation. Paul is very clear on this point, too (see 1 Cor 11:11-12; Gal 3:28).

⁹⁰ Eph 5:33.

be won over without a word by their wives' conduct when they observe your reverent and chaste behavior...."⁹¹

120 A husband and wife can obey the Father's plan for right order in marriage even in the midst of great poverty, anxiety, suffering, and homelessness as the encouraging example of St. Joseph and the Virgin Mary reveal. As the time of Jesus' birth arrived, Joseph's heart must have suffered greatly when, as provider and protector, he was forced to beg door to door to find a suitable place for his displaced wife and family but was rejected by all. Trusting in the providential love of the Father, he did not give in to discouragement but transformed a stable for animals into a clean, safe, and secure shelter. Mary's feelings of vulnerability and fears as a wife and expectant mother could have tempted her to be uncharitable or disrespectful toward her husband, or even to take control and usurp his fatherly authority over the family. Within this holy marriage, Joseph and Mary each chose humble obedience and, with trust, followed perfectly the Father's plan for right order in their relationship in charity and mutual love.

Mutual Subjection Out of Love for Christ

121 The spousal union between Christ and the Catholic Church is the blueprint for chastity in the marriage relationship. Chaste spousal love is modeled on Christ's total self-giving love for the Church, a *great mystery* of love requiring faithfulness and obedience to the point of dying totally to self:

⁹²Be subordinate to one another out of reverence for Christ.⁹³ Wives should be subordinate to their husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is head of his wife just as Christ is head of the church, he himself the savior of the body. As the church is subordinate to Christ, so wives should be subordinate to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the church and handed himself over for her to sanctify her, cleansing her by the bath of water with the word, that he might present to himself the church in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.⁹⁴

⁹¹ 1 Peter 3:1-2.

⁹² [Eph. 5:21-6:9] Cf. the notes on Col 3:18-4:1 and 1 Peter 2:18-3:7 for a similar listing of household duties where the inferior is admonished first (wives, Eph 5:22; children, Eph 6:1; slaves, Eph 6:5); then the superior (husbands, Eph 5:25; fathers, Eph 6:4; masters, Eph 6:9). Paul varies this pattern by an emphasis on mutuality (see Eph 5:20); use of Old Testament material about father and mother in Eph 6:2; the judgment to come for slave-owners (you have a Master in heaven, Eph 6:9); and, above all, the initial principle of subordination to one another under Christ, thus effectively undermining exclusive claims to domination by one party. Into the section on wives and husbands an elaborate teaching on Christ and the church has been woven (Eph 5:22-33).

⁹³ [21-33] The apostle exhorts married Christians to a strong mutual love. Holding with Genesis 2:24 that marriage is a divine institution (Eph 5:31), Paul sees Christian marriage as taking on a new meaning symbolic of the intimate relationship of love between Christ and the church. The wife should serve her husband in the same spirit as that of the church's service to Christ (Eph 5:22, 24), and the husband should care for his wife with the devotion of Christ to the church (Eph 5:25-30). Paul gives to the Genesis passage its highest meaning in the light of the union of Christ and the church, of which Christlike loyalty and devotion in Christian marriage are a clear reflection (Eph 5:31-33).

⁹⁴ Eph 5:21-27. Author's note: A must read on chastity and marriage is Pope Pius XI Encyclical *Casti Connubii*, on Christian Marriage (December 31, 1930).

122 Commenting on this passage of St. Paul, Pope John Paul II said:

The author knows that this way of speaking, so profoundly rooted in the customs and religious tradition of the time, is to be understood and carried out in a new way: as a “*mutual subjection out of reverence for Christ*” (cf. *Eph 5:21*). This is especially true because the husband is called the “head” of the wife as Christ is the head of the Church; he is so in order to give “himself up for her” (*Eph 5:25*), and giving himself up for her means giving up even his own life. However, whereas in the relationship between Christ and the Church the subjection is only on the part of the Church, in the relationship between husband and wife the “subjection” is not one-sided but mutual.⁹⁵

The Marital Bond

123 The following paragraphs were written by a man who, throughout his 40 years of marriage, reflected deeply on the mystery of married love found at Ephesians 5:21-33. Husband and wife truly become one in mutual subjection when each fulfills God’s design, the man as head, and the woman as heart, of just one body. He wrote:

The Marital Bond

“Give way to one another out of reverence for Christ.” (Ephesians 5)

“True love means living within another’s will, even at the cost of sacrifice.” Love is proven by sacrifice. Sacrifice means dying

to self. Though human nature opposes it, self denial brings life to us. This is why the Cross is the symbol of the Catholic faith because it frees us from the bondage of self so that we can become one with another. The marital bond is thus created by a man and woman who embrace this mystery of death and resurrection. But they each must do so in unique and different ways.

A man gives himself to a woman and makes it possible for her to give herself to him by proving he has the self-control needed to care for her. By demonstrating his ability to manage his feelings, sexuality, eating, drinking, language, spending, appearance and possessions, he proves he has the power to put her needs ahead of his own. These displays of strength give her cause to trust him so that she too can die to self by giving her will to him in all things but sin. Their love is, therefore, born of and proven by self-sacrifice. But it is the man who must first give the woman reason to believe that he is worthy of her gift and that she will be safe and secure with him. He may not be a knight in shining armor who wins her by risking his life, but displays of his power to control himself for her sake have the same effect. Killing the dragon (of selfishness) is still required to win her hand and heart along with proof that he possesses a strong work ethic supported by deep faith in God and thus himself.

The woman gives herself to the man she wants by gradually uniting her will to his in all things but sin. She encourages their union by paying attention to him, respecting him, building him up, following his lead and doing her best to please him. In so doing, she captures his heart and his head causing him to think of and feel close to no other

⁹⁵ Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Letter, *Mulieris Dignitatem* (August 15, 1988), 24.

woman but her. Seeing that she wants to be with him and has eyes for no one but him gives him confidence in her and himself. When he finds her constantly on his mind, when he realizes that he feels complete and is at his best with no one but her, when he yearns to be with her and wants to make her happy by knowing and doing her will in all things but sin, the bond is formed. He falls in love. It may look like a man “takes a wife,” but it’s the woman who takes the man by capturing his heart. By the attractiveness of her goodness and beauty, and the gift of her will, she causes him to be taken by her. Proof lies in the fact that, from then on, he wants to live the rest of his life with and for no one but her.

When a man and a woman unite their hearts and wills, they become soul mates forming a bond that can only be broken by an immoral act. This bond is evidenced by the deep sense of communion they feel even when apart because their greatest need, to be united with another and no longer alone, has been fulfilled. Because of this bond, they understand each other in a way not possible with anyone else, and, thus, because they are united heart to heart, they have no interest in anyone else’s attention or affection. From this bond comes a deep sense of trust in themselves and each other that so enlivens and encourages them that their limitations and fears disappear. For by losing themselves in each other, they become transformed into a man and woman that only God can imagine, and the Cross of self-sacrifice can create.

The Sacramental Union between Man and Woman

124 God’s plan for love—if followed with trust, obedience, and chastity—is truly

beautiful beyond imagination, heaven on earth, and lifts up heart, mind, soul, and body with joy. Chastity in marriage involves integrating two complementary bodies and souls into one, and so accomplishes a union of hearts, minds, emotions, and spirits on the physical, psychological, emotional, and spiritual planes in the deepest intimate core of the person.

125 In daily life, Pope John Paul II noted that the mutual love of spouses of which the Gospel speaks is to be modeled after Christ’s own sacrificial, self-giving love for the Church and that God wills that the spousal union of bodies be an even deeper expression of their communion of minds and hearts. He reminds spouses that they are to be calm and patient with one another to the extent of cultivating within themselves the antidote to the other’s faults and weaknesses, and that “neither of the partners can demand to be loved in the same way as he or she loves.” Thus, each partner must sacrifice his or her own desires to bring about a strong bond of unity and mutual love for one another.⁹⁶

Fidelity of Spouses to One Another and to Catholic Truth

126 Chastity in marriage means fully experiencing the physical and spiritual union of spouses God intended and always being open to the fruits of this love in the gift of children and family. As the Encyclical *Humanae Vitae* affirms:

Married love has *four characteristics*: it is *human* love (physical and spiritual), it is *total*, *faithful* and *fruitful* love... “The family draws its proper character as a community, its traits of communion, from that fundamental

⁹⁶ Cf. Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Journey to Africa, Mass for Families, *Homily* (May 3, 1980), 4.

communion of the spouses which is prolonged in their children. *Will you accept children lovingly from God, and bring them up according to the law of Christ and his Church?*, the celebrant asks during the Rite of Marriage. The answer given by the spouses reflects the most profound truth of the love which unites them.” With the same formula, spouses commit themselves and promise to be “faithful forever.”⁹⁷

127 Like Christ’s love, married love can never be yes one minute and no the next, but “requires the inviolable fidelity of the spouses. This is the consequence of the gift of themselves which they make to each other. Love seeks to be definitive; it cannot be an arrangement ‘until further notice.’”⁹⁸

128 To live chastely in marriage to the degree Christ demands requires a “continuous illumination of the Holy Spirit. “At the centre of the spirituality of marriage...lies chastity, not only as a moral virtue (formed by love), but likewise as a virtue connected with the gifts of the Holy Spirit—*above all the gift of respect for what comes from God...* So therefore, the interior order of married life, which enables the ‘manifestations of affection’ to develop according to their right proportion and meaning, is a fruit not only *of the virtue* which the couple practise, but also *of the gifts* of the Holy Spirit *with which they cooperate.*”⁹⁹

129 Chastity between a husband and wife involves honoring their marriage vows to be true to each other until death, avoiding at all

times even “looking lustfully” at another person or image, accepting children lovingly from God by always being open to the gift of new life in sexual relations, and entrusting one’s emotional center, heart, mind, spirit, and entire self into the custody of the beloved. In conforming to God’s design for married love, husband and wife can be transformed into a man and woman that only God can imagine and create.

Love in the Family

In the domestic church, the family, the father is the “priest of the home” whose primary purpose is to spiritually and temporally guide his family, as a good shepherd cares for his sheep, by offering his entire life as a sacrifice of love. A father is not only responsible for providing and protecting but also for teaching, governing, and sanctifying his family, leading them in a daily sacrifice of prayer and into a deeper and more active participation in the sacramental, devotional, and liturgical prayer life of the Church. Following Christ, husbands and fathers are called to unceasing prayer and total self-sacrifice in order to attain the goal of holiness and eternal life for their family.

A Domestic Church and Sanctuary of Purity and Holiness

130 Marriage, sexuality, and the family are designed by God for a holy purpose. The *Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church* states:

⁹⁷ TMHS, 29.

⁹⁸ CCC, 1646.

⁹⁹ TMHS, 21.

A man and a woman united in marriage form a family together with their children. God instituted the family and endowed it with its fundamental constitution...ordered to the good of the spouses and to the procreation and education of children... In Christ the family becomes the *domestic church* because it is a community of faith, of hope, and of charity.¹⁰⁰

131 Husband and wife are no longer two but one, and they form a *communion of persons* with one another and with God. Sexual love within marriage is an icon of the interior life of God because it expresses a communion of persons.¹⁰¹ When the two are joined as one, they can become three in one family, like the Trinity, and the family becomes “a sign and image of the communion of the Father and the Son in the Holy Spirit.”¹⁰²

132 This *domestic church* is called to be a sanctuary of life, purity, and holiness. Family prayer establishes a foundation for the home as a sanctuary where love, chastity, and other virtues necessary for life can grow and develop with the supernatural help of God.¹⁰³ In fact, daily family prayer is so essential to the vitality of the family that, if it were absent within the home, “the family would lack its very character as a domestic Church.”¹⁰⁴

Chaste Love is Taught Primarily by the Example of Parents

133 Within the holy sanctuary of the *domestic church*, parents are able to pass on to their children “the lived truth of the faith” by teaching them how to love God and neighbor, and how to live chastely by renouncing selfish desires, making sacrifices, and waiting.¹⁰⁵

134 The degree of chastity and true love in family relationships is dependent upon the parents’ example of living chastity in marriage. “Married people are called to live conjugal chastity...Parents are well aware that *living conjugal chastity themselves* is the most valid premise for educating their children in chaste love and in holiness of life.”¹⁰⁶

135 In fulfilling the duties of educating their children, parents are to strive to achieve these three primary objectives: “(a) to maintain in the family *a positive atmosphere of love, virtue and respect for the gifts of God*, in particular the gift of life; (b) to help children to understand the value of sexuality and chastity in stages, sustaining their growth through enlightening word, example and prayer; (c) to help them understand and discover *their own vocation to marriage or to consecrated virginity for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven* in harmony with

¹⁰⁰ CCCC, 456.

¹⁰¹ Witness to Hope: The Biography of Pope John Paul II, George Weigel (New York Cliff Street Books, 1999), 339.

¹⁰² CCC, 2205.

¹⁰³ “This mission—to be the first and vital cell of society—the family has received from God. It will fulfill this mission if it appears as the domestic sanctuary of the Church by reason of the mutual affection of its members and the prayers that they offer to God in common, if the whole family makes itself a part of the liturgical worship of the Church, and if it provides active hospitality and promotes justice and other good works for the service of all the brethren in need.” Vatican Council II, *Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity*, 11.

¹⁰⁴ Pope Paul VI, *Marialis Cultus* (Feb. 2, 1974), 52.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. TMHS, 5.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 20.

and respecting their attitudes and inclinations and the gifts of the Spirit.”¹⁰⁷

136 When the home is a sanctuary of God’s presence presided over by a holy marriage and right order in relationships, chaste love can permeate the atmosphere of the home and be integrated deeply into the hearts and souls of the children. Much formation and education in chastity will be passed on indirectly in an atmosphere of prayer and reverence for God. As a result, children will more easily grow in natural and supernatural virtues and be strengthened with the power of God to be able to fulfill their vocation to love.

The Holy Family of Nazareth: Model of Family Love

137 The perfect example of God’s design for chastity in the family is the Holy Family of Nazareth. The Holy Family is not just a model to study and emulate, but they are living persons that can be invited into the family home to help the father, mother, and children live God’s plan for holy love. Jesus said: “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, (then) I will enter his house.”¹⁰⁸ As Jesus, Mary, and Joseph enter and remain within the family home, all that offends against chastity is driven out and purified from family life. Through the maternal love of the Virgin Mary, all thoughts that are good, true, noble,

honorable, just, pure, beautiful, lovely, and gracious¹⁰⁹ will reign in the heart of the family.

138 Fathers and mothers can turn to Joseph and Mary, in Scripture and in prayer, for assistance in defending and protecting the chastity of their children from forces seeking to violate the sanctity of the family home. Joseph and Mary are acutely aware of the modern diabolic forces that, like Herod of old, are organized and ready to search out and destroy innocent children. The modern media is one such force that can enter the home, and destroy the souls of children, through television, radio, cell phones, and computers. Vigilance is critical, and “parents should also consider any attack on the virtue and chastity of their children as an *offense against the life of faith itself that threatens and impoverishes their own communion of life and grace.*”¹¹⁰

139 Obedience to God’s plan for sexuality establishes a blessed and rich inheritance for future generations by imprinting God’s design for love in the children. Children who are formed in an atmosphere of beauty, purity, and holiness and witness the sacrificial love of Christ for his bride lived out by their father and mother will be prepared for true love. “Children will thus come to marriage with that realistic wisdom about which Saint Paul speaks when he teaches that husband and wife must continually give way to one another in love, cherishing one another with mutual patience and affection.”¹¹¹

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 22.

¹⁰⁸ Rev 3:20; [20] Christ invites all to the messianic banquet in heaven; Cf. Isaiah 25:6; Luke 14:15; 22:30.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. Phil. 4:8.

¹¹⁰ TMHS, 21; Cf. *Ephesians* 6:12.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 31; Cf. *1 Corinthians* 7: 3-6; *Ephesians* 5: 21-23.

Summary Points

140 God the Father's love, revealed in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ upon the altar of the cross and made present in the Eucharist, is the source of life and all of our relationships of love.

141 To truly love our neighbor, spouse, and family as Christ has loved us, we must first adore and love God with all of our heart, mind, soul, and strength, since we cannot give what we have not first received.

142 Jesus Christ gave St. Peter and his successors, as Pope, the full authority of God the Father to teach, govern, and sanctify His family in every nation on earth until the end of time.

143 The spousal union of Jesus Christ with his bride, the Catholic Church, means the two have become one and share one mind, one heart, one spirit, one body, one voice, and one love. It is the source and model for mutual self-giving love in marriage.

144 The ability to love others in Christ (charity) is proportionate to a concern for chastity (sexual purity) and orthodoxy (adherence to and love for the teachings of the Catholic Church). Purity of heart, body, and mind are necessary for true love.

145 God created the marital union of man and woman to reflect His very image and likeness as the highest manifestation of divine love in the natural order. Married love, according to the natural law, is human (physical and spiritual), total (a sacrificial gift of self until death), faithful (exclusive love), and fruitful (always open to new life).

146 From the fall of Adam and Eve, original sin has obscured God's plan for married love. Christ redeemed and restored its original purity in the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony, giving married couples supernatural grace so their love can manifest the beauty of its heavenly design.

147 Primarily through the example of a chaste and holy marriage open to life and family prayer, parents establish their family home as a sanctuary of life where God's holy love can be transmitted in the procreation and education of their children in love.