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CHAPTER 3. CHRISTIAN TRADITION: THREE GREAT DOCTORS OF THE CHURCH ON SEX, MARRIAGE AND LOVE

The relevant views of three great representatives of Christian tradition will be treated here to some extent, rather than including more authors but only giving them cursory attention. The three authors treated here, John Chrysostom, Augustine of Hippo, and Thomas Aquinas, have each been and continue to be widely read. They have exerted an enormous influence on much subsequent Christian thinking, writing and theology. They are also included among the Doctors and Saints of the Church, in recognition of their outstanding teaching, orthodoxy and holiness of life. Although the writings of each of them cover many subjects, we will focus here on their views on sex, marriage and love. Something is also said about their lives to give a context to their teachings. Some of the details of their lives have relevance to our topics.

The last section of this chapter provides some analyses, noting, among other things: some of the morally relevant values and norms that these "classical" Christian theologians propose, whether their teachings are consistent with and represent an authentic development of biblical teachings, the distinction between Christian Tradition and traditions, and some considerations for evaluating other Christian traditions.

A. St. John Chrysostom

1. His Life and Character

St. John Chrysostom is regarded as the greatest pulpit orator and biblical commentator of the Greek Church. The name "Chrysostom" meaning "gold mouth" was given to him because of his outstanding preaching skills. He is more widely read than any other Eastern Father of the Church. (A "Father of the Church" is an early non-scriptural Christian writer who has been accepted as a representative of the tradition of the Church.) Chrysostom is one of the greatest apologists of Christian marriage.

Born in 347 in Antioch, Chrysostom was raised by his widowed mother, Anthusa. During his youth he was taught the Bible, Greek classics and rhetoric. He became a rhetorician and practiced law. The influence of the study of the Scriptures, his mother, bishop Meletius and a friend led to a gradual change in his character. His baptism in 369 or 370 marked a radical and permanent change in his life. He completely renounced the world and dedicated himself to the service of Christ. Although he wanted to become a monk, he remained with his mother at her request. He turned his home into a monastery and studied Scripture under Diodorus, the founder of the Antiochan school of theology.

In 374, after his mother died, he became a monk and spent the next six years in monastic solitude, theological study, meditation and prayer. From 381-98 he was a deacon, priest and preacher at Antioch. As a deacon he became acquainted with the needs of the poor and sick. It was during this period that the greater part of his homilies and commentaries were composed. Most of his sermons were taken down by short-hand writers. There were many nominal Christians (i.e. heathen in practice) in his time. Christianity, which had recently been legalized, was confronting

pagan society and Greek philosophical thought.

In 398 he was consecrated bishop (Patriarch) of Constantinople. He sold the costly episcopal furniture for the benefit of the poor and hospitals. He was popular at first, but made enemies, including the Empress, Eudoxia, by his uncompromising denunciation of sin and vice, including the vices of the clergy and aristocracy. In 403 he was sentenced to banishment for life on false charges, but was restored at the demand of the people. In 404 he was banished to exile again. His deposition was condemned and annulled by Pope Innocent I, but without effect. During his exile Chrysostom continued to exert a wide influence by correspondence with faithful friends. He died in 407 while on a forced foot journey to the most inhospitable parts of the Empire.

Although irritable of temper, his character was perfected by suffering. He was charitable and led an exemplary life of purity and holiness. Chrysostom was an ideal priest - a man for his and for all times. He considered the study of the Bible, which he recommended also to lay people, as the best means of promoting the Christian life. His biblical commentaries are generally guided by common sense and practical wisdom. He put himself into the psychological state and historical situation of the writer, and is more free from arbitrary and absurd interpretations than almost any other patristic commentator. Chrysostom had great respect for Scripture as the inspired Word of God, and tends to pay attention to every detail of the text. He taught that close search and earnest prayer are needed to discover the meaning of the Divine Scriptures.¹ Although he stands within the Antiochan patristic exegetical tradition which emphasized the literal sense, he knew how to derive

1. Homily 21 on John, NPNF, Vol. XIV, 72. For more details concerning St. John Chrysostom's life and character see: Philip Schaff, "Prolegomena," in NPNF, Vol. IX, 5-23; Robert C. Hill, trans., FOC, Vol. 74, 2-17; and Catharine P. Roth, "Introduction," *St. John Chrysostom On Marriage and Family Life*, trans. by Catharine Roth and David Anderson (Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1986).

spiritual nourishment from the Scriptures and make them profitable for instruction. He preached the whole truth of the Gospel faithfully, fearlessly and in an interesting manner.

2. A Summary of Some of His Related Biblical Commentaries

With regard to Genesis, Chapter 1:26-27, Chrysostom understands the human beings, male and female, being created in the "image of God" as meaning that they were created by God to have authority and control over everything else. They were to have control over even their own ideas, submitting them to the rule of reason. All the other visible creatures were made for human beings. He understands their creation in the "likeness" of God as meaning their resemblance to God in virtue (i.e. gentleness, mildness...). Concerning Gn 2 speaking of woman as a helpmate like and of the same kind as the man, Chrysostom says woman was created with the same properties including the possession of reason, of equal esteem, and in no way inferior to man. The couple's feeling no shame before the fall, he interprets as a blessed, carefree condition, as if in heaven.

He interprets the temptation and sin of Gen 3 as their not being content to remain within their proper limits. By disobeying God the human beings lost their position of trust and lost the control (although not all of it) that they originally had. Chrysostom speaks of woman's subjection to man as a consequence of the fall, not as part of God's original creation. He views God's punishments of the human beings as expressing God's care lest they go further astray, to remind them of their limits. One of the main purposes of his homilies on the first chapters of Genesis is to show how good and kind God is to us, and how grateful we should be. He underlines God's wisdom in arranging everything, and thus how it is intelligent to obey and folly to disobey God.²

2. See Homilies 8-17 on Genesis (FOC, Vol. 74, trans. by Robert C. Hill, 107-246). Concerning Genesis, Chrysostom did not know Hebrew. He used the Greek translations of his day. His commentaries on Genesis are not critical in the modern sense - e.g., he takes Genesis as the words of Moses (cf. *ibid.*, 13-14).

Concerning Gn 4:1 Chrysostom speaks of the generation of children as the greatest consolation for human beings once mortality had come on the scene. Regarding the account of Abraham and Sarah in Egypt (Gn 12:10-20), Chrysostom notes that Sarah's beauty is a work of God and not the cause of disaster. Rather, depraved will is the cause of every evil. He emphasizes God's providence in delivering them without harm. Concerning Abraham and Sarah's involvement with Hagar (Gn 16), Chrysostom notes Abraham's restraint and respect for Sarah though she is sterile. He says the account instructs us to prize domestic peace, that husband and wife are not to contend against each other.³

On a Few Relevant Gospel Texts

With respect to the Gospel according to Matthew, Ch. 5:27-28, Chrysostom says that not mere looking, but lustful looking is prohibited. Women who invite such looks will receive the utmost penalty. Adultery in the heart soon leads to that in the flesh. Jesus removes the beginning and seeds of evil. Chrysostom says we should admire the Artificer when we behold the beauty of God's creatures.

Concerning Mt 15:18-20 Chrysostom speaks of youth being unrestrained as the cause of fornications and adulteries. If they are brought to marriage after countless stains in their youth, it will be without purpose and fruit. Temperance among youth, both men and women, is a marvelous thing. He prays that the Holy Spirit be sent forth on them and its fire burn up all wicked desires. The sword of the Spirit slays lawless lusts, sloth, wrath, drunkenness, fornication (he refers to Gal 5:24). Chrysostom criticizes fathers who take great care to tame their horses but allow their own young ones to go unbridled without temperance, disgracing themselves by fornications, gamings and

3. See Homilies 18, 32 and 38 on Genesis (FOC, Vol. 82, trans. by Robert C. Hill, 12, 266, and 355-6).

wicked theaters.

If Isaac remained a virgin until he married at the age of forty, how much more ought young men under grace to practice restraint? Referring to Lk 12:47 Chrysostom says that there are different punishments for sins according to times, persons, their rank, their understanding and other things. He notes the different punishments for fornication in Scripture: one is punished more after the law is given; a priest and his daughter are more severely punished; a woman forced receives no punishment. He asks how much more severe will be the punishment after the coming of Christ and the grace of the Spirit, especially for one bearing the priest's office now?

Regarding Mt 18:19-20 Chrysostom says that if you love your neighbors for Christ's sake and are virtuous, Christ will be with you. Love for Christ's sake is firm, impregnable, not to be broken. Nothing can tear it asunder. Let us imitate Christ's love who even treated his enemies with kindness.

Concerning Mt 19:3-12 Chrysostom holds that divorce is not only against the law of God. It is also against nature since it involves severing "one flesh". The expressions "cleaving" and "one flesh" denote that God in creation sought for a great union in marriage. Virginitiy for Heaven's sake is exceeding in greatness. It is not a matter of law but of gift from above and free choice. Regarding the parable of the ten virgins (Mt 25:1-13), however, he says virginitiy without virtue is of no benefit.⁴

On a Few Relevant Passages of 1 and 2 Corinthians

With respect to 1 Cor 5-6 Chrysostom says unclean desire makes the soul captive and blinds one. This is why fornication, drunkenness and gluttony do not seem evil to the heathen and worthy of punishment. "Flee fornication" here means that we should deliver ourselves from that evil with

4. See Homilies 17, 49, 59, 61-2, 70, 75, 78 and 87 on Matthew (NPNF, Vol. X, 117, 309, 371, 374, 382, 384, 429, 455, 470-1 and 585); and Homily 30 on Acts (NPNF, Vol. XI, 192).

zeal. In the fornicator the entire body becomes defiled. Fornication is a dreadful thing, an agent of everlasting punishment. Even in this world it brings with it 10,000 woes (anxieties, fears...). Drunkenness is the mother of fornication. Abortion is murder before birth, making the chamber of procreation a chamber for murder. It is an abuse of a gift of God and involves fighting with His laws. We should reverence Christ who dwells within us and continue to be chaste.⁵

Regarding 1 Cor 7:1-2 Chrysostom says marriage is a remedy to eliminate the evil of fornication. Marriage was instituted for two purposes, to make us chaste and parents. The reason of chastity takes precedence, especially now when the whole world is filled with our kind. Marriage does not always lead to child-bearing, but it sets a limit to desire by teaching us to keep to one wife. Before the hope of resurrection, offspring were a great comfort - they continued one's image and memory. With the hope of the resurrection there remains only one reason for marriage - to avoid fornication.⁶

Concerning 1 Cor 7:3-5 Chrysostom says husband and wife are not their own masters but each other's servants. Both are equally responsible for the honor of their marriage bed. Adultery is worse than fornication. A husband must keep his wife's property (i.e. his body) intact, without diminishing or damaging it. The wife should do the same. Here there is complete equality. If you diminish chastity you will pay the penalty to God who instituted marriage. Do not neglect your salvation. Adultery empties out love and undermines good will. By such sins many families are broken, many

5. See Homilies 11, 12 and 18 on 1 Corinthians (NPNF, Vol. XII, 61, 101-2); Homily 43 on John (NPNF, Vol. XIV, 235); and Homily 24 on Romans (NPNF, Vol. XI, 520).

6. From a Catholic perspective, Chrysostom's view on the purpose of marriage should be understood in the light of later Catholic teaching on marriage which holds in part that the "matrimonial covenant" is by its nature ordered toward both "the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of offspring..." CCC, n. 1601, quoting CIC, c. 1055,1.

battles started. Virtue on the other hand gives birth to love which brings innumerable blessings. Why should husband and wife not refuse one another? Because great evils - adulteries and broken homes - often result from such abstinence without the other's consent. Regarding their abstaining by agreement to devote themselves to prayer, Chrysostom says this refers to unusually intense prayer since Christians are to pray all the time. He notes that sexual relations do not make prayer unclean. They simply occupy one's attention.⁷

With respect to 1 Cor 7:7-9 Chrysostom interprets Paul as saying that continence is better than marriage, but if you suffer violent, burning passion, then relieve it through marriage. God has annexed carnal desire to the generation of children, to maintain a succession among us, without forbidding us from traveling the higher road of continence. Regarding verses 17-24 Chrysostom says Paul attacks slavery in its worst form, slavery to evil/sin. He notes that a person freed from passions and vices of the mind is truly free even if he (she) is a slave. For example, Joseph's master's wife (Gn 39:7-30), although free, was a slave to lust (she was not even free to disobey her lust). Although a slave, Joseph was free to practice virtue and everything he did brought him glory.

Concerning 1 Cor 7:25-40 Chrysostom says that one does not sin in marrying unless one has vowed to be a virgin. With respect to remaining a virgin or marrying Paul uses gentle persuasion and leaves the choice to those concerned. Sex is not evil, but it is a hindrance to one who desires to devote all one's strength to prayer. Abstaining from marriage gives one more leisure for the service of God, but this is of no advantage if not employed so. Anyone anxious about worldly affairs is not really a virgin. On the other hand, one with an uncorrupt soul is a "virgin" (cf. 2 Cor 11:2), even though she (he) has a husband (wife). The Lord seeks after virginity of soul. To marry

7. See "Homily 19 on 1 Corinthians 7" and "Sermon on Marriage", in Roth (see note 1), 26-28 and 81-88.

"in the Lord" means to marry with the virtues of prudence and decency. Whether one is a virgin, in a first marriage, or a widow (widower) who has remarried, Chrysostom urges that we seek holiness that we may be counted worthy to see God and attain the Kingdom of heaven.⁸

In commenting on 2 Cor Chrysostom states that no self-indulger has fellowship with Christ. Lust (every inordinate desire) is engendered from habit and idleness (i.e. having nothing to do). The cure is to give oneself to other things to distract the soul: books, prayer, assisting others, necessary cares, wisdom. A healthy fear of God, remembrance of hell and desire of the kingdom of heaven are able to quench the fire of lust. Do not continually associate with someone who tempts you, who enkindles lust. Chastity does not involve being a passionless person, but self-restraint. Choose to see the beauty of soul (i.e. character and virtue) in others. Let us strive to please God continually - this is life, the kingdom, 10,000 goods. Referring to the golden rule (Mt 7:12) Chrysostom says that Jesus shows us that virtue is natural.⁹

On the Relationship of Husband and Wife (Eph 5:22-33)

In a long homily on Eph 5:22-33¹⁰ Chrysostom says that no relationship between human beings is as close as that of husband and wife if they are united as they ought to be. God providentially created this close union. The love of eros, planted deep within our inmost being, attracts the bodies of men and women to each other. Man and woman are not independent or self-sufficient of each other. The love of husband and wife is a force that welds society together. When harmony prevails

8. See "Homily 19 on 1 Corinthians 7" in Roth (see note 1), 29-42; and Homily 85 on John and Homily 28 on Hebrews (NPNF, Vol. XIV, 318 and 498).

9. See Homilies 1, 7, 11, and 17 on 2 Corinthians (NPNF, Vol. XII, 274, 316-17, 335 and 362-3); and Homily 6 on 2 Timothy and Homily 36 on John (NPNF, Vol. XIII, 496, and Vol. XIV, 127, respectively).

10. See Homily 20 on Ephesians 5:22-33 in Roth (see note 1), 43-64.

in marriage, the children are raised well, the household is kept in order, and great benefits, both for families and states, are produced. When it is otherwise, everything is thrown into confusion, turned upside down.

Chrysostom understands the wife's submission to her husband to be for the sake of harmony.¹¹ Where there is equal authority there never is peace. Neither a household nor the Church can be a democracy. When we are led by the Spirit of Christ, then there is peace. Authority must necessarily rest in one person. The wife is a secondary authority. She possesses real authority and equality of dignity with her husband. Chrysostom says the wife's submission is to be considered primarily as part of her service to the Lord rather than for her husband's sake. The Church (including both husband and wife) is to be submissive to Christ.

The husband as head has the responsibility of leader and provider. He is to behave as Christ, caring for his wife as Christ cares for the Church. He should be willing to endure any suffering for her, even to give his life if necessary. The husband should not threaten or disgrace his wife, but relate to her with kindness, love and patience, even if she mocks him. The wife should not be afraid of her husband. Where love prevails everything else follows. Where love is absent fear will be of no use. Fear is no substitute for the power of love which binds husband and wife together in harmony. A wife who loves her husband will respect him and not stubbornly contradict him. A husband and wife should each do their duty, obey God's law, even if the other does not.

11. Concerning "submission" and "headship" within marriage, I think it is again (see Ch. II, note 92, above) worthwhile to refer to Pope John Paul II's teaching in *Mulieris Dignitatem* (Ottawa: Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1988), n. 24. Referring to Eph 5:21 he says in part, "All the reasons in favour of the 'subjection' of woman to man in marriage must be understood in the sense of a 'mutual subjection' of both 'out of reverence for Christ'". We can also note here that Chrysostom's own teaching on this subject was quite enlightened within his context of a society that did not question patriarchy as our society does.

Whoever you marry, Chrysostom continues, you will never be as estranged as the Church was from Christ. The Church was corrupt, foolish, disobedient; Christ sacrificed Himself for her in her corrupt state (cf. Rm 5:7-8). He accepted her and made her beautiful (Ep 5:26-27). Chrysostom reminds each husband that his wife is God's creation. A husband who reproaches his wife whom he considers not beautiful - something over which she has no control - condemns the One who made her. Praise, hatred and love based on outward beauty come from impure souls. Pride, foolishness, and contempt of others are evils that arise if outward beauty is a concern. Outward beauty only gives pleasure for a short time. Familiarity causes admiration of it to fade and it can be immediately lost by disease. Instead seek beauty of soul, which God requires, and imitate the Bridegroom of the Church. Look for affection, gentleness and humility in a wife. Love that begins on honest grounds (i.e. its object is beauty of soul) continues ardently. Let us seek beauty of soul not wealth and social status which are external things. Passion for money corrupts and ruins us.

Eph 5:28-29, which calls husbands to love their wives as their own bodies, presents a plain demanding illustration. If the head (husband) despises its body (wife) it will itself die since the head is a member of the body as well. Spouses are no longer two bodies, but one in the same way as Christ and the Father are one. Concerning the "one flesh" union of spouses, Chrysostom says, when a woman receives a man's seed with rich pleasure and it is mingled with her own substance she returns it as a child. A child, formed from the substance of each, is a bridge connecting mother and father, so the three become one flesh. Even if there is no child, the intercourse of spouses effects the joining of bodies and they are made one.¹²

We are members of Christ's body, recreated and sharing His nature, by partaking of His

12. See also Homily 12 on Colossians 4:18 in Roth (see note 1), 76.

mysteries (baptism, communion). Marriage is a great mystery. Married love is not invalidated by its allegorical meaning, by its reference to the greater mystery of Christ marrying His Bride, the Church (v. 32). Marriage is a mystery in that one leaves one's parents with whom one has been in such close contact for many years and unites more closely to another whom one has not always known. The text (in quoting Gn 2:24) does not say the husband merely dwells with his wife, but that he clings to her. This demonstrates the closeness of the union and the sincerity of love intended. To marry in Christ is spiritual, not of blood nor will of the flesh. If marriage were to be condemned, Paul (Chrysostom assumes Paul wrote Ephesians) would never call Christ a bridegroom and the Church a bride.

The Christian household is a little Church. By seeking the things that please God and by becoming a good husband and wife it is possible to surpass all others in virtue. Chrysostom presents the household of Abraham, Sarah, Isaac and their servants united in harmony and piety as a perfect illustration of the precept concerning "headship" and "submission". Abraham in love always did what Sarah, his wife, asked; she respected him; their son was virtuous; and their chief servant was most trustworthy. Spouses should avoid quarrels and disagreements. They should not be unreasonably suspicious of each other.

A husband should love his wife and do everything for Christ's sake, in a spirit of obedience to Him. Chrysostom urges that we painstakingly care for our wives and children. Then we will have a good defense before the judgment seat of Christ. Let us be detached from money, strive above all else for virtue and keep the fear of God before our eyes. A husband should teach his wife not only with words, but by his example of detachment from high social position, and by his gentleness, temperance, and self-control. (Elsewhere he says a wife of good example will be able to give her

husband fitting counsel, and no teacher is so effective as a persuasive wife.¹³) A husband should advise his wife against expensive clothes and jewelry. Her appearance should be dignified; their house furnished neatly and soberly. By taking no pleasure in worldly excess, by shunning immodest behavior and by not engaging in idle conversations, their marriage will be free from the evil influences that are so popular these days. A young bride will soon discover how delightful it is to live in this way.

Whenever a husband gives his wife advice, he should always begin by telling her how much he loves her, more than gold or his own life. Their only hope should be that the two of them pass through this life so as to be united in the world to come, in Christ's kingdom, in perfect love - perfectly one with Him and each other, and their pleasure will know no bounds. Life here is brief and fleeting. A husband should show his wife that he values her company. He should esteem her in the presence of friends and children, and praise her good acts. If she does anything foolish he should advise her patiently. A wife should never nag her husband.

Pray together at home and go to Church, Chrysostom continues. Afterwards ask each other the meaning of the readings and prayers. Remind one another that nothing in life is to be feared except offending God. If your marriage is like this, your perfection will rival the holiest of monks.

Since your bodies are one, your possessions should not be divided but held in common in marriage. You should not speak of "yours" and "mine", but say to each other, "I (i.e. everything) am yours" (cf. 1 Cor 7:4). Husbands praise your wives. Do not call her by name alone but with terms of endearment, honor and love. Prefer her above all others, teach her to fear God and your house will be filled with 10,000 blessings. Seek what is perfect (the kingdom of God) and secondary

13. See Homily 70 on John in NPNF, Vol. XIV, 256; and Homily 19 on 1 Cor 7 in Roth (see note 1), 33, respectively.

things will follow (cf. Mt 6:33). Children generally acquire the character of their parents. If we study the Scriptures we will find lessons to guide us in everything we need. In this way we will please God and gain the blessings He promised to those who love Him.

On Parents and Children (Eph 6:1-4)

Regarding Eph 6:1-4 Chrysostom first says that husband and wife together have authority over the children.¹⁴ The passage is short since children have a short span of attention. It addresses them on their level. It does not speak of the kingdom to come, which they are not able to understand, but of a long life, what they want. If parents live according to God's law, children will willingly submit to the same law. To obey in the Lord means to obey in what pleases, not displeases the Lord. This passage lays a foundation for the virtuous life. One who does not honor parents will never treat others with kindness. Anything begun on a good foundation proceeds to the proper conclusion.

Parents, do not provoke your children to anger by overburdening them as if they were slaves or by disowning them. Everything should take second place to bringing your children up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. Concern for spiritual things will unite the family. Children are exposed to all sorts of folly and bad examples; they need remedies for these. Give them a pattern to imitate. Children about to go out into the world stand in greater need of Scriptural knowledge than monks. From their earliest years teach them to study the Bible and to love true wisdom. Consider how Hannah commended her son Samuel to God, who was able to make him great. It is praiseworthy to dedicate children, whom God has given, to God.

Bring up your children with good rules. Form them in good habits from the earliest age. Let

14. See Homily 21 on Ephesians 6:1-4 in Roth (see note 1), 65-72. I have also integrated here some of Chrysostom's teaching on bringing up children as found in Homily 9 on Timothy (NPNF, Vol. XIII, 436-7).

us not indulge them. Especially let us train them in chastity - much attention will be necessary. The one who is chaste before marriage will be chaste after marriage. Sometimes it will be necessary to advise, sometimes to warn, and sometimes to threaten our children. Children are a great charge. Let us bestow great care upon them. It is absurd, as many do, to take more care of one's possessions than one's children. Mothers, prepare your daughters for marriage. Instruct them to be pious, modest, despisers of wealth, indifferent to ornament. They will then save not only themselves but also their husbands, their children and grandchildren. Good branches shoot forth from a good root. Let your sons be steady, sober, modest, learn to govern their appetites, be good economists, affectionate and submissive to rule.

Teach your children to think lightly of this life's passing glories. These lessons are not learned from a skillful professor but from divine revelation. Give your child great things as true wisdom, not little things as possessions and rhetoric. Character not cleverness is needed. Worldly learning is not worthless, but it should not be an exclusive preoccupation. Wealth is a hindrance. It leaves us unprepared for the hardships of life. Let us raise children in a way that they can face any trouble. When we teach our children to be gentle, forgiving, good (attributes of God), generous, and to love their fellow human beings, we instill virtue in their souls and reveal the image of God within them.

Our task is to educate both ourselves and our children in godliness. If a man whose children are unruly is unworthy to be a bishop (cf. Tit 1:6), how can he be worthy of the kingdom of heaven? The virtue of those for whom we are responsible is also necessary for our salvation. Let us beg God to help us in our task. God will bring this work to perfection if we try to do our task. Let all we do be to the glory of God and our salvation through Jesus our Lord.

On Marrying Well

Chrysostom also has some interesting things to say concerning choosing a wife (and husband), and how a wedding should be celebrated.¹⁵ Show foresight when you are about to marry a wife, he says. You cannot return her. First of all read the laws of the Church (not only those of the state). Neglect of God's law brings inescapable punishment. Take every care to choose a good, kind, docile wife who is well-ordered and compatible with your character. A benefit of this is that you will love her intensely. If you marry a surly woman you must reform her with gentleness and kindness, as Christ did the Church. If there is some wickedness in your wife, do not reject her but expel the evil. Even if your wife is incurable, she is your limb, "one flesh" with you. We will receive great reward for our attempts to teach and educate her, for our patience.

Do not consider marriage, such a great mystery, lightly or casually. Marriage is not a business venture but a fellowship for life. To marry with concerns of money and possessions as though buying and selling, rather than inquiring into the way of life and morals of the other, is an insult to the gifts of God. Let us seek virtue of soul and nobility of character that we may enjoy tranquility, harmony and lasting love. Marriage exists not for strife and contention, but that we may have a refuge, a consolation in times of trouble, and enjoy another's help. Seek a gentle, pious and chaste wife who will use well what we have. In a good marriage a warm and genuine friendship holds between spouses. A man who truly loves his wife continues always content with her.

Chrysostom urges parents to weep for your sons and daughters when you see them led astray. Since marriage is a bond ordained by God and an image of something far greater, the Church and Christ, why celebrate it in a silly and immodest manner? Our mysteries (including marriage) are

15. See "How to Choose a Wife," "Homily 12 on Colossians 4:18" and "Sermon on Marriage" in Roth (see note 1), 89-114, 73-80 and 81-83 respectively; Homily 73 on Matthew (NPNF, Vol. X, 443); and Homily 9 on Timothy (NPNF, Vol. XIII, 436-7).

to be celebrated quietly, with decency, reverence and modesty. Referring to Heb 13:4, he says, I want to purify your wedding celebrations and restore marriage to its due nobility. When drunkenness arrives, chastity departs. Choose edifying songs not satanic ones for your wedding. If you ask Christ he will perform an even greater miracle than in Cana (cf. Jn 2). He will transform the water of your unstable passions into the wine of spiritual unity. There is nothing more pleasurable than virtue, nothing sweeter than orderliness, nothing more honorable than dignity. Look for a husband with piety, gentleness, wisdom and fear of the Lord, not superfluous things as money and social position, if you want happiness.

Parents, pray that your children will each find a virtuous spouse. Chrysostom favors early marriage - the bodies of the spouses being pure, he says, their love will be more ardent. Beseech Christ to be present at your wedding, as He was at Cana. Christ is not ashamed to come since marriage images His presence in the Church. Invite people of good character, the clergy (this will assure Christ's presence - cf. Mt 10:40), and the choirs of the poor. Christ is present when the poor enter. The prayer of widows and the poor is more beneficial than any amount of laughter and dancing. Avoid excessive expense, and may the bride dress modestly. Let there be no drunkenness but an abundance of spiritual joy at your banquets. Chrysostom wonders whether we can even call most weddings such, the way they are celebrated as spectacles these days. Christ present at a wedding brings cheerfulness, pleasure, moderation, modesty, sobriety, health; Satan brings anxiety, pain, excessive expense, indecency, envy, drunkenness. Let us avoid such evils and may God count us worthy to obtain the good things He has promised to those who love Him.

On Love

Concerning love Chrysostom says God is loving and beneficent towards us. He does not force

but draws all that will to Himself by persuasion and benefits. It is ridiculous to say we love God in words and oppose Him by our deeds. Love abstains from evils, performs good deeds and fulfills the Law. We shall be like God if we love all people, even our enemies. Nothing so much causes a right life as love - this attracts the heathen more than miracles. Love is the beginning and end of every virtue. Virtue leads to life and has a great deal of pleasure attached to it. Vice, however, has a great deal of pain attached to it. If we are earnest in succeeding in virtue it will be light and palatable to us. Nothing makes us so wise as virtue. All wickedness has its beginning in folly - sin is unreasonable. Let us school ourselves in one virtue this month, and when we have got into the habit of this virtue let us go to another, guarding what is already gained and acquiring others. Marriage, which is honorable (cf. Heb 13:4), is not a hindrance to virtue. Rather the ill use of marriage is. Paul's greetings to Priscilla and Aquila, his helpers in Christ (Rm 16:3-5), prove that it is possible in the married state to be noble and virtuous, and to love Christ.

Regarding Jesus' new commandment, Chrysostom asks, do you see how the love of God is intertwined with our own? True brotherly affection and friendship is eager to help the other in spiritual things. Let us love with brotherly affection, without dissimulation. Let us love Christ as we ought to, doing everything for His sake, not for reward. One caught with the fire of Christ's love is as far from being taken captive by any passion, as gold refined in the fire and purified is free from alloy. If we love Christ, we would know that to offend Him Whom we love would be more painful than hell. We do not have language to describe the experience of blessedness, the spiritual joy and the untold treasure of good things when we have Christ as our beloved and lover. Let us leave everything to cling to that love.¹⁶

16. Regarding love and virtue see Homily 52 on Acts and Homilies 5, 10, 12, 21, 23 and 30 (NPNF, Vol. XI, 312, 366, 401, 424, 503, 514, and 530); and Homilies 10, 19, 20, 42, 72, 76 and

B. St. Augustine of Hippo

1. His Life and Influence

Augustine was born November 13, 354 at Tagaste, a village in North Africa near Hippo Regius. His father, Patrick, who was pagan, embraced Christianity shortly before dying in 371. His mother, Monica, was a saintly Christian. Augustine studied philosophy and rhetoric at schools of Madaura and Carthage.

In his *Confessions* (his autobiography), 2:2, Augustine says that in his sixteenth year he gave himself wholly to the service of the life of his flesh. He speaks of his "hot confusion", "foolish youth" and "shameful actions", and says, "Through my fornications I was scattered and poured out, and my ebullience was dissipated.... I was controlled by the madness of sensuality, legitimate by human standards but illicit in terms of Thy [God's] laws." In his relationships the moderate relation of mind to mind was not maintained according to the bright bond of friendship, but darkened and beclouded by concupiscence and lust. Augustine says he broke the bonds of God's lawful restrictions regarding sex and marriage, but he did not escape God's punishments. All his illicit pleasures were befouled with most bitter aversions - God makes suffering a lesson, striking that He may heal (cf. Dt 32:39).¹⁷

Augustine says that at that time his father took no pains as to how he was growing up before God or how chaste he was. His mother, however, a faithful follower of the Lord, "most carefully 77 on John, and Homilies 3, 5, 7 and 25 on Hebrews (NPNF, Vol. XIV, 35, 67, 72, 150, 266, 280, 282, 381, 392, 402 and 477).

17. FOC, Vol. 21, trans. by Vernon J. Bourke. Besides Augustine's own *Confessions* [C], for material in this section I have relied on FEF, Vol. 3, pp. 1 and 82; and "Prolegomena: St. Augustine's Life and Work" by Philip Schaff, NPNF, Vol. 1, 1-24. References to Augustine's works will first be given in the notes here. Subsequent references will be given in the text in abbreviated form, noting book (if applicable) and chapter numbers.

admonished me, that I should not indulge in fornication and, above all, not commit adultery with the wife of another man." He says he did not realize then that God was speaking through her. He was ashamed to be less wanton than his contemporaries who boasted about their shameful exploits. He found pleasure not only in debased actions, but also in boasting of such, some things of which he had not actually done.(C 2:3)

Augustine says he sought to love and be loved, but he muddied friendship with the filth of concupiscence and the scum of lust. He took pride in being cultured, but experienced bitterness, jealousy, suspicions, fears, fits of anger and quarrels.(C 3:1) He lived with a woman, not in lawful marriage but in a restless union of wanton love and imprudent passion, in which a child that was not wanted was born. Augustine notes the great difference between this and the moderated pleasure of conjugal love mutually entered into for the generation of offspring.(C 4:2) His son Adeodatus was born in 372.

In 374 he joined the Manichean sect, which he remained with for nine years. Concerning his time as a Manichean, Augustine says they were led astray and led others astray through a variety of passions, teachings which they call liberal and the false name of religion. They pursued the emptiness of popular glory and immoderate lusts.(C 4:1) When one of his friends died, the weariness of life and fear of death weighed heavily upon him. Although other friends consoled him, Augustine says he did not know how to love people then as they should be loved. He loved them as a substitute for God.(C 4:6-8)

Augustine abandoned Manicheanism in 383 after meeting and being disillusioned at the ignorance of one of their teachers, Faustus (cf. C 5:6-7). Later that year he journeyed to Italy and obtained a position as teacher of rhetoric in Milan. He read various Neoplatonic writings (in Latin

translation) which helped to correct some of his ideas concerning God and being. Although these presented certain beautiful ideals, they did not provide him with power to conform to them.(Cf. C 7:9 and 21). The prayers of his mother, the preaching of Ambrose, bishop of Milan, a biography of St. Anthony and the Epistles of Paul were instrumental in his conversion to Catholic Christianity, which took place in several stages.

Before his conversion to God and Christianity were complete, Augustine relates how he delayed to devote himself wholly to God. He thought he would be very unhappy if he was deprived of feminine embraces. At that time he believed continence was a result of one's own power which he did not have. He was not yet aware that it was granted by God and so did not ask for it (cf. Wis 8:21).(C 6:11) Chiefly through the efforts of his mother, who was concerned for his salvation, he was engaged to a girl who was two years too young to marry. The woman he had lived with was torn from him because she was an impediment to his marriage. But, because he was still a slave of lust rather than a lover of marriage, he was impatient to wait the two years. He took up with another woman but not as a wife. Nothing kept him from falling deeper into the abyss of carnal pleasures, he says, except the fear of death and God's future judgment.(C 6:13-16)

Further on he says, "Lust is the product of perverse will, and when one obeys lust habit is produced, and when one offers no resistance to habit necessity is produced. By means ... of these interconnected links ... I was held in the grip of a harsh bondage."(C 8:5) At that time his new will to serve God for His own sake and enjoy Him as the only sure joyfulness was not yet capable of overcoming the older will. As he became more aware of his iniquity and wretchedness he even prayed, "Give me chastity and self-restraint, but not just yet."(C 8:7) He was afraid God would quickly cure him from the disease of concupiscence, which he preferred to have satisfied rather than

extinguished. And so he was hesitant to tear away from the vanities of the flesh when first aware of the call to him to be continent. The chaste dignity of continence, tranquil and joyful, began to manifest itself. He became aware of continence as a fruitful mother of joys coming from espousal with God. Worldly things did not delight him then in comparison to God, but he was still held in thrall by woman and hesitated to choose the better state of celibacy. (Cf. C 8:1 and 11)

Augustine then relates how upon reading Rm 13:13-14 a peaceful light streamed into his heart and the dark shadows of doubt fled away. (C 8:12) He says the instant he bowed under the gentle yoke and burden of Christ Jesus, his Helper and Redeemer, it suddenly became sweet for him to do without the trifling things he had been afraid of losing. Christ, brighter than any light, sweeter than every pleasure of sense entered into their place. He says, "Now, my mind was free from the biting cares of ambition, of acquisition, of rolling about and scratching the scab of lust." (C 9:1)

Augustine then retired for several months to prepare himself to receive Baptism which he received with his son from Ambrose on Easter Sunday 387. Augustine gave up his profession and sold his possessions for the poor, to devote himself exclusively to the service of Christ until he died. A few months later his mother died in Ostia. Augustine returned to Africa and spent the next three years at Tagaste in contemplative and literary refinement. His son died in 389. In 391 he was ordained to the priesthood (chosen against his will by the voice of the people) by the bishop of Hippo, Valerius, whom he succeeded in 395. In this office he labored for thirty-five years.

Augustine's outward mode of life was extremely simple and mildly ascetic. He was devoted to the poor and lived with his clergy in an apostolic community of goods. He made and kept a voluntary vow of poverty and celibacy. His house was made into a seminary of theology. In combining the clerical and monastic life, he was unwittingly the founder of the Augustinian order.

He also founded religious societies of women. The object of his preaching was that all might live together with Christ. Augustine was the intellectual head of the Western Church of his time. He took an active interest in all theological and ecclesiastical questions. He was a champion of orthodox doctrine against various heresies including Manicheanism, Donatism and Pelagianism. Augustine engaged in controversy with a genuine Christian spirit, patience and love in truth.

In the latter part of his life he was troubled by increasing bodily infirmities and the spread of the barbarian Vandals over his country. The last ten days of his life were spent in prayer and retirement. On August 28, 430 he died peacefully, in full possession of his faculties and in the presence of many friends and pupils.

Augustine's numerous writings were composed over a forty-four year period, although those before his conversion are lost. His *Confessions*, written in 397, are the most widely read of all patristic literature. His *De Civitate Dei* (City of God), begun in 413 and completed in 426, is the deepest and richest apologetic work of antiquity.

Augustine is generally most highly regarded among the church fathers in both the Roman Catholic Church and Protestant churches. He, however, has had little influence on the Greek Church. His writings ruled the theology of the Middle Ages. In virtue of his dialectic mind and devout heart, he can be considered the father of both scholasticism and mysticism. Augustine's theology is grounded less upon biblical exegesis than upon his Christian and churchly mind which was saturated with scriptural truths. He believed we ought to wish our view be that of the Scriptures rather than the other way around. Augustine excels in insight. He is more of a thinker than a scholar. He sought to apprehend the divine with united power of mind and heart, of bold thought and humble faith. He never depreciated reason, but subordinated it to faith and used it to defend

revealed truth. Augustine is properly the founder of a Christian philosophy and he will always be consulted in speculative discussions of Christian doctrine.

Augustine is a philosophical and theological genius of the first order, who also had a heart full of Christian love and humility. Although he is a great and original thinker, many today would find some of his views questionable or objectionable. For example, he thought that only a minority of people were saved. Although he first supported religious freedom, he later supported coercion (but never the death penalty) in this area. Augustine, however, submitted his private judgment to the authority of the Church. We will consider below (see a few of the notes) how official Catholic teaching has modified some of his teachings on marriage.

2. A Summary of his Teaching on Marriage, Sex and Chastity

Augustine begins his *De Bono Coniugali* ("The Good of Marriage"),¹⁸ written in 401, by speaking of human nature as social and friendship as a great and natural good. The first natural tie of human society is that of man and wife. The marriage of male and female is something good and is confirmed in the Gospel (cf. Mt 19:9 and Jn 2:1-11). Marriage is good not solely because of procreation, but also because of the natural companionship between the two sexes. (M 1-3) Marriage and intercourse are goods for the sake of friendship (a good sought for its own sake) since from them comes the propagation of the human race in which friendly association is a great good. (M 9) Marriage was instituted so that children might be born properly and decently. (M 17)

Against those who hold otherwise (e.g. the Manicheans of his time), Augustine affirms that

18. For Augustine's whole treatise on "The Good of Marriage" [M] see FOC, Vol. 27, 9-51, trans. by Charles T. Wilcox, M.M. Two other works of Augustine that will often be referred to are: "On Marriage and Concupiscence" [MC] (written 419-20), NPNF, Vol. 5, 263-308; and "City of God" [CG] (written 413-26), FOC, Vols. 8 (trans. by Demetrius B. Zema and Gerald G. Walsh, 1950), 14 (trans. by Gerald G. Walsh and Grace Monahan, 1952) and 24 (trans. by Gerald G. Walsh and Daniel J. Honan).

marriage is a good which can be defended by right reason against all charges. He speaks of a threefold good of marriage: *proles*, the generation of children, their spiritual regeneration to new life and raising them to be children of God (cf. 1 Tm 5:14); *fides*, the mutual fidelity of chastity of the spouses and their mutual service of sustaining each other's weakness for the avoidance of illicit intercourse (cf. 1 Cor 7:4); and *sacramentum*, the sanctity of the marriage bond which in the case of marriage in the City of God (i.e. in the Church) is indissoluble until the death of one of the spouses (cf. 1 Cor 7:10). Augustine says marriage "is a good in which the married are better in proportion as they fear God more chastely and more faithfully, especially if they also nourish spiritually the children whom they desire carnally."(M 19; see also M 6, 15, 20, 24)

Augustine calls his readers to love these nuptial blessings. The union of male and female for the purpose of generation is a natural good of marriage. Spouses owe fidelity equally to each other regarding the marriage debt. They each have authority or power over the other in a certain sense (cf. 1 Cor 7:3-5). Adultery violates marital fidelity. Breaking off an adulterous union (i.e. repenting of sin and returning to conjugal chastity), however, does not violate fidelity. Believing Christian spouses are to be faithful on account of each other and Christ. They are members of Christ and are not to form a new connection with another as long as both of them live. The sacramental bond (i.e. the nuptial contract in the city of our God) is neither lost nor destroyed (dissolved) by separation, divorce, adultery, or sterility (cf. 1 Cor 7:10-11). Concerning the latter, Augustine says, in the marriage of our women the sanctity of the sacrament is of more importance than the fecundity of the womb. The marriage bond should be guarded by husband and wife with concord and chastity. The sacrament of marriage is great regarding Christ and the Church, small regarding the married couple, but even then it is a sacrament of an inseparable union. There is no divorce or separation

forever in the case of Christ and the Church. The conjugal bond is so strong because it is a symbol of something greater than what could arise from our weak mortality.(Cf. Eph 5:32 - the Greek *mysterion* commonly translated as "mystery" in English is translated to *sacramentum* in the Latin Vulgate. See M 4, 7, 15 and 18; MC 1:5, 11, 19 and 23.)

Regarding Gen 1:27-28 Augustine holds that the blessing and command to increase, multiply and fill the earth is the very mission which God gave to marriage when He instituted it from the beginning. This is why He made the bodies of the two sexes so manifestly different. "The simple truth is, as is luminously clear from the bodies of the different sexes, that males and females were made as they were for the purpose of increasing and multiplying, and filling the earth by becoming fathers and mothers."(CG 14:22) The difference of the two sexes, their union pertaining to procreation, and their fruitfulness belongs to the blessing pronounced on the marriage institution. These things are all of God. All the natural endowments of soul and body are gifts of God made by God.(MC 1:4 and 2:14)

Augustine interprets woman's being made from the side of man (see Gen 2:18-24) as showing clearly how highly we were meant to esteem the relationship between husband and wife.(CG 12:28) The first married pair shows one husband with one wife. This better promotes the good purpose of marriage than one husband with many wives. Augustine, referring to New Testament texts concerning headship and submission in marriage, says it is more consonant with the order of nature that men rule over women than women over men.¹⁹

Sin, Intercourse and Fornication

Before the sin of our first parents, he says, the soul subject to God originally had mastery over

19. See note 11 above.

the body. But, with the soul deliberately deserting God, the flesh began to rebel against the spirit (cf. Gal 5:17).(CG 13:5) Before sin our first parents' love was perfectly serene, their mutual affection was that of a true and faithful married couple (CG 14:10; and MC 1:10)

The man and woman were naked and felt no shame (Gen 2:25) because "no desire stirred their organs in defiance of their deliberate decision." After sin, however, they were aware of their nakedness because they had been stripped of grace which had taken away shame as long as there was no law in their members warring against the law of their minds because of sin (cf. Rm 7:23).(CG 14:17) Augustine believed the organs of generation would have obeyed the will simply (as the hands and feet do) in the absence of lust. It is just, that in not obeying God human beings lost the obedience to their wills of their members responsible for their greatest function, the procreation of children. If our first parents had not sinned, the generation of children would have been through sexual intercourse. In Paradise sex and conception would have been as need required by deliberate choice and not by uncontrollable lust.(M 2; MC 1:7 and 2:53; CG 14:23 and 24). He says the "modesty of our human nature ... makes even the purest of parents to blush over the element of lust in the generative act".(CG 15:16) Carnal concupiscence is not of the essence of marriage, but an evil which is an accident of original sin (MC 1:19) Augustine thinks that both sexes will remain in the resurrection, but then there will be none of that lust which is the cause of shame in connection with sex. All will be as before the first sin.(CG 22:17)

Original sin (cf. Rm 5:12) arose from Adam's depraved will. Whence the corrupt will of human beings sprang. By Adam's sin the human race has become a wild olive tree. The remission of sins is referred to baptism and repentance. Jesus shall save His people from their sins (cf. Mt 1:21).(MC 1:37-38 and 2:37 and 60)

No one is wicked by nature but only by some defect. We should hate the sin but love the sinner.(CG 14:6) Sin arises when because of an immoderate leaning to lower goods, the higher - God, His Truth and Law - are deserted.(C 2:5)

Concerning the sins of those making progress, Augustine says these acts by people of good judgment are both blamed from the rule of perfection and praised because of the hope of fruit to come, as is the growing stalk because of the harvest. He says there is "often a difference between the species of the deed, and the mind of the agent, and the critical situation of hidden circumstance." Although God may command something and hide for a time the reason, who should doubt that it should be done even though opposed to the social conventions of some people? Only that society is just that serves God. True justice does not base its judgments on custom, but on the supremely right law of the omnipotent God.(C 3:7 and 9)

If a woman is involved in a sexual relationship of unmarried cohabitation, who would say she did not sin, even if she remains faithful to him, since she had relations with a man though she was not his wife. If she plans to marry another then this is adultery. It is honorable to refuse to have intercourse and not to give birth except with a husband. This equally applies to a man in such a situation. Marriage protects a couple from adultery and fornication (see 1 Cor 7:2-9). It is disgraceful to make use of a wife or husband for purposes of lust.(M 5-6)

Intercourse in marriage for the purpose of generating children involves no fault or sin because the mind's good will leads bodily pleasure instead of following its lead. Believers generate offspring with the purpose of their becoming children of God. 1 Th 4:3-5 (regarding knowing how to possess his vessel - interpreted as wife by Augustine - in sanctification and honor), he says, is to be applied to the carnal generation of children to be spiritually generated.

Marital embraces not having procreation as their object, but serving concupiscence, are permissible and pardonable, that no lapse occur into damnable (mortal) sins, fornications and adulteries (cf. 1 Cor 7:5-6). The Greek *syngnoma* of v. 6, commonly translated as "concession" in English, was translated to *venia* in the text Augustine used. This Latin word meaning permission also means forgiveness. Hence, it is understandable that Augustine thought that intercourse for satisfying concupiscence (in desiring carnal pleasure) with a spouse involves "venial" (i.e., pardonable) sin. He held that it is no sin to render the conjugal debt, but venial sin to exact it beyond the need of generation. Beyond this intercourse no longer obeys reason but passion. Augustine says the Latin term *passio* (passion) is usually understood as a term of censure in ecclesiastical usage. If a spouse prefers to live in perpetual continence, he or she is not to deny what the other wants because of weakness and incontinence, lest the other fall into damnable seductions through temptations of Satan and sin mortally. The somewhat immoderate demanding of the debt or intercourse in marriage that interferes with prayer is granted as a concession (cf. 1 Cor 7:6).²⁰

20. A number of contemporary exegetes think that the "concession" of 1 Cor 7:6 applies instead to marrying (E.g. Richard Kugelman, JBC, 51:37, says it refers to marrying lest one commit fornication - cf. vv. 2 and 7; and Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, NJBC, 49:36, says the "this", Greek *touto* of v. 6 points forward not backward.) or to periods of periodic abstinence within marriage (NJB, p. 1899, note e).

Official Catholic teaching has implicitly modified some of Augustine's teaching concerning conjugal relations. Concerning sexual pleasure Pope Pius XII in an "Address to Midwives," Oct. 29, 1951, says: "The Creator in His goodness and wisdom has willed to make use of the work of the man and the woman to preserve and propagate the human race, by joining them in wedlock. The same Creator has arranged that the husband and wife find pleasure and happiness of mind and body in the performance of that function. Consequently, the husband and wife do no wrong in seeking out and enjoying this pleasure. They are accepting what the Creator intended for them. ...the use of the natural, generative instinct and function is lawful in the married state only, and in the service of the purposes for which marriage exists. ...only in the married state and in the observance of these laws are the desires and enjoyment of that pleasure and satisfaction allowed."(*Official Catholic Teachings: Love and Sexuality*, 119-20, ed. Odile M. Liebard, Wilmington. N.C.: McGrath, 1978). Concerning conjugal love and the marital act the Second Vatican Council, GS, n. 49, says in part: "This love is uniquely expressed and perfected through the marital act. The actions within marriage

Marriage itself does not force this but endures it. Being demanding in marriage is a lesser sin than fornication.(see M 6-7, 10-11, 13; MC 1:5, 9, 13, 16-17, and 2:55)

Those who attempt to prevent propagation by wrong desire or evil appliance are not really spouses according to Augustine. He speaks of resorting to methods to secure barrenness or slaying offspring before birth as cruel lust. He says too that changing the natural use of sex into that which is contrary to nature (cf. Rm 1:26) is all the more damnable in a spouse.(M 10; MC 1:17)

Unholy spouses do not put a stain on the married state. Neither do concubines who have intercourse for the sake of children justify their concubinage. A subsequent honorable agreement, however, can unite in marriage those who had not been rightly united.(see M 14) "For, what food is to the health of man, intercourse is to the health of the race, and both are not without carnal pleasure, which, however, when modified and put to its natural use with a controlling temperance, cannot be a passion."(M 16) In his *Retractationes*, 2:22, Augustine says, "This was said since the good and proper use of passion is not a passion."²¹ As the fathers of New Testament times took food because of the duty to care for others, so the fathers of Old Testament times had intercourse

by which the couple are united intimately and chastely are noble and worthy ones. Expressed in a manner which is truly human, these actions signify and promote that mutual self-giving by which spouses enrich each other with a joyful and a thankful will."

Pope Paul VI in *Humanae Vitae* (Boston: Daughters of St. Paul, 1968) speaks of true conjugal love as involving a reciprocal personal gift of self. Sexual relations between husband and wife "do not cease to be lawful if, for causes independent" of their will, "they are foreseen to be infecund, since they always remain ordained toward expressing and consolidating their union."(n. 11) He speaks of the conjugal act as having two God-given meanings, unitive and procreative, which are to be safeguarded. One is not to directly will an impediment to procreation and deliberately make a conjugal act infertile. But when procreation is not desirable for just motives, spouses can have sexual relations during the infertile periods only "to manifest their affection and to safeguard their mutual fidelity. By so doing, they give proof of a truly and integrally honest love."(n. 16) Cf. also Pope John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio* (Boston: Daughters of St. Paul, 1981), n. 32, regarding the value and innate language of total reciprocal self-giving of conjugal love.

21. FOC, Vol. 27, p. 32, note 1.

because of the duty of caring for others. Children are to be propagated (then carnally and now spiritually) for charity, because of that great Mother Jerusalem.(cf. M 16)

The soul fornicates when it seeks things away from God.(see C 2:6) People who love fleeting things while despising God fornicate against Him.(C 5:12)

Concupiscence

Marriage is also good in that carnal lust (something bad) is turned to the honorable task of begetting children. Parental affection tempers and represses concupiscence of the flesh. A kind of dignity prevails when in the marital act husband and wife think of themselves as mother and father.(cf. M 3) Censuring lust, a disease, is not a condemnation of marriage.(cf. MC 1:6 and 2:55)

God commands us to refrain from concupiscence. Spouses should love each other but not the world and what is in it - lust of the flesh and of the eyes, and the pride of life (cf. 1 Jn 2:15-17 and 1 Cor 7:29-31). They should not love carnal concupiscence in themselves or each other.(cf. MC 1:15 and 20) Concupiscence of the eyes (1 Jn 2:16), Augustine says, means a craving to know, "a certain vain and curious desire - cloaked under the name of knowledge and science ... for gaining personal experience through the flesh." Augustine speaks of "a lust for experience and knowledge" not only regarding the beautiful and attractive, but also regarding a curiosity to try the contraries of these.(cf. C 10:35)

Concupiscence, a certain affection of an evil quality, remains after baptism as languor after recovery from disease. In the regenerate it is not itself sin any longer whenever they do not consent to it for illicit works. Concupiscence may be greater or less in different individuals according to their progress in renewal of the inner self. The mighty grace of God renews the inward self day by day, enabling us to delight in the law of God, to progress by perseverance and to be truly free, with

love that cheers, not with fear that torments. As God's gifts increase more and more, the soul can escape the snare of concupiscence even in sleep and follow God (i.e. so as not to consent to sensual images).(Augustine refers to his own experience regarding this in C 10:30) Concupiscence pulls down, but charity's power through God's Spirit lifts up.(cf. C 13:7) The grace of Christ delivers us so that we can serve the law of God with our minds by refusing our consent to the law of sin (cf. Rm 7:24-25). Even though we are not yet entirely freed of the desires of sin, there is real freedom and no condemnation for those in Christ even now (Rm 8:1-2).(cf. MC 1:25, 28, 30, 33 and 35-36).

Everyone, however exemplary, yields to some promptings of concupiscence and sins, however venially.(CG 1:9) A young child in which reason has not yet begun to fight yields practically to all pleasure. But, as a boy grows older, he must take on the war against passion like a man. As long as passions have not been strengthened by constant victory they are easily conquered and put to rout, but if they have acquired the habit of conquest and domination, they can be defeated only by difficult effort. This can only be truly and sincerely made with love of true holiness. Such love can be found only through faith in Christ. There exist cases where open vices are overcome by hidden vices which pass for virtues, but which in reality are ministers of pride and self-complacency. Vices in truth are only vanquished by the love of God, a gift that none but God can give. This love is given in no other way than through Jesus, the Mediator (cf. 1 Tm 2:5). Few from early adolescence continue free from every mortal sin. Most, after they become conscious of responsibility to law, are first overcome by passion and violate the law. Then when they have recourse to grace they grieve and struggle against passion until with their will in subjection to God and their reason in control of the flesh, they conquer themselves.(cf. CG 21:16) Concerning the training of a child we love, Augustine speaks of law, education, corporal punishment and fear in disciplining the waywardness

of growing children, lest they grow stubborn and too wild to be tamed (Sir 30:12).(cf. CG 22:22)

"...a prohibition always increases an illicit desire so long as the love of and joy in holiness is too weak to conquer the inclination to sin; and, without the aid of divine grace, it is impossible for man to love in and delight in sanctity."(CG 13:5) Concerning the power of sin coming from the Law, which in itself is holy, Augustine refers to Rom 7:12-13 and 1 Cor 15:56.

Lust for sexual excitement can take such complete possession of the whole person that it practically paralyzes all power of deliberate thought.(cf. CG 4:16) One makes oneself bad by loving the good of any nature perversely and so losing something better. Lust is not a defect in bodies which are beautiful and pleasing, but a sin of loving corporal pleasures perversely by abandoning temperance which joins us in spiritual union with more beautiful realities. Reason is a capacity infused by God which awakens in a life that involves learning the perception of the true and pursuit of the good. It then flowers into that wisdom and virtue which enables the soul to battle with prudence, fortitude, temperance and justice against error, waywardness and other inborn weaknesses and to conquer them with the sole purpose of reaching the supreme and immutable Good.(cf. CG 22:8 and 24)

Chastity and Holiness

1 Cor 6:19 is said to all the faithful - this actual bodily substance and nature of ours is already God's temple in all the faithful. Therefore, the bodies of the married who remain faithful to themselves and the Lord are holy. Chastity in the married state is a gift of God (cf. 1 Cor 7:7). If not possessed we should seek it from Him; if possessed give Him thanks. The crown of marriage is the chastity of procreation and faithfulness in rendering the carnal debt. Holy spouses observe in all things a chaste and religious harmony. Spouses who are believers, religious, chaste and of

good will please the Lord and each other.(cf. M 11 and 18; MC 1:1, 15 and 35) Having been invited, the Lord came to a marriage (cf. Jn 2:1-11) in order to affirm conjugal chastity and to show that marriage is a sacrament. The "good wine" is His Gospel.²²

Separation in the case of adultery is lawful, but the bond of chastity remains; it is adultery to remarry or to marry a separated married person whose spouse is still alive (cf. Rm 7:2-3).²³ "...it is of the essence of chastity not to commit fornication, not to commit adultery, not to be stained with any illicit intercourse." Whoever does not observe these precepts acts against the commands of God and is not obedient.(cf. M 23)

There is no true chastity, conjugal, vidual or virginal, except which devotes itself to true faith (cf. Heb 11:6). A person is not really chaste who observes marital fidelity from any other motive than devotion to the true God, for example, to please people or to avoid trouble. Some sins are overpowered by others.(cf. MC 1:4-5)

Virginity or Celibacy

Augustine says continence (celibacy) is a gift of God - no one can be continent without God giving it. "Through continence, in fact, we are gathered in and returned to the One from whom we have flowed out into the many."(C 10:29)

Marriage and continence are two goods, the second of which is better (cf. Lk 10:39 regarding Martha and Mary). Although celibacy is better, it is better to marry if one does not have self-control. The weakness of incontinence is hindered from falling into the ruin of profligacy by the honorable estate of marriage (cf. 1 Cor 7). Concerning this he says he wants both younger women

22. "Homilies on John," 9:2, FEF, Vol. 3, 116.

23. Cf. "Adulterous Marriages," 2:4:4, FEF, Vol. 3, 133.

and men to marry to be mothers and fathers of families to give no occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully (see 1 Tm 5:14). With respect to continence, Augustine thinks that with all nations abundantly producing offspring, there is no necessity to do so.(cf. MC 1:18) Abstention from the function of human generation (marriage) is not good in itself, but only when inspired by faith in God, who is the Supreme Good (cf. M 8, 10; MC 1:18; CG 15:20). "Continence as such is better than wedlock, yet, by any sound and true criterion, a married Christian is better than a celibate pagan.... a married man of great faith who is most obedient to God is certainly better than a continent one who has less faith and obedience."(CG 16:36).

Obedience is a greater good than continence. In a certain sense obedience is the mother of all virtues. Continence, not of the body but of the soul, is a virtue. Both the celibacy of John and the marriage of Abraham did service for Christ in accord with the needs of the time. The patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob) were spouses and parents for the sake of Christ. Augustine warns virgins dedicated to God to be humble (cf. Sir 3:20).(cf. M 21, 23 and 26) Nevertheless, the chastity of the unmarried is better than the chastity of marriage.(cf. M 21-22)

Augustine holds that it is no sin to marry (1 Cor 7:9 and 28), but when virginal continence (and that of widowhood) "has been sought and chosen and consecrated in the obligation of a vow it is damnable not only to enter upon a marriage but, although one does not actually marry, even to desire to marry." He says that Christ wanted virginity to be of free choice. "In being born of a Virgin who chose to remain a Virgin even before she knew who was to be born of her, Christ wanted to approve virginity rather than to impose it."²⁴

Concerning virginity, Augustine also says that the virginal marriage of Joseph and Mary was

24. "The Advantage of Widowhood," 9:12, and "Holy Virginity," 4:4, FEF, Vol. 3, 110 and 71 respectively.

a true marriage. Their marriage effected the entire good of marriage. There was offspring, faithfulness and a marriage bond. Their mutual pledge (i.e. regarding remaining virgin) and keeping it would have led to a firmer bond.

By this example it is strongly intimated to the married faithful that even when continence is observed by their common consent, their marriage can still perdure and still be called a marriage, not by a physical joining of the sexes but by the maintaining of the affections of the mind.²⁵

Augustine speaks of the time before Christ as a time for marriage and propagation, to preserve a people for Christ's coming. In the time after Christ's coming propagation is no longer of the same necessity. The way is open for the regeneration of an abundance of spiritual offspring.(cf. MC 1:12-14)

3. On Love and Friendship

Concerning the two commandments of love Augustine says it is not wrong to love oneself so long as one loves God. We must help all we can influence (spouse, children...) to love God and wish to be similarly helped by our fellow human beings. Right order means to harm no one and help whomever one can. Two societies have issued from two kinds of love: worldly society from a selfish love which dared to despise even God; the communion of saints is rooted in a love of God that is ready to trample on self.(cf. CG 14:14 and 28)

God's Love, Good Spirit and Gift inflame us and lift us up to the peace of Jerusalem. The simple love of God and neighbor may be expressed in many ways by a multiplicity of symbols and innumerable tongues. God's works praise Him, so that we may love Him.(cf. C 13:10, 24 and 33)

"Bodily beauty, created as it is by God, is still but a lowly good, fleeting and fleshly, and cannot

25. "The Harmony of the Evangelists," 2:1:2, FEF, Vol. 3, 61.

be loved without sin if it is preferred to God, who from eternity to eternity is Goodness itself." Any created thing can be loved both well (when due order is observed) and ill (when that order is disturbed). "It is only when the Creator is rightly loved, that is, when He is loved for what He is, and when no creature is loved in place of Him, that there cannot be too much love." "The best brief definition of virtue is to say it is the ordering of love." He refers to Can 2:4 praying "Order charity in me."(CG 15:22) Whether a person leads a more contemplative or active life, "What is not indifferent is that he love truth [contemplate God] and do what charity demands [regarding the needs of his/her neighbor].(CG 19:19)

"There are two kinds of love, divine and human." It is licit for one to love one's spouse, children, friends and fellow citizens with a human love. But, even the impious are capable of that love.²⁶ A married man is not to allow anything in his love and pleasure regarding his wife to come before Christ, his foundation. The pleasures of passionate love on earth are made legitimate by means of the marital union. With respect to Mt 10:37 Augustine says that one who puts his human loves (i.e. regarding father, mother, wife, son, daughter) above the love of Christ, will not be saved.(cf. CG 21:26) In a good marriage the order of charity flourishes.(cf. M 3)

A good person is someone who loves rightly. If someone loves rightly, he (or she) also believes and hopes rightly. How can one, who does not believe in God, love God? To live well is nothing else than to seek and love God, the greatest good, with all one's heart, soul and mind. It is the task of temperance, fortitude, justice and prudence (i.e. the cardinal virtues) to preserve such love. God, who is the good of every good, should not be loved as this or that good, but as good itself. Nothing is more excellent than the gift of God's love, without which His other gifts are productive of nothing.

26. "Sermons," 349:1, FEF, Vol. 3, 33.

Concerning love Augustine says, too:

For without the Gift of God, that is, without the Holy Spirit, through whom love is poured out into our hearts (Rm 5:5), the law could command but could not help. Moreover, the law could make a man a transgressor, who could not excuse himself on grounds of ignorance. Where there is no love of God, carnal desire does reign.

[The faith of Christ which works through love (Gal 5:6) asks for whatever it does not yet have in love.] God, therefore, does not command what is impossible, but in commanding He also admonishes you to do what you are able, and to ask His help for what you are unable to do. [To love freely is to desire only God for your reward, who alone can satisfy you.]

Let us love our Lord God, let us love His Church; Him as a Father, her as a Mother; Him as a Master, her as His Handmaid; for we are the children of the Handmaid herself. But this marriage is held together by a great love; no one offends the one and gains favor with the other.²⁷

"Friendship among human beings," says Augustine, "brings sweetness through the loving knot whereby from many minds a union is formed."(C 2:5) Friendship is not true unless God cements it between those who cleave to Him with charity diffused into our hearts through the Holy Spirit (cf. Rm 5:5).(cf. C 4:4) "Happy is he who loves Thee [God], and his friend in Thee, and his enemy because of Thee."(C 4:9)

Augustine notes though that all human relationships are fraught with misunderstandings. He speaks of the pain of unfaithful friends and the sadness of the death of a close friend. But, it is harder to see a loved one lose his or her faith or fall into grievous sin (spiritual death). It is a joy for Christians when our friends die a holy death. "There is no greater consolation than the unfeigned

27. Regarding the quotations see "Enchiridion of Faith, Hope, and Love," 31:117, "Nature and Grace," 43:50, and "Psalms," 88:2:14, in FEF, Vol. 3, 153, 111 and 19 respectively; see also 23, 27, 36, 78, 80, and 152.

loyalty and mutual love of good men who are true friends."(CG 19:5 and 8)

C. St. Thomas Aquinas

1. His Life

Born about 1225, Thomas was the youngest son of Landolfo, count of Aquino (near Naples), and Teodora. His father was a man of the world - a military man and nephew to the Holy Roman Emperor. At the age of five Thomas entered the Abbey of Monte Cassino as a Benedictine oblate. Nine years later he went to the University of Naples for undergraduate arts studies. At seventeen he became a Dominican novice. He refused to join his father's military force. Fearing family opposition his superiors planned for him to go to Paris. But on the way his brothers, instigated by his mother, kidnapped him. Thomas was made a prisoner in Roccasecca, the family castle. They attempted to bring him to his senses, even tempting him to forsake his religious vocation by means of a beautiful female companion. His father offered him the honorable position of abbot at Monte Cassino, but he preferred to be a poor Friar, a humble follower of the Lord rather than a leader. He spent his time studying Scripture, Peter Lombard and Aristotle. Seeing his resolve, and through the influence of his sister Marietta, his family released him after a year.

Thomas Aquinas then (1245) went on foot to Paris and later to Cologne for several years of theological and seminary studies. He was ordained sometime between 1248-52. His fellow students called him "the dumb ox" due to his offering no comments in discussions and his huge head and frame. The learned and famous lecturer, Albert the Great, however, discovered Aquinas' great gifts of mind and is said to have announced: "You call our brother Thomas a dumb ox, do you? I tell you

that someday the whole world will listen to his bellowing."²⁸

In 1252 Aquinas returned to Paris for graduate theological studies. He received the license to teach as a master of theology in 1256 by papal dispensation (four years before the required age). As a teacher he attracted crowds of students who recognized his depth, beyond all the other teachers of his day. Aquinas devoted himself to the intellectual interests of his time and read many classical works, Christian and non-Christian. With a conviction to let everyone speak for himself, he obtained a Greek expert to translate Aristotle's original texts into Latin (the translations of the day were far removed from the original).

In 1259 he was called to the papal court as lecturer. At the direction of Urban IV he brought together the commentaries of twenty-two Latin and fifty-seven Greek Fathers of the Church on the Four Gospels under the title *Catena Aurea*. His first Summa (*Summa Contra Gentiles*), written from 1258-9 was intended to promote Christian unity. It is a reasoned discussion with those who do not accept the Catholic faith - pagans, Jews, Mohammedans and Greek schismatics. He began his most famous work the *Summa Theologiae* in 1266. This was composed as a textbook for students, but never completed.

In 1270 Aquinas was recalled to Paris to meet the threat of Latin Averroism. He confronted the liberals of his day in open forum, but was himself opposed by the conservatives of his day. The latter called themselves "Augustinian" and feared that Aristotelian ideas would destroy the purity of the Christian faith. Aquinas himself meditated and commented on Scripture throughout his

28. *Living Biographies of Great Philosophers*, by Henry Thomas and Dana Lee Thomas (Garden City: Blue Ribbon Books, 1946), 74. For more details of Aquinas' life than offered here see *ibid.*, 67-80; *An Aquinas Reader*, ed. and introduced by Mary T. Clark (Garden City: Image Books, 1972), 7-27; and *St. Thomas Aquinas: Theological Texts*, selected and trans. with notes and introduction by Thomas Gilby (Durham, North Carolina: The Labyrinth Press, 1982), xi-xvii.

intellectual life. He thought of himself as a collaborator of Augustine, never his opponent.

In 1272 he was assigned to the University of Naples where he continued teaching and writing. On December 6, 1273, however, he put down his pen saying: "I cannot; such things have been revealed to me that all that I have written seems to me as so much straw." He was summoned by Gregory X to attend the Church Council at Lyons that aimed at reunion with the Greek Church. He fell ill on the way and died at the Cistercian monastery of Fossa Nova in 1274 at the age of forty-nine. As he received the last rites he prayed: "I receive Thee, ransom of my soul. For love of Thee have I studied and kept vigil, toiled, preached, and taught...."²⁹

Aquinas was a remarkable man, a man for all ages. In his short life, in spite of his teaching and other assignments, he produced some 100 works of carefully reasoned, creative thinking. Aquinas' thought involves a synthesis in which faith and reason, nature and grace, matter and spirit are fused rather than juxtaposed. He uses analogy recognizing the likenesses in diversity and the kinship between all parts of reality. His theology is positive and speculative, showing an appreciation for real and allegorical truths, as well as a sense of history. He studies God's revelation through Jesus Christ, and the new life He brings, in a scientific, logical, dialectical and explanatory manner. Concerning the unity of all truth, the study of the theology of Aquinas, among the doctors of the Church, has been especially recommended in the formation of priests and in Catholic schools of higher learning.³⁰ The thought of St. Thomas Aquinas has influenced such diverse artists as Dante, T. S. Eliot and James Joyce; such unlike philosophers as Jacques Maritain and Edith Stein; and such

29. Both quotes are from Clark (see note 28), 20.

30. See, e.g., Vat.II, "Decree on Priestly Formation" *Optatam Totius*, 16; and "Declaration on Christian Education" *Gravissimum Educationis*, 10; respectively.

different theologians as John Courtney Murray and Karl Rahner.³¹

2. A Summary of His Teaching on Love

Aquinas distinguishes natural love (regarding a sense of affinity in an inanimate entity that accords with its nature), sensory love (regarding the sense of affinity for some sensory good, feeling for its attractiveness, attachment, felt in the sensory appetite or affective faculty) and intellectual or rational love (regarding the sense of affinity for some rational good, feeling for its attractiveness, attachment, felt by the rational appetite, the will. Concerning love he says the Latin term *amor* has the widest reference. *Dilectio*, which is confined to rational creatures, adds to the notion of love reference to antecedent choice. *Caritas* adds a note of perfection to the notion of love. *Amicitia* means friendship. Love may be divided into *amor concupiscentiae* (love-of-desire) and *amor amicitiae* (love-of-friendship). The object of love-of-friendship (someone) is loved for its own sake. This is the primary sense of love. The object of love-of-desire (the good thing wanted for someone) is loved for the sake of something (someone) other than itself. This is love in the secondary sense. A person is properly our friend when we want some good for him or her. We are said to desire something when we want it for ourselves.(cf. ST 1-2,26)

Only what is good can be an object of love. A thing's good lies in that with which it has affinity (connaturality) and proportion (kinship). Evil is never loved except under some good description. Love is evil when directed towards something which is not genuinely good (*verum bonum*). Good is that which is desirable, that in which the appetite takes pleasure. Beautiful adds to good a reference to the cognitive powers - the beautiful gives pleasure when it is perceived or contemplated. A good can be the object of the appetite only in so far as it is known, therefore, some

31. Cf. Gilby, xi-xiii, and Clark, 9 (see note 28).

knowledge of the object is necessary before it can be loved. Regarding natural love the knowledge is possessed by the author of nature. Similarity, in the sense that two persons possess the same qualities, gives rise to love-of-friendship or love-of-goodwill (*benevolentiae*) - one wishes well to the other as to oneself. Similarity regarding potentiality and its corresponding actuality gives rise to love-of-desire or friendship based on convenience or pleasure.(cf. ST 1-2,27,1-3)

Love is a unifying force. It moves one to desire and seek the presence of the loved object. It consists in union by inclination or feeling, union of hearts. The lover sees the object as part of himself (herself) in love-of-friendship or as part of his (her) property in love-of-desire. Mutual indwelling is both a cognitive and affective effect of love. The beloved is constantly present in the lover's thoughts and feelings. The lover strives for personal insight into everything about the beloved, even to penetrate into the beloved's very soul (cf. 1 Cor 2:10). We often speak of love as "intimate". Love-of-friendship is mutual or reciprocal. Ecstasy or transport means to be carried outside oneself. Cognitive transport is caused by love dispositively - love turns a person's thoughts to the beloved which withdraws the mind from other things. Affective transport is caused by love directly. In love-of-desire one is anxious to enjoy something yet outside one's grasp. In love-of-friendship the ultimate term of a person's feelings is located outside oneself. In wanting some good for one's friend, one exercises care and thought about the friend's interests for the friend's sake.(cf. ST 1-2,28,1-3)

A person is better for love of a good that is appropriate for oneself (the love of God enriches a person supremely), but suffers harm for love of a good inappropriate for oneself (one suffers the greatest harm by loving sin). Love is the cause of everything the lover does. A person's end is a good he (she) desires and loves, therefore, every agent performs every action out of love of some

kind. God makes all things because of His Love. Love causes all the other emotions.(cf. ST 1-2,28,5-6; and SCG III,116,5)

...every movement of feeling is derived from love, for no one desires, hopes, or rejoices except because of a good which is loved. Likewise, neither does anyone experience repugnance, fear, sorrow, or anger except because of what is opposed to the good that is loved.(SCG III,151,4. For more details concerning the emotions see ST 1-2,22-48.)

Charity (*caritas* - the love of God) is a friendship of a human being and God (cf. Jn 15:15). Our charity in this life is imperfect, but it will be made perfect in heaven. The act of charity is beyond the human will's natural power. The motion of charity springs from the Holy Spirit, but not in a way that the human mind is passive and in no sense an active source of motion. To be an act of will (a voluntary, loving choice) is the very nature of loving. Charity is the root of merit. The divine essence itself is charity as it is goodness and wisdom. The divine power which is the source of charity has an infinite nature. Charity for our neighbor is sharing in divine charity. Charity is immediately united to the soul as the soul is to the body.(cf. ST 2-2,23,1-2)

Acts and habits get their specific character from their objects. The proper object of love is the good. Charity is love of divine good. God is the principal object of charity; we love one another for his sake. The friendship of charity is based on the fellowship of eternal happiness.(cf. ST 2-2,23,4-5)

The norm of all good human actions is twofold: human reason and God himself. Virtue is ordered to the good, which is realized principally in an end. End and good are twofold: ultimate and proximate. Charity directs a person to the ultimate and principal good, God. A secondary and particular good can be truly good (capable by its nature of being directed to the ultimate good and

end) or not a true good (but seems so) since it leads a person away from his (her) ultimate good. True virtue in an unqualified sense directs a person to the principal good. There is no true virtue in this sense without charity. Without charity an act can be good of its kind, though not fully good since it lacks reference to our ultimate end. Charity is a virtue, the greatest of all virtues (cf. 1 Cor 13:13), since it attains God, the first measure of human reason, most fully and joins us to him. Charity directs the acts of all the other virtues to our final end. Charity is called the mother of the virtues because from the desire of the ultimate end it conceives their acts by charging them with life.(cf. ST 2-2,23,3,6-8)

Since charity's object, divine good, is known by intellect alone, it is found in the intellectual appetite, the will. Charity goes beyond reason (cf. Ep 3:19) - it is ruled not by reason as are the human virtues, but by the wisdom of God. Charity is not acquired by natural powers but is infused by the Holy Spirit who is the love of the Father and Son (cf. Rm 5:5). The quantity of charity depends on the Holy Spirit who distributes his gifts as he pleases (cf. Ep 4:7). The intensity, depth, and fervor of charity can grow in this life. This means its subject (the person) participates more and more in the likeness of the Holy Spirit. We can speak of various stages of growth in charity, but compare the beginning, middle and end of a continuum. "Beginners" are involved in withdrawing from sin and resisting the appetites opposed to charity. The chief preoccupation of "those making progress" is to advance in virtue. Their concern is that their charity grow and become strong. "Perfect" refers to those who apply themselves chiefly to cleaving to and enjoying God (cf. Phil 1:23).(cf. ST 2-2,24,1-9)

Mortal sin destroys charity; venial sin and ceasing to do the works of charity can indirectly weaken charity. God withdraws his grace as a punishment for sin. It is impossible for the Holy

Spirit to move a person to make an act of love and for the person to lose charity by committing sin at the same time. Charity cannot commit sin. Charity can be lost in this life, but not in heaven. The way of true love is not to propose to love for a time and then to leave off loving. Charity's act rules out every motive for sinning. Every act of mortal sin is contrary to the essential character or nature of charity which is to love God above all. This means that one wills to obey God in everything, keep his commandments in their entirety, subject oneself entirely to him and refer to him all one has. The purpose of divine law, which is offered to us as an aid to natural law, is to make people good. It is obvious that all mortal sin which is contrary to God's commandments (will) constitutes an obstacle to the infusion of charity. There are two ways of losing charity: directly, by contempt of God; and indirectly, when some passion of concupiscence or fear leads us to do something opposed to charity. Only disordered affection for created goods that is utterly opposed to the divine will amounts to mortal sin. Mortal sin, which consists in turning away from God, is contrary to charity which denotes union with God.(cf. ST 2-2,24,10-12; and SCG III, 116,3 and 117,6)

It is specifically the same act which loves God and neighbor. We love all our neighbors with the same love of charity, seeing them in relation to God. Irrational creatures are not loved from the love of charity in the sense of friendship, but they can be loved as goods we wish ourselves or others to have (i.e., cherished for God's honor and human service). Our love for ourselves is the model and root of friendship. Our attitude to others is the same as to ourselves. Out of charity one loves oneself as belonging to God. Our body is from God and we can use it for God's service. We ought to love our body with the same charity that we love God. Loving our neighbor out of charity for God's sake involves loving what is good and hating what is bad for him (her). It means loving one's nature (capacity for eternal life), but hating the fact that one is a sinner, since sin is opposed to God

and an obstacle to eternal happiness. Those weak in virtue are in danger of being led astray by contact with sinners, but it is good for those strong in virtue to mix with sinners so as to convert them (cf. Mt 19:10-11).(cf. ST 2-2,25,1-6)

Both good and bad people love their own self-preservation. The good love the "inner man" (their rational nature) integrally; the wicked do not but love the corruption that affects the "outer man" (the sensitive and bodily part of one's nature) (cf.. 2 Cor 4:16). We are to love our enemies as human beings, as God's children. Perfect charity not only makes us avoid being overcome by evil but also to desire to overcome evil with good (cf. Rm 12:21). It tries by kindness to induce an enemy to love us. Charity's friendship takes in the angels also. Concerning loving devils, Aquinas astutely notes that this is to be according to God's will (i.e. desiring the preservation of their natural being for the glory of God).(cf. ST 2-2,25,7-12)

There must be an order among the objects of charity with reference to God, the first principle of this love. God is to be loved in charity above all and primarily since he is the cause and source of eternal happiness. God's greater goodness makes him more lovable than our neighbor. By charity one loves God more than oneself since his good is greater than the good one receives from him (both regarding the good of nature and the good of grace). We are bound to love ourselves (our spiritual nature) more than our neighbor. One may not sin even to free another from sin. My neighbor is not as close to me as I am to myself. But, one ought to love one's neighbor more than one's own body, even putting up with bodily harm for a friend's sake (cf. Jn 15:13).(cf. ST 2-2,26,1-5)³²

32. In *On the Perfection of Religious Life*, Chs. 13-14 (see Clark, note 28 above, 279-89), Aquinas develops the theme of perfect love of neighbor in detail. Such love is genuine (not loving the other to the extent he or she is useful to us), orderly and just (preferring the greater good - the good of soul is greater than the good of body which is greater than the good of external things), holy (ordered to God), and efficacious and dynamic (i.e. one takes positive measures and exerts oneself to procure what is good and repel what is evil - cf. 1 Jn 3:18).

Charity makes us love all people equally in the sense of wanting the same good (eternal happiness) for them. We should have good will to all people, but we cannot do good to everyone equally. With respect to preserving God's justice, charity loves those who are better and closer to God more in the sense of willing for them a greater good. A person loves those closer to oneself more intensely, however, willing them good more intensely. We love those connected to us in more ways than others since other friendships than charity come into play. Virtuous friendships are to be subordinated to and directed by charity. Concerning kindred Aquinas notes, for example, that one ought to love one's spouse (with whom one has greater intimacy) more intensely than one's parents, but show greater reverence for one's parents (as principles in one's natural origin). He holds that the order of charity remains in heaven. The motives underlying any virtuous love here on earth will not cease to inspire the blessed in heaven.(cf. ST 2-2,26,6-13)

Charity's function is to love rather than be loved. Love as an act of charity includes goodwill, but adds to it a union of the affections. God (as ultimate end, exemplar of all goods and the source of whatever goodness there is in other things) is not loved because of anything else. Other things (favors, hope of rewards and purposing to avoid punishments), however, can dispose us to advance in loving God. In this life we come to know God through other things, but by charity we love him without any intermediary. We ought to love God wholly and with all our might (cf. Dt 6:5), loving everything that belongs to God and subordinating all we have to God. The more we love God, the better we love.(cf. ST 2-2,27)

The spiritual joy that comes from God is an effect of charity. The joy of the blessed in heaven is more than full. Not only their desire for God but all their other desires come to rest. They obtain more than they desired (cf. 1 Cor 2:9). Charity brings about peace: 1) it brings all one's desires to

an ordered unity - in loving God with our whole heart all our desires become focused on one object, we refer everything to him; and 2) it brings about a union between the desires of persons - love makes us want to do the other's will as our own. Kindness, doing good to another, is an act of friendship or love. Fraternal correction aims at a sinner's improvement and is an act of charity. It is also an act of justice since sin tends to hurt others too. A superior should always correct with regard to the common good, but one should refrain from fraternal correction if it is probable that it will only make the other worse. Such things as feasting and carousing are banished by instructing and advising rather than by bitterness, harshness, highhandedness...(cf. ST 2-2, 28, 29, 31, 33 and 150,1ad4)

Christ dwells in our mind through faith. We can be certain that he does when we know we believe what the Catholic Church holds and teaches. Christ dwells in our heart through faith quickened by charity. We can be confident of this if we find ourselves so prepared and ready that no temporal object will be allowed to make us act against Christ (cf. 1 Jn 3:21).³³

3. On Chastity, Virginity, Lust, and Matrimony

Aquinas treats chastity as a specific type of the virtue of temperance. Human virtue directs us toward intelligent living. The virtues are connected with one another by prudence (practical wisdom) and charity (the love of God). Moral virtue safeguards reasonable values (goods) against passions that conflict with them. Bodily goods of sense are not of their nature opposed to reason, but are there to serve its purposes. The clash comes from the tendency of the sensory appetite to seek gratification from them beyond the bounds of reason. Using corporal and sensible things in a proper way to revere God raises one's mind to God. Improper use of them either completely

33. Cf. Aquinas' "Commentary, 2 Corinthians, xiii, lect. 2." Gilby (see note 27 above), 208-18, translates this text and selected others concerning Aquinas' teaching on love.

distracts the mind from God (when the end of the will is fixed in inferior things) or slows down the inclination of the mind toward God (when we are more attached to these things than necessary).

As a general virtue temperance signifies a tempering or moderating of human activities and emotions by the reason which is present in all virtue. As a special virtue temperance reins our appetites for the most delightful pleasures. Because pleasure follows from connatural activity, pleasures are more vehement when they attend our most natural activities, those which serve the individual through food and drink and the species through the coupling of male and female. Temperance is about these tactile pleasures. The standard of temperance is set by the needs of the present life.(cf. ST 2-2, 141, 143, 152,3ad2; and SCG 3,121)

The word "chastity" (*castitas*) comes from the chastising of concupiscence by reason. Chastity is a virtue which charges the acts of our members with the judgment of intelligence and the choice of the will. Properly speaking chastity is a special virtue which has its own well-defined material, the desires for sexual pleasure centered on bodily intercourse. Lust (*luxuria*) is the opposite vice. We can also speak of spiritual chastity (regarding its metaphorical use, meaning having God as our heart's delight, cleaving to him, and refraining from enjoying things against his design - cf. 2 Cor 2:2) and spiritual fornication (delighting in things against God's order - cf. Jer 3:1). Every virtue holds us back from embracing illicit things. The desire for pleasure is like a child. We are born with it. It grows the more we give in to it; like a spoilt child it needs salutary correction. The activities of eating which preserve the individual are different in kind from the activities of sex which preserve the species. Usage applies chastity to the act of intercourse; purity (*pudivitia*) deals with what surrounds it such as looks, kisses and touches. Sensitivity to shame applies very much with respect to acts of sex since our genital motions are less subject to reason than our other bodily

members.(cf. ST 2-2,151)³⁴

Virginity

Aquinas defines virginity (*virginitas*) in terms of moral integrity; the unbroken hymen is incidental to it. Immunity from the pleasure of orgasm is its material. The purpose of perpetually abstaining from this pleasure gives it completion and meaning. Vicious human acts (vices) are against right reason. Virginity is not vicious but praiseworthy (cf. 1 Cor 7:25 and 34). Doing without bodily pleasures in order to more freely devote oneself to the contemplation of truth is in harmony with reason. Aquinas interprets Gen 1:28 (regarding increasing and being fruitful) as a command (duty) that falls not on every individual (as eating) but on the group as a whole. "To multiply" means not only in body, but also to grow in spirit. The human family is sufficiently provided for if some undertake the responsibility of bodily generation. Others are free to devote themselves to the study of divine things for the health and beauty of our race. A virgin abstains from pleasures of sex not out of dislike for them (like a boor), but according to right reason which fixes the virtuous mean.(cf. ST 2-2,152,1-2)

Human beings possess the material element of virginity (bodily innocence of the pleasure of sex) at birth. But as a virtue, virginity involves the purpose of keeping this for God's service. Concerning the loss of virginity, its material is gone beyond recall (not even God can make the past to not have been), but its form (dedicated resolve) can be restored by repentance.(cf. ST 2-2,152,3)

To deny that the state of virginity should be placed higher than the married state is refuted by

34. In *On the Perfection of the Spiritual Life*, Ch. IX, Aquinas speaks of "Helps to Preserving Chastity": 1) keep the mind occupied with prayer and the contemplation of divine things - praising God keeps one from the distractions of sin (cf. Ep 5:18-20 and Is 48:9; 2) study Scripture (cf. 1 Tm 4:12-13); 3) keep occupied with any type of wholesome thought (cf. Ph 4:8); 4) avoid idleness (cf. Sir 33:28); and 5) endure disturbances of the mind. See Clark (note 28 above), 511-16, for his full treatment of these.

Christ's example, who chose a virgin mother, by the Apostle who counsels virginity as a greater good (cf. 1 Cor 7:38), and by reason. Divine good is better than human good. Virginity pertains to the contemplative life (considering the things of God); marriage to the active life (the married must think of the things of this world - cf. 1 Cor 7:33). Nonetheless, a married person, who is more excellent in virtue and ready to do what is asked of one, can be better than a virgin. Both virginity and marriage are honored in the person of Mary, the Mother of God, who was both a virgin and espoused. Of all forms of being chaste though, virginal chastity is best, surpassing the chastity of marriage and widowhood. Virginity is not the greatest virtue. The theological virtues and the virtue of religion which are directly occupied with the things of God take precedence over virginity. Martyrdom (laying down one's life) and monastic life (includes poverty and obedience as well) are also greater than virginity (renouncing the pleasures of sex) since they engage one more powerfully to cleave to God.(cf. ST 2-2,152,4-5 and 3,29,1)

Lust

Concerning the vice of lust (*luxuria*), Aquinas says that although voluptuousness goes with many other pleasures it is especially referred to those of sex. Sin implies a breach of the reasonable plan of life, which requires that things be fittingly ordered to their ends. Sex, in due manner and order in keeping with its purpose of human generation, is without sin. The abundance of pleasure in a well-ordered sex-act is not inimical to right reason, even though one cannot give free attention to spiritual things at the same time. Nor is it against virtue when reason suspends its activity according to right reason to go to sleep. That sexual desire and pleasure are not subject to the sway and moderation of reason is part of the penalty of original sin. The pleasures of intercourse would have been greater had the human race not fallen into original sin.(cf. ST I,98,2ad3 and 2-2,153,1-2)

The order of reason is urgently required regarding the exercise of sex since it is necessary for the common good, the preservation of the human race. Whatever strikes at this is wrong, therefore, lust is a sin. Using one's body for lechery wrongs the Lord, its principal owner (cf. 1 Cor 6:20). Unfeelingness (*insensibilitas*), found in those who so dislike intimacy with women that they are not fair in rendering the conjugal debt to their wives, is a rare vice since most of us are very prone to pleasure. Some abstain from lechery from hope of future glory. Despair destroys this (cf. Ep 4:19). Lust causes blindness of mind (regarding apprehending an end as good), interferes with deliberation (regarding what should be done to attain the end), can hold up the decision (regarding what should be done), and causes inconstancy. Lust also causes inordinateness of will: an inordinate desire for pleasure, a hatred of God who forbids its undue attachment to this world and its pleasures, a despair about the future world and no taste for spiritual joys.(cf. ST 2-2,153,3-5)

Fornication and Other Kinds of Lust

Fornication is included in Gal 5:19 with other sins that shut one out from the kingdom of heaven. No one is excluded from this kingdom except for mortal sin. Beyond all doubt we should hold that simple fornication (*fornicatio*) is a mortal sin. A sin which directly attacks a requirement for human life is deadly. Fornication is an inordinate act of a sort to injure the life that may be born from the intercourse. In animals where the female alone suffices to rear the offspring, intercourse is promiscuous (e.g. dogs). In animals where raising the young requires both male and female, their mating is not promiscuous (e.g. certain birds). The human child requires care of both a mother and a father, therefore, indiscriminate intercourse is against human nature. The union of one man with one woman for a long period (even a whole lifetime) is postulated.

Men have a natural solicitude to be certain about who are their children, a certainty destroyed

by sexual promiscuity. Being committed to one woman is called matrimony and is of natural law. Since intercourse is ordained to the common good of the human race it also falls under the control of human law. Since fornication (intercourse between people not married to each other) is outside matrimony, which is for the good of the child, it is a mortal sin. What the law determines is judged according to what happens in the general run, not in special cases. Thus it makes no essential difference if a fornicator provides for his (or her) child's education.(cf. ST 2-2,154,2)

Fornication is contrary to right reason which is measured by God's will, the supreme law. It is contrary to love of our neighbor since the act of generation is performed in a setting disadvantageous to the good of the child to be born (i.e. not according to what is fitting to the child). A person who sins (regarding the flesh) is freed from eternal loss if he (she) repents and makes satisfaction for wrongs he committed, not if he persists in carnal wantonness impenitent until death. One act of intercourse can beget a child, therefore, inordinate intercourse, which handicaps a child to be born, is a grave sin from the kind of act it is. The gravity of a sin is assessed by considering the importance of the good with which it conflicts. Since fornication conflicts with the good of a child to be born, it is graver than sins against property (e.g. theft), but not as grave as sins directly against God or human life already in existence (as murder). Fornication offends God - not that the fornicator directly intends this, but he (she) accepts this as a consequence.(cf. ST 2-2,154,2-3; and SCG 3,122)

Kisses, embraces and caresses can be done without libidinousness. They are not sinful acts in themselves, but can be made bad by a bad intention. Consent to the pleasure of a mortal sin is itself a mortal sin (cf. Mt 5:28), not only consent in the act. Therefore, kisses and the like for the sake of the pleasure of fornication are libidinous and mortal sins.(cf. ST 2-2,154,4)

In itself a nocturnal emission is not a sin, for sin depends on the judgment of reason. Until they come under the control of reason first motions of sensuality have nothing sinful about them. During sleep reason does not exercise free judgment and so no fault is imputed to the person (cf. also when one is out of one's mind). The mind's awareness is less hindered during sleep than its judgment. Sometimes a nocturnal emission is the result of preceding sin, as when one while awake dwells on carnal sins with lust for their pleasure.(cf. ST 2-2,154,5)

A maiden's virginal intactness is a barrier to fornication. Her maidenhead is like a seal that should not be broken save by marriage. Seducing an unmarried maiden injures her (it prevents her from contracting honorable marriage) and satisfaction must be made (cf. Ex 22:16 and Dt 22:28). Adultery wrongs not only the child who may be born, but also the offspring of the marriage. It offends the spouse, violating the right to faithfulness, and is unfaithful to God's law (cf. Sir 23:32-34).(cf. ST 2-2,154,6 and 8)

Incest contravenes the proper exercise of sexuality for three reasons: 1) because of natural instinctive feelings of honor towards one's parents (which extend to other kindred) which set up a certain reticence and sense of impropriety regarding sexual exposure (cf. Lv 18:7); 2) if blood relatives who have to live together closely were not debarred from sexual intercourse, opportunities would make it too easy and their spirits would be enervated by lust; and 3) incest would prevent people from widening their circle of friends - when one marries outside one's family, the spouse's relatives are as one's own. Violating a person who has vowed chastity to the service of God is a sort of sacrilege. Unnatural vice conflicts not only with right reason, but also with the natural pattern of sexuality for the benefit of the species. It happens variously: the sin of self-abuse (masturbation) - procuring orgasm for the sake of venereal pleasure outside intercourse; bestiality; sodomy (cf. Rm

1:26); when the natural style of intercourse is not observed as regards the proper organ or according to other beastly and monstrous techniques.(cf. ST 2-2,154,9-11; and SCG 3, 125 and 122,5)

On Matrimony as an Office of Nature, as a Sacrament, and its Definition

Matrimony is natural because natural reason inclines to it. Nature intends not only the begetting of offspring, but also its education and development, until it reaches the state of virtue regarding human beings. A child to be brought up and instructed needs definite parents. This requires a tie between the man and a definite woman. In this matrimony consists. One person is not self-sufficient in all things concerning life. Human beings are naturally inclined to political society, but even more to conjugal society. Some works necessary to life are becoming to men, others to women.(cf. Aristotle, *Ethic.* viii. 11,12) Since the human child needs parental care for a long time, there is a great tie between male and female, to which even generic human nature inclines. Scripture states that there has been matrimony from the beginning of the human race.(cf. ST Supp.,41,1)³⁵

Marital friendship is useful (it serves to provide for domestic life), delightful (it brings the delight and pleasure of sex), and honorable (if spouses are fair to each other their friendship is virtuous and mutually agreeable).³⁶ It is fitting for matrimony to be completely indissoluble because the friendship between husband and wife is the greatest of human friendships. They unite not only

35. Aquinas died before this part of the ST (Supplement) was finished. It was completed by a disciple of Aquinas from other writings of Aquinas (cf. Aquinas' Commentary on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard). Concerning Aquinas following Aristotle in saying that some works necessary to life are becoming to men, others to women, we should appreciate that the question of the roles of men and women was not discussed in their times to the same extent that it is today. In any case, even today, it is not an unfair stereotype to say that generally men are better suited to heavy manual labor and only women can beget babies and nurse them at the breast.

36. "Commentary, *VIII Ethics, lect. 12,*" in Gilby (see note 28), 385.

in fleshly union, but also in a partnership of the whole range of domestic activity. The indissolubility of marriage also fosters good behavior. Spouses, knowing their union is indivisible, will tend to love each other more faithfully and take better care of their domestic possessions. It also contributes to a more solid affection among the relatives. Marriage should be between one man and one woman so that marital friendship can be equal and strong. It is evident from experience that polygamy results in domestic discord and the wives having a status like that of servants.(cf. SCG 3, 123 and 124)

It is not a sin to marry and have children (see 1 Cor 7:28; 1 Tm 5:14; and 1 Cor 7:3), therefore, the marital act is not a sin. Since corporal nature is created by the good God, what pertains to its preservation and to which nature inclines can not be in itself evil. It can not be impossible to find the mean of virtue concerning the generative act. The marital act, which appears as an inordinate act by reason of the corruption of concupiscence, is wholly excused by the marital blessing and not a sin. The root of merit is charity. Fulfilling a precept, also regarding the marital act (see 1 Cor 7:3), is meritorious if done from charity. Rendering the conjugal debt is also an act of justice. For one in the state of grace, the marital act is always either meritorious if the motive is a virtue (as justice regarding the marital debt or religion regarding begetting children to worship God) or sinful if motivated by lust.³⁷ It is a venial sin if one does not exclude the marital blessings; mortal sin if one excludes them.(cf. ST Supp.,41,3-4)

A sacrament denotes a sanctifying remedy against sin offered to us under sensible signs. This is the case with matrimony. Ep 5:32 speaks of matrimony as a sign of a sacred thing. The words

37. Vat.II, GS, 47-52, speaks beautifully and positively about marriage and the family, including sexual relations within marriage. It, however, also speaks of the need for the virtue of chastity and that the dignity of conjugal partnerships and married love is often dishonored by so-called free love, selfishness, hedonism and so on.

expressing the marital consent are the form of this sacrament. In the sacrament of matrimony (as in penance) the matter is the acts of the recipients. The bond between the spouses resulting from mutual consent is reality and sacrament. The priest's blessing is a sacramental. Matrimony is conformed to Christ's passion as regards charity.

Matrimony had various institutions. As directed to the good of begetting children, which was necessary even before sin, it was instituted before sin. As a remedy for the wound of sin, matrimony was instituted after sin at the time of the natural law. Its institution belongs to the Mosaic Law with respect to personal disqualification's. Matrimony was instituted as a sacrament of the New Law in so far as it represents the mystery of Christ's union with the Church. Concerning other advantages of matrimony (friendship and mutual services) its institution belongs to civil law. Matrimony as a sacrament applies to fulfilling both offices of nature and of society.

Since matrimony is a sacrament, it is a cause of grace. Matrimony contracted in the faith of Christ is able to confer the grace which enables those works required for matrimony. Whenever God gives the faculty to do a thing, He gives helps to make becoming use of the faculty. The outward acts and words that express consent effect a tie which is the sacrament of matrimony. This tie by divine institution works to the infusion of grace. Since sacraments effect what they signify, the sacrament of matrimony confers on spouses grace whereby they are included in the union of Christ and the Church, that they may propose not to be disunited from Christ and the Church in fleshly and earthly things. It is also necessary that matrimony as a sacrament is a union of one man to one woman to be held indivisibly since the union of Christ and the Church is a union of one to one to be held forever.(cf. ST Supp.,42,1-3; and SCG 4,78)

Matrimony is a kind of relation, a joining, a uniting (cf. Gen 2:24). By matrimony two persons

are directed to one purpose - one begetting and upbringing of children, and one family life. The joining of bodies and minds is a result of matrimony. Noting the etymology of related Latin words, Aquinas says matrimony is called the "conjugal union" regarding its essence (the joining together), the "nuptial union" regarding its cause (the wedding), and "matrimony" regarding its effect (the offspring - cf. a mother's duty regarding bringing up children and matrimony's providing her with a support in the person of her husband). The joining of matrimony, conjugal union, is the greatest of all joinings since it is a joining of soul and body. We find three definitions of matrimony corresponding to its cause (marital consent), its essence (marital union between lawful persons, a man and a woman, involving living together in undivided partnership), and its effect (common life in family matters which is directed by divine and human law).(cf. ST Supp.,44)

On Marital Consent

In matrimony as an office of nature there is a material joining; as a sacrament there is also a spiritual joining. The joining is effected by the mutual consent. The spiritual joining is effected by divine power by means of the material joining. The instrumental causes in sacraments are material operations deriving their efficacy by divine institution. The consent signifies (symbolizes) Christ's will which brought about His union with the Church. The direct object of the consent is the union of husband and wife. The consent which makes a marriage must be expressed in words by the contracting parties which express their will to one another. Signs, for those who can not speak, can count for words.(cf. ST Supp.,45,1-2)

Consent given in terms of the future tense does not make a marriage. One who promises to do a certain thing (e.g. to marry) does it not yet. Expressing consent in the future tense does not signify marrying (or make a marriage), but a promise to marry known as betrothal. Expression of words

without inward consent also makes no marriage. If mental consent is lacking in one of the parties, on neither side is there marriage, since marriage consists in a mutual joining together. The party in whom there is no fraud is excused from the sin of fornication on account of ignorance. Concerning such cases the tribunal of the Church judges according to evidence (outward appearances). The Church may be deceived in the facts of a case.(cf. ST Supp.,45,3-4; cf. also q. 43 regarding betrothal)

What is essential to the sacrament of matrimony is necessary for validity. Consent expressed in words of the present between persons lawfully qualified to contract makes a marriage. If other things that belong to the solemnization of the sacrament (i.e. things fitting to its celebration, e.g., the priest's blessing) are omitted, the marriage is still valid. It is a sin, however, to omit these without a lawful motive. Children can marry without parental consent. There is something disgraceful about clandestine marriages. Many evils result from them (e.g. one of the parties is often guilty of fraud).(cf. ST Supp.,45,5) (Clandestine marriages were forbidden by the canon law of Aquinas' time, but not regarding validity. The Council of Trent, Sess. xxiv, later declared them invalid. Cf. DS 1813-16.)

Even though an oath be added to a promise to marry, the marriage is not made yet. Fulfilling an unlawful oath is not of divine law. A certain circumstance can make a lawful oath unlawful (e.g. marrying someone else makes it unlawful to marry a person to whom one previously made an oath to marry). Intercourse after a promise to marry does not make a marriage if inward marital consent is lacking. One who consents to sexual union by deed does not for this reason consent to marry. An engaged person who has sex without intending to consummate marriage and thinking the other does too is guilty of fornication. According to the pre-Tridentine canon law (see the preceding

paragraph) carnal intercourse following on betrothal was presumed to indicate real matrimonial consent, unless there appeared clear signs of deceit or fraud. Aquinas followed the canon law of his time.(cf. ST Supp.,46)

For marriage there must be complete voluntariness, because it has to be perpetual. Compulsion by fear invalidates a marriage. Consent with a condition regarding the present is valid if the condition is verified and not against marriage or its blessings. Consent with a condition regarding a future contingent makes no marriage.(cf. ST Supp.,47)

Consent that makes a marriage is a consent to marriage, which is a certain joining together of husband and wife ordained to carnal intercourse. Spouses receive power over the other in reference to carnal intercourse. Consenting to marriage involves consenting to carnal intercourse implicitly not explicitly. The object of consent is the power to have carnal intercourse which is the cause of carnal intercourse. Marriage corresponds to marriage consummated as power corresponds to the act which is its operation. The essential cause of marriage is its end to which marriage by its very nature is ordained, the begetting of children and avoiding of fornication.³⁸ This is always good. There can be an infinite number of accidental causes in marriage (i.e. what the parties intend as a result of marriage), some of which are good and some bad.(cf. ST Supp.,48)

On the Goods of Marriage

There is a loss of reason incidental to the union of man and woman. They suffer from solicitude for temporal things (cf. 1 Cor 7:28) and reason is carried away by the vehemence of pleasure - it is not able to understand anything at the same time. Therefore, the choice of this union can only be made ordinate by certain compensations, the goods which excuse marriage and make

38. Aquinas' teaching regarding the end of marriage should be considered in the light of later Church teaching (see note 6 above).

it right. These goods belong to the nature of marriage. They are not extrinsic causes of its rectitude. By these goods marriage both fulfills an office and affords a remedy to concupiscence.(cf. ST Supp.,49,1)

There are three goods of marriage. As an office of nature marriage is directed by two things (like every other virtuous act): 1) intention of due end on the part of the agent (here offspring - *proles*); and 2) due matter on the part of the act (here fidelity - *fides*, the spouses only having intercourse with each other). Marriage also has a certain goodness as a sacrament - *sacramentum*. The principal end (offspring, the begetting and education of children) includes the secondary end (the entire communion of works existing between husband and wife which is directed to the primary end). Fidelity here regards keeping the promise concerning the marital debt and not committing adultery. It is a part of justice. The sacramental aspect is a condition added to marriage considered in itself. The sacramentality of marriage pertains to its indissolubility and its signification. All those things that result from marriage are a sign of Christ's union with the Church.(cf. ST Supp.,49,2)

The sacrament is the most excellent of the goods of marriage. It belongs to marriage considered as a sacrament of grace whereas the other two belong to marriage as an office of nature. A perfection of grace is more important than a perfection of nature. Grace, however, does not destroy nature, but perfects it. The sacrament is also more essential to marriage in the sense that there is no marriage without inseparability (denoted by sacrament), but there can be marriage without fidelity and offspring. A marriage would be invalid, however, if anything contrary to these were expressed in the consent to marry. Although consent to marry may be succeeded by a contrary act, it is a consent to an everlasting bond or it makes no marriage. Consent for a time makes no

marriage. In another sense offspring is the most essential to marriage, fidelity is second and sacrament third, since for us it is more essential to be in nature than grace. To be in grace, however, is more excellent.(cf. ST Supp.,49,3; 1,1,8ad2)

The human act with respect to the marital act derives its goodness from those things which place it in the mean of virtue, here the goods of fidelity and offspring. By the goodness of the sacrament the act is said to be not only good but holy - the marital union signifies the union of Christ with the Church. It is possible to interrupt a generically better act (as contemplation) for some less good act (as the marital act) without sin, and it is sometimes fitting to do this. Fidelity and offspring, the goods of marriage relating to the marriage act, make it honest. When spouses come together in order to have offspring or to pay the marital debt, they are wholly excused from sin. Otherwise it is always at least a venial sin. The good of the sacrament makes marriage itself honest, not its act, as though it were wholly excused from sin by being done for some signification. Offspring as a good of the sacrament of marriage includes directing children to God, besides the good of the species.(cf. ST Supp.,49,4-5)

Pleasure in a good action is good, in an evil action evil (Aristotle, *Ethic.* x.3,4). The marital act is not evil in itself. If pleasure is sought in the marital act in such a way as to exclude the honesty of marriage (e.g. treating one's spouse not as a spouse but as another), it is a mortal sin. Seeking pleasure within the bounds of marriage is a venial sin.³⁹ The marital debt may be asked for explicitly (in words) or implicitly (made known to one by certain signs even though the other does not ask for it explicitly). One is bound to pay the debt when the other shows signs of wishing

39. Regarding the legitimate seeking of sexual pleasure within marriage and marital sexual relations as a way for spouses to manifest their affection though see the official Catholic teaching referred to in note 20 above, last two paragraphs).

it, even if not asked for explicitly. Husband and wife are equals regarding paying for and asking for the debt. It is a sin for either to take a vow contrary to the marital debt without the other's consent. It is unlawful, but not a mortal sin, to ask for the marital debt on holy days, when one ought especially to give one's time to spiritual things. One should, however, pay the marital debt to one's spouse who asks at any season, with due regard for the decorum required in such matters.(cf. ST Supp., 49,6 and 64. Impediments to marriage and certain things annexed to marriage are treated in ST Supp.,50-68.)

D. Analysis

This section first provides some analysis of the teachings summarized above (sections A-C) of Chrysostom, Augustine and Aquinas, three "classical" Christian writers. Some of the contributions, as well as a few of the limitations, of their theology are noted. It then treats the question of the development of Christian doctrine and the distinction between Christian Tradition and traditions. Finally, some considerations for evaluating other Christian traditions are presented.

St. John Chrysostom's theology, in the form of biblical commentaries, is very much rooted in the Bible. In providing many pastoral and practical insights with respect to living as true Christians, whether married or not, he has made a significant theological contribution. He recommends the study of the Bible for all people including children, and prayer, to know the whole truth of the Gospel and to live in the world as true Christians. With respect to morally relevant values and norms, Chrysostom first of all emphasizes God's goodness and wisdom, and his care, kindness and providence in our regard. It is therefore intelligent to obey and strive to please God, whereas sin is unreasonable folly.

Chrysostom persuasively provides a variety of motives for learning to be virtuous and to avoid vice. One is truly free who is freed from vices and free to practice virtue. One should live virtuously for Christ's sake, the glory of God and our salvation. Virtue, imitating Christ's love, makes us like God and worthy to have fellowship with Christ and see God. Innumerable benefits or blessings including harmony and much pleasure are also associated with virtue, whereas innumerable evils including much pain are associated with vice. With respect to Christian character and virtues, Chrysostom speaks of caring for each other, gentleness, humility, affection, self-restraint, temperance, chastity, true wisdom and the rule of reason, mildness, gratitude, prayer, and so forth. Vices or evils, the result of depraved will, include, among others, unrestraint, folly, drunkenness, gluttony, wrath, adultery, fornication, divorce and abortion. Chastity involves reverencing Christ who dwells within us. Fornication fails to do this and brings 10,000 woes. Not being chaste empties out love and makes marriage less fruitful.

Chrysostom also shows a high appreciation of celibacy for Heaven's sake, if lived virtuously, the greatness of the marital union, and domestic peace. He esteems very much a strong love and warm, genuine friendship between husband and wife. This has great benefits for families and states. He sees Christian marriage as something spiritual and the Christian household as a little Church.

St. Augustine's remarkable conversion from a life of vice, including sexual immorality, to the love of God, in itself speaks powerfully to our topics. With respect to morally relevant values and norms, Augustine is aware of a "hierarchy" of goods. God is the supreme good. Human friendship, the natural companionship of the sexes, marriage, the harmony of spouses, sexual intercourse, procreation, parental affection, and so on, are also goods. Bodily beauty is also good, but it is a lowly good compared to God, who is Goodness itself. Augustine very much appreciates everything

that is good as a gift of God. He understands sin as involving a depraved will, an immoderate love of lower goods and deserting God - His Truth and Law - the highest good. Virtue involves a proper ordering of love, subjecting our wills to God, which is possible with God's grace.

Augustine distinguishes human and divine love. He affirms that only the love of God, which only God can give, can vanquish vices and enable us to love and find joy in holiness. He contrasts selfish love, also with respect to sex, both outside and within marriage, with the love of God. It is in the light of this that he considers such things as adultery and fornication as sinful, as against commands of God. He speaks of virtues such as prudence, temperance, justice, fortitude, self-restraint, continence, chastity including chaste marital fidelity, and the service of Christ; and vices such as pride, self-complacency, and lust. Augustine had a real appreciation of the true, good and beautiful. With respect to his great love for the truth, he appreciated reason, which he thought ought to be subordinated to Catholic Christian faith.

Augustine made a significant contribution to the theology of marriage. Among other things, his treatment of the good of marriage has influenced much subsequent theology and Catholic teaching. The threefold good of marriage, according to Augustine, includes the generation of offspring and raising them to worship and serve God; chaste marital fidelity; and the sacred marriage bond. Although Augustine articulated many truths, often in a powerful and eloquent way, the main theme running through his writings is the love of God.

St. Thomas Aquinas possessed a remarkable depth of understanding. In his writings, one finds many clear and helpful distinctions. For example, with respect to morally relevant values and norms, he makes a number of distinctions concerning goods and kinds of love. God, the ultimate good and end, is the exemplar and source of all other goods. Aquinas distinguishes sensory good

and rational good (cf. our sensory and rational appetites), genuine versus apparent good, divine good, the good of nature and the good of grace. Of significance he teaches that God's grace does not destroy our human nature but perfects it. With respect to love, he distinguishes natural love, sensory love, rational (intellectual) love, love-of-desire and love-of-goodwill/friendship, and charity (love of God).

The norm (moral) of good human actions, according to Aquinas, is human reason and God himself - God's wisdom, law, will. Like Augustine, Aquinas advocates a proper order of love. One should love the good that is appropriate for one. The love of God (charity) brings all of one's desires to an ordered unity. Charity is the mother of the virtues. True virtue directs a person to God. He provides a systematic and quite extensive treatment of the virtues, including the virtue of chastity.

Aquinas also made a significant contribution to the theology of marriage. Of note are his clarifications or clear expressions of prior developments regarding valid marital consent, the goods of marriage, and his understanding of Christian matrimony as a sacrament instituted by Christ, a sacred sign and instrument of grace. Among other things, Aquinas appreciates marriage as a partnership, and its advantages regarding friendship and mutual service. He held that marital friendship is the greatest of all human friendships. Monogamy respects the equal dignity of the spouses and promotes strong marital friendship. Aquinas also held that the marital act, if motivated by virtue, was not only not a sin, but meritorious, that is, a means to grow closer to God. In general his treatment of pleasure is balanced and enlightened.

Aquinas provides reasons for his moral conclusions, which are in harmony with Catholic teaching. For example, with respect to our topics, he considers fornication to be contrary to the good of a possible child, God's will and right reason. Marriage is for the good of man and woman,

and children. Aquinas also considers sexual intercourse in relation to the common good.

While Chrysostom, Augustine and Aquinas have each made significant contributions to Christian theology, including the theology of sex, marriage and love, we should also note here a few of their limitations. For example, they all present a somewhat limited view of the purposes of marriage. Although they each do say some valid things with respect to this, none of them speak of mutual self-giving conjugal love as the fundamental reason for marriage.⁴⁰ Their interpretations of the New Testament teaching on the husband's headship and the wife's submission, although quite enlightened for their times, need to be understood in the light of mutual submission out of reverence for Christ. They also do not explicitly speak about marital sexual relations as an expression of conjugal love and affection, and that it is proper for husband and wife to enjoy sexual relations with each other, provided they properly respect each other and God's will in this area. With respect to these limitations, see also notes 6, 11, 19, 20, 38 and 39 of this chapter. In spite of such limitations, however, contemporary Christians and non-Christians, can learn much from Chrysostom, Augustine and Aquinas. In general their theology is consistent with and represents an authentic development of biblical teaching. They were very intelligent and committed followers of Jesus. Their writings, for the most part, can provide a great stimulus for theological reflection today, as they have in the past, and assist us in the proper formation of our consciences.

In this section, I think it is also relevant to say something about the development of Christian doctrine, and the distinction between Christian Tradition and traditions. Jesus, according to the Gospel of John, promised to send his disciples the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth, who would lead them into the complete truth (cf. 14:16-17 and 26 and 16:12-15). In the light of this, we can

40. See, e.g., Dietrich von Hildebrand, *Marriage: The Mystery of Faithful Love* (New Hampshire: Sophia Institute Press, 1984), Ch. 1 "Love and Marriage".

appreciate that God can and does enlighten people who are open to him. Also Christians, individually in their lives and collectively through the centuries, can grow in understanding God's truth and revelation in Christ. We can thus speak of a development of Christian doctrine. As Christians face new questions and issues, with the help of the Holy Spirit, they can grow in understanding the truth. An authentic development of doctrine does not involve contradicting eternal truths that were perceived in the past, but a development in the articulation of certain truths.(cf. DV, n. 8; GS, nn. 44 and 62; and CCC, n. 94)

According to Catholic teaching,

[The living transmission of God's revelation in Christ] accomplished in the Holy Spirit, is called Tradition, since it is distinct from Sacred Scripture, though closely connected to it. Through Tradition, "the Church, in her doctrine, life and worship perpetuates and transmits to every generation all that she herself is, all that she believes." [DV, 8, par. 1] "The sayings of the holy Fathers are a witness to the life-giving presence of this Tradition, showing how its riches are poured out in the practice and life of the Church, in her belief and her prayer." [DV, n. 8, par. 3] (CCC, n. 78)

Tradition is to be distinguished from the various theological, disciplinary, liturgical or devotional traditions, born in the local churches over time. These are the particular forms, adapted to different places and times, in which the great Tradition is expressed. In the light of Tradition, these traditions can be retained, modified or even abandoned under the guidance of the Church's magisterium. (CCC, n. 83)⁴¹

The theological traditions originating in Chrysostom, Augustine and Aquinas (cf. this chapter), can and should be evaluated in the light of this distinction between Christian Tradition and traditions. This would also apply to other Christian traditions, for example, those originating with

41. Cf. also Yves Congar, *Tradition and Traditions: An Historical and a Theological Essay* (New York: Macmillan, 1967), and *I Believe in the Holy Spirit* (New York: Seabury, 1983).

the Protestant Reformer, Martin Luther.⁴²

In evaluating the proposals of various Christian traditions (as well as those of contemporary theologians, ethicists and others), one can and should ask and attempt to answer a number of questions. Both Christians and non-Christians can ask whether the proposals are true, do they correspond to the breadth and depth of reality and human experience. Does the author have an integral understanding of goods or values and love? One can also examine any norms or recommendations proposed, and try to understand why they were formulated. What values are they intended to protect and promote? Christians also ask whether or not these proposals represent an authentic development of biblical teaching. Along these lines they ought to try to discern whether these proposals are compatible or not with the fullness of God's revelation in Jesus Christ. A Catholic perspective also asks whether these proposals are compatible or not with the truth expressed in Catholic teaching. With respect to this, the next chapter of this book considers the role of the Church's magisterium and some Catholic Church teachings that are relevant to our topics of premarital sex and love.⁴³

42. See, e.g., Lisa Sowle Cahill, *Between the Sexes: Foundations for a Christian Ethics of Sexuality* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), Ch. 7. Her treatment of Martin Luther's views on sexuality and marriage is generally sympathetic but critical of certain aspects. With respect to Christian theological traditions on sex and marriage see also, e.g.: George Hayward Joyce, *Christian Marriage: An Historical and Doctrinal Study* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1948); Edward Schillebeeckx, Vol. II: Marriage in the History of the Church, in *Marriage: Human Reality and Saving Mystery* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1965); and Ronald Lawler, Joseph Boyle and William E. May, *Catholic Sexual Ethics* (Huntington: Our Sunday Visitor, 1985), Ch. 2 "Sex in the Catholic Tradition".

It should be noted, however, that Christian traditions do not only include theological traditions. The wealth of the Christian heritage also includes, among other things, various liturgies and other forms of prayer, Christian art and literature, and Christian saints, all of which can help us better appreciate Christian values. It is beyond the purposes of this book to discuss all of these here.

43. Chapters V and following of this book attempt to integrate some of the better insights, as well as criticize some proposals, of some contemporary theologians, ethicists and others, relevant to our topics of premarital sex and love.