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CHAPTER 4: SOME CATHOLIC CHURCH TEACHINGS RELEVANT TO PREMARITAL SEX AND LOVE

Among Christian "voices", one of the leading voices is that of Catholic teaching, that is, the teaching of the pope and bishops teaching in union with him. Catholic teaching has addressed a number of questions with respect to human sexuality and marriage. This chapter first considers briefly the role of Catholic teaching, according to the Catholic Church. Some of the most relevant Catholic Church teachings with respect to premarital sex, love and related issues are then presented. The last section of this chapter presents some analyses, pointing out some of the developments in these teachings and some of the relevant norms and values. Hopefully readers, whether Catholic or not, will find this helpful in forming their own consciences and in fulfilling their related professional, pastoral, parental and/or personal responsibilities (cf. Chs. I and IX).

Catholics believe that Jesus remains always with His Church (cf. Mt 28:16-20) and continues to teach through her. The Second Vatican Council teaches that only the Magisterium (i.e. the living teaching office of the pope and the bishops teaching in union with him), whose authority is exercised in the name of Jesus Christ, can authentically interpret the Word of God, as transmitted by sacred Scripture and Tradition. With the help of the Holy Spirit the Church grows in understanding God's Revelation.(see DV, nn. 1-10) The Church's doctrine has often been developed or refined in response to certain errors or controversies.

Not all of the teaching of the Magisterium is declared to be infallible. Nevertheless, according to the Second Vatican Council:

In matters of faith and morals, the bishops speak in the name of Christ and the faithful are to accept their teaching and adhere to it with a religious assent of soul. This religious submission of will and of mind must be shown in a special way to the authentic teaching authority of the Roman Pontiff, even when he is not speaking *ex cathedra*. That is, it must be shown in such a way that his supreme magisterium is acknowledged with reverence, the judgments made by him are sincerely adhered to, according to his manifest mind and will....(LG, n. 25 Abbott)¹

Bishops individually do not enjoy the prerogative of infallibility. They, however, proclaim Christ's doctrine infallibly, when united among themselves and with the pope "in their authoritative teaching concerning matters of faith and morals, they are in agreement that a particular teaching is to be held definitively and absolutely." Their definitions on matters of faith and morals for the universal Church must "be adhered to with the loyal and obedient assent of faith."(LG, n. 25 Flannery)

Although the Holy Spirit guides and enlightens individuals who are open to Him, the Second Vatican Council teaches:

In the formation of their consciences, the Christian faithful ought carefully to attend to the sacred and certain doctrine of the Church. The Church is, by the will of Christ, the teacher of the truth. It is her duty to give utterance to, and authoritatively to teach, that Truth which is Christ Himself, and also to declare and confirm by her authority those principles of the moral order which have their origin

1. With regard to the passage cited, the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops in their *Statement on the Formation of Conscience* (Boston: Daughters of St. Paul, 1973), n. 41, say, "For a Catholic, 'to follow one's conscience' is not ... simply to act as his unguided reason dictates. ...[a Catholic] must take into account first and foremost the teaching of the magisterium. When doubt arises due to a conflict of "my" views and those of the magisterium, the presumption of truth lies on the part of the magisterium.[The teaching of the magisterium] must be carefully distinguished from the teaching of individual theologians or individual priests, however intelligent or persuasive."

in human nature itself.(DH, n. 14 Abbott)

In this chapter we will consider, too, some of the Roman Catholic Church's canon law concerning marriage. This has undergone certain revisions up to the current 1983 Code of Canon Law (CIC). What is merely of ecclesial law (i.e. as distinct from God's revealed truth and moral law, as well as the natural moral law discovered by the human mind - cf. Rm 2:14-16) can be changed by the respective Church authority as required by changing circumstances. Also, truth and God's moral law pertain to all persons, whereas what is merely of human law including canon law only pertains to those persons within its jurisdiction. For example, Roman Catholic canon law applies to Roman Catholics. The pope and bishops have the responsibility to enact and revise Church laws for the common good of the Church and the individual good of her members, in harmony with God's law and the exigencies of human nature.²

No human being, including the pope and bishops, however, can change the truth and God's will or moral law, as revealed by him or discovered by us. Along these lines, the Second Vatican Council teaches:

....[the Magisterium] is not superior to the word of God, but is its servant. It teaches only what has been handed on to it. At the divine command and with the help of the Holy Spirit, it listens to this devotedly, guards it with dedication and expounds it faithfully. All that it proposes for belief as being divinely revealed is drawn from this single deposit of faith.

It is clear, therefore, that, in the supremely wise arrangement of God, sacred Tradition, sacred Scripture and the magisterium of the Church are so connected and associated that one of them cannot

2. For an excellent and balanced treatment of conscience, also with respect to Jesus, Church teaching, and Church law, including the proper use of "epikeia" with regard to the latter, see the whole *Statement on the Formation of Conscience* of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (ibid.).

stand without the others. Working together, each in its own way under the action of the one Holy Spirit, they all contribute effectively to the salvation of souls [i.e., people].(DV, n. 10 Flannery)

A. Pre-Vatican II

In 866 Pope Nicholas I held that the form (efficient cause) of matrimony is only the consent, not other things including coition.³ The Second Lateran Council in 1139 defended legitimate marriage covenants against those who condemned them (e.g. the medieval neo-Gnostics).⁴ Concerning marriage, a Profession of Faith for Waldensian converts proposed by Innocent III in 1208 reads: "With the Apostle (see 1 Cor. 7) we do not say that marriage is not to be contracted; but we strictly forbid that those that are contracted in the correct way be broken. That a man and his wife can gain salvation we believe and profess..."⁵ Innocent IV in 1254 wrote: "Concerning fornication, however, which an unmarried man and an unmarried woman commit, it is not to be in any way doubted that it is a mortal sin since the Apostle asserts that both fornicators and adulterers are outside the kingdom of God."⁶

The Council of Florence in 1439 taught that there are seven sacraments of the New Law. The seventh, the sacrament of matrimony, is a sign of the close union of Christ and the Church. The

3. "Replies to the Bulgarians," 13 Nov. 866, DS 643; cf. DS 766.

4. DS 718; cf. Rev. Ronald Lawler, O.F.M.Cap., Joseph Boyle, Jr. and William E. May, *Catholic Sexual Ethics: A Summary, Explanation, & Defense* (Huntington: Our Sunday Visitor, 1985), 59.

5. "Letter to the Archbishop of Terragona," 18 Dec. 1208, *Eius exemplo*, DS 794. Translation from TCT, p. 335.

6. "Letter to his delegate to the Greeks," 6 Mar. 1254, DS 835 (translation provided by Francis Firth, csb); cf. DS 897 and 899.

Council quotes Ep 5:32; teaches that mutual consent, the efficient cause of matrimony, has reference to the present and is ordinarily expressed in words; and speaks of three blessings ascribed to matrimony - *proles* (children), *fides* (fidelity) and *indivisibilitas* (indissolubility). Matrimony is said to be indissoluble because it signifies the indivisible union of Christ with the Church.⁷ In 1459 Pius II condemned the proposition that outside of marriage *luxuria* (unchastity, lust) is not a sin, except by the prohibition of positive law (i.e. by ecclesiastical prohibition, lest the opinion of Epicurus be followed as true).⁸

The Council of Trent (1545-63) was held largely in response to the Protestant Reformation. In 1563 the Council issued some teaching and canons on the sacrament of matrimony. The Council interprets Jesus as clearly teaching the stability (indissolubility) of the marriage bond and that marriage is to be monogamous (see Mt 19:6 and Mk 10:9; cf. Gn 2:23-24 and Ep 5:30). "Christ himself, who instituted the holy sacraments ... merited for us by his passion the grace that brings natural love to perfection, and strengthens the indissoluble unity, and sanctifies the spouses." (Ep 5:25 and 32 are quoted). "...our holy Fathers, the councils, and the tradition of the universal Church have always rightly taught that matrimony should be included among the sacraments of the New Law."⁹

The Council of Trent's "Canons on Matrimony" (in the form of anathemas) speak of the state of celibacy as being superior to the marriage state (Mt 19:11-12 and 1 Cor 7:25-40). They also declare

7. Decree *Exultate Deo* on union with the Armenian Church, 22 Nov. 1439, DS 1310 and 1327. The Decree's instruction on the sacraments follows the teaching of Thomas Aquinas closely - see TCT, p. 261.

8. Letter regarding errors of Zanini, 14 Nov. 1459, DS 1367.

9. TCT, 336 (Session XXIV, 11 Nov. 1563, DS 1797-1800).

the Church's power to legislate with respect to marriage, to allow spouses to separate for various reasons, and to judge marriage cases. The Council of Trent also published a "Decree on the Reformation of Marriage". Before this Decree was in force clandestine marriages were prohibited by the Church, but they were considered valid, unless declared invalid by the Church. Because of the evils resulting from clandestine marriages (e.g. someone leaving their former spouse with whom they had contracted marriage secretly, then contracting "marriage" publicly with another and living in perpetual adultery with her or him), the Council Fathers saw the need for a more efficacious remedy. Henceforth (i.e. after the Decree came into effect), the "faithful", to marry validly, were required to marry according to a certain form:

Those who shall attempt to contract marriage otherwise than in the presence of the parish priest, or of some other priest by permission of the said parish priest, or of the Ordinary, and in the presence of two or three witnesses; the holy Synod renders such wholly incapable of thus contracting, and declares such contracts invalid and null, as by the present decree It invalidates and annuls them.¹⁰

In 1880 (Feb. 10) Pope Leo XIII published the Encyclical *Arcanum Divinae Sapientiae* on Christian marriage. He reiterated and synthesized earlier Church teaching on the subject. Of note, he taught that

...Christ our Lord raised matrimony to the dignity of a sacrament. ...husband and wife, sheltered and strengthened by the heavenly grace which his merits produced, may attain sanctity in the marriage

10. *The Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, trans. and ed. by Rev. J. Waterworth (London: C. Dolman, 1848), p. 197 (DS 1813-16), from the "Decree on the Reformation of Marriage," Ch. 1; regarding clandestine marriages as well as mixed marriages, marriages between non-Catholics and civil marriages cf. DS 2515-20, 2590, 2965-74, 2990-3, 3385-88 and 3468-74. See CIC, canons 1108-33 (cf. section F of this chapter) regarding the present requirements for Roman Catholics concerning "The Form of the Celebration of Marriage", "Mixed Marriages" and "The Secret Celebration of marriage". The form of celebration required for the valid marriage of non-Roman Catholics depends on any legitimate laws that pertain to them.

itself. ...by the bond of divine charity, he made a stronger union of the naturally indivisible society of husband and wife....

The sacrament of matrimony bids not merely to propagate the human race but to procreate offspring to the Church, fellow citizens with the saints of God (cf. Ep 2:19). Spouses owe each other the greatest love, constant fidelity, and careful and assiduous support. Against the Royalists Leo XIII held that

...in Christian marriage the contract cannot be separated from the sacrament. And therefore it is impossible for the contract to be genuine and lawful, unless it is at the same time a sacrament. ...matrimony is the actual contract, provided it is made according to law. ...matrimony is a sacrament because it is a sacred sign and produces grace, and reflects the mystical marriage of Christ with the Church.among Christians every marriage is by its very nature and essence a sacrament.¹¹

Pope Pius XI

In 1929, in the Encyclical *Divini illius Magistri* on Christian Education, Pope Pius XI included some remarks on sex education. He underlines the great danger of that naturalism which was invading this field in his time. Every method of education which negates or forgets original sin and grace, and is founded on the strengths of human nature alone, is erroneous. The subject of Christian education is the whole person, spirit joined to body in a unity of nature, fallen but redeemed by Christ. Christian education is based on divine authority and God's holy laws. Pius XI lauds those who seek to remove despotism and violence (which is not proper correction), but he criticizes those who exaggerate the autonomy and independence of initiative of the child and seek to diminish or suppress the proper authority and work of the educator. Traditional Christian education is similar to the way God, who calls us to active cooperation, treats us. Some delude themselves, who under

11. TCT, p. 339, and LS, p. 6 (DS 3142-6).

the pretext of liberating the child, actually render the child a slave to his or her blind pride and disordered passions.

Pius XI speaks of the error and dangerous pretension of promoting a so-called sex education which is considered able to safeguard youth from the dangers of sense with purely natural means. It is a serious error not to acknowledge the fragility of human nature. Experience shows that in youth faults against good behavior are more the effect of weak will, exposed to occasions (i.e. to sin) and not sustained by the means of grace, than intellectual ignorance. Individual instruction is necessary in this delicate area, at the opportune time, by one who has from God the mission and grace to do so. This should be done observing all the cautions of traditional Christian education. Remedies should be used which introduce the virtue of chastity and close the door to vice. With respect to coeducation of the sexes in general Pius XI emphasizes the importance of Christian prudence and modesty, especially in the delicate and decisive period of formation during adolescence.¹²

In his Encyclical *Casti Connubii* on Christian Marriage (1930)¹³ Pius XI first speaks of the nature and great dignity of chaste Christian marriage. According to Scripture and the constant tradition of the Church, marriage was not instituted or restored by human beings, but by God the Author of nature and Christ the redeemer. The nature of marriage is independent of human free will. Each individual marriage, however, arises only from the free consent of the spouses, which joins their souls more intimately than their bodies. The marital bond is entirely different from the union of

12. Cf. *Insegnamento Pontifici 3: L'Educazione*, ed. by the Monks of Solesmes (Rome: Edizioni Paoline, 1957), pp. 242-7; and DS 3697-8.

13. The full official Vatican English text is printed by the Daughters of St. Paul, Boston. Specific references will be given in the text by page number.

animals by instinct alone (without reason and free will) and far removed from base human unions which are opposed to reason and nature.

Pius XI follows and develops St. Augustine's teaching on the blessings of matrimony: offspring, conjugal faith and the sacrament. Christian spouses are to offer their children to the Church so that they may be baptized (made living members of Christ). The right and important duty of educating children (regarding both natural and supernatural life) belongs first to parents. Since matrimony binds parents indissolubly together, to care for and help each other, it provides for this education in the best possible way. Therefore, "every use of the faculty given by God for the procreation of new life is the right and the privilege of the married state alone ... and must be confined absolutely within the sacred limits of that state."(12)

Conjugal faith demands the complete unity of matrimony between one man and one woman. It must be distinguished by chastity, spouses endeavoring to follow God's law and will in everything. It demands that husband and wife be joined in a holy and pure love, as Christ, who sought only the good of His Spouse, loved the Church. Such love is not based on passing lust but consists in deep attachment of the heart expressed in action. Imitating Christ, spouses ought to help each other day by day to grow in the interior life, virtue, and true love towards God and neighbor. By God's grace they ought to arrive at the summit of perfection as proved by the example of many saints. All the rights and duties of the married state including the marital debt (cf. 1 Cor 7:3) are to be regulated by such love. The wife's submission (cf. Ep 5:22-23) does not "bid her obey her husband's every request if not in harmony with right reason or with the dignity due to wife", but it "forbids that exaggerated liberty which cares not for the good of the family". The degree and manner of this

submission "may vary according to the different conditions of persons, place and time."(15-16)¹⁴

Divine charity is to be the constant guide of the mutual relations of spouses.

"Sacrament" denotes both the indissolubility of the marriage bond and its being made an efficacious sign of grace by Christ. The marriage bond is not subject to any civil power. Inviolable stability belongs to every true marriage (not to invalid or illicit unions). Rare exceptions, "as in the case of certain natural marriages between unbelievers" or unconsummated Christian marriages, depend on divine law of which the Church is the interpreter. The mystical signification with respect to Christ and the Church "is fully and perfectly verified in consummated marriage between Christians."(19) Pius XI commends those who defend the inviolable stability of marriage for the private good of spouses and children, as well as the public good of human society (cf. true love, dignity, security, development of virtuous life and integrity). The sacrament of matrimony strengthens and "consecrates" Christian spouses. It increases sanctifying grace in those who place no obstacle in its way. It also gives spouses the "right to the actual assistance of grace, whensoever they need it for fulfilling the duties of their state."(22) If they cooperate with God's grace diligently, doing all within their power, "they will be able with ease to bear the burdens of their state and to fulfill their duties."(23)

Pius XI then treats certain false theories such as denying the divine institution of matrimony. He astutely criticizes certain media which depict vice including fornication without reproach in the name of emancipation, and those who concoct new abominable types of unions - "temporary,"

14. In his Apostolic Letter On the Dignity and Vocation of Women *Mulieris Dignitatem* (Ottawa: Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1988), n. 24, concerning Ep 5:21-33, Pope John Paul II refers to v. 21 and 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'." See also, Ch. II, note 92.

"experimental"... Evils opposing each of the benefits of marriage are explained in detail. With respect to "offspring" he speaks of deliberately frustrating the natural power of the marital act to generate life as "an offense against the law of God and of nature".(29) Taking the life of offspring in the mother's womb he says is "direct murder of the innocent" and against the precept: "Thou shalt not kill"(Ex 20:13).(32) Regarding eugenics he speaks of the natural right to marry, although some people are to be dissuaded from marrying. Concerning sterilization, neither public officials nor private individuals have the right to destroy or mutilate members of the body "except when no other provision can be made for the good of the whole body."(36)

Opposed to "conjugal faith" is not only adultery but also "all sensual affections and actions with a third party".(36) The doctrine of Christ (e.g. Mt 5:28) abides just as he is ever the same yesterday, today and forever (cf. Heb 13:8). Concerning the emancipation of women, Pius XI spoke of public authority's responsibility to adapt civil rights with respect to modern needs, in keeping with good morality and the welfare of the family. It is not true emancipation, however, which in reality debases the woman and makes her "the mere instrument of man."(38) Pius XI calls "enemies of marriage" those who "substitute for that true and solid love, which is the basis of conjugal happiness, a certain vague compatibility of temperament" which they call "sympathy", and assert that "when it ceases the marriage is completely dissolved. This is to build a house on sand (cf. Mt 7:27) rather than on the rock of "mutual conjugal chastity" strengthened "by a deliberate and constant union of spirit" that will never fall away or be shaken by adversity.(39)

Opposed to the "sacrament" are those who wish to commit marriage to civil society alone, free it from any indissoluble bond, and remove it from the Church's jurisdiction. The Church dissuades mixed marriages (Catholics marrying non-Catholics) because of possible dangers to the faith of the

Catholic party and children, and because in them it is more difficult to imitate the close union between Christ and His Church. Close union of spirit, mind and heart, on which the peace and happiness of family life rest, is weakened, perhaps even destroyed.[see section F below, canons 1124-9, regarding a Catholic marrying a non-Catholic today] Opposed to those who argue for divorce (for various reasons or any reason whatsoever) "stands the unalterable law of God".(45) Any human action contrary to Christ's teaching, "What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder"(Mt 19:6), is null and void. All the excuses for divorce are easily answered. Separation, which does not sever the bond and which the Church allows in certain circumstances, "removes all the alleged inconveniences and dangers."(46) Pius XI contrasts the benefits of the marriage bond remaining intact with the evils of divorce for both the family and the State.(47-49)

The rest of the encyclical is devoted to suitable remedies to the aforementioned abuses. First of all it is necessary to return to the divine plan. One who submits oneself to God will find inner peace. Married people should give themselves to God, continually ask for assistance from God (who provides both honest natural means and supernatural grace), frequent the sacraments, and humbly obey the Church, whom Christ made "the teacher of the whole of the truth concerning religion and moral conduct."(54) To restore marriage it is of "utmost importance that the faithful should be well instructed concerning matrimony ... often and fully..."(55)

The basis of a happy marriage is prepared during the periods of childhood and adolescence. There is danger that those who were selfish and indulgent before marriage will be the same in marriage, experiencing sadness, strifes, estrangements and "left alone with their own unconquered passions."(60) Let parents bring up their children as God wills, as perfect Christians. Children's minds should be imbued with heavenly doctrines and their hearts should be strengthened with the

aids of divine grace including the sacraments. To avoid the sorrows of an indiscreet marriage those about to enter into wedlock should carefully deliberate in choosing the person with whom henceforward they must live continually: they should ... keep before their minds the thought first of God and of the true religion of Christ, then of themselves, of their partner, of the children to come, as also of human and civil society, for which wedlock is a fountainhead. Let them diligently pray for divine help, so that they make their choice in accordance with Christian prudence, not indeed led by the blind and unrestrained impulse of lust, nor by any desire of riches or other base influence, but by a true and noble love and by a sincere affection for the future partner; and then let them strive in their married life for those ends for which the State was constituted by God. Lastly, let them not omit to ask the prudent advice of their parents with regard to the partner...(61-2)

Every effort should be made so that fathers can earn enough to provide for their family's needs. Aid should be provided to those unable to support themselves. The rich, according to Christian charity, should help the poor. Officials of the State should not neglect the needs of married people and their families. They "must do their utmost to relieve the needs of the poor".(65) Just laws should be made and enforced also to protect chastity, for reciprocal conjugal aid, and so on. Those in positions of power should work in harmony and friendship with the Church to overcome the tremendous evils which assail marriage and the family.

Pope Pius XII

During his long pontificate (1939-1958) Pope Pius XII gave many addresses to various groups, touching on many specific moral issues and problems. He frequently addressed issues related to the virtue of purity, earning the title *Defensor Puritatis* (Defender of Purity).¹⁵ Here we will consider

15. *The Problem of Teen-age Purity: The Teachings of Pope Pius XII*, compiled by Nazareno Camilleri, S.D.B.; trans. by Marion Barrows (New Rochelle, N.Y.: Salesiana Publishers and Distributors, 1961), 1. Subsequent references to this source will be given in the text by the abbreviation PTP, page number and the date of the address.

only briefly some of the themes in his teaching that are relevant to our topics.

Advocates of extra-marital or promiscuous sexual relations often attempt to justify these by an "individualistic" or "situational" ethics. Pope Pius XII says this new system of morality is "far removed from the Faith and from Catholic principles..." It severs the individual conscience from God's universal, absolute moral law. "...it diverts attention from God or simply denies Him and in every way turns man back upon himself."(PTP 5, Apr. 18, 1952) In our "progressive", materialistic civilization, the pope points out that intellectual life "is dominated by techni-scientific and economic thinking to such an extent that it is losing sight of the truths of the higher order which are called metaphysical truths, and the capacity to perceive them."(PTP 11, May 24, 1953)

Pope Pius XII considered the corruption of morals to be serious and widespread in his time. He notes how the various media have been abused to contribute "towards the frivolity, worldliness, and sensuality of youth." But he also considers a leading factor of the widespread religious and moral breakdown of youth to be the decline of family life.(PTP 14, Mar. 26, 1950) Parents themselves need to prepare themselves well to fulfill their "grave responsibility to give their children a truly Christian education even at the cost of great sacrifice." This education not only of body but also of spirit must begin in infancy. He observes, "It is true that at the age of twelve or fifteen many do seem intractable; but why? Because from the time they were two or three years old, everything has been given or allowed; everything they had has been handed to them."(PTP 17 and 19, Oct. 26, 1941) He admonishes parents not to squander their parental authority, a right conferred upon them by God. Parents should exercise their authority to guide their children in a benevolent, serene, strong, frank, affectionate, prudent and gracious way.(PTP 19, Sept. 24, 1941)

Pope Pius XII addressed too the respective responsibilities of the school and the Church in the

holistic education of children and youth. A Christian teacher, who understands both the seriousness of sin and the influx of God's graces in the life of the young, will work patiently and constantly "to correct the defects of his [her] pupils and to strengthen their good points." By elevating and ennobling, the Christian teacher "effectively collaborates in the Mystery of the Redemption."(PTP 10, Jan. 5, 1954) Teachers, especially those instructing in religion, ought "to remind themselves very often that they will have to render to God a strict account of their pupils."(PTP 25, Oct. 14, 1950)

Pope Pius XII taught that the Divine Commandment of purity in body and soul is unchanged - it is no less valid today. Since Jesus taught the observance of the Commandments and the necessity to do the will of our Father in Heaven in order to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, "that charge of harsh restriction, which the 'modern morality' directs against the Church, really is primarily an assault upon the adorable Person of Christ."

[Modern youth] have the moral obligation and the possibility, aided by grace, of keeping themselves pure. Hence We reject as erroneous any sort of opinion that considers inevitable the missteps made during years of puberty, as though they were not worth much care or were not gravely sinful...

...the educator, in addition to representing for the young the noble rewards of purity so as to lead them to love and desire it, should always clearly inculcate it also as a Commandment, having all the profundity and seriousness of Divine ordination.

...he [she] will urge the young to avoid the proximate occasions [of sin], he will encourage them in the struggle without disguising its difficulty, will persuade them to embrace whatever sacrifice the virtue requires, and will exhort them to persevere and not fall into the danger of laying down their arms from the start and succumbing to bad habits without resistance.(PTP 26-28, Mar. 22, 1952)

Pope Pius XII believed the average person, even the great majority of people, have the ability

to act responsibly. Concerning the question of culpability, he advocated an enlightened moral realism which avoids two extremes: "one, inclined toward admitting culpability too easily, which just now is not the predominating tendency; the other, denying culpability without sufficient reason, which in certain places has acquired a somewhat disturbing vogue."(PTP 29, May 26, 1957)

Referring to certain findings of experimental psychology, Pius XII says educators should not ignore the characteristics of childhood. He advocates a prudent moral education, including education to purity, from the first years. "Youth of today, no less than of times past," he says, "is ready and eager to do good and to serve God. To this, however, youth must be educated."(PTP 29-30, Jul. 24, 1949)

In many cases, both for old and young, there will be an obligation of moral heroism, particularly in regard to purity. God does not command the impossible. One should count not only on one's own strength, but sincerely and constantly seek Divine aid. Pope Pius XII refers to a number of saints and martyrs including Maria Goretti "who continue by their example to give most eloquent testimony for the truth as opposed to the 'new morality'." "The fundamental obligations of the moral law," including those with respect to fornication and self-abuse,¹⁶ "are based on the essence and nature of man and on his essential relationships [with God and others]..."(PTP 31-32, Apr. 18, 1952)

With regard to recognizing the sovereign rule of God over us, Pope Pius XII points out that

...[the] Divine Will is the voice of an infinite love for us: in a word, not the kind of abstract duty or law that would be overbearing and inexorable, hostile and destructive of human freedom to will and to act, but rather, duty responsive and submissive to the demands of a love, a friendship, infinitely generous, surpassing and supporting the many vicissitudes of our life in this world.(PTP 35, Aug. 20, 1941)

16. On Oct. 8, 1953, Pius XII said that masturbation directly procured is not licit, whatever may be the purpose (LS, p. 133); cf. the Holy Office in 1929, DS 3684.

Concerning sex education Pope Pius XII speaks of the need for an enlightened and progressive education of the heart and the will to modesty and purity. He affirms the primary right and responsibility of parents to educate their children in this area. While allowing the substitution of a mature, conscientious and prudent educator if the parents are negligent or inept, he says this should be the exception. Taking into account the physical and psychic development of the child or adolescent, effective sexual education "teaches the youth as much as he [she] needs to know and helps him understand how to conduct himself, both by himself and in respect to whatever circumstances surround him."(PTP 40-44, Apr. 13, 1953; cf. also Oct. 26, 1941 and Sept. 18, 1951)

By virtue of the sacrament of matrimony, a human institution -the family community- is transformed into an instrument of divine action and it is directly sanctified. The sacrament of matrimony gives the married couple the grace to accomplish holily the duties of their married state and it strengthens the bonds of mutual affection that unite them. This special sacrament ennobles and sanctifies the chaste use of marriage.¹⁷

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.

[But, as in eating and drinking, they ought to keep within the bounds of moderation and not] subject themselves unrestrainedly to their sensual appetite. ...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

17. LS, 231 (Address on Jul. 13, 1958), and 146 and 141 (Pius XII's Encyclical Letter on Holy Virginity *Sacra Virginitas*, Mar 25, 1954.).

exists. It follows from this that, only in the married state and in the observance of these laws, are the desires and enjoyment of that pleasure and satisfaction allowed; because pleasure is subject to the law of action from which it springs and not vice-versa....

Some would like to maintain that happiness in married life is in direct ratio to the mutual enjoyment of marital relations. This is not so. On the contrary, happiness in married life is in direct ratio to the respect the husband and wife have for each other, even in the intimate act of marriage.¹⁸

Love wishes the happiness and betterment of the beloved. It realizes its lack of power with respect to fully satisfying the other and relies more and more on God.¹⁹ To a group of families Pope Pius XII said:

Make your families...real centers of holiness: where the Lord is always present with His grace; where you pray together and go together to Holy Mass and the Sacraments; where the law of God is faithfully obeyed; where every member of the family aspires seriously towards perfection.(PTP 72, Aug. 14, 1958)

Concerning celibacy, Pope Pius XII observes that the love of Christ moves some to renounce marriage - to be free of its obligations to be more entirely at God's disposition and to devote oneself to the good of neighbor. He asks, how could St. Frances Xavier, St. Vincent de Paul, St. John Bosco and St. Frances Xavier Cabrini, for example, have accomplished such labors, if they had to look after the needs of a spouse and children?²⁰

Pope Pius XII says, "Today, Jesus desires saints from among the youth." May they look to Jesus as their particular Friend and the Model of all virtue.(PTP 69, Nov. 4, 1955) He tells youth that in

18. LS, 119-121 (Address Oct. 29, 1951).

19. LS, 211 (Address Sept. 29, 1957).

20. LS, 140 (*Sacra Virginitas*, Mar. 25, 1954).

order to face powerful opposition they will need courage rooted in clear and strong convictions.

You need to have a rational and profound understanding of what you believe. You need to see it in the splendor of its truth, its purity, and its power, in the fullness of its demands. You need to understand why the Catholic doctrine is the right doctrine.(PTP 49, Dec. 8, 1947)

Pope Pius XII also speaks of the need for sincere and habitual prayer, and to repel temptations and seductions with a vigorous "No". He recommends special devotion to the Immaculate Virgin Mary, regular sacramental Confession (which purifies and heals us), and frequent reception of Jesus in the Eucharist, even daily if possible.(PTP 57-61, 11 Sept. 1947, 12 Oct. 1949 and 17 Apr. 1940) The Eucharist, which intimately unites one with the Divine Spouse, is the best remedy against lust. From it one derives strength to resist all temptations to sins of impurity.²¹

Adam's sin has caused a deep disturbance in our corporal faculties and passions - they seek to gain control of the life of the senses and even of the spirit, obscuring our reason and weakening our will. Christ's grace helps us to live by the spirit and to keep our bodies in subjection. The virtue of chastity does not mean insensibility, but subordinating the urge of concupiscence to reason and the law of grace, striving after what is noblest in human and Christian life. All holy people carefully guard the movements of their senses and passions. Our Savior (Mt 5:28-29) demands that we never consent to any sin, even internally, and that we steadfastly remove far from us anything that can even slightly tarnish the beautiful virtue of purity.²²

Pope Pius XII speaks too of the need to form right consciences regarding Christian duties in the use of books, cinema, television, sports, modesty of dress, and so on. He says all "who are able should engage every energy and direct every talent to the promotion of a literature, a theater, and

21. Ibid., 156.

22. Ibid., 145-6 and 152.

a cinema educational and wholesome in theme and in detail, and at the same time interesting and attractive - true works of art."(PTP 51-57 and 65, Sept. 11, 1947) But, to combat the massive social evils, he taught that individual efforts, while most necessary, were not enough. It is necessary for Christian forces to unite, to labor on a large scale, locally, regionally, nationally and internationally, in a variety of ways responding to all the forms of danger and misery, needs (corporal and spiritual) and situations.(PTP 64, 28 Sept. 1948 and 20 Sept. 1942) He says,

...[We should all] intervene as far as we can, for the cause of the Faith, for the Divine Savior - intervene wherever there are vital interests at stake; wherever there are under consideration laws that touch upon the worship of God, the marriage contract, the family, the school, and the social order; wherever there is a question of the formation of people's minds through educational means.(PTP 73, Sept. 11, 1947)

In this struggle...final success is already assured on the infallible word of God. There will come the day of the triumph of good over evil, as there will come the day when (We say it with sadness) 'the cursed will depart into everlasting fire' (Matt. 25:41) - those who have chosen to turn away from God and have remained obstinate in their impenitence to the end....

Battles are still before us with uncertain results, because these are still dependent on the good will of men [and women].... may Jesus reign anew in hearts and in the world.(PTP 73, Dec. 8, 1953)

Pope John XXIII

Pope John XXIII is mainly remembered for calling the Second Vatican Council and for his two great social encyclicals, *Mater et Magistra* (1961) and *Pacem in Terris* (1963). He, however, did not neglect the areas of marriage and family life. In *Mater et Magistra*, for instance, he expresses concern that salaries be big enough to support workers and their families.²³ In an address to the

23. Ibid., 266.

Sacred Roman Rota on October 25, 1960, he raised a number of points relevant to our topics.

Pope John XXIII speaks of dangers in our times that threaten the whole concept of the family, and of the writings and talks of his predecessors as bearing witness to the maternal care of the Church. He says he wants to draw the attention of all to the holiness of marriage. He addresses three points of pastoral practice: 1) the duty of instruction for all on the dignity and obligations of married life, and how for Christians it is a great sacrament; 2) those who are to educate, counsel or judge need strength and solidity of conviction, of doctrine and resolution, along with constant study and a humble and sincere attitude that knows that true and profound learning never goes, nor can go against, Revelation and the teaching of the Church; and 3) the constant recalling of the Fatherhood of God.

The beauty of Christian teaching on marriage calls for a continuous and persuasive instruction of the faithful that will reach all levels of society. This is especially necessary and urgent for young people approaching marriage. Sometimes the time of youth, in particular during the period of engagement, can smother the clarity of ideals in the fog of feeling and an expression of love that is mistaken or not sufficiently controlled.

Pope John XXIII deplores the harm done by a naturalistic and materialistic concept of life, especially regarding marriage and the family, reducing them to merely human institutions and weakening their structure and stability. He speaks of original sin and the need for recourse to grace. He stresses too the need for unsullied moral principles, sound training of the emotions, and esteem for human values viewed in their harmony with the supernatural.²⁴

The moral order is grounded in truth, functions according to the norms of justice, and is

24. *Ibid.*, 251-4.

inspired and perfected by mutual love. It is universal, absolute and unchangeable in its principles, having its objective foundation in the true God, transcendent and personal. God, the first Truth and highest Good, "alone is that deepest source from which human society can draw its vitality, if that society is to be well ordered, beneficial, and in keeping with human dignity."²⁵

B. Vatican II (1962-1965)

The Second Vatican Council's "Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World" *Gaudium et Spes* [GS](1965), nn. 47-52, treats "The Dignity of Marriage and the Family". The Council in this chapter did not intend to give an exhaustive treatment of all matters in this area, but only to present "certain key points of the Church's teaching in a clearer light"(GS, 47),²⁶ which it does beautifully. This chapter begins by noting how the healthy state of "conjugal and family life" is important for the well-being of the individual person and of human and Christian society. Unfortunately, these partnerships are often dishonored or plagued by "polygamy, ...divorce, so-called free love, ... selfishness, hedonism, and unlawful contraceptive practices." Wider economic and social conditions often cause serious disturbances in families. Nevertheless, the profound changes in modern society reveal the strength and true nature of marriage and the family "in one way or another."(GS, 47 Flannery)

The intimate partnership of married life and love has been established by the Creator and qualified

25. Encyclical Letter "Peace on Earth" *Pacem in Terris*, 37-38 (Boston: Daughters of St. Paul, 1963). For another source, besides those referred to in this chapter, on pre-Vatican II teachings on marriage, see: *Papal Teachings: Matrimony* (Boston: St. Paul Editions, 1963), selected and arranged by the Benedictine Monks of Solesmes, trans. by Michael J. Byrnes.

26. Specific references to the documents of the Second Vatican Council are given here by document name or abbreviation and section number(s).

by His laws....

....By their very nature, the institution of matrimony itself and conjugal love are ordained for the procreation and education of children, and find in them their ultimate crown.

....As a mutual gift of two persons, this intimate union, as well as the good of the children, imposes total fidelity on the spouses and argues for an unbreakable oneness between them.

Christ the Lord and the Spouse of the Church comes into the lives of married Christians through the sacrament of matrimony ... [so that they] may love each other with perpetual fidelity through mutual self-bestowal.

Authentic married love is caught up into divine love and is governed and enriched by Christ's redeeming power and the saving activity of the Church....(GS, 48 Abbott)

By virtue of the sacrament of matrimony, "as spouses fulfill their conjugal and family obligations, they are penetrated with the spirit of Christ", advance in perfection and mutual sanctification, and "contribute jointly to the glory of God."²⁷ While parents have a duty to educate their children, especially religiously,²⁸ children ought to respond with gratitude, love and trust, and stand by their parents in hardships and old age. The Christian family, by mutual love, solidarity, faithfulness, and by sharing its spiritual riches with other families, will manifest to all, "the Savior's living presence in the world, and the genuine nature of the Church."²⁹(GS, 48 Abbott)²⁹

Married love, an affection between two persons rooted in the will, is eminently human and

27. Cf. also Vatican II's "Dogmatic Constitution on the Church" LG, Ch. V, which teaches that all Christians, married and single, are called to holiness, "to the fullness of Christian life and to the perfection of love."(n. 40 Flannery; cf. Mt 5:48)

28. Cf. also *ibid.*, 11, which refers to the Christian family as "the domestic Church" and says parents, by word and example, "are the first heralds of the faith with regard to their children."

29. Cf. also *ibid.*, 35, regarding the Christian family's witness to "the present power of the kingdom of God and the hope of a blessed life."

involves the good of the whole person.

...it can enrich the expressions of body and mind with a unique dignity, ennobling these expressions as special ingredients and signs of the friendship distinctive of marriage. This love the Lord has judged worthy of special gifts, healing, perfecting, and exalting gifts of grace and charity.

Such love, merging the human with the divine, leads the spouses to a free and mutual gift of themselves, a gift proving itself by gentle affection and by deed. Such love pervades the whole of their lives. Indeed, by its generous activity it grows better and grows greater. Therefore it far excels mere erotic inclination, which, selfishly pursued, soon enough fades wretchedly away.

This love is uniquely expressed and perfected through the marital act. The actions within marriage 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.

Sealed by mutual faithfulness and hallowed above all by Christ's sacrament, this love remains steadfastly true in body and in mind, in bright days or dark.(GS, 49 Abbott)

The equal personal dignity of husband and wife is acknowledged by mutual and total love. The vocation of Christian marriage demands virtue - cultivating and praying for a constant, generous and sacrificial love. By witnessing to such love Christian couples will do their part in bringing about the needed renewal on behalf of marriage and the family.

It is imperative to give suitable and timely instruction to young people, above all in the heart of their own families, about the dignity of married love, its role and its exercise; in this way they will be able to engage in honorable courtship and enter upon marriage of their own.(GS, 49 Flannery)³⁰

Children are the supreme gift of marriage and contribute substantially to the welfare of their parents. The married couple should be ready to cooperate with the love of the Creator and Savior to transmit and educate human life. Decisions in this regard should be made jointly, with reverence toward God and a conscience conformed to God's law and submissive to the Church's teaching office. Spouses should take into account their conditions and the good of themselves, the family, society and the Church. Since marriage is not merely for procreation, it retains its value and indissolubility when there are no children despite being desired.(GS, 50)

In many circumstances today the size of a family should not be increased. Concerning this the Council teaches that "there can be no conflict between the divine laws governing the transmission of life and the fostering of authentic married love." Abortion and infanticide are abominable crimes.

30. Vatican II's "Declaration on Christian Education" GS, n. 1, teaches that "children and young people should be assisted in the harmonious development of their physical, moral and intellectual endowments As they advance in years, they should be given positive and prudent sexual education [they] have a right to be encouraged to weigh moral values with an upright conscience, and to embrace them by personal choice, and to know and love God more adequately."(Abbott) This document also outlines the respective roles in education of government, parents, schools and institutes of higher learning, and the Church, according to the principle of subsidiarity.

[Human] ... sexuality and the faculty of reproduction wondrously surpass the endowments of lower forms of life.... When it is a question of harmonizing married love with the responsible transmission of life, it is not enough to take only the good intention and the evaluation of motives into account; the objective criteria must be used, criteria drawn from the nature of the human person and human action, criteria which respect the total meaning of mutual self-giving and human procreation in the context of true love; all this is possible only if the virtue of married chastity is seriously practiced.(GS, 51 Flannery)

The family is the foundation of society and a school of deeper humanity where various generations come together and help one another to grow.

Children should be so educated that as adults they can with a mature sense of responsibility, follow their vocation, including a religious one,³¹ and choose their state of life. If they marry [they should be guided] ...with respect to founding a family no pressure, direct or indirect, should be put on the young to make them enter marriage or choose a specific partner.(GS, 52 Abbott)

Vatican II's chapter on marriage and the family in GS closes by calling public authorities, Christians in cooperation with other people of good will, various experts, priests, family associations, and spouses themselves to promote the welfare of children, married couples and families.(GS, 52)

Most of the other teachings of Vatican II which directly relate to sex, marriage and family life are referred to in the notes for this section. In one way or another, however, all of the teachings of Vatican II (e.g. regarding the media, liturgy, ecumenism, religious freedom) could be related to our

31. The Second Vatican Council's documents include a few which explain the various Christian vocations: "Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests" *Presbyterorum Ordinis*; "Decree on the Appropriate Renewal of the Religious Life" *Perfectae Caritatis*; "Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity" *Ad Gentes*; and "Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity" *Apostolicam Actuositatem*. These documents include sections which outline the responsibilities of Christian families in each of these areas.

topics.

C. Pope Paul VI

In an address on February 12, 1966,³² Paul VI expands on some of the teachings of the Second Vatican Council on marriage and the family. He reaffirms that marriage and the family come from God, corresponding to a plan of His which remains unchanged and rises above the changing circumstances of the times. God wants to use them to make people sharers in His love for people and His power to bring new life into being. Marriage and the family are also ordained to God. Families founded and lived on earth are destined to get together again in heaven. Any concept of marriage and the family that overlooks their essential relationship to God is not able to find the correct way to solve their problems.

[God wants married people to] share in His love - the personal love that He has for each of them, by means of which He calls them to help each other and to give themselves to each other to achieve the fullness of their personal lives, and the love that He bears toward mankind ... by means of which he wants ... [men and women] to multiply so that they may share in His life and in His eternal happiness.(LS, 291)

Spouses should each pledge themselves wholly to helping the other be what God wants them to be. Seen thus they will regard marital unity and indissolubility, and mutual fidelity, as normal and necessary. Without love these can seem a burden. With love they will discover unsuspected wellsprings of generosity, wisdom and strength. Spouses should also desire to faithfully express the love of God, the Creator, by generating new lives. Regarding this they should maturely seek the

32. To Participants in the 13th national Congress of the Italian Women's Center (LS, 288-95).

greater good.

In charity spouses will find light, the way to truth, and the correct solution to their problems, according to God's law, ones they will not regret at the end of their lives. Let spouses look to a full and universal charity, desiring God's glory and the spread of His Kingdom. In mutual charity each seeks the other's good and tries to anticipate the other's good desires rather than impose one's own will. Charity, with its responsibilities towards God, one's spouse and children is not an easy way of life, but a long journey towards sanctification which is nourished on the joys and sacrifices of every day. This way of life is normal when it is guided by God's law and bathed in love.

The wise doctrine of the Church concerning the transmission of life and the virtue of conjugal chastity has ennobled and sanctified marital love, purified it from selfishness and pride, and from superficially pursuing ephemeral things of this world in preference to giving oneself to something eternal. This doctrine and virtue have refined spouses' sense of mutual respect and mutual esteem. Parents' obedience and loyalty to God assures them the grace they need to raise their children as Christians and is the children's most profound training in loyalty to God. The virtue of purity in married life, in accord with God's laws, stirs up moral strength, spiritual wealth, peace and greatness of soul. Let spouses not reduce the divine law and ideal to the measure of their own wills, but confidently trust in the strength of God's grace and constantly ask for it in their prayers.

On June 24, 1967, Paul VI published *Sacerdotalis Caelibatus* on priestly celibacy.³³ This document also includes some good points on sexuality and marriage. Paul VI teaches that Christ reestablished the primordial dignity of marriage (Mt 19:3-8), honored it with His presence at Cana (Jn 2:1-11), and elevated it to the dignity of a sacrament and sign of His union with the Church.

33. My source is EV, vol. 2, especially 1434-87. References will be given in the text by section number.

Thus Christian spouses in the exercise of mutual love, in fulfilling their specific responsibilities and tending to that holiness which is proper to them, walk together toward the heavenly homeland. But Christ has also opened a new way in which the human creature adheres totally and directly to the Lord, preoccupied only with Him and His things (cf. 1 Cor 7:33-35).(20)

Christ remained in the state of virginity all his life which signifies his total dedication to the service of God and to people. The response to the divine charism of consecrated virginity has as motive the kingdom of God (cf. Mt 19:12). Authentic love is total, exclusive, stable and perennial, the stimulus to every heroism.(21-24)

Grace does not destroy and do violence to nature, but elevates it and gives it supernatural capacities and vigor. God, who created and redeemed humankind, gives what is necessary to do what He asks. Celibacy is not contrary to nature. Human beings, created in the image and likeness of God, are not only flesh. The sexual instinct is not everything in us. We are also and above all intelligence, will, freedom - faculties by which we must retain our superiority to the universe. The choice of celibacy does not involve ignorance and depreciation of the sexual instinct and of affectivity, which would be harmful. Rather, it requires a lucid understanding, attentive dominion of self and a wise sublimation of one's psyche to a superior plan.(51-55)

The spiritual dimension of every authentic love and its personal sacrifice will merit for the married the grace of an authentic union.(57) Chastity is not acquired at once forever, but is the result of a laborious conquest and of a daily affirmation. The world of our time has placed in great relief the positive value of love in the relationship between the sexes, but it has also multiplied the difficulties and risks in this field.(73)

On July 25, 1968, Paul VI published his encyclical on the transmission of human life *Humanae*

Vitae.³⁴ He first notes some of the aspects of the problem today including the concern of many over world population growth, the difficulties that married couples and parents often face, and human progress in the domination of the forces of nature. Paul VI wrote this encyclical after wide consultation. A papal commission on birth control, including various experts, had studied the problem for several years. The members of the commission had not reached full agreement regarding the moral norms to be proposed. Paul VI says he also received counsels from many bishops. He says he replies to these grave questions after much reflection and prayer, "by virtue of the mandate entrusted to us by Christ".(6)

Paul VI points out that the problem of birth, like every other human problem, is to be considered in the light on an integral vision of the human person and his (her) vocation, both natural and supernatural. Conjugal love has its origin in God who is love. Marriage is not the effect of chance, but the wise institution of the Creator to realize in humankind His design of love. Conjugal love is fully human, total, faithful and exclusive until death, and fruitful.(7-9)

Responsible parenthood involves knowledge of and respect for the biological laws in the power of giving life which are part of the human person, and dominion of reason and will over the tendencies of instinct and passion. It also involves considering physical, economic, psychological and social conditions with respect to decisions about family size, and that husband and wife recognize their duties towards God, themselves, the family and society, "in a correct hierarchy of values."(10)

34. I have used here the NC News Service Translation, published by the Daughters of St. Paul, Boston. Specific references will be given in the text by section number. For a good treatment of the controversy on contraception and responsible parenthood through natural family planning, see, e.g., Benedict M. Ashley and Kevin O. O'Rourke, *Healthcare Ethics* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 4th ed. 1997), Ch. 10.1-3.

Although God has wisely designed rhythms of fertility, each marital act "must remain open to the transmission of life", according to the norms of the natural law, as interpreted by the constant doctrine of the Church.(11)³⁵

...[This teaching is] founded upon the inseparable connection, willed by God and unable to be broken by man on his own initiative, between the two meanings of the conjugal act: the unitive meaning and the procreative meaning...(12)

....To use this divine gift destroying, even if only partially, its meaning and its purpose is to contradict the nature both of man and of woman and of their most intimate relationship, and therefore it is to contradict also the plan of God and His will. On the other hand, to make use of the gift of conjugal love while respecting the laws of the generative process means to acknowledge oneself not to be the arbiter of the sources of human life, but rather the minister of the design established by the Creator.(13)

We do not have unlimited dominion over our bodies, including our generative faculties.

Illicit means of regulating birth include direct sterilization, intentionally making conjugal acts infertile (i.e. contraception), and, above all, directly willed and procured abortion. Regarding these Paul VI points out that

[while] it is sometimes licit to tolerate a lesser evil in order to avoid a greater evil or to promote a greater good, it is not licit, even for the gravest reasons, to do evil so that good may follow therefrom [he refers to Rm 3:8] that is, to make into the object of a positive act of the will something which is intrinsically disordered, and hence unworthy of the human person...(14)

[The Church, however,] does not at all consider illicit the use of those therapeutic means truly necessary to cure diseases of the organism, even if an impediment to procreation, which may be foreseen, should result therefrom, provided such impediment is not, for whatever motive, directly

35. In the notes Paul VI refers to a number of related earlier documents of the Church.

willed.(15)

Concerning what is better known today as Natural Family Planning (NFP), Paul VI teaches that the Church is the first to praise the intervention of intelligence in a way that respects the order established by God. (NFP does not only include the older Calendar Rhythm Method, but also more modern and highly effective methods such as the Ovulation and Sympto-thermal methods.³⁶) He continues:

If, then, there are serious motives to space out births ... it is then licit to take into account the natural rhythms immanent in the generative functions, for the use of marriage in the infecund periods only ... to regulate birth to manifest their affection and to safeguard their mutual fidelity. By so doing, they give proof of a truly and integrally honest love.(16)

In *Humanae Vitae* Paul VI also notes some of the negative consequences of artificial birth control including the general lowering of morality and the possibility that the man may lose respect for the woman, "considering her as a mere instrument of selfish enjoyment, and no longer as his respected and beloved companion." Because of human weakness, especially the young "have need of encouragement to be faithful to the moral law, so that they must not be offered some easy means of eluding its observance."(17) The Church, like her divine founder, is a "sign of contradiction" (see Lk 2:34). She does not cease to proclaim "the entire moral law, both natural and evangelical", of which she is not the author or arbiter, but "only their depository and their interpreter".(18)

The last part of the encyclical contains a number of pastoral directives. Paul VI says the Church, like Jesus, knows the weaknesses of people and has compassion for them, but cannot renounce the teaching of divine law. Efforts to practice God's law, with His help, ennoble the

36. For information concerning these and other methods of family planning see, e.g., *Love and Life: Fertility and Conception Prevention*, 4th edition, by Dr. Suzanne Parenteau-Carreau (Ottawa: Serena Canada, 1989).

person and benefit the human community.(19-20) Spouses must first of all have "solid convictions concerning the true values of life and of the family".

[The] discipline which is proper to the purity of married couples, far from harming conjugal love, rather confers on it a higher human value. It demands continual effort yet, thanks to its beneficent influence, husband and wife fully develop their personalities, being enriched with spiritual values. Such discipline bestows upon family life fruits of serenity and peace, and facilitates the solution of other problems; it favors attention for one's partner, helps both parties to drive out selfishness, the enemy of true love; and deepens their sense of responsibility. By its means, parents acquire the capacity of having a deeper and more efficacious influence in the education of their offspring; little children and youths grow up with a just appraisal of human values, and in the serene and harmonious development of their spiritual and sensitive faculties.(21)

It is necessary to create "an atmosphere favorable to education in chastity." It is vain to seek to justify pornography, licentious performances and so on with the pretext of "artistic or scientific exigencies" or the freedom allowed by public authorities.(22) Paul VI reminds public authorities that they can do much to "safeguard moral customs". Concerning the demographic problem, he calls for

a wise education of peoples in respect of moral law and the liberty of citizens.... The only possible solution to this question is one which envisages the social and economic progress both of individuals and of the whole of human society, and which respects and promotes true human values.(23)³⁷

Paul VI, speaking directly to Christian husbands and wives, recalls certain evangelical teachings such as that the Holy Spirit pours God's love into our hearts, that grace makes us new creatures, capable of responding with love and freedom to God's design, and of finding the yoke of Christ to

37. Paul VI here refers to some of the Church's social teachings including his encyclical on The Development of Peoples *Populorum Progressio* (1967).

be sweet. He invites them to pray perseveringly for divine help, and

[to] draw from the source of grace and charity in the Eucharist. And if sin should still keep its hold over them, let them not be discouraged, but rather have recourse with humble perseverance to the mercy of God, which is poured forth in the sacrament of Penance. In this way they will be enabled to achieve the fullness of conjugal life...[part of Ep 5:25-33 is quoted](25)

Married couples who generously try to be faithful to divine law are invited to share their experience with others - an opportune form of apostolate today.(26)

Finally, Paul VI encourages and calls scientists, medical personnel, priests, bishops and all people of good will to fulfill their responsibilities in this area.(24 and 27-31)

In an address to the Roman Rota on February 9, 1976, Pope Paul VI speaks of the nature of marriage as a community of love, a conjugal community and a sacrament. He also recalls the principle that a marriage comes into existence in an indivisible moment "when the spouses express a juridically valid matrimonial consent." This consent is an act of the will which establishes an irrevocable contract or conjugal covenant.³⁸

D. The Vatican's Declaration on Sexual Ethics (1975)

On December 29, 1975, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith published its "Declaration on Certain Questions Concerning Sexual Ethics" *Persona Humana* (PH).³⁹ This declaration was approved, confirmed and ordered to be published by Pope Paul VI. It is especially relevant to our topics since it specifically treats premarital sexual relations and masturbation.

38. LS, 451-5.

39. I have used the Vatican English translation of *Persona Humana* (PH) published by the Daughters of St. Paul, Boston. Subsequent references will be given in the text by section number.

Persona Humana first notes that sexuality profoundly affects the human person on the biological, psychological and spiritual levels, according to contemporary scientific research. The corruption of morals has increased - there is an "unbridled exaltation of sex" today. Through the media and public entertainment

this corruption has reached the point of invading the field of education and of infecting the general mentality.

In this context certain educators, teachers and moralists have been able to contribute to a better understanding and integration into life of the values proper to each of the sexes; on the other hand there are those who have put forward concepts and modes of behavior which are contrary to the true moral exigencies of the human person.(1)

The Declaration continues, teaching that

many people are in error who today assert that one can find neither in human nature nor in the revealed law any absolute and immutable norm to serve for particular actions other than the one which expresses itself in the general law of charity and respect for human dignity....

...divine Revelation and, in its own proper order, philosophical wisdom, emphasize the authentic exigencies of human nature. They thereby necessarily manifest the existence of immutable laws inscribed in the constitutive elements of human nature and which are revealed to be identical in all beings endowed with reason.(4)

The principles and norms taught by the Church regarding sexual ethics

in no way owe their origin to a certain type of culture, but rather to knowledge of the divine law and of human nature. They therefore cannot be considered as having become out of date or doubtful under the pretext that a new cultural situation has arisen.(5)

The principal criterion of the morality of the conjugal act "is respect for its finality", that it "preserve

the full sense of mutual self-giving and human procreation in the context of true love."(Vatican II, GS, 51, is quoted) The Church's traditional doctrine states that "the use of the sexual function has its true meaning and moral rectitude only in true marriage."(5) This last statement implies that all deliberate nonmarital sexual activity is immoral, not only adultery and fornication, but also masturbation and non-marital sexual petting.

Section 7 of the Declaration *Persona Humana* treats premarital sexual relations. Because it is most relevant to our topics, the whole section will be quoted here:

7. Today there are many who vindicate the right to sexual union before marriage, at least in those cases where a firm intention to marry and an affection which is already in some way conjugal in the psychology of the subjects require this completion, which they judge to be connatural. This is especially the case when the celebration of the marriage is impeded by circumstances or when this intimate relationship seems necessary in order for love to be preserved.

This opinion is contrary to Christian doctrine, which states that every genital act must be within the framework of marriage. However firm the intention of those who practice such premature sexual relations may be, the fact remains that these relations cannot ensure, in sincerity and fidelity, the interpersonal relationship between a man and a woman, nor especially can they protect this relationship from whims and caprices. Now it is a stable union that Jesus willed, and He restored its original requirement, beginning with the sexual difference. "Have you not read that the creator from the beginning made them male and female and that he said: "This is why a man must leave father and mother, and cling to his wife, and the two become one body? They are no longer two, therefore, but one body. So then, what God has united, man must not divide."(Cf. Mt 19:4-6) St. Paul will be even more explicit when he shows that if unmarried people or widows cannot live chastely they have no other alternative than the stable union of marriage: "...it is better to marry than to be aflame with passion."(1 Cor 7:9) Through marriage, in fact, the love of married people is taken up into that love

which Christ irrevocably has for the Church,(Cf. Eph 5:25-32) while dissolute sexual union⁴⁰ defiles the temple of the Holy Spirit which the Christian has become. Sexual union therefore is only legitimate if a definitive community of life has been established between the man and the woman.

This is what the Church has always understood and taught, and she finds a profound agreement with her doctrine in men's reflection and in the lessons of history.

Experience teaches us that love must find its safeguard in the stability of marriage, if sexual intercourse is truly to respond to the requirements of its own finality and to those of human dignity. These requirements call for a conjugal contract sanctioned and guaranteed by society - a contract which establishes a state of life of capital importance both for the exclusive union of the man and the woman and for the good of their family and of the human community. Most often, in fact, premarital relations exclude the possibility of children. What is represented to be conjugal love is not able, as it absolutely should be, to develop into paternal and maternal love. Or, if it does happen to do so, this will be to the detriment of the children, who will be deprived of the stable environment in which they ought to develop in order to find in it the way and the means of their insertion into society as a whole.

The consent given by people who wish to be united in marriage must therefore be manifested externally and in a manner which makes it valid in the eyes of society. As far as the faithful are concerned, their consent to the setting up of a community of conjugal life must be expressed according to the laws of the Church. It is a consent which makes their marriage a sacrament of Christ.

Section 8 of the Declaration *Persona Humana* treats homosexual relations. It distinguishes between homosexual relations (genital acts), tendencies and persons, teaching in part:

In the pastoral field ... homosexuals must certainly be treated with understanding and sustained in the hope of overcoming their personal difficulties... But no pastoral method can be employed which would give moral justification to these acts... For, according to the objective moral order homosexual

40. Note 16 of PH reads: "Sexual intercourse outside marriage is formally condemned: 1 Cor 5:1; 6:9; 7:2; 10:8; Eph 5:5; 1 Tim 1:10; Heb 13:4; and with explicit reasons: 1 Cor 6:12-20."

relations are acts which lack an essential and indispensable finality.... [Note 18 of the declaration quotes Rom 1:24-27.]

Since this issue is of concern to many individuals today, including many young people, parents, teachers and counselors, but is not treated comprehensively in this book, I will refer here to one of the best books on the subject: *The Homosexual Person: New Thinking in Pastoral Care* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1987), by John F. Harvey, who has over thirty years of pastoral experience with homosexual persons. His book is informative, sensitive, caring and faithful to the teaching of the Catholic Church.⁴¹

Masturbation is treated in section 9 of *Persona Humana*.

...[Masturbation] is an intrinsically and seriously disordered act. The main reason is that, whatever the motive for acting in this way, the deliberate use of the sexual faculty outside normal conjugal relations essentially contradicts the finality of the faculty.[see n. 5 above]the tradition of the Church has rightly understood it to be condemned in the New Testament when the latter speaks of "impurity," "unchasteness" and other vices contrary to chastity and continence.

Referring to sociological surveys concerning the frequency of the phenomenon, the declaration says this does not "constitute a criterion for judging the moral value of human acts. Rather, it is linked to human weakness following original sin, loss of a sense of God, the corruption of morals, and the neglect of modesty, "the guardian of chastity". With respect to the question of moral responsibility, the declaration says

...[Modern psychology] helps one to see how the immaturity of adolescence (which can sometimes persist after that age), psychological imbalance or habit can influence behavior, diminishing the

41. See also the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith's "Letter to the World's Bishops on the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons," *Origins: NC Documentary Service*, Nov. 13, 1986, Vol. 16: No. 22, 377-82.

deliberate character of the act and bringing about a situation whereby subjectively there may not always be serious fault. But, in general, the absence of serious responsibility must not be presumed; this would be to misunderstand people's moral capacity.(9)

(See also Ch. VIII.A of this book regarding masturbation.)

Loving God and one's neighbor and possessing eternal life necessarily include keeping the other particular commandments.(see Mt 19:16-19 and 22:38-40) One's fundamental option or attitude towards God and people

can be completely changed by particular acts, especially when, as often happens, these have been prepared for by previous more superficial acts....

A person therefore sins mortally not only when his action comes from direct contempt for love of God and neighbor, but also when he consciously and freely, for whatever reason, chooses something which is seriously disordered. For in this choice ... there is already included contempt for the divine commandment: the person turns himself away from God and loses charity. Now according to Christian tradition and the Church's teaching, and as right reason also recognizes, the moral order of sexuality involves such high values of human life that every direct violation of this order is objectively serious.

It is true that in sins of the sexual order, in view of their kind and their causes, it more easily happens that free consent is not fully given; this is a fact which calls for caution in all judgment as to the subject's responsibility. In this matter it is particularly opportune to recall the following words of Scripture: "Man looks at appearances but God looks at the heart."(1 Sam 16:7) However ... it in no way follows that one can hold the view that in the sexual field mortal sins are not committed.(10)

Pastors are exhorted not to render God's commandments null, but to follow the example of Jesus, who came "not to condemn but to save"(Cf. Jn 3:17), and who was "intransigent with evil, but

merciful towards individuals."(10)⁴²

The virtue of chastity is not confined to avoiding the faults mentioned. It concerns the whole personality, "both interior and outward behavior." A person's heart is made pure by accepting the Holy Spirit and answering God's call to be holy, by properly respecting one's body which is the temple of the Holy Spirit. Regarding this the declaration quotes Mt 5:28, 1 Th 4:3-8, Ep 5:3-8 and 1 Cor 6:15,18-10 and refers to a few other biblical texts. It says too that:

The more the faithful appreciate the value of chastity and its necessary role in their lives as men and women, the better they will understand, by a kind of spiritual instinct, its moral requirements and counsels. In the same way they will know better how to accept and carry out, in a spirit of docility to the Church's teaching, what an upright conscience dictates in concrete cases.(11)

One can achieve liberation from sin "through the grace of Jesus Christ."(cf. Rm 7:24-25) One can "overcome temptations by the power of God."(cf. 1 Cor 10:13)

...[The Christian faithful] today more than ever, must use the means which have always been recommended by the Church for living a chaste life. These means are: discipline of the senses and the mind, watchfulness and prudence in avoiding occasions of sin, the observance of modesty, moderation in recreation, wholesome pursuits, assiduous prayer and frequent reception of the sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist. Young people especially should earnestly foster devotion to the Immaculate Mother of God, and take as examples the lives of the saints and other faithful people, especially young ones, who excelled in the practice of chastity.

...the virtue of chastity ... increases the human person's dignity and enables him [her] to love truly, disinterestedly, unselfishly and with respect for others.(12)

42. Part of Pope Paul VI's *Humanae Vitae*, 29, is quoted. Regarding this consider, e.g., Jesus' response to the woman caught in adultery, including his saying to her, "Neither do I condemn you; go, and do not sin again." (see Jn 8:1-11 RSV).

The declaration concludes by reminding bishops, priests and their collaborators, and all lay people, including artists, writers, public entertainers and those who work with the media, of their respective responsibilities in this area.

...[Parents and teachers of the young are exhorted] to lead their children and their pupils, by way of a complete education, to the psychological, emotional and moral maturity befitting their age. They will therefore prudently give them information suited to their age; and they will assiduously form their wills in accordance with Christian morals, not only by advice but above all by the example of their own lives, relying on God's help, which they will obtain in prayer. They will likewise protect the young from the many dangers of which they are quite unaware.(13)

E. Pope John Paul II

Pope John Paul II devoted many of his General Audiences from September 5, 1979 to November 28, 1984 to developing a theology of the human body, sexuality, and marriage. Most of these talks involve commentaries on sections of the first chapters of *Genesis* and a few other texts of the Bible such as Mt 5:27-28 and Eph 5:21-33 that are relevant to sexuality and marriage. John Paul II thinks that to adequately respond to questions today concerning sexuality and marriage, we need an integral vision constructed from "the beginning", following Christ's indication (cf. Mt 19:3ff. and Mk 10:2ff.). Some of the many themes treated are: man and woman are created by God, given as gifts for each other, and fully find themselves in sincerely giving themselves, in a communion of persons; the human body, male and female, expresses and reveals the person, and has a "nuptial" meaning and a "generative" meaning; man and woman come to know themselves more fully by reciprocal giving and receiving, also in marital intercourse and by becoming parents;

sin and lust have depersonalizing effects; Christ calls us to purity of heart and mature sexual spontaneity; redemption in Christ and life in the Spirit empower and give true freedom; the risen body will be incorruptible, glorious, full of dynamism and spiritualized; marriage and continence complement each other; reverence for Christ is the basis of the relationship between spouses; the sacrament of marriage is an effective sign of God's saving power; the "language of the body" strengthens the marriage covenant; it is important to harmonize human love with respect for life; responsible parenthood is linked to moral maturity; marital chastity deepens personal communion; and prayer, Penance and the Eucharist are the principal sources of spirituality for married couples.

These talks are published in English translation in several places including *L'Osservatore Romano* (English Edition), and in a four volume series by the Daughters of St. Paul, Boston: *Original Unity of Man and Woman: Catechesis on the Book of Genesis* (1981); *Blessed are the Pure of Heart: Catechesis on the Sermon on the Mount and Writings of St. Paul* (1983); *The Theology of Marriage and Celibacy: Catechesis on Marriage and Celibacy in the Light of the Resurrection of the Body* (1986); and *Reflections on Humanae Vitae: Conjugal Morality and Spirituality* (1984). Since all of these talks taken together are quite extensive, a detailed treatment of them will not be presented here. Some of their themes, however, underlie the Church teaching considered in the rest of this chapter. Some of their themes will also be integrated into the next chapter of this book on "Some Elements of a Christian Anthropology with Respect to Sex, Marriage and Love". One needs to read them first hand, however, to appreciate their full profundity and beauty. They integrate an analysis of human subjective and inter-subjective experience of meaning and morality with a metaphysical / theological understanding.

Familiaris Consortio

Following the 1980 Synod of Bishops, which was dedicated to the family, Pope John Paul II published *Familiaris Consortio* [FC] on "The Role of the Christian Family in the Modern World", on November 22, 1981.⁴³ This document is quite a lengthy and comprehensive treatment of the family. Its four parts treat respectively: bright spots and shadows for the family today; the plan of God for marriage and the family (includes a treatment of the sacrament of matrimony and celibacy); the role of the Christian family in forming a community of persons, in transmitting life and education, in participating in the development of society, and in sharing in the life and mission of the Church, including its role as a believing and evangelizing community and a community in dialogue with God; and pastoral care of the family, including a treatment of its stages, structures, agents, and some difficult cases. Although all parts of this document could be related to our topics, only some of the themes which are most directly relevant will be presented here.

Concerning premarital sexual relations, sections 11, 80 and 81 of FC are directly pertinent. Section 11 speaks of God, who is love, a mystery of loving personal communion, creating man and woman in His image, inscribing in them the capacity and responsibility of love and communion. Love is the fundamental vocation of every human being. The human person is called to love in his or her unified totality of body and soul. This vocation to love can be realized in its entirety in either marriage or celibacy.

...sexuality, by means of which man and woman give themselves to one another through the acts which are proper and exclusive to spouses, is by no means something purely biological, but concerns the innermost being of the human person as such. It is realized in a truly human way if it is an integral part of the love by which a man and a woman commit themselves totally to one another until death.

43. I have used the Vatican English translation published by the Daughters of St. Paul, Boston. Subsequent references will be given in the text by section number.

The total physical self-giving would be a lie if it were not the sign and fruit of a total personal self-giving, in which the whole person, including the temporal dimension, is present: if the person were to withhold something or reserve the possibility of deciding otherwise in the future, by this very fact he or she would not be giving totally.(11)

This totality "also corresponds to the demands of responsible fertility." Human procreation involves "a whole series of personal values" since it is directed to the generation of a human person.

For the harmonious growth of these values a persevering and unified contribution by both parents is necessary.

The only "place" in which this self-giving in its whole truth is made possible is marriage, the covenant of conjugal love freely and consciously chosen, whereby man and woman accept the intimate community of life and love willed by God Himself, which only in this light manifests its true meaning. The institution of marriage is not an undue interference by society or authority, nor the extrinsic imposition of a form. Rather it is an interior requirement of the covenant of conjugal love which is publicly affirmed as unique and exclusive, in order to live in complete fidelity to the plan of God, the Creator. A person's freedom, far from being restricted by this fidelity, is secured against every form of subjectivism or relativism and is made a sharer in creative Wisdom.(FC, 11)

Concerning "trial marriages" which many people would like to justify today, John Paul II says:

...human reason leads one to see that they are unacceptable, by showing the unconvincing nature of carrying out an "experiment" with human beings, whose dignity demands that they should be always and solely the term of a self-giving love without limitations of time or of any other circumstance.

The Church, for her part, cannot admit such a kind of union, for further and original reasons which derive from faith. For, in the first place, the gift of the body in the sexual relationship is a real symbol of the giving of the whole person: such a giving, moreover, in the present state of things cannot take place with full truth without the concurrence of the love of charity, given by Christ. In the second place,

marriage between two baptized persons is a real symbol of the union of Christ and the Church, which is not a temporary or "trial" union but one which is eternally faithful. Therefore between two baptized persons there can exist only an indissoluble marriage.(FC, 80)

With regard to overcoming such a situation, John Paul II speaks of investigating the causes of the phenomenon and of "a true education in genuine love and in the right use of sexuality", which introduces all aspects of the person, including the bodily, "into the fullness of the mystery of Christ." He also speaks of training persons from childhood to dominate concupiscence and "to establish relationships of genuine love with other people", with the help of the grace of Christ and without fear.(FC, 80)

Concerning "De Facto Free Unions", "unions without any publicly recognized institutional bond, either civil or religious", that is, unmarried cohabitation, John Paul II first notes that this phenomenon may be based on various factors:

Some people consider themselves almost forced into a free union by difficult economic, cultural or religious situations, on the grounds that, if they contracted a regular marriage, they would be exposed to some form of harm, would lose economic advantages, would be discriminated against, etc. In other cases, however, one encounters people who scorn, rebel against or reject society, the institution of the family and the social and political order, or who are solely seeking pleasure. Then there are those who are driven to such situations by extreme ignorance or poverty, sometimes by a conditioning due to situations of real injustice, or by a certain psychological immaturity that makes them uncertain or afraid to enter into a stable and definitive union. In some countries, traditional customs presume that the true and proper marriage will take place only after a period of cohabitation and the birth of the first child.(FC, 81)

These situations each present the Church with difficult pastoral problems, says John Paul II,

because of their serious consequences. Religious and moral consequences include "the loss of the religious sense of marriage seen in the light of the Covenant of God with His people; deprivation of the grace of the sacrament; grave scandal"; social consequences include "the destruction of the concept of the family; the weakening of the sense of fidelity, also towards society; possible psychological damage to the children; the strengthening of selfishness". John Paul II continues:

The pastors and the ecclesial community should take care to become acquainted with such situations and their actual causes, case by case. They should make tactful and respectful contact with the couples concerned, and enlighten them patiently, correct them charitably and show them the witness of Christian family life, in such a way as to smooth the path for them to regularize their situation. But above all there must be a campaign of prevention, by fostering the sense of fidelity in the whole moral and religious training of the young, instructing them concerning the conditions and structures that favor such fidelity, without which there is no true freedom; they must be helped to reach spiritual maturity and enabled to understand the rich human and supernatural reality of marriage as a sacrament.

The People of God should also make approaches to the public authorities, in order that the latter may resist these tendencies which divide society and are harmful to the dignity, security and welfare of the citizens as individuals, and they must try to ensure that public opinion is not led to undervalue the institutional importance of marriage and the family. And since in many regions young people are unable to get married properly because of extreme poverty deriving from unjust or inadequate social and economic structures, society and the public authorities should favor legitimate marriage by means of a series of social and political actions which will guarantee a family wage, by issuing directives ensuring housing fitting for family life and by creating opportunities for work and life.(FC, 81)

Concerning Catholics in merely civil marriages, John Paul II says in part that the aim of pastoral action will be "to try to do everything possible to induce them to regularize their situation in the

light of Christian principles."(FC, 82)⁴⁴

The "transmission of life" is treated in FC, 28-35. John Paul II reaffirms and develops the Church's teaching on this matter (cf. especially Vatican II, GS, 51; and Paul VI, *Humanae Vitae*; see above). Here we will only consider a few of John Paul II's points. Concerning contraception he says in part:

...the innate language that expresses the total reciprocal self-giving of husband and wife is overlaid, through contraception, by an objectively contradictory language, namely, that of not giving oneself totally to the other. This leads not only to a positive refusal to be open to life but also to a falsification of the inner truth of conjugal love, which is called upon to give itself in personal totality.(FC, 32)

Contraception thus violates not only the procreative meaning, but also the unitive meaning of sexual relations. John Paul II considers natural family planning to be very different. With respect to the experience of many couples, he says:

The choice of the natural rhythms involves accepting the cycle of the person, that is the woman, and thereby accepting dialogue, reciprocal respect, shared responsibility and self-control. To accept the cycle and to enter into dialogue means to recognize both the spiritual and corporal character of conjugal communion, and to live personal love with its requirement of fidelity. In this context the couple comes to experience how conjugal communion is enriched with those values of tenderness and affection which constitute the inner soul of human sexuality, in its physical dimension also. In this way sexuality is respected and promoted in its truly and fully human dimension, and is never "used" as an "object" that, by breaking the personal unity of soul and body, strikes at God's creation itself at the level of the deepest interaction of nature and person.(FC, 32)

44. John Paul II also treats sympathetically and outlines the Church's pastoral practice regarding the situations of "Separated or Divorced Persons Who Have Not Remarried" and "Divorced Persons Who Have Remarried", in *Familiaris Consortio*, 83 and 84.

John Paul II shows himself to be quite aware of the various difficulties many couples have in this area. Concerning understanding and living the moral norm, he speaks of certain necessary human conditions including: knowledge and respect of the body's rhythms of fertility, a permanent education in chastity, humility, patience, persistence, strength of mind, frequent and trusting recourse to God in prayer and the sacraments, and acceptance of the gift of the Spirit.(FC, 33) He speaks, too, of the moral progress of married people (FC, 34), and, among other things, calls for "a broader, more decisive and more systematic effort to make the natural methods of regulating fertility known, respected and applied."(FC, 35)

The family's educational role is treated in FC, Part III, II.2 (36-41). Among other things, John Paul II speaks of the responsibility of parents to model and teach their children true justice, self-giving love in relationships, and to give them "a clear and delicate *sex education*." Concerning the latter he says:

Faced with a culture that largely reduces human sexuality to the level of something commonplace, since it interprets and lives it in a reductive and impoverished way by linking it solely with the body and with selfish pleasure, the educational service of parents must aim firmly at a training in the area of sex that is truly and fully personal: for sexuality is an enrichment of the whole person - body, emotions and soul - and it manifests its inmost meaning in leading the person to the gift of self in love.

Sex education, which is a basic right and duty of parents, must always be carried out under their attentive guidance, whether at home or in educational centers chosen and controlled by them. In this regard, the Church reaffirms the law of subsidiarity, which the school is bound to observe when it cooperates in sex education, by entering into the same spirit that animates the parents.

In this context *education for chastity* is absolutely essential, for it is a virtue that develops a person's

authentic maturity and makes him or her capable of respecting and fostering the "nuptial meaning" of the body. Indeed Christian parents, discerning the signs of God's call, will devote special attention and care to education in virginity or celibacy as the supreme form of that self-giving that constitutes the very meaning of human sexuality.

In view of the close links between the sexual dimension of the person and his or her ethical values, education must bring the children to a knowledge of and respect for the moral norms as the necessary and highly valuable guarantee for responsible personal growth in human sexuality.

For this reason the Church is firmly opposed to an often widespread form of imparting sex information dissociated from moral principles. That would merely be an introduction to the experience of pleasure and a stimulus leading to the loss of serenity - while still in the years of innocence - by opening the way to vice.(FC, 37)

To the Youth of the World

On March 31, 1985, Pope John Paul II published an Apostolic Letter *To the Youth of the World* (Vatican City: Vatican Polyglot Press). In section 10 he speaks directly to young people about "The Great Sacrament of Marriage", saying in part:

.... Youth is the period when this great theme [God's creating human beings male and female, with complete equality in human dignity and with marvelous complementarity] affects in an experimental and creative way *the soul and body* of every young woman and young man, and manifests itself in the youthful conscience together with the fundamental discovery of the personal "I" in all its manifold potentiality. Then also on the horizon of a young heart a new experience occurs: *the experience of love*, which from the beginning has to be included in that plan of life which youth spontaneously creates and forms.

....I ask you *not to break off your conversation with Christ* in this extremely important phase of your youth; I ask you rather to commit yourselves even more. When Christ says "Follow me", his call *can*

mean; "I call you to still another love"; *but very often it means*: ...follow me who am the Bridegroom of the Church who is my bride; come, you too become the bridegroom of your bride, you too become the bride of your spouse. *Both of you become sharers* in that mystery, *that Sacrament*, which ... is something great ... "in reference to Christ and the Church".(Eph 5:32)

.... I want you to believe and to be convinced that your human "great mystery" has its *beginning in God who is the Creator*, is rooted in Christ the Redeemer, who as the spouse "gave himself", and who *teaches* all husbands and wives how to "give themselves" in the full measure of each one's personal dignity. Christ teaches us married love.

.... Many times in my life it has been my task to accompany in a sense more closely this love of young people. Thanks to this experience I have come to understand just *how essential the matter* that we are dealing with here is, how important and how great it is. I think that to a large extent the future of humanity is decided along the paths of this love....

Today, *the principles of Christian morality* concerning marriage are in many circles being presented in a distorted way. Attempts are being made to impose on environments and even entire societies *a model that calls itself "progressive" and "modern"*. It then goes unnoticed that this model transforms a human being and perhaps especially a woman from a subject into an object (an object of specific manipulation), and the whole great *content of love* is reduced to "*pleasure*", which, even though it involved both parties, would still be selfish in its essence. Finally *the child*, who is the fruit and the fresh incarnation of the love between the two, becomes ever more "*an annoying addition*". The materialistic and consumeristic civilization is penetrating this whole wonderful complex of conjugal and paternal and maternal love, and stripping it of that *profoundly human content* which from the beginning was also permeated by a divine mark and reflection.

Dear young friends! *Do not allow this treasure to be taken away from you!* ...love "rejoices in the truth". *Seek out this truth* where it is really to be found! If necessary, be resolved to go against the

current of popular opinion and propaganda slogans! *Do not be afraid of the love that places clear demands on people.* These demands - as you find them in the constant teaching of the Church - are precisely capable of making your love a true love....

Besides the talks and documents of Pope John Paul II referred to in this section, and other documents approved by him that are treated in sections F, G, and I below, he has at many other times and places addressed issues related to human sexuality and marriage. These various statements can be found in *L'Osservatore Romano*, English Edition. Here only a few other documents by Pope John Paul II are named which have some relevance to our topics: Apostolic Letter *Mulieris Dignitatem* On the Dignity and Vocation of Women (1988); Apostolic Exhortation *Christifideles Laici* On the Vocation and the Mission of the Lay Faithful in the Church and in the World (1988); and Encyclical Letter *Veritatis Splendor* Regarding Certain Fundamental Questions of the Church's Moral Teaching (1993). These documents are published by several Catholic publishers including the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, Ottawa.

F. The Code of Canon Law (1983)

The 1983 revised Code of Canon Law (CIC) contains the universal disciplinary regulations or ecclesial laws for Roman Catholics the world over. (For Catholics of Oriental rites see CCEC [1990].) Canons 1055-1165 deal with marriage. In a sense, these "Church laws" translate Catholic teaching on marriage into some concrete guidelines. Here we will only consider some of these teachings and/or guidelines which are relevant to our topics. Since canon law is generally expressed in a very concise and often technical language, the "lay" reader can often benefit by reading a good

commentary as well.⁴⁵

Canon 1055, par. 1, concisely expresses the Catholic Church's understanding of marriage:

The marriage covenant, by which a man and a woman establish between themselves a partnership of their whole life, and which of its own very nature is ordered to the well-being of the spouses and to the procreation and upbringing of children, has, between the baptized, been raised by Christ the Lord to the dignity of a sacrament.

Of note, among other things, the biblical term "covenant" is used to signify that marriage is not only a legal "contract".⁴⁶ Canon 1057, par. 2, defines "matrimonial consent" as "an act of will by which a man and a woman by an irrevocable covenant mutually give and accept one another for the purpose of establishing a marriage." Par. 1 of canon 1057 states in part that, "A marriage is brought into being by the lawfully manifested consent of persons who are legally capable." The issue of what makes a valid marriage is treated further below and is relevant to the issue of "preceremonial sex" (see Ch. VII.G of this book). Canon 1059 states that a marriage involving Catholics, even if only one party is a baptized Catholic is governed by both God's law and canon law. The role of legitimate civil authority with respect to "the merely civil effects of the marriage" is explicitly recognized. Any human laws or policies (e.g. civil law or the policies of various churches)

45. The quotations from the 1983 Code in this section are from *The Code of Canon Law: In English Translation* (London: Collins Liturgical Publications, 1983; distributed in Canada by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, Ottawa). For a basically very good and informative commentary see, e.g., the relevant sections of *The Code of Canon Law: A Text and Commentary*, ed. by James A. Coriden, Thomas J. Green, and Donald E. Heintschel; commissioned by the Canon Law Society of America (New York: Paulist Press, 1985).

46. In the essay, "Marriage Breakdown and Church Law: Changing Jurisprudence", in *Christian Marriage Today: Growth or Breakdown?: Interdisciplinary Essays* (Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1985), ed. by Joseph A. Buijs, 71-87, the canonist Francis G. Morrissey, omi, discusses this and other changes from the 1917 Code to the 1983 revised Code of Canon Law.

concerning marriage should never contradict God's law and should always be fair.⁴⁷

Canons 1063-72 address the "Pastoral Care and the Prerequisites for the Celebration of Marriage". This section promotes the development and preservation of the Christian character of marriage in various ways including: preaching and catechetical instruction on the meaning of Christian marriage and the role of Christian spouses and parents, personal preparation for entering marriage, the fruitful celebration of the marriage liturgy, and help given to those who have entered marriage so that "they may day by day achieve a holier and a fuller family life."(Canon 1063) The canonist Francis Morrissey notes that this could be carried out in minimal fashion, but "with a bit of imagination and pastoral zeal, this programme could be but the beginning of a constructive plan to do much to help young couples as they embark on their married life. Yet, it is impossible to legislate for generosity."⁴⁸

Canons 1073-94 address "diriment impediments" to marriage, that is, things which render "a person incapable of validly contracting a marriage."(Canon 1073) For example, a brother or sister by blood or by adoption cannot validly marry each other (cf. canons 1091-94, as well as canons 108-10; cf. also Lev 18).

Canons 1095-1107 treat the requirements of valid "Matrimonial Consent". Of significance canon 1095 states:

The following are incapable of contracting marriage:

47. For an example of the canon law on marriage of another Christian Church, the Anglican Church of Canada, see *Marrying in the Church: A Pastoral Guide*, ed. by Graham Cotter (Toronto: Anglican Book Centre, 1983). For an example of civil law on marriage and related issues see *Canadian Family Law* by Malcolm C. Kronby (Toronto: Stoddart Publishing Co. Limited, 4th ed. 1986).

48. *Ibid.*, 77.

1. those who lack sufficient use of reason;
2. those who suffer from a grave lack of discretionary judgement concerning the essential matrimonial rights and obligations to be mutually given and accepted;
3. those who, because of causes of a psychological nature, are unable to assume the essential obligations of marriage.⁴⁹

Other canons in this section specify some other reasons why one or both parties to a marriage may not give true or valid consent to marry. For example, canon 1101 states:

The internal consent of the mind is presumed to conform to the words or the signs used in the celebration of a marriage.

If, however, either or both of the parties should by a positive act of will exclude marriage itself or any essential element of marriage [cf. canon 1055 above] or any essential property [i.e., the unity and indissolubility of marriage - see canon 1056], such party contracts invalidly.

Also, canon 1102 states in part that, "Marriage cannot be validly contracted subject to a condition concerning the future", and canon 1103 states that, "A marriage is invalid which was entered into by reason of force or of grave fear imposed from outside, even if not purposely, from which the person has no escape other than by choosing marriage."

Canons 1108-29 treat "The Form of the Celebration of Marriage" and "Mixed Marriages". Ordinarily, a Catholic,⁵⁰ to marry validly in the eyes of the Catholic Church, must have their marriage "contracted in the presence of the local Ordinary or parish priest or of the priest or deacon delegated by either of them, who, in the presence of two witnesses, assists, in accordance however

49. In *ibid.*, 78-84, Morrisey discusses canon 1095 in some detail, as well as the kind of fraud, deceit and error that would render a marriage null. See also the relevant sections of Coriden, Green and Heintschel's commentary (see note 45 above).

50. With respect to canonical form, a Catholic is a person who "was baptized in the catholic Church or received into it and has not by a formal act defected from it" (canon 1117).

with the rules set out in the following canons..."(canon 1108, par. 1) Several exceptions to this "form" and their respective conditions are specified in the Code, for example: the diocesan Bishop, with proper authorization, can delegate lay persons to assist at marriages where there are no priests and deacons (see canon 1112); and in the case of mixed marriages,

.... If... the catholic party contracts marriage with a non-catholic party of oriental rite, the canonical form of celebration is to be observed for lawfulness only; for validity, however, the intervention of a sacred minister is required, while observing the other requirements of law.

If there are grave difficulties in the way of observing the canonical form, the local Ordinary of the catholic party has the right to dispense from it in individual cases ... for validity, however, some public form of celebration is required...."(canon 1127)⁵¹

A Catholic is prohibited from marrying a non-Catholic baptized Christian unless they have the express permission of the competent authority (see canons 1124-29; a Catholic needs a dispensation from the impediment of disparity of worship to validly marry a non-baptized Christian - see canon 1086). Concerns are raised here concerning removing any dangers to the faith of the Catholic party, having the children baptized and brought up in the Catholic Church, and providing the spiritual help and other assistance needed to fulfill their obligations and to foster the unity of their marriage and family life.

Canons 1134-40 treat "The Effects of Marriage". Among other things, these canons point out

51. The Church normally requires Catholics to marry according to the ecclesiastical form for several reasons: "-Sacramental marriage is a *liturgical* act. It is therefore appropriate that it should be celebrated in the public liturgy of the Church; -Marriage introduces one into an ecclesial *order*, and creates rights and duties in the Church between the spouses and towards their children; -Since marriage is a state of life in the Church, certainty about it is necessary (hence the obligation to have witnesses); -The public character of the consent protects the "I do" once given and helps the spouses remain faithful to it."(CCC, n. 1631) Canons 1130-33 of CIC treat exceptional circumstances whereby the local Ordinary may permit "The Secret Celebration of Marriage", and its respective conditions.

that: from a valid marriage a permanent and exclusive bond arises between the spouses; spouses in a Christian marriage are strengthened and "consecrated for the duties and the dignity of their state"(canon 1134); "Each spouse has an equal obligation and right to whatever pertains to the partnership of conjugal life"(canon 1135); and "Parents have the most grave obligation and the primary right to do all in their power to ensure their children's physical, social, cultural, moral and religious upbringing"(canon 1136).

Canons 1141-50 treat the possible dissolution of a non-consummated marriage by the pope for a just reason, and the possible dissolution of a non-sacramental marriage in virtue of the Pauline privilege (cf. 1 Cor 7:12-16). Canons 1151-5 treat the separation of the spouses while the marriage bond remains. "Spouses have the obligation and the right to maintain their common conjugal life, unless a lawful reason excuses them."(canon 1151). Three lawful reasons - adultery, grave danger and undue difficulty - and their respective conditions are specified. Canons 1156-65 treat "The Validation of Marriage", including retroactive validation.

Catholic canon law concerning marriage (including that regarding impediments, matrimonial consent and the form required for the valid or lawful celebration of marriage) is not only relevant with respect to the question of annulments. It can also be helpful to appreciate the importance of good marriage preparation and the proper celebration of marriage. Human sexuality and marriage are not only private matters. They also have important public dimensions. With respect to the question of premarital sex, Catholic canon law can also help one to appreciate better, among other things, the demarcation between being truly or validly married and not being married.

G. The Vatican's Document on Sex Education (1983)

The Vatican's Congregation for Catholic Education (CCE) published "Educational Guidance in Human Love: Outlines for Sex Education" on November 1, 1983.⁵² This beautiful document synthesizes and builds on relevant previous teaching of the Church. It refers to much of the teaching treated in this chapter. Here we will focus on some of the new developments expressed in this document. The document in its entirety, however, deserves careful study, especially by parents and those directly involved in the field of sex education.

The CCE's document on sex education emphasizes throughout the need for an integral vision of the matter and the importance of harmonious human development. It notes both the importance of sex education, to help "children and adolescents on the way to psychological and spiritual maturity" and to protect "them from the dangers of ignorance and widespread degradation"(12), as well as the difficulty of this undertaking "by reason of the complexity of the diverse elements (physical, psychological, pedagogical, sociocultural, juridical, moral and religious) which come together in educational action."(11) The positive work, that respects human dignity, that is already being carried out in this area is praised.(12-13)

Sections 22-33 of the document explain the Christian concept of sexuality in the light of the creation of man and woman in the image of God, as single persons and as communities of love, sin, the mystery of Christ, and the transfiguring presence of the Spirit. It affirms that the sexes are diverse, complementary, and equal in personal dignity.

52. I have used the Vatican English text reprinted by the Daughters of St. Paul, Boston. Subsequent references will be given in the text by section number. We can also note here that the Pontifical Council for the Family (PCF) more recently published another document on sex education, "The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality" (*Origins*, 1 Feb. 1996, 529-52). The PCF document focuses on the role of parents and complements the CCE document that is summarized in this section. To avoid unnecessary repetition, the PCF document will not be treated in this chapter, since many points from it are incorporated into Ch. IX below.

Concerning the nature, purpose and means of sex education, the document teaches in part:

A true "formation" is not limited to the informing of the intellect, but must pay particular attention to the will, to feelings and emotions. In fact, in order to move to maturation in affective-sexual life, self-control is necessary, which presupposes such virtues as modesty, temperance, respect for self and for others, openness to one's neighbor.

None of this is possible except in the power of the salvation which comes from Jesus Christ.(35)

.... In education [it is important that new knowledge be] ...enlivened by the assimilation of corresponding values and by a lively awareness of the personal responsibilities associated with entry into adulthood.(37)

....it is necessary that the knowledge of moral norms be accompanied by clear motivation, so as to bring a sincere personal adherence to maturity.(40)

In the light of the fact that "personal formation is a permanent process"(41), the document teaches that:

Educators will have to bear in mind the fundamental stages of such evolution: the primitive instinct, which in the beginning is manifested in a rudimentary state, meets in its turn the ambivalence of good and evil. Then with the help of education, the feelings are stabilized and at the same time augment the sense of responsibility. Gradually selfishness is eliminated, a certain asceticism is stabilized, others are accepted and loved for themselves, the elements of sexuality are integrated: genitility, eroticism, love and charity. Even if the result is not always fully attained, those who come near the goal to which they aspire are more numerous than may be thought.(42)

Christian sex education is realized in the context of faith in God's Word, grace, the paschal mystery, and resurrection of the body. It also "indicates guidelines for responsibly opposing" negative influences related to the disorder of sin operating in the individual and society. Concerning this the document speaks of the sacraments, spiritual direction, and prayer, both personal and

communal, as means to obtain God's strength and to experience the "Christian joy which wins the battle against evil, beyond every moralism and psychological aid." Concerning the pessimism of many today regarding human capacity to accomplish lifelong commitments, Christian education should increase the confidence of the young in "the certainty that God will help them with His grace to accomplish His purposes."(43-46) This part of the document concludes by pointing out that

Imitation of and union with Christ, lived and handed on by the saints, are the most profound motivations for our hope of realizing the highest ideal of a chaste life, unattainable by human effort alone.(47)[Specific note is made of the Church's long experience of how devotion to the Virgin Mary and her eminent example have helped the faithful to realize this ideal.]

Part II of the document speaks of the responsibility of putting sex education into effect. The family is "the best environment to accomplish the obligation of securing a gradual education in sexual life."(48) In the family, affection and reciprocal trust "are necessary for the harmonious and balanced development of the child right from birth."(49) The exemplary conduct of parents "represents the most valid contribution in the education of their children."(50) It is important that parents themselves be properly formed in conscience and values, among others, respect for people of all ages including the unborn. The "collaboration of parents with other educators who are co-responsible for formation will positively influence the maturation of young people."(51-2)

In view of the Church's "educative mission entrusted by Christ", the document says, "the Catholic school, the parish and other ecclesial institutions are called to collaborate with the family.... It is the responsibility of the Bishops to establish norms and guidelines adapted to the necessities of the individual churches."(53-5) With respect to sex education, catechesis

...must illustrate the positive values of sexuality, integrating them with those of virginity and marriage,

in the light of the mystery of Christ and of the Church.(56)

....A wise initiative, prudent and adapted to age and environment, can avoid traumas for children and render the solution of sexual problems easier for them.(59)

A fundamental aspect of the preparation of the young for marriage consists in giving them an exact vision of the Christian ethic regarding sexuality....(60)

....The stability of marriage and of conjugal love requires as indispensable conditions: chastity and self-control, the formation of character and the spirit of sacrifice. With regard to certain difficulties of married life, rendered more acute by the conditions of our time, chastity during one's youth as an adequate preparation for marital chastity will be a decisive help to the married.(61)

The document speaks specifically of the need for young people before marriage to be instructed in "the greatness of the Sacrament of Matrimony" and "the natural methods of regulating their fertility." At an appropriate age young people need to be given the teaching of the Church "on artificial means of contraception, and the reasons for such teaching, so that the young may be prepared for responsible marriage, full of love and open to life."(62) "A solid catechetical preparation of adults on human love", too, will establish "the foundations for the sex education of children."(63)

The document also speaks of the State's task

to safeguard its citizens against injustices and moral disorders, such as the abuse of minors and every form of sexual violence, degrading dress, permissiveness and pornography, and the improper use of demographic information.(65)

[The common good]...requires the juridical regulation of the instruments of social communication to protect public morality, in particular the world of youth, especially with regard to magazines, films, radio and television programs, exhibitions, shows and publicity.(68)

People, especially young people, need to learn moderation, discipline and understanding in their use of the media. Parents and operators of the media should not "hide behind the pretext of neutrality" which is really indifference.(67-8)

Concerning the responsibility of the school with respect to sex education (69-75), "a strict collaboration between the school and the family" is needed.(72) Teachers of sex education need to have the required qualities.(71-2) Care needs to be taken with respect to the preparation and use of teaching materials, since some materials of a naturalistic character or that crudely present sexual realities are harmful to children and adolescents.(76) Youth groups can also be a significant positive factor in formation since "maturation of the personality is not possible without efficacious personal relationships."(77)

Part III of the document treats the complex conditions and mode of sex education. Teachers need not only suitable psycho-pedagogic training and the relevant scientific knowledge, but also affective maturity and a complete vision of the meaning and value of sexuality. In some situations a psychologist or medical therapy may be needed.(79-82) "Affective-sex education ... must always be adapted to the individual."(84) The progressive character of this education must be respected, "attentive to the stages of physical and psychological growth... One needs to be assured that the pupil has assimilated the values, the knowledge and the motivation which has been proposed."(85) This teaching must be objective, frank and prudent, adapting the matter to the expectations of the pupil, with appropriate choice of language and respect for "the child's sense of decency".(86-87) Human and Christian values of sexuality need to be presented with conviction and "confirmed by the testimony of life."(88) It is necessary to show how to find the reason and value of moral norms.(89)

Sections 90-93 treat the importance of education for modesty and friendship. Learning to respect the body "as a gift from God, a member of Christ and a temple of the Holy Spirit", the development of the aesthetic sense, the presentation of concrete and attractive models of virtue, and communication which fosters reciprocal respect, understanding and true communion, are required.

Part IV of the document treats some particular problems. True love is not possessive, but generous, self-giving, devoted to the other for the other's own good, and respects the personality and freedom of the other. The sex instinct, however, "if abandoned to itself, is reduced to the merely genital, and tends to take possession of the other, immediately seeking personal gratification."(94)

...[Non-marital sexual relations] constitute a grave disorder, because they are reserved to a reality which does not yet exist; they are a language which is not found in the objective reality of the life of the two persons, not yet constituted in definitive community with the necessary recognition and guarantee of civil and, for Catholic spouses, religious society.(95)

Non-marital sexual petting, also when it does not reach the complete encounter to which it tends, is "a moral disorder".(96)

Sex education will help adolescents to discover the profound values of love, and to understand the harm which such manifestations do to their affective maturation, inasmuch as they lead to an encounter which is not personal, but instinctive, often weakened by reservations and egoistic calculations, without therefore the character of true personal relationship and so much less definitive.

An authentic education will lead the young towards maturity and self-control, the fruit of conscientious choice and personal effort.(97)

The document reiterates earlier Church teaching on masturbation (see especially section D, PH 9, above). It also speaks of the importance of identifying "the causes of the deviation in order to help the adolescent to overcome the immaturity underlying this habit."(98-99) The teacher is called

to "help the pupil towards social integration, to be open and interested in others, to be able to be free from this form of autoeroticism, advancing towards self-giving love..." and to recommend recourse to prayer and the sacraments, and involvement in works of justice and charity.(100)

When the case of homosexuality presents itself, the family and the teacher are called to seek to understand its causes and to offer

an efficacious help in the process of integral growth: welcoming with understanding, creating a climate of hope, encouraging the emancipation of the individual and his or her growth in self-control, promoting an authentic moral force towards conversion to the love of God and neighbor, suggesting - if necessary - medical-psychological assistance from persons attentive to and respectful of the teaching of the Church.(101-3)

The document also addresses the destructive problem of escape in drugs which is getting worse today and often found together with sexual disorders. Among other things, it notes that remedial intervention is long and laborious; preventative action "is more efficacious". The civil and Christian community must know how to welcome insecure, lonely and abandoned youth, and help them to be involved in healthy activities. Sports, in particular, "possess a great educative value", as a healthy relaxation which encourages young people "to renounce their egotism and to meet other people. Only a freedom which is authentic, educated, aided and promoted offers protection from the quest for the illusory liberty of drugs and sex."(104-5)

The Congregation for Catholic Education's document on sex education concludes by saying, among other things, that "Silence is not a valid norm of conduct in this matter," that this education "belongs in first place to parents", that it is preferable that this education be carried out in individual form, that sex education for Christians is inspired by faith, and that God gives light, strength and

self-control. It promotes, too, "the union of parents, of Christian communities, and of educators for convergent action in such an important sector for the future of young people and the good of society."(106-11)

H. United States Catholic Bishops

The National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB) of the United States on November 11, 1976, published A Pastoral Reflection on the Moral Life "To Live in Christ Jesus".⁵³ With respect to the family, the NCCB speaks of the need and right of every human being to be loved, to have a home to put down roots and to grow. This need is met in the family, which has a special vocation to love people simply, because they are, not for what they do or have. Marriage symbolizes God's faithful love. God gives people the greatness of heart to keep such pledges of loving faithfulness (cf. Mt 19:10-12) Many in our contemporary culture consider such promises too risky. This outlook has increased marital tragedy.

Only men and women who make promises for life, believing in God's help so they can be true to their word, have the love and strength to surmount the inevitable challenges of marriage. Unselfish love and a readiness to forgive and make sacrifices when need arises is required to preserve marriage. For the family to be a place where human beings can grow with security, spouses must have as their model the selfless and enduring love of Christ for the Church. Seeing marriage as dissoluble pays too little heed to Jesus' call to identify ourselves with His redeeming love, which endures all things. The covenant of Christian marriage is as irrevocable as Christ's love for His

53. LS, 456-67, includes a selection regarding love and sexuality. Subsequent references will be made in the text by page number.

Church. Young people and the engaged must be taught the meaning of Christian marriage. Married couples must have the support and encouragement of the Christian community. Although some "broken marriages" were never real Christian marriages, some are sacramental indissoluble unions. The Church, in serving the truth in love (cf. Ep 4:15), must seek to mediate Christ's compassion to those who have suffered marital tragedy without undermining His teachings.(LS 457-9)

The love-giving and life-giving meanings of marital love are joined in loving acts of marital intercourse, "not only on the biological level but on all levels of personality".(LS 460) These meanings are real human values and aspects of human personhood. One need not always act to realize both of these values, but it is wrong to act deliberately against either. The wrongness of contraceptive intercourse (not only the contraceptive mentality) lies in the rejection of the life-giving meaning of intercourse and separating it from its love-giving meaning.(LS 460-1)

Sexual intercourse is a moral and human good only within marriage; outside marriage it is wrong. [Premarital and extramarital sexual relations]are not worthy of beings created in God's image and made God's adopted children nor are they according to God's will. The unconditional love of Christian marriage is absent, for such relations are hedged around with many conditions. Though tenderness and concern may sometimes be present, there is an underlying tendency toward exploitation and self-deception. Such relations trivialize sexuality and can erode the possibility of making deep, lifelong commitments.(LS 461-2)

On November 21, 1990 the United States Catholic Conference (USCC) approved a document, *Human Sexuality: A Catholic Perspective for Education and Lifelong Learning* (Washington, D.C.: USCC, 1991), which was prepared by its Education Committee. This is quite a comprehensive document on education in human sexuality. It integrates many themes from earlier Catholic

teaching, including human sexuality as a wonderful gift of God and an awesome responsibility. In the light of God's plan for human sexuality and his universal call to wholeness and holiness, the document treats various issues including the universal challenge to chastity, marriage preparation, sexuality and the single person, conjugal love and responsible parenthood, reproductive technology, homosexuality, vowed celibacy, adolescence in the 1990s, masturbation, art versus pornography, the HIV infection / AIDS crisis, and sexual abuse and dysfunction. It also provides many principles and recommendations for a holistic education in human sexuality. With respect to this its Chapter 5 treats the family, school, church and society in partnership, and its Appendix treats, among other things, the different stages of human development: early childhood, childhood, early adolescence, adolescence, and adulthood. Finally, it provides a fairly extensive bibliography of Church documents related to education in human sexuality. Some of the insights and recommendations of this document will be incorporated into this book's treatment of specific issues (Chs. VI-IX below).

I. Catechism of the Catholic Church

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC)⁵⁴, approved and ordered to be published by Pope John Paul II, was first published in French in 1992. The Vatican's English translation was released in 1994. The definitive Latin text and changes in English were published in 1997. This catechism represents a comprehensive, concise, authoritative and modern presentation of Catholic doctrine, with many quotations from and references to Scripture, other Church documents, and classical Christian sources. Its initial preparation over six years involved extensive collaboration and consultation.(pp. 5-9) The four main parts of this catechism on the profession of faith, the

54. References in this section will be by section number, unless otherwise specified.

celebration of the Christian mystery, life in Christ, and Christian prayer, in a sense, all relate to God's love and his call to us to participate and grow in his love. The whole catechism can thus, in one way or another, be related to our topics. Of note, however, a few of its sections deal specifically with marriage including the sacrament of matrimony (1601-66), the family (2197-2233), human sexuality and sexual morality (2331-2400), and purity (2514-33). Since many of this catechism's themes regarding human sexuality and marriage are found in this chapter or other parts of this book, we will only quote here in part a few of its teachings on chastity, non-marital sex, purity and modesty, to give the reader some sense of its contents and style:

2337 Chastity means the successful integration of sexuality within the person and thus the inner unity of man [the human being] in his [her] bodily and spiritual being. Sexuality, in which man's belonging to the bodily and biological world is expressed, becomes personal and truly human when it is integrated into the relationship of one person to another, in the complete and lifelong mutual gift of a man and a woman.

The virtue of chastity therefore involves the integrity of the person and the integrality of the gift.

2353 *Fornication* is carnal union between an unmarried man and an unmarried woman. It is gravely contrary to the dignity of persons and of human sexuality which is naturally ordered to the good of spouses and the generation and education of children. Moreover, it is a grave scandal when there is corruption of the young.

2519 The "pure in heart" are promised that they will see God face to face and be like him. (Cf. 1 Cor 13:12; 1 Jn 3:2) Purity of heart is the precondition of the vision of God. Even now it enables us to see *according to* God, to accept others as "neighbours"; it lets us perceive the human body - ours and our neighbour's - as a temple of the Holy Spirit, a manifestation of divine beauty.

2521 Purity requires *modesty*, an integral part of temperance. Modesty protects the intimate centre

of the person. It means refusing to unveil what should remain hidden. It is ordered to chastity to whose sensitivity it bears witness. It guides how one looks at others and behaves toward them in conformity with the dignity of persons and their solidarity.

J. Analysis

This section first points out some of the developments in Catholic teaching with respect to human sexuality and marriage. Some of the relevant norms and values are then highlighted, and a few conclusions are offered.

The statements cited in this chapter before Pope Leo XIII's encyclical on Christian marriage (1880) are very brief. They simply state certain truths or regulations rather than attempting to provide a developed, systematic treatment. Recent teachings, however, reflect a well-developed theology of the human person, sexuality, conjugal love, Christian marriage as a sacrament, and the family as a communion of persons and school of humanity. Some later documents, for example, are quite complex, dealing with various dimensions of the human person/subject in relation to others: biological, psychological, sociocultural, juridical, moral and spiritual. Recent documents also show an increased pastoral sensitivity and treat more specific issues in greater detail, for instance: premarital sex and petting, trial or "free" unions, AIDS, natural family planning, and the requirements for a valid marriage. There are also some developments in the reasons given for some of the conclusions. For example, non-marital sex and contraception are understood to violate not only the procreative, but also the unitive meaning of human sexuality.

Although there are such developments in Catholic teaching on human sexuality and marriage, there is also a remarkable consistency with respect to the basic doctrines and moral norms. For

example, marriage is meant to be a loving, chaste, faithful, exclusive, and deep union for life between a man and a woman, according to God's wise and loving plan. Non-marital sex, abortion and contraception, among some other things, are presented without exception as being morally wrong, contrary to human dignity and God's will. All people are called to grow in the love of God. Jesus is the best model of virtues and Friend to all, married or not. The moral order and its unchanging, universal principles are understood to be objectively founded in God, an eternal loving communion of persons, who loves us with an infinite love. The moral norms taught by the Church are understood not to be based on a certain culture, but on the nature or essence of human beings and their essential relationships with God and others. God is understood to be most merciful, to not command the impossible, and to provide various natural and supernatural means for us to grow in living according to his will. Catholic teaching calls for true Christian education of the whole person, including a holistic sex education and preparation for marriage.

With regard to the principles and norms found in Catholic teaching on human sexuality and marriage, we can ask what values are they meant to protect and promote. They are in fact related to a number of important human and Christian values. Some of these values, which are named in Catholic teaching itself, include the following: the infinite goodness and love of God; the great dignity of all human persons and the sanctity of all human life including the unborn; the goodness of human sexuality, including its unitive-marital and procreative meanings, and the marvelous complementarity of the sexes; the beauty of authentic conjugal love; natural human love perfected by God's grace to become holy and pure as Christ's love; marriage, including its complete unity and indissolubility, as created by God and redeemed by Christ, for the good of spouses, children and society; sacramental marriage as signifying and participating in Christ's faithful love for his bride,

the Church; the language of the body including its "nuptial" meaning with respect to the self-giving love of persons in marriage or celibacy; truth, including higher metaphysical truths; the virtues including faith, hope, love (charity), prudence, justice, fortitude, self-mastery, fidelity, chastity, purity, modesty, humility, and other Christlike qualities; prayer and the sacraments; the common good and public morality; and so forth.

In closing this chapter I would like to offer a few conclusions. With respect to sex, marriage and love, Catholic teaching espouses and is faithful to biblical values and teaching, in their most developed forms, and represents an authentic development of biblical teaching (cf. Ch. II). Catholic teaching, therefore, can help us to follow Jesus more faithfully. Many of the best insights found in various Christian traditions on the subjects of sex, marriage and love (cf. Ch. III) are incorporated in Catholic teaching as well. Catholic teaching also points out many fundamental elements for a holistic Christian anthropology (cf. the next chapter).