

[This chapter is from the book, *Premarital Sex and Love: In the Light of Human Experience and Following Jesus* by Paul Flaman. Copyright 1999 by Paul J. P. Flaman, St. Joseph's College, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada T6G 0B3. Any feedback you have can be emailed to: pflaman@ualberta.ca **Note:** Section D of this chapter has been published as an article with some minor modifications as: "Wholesome Sex Education", *Journal of the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars / Amicale de Savants Catholiques Canada*, Autumn 2000, 25-35.]

CHAPTER 9: COUNSELING, PASTORAL ACTION, SEX EDUCATION AND SPIRITUALITY

Although this whole book on "Premarital Sex and Love" is meant as a resource for those concerned about these and related issues, something more should be said in this last chapter with regard to counseling, pastoral action, sex education and spirituality. The goal of these is not only to help people to come to a better understanding of themselves, other people, their sexuality, and God. Good counseling, pastoral action, sex education and spirituality are also meant to help people on the practical level to choose and live well, to find real fulfillment (cf. Ch. 1). In order to be authentically Christian, counseling, pastoral action, sex education and spirituality need to be rooted in an integral vision and the Christian vocation (cf. Ch. 5). According to this perspective, human and Christian maturation and fulfillment are realized in self-giving love, in a properly ordered love of God, oneself and others. In line with this, wholesome sex education, among other things, involves helping people to grow in the positive virtue of chastity which integrates human sexuality with a properly ordered love (cf. Ch. 6.A). Keeping in mind these goals, I will attempt to present here some principles relevant to good counseling, pastoral action, sex education and spirituality.

A. Some Principles of Effective Communication

and Legitimate Cooperation with Others

Good communication is important not only for professionals, including educators, pastors and counselors involved with sex education, spiritual leadership, and people in premarital relationships. It is also important for people in premarital relationships to learn how to communicate well (cf. Chs. 7.J and 8.B-F). Parents and friends involved with those in premarital relationships, in order to fulfill their responsibilities which often include non-professional "counseling", etc., also need to be able to communicate well. With regard to developing a more integral response to the many problems related to premarital sex and helping people in premarital relationships to grow in a properly ordered love, it is necessary that good communication be developed at many levels, for example, between parents, teachers, professionals, pastors, people in government and the media, and so forth. In this section we will consider some principles of effective communication which can be adapted to various relationships.

We live in a pluralistic world in which people often hold very different views and convictions (not infrequently within the same family or institution). In particular, premarital sex and some related issues are quite controversial in our society (cf. Chs. 6 and 7, parts of Ch. 8, and D below). Although sincere efforts to communicate well often lead to mutual understanding and agreement, sometimes people continue to differ on important matters including the morality of certain acts and the approaches to solve certain problems. We will, therefore, consider here as well some principles with regard to legitimate versus illegitimate forms of cooperation with others.

Good communication involves love and respect. Without these communication can result in further alienation rather than building relationships. Communication is a learned skill that can be developed with practice. No matter how poor or how good we are at communicating, we can all

improve our ability to communicate by being open to learning and by patiently working at it.¹ There is much good literature today on communication, some of which is referred to in this section's notes. Many people with training and experience in this area can also help one to learn how to communicate better or to resolve communication problems.

One of the first principles of good communication is to try to develop and preserve an open trusting relationship, since "Modern communication theory has shown" that good communication depends in part "on good emotional relations among the communicators".² For example, if parents have developed an open trusting relationship with their children from an early age in which it is natural to communicate about everything including one's feelings, hopes, dreams and hurts, it will also be easier to talk about sex.³

If a parent, teacher, pastor or professional, for example, does not have an open trusting relationship with one of his or her children, students, youth group members or clients, it is important to try to build such a relationship to open the lines of communication. Some ways that a parent or other youth leader, for example, can do this with their children or the young people they are called to serve are: making oneself available and approachable, spending time with them (perhaps also doing some things with them that they enjoy), taking an interest in what they are interested in, getting to know their "world" and their friends, and taking their concerns seriously. One should also

1. Cf. Josh McDowell and Dick Day, *Why Wait? What You Need to Know About the Teen Sexuality Crisis* (San Bernardino, CA: Here's Life Publishers, 1987), 390-8; and Joseph and Lois Bird, *Marriage is for Grownups* (Garden City, NY: Image Books, 1971), 22-3 and 45-9.

2. Benedict Ashley and Kevin O'Rourke, *Healthcare Ethics: A Theological Analysis* (St. Louis: The Catholic Health Association of the United States, 3rd ed. 1989), 190 (cf. part 1 of their Principle of Professional Communication).

3. Cf. McDowell and Day (see note 1), 385-6.

be alert for signals. For example, a person with a problem, whether young or not so young, may not come right out and say this but may hang around, withdraw or exhibit disruptive behavior. Qubein recommends dealing with problems early, expressing caring concern, and inviting the person to talk without being pushy. Addressing youth directors, he also recommends communicating through the basic needs of youth. Concerning this he says in part that "any youth director who shows love and enables young people to express love, who utilizes the talents and energies of youth and helps them to grow and learn, will be able to break through all the barriers and communicate effectively with them."⁴ To open the doors of communication, a lot of patience may be required, especially in relating with those who have been deeply wounded in this area in the past. If parents, for example, have been responsible, in whole or in part, for closing doors to communication with their children by their lack of care, sensitivity, and so forth, they should try to open them in appropriate ways. This requires a sincere commitment to change, and perhaps also an apology and asking for forgiveness. Whenever we fail to love properly, as we all do at times, we should begin to love again without delay.

Communication involves both listening and sharing. With regard to this, the Bible presents some good points including the following:

...everyone should be *quick to listen* but *slow* to speak and *slow* to human anger...(Jm 1:19 NJB)

...there must be no more lies. *Speak the truth to one another* No foul words should ever cross your lips; let your words be for the improvement of others, as occasion offers, and do good to your

4. Nido Qubein, *What Works & What Doesn't in Youth Ministry* (Colorado Springs: Meriwether Publishing Ltd., 1986), 83-5 and 101-5 (the quote is from 104). Re parents cf. McDowell and Day (see note 1), 386-98. Re overcoming barriers to communication such as fear, defensiveness, pride and selfishness, see e.g., also: Bird (see note 1), Ch. 2; Gary Chapman, *Toward a Growing Marriage* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1979), 109-21; and Ralph Martin, *Husbands, Wives, Parents, Children* (Ann Arbor: Servant Books, 1978), Ch. 5.

listeners.... Be ... sympathetic, forgiving each other as readily as God forgave you in Christ.(Eph 4:25-32 NJB)

Listening and giving one's full attention to another person is one of the best ways of showing love. Everyone needs to be heard. Listening gives people the opportunity to share themselves including their perceptions of any problems they are having and their deep feelings. This can help them to know themselves better, to gain confidence, and to be better able to deal with their feelings and difficulties. Among other things, good listening can also help to avoid trying to answer questions that no one is asking.⁵

In listening to people one should be welcoming, compassionate, and empathize with them, trying to see things from their perspective, seeking to understand their feelings and what they are really trying to say. Sensitively giving appropriate feedback and asking appropriate clarifying and non-threatening questions can help the other share what needs to be shared. This can help avoid making false assumptions, ensure that one has really understood the other and confirm for the other that he or she has really been heard and understood. Good listening also involves being attentive to what others are communicating nonverbally by their tone of voice, eyes, facial expressions, gestures and body postures. It is important to express interest and to convey loving presence by one's eye contact, facial expression, posture and by appropriate responses that show that one is really listening and cares. This includes expressing appreciation to the other for sharing. Listening and responding well can help others gain a better sense of their worth and dignity.⁶

5. Cf. Qubein (see note 4), 105-7; and Jean Vanier, *Community and Growth: Our Pilgrimage Together* (Toronto: Griffin House, 1979), 79-87.

6. Cf. McDowell and Day (see note 1), 288-96; Ashley and O'Rourke (see note 2), 102-3; and Vanier (see note 5), 115-16.

With regard to loving others as Jesus loves us (cf. Jn 13:34-5 and 15:12-17) and listening to them, Chiara Lubich speaks of making ourselves one with them (cf. Ch. 5.A.4 regarding God in Jesus making himself one with us in all things except sin) and emptying ourselves of pride, ambition and selfishness. Concerning this she says in part:

To make ourselves one with somebody else we cannot let ourselves think of possible answers to give or other things to do while we are listening to our neighbor with love. We have to empty ourselves completely in order to have room for the whole of our neighbor's burden, all of his problems and his needs, just as Jesus has done.

If we do this, she says, we will learn from experience that the Holy Spirit often inspires "what response to give" or "the right action to take." Making ourselves one

...must be the basis of every relationship we have.

.... It is the frame of mind needed for any dialogue....

If we are not perfect at making ourselves one we will not have the light of God and any dialogue will become sterile and get nowhere.... To dialogue means to love. Only the Holy Spirit in us can help us really to have dialogue. Furthermore, it is only the Holy Spirit in us that can reveal to us the subtle errors that may be concealed in the most fascinating theories....⁷

Although good psychology and theology can provide many valuable insights, from a Christian perspective, good communication involves more than this. In order to love people fully and properly, to listen to them with true sensitivity and compassion, and to be truly wise in our responses

7. Chiara Lubich, *When Our Love is Charity* (New York: New City Press, 1972, translated from the original Italian by Julian Stead), 23-6. We can note here that the Holy Spirit will never guide or inspire us to say or do anything that is contrary to God's will as already revealed by God. From a Christian and Catholic perspective, compare the Bible and authentic Christian tradition as faithfully interpreted by the Church's Magisterium (cf. Chs. 2-4). Since Jesus is God incarnate, the fullest revelation of God to us, the Holy Spirit will never lead us to say or do anything that Jesus would not say or do (cf. Ch. 5).

and sharing, we need to be open to God - to allow our human understanding to be enlightened by his and to allow our human love to be animated and transformed by his love.(cf. Ch. 5) To become a better communicator we need to develop a close relationship with God by regularly communicating with God. Among other things, our prayer should include sincerely and often asking God to transform us in his love - to make us more humble, sensitive and caring, to help us to see ourselves and others more realistically, and to give us the wisdom we need for every concrete situation.⁸

One's sharing, like one's listening, should be motivated, animated and guided by a properly ordered love of others, oneself, and God. Among other things, this includes having a proper respect for the great personal dignity of people, whatever their age and social status (i.e., one should not be condescending in any way). One's sharing, what one shares and how one shares it, should be appropriately adapted to those with whom one is sharing, taking into account their level of intelligence, maturity, needs, culture and values (cf. B below). Jesus is an excellent model of this: "...one reason that Jesus was so powerful in communicating was that he always managed to say exactly what needed to be said, when it needed to be said, with words and illustrations that the people could easily understand."⁹ Since listening well gives one a better understanding of people, it can also help one to share more effectively. A "variety of appropriate feedback mechanisms" can

8. Cf. John and Paula Sandford, *The Transformation of the Inner Man* (Tulsa: Victory House, Inc., 1982), Ch. 7 "The Role of a Christian Counselor". *Counseling: Humanistic and Christian* (Rome: Tipolitografia G. Pioda, 1982), by Fabio Giardini, OP, e.g., presents many good psychological and theological insights on counseling.

9. Qubein (see note 4), 108. Cf. e.g., also Gerard Rossé, "Interview: Jesus and Communications," *Living City*, July 1996, 5-7; and Fran Ferder, *Words Made Flesh: Scripture, Psychology & Human Communication* (Notre Dame: Ave Maria Press, 1986), 115-39.

help one assess how well others have understood what one has shared.¹⁰ What is appropriate to share and how one shares it will also depend in part on who one is, one's knowledge and experience, and the kind of relationship one has with the other person or persons (see, e.g., Ch. 8.E re the communication appropriate to a couple considering getting married).

Based on much experience, Ashley and O'Rourke have formulated a "Principle of Professional Communication" which outlines some of the responsibilities of healthcare professionals (physicians, nurses, psychologists, ethicists, pastors...) with regard to serving others and the basic human need for truth:

1. *To strive to establish and preserve trust at both the emotional and rational levels.*
2. *To share the information they possess that is legitimately needed by others in order to have an informed conscience.*
3. *To refrain from lying or giving misinformation.*
4. *To keep secret information that is not legitimately needed by others, but that if revealed might either harm the patient or others or destroy trust.*¹¹

It seems to me that this principle can be adapted to professionals in other fields, as well as to non-professionals including parents and friends. With regard to applying this principle, let us consider some examples related to "Premarital Sex and Love".

10. Qubein (see note 4), 108-9.

11. Ashley and O'Rourke (see note 2), 190 (for a fuller explanation see 102-7 and 190-1. Cf. also their principles of well-formed conscience and free and informed consent which includes a section on the role of guardians regarding people who are incompetent to decide (177-9). Re communication, informed consent and confidentiality see, e.g., also The Canadian Medical Association (CMA), *Code of Ethics* (Ottawa: Canadian Medical Association, 1996; <http://www.cma.ca/>), nn. 8, 12-24 and 26-7; Canadian Nurses Association (CNA), *Code of Ethics for Nursing* (Ottawa: CNA, 1991), 3-6 and 21; and Catholic Health Association of Canada (CHAC), *Health Care Ethics Guide* (Ottawa: CHAC, 1991), 31-2.

Tests confirm that a young man is carrying a sexually transmitted disease. He believes he contracted the STD in a casual sexual encounter rather than from his girlfriend whom he is convinced has only had sex with him and whom he hopes to marry. To help the young man have an informed conscience, the doctor communicates to him the best medical information concerning the disease and any available treatment options (cf. the requirement of informed consent). The doctor then explains to him why his sexual partners including his girlfriend should also be tested. Depending on the STD in question they face serious risk of bodily harm, infertility or even death (cf. Ch. 6.E, under "Sexually Transmitted Diseases"; and what they need to know to have an informed conscience and to make good decisions concerning their health). The young man is willing to cooperate regarding informing his casual sexual partners, but not regarding informing his girlfriend whom he fears will realize he has been "unfaithful" and be very upset. Does confidentiality prevent the girlfriend from being informed that she is at risk and that she should be tested? Concerning such cases Ashley and O'Rourke say in part that "the right of privacy, sacred as it is, is limited by other persons' rights" and when "there is probable danger of harm that can be prevented, the professional should discreetly do what is likely to be helpful in preventing such harm. Ordinarily this should not be done without first warning the patient of exposure if the patient refuses to desist."¹² The Canadian Nurses Association also has some helpful guidelines regarding the obligation of confidentiality and its limits including the following:

Even when ... confronted with the necessity to disclose, confidentiality should be preserved to the maximum possible extent. Both the amount of information disclosed and the number of people to

12. Ashley and O'Rourke (see note 2), 105.

whom disclosure is made should be restricted to the minimum necessary to prevent the feared harm.¹³

These guidelines are in line with a proper application of the Principle of Professional Communication (note the precise wording of parts 1, 2 and 4, as cited above). They can apply to many cases including those where one needs to inform certain people to prevent a suicide or the continuation of sexual abuse and violence (cf. Ch. 8.C). Whether one is a professional or not (e.g., a parent or friend), in certain cases one may have an obligation to share some private information "with those who legitimately need it". Respecting people's legitimate rights to confidentiality, however, by keeping secret private information "not legitimately needed by others", is fundamental to preserving trust and keeping important lines of communication open.

Some other cases with regard to our topics where the Principle of Professional Communication can provide helpful guidance include when someone (e.g., a teacher, counselor, pastor, doctor, parent or friend) is asked for advice regarding premarital sex, birth control, premarital pregnancy, abortion, dating, choosing a marriage partner, etc. If one is well-informed regarding the issue(s) in question, including the morally relevant facts, values and norms, one can be of great assistance to another person, in helping him or her to form a correct moral conscience and to make good choices (cf. Chs. 1-8 above and the index). Among other things, depending on the person's needs, this may include helping the person to appreciate better the values underlying any sound moral norms that apply to him or her and/or to explore the moral options open to him or her. If one is not adequately informed or prepared to provide the help the person needs, one may have an obligation to become better informed or prepared oneself. It is important to realize one's limitations and to

13. CNA (see note 11), 6.

refer the person to other competent and reliable people or resources if necessary.¹⁴ One should also "refrain from lying or giving misinformation" (Principle of Professional Communication, part 3). For example, one should not misrepresent any relevant biblical or official Catholic teaching on the subject (cf. Chs. 2 and 4 above), or distort the facts.¹⁵

To avoid hypocrisy, whether one is a parent, friend, teacher, counselor or pastor, etc., it is important to try to put into practice the values and virtues that one shares. For example, one will be much more credible and effective in promoting the virtues including chastity, fidelity, justice, patience, honesty and self-giving love if one really appreciates the value of these virtues, and one has personally grown in living them, through various trials and temptations, with the help of God's grace. This does not mean, however, that one needs to be perfect before one can support and help someone. Consider the following by Jean Vanier:

I am struck by how sharing our weakness and difficulties is more nourishing to others than sharing our qualities and successes.... The discovery that we are all in the same boat and all have the same fears and weariness, can help us to continue. People are nourished by humility, because humility is truth, linked to a trust in God....¹⁶

14. Qubein (see note 4), 90-4, presents some good guidelines regarding when, how and to whom to refer including cases of serious depression, serious involvement with alcohol or drugs, and when a person speaks of suicide. Among other things, he notes that when one refers a person to someone else for help, one should not abandon the person but follow up.

15. Cf. United States Catholic Conference [USCC], *Human Sexuality: A Catholic Perspective for Education and Lifelong Learning* (Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, Inc., 1991): "Each person has an obligation to form a correct conscience. It is the responsibility of Catholic educators to assist them in the process by articulating church teaching in its entirety and in its integrity."(92) Regarding responding to people with AIDS this document also says in part: "...all must respond in a manner consistent with the best medical and scientific information available."(66)

16. Vanier (see note 5), 115.

When one is adequately aware of one's own vulnerability, weaknesses and sins, one will also be more effective when called to correct or confront someone, to challenge him or her to grow in responsible love.(cf. Mt 7:3-5 and 18:16-17) With regard to the role of parents in this area, McDowell and Day speak of the importance of not belittling one's children but affirming their worth, of expressing one's unconditional love and affection, of being positive and encouraging, of waiting for the right time to correct, and of choosing one's words carefully. Among other things, with regard to parents communicating with their children, they also speak of the importance of expressing one's feelings (e.g. "I'm feeling very angry right now"), but without using them to manipulate (e.g. "...and it's all your fault"), of communicating expectations clearly, of being flexible regarding what is negotiable, of being fair and honest including asking one's children for forgiveness when one makes mistakes, and of trying to stand in their shoes to understand them.(cf. Mt. 22:39 regarding loving one's neighbor as oneself)¹⁷

Parents, by their example and words, in collaboration with other educators (cf. C below), have the responsibility to teach their children many things including necessary practical skills. They

17. McDowell and Day (see note 1), 392-8. Regarding Jesus' attitude towards sinners see parts of Ch. 2.B.1. Regarding "fraternal correction" see Thomas Aquinas (Ch. III.C.2, 2nd last par., above); and CCC, n. 1829. Regarding criticism and communication in community see, e.g., Thomas Dubay, SM, *Caring: A Biblical Theology of Community* (Denville, NJ: Dimension Books, 1973). Cf. also the Pontifical Council for the Family, "The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality", *Origins*, 1 Feb. 1996, which says in part with regard to the role of parents: "Parents must find time to be with their children and take time to talk with them. As a gift and a commitment, children are their most important task... Children are more important than work, entertainment and social position. In these conversations ... parents should learn how to listen carefully to their children, how to make the effort to understand them and how to recognize the fragment of truth that may be present in some forms of rebellion...." Children will also be better disposed to live according to "moral truths" if their parents show them "the supernatural and human motives that recommend such behavior", they see them "practiced in their parents' life", and their parents "really place themselves at their level with love", since "nothing moves us to love more than knowing that we are loved."(539)

should share with them the best of their cultural heritage and help them to appreciate all authentic human values. Above all, however, loving parents will share with their children their love and educate them in love:

.... The self-giving that inspires the love of husband and wife for each other is the model and norm for the self-giving that must be practiced in the relationships between brothers and sisters and the different generations living together in the family. And the communion and sharing that are part of everyday life in the home at times of joy and at times of difficulty are the most concrete and effective pedagogy for the active, responsible and fruitful inclusion of the children in the wider horizon of society....(Pope John Paul II, FC, n. 37)

With regard to communication and sharing, we can also note here that Christians, who really believe in God's love communicated to us through Jesus Christ, will want to share this Good News not only with each other, but also with other people in appropriate ways. Consider the following by Rossé:

...the thrust to speak out, to spread the news, to use all available means of communication, as Jesus did in his times, is an inherent part of the Gospel itself.... This is not because of a spirit of propaganda, but because there is a joy in sharing the greatness of divine Love revealed in the events and in the person of Jesus Christ. It is a greatness of love that has been poured out onto humanity and which anyone can experience first hand.¹⁸

Christians, motivated by a properly ordered love of God and people, are called to participate in the evangelizing and catechetical mission of the Church, the people of God, according to their personal vocations.¹⁹

18. Rossé (see note 9), 7.

19. For some good principles with regard to evangelization, catechesis, and the proper use of modern means of communication see: Pope Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* On

Legitimate Cooperation With Others

Christians are also called to cooperate with each other and others to work together in moral ways to build a better world, to help people to overcome their problems and to grow in love. With regard to this we should consider not only our topics of "Premarital Sex and Love". Sincere efforts to communicate well and to help others to communicate better who need such help will often lead to mutual understanding and agreement on approaches. In our pluralistic world, however, people come from many different backgrounds and hold various points of view on many subjects. With regard to this, it is not always possible to reach a consensus on goals and on means to solve particular problems. At times, we may find ourselves in situations where other people want to do things or perhaps even want us to cooperate with them in doing something that we consider wrong. With regard to such situations, let us consider the "Principle of Legitimate Cooperation" as formulated by the Catholic Health Association of Canada:

It is unethical to cooperate "formally" with an immoral act (i.e. directly to intend the evil act itself).

But sometimes it may be an ethical duty to cooperate "materially" with an immoral act (i.e. one does not intend the evil effects, but only the good effects) when only in this way can a greater harm be prevented, provided (1) that the cooperation is not immediate and (2) that the degree of cooperation and the danger of scandal are taken into account.²⁰

Evangelization in the Modern World (Vatican City: Vatican Polyglot Press, 1975); Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation *Catechesi Tradendae* On Catechesi in Our Time (Ottawa: Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1979); and the Second Vatican Council (Vat.II), Decree on the Instruments of Social Communication *Inter Mirifica*. Cf. e.g., also Paul Soukup, *Communication and Theology: Introduction and Review of the Literature* (London: World Association for Christian Communication, 1983).

20. CHAC (see note 11), 15. This principle applies the Principle of Double Effect to the issue of cooperation (see *ibid.*, 14-15). CHAC's formulation of these principles borrows much from Ashley and O'Rourke (see note 2), who explain these principles more fully (184-90). Regarding cooperation in evil compare, e.g., also the biblical injunctions, "...never make yourself an

With regard to our topics, let us first of all consider the case where a young woman asks her doctor, parents and/or boyfriend for help to have a procured abortion. Direct abortion, which involves the directly intended killing of an innocent human being, as we considered in Ch. 6.E under "Premarital Pregnancy", is always a seriously immoral act, although personal culpability can vary. It is not only always wrong for a doctor or someone else to perform a direct abortion. It is also always wrong for anyone (the woman herself, her parents, the father of the unborn child, a friend, a counselor, etc.) to formally cooperate with a direct abortion by directly intending that someone else perform one. One can cooperate formally with an evil action in several ways. For example, "Advising, counseling, promoting, or condoning an evil action, even when sometimes done merely by being silent when one has a duty to speak up or express an opinion, is formal cooperation because such actions signify agreement with evil."²¹

Since premarital sexual intercourse, sexual petting, masturbation, and direct contraception are also kinds of behavior that are always wrong to choose (see Ch. 6-8.B; contraception is treated in Ch. 6.E under "Premarital Pregnancy"), it is also always wrong to formally cooperate with these by promoting them or otherwise intending that someone choose these. Although these are certainly not

accomplice in anybody else's sin; keep yourself pure."(1 Tim 5:22 NJB); Thomas O'Donnell, SJ, *Medicine and Christian Morality* (New York: Alba House, 1975), 31-8 (see the index re some specific applications); Thomas Pazhayampallil, SDB, *Pastoral Guide* (Bangalore, India: Kristu Jyothi College, 1977), 65-71 (see the index re some specific applications); Germain Grisez, *Living a Christian Life*, Vol. 2 of *The Way of the Lord Jesus* (Quincy, IL: Franciscan Press, 1993), Ch. 7.F; "Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services" (approved by the United States Catholic Bishops), *Origins*, 1 Dec. 1994, Appendix: The Principles Governing Cooperation (461); and Pope John Paul II, EV, *"We must obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29): civil law and the moral law*, nn. 68-74.

21. Ashley and O'Rourke (see note 2), 188. Cf. Pope John Paul II, EV, n. 74, who says in part, "Christians, like all people of good will, are called upon under grave obligation of conscience not to cooperate formally in practices which, even if permitted by civil legislation, are contrary to God's law. Indeed, from the moral standpoint, it is never licit to cooperate formally in evil...."

the only kinds of sin, they are specifically mentioned here because of their relevance to our topics. As explained in Ch.5.A.3 and B.1, God never wants someone to sin, he never does evil and he never directly intends evil. To love God and people properly we can not either. This does not mean, however, that we should condemn or reject people who sin. Consider, for example, Jn 8:3-11 reporting that Jesus did not condemn a woman caught in the act of adultery, but counseled her to "sin no more"(NJB). If someone (e.g. one's child, patient, student, client, friend) chooses to do something we consider wrong or sinful, we should make it clear to them that we still care for them. Compare God who loves sinners, wants everyone to be saved, awaits their return and is infinitely merciful.²² We can also note here that someone who formally cooperates with an immoral action of another may actually be more culpable than the person who does the immoral action. For example, parents who pressure their daughter to have a direct abortion may have greater freedom and a greater awareness that this is wrong than their daughter. In any case, provided we repent - turn from our sins to God - we can experience forgiveness and healing (see Ch. 6.K).

In cooperating materially with an immoral act one in some way assists another person to do the immoral act,

...[but] one does *not intend* the evil effects, but only the good. When such material cooperation is *immediate* (e.g., nurses who assist physicians to perform an abortion, which they personally disapprove), it amounts to the same as formal cooperation because it is a direct contribution to an evil act in which the cooperator shares the responsibility for the act... On the other hand, *mediate* material cooperation, which can be proximate or remote, under certain conditions is sometimes justified....²³

22. Cf. Qubein (see note 4), 89.

23. Ashley and O'Rourke (see note 2), 188. Cf. e.g., O'Donnell (see note 19), 31-40, who considers immediate material cooperation in the sinful act of another to always be wrong, but mediate material cooperation to be justified sometimes; and the U.S. Bishops' "Ethical and

There are many possible degrees of mediate material cooperation ranging from cooperation that is close (proximate) to further removed (remote). Other things being equal, one needs a more serious reason to justify material cooperation that is more closely involved. With regard to this consider, for example, a hospital where some abortions are performed and the roles of an anesthetist, a nurse who sometimes provides post-abortion nursing care, and a janitor. Consider, for example, also a taxpayer who pays his or her taxes, knowing that while most of this money is used for good purposes, some of it is used for immoral purposes such as to fund direct abortions, in whole or in part.

A proportionately grave reason is required to justify an act of mediate material cooperation with an immoral act. We can also note here that while it is never moral to do evil, even with the intention of achieving good (cf. Rm 3:8), it is sometimes moral "to tolerate a lesser evil in order to avoid a greater evil or to promote a greater good" (Pope Paul VI, HV, n. 14; cf. Ch. 5.B.1, last 2 paragraphs). While trying to make sure that one is not doing evil oneself and that one's intentions are good, one should also consider other morally relevant circumstances (cf. CCC, nn. 1749-61) in evaluating a particular case of mediate material cooperation. For example, what alternatives does one have? What are the consequences (good and bad, benefits and harms to oneself and others) of each alternative including refusing to cooperate? Can one prevent the immoral act of the other using moral means? Is scandal possible or likely if one cooperates? In the circumstances, how can one best give witness to God and his love, and to morally relevant values such as the dignity of persons, the sacredness of human life, truth, fidelity and justice? What are one's responsibilities in Religious Directives..." (see note 19 above), 461: "...immediate material cooperation - without duress - is equivalent to implicit formal cooperation and, therefore, is morally wrong. When the object of the cooperator's action remains distinguishable from that of the wrongdoer's, material cooperation is mediate and can be morally licit..."

the situation with regard to loving God, oneself and others in a properly ordered way? In the light of such questions, Grisez notes that the Golden Rule (see Mt 7:12) can help one determine whether or not to cooperate materially.²⁴

Since circumstances can vary so much with regard to particular issues of mediate material cooperation, one needs to try to form one's own conscience to the best of one's ability in particular cases. One should try to resolve any doubts honestly and reach moral certainty about what one should or should not do.(cf. Ch. 1.B-E) Reading good literature on the subject can be helpful (see the sources referred to in note 20 of this chapter). Consulting with a reliable person (e.g. a good moral theologian or bishop) can also be helpful, especially with regard to complex cases. Above all, however, one should humbly seek God's guidance, and trust in and cooperate with his loving providence.

If one judges that it is immoral to cooperate with another person's immoral act, because such cooperation would be formal or immediate material cooperation, or an unjustified form of mediate material cooperation, this does not mean that one can not help the person. Immoral cooperation would indeed not be real help. For example, a doctor who judges it immoral to perform a direct abortion, to give a prescription for directly contraceptive purposes, or to refer someone who requests such things to another doctor, can do more than simply inform his or her patients that he does not

24. Grisez (see note 20), 442-3. Cf. the other sources referred to in note 20 including O'Donnell, 32-40; Pazhayampallil, 66-71; and U.S. Bishops' "Ethical and Religious Directives...", 461: "... Prudence guides those involved in cooperation to estimate questions of intention, duress, distance, necessity and gravity. In making a judgment about cooperation, it is essential that the possibility of scandal should be eliminated. Appropriate consideration should also be given to the church's prophetic responsibility."

do these.²⁵ He or she could do much to help his patients and others to become better informed of moral alternatives to these (cf. the Principle of Professional Communication, part 2, above). He or she, in cooperation with others, could also provide various practical means of help.(cf. Pope John Paul II, FC, n. 35) Among other things, in response to the person's real needs (cf. Mt 25:31-46), this could include: providing young unmarried pregnant women with the help they need to continue their pregnancies and to make decisions that are best for themselves, their babies, and others concerned; and of providing single people not only with appropriate information concerning the harmful

25. Cf. CMA (see note 11) re the responsibilities of the physician to the patient, n. 8: "Inform your patient when personal morality would influence the recommendation or practice of any medical procedure that the patient needs or wants."; CNA (see note 11), 10: "A nurse is not ethically obliged to provide requested care when compliance would involve a violation of her or his moral beliefs.... Nurses who have or are likely to encounter such situations are morally obligated to seek to arrange conditions of employment so that the care of clients will not jeopardized."; the widely recognized rights of freedom of conscience and religion (cf. Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations which is quoted in Ch. 7.B); and Pope John Paul II, EV, n. 74: "... Those who have recourse to conscientious objection must be protected not only from legal penalties but also from any negative effects on the legal, disciplinary, financial and professional plane." Regarding abortion, contraception and sterilization, the U.S. Bishops' "Ethical and Religious Directives..." (see note 20), state in part: "Catholic health care institutions are not to provide abortion services even based upon the principle of material cooperation. In this context, Catholic health care institutions need to be concerned about the danger of scandal in any association with abortion providers. Catholic health care providers should be ready to offer compassionate physical, psychological, moral and spiritual care to those persons who have suffered from the trauma of abortion. Operations, treatments and medications that have as their direct purpose the cure of a proportionately serious pathological condition of a pregnant woman are permitted when they cannot be safely postponed until the unborn child is viable, even if they will result in the death of the unborn child.... Catholic health institutions may not promote or condone contraceptive practices, but should provide, for married couples and the medical staff who counsel them, instruction both about the church's teaching on responsible parenthood and in methods of natural family planning. Direct sterilization ... is not permitted in a Catholic health care institution... Procedures that induce sterility are permitted when their direct effect is the cure or alleviation of a present pathology and a simpler treatment is not available."(nn. 45-7 and 52-3). Pazhayampallil (see note 20), 66, concludes that, "...one is never allowed to instruct people to use contraceptives. To instruct people to commit sin is in itself a morally evil act, it is to induce another directly to sin." O'Donnell (see note 20), 36-7, also concludes that referring patients to others for immoral procedures (e.g. contraception, contraceptive sterilizations, and direct abortion) would seriously compromise the moral integrity of a Catholic doctor and cause grave scandal.

consequences of premarital sex and the many advantages of waiting until marriage, but also the education and practical means of help they need to live chastely and grow in a properly ordered love of themselves, others and God (cf. Chs. 6-8, as well as this chapter). Such are real means of help.

B. Appropriately Adapted to Those to be Counseled and Educated

A properly ordered love will adapt counseling and education, including sex education, in appropriate ways to those to be counseled and educated. This includes being sensitive to their stage of development and level of maturity - physical, emotional, intellectual, moral, spiritual and sexual. It also means being sensitive to individual differences, needs and problems, as well as to different family and cultural environments (cf. A above regarding listening and sharing).

Although each person is unique and his or her process of growth, development and maturation is also unique, certain stages of human development are often discussed with regard to education: childhood, adolescence and adulthood. Regarding each of these some distinguish certain sub-stages such as early, middle and later.²⁶ In this section these stages of development will be briefly described noting some common needs of people during these various stages. In C below we will consider some of the respective responsibilities of parents and others with regard to responding to

26. See, e.g., USCC (see note 15), 95-116; and PCF (see note 17), Part VI "Learning Stages". Among other things, the USCC document says, "*It is helpful to remember that one stage builds on another, and that stages of growth and development often overlap.*"(96) We can also note here that a significant part of a human being's growth and development including sexual development occurs before birth: see, e.g., Fran Ferder & John Heagle, *Your Sexual Self* (Notre Dame: Ave Maria Press, 1992), Ch. 4 "Knit Together in My Mother's Womb". For an overview of "Life-span Psychological Development" see, e.g., Philip G. Zimbardo, *Psychology and Life* (Boston: Scott, Foresman and Company, 12th ed. 1985), Ch. 3. For an overview of some of the most significant psychological theories of religious and moral development see, e.g., William J. Hague, *New Perspectives on Religious and Moral Development* (Edmonton: University of Alberta, 1986).

these needs.

Childhood

Early childhood, from birth to six years, is a time of rapid growth in many ways - physically, cognitively, affectively, socially and spiritually. Young children need a secure, safe and wholesome environment where they can witness loving relationships and receive parental love, affection, warmth, nurturing, attention and guidance (cf. Ch. 6.F). Infants and toddlers learn about the body through seeing and touch. They grow in their ability to control body functions. Young children should be given the proper names for body parts and their questions should be answered honestly and in language they can understand, but without overwhelming them with unnecessary details.

In general the first sexual information to be given to a small child does not deal with genital sexuality, but rather with pregnancy and ... birth.... Parents can ... communicate some simple facts about pregnancy, but always in the deepest context of wonder at the creative work of God, who wants the new life he has given to be cared for in the mother's body, near her heart.²⁷

God's love should be communicated to children through the love of family members. Children need to learn to accept themselves as God created them. They need help to begin to develop a personal relationship with God through prayer. Among other things, young children also need opportunities for wholesome play and to be taught to distinguish between safe and unsafe situations and between appropriate and inappropriate touches, behaviors and attitudes. They need good role models, ongoing gentle moral guidance, and help in learning the consequences of actions. Since they are highly impressionable care needs to be taken in selecting their care-givers (e.g. baby-sitters)

27. PCF (see note 17), n. 76.

and the media (e.g. television) to which they are exposed.²⁸

Middle and later childhood is from approximately the ages of six to eight and nine to eleven respectively. The Pontifical Council for the Family speaks of "the years of innocence" from about the age of five until puberty, before any physical sexual development is evident. "The rudimentary instinctive sexuality of very small children has disappeared." Although children at this stage are aware of physical differences between the two sexes, they generally have little interest in genital sexual functions and sexual problems. Normally their interests turn to other aspects of life. Peer relationships become more important. Boys and girls generally prefer to associate with and seek friends of their own sex. They learn what it means to be a woman or a man by adult example and family experience. Children need to learn to appreciate the equal dignity and mutuality of the two sexes, as well as to value their femininity or masculinity as a special gift of God. Although unfair discrimination including sexism is wrong, "The real differences between the two sexes should not be ignored or minimized..." During this stage children should be protected from "premature sexual information" which they are not yet able to fully understand and integrate, and which "tends to shatter their emotional and educational development and to disturb the natural serenity of this period of life." Children who receive premature and/or immoral sex information from the mass media, their peers and/or other people will need to be given suitable and carefully limited sexual information to correct erroneous information and immoral views. Children also need to be protected from sexual violence in part by teaching them "modesty and reserve with regard to strangers as well as by giving suitable sexual information, but without going into details and

28. Cf. USCC (see note 15), 95-9; and Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation *Catechesi Tradendae* [CT] On Catechesis in our Time (Ottawa: CCCB, 1979), n. 36.

particulars that might upset or frighten them."²⁹(Cf. Ch. 8.C)

Childhood is a time of learning and growing intellectual interest, when children's cognitive and reflective capacities develop. Among other things, children need to learn: proper habits of caring for the body (hygiene, balanced diet, rest, exercise...); how to respect properly the dignity of themselves and other persons; how to receive and express love in appropriate ways; how to listen, share and forgive; healthy self-discipline; a true sense of justice and disinterested service with regard to others, especially the poorest and most needy in this world; and how to develop a growing relationship with God. As children grow in the virtues and a knowledge, appreciation and respect for essential human values and sound moral norms, they can become more and more able to make reasonable and responsible decisions on their own. Among other things, parents can help their children to learn to reflect critically on the values and attitudes that are presented to them in various media, by their peers, in school and Church, etc. Narratives from the Bible and other good sources which present the lives of Jesus, Mary and other holy men and women, in a proper manner and adapted to the maturity level of children, can appeal to them and have a very healthy influence on their imaginations, and moral and spiritual development.³⁰ Childhood is also normally the time when Catholic children are prepared to receive the sacraments of the Eucharist and reconciliation in a meaningful way. Pope John Paul II says that catechesis at this stage of life "will have to reveal, although in an elementary way, all the principal mysteries of faith and their effects on the child's moral and religious life and it communicates to the child the joy of being a witness to Christ in

29. PCF (see note 17), nn. 78-85.

30. Such sources including some good videos for children are available at many good Christian / Catholic bookstores and libraries.

ordinary life."³¹

Adolescence

Adolescence is a time of rapid changes - physical, psychological and sexual. It should also be a time of significant moral and spiritual growth. Development is not always step-by-step or smooth. Since the level of maturity of adolescents at the same age may differ significantly in one or more areas, it is important that parents, counselors, educators and pastors, etc., be sensitive to and adapt to individual differences and needs. The counseling and education which adolescents need is on-going and progressive.

Puberty is the period during early adolescence when the sexual organs mature and first become capable of reproduction. It is also a time of the development of secondary sexual characteristics and new experiences including menstruation or change of voice and nocturnal emissions. Adolescence is a time of significant physical changes and growth, often in spurts. Among other things, adolescent girls need help to understand menstruation and the meaning of the cycles of fertility, and to "joyfully accept the development of their femininity..." Adolescent boys need help to understand the physiological development of the genitals "before they get this information from their companions or from persons who are not well-intentioned." Both adolescent girls and boys also need to receive "sufficient information about the bodily and psychological characteristics of the opposite sex, about whom their curiosity is growing."³²

Psychologically and socially, adolescence is a time of transition between childhood and adulthood. In nonindustrial societies this was a relatively short period, often marked with certain

31. CT (see note 28), n. 37. Cf. USCC, 100-3; and Pope John Paul II, FC, n. 37.

32. PCF (see note 17), nn. 90-91.

rites of initiation into adult roles. In modern technological information societies this period can be extended for a decade or more. Young people today generally face many options with regard to education, job training, careers, lifestyles, and values. Finding one's personal identity and place in the adult world, moving from childhood dependence to adult autonomy and responsibilities, and becoming an integrated mature adult can be very difficult.³³

Peer relations and friendships generally become more important for adolescents. They need to learn friendship and communication skills, including how to resolve conflicts constructively.(cf. parts of Ch. 8.C-F and Ch. 9.A) Their seeking peer approval may conflict with expectations of their parents and other elders. Adolescence is often a time of big dreams, profound questioning, and personal turmoil. Adolescence, however, need not be a time of outright rebellion and of alienation from parents. Many adolescents report relatively harmonious relations with their parents. Although their preferences for music and fashion, etc., may differ significantly from those of their parents, "their fundamental values tend to remain similar to those of their parents".³⁴ Like other people, they need to be appreciated and loved, to love and be needed. In the light of typical new experiences regarding sexual attraction, infatuation and love, they need to be educated in true friendship and integral love.(cf. Ch. 8.D and Ch. 5) Adolescents need opportunities to discover their capabilities by doing, to learn and grow in responsibility and self-control. Their energy and drive for fun needs to be channeled properly not blocked.³⁵ Adolescents can often benefit from patient and loving advice, as well as reasonable guidelines and limits suited to their level of maturity. With regard to

33. Cf., e.g., Zimbardo (see note 25), 91-7; and PCF (see note 17), n. 106.

34. Zimbardo (see note 26), 96.

35. Cf. USCC (see note 15), 104-12; and Qubein (see note 4), Ch. 5.

this the Pontifical Council for the Family says in part:

... Without taking away their rightful autonomy, when necessary parents should know how to say no to their children, and at the same time they should know how to cultivate a taste in their children for what is beautiful, noble and true...³⁶

Although young people are bombarded by information in today's world, many are emotionally immature. Many lack mature nurturing parents and/or parents who give them adequate time and attention. Many fear their parents will divorce or blame themselves if they do. Many young people who suffer family breakup also do not have the support of extended family and long-term friends. Many grow up without knowing how to give and receive love and fear they will never find love. Like all people, however, young people need to be part of lasting loving relationships. Young people in today's world generally want a happy home life, close family ties, lasting loving relationships, and role models who have it together regarding love, marriage, sex and family.³⁷

Growing adolescents are generally very concerned about their physical appearance. Many worry about acne or developing abnormally, especially if they are developing earlier or later than most of their peers. In a culture in which the media emphasize physical attractiveness, many feel inadequate and have a poor sense of their worth. Many young people today fear failure and that they will not be accepted. Many feel insignificant, alone, and lack hope for the future. They may seek short-term pleasures and/or to escape the pain by means such as sex, alcohol, drugs and suicide.

Young people need to find mature persons, friends, models and mentors, in whom they can confide

36. PCF (see note 17), nn. 107-8. Cf. Zimbardo (see note 26), 96: "...both empirical and clinical evidence" suggest "that too little parental control and involvement may be as detrimental to the development of autonomy as too strict control and overinvolvement..."; and Pope John Paul II, FC, n. 25.

37. Cf. McDowell and Day (see note 1), 29-37 and 57-66; and Reginald Bibby and Donald Posterski, *Teen Trends: A Nation in Motion* (Toronto: Stoddart Publishing Co. Limited, 1992).

and who can provide them with good guidance. Many need help to avoid closing in on themselves, and to understand their individual worth and that they are loved unconditionally by God. A proper sense of one's worth is also necessary, whether one is young or old, to remove one's masks and experience real intimacy. Although sex and intimacy are often confused today, most young people, especially girls or young women, consider intimacy and affection more important than sex.³⁸

Adolescence can and ought to be a time of significant moral and spiritual development. Young people should be provided the resources and help they need to be able to form their consciences properly. This includes learning the facts and norms, and appreciating the values that are relevant to fulfilling their responsibilities, including those regarding sexuality (see Ch. 1). From a Christian perspective

Positive information about sexuality should always be part of a formation plan so as to create the Christian context in which all information about life, sexual activity, anatomy and hygiene is given. Therefore, the spiritual and moral dimensions must always be predominant so as to have two special purposes: presenting God's commandments as a way of life and the proper formation of conscience....³⁹

Young people need to realize that their bodies, sex and sexuality are not bad or dirty, but great gifts, created good by God. To care for one's body properly one needs to learn to live a healthy lifestyle that includes proper hygiene, exercise, rest and a balanced diet (note, e.g., the problem

38. Cf. Qubein (see note 4), 68-70 and 81-94 (among other things, he advises youth leaders to watch for signs of problems and to refer to appropriate professional help if the person is seriously depressed over an extended period of time, speaks about suicide, there is a strong indication of serious involvement with drugs or alcohol, the person is excessively withdrawn, there are sudden and extreme changes in behavior, or the person has compulsive behavior problems); USCC (see note 15), 104 and 111; PCF (see note 17), nn. 107-8; and McDowell and Day (see note 1), 30-1 and 66-9.

39. PCF (see note 17), n. 94.

some young women have with anorexia). Among other things, young people need to learn the risks of smoking, alcohol, drugs and STDs, in the context of learning a healthy and moral lifestyle. One needs to learn to respect properly one's own body and the bodies of others. Young men (also many older men), in particular, need to learn to respect properly women. Values, including the great and equal dignity of all human persons, need to be appreciated in the light of God, who is infinitely good and the source of all that is good. Young people need to learn to appreciate properly the relationship between love and procreation, the unitive and procreative dimensions of conjugal union, and universal moral principles. Among other things, it is important that Christian and Catholic parents, teachers, counselors and pastors, when appropriate and necessary, provide young people with a positive and serene explanation of the solid points of Christian morality, and Catholic teaching and pastoral practice, regarding, for example, the indissolubility of marriage, the responsibilities of parenting, annulments, and the immorality of abortion, contraception, masturbation, and nonmarital genital relations, including premarital and homosexual genital relations. Young people need education on the reality of sin including sexual sins and their destructive consequences. They need to learn to recognize and resist temptations, and to avoid unnecessary occasions of sin (e.g. to masturbate and/or to experiment sexually with nonmarital sexual petting and intercourse). Among other things, they also need to be informed appropriately of the dangers regarding sexual abuse and violence including date rape (see Ch. 8.C). To keep a positive and hopeful perspective, however, they also need to learn God's wonderful plan of salvation in Christ, forgiveness, and his gifts of grace, healing and the Holy Spirit.(cf. Chs. 5-8.B above)⁴⁰

40. Cf. USCC (see note 15), 104-12; Qubein (see note 4), Ch. 5; and PCF (see note 17), nn. 93 and 102-6. With regard to homosexuality, PCF, n. 104, says in part: "If parents notice the appearance of this tendency or of related behavior in their children during childhood or adolescence, they should seek help from expert qualified persons in order to obtain all possible assistance." While CCC, nn.

Young people, especially "in societies overwhelmed by consumer pressures," need well-reasoned explanations to help them to appreciate the values of chastity and modesty, and to see "the intellectual and human weakness of theories that inspire permissive and hedonistic behavior..."⁴¹ They need to learn how to deal with unrealistic presentations of sex in the media. Sex is often used to sell, and portrayed as normal and available - also for the unmarried. Sex is often presented unrealistically, with physical intimacy being emphasized. In our post-Judeo-Christian society, there are many encouragement's to engage in premarital sex, for example, from television, music and peers. Many young people learn distorted views of sexuality from the media, spending more time watching television and movies, and listening to music than interacting with real adults. Many parents do not provide their children with enough guidance regarding the use of media, including the use of computer multimedia and the Internet. Among other things, young people also need to learn how to deal responsibly with negative things in their environment such as pornography and abusive language, and how to express love in appropriate ways (see Ch. 8.B above).⁴²

Good spirituality is also very important for young people. Many are empty inside. To be fulfilled they need to develop a meaningful personal relationship with God. They need to establish

2357-9, gives some reasons for Catholic teaching that homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered and can in no circumstances be approved, it also says in part regarding men and women who have deep-seated homosexual tendencies: "This inclination, which is objectively disordered, constitutes for most of them a trial. They must be accepted with respect, compassion and sensitivity. Every sign of unjust discrimination in their regard should be avoided. These persons are called to fulfill God's will in their lives and, if they are Christians, to unite to the sacrifice of the Lord's Cross the difficulties they may encounter from their condition. Homosexual persons are called to chastity.... they can and should gradually and resolutely approach Christian perfection." For a very good treatment of homosexuality see *The Homosexual Person: New Thinking in Pastoral Care* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1987), by John F. Harvey.

41. PCF (see note 17), nn. 96-7.

42. Cf. McDowell and Day (see note 1), Chs. 2-5; and USCC (see note 15), 104-12.

their goals in the light of God.

It is very important for young people not to find themselves alone in discerning their personal vocation. Parental advice is relevant, at times decisive, as well as the support of a priest or other properly formed persons (in parishes, associations or in the new fruitful ecclesial movements, etc.) who are capable of helping them discover the vocational meaning of life and the various forms of the universal call to holiness....

God calls everyone to holiness. He has very precise plans for each person, a personal vocation which each must recognize, accept and develop....⁴³

Young people need proper instruction on the vocational meanings of both marriage and celibacy (cf. Ch. 8.F and G). Witnessing examples of "fidelity to God and one another in the marriage covenant", in the lives of their parents, can be decisive in adolescence, "the phase when young people are looking for lived and attractive behavior models." They can also find good models of friendship, loving relationships with people of both sexes, and fidelity to God in Jesus and other holy and mature men and women. Catholic teaching also highlights "the inestimable value of prayer and frequent fruitful recourse to the sacraments for a chaste life, especially personal confession" and the Eucharist.⁴⁴ The involvement of adolescents in the life and activities of the Church "depends to a large measure on parental encouragement and support as well as peer participation. They tend to become active participants in church life and ministry if their parents are involved and if encouraged

43. PCF (see note 17), nn. 99-100.

44. Ibid., nn. 101-2 and 106. See also parts of Ch. 4 above; and CCC, Part II regarding the liturgy and the sacraments, including Confirmation which is sometimes called the "sacrament of Christian maturity"(n. 1308) and gives the baptized "a special strength of the Holy Spirit" to be "true witnesses of Christ"(n. 1285). For an example of a good book on sexuality that is faithful to Catholic teaching and that is adapted to young people see: Rev. Robert J. Fox, *The Gift of Sexuality: A Guide for Young People* (Huntington, Indiana: Our Sunday Visitor, 1989).

by personal or peer group invitation."⁴⁵ Especially in affluent societies, it is also "very important to present young people with the ideals of human and Christian solidarity and concrete ways of being committed in church associations, movements and voluntary Catholic and missionary activities."⁴⁶

With regard to adapting catechesis to adolescents and young people, Pope John Paul II says in part:

.... A catechesis capable of leading the adolescent to reexamine his or her life and to engage in dialogue, a catechesis that does not ignore the adolescent's great questions - self-giving, belief, love and the means of expressing it constituted by sexuality - such a catechesis can be decisive. The revelation of Jesus Christ as a friend, guide and model, capable of being admired but also imitated; the revelation of his message which provides an answer to the fundamental questions; the revelation of the loving plan of Christ the Savior as the incarnation of the only authentic love and as the possibility of uniting the human race - all this can provide the basis for genuine education in faith. Above all, the mysteries of the Passion and death of Jesus, through which ... he merited his glorious Resurrection, can speak eloquently to the adolescent's conscience and heart and cast light on his first sufferings and on the sufferings of the world that he is discovering.

With youth comes the moment of the first great decisions. Although the young may enjoy the support of the members of their family and their friends, they have to rely on themselves and their own conscience and must ever more frequently and decisively assume responsibility for their destiny.... a catechesis which denounces selfishness in the name of generosity, and which without any illusory over-simplification presents the Christian meaning of work, of the common good, of justice and charity, a catechesis on international peace and on the advancement of human dignity, on

45. USCC (see note 15), 104-5 (cf. also parts of 105-12).

46. PCF (see note 17), n. 106.

development, and on liberation, as these are presented in recent documents of the Church, fittingly completes in the minds of the young the good catechesis on strictly religious realities which is never to be neglected. Catechesis then takes on considerable importance, since it is the time when the Gospel can be presented, understood and accepted as capable of giving meaning to life and thus of inspiring attitudes that would have no other explanation, such as self-sacrifice, detachment, forbearance, justice, commitment, reconciliation, a sense of the Absolute and the unseen.... traits that distinguish a young person from his or her companions as a disciple of Jesus Christ.

Catechesis thus prepares for the important Christian commitments of adult life....⁴⁷

Adulthood

Although we can speak of young, middle aged and older adults, the maturity, backgrounds and life experiences of adults in the same age group can vary significantly. Educators and counselors need to know those they work with and "make adaptations accordingly." At every stage of development adults need to be offered "the information and formational opportunities necessary to live faithfully and responsibly the physical, psychological, social, and spiritual dimensions of life."⁴⁸ Many young adults and some older adults are in the "premarital" stage of their lives. Among other things, they may need more education on premarital sex and related issues (cf. Chs. 6-8 above). They can often benefit by discussing the choice of a marriage partner with mature people who know them well. It is also important that they are well prepared for marriage.(see Ch. 8.E and F)

47. Pope John Paul II, CT, nn. 38-9. In nn. 40-2 he also speaks of adapting catechesis to young people, including the mentally handicapped who "have a right, like others of their age, to know 'the mystery of faith'", and "to the ever increasing number of children and young people born and brought up in a non-Christian or at least non-practising home but who wish to know the Christian faith...." For an excellent book on human sexuality that takes into account in particular the needs of the mentally handicapped see Jean Vanier's *Man and Woman He Made Them* (New York: Paulist Press, 1985).

48. USCC (see note 15), 113 and 115. Cf. also Giardini (see note 8), who discusses the personal maturity, personal freedom and philosophy of life of the counselee (Chs. 1V-6).

Whether they are married, single or committed to celibacy, adults continue to need: friendships, to develop communication skills, to be loved and to love, to touch and be touched and to express love in ways appropriate to their various relationships. Adults living in our contemporary pluralistic society are exposed to conflicting views and various lifestyles concerning sexual and other issues. Not only children and adolescents, but also adults need continual moral and spiritual education. They often need assistance to use "their reasoning ability, the sources of divine revelation, the Church's teaching and guidance, the wise counsel of others, and their own individual and communal experience of grace to make good moral decisions".⁴⁹(cf. also Ch. 1 above) Adults can benefit from good moral and spiritual counseling (e.g. by seeing a learned, wise and holy priest or pastor) not only during times of crisis or profound change in their lives, or to respond constructively and morally to certain problems including sexual problems in their lives and relationships. Good counseling can also help one to respond maturely to various social and peer pressures, and to grow and be faithful to one's personal vocation during the "ordinary" times of one's life. It is also important that adults have opportunities to develop their relationship with God through prayer and good spiritual reading, by receiving the sacraments, and by being part of a healthy Christian community where they can not only receive but also give and share.

Pope John Paul II speaks of the catechesis of adults as

....the principal form of catechesis, because it is addressed to persons who have the greatest responsibilities and the capacity to live the Christian message in its fully developed form.... for catechesis to be effective, it must be permanent....

Catechesis is ... for adults of every age.... It is desirable that initiatives meant to give all these groups ["....those who in childhood received a catechesis suited to their age but who later drifted away from

49. USCC (see note 15), 115.

all religious practice those who feel the effects of a catechesis received early in life but badly imparted or badly assimilated the elderly migrants those who live in areas ... without churches...."] a Christian formation, with appropriate means (audio-visual aids, booklets, discussions, lectures), should increase in number, enabling many adults to fill the gap left by an insufficient or deficient catechesis, to complete harmoniously at a higher level their childhood catechesis, or even to prepare themselves enough in this field to be able to help others in a more serious way.

.... adults have much to give to young people and children in the field of catechesis, but they can also receive much from them for the growth of their own Christian lives.

.... nobody in the Church of Jesus Christ should feel excused from receiving catechesis. This is true even ... of all those called to the task of being pastors and catechists. They will fulfill this task all the better if they are humble pupils of the Church, the great giver as well as the great receiver of catechesis.⁵⁰

With regard to adapting catechesis to adults we can note, for example, that many young adults are in the "searching" stage of faith development. Those in this stage can benefit especially from involvement with Christians, mentors and communities which model the Christian values for which they are searching. On the other hand, many adults who are approaching middle adulthood or older are more secure in their identity, have a more mature Christian faith, and can bring "to learning rich life experiences that serve as a resource to other people."⁵¹

Many adults who are not in the "premarital" stage of their own lives (married people, and single adults who are committed to celibacy or who will not get married for other reasons), nevertheless, are involved as parents, teachers, pastors, or counselors with people who are in the "premarital"

50. Pope John Paul II, CT, nn. 43-5. Cf. the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* [CCC] as a reference point and an excellent resource for catechesis.

51. USCC (see note 15), 113.

stage of their lives. With regard to adapting "ongoing education" to the needs of adults, we can note here, for example, that parents and guardians, among other things, should be provided opportunities "to enhance both their parenting skills and their ability to contribute wisely and well to the sexuality education of children entrusted to them..." Such education should also foster in parents an awareness of "the privilege and duty of providing a Christian family environment, in which a positive and moral understanding of human sexuality is modeled, taught, and encouraged..."⁵²

In concluding this section, I would like to note that the Vatican's Congregation for Catholic Education in its 1983 document on sex education says in part that, "Affective-sex education ... must always be adapted to the individual", being attentive to his or her level of maturity and stage of physical, psychological, sexual, moral and spiritual development. Education must also take into account the particular role of the teacher (cf. C below regarding the respective responsibilities of parents and others). Although the progressive character of this education "requires a partial explanation," this must always be "according to truth." Prudence requires of the educator "not only an appropriate adaptation of the matter to the expectations" of the person to be educated, "but also an appropriate choice of language, mode and time in which the teaching is to be carried out."⁵³ Dietrich von Hildebrand, also makes an important distinction with regard to "adaptation" and the Christian apostolate:

It is legitimate to seek the greatest possible knowledge of him to whom we would communicate

52. Ibid., 115. With regard to this, my whole book is meant as a resource for educators, parents and others not only with regard to premarital sex and related specific issues, but also to foster "a positive and moral understanding of human sexuality".

53. Congregation for Catholic Education [CCE], *Educational Guidance in Human Love: Outlines for Sex Education* (Boston: Daughters of St. Paul, 1983), nn. 84-7. This document is treated more fully in Ch. 4.G above.

Christ's word. We should first strive to know his situation, his mentality, his positive and negative tendencies, his yearnings, the truth he has grasped, the errors he has fallen prey to. This is indispensable if we are to know where to begin with our apostolate. We should secondly try with loving reverence to enter through the door already opened by the truths he has grasped, as St. Paul did on the Areopagus when he availed himself of the notion of the "unknown God." Thirdly, we should accept and even endorse all customs that do not contradict the Christian truth and the Christian ethos. Fourthly, we should make use of all his more or less conscious yearnings for God.

All the moral values he is familiar with, all the beauty he has discovered in nature, all those natural truths that play a role in his world view ... would be a starting point for our apostolate. And if there are true and valid elements in his religion ... we should make these bridges to the Christian Gospel.

But hand in hand with this, there should go a refusal to make any compromise with the errors in which he is involved, an untiring effort, born out of the love of Christ and charity for this brother, to liberate him from his errors.

.... To speak the language of the [other] ... can never mean to falsify the Christian message by translating it into terms incompatible with it, or by offering it according to an ethos that contradicts the very atmosphere of Christ....⁵⁴

C. The Respective Roles of Parents, the Church, Schools, the Media and Others (Subsidiarity)

Parents are the first and most important educators of their own children... They share their educational mission with other individuals or institutions, such as the Church and the State. But the mission of education must always be carried out in accordance with a proper application of the

54. Dietrich von Hildebrand, *Trojan Horse in the City of God* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1967), 67-8. Cf. Stanley Grenz, *A Primer on Postmodernism* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1996), Ch. 7 "The Gospel and the Postmodern Context".

principle of subsidiarity. This implies the legitimacy and indeed the need of giving assistance to the parents, but finds its intrinsic and absolute limit in their prevailing right and their actual capabilities....

The process of education ultimately leads to the phase of *self-education*, which occurs when the individual, after attaining an appropriate level of psycho-physical maturity, *begins to "educate himself on his own"....*(Pope John Paul II, LF, n. 16)⁵⁵

In line with the above statement, we will consider here the respective roles of parents, the Church, schools, the media and others with regard to helping people in the "premarital" stages of their lives. Among other things, this involves helping them to develop as human persons, including their sexuality, in healthy ways, and to grow in responsibility and a properly ordered love of God, themselves and others. Because of our interdependence, the respective responsibilities of parents and others in this area are complementary.

Parents

In begetting children, who have many needs to grow and develop in healthy ways, parents normally have the primary responsibility to raise and educate them. "Their role as educators is so decisive that scarcely anything can compensate for their failure in it."(GS, n. 3) Because of the

55. Although the principle of subsidiarity was first explicitly defined by Pope Pius XI in his encyclical on The Social Order *Quadregesimo Anno* (1931), n. 79, it is implicitly found in some of the writings of Thomas Aquinas and Pope Leo XIII. Its meaning is related to the Latin word *subsidium* which means "aid, help": "Subsidiarity" by R. E. Mulcahy, in NCE, vol. 13, 762-3. This principle is often referred to in recent Catholic teaching and theology on the respective roles of individuals, the family, the State, and other institutions or organizations of education, health care, and so forth. With regard to this principle, Ashley and O'Rourke (see note 2), say in part: "*Subsidiarity* implies that the first responsibility in meeting human needs rests with the free and competent individual, then with the local group. Higher and higher levels of the community [note: "higher" here does not mean more important] must assume this responsibility (1) when the lower unit cannot assume it and (2) when the lower unit refuses to assume it.... If a lower level neglects to fulfill ... [its] responsibility, a higher level must correct the oversight... The higher level should never be content merely to take over responsibility, however; it must work to return responsibility to a lower level...."(121)

unique relationship between parents and their children, the essential duty and right of parents to educate their children is "*irreplaceable and inalienable*, and ... incapable of being entirely delegated to others or usurped by others."(Pope John Paul II, FC, n. 36) In certain tragic cases, however, where the "biological" parents are physically or psychologically incapable of raising their children,⁵⁶ adoptive or foster parents, or other legitimate guardians, may be called to fulfill this "parental" role in various ways. It should also be kept in mind that children are not their parents' possessions. As human persons they have the same fundamental dignity and human rights as their parents.

Pope John Paul II speaks of "*parental love*" as the animating principle "inspiring and guiding" all of their "concrete educational activity"(FC, n. 36) Amidst the difficulties of fulfilling their educational role, parents must "train their children in the essential values of human life", including "a correct attitude of freedom", and a sense of "true justice" and "true love"(FC, n. 37) Although the educational role of parents normally includes teaching their children how to talk and communicate, proper hygiene, good manners, domestic skills, how to manage money, and so forth, and is broader than their role regarding sex education, we will focus here mainly on the latter because of its importance to our topics.⁵⁷

"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 centres chosen and controlled by them."(Pope John Paul II, FC, n. 37) With regard to schools, including public schools, the United

56. Cf. PCF (see note 17), n. 41.

57. For a broader treatment of the educational role of parents see, e.g., Grisez (see note 20 above), 690-712; Paul Flaman, *Family Unity: A Christian Perspective* (Muenster, SK: St. Peter's Press, 2nd ed. 1986), 178-82; the sources referred to in the notes of these books; and John Olsen and Thomas Masters, eds., *The Family and Education: To Teach as Jesus Did* (New York: New City Press, 1989).

States Catholic Conference of Bishops speaks of the importance of parents being "involved in the development of curriculum and school policies and programs.... [as well as the] implementation, and evaluation of programs of education in human sexuality." Parents also have the right and duty to protest programs that violate their moral and religious convictions, and to remove their children from them. This should not be done in an indiscriminate way, however. Parents should be careful that their information is accurate, that their convictions are well-founded, that they do not violate the rights of other conscientious parents, and that their children experience as little embarrassment as possible and are given an adequate formation.⁵⁸

Since parents are important role models for their children, the parents' own example and attitudes with regard to sex and marriage, as well as the quality of their relationships with each other and their children, will have a profound influence with regard to their children's sexual development and education. If the parents have healthy attitudes and relationships, and they are responsible themselves, this will contribute to the healthy and harmonious psychological, social, sexual and moral development of their children. On the other hand, human experience, as well as recent findings of the psychological and pedagogical sciences, also show that

Certain serious privations or imbalances between parents (for example, one or both parents' absence from family life, a lack of interest in the children's education or excessive severity) are factors that can cause emotional and affective disturbances in children. These factors can seriously upset their

58. USCC (see note 15), 73-80 (the quotation is from p. 76). Cf. PCF (see note 17), nn. 114-17, which recommends in part that parents associate with other parents to fulfill their role as primary educators of their children. For a discussion, which includes many practical steps and good insights, of parents becoming more involved in evaluating and developing sex education programs in schools, see: Anne Newman and Dinah Richard, *Healthy Sex Education in Your Schools: A Parent's Handbook* (Colorado Springs: Focus on the Family, 1990). The role of schools with regard to education in sexuality and chastity will be treated further below in this and the next sections.

adolescence and sometimes mark them for life.

Children need to receive love, care, affection, attention, acceptance, appreciation and respect from both parents. It is important that both parents spend enough time with each child, listening and seeking to understand, sharing themselves, and helping him or her to reflect, to reason, and to channel his or her anxieties and aspirations correctly. Parents will succeed better in this if they really place themselves at their children's level "with love."⁵⁹

Unfortunately, in today's world many children of various ages are starving for their parents' love. Many parents, especially many fathers, do not spend enough time where they are really involved in a personal relationship with their children. This may be due to the demands of work (cf. also more mothers working outside the home) and/or mistaken priorities regarding work, acquiring material possessions, and their own recreation. Some parents spend more time watching television and/or socializing with adults than with their own children. McDowell and Day exhort parents to invest time with their children, to love them, and to build close relationships with them. They point out that parental rules without a relationship lead to active or passive rebellion. Also, if children receive enough love and attention from their parents through words and actions, time spent doing things with them, communicating, lots of hugs and so forth, their children will be less likely to give in to pressures to engage in irresponsible sexual relations. And, if they do have serious problems such as regarding teenage pregnancy, they will be more likely to turn to their parents for understanding and help.⁶⁰

59. Pontifical Council for the Family (PCF), "The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality" (*Origins*, 1 Feb. 1996, 529-52), nn. 51 and 59 (see also n. 50). This document was written to help parents to fulfill their primary responsibility with regard to the sex education of their children.

60. See McDowell and Day (see note 1), 59-64 and 379-87. Cf. also Josh McDowell, *Teens Speak Out: What I Wish My Parents Knew About My Sexuality* (San Bernardino, CA: Here's Life

When parents have concerns about their teenagers, researchers Bibby and Posterski advocate honest discussion with them to learn what they are experiencing. Since teenagers generally value their friends highly, welcoming their peers into one's home while maintaining a healthy family balance is a good idea. Parents should try to enter their teenager's life concerns at the points of least resistance and do whatever is necessary not to breach the relationship. Bibby and Posterski also speak of certain common parental pitfalls in dealing with their teenage children such as overprotection and overcontrol. On the other hand, one should not be gullible either. Young teens, for example, need rules until they start exercising good judgment. Children should be encouraged to be responsible, given age appropriate choices, and allowed to deal with the consequences. Parents should respect their children and try to deal realistically with the here and now situations. Although the situations of teenagers today are not exactly the same as when parents were teenagers, parents should try to think about when they were teenagers and how they wanted their parents to treat them. Overindulging children leads them to think that they are entitled. Older children staying at home too long or returning to live at home can also hinder their developmental process and not let them grow up.⁶¹

From a Christian perspective, ideally parents are meant to model God's love and truth and communicate these to their children. They can not do this, however, unless they have been open to receiving God's love and truth themselves. The biblical author of the Letter to the Ephesians

Publishers, Inc., 1987); Grisez (see note 20), 719-20, regarding "Families Should Deal Responsibly with a Pregnancy out of Wedlock"; and "Premarital Pregnancy" under Ch. 6.E above.

61. See Bibby and Posterski (see note 37), Ch. 5. With regard to parents training their children in a correct attitude with regard to material goods and a true sense of justice, Pope John Paul II speaks of "adopting a simple and austere life style" and a "sincere solicitude and disinterested service with regard to others, especially the poorest and those in most need"(FC, n. 37).

exhorts parents: "do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord."(6:4 RSV) In raising their children parents are called to collaborate with God's pedagogy and grace. Before parents can instruct their children in God's plan concerning sex and marriage, and what God wants and knows is best for them concerning premarital sex and related issues (see Chs. 2-8 above), they have to have a good understand of these themselves. Some parents may need to reexamine their own views, values, attitudes and lifestyles regarding sexuality and marriage to see if they are really Christian. Perhaps their own parents were not the best role models or they have been unduly influenced by certain distorted views presented in the media. Parents, too, need to form their own consciences correctly (cf. Ch. 1 above) and assimilate in their lives true values concerning human love, sexuality and marriage. If children witness that their parents really love each other, and are aware that their parents are sexually attracted to each other and enjoy sex with each other in marriage, the context approved by God, it will be much easier for them to appreciate God's plan concerning conjugal love, human sexuality and marriage.⁶²

God is love, he created human beings, male and female in his image and likeness, and he calls them to share in his self-giving love (cf. 1 Jn 4:8; Gen 1:26-27; and FC, Part Two). In the light of this, Pope John Paul II speaks of education in "love as self-giving" as the "indispensable premise for parents called to give their children a clear and delicate *sex education*." In a culture that interprets and lives human sexuality

...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

62. Cf. McDowell and Day (see note 1), 380-5; Pope John Paul II, LF, n. 16; and the Vatican's Congregation for Catholic Education [CCE], *Educational Guidance in Human Love: Outlines for Sex Education* (Boston: Daughters of St. Paul, 1983), nn. 48-52.

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...(FC, n. 37)

In a family in which the parents bear witness to "the bond of mutual love" and in which self-giving love for God and others is practiced, it is easier to teach children "how to enter into healthy relationships with God, with their parents, their brothers and sisters, with their companions of the same and opposite sex and with adults."⁶³

If parents are comfortable with their own sexuality and in communicating with each other about their sexuality, it will be easier for them to feel comfortable in talking with their children about sex. Also, if parents have developed an open close trusting relationship with their children, it will be natural for them to communicate with their children about human sexuality, not in a one-time lecture, but at various times in appropriate ways. Parents who understand and love their children in their uniqueness are in the best position to adapt information about sexuality to each child and his or her stage of growth (cf. B above). The most intimate information should be communicated in a personalized dialogue, normally between the child or young person and the parent of the same sex, due to the natural bond between mothers and daughters, and fathers and sons. Parents "who are alone will have to act with great sensitivity when speaking with a child of the opposite sex, and they may choose to entrust communicating the most intimate details to a trustworthy person of the same sex as the child."⁶⁴

Education in human sexuality should be in the broader context of education in growing in authentic love of God and people, in the context of God's universal call to holiness.(cf. Ch. 5 above)

63. PCF (see note 59), nn. 52-3.

64. Ibid., n. 67. Cf. nn. 65-7; and McDowell and Day (see note 1), 385-6.

The moral dimension must always be part of parents' explanations about sexuality. "...education must bring 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."(Pope John Paul II, FC, n. 37) Duly prepared parents are most capable of giving moral education in this delicate area. Parents have a duty to adequately form their children in chastity and not to tolerate an "immoral or inadequate formation being given to their children outside the home".⁶⁵

Education in chastity is inseparable from cultivating the other virtues, in particular Christian love characterized by respect, altruism and service. Chastity is not reduced to conforming external behavior to a norm but also involves cultivating some feelings and controlling others. It is important that parents show their children the "supernatural and human motives that recommend such behavior." The self-control that chastity involves is simply what a properly ordered love of God, oneself and others requires regarding sexuality (cf. Ch. 6.A). Children should be encouraged to live in an orderly way "without stifling feelings and tendencies, but channeling them into a virtuous life". Chastity is a gift of God, is possible with God's help, and brings joy and harmony to "one's emotional life". It is appropriate that parents not only share appropriate information regarding relevant facts, values and norms with their children to help them form their consciences correctly and to make good choices (cf. Ch. 1 above), but also share with them their feelings - their hopes, dreams and hurts.

The good example and leadership of parents is essential in strengthening the formation of young people in chastity. A mother who values her maternal vocation and her place in the home greatly helps develop the qualities of femininity and motherhood in her daughters and sets a clear, strong and noble

65. PCF (see note 59), n. 44 (cf. also 43 and 68-71).

example of womanhood for her sons. A father whose behavior is inspired by masculine dignity without *machismo* will be an attractive model for his sons and inspire respect, admiration and security in his daughters.⁶⁶

It is also vital that parents teach their children how to evaluate their environments. Among other things, "Parents ... must actively ensure the moderate, critical, watchful and prudent use of the media", and seek wholesome forms of recreation and entertainment for their children. With regard to the widespread dissemination of pornography via means such as magazines, videos and the Internet, parents need to critically educate their children and "as individuals or in associations ... demand from the authorities laws that prevent and eliminate the exploitation of the sensitivity of children and adolescents." If deviant tendencies, attitudes, behaviors and/or other problems are present, parents should try to identify the causes and have recourse to qualified experts "with an upright Christian sensitivity." Parents should also encourage their children in appropriate ways and times to choose good friends, to be prudent concerning dating and choosing a marriage partner, and do their part in preparing their children for their future vocation.(see Ch. 8)⁶⁷

It is not easy for parents to fulfill all their responsibilities including those concerning education and sex education in particular. With mutual respect, love and appreciation parents should discuss their views with each other and strive to be as united and as supportive of each other as possible. All families need God's grace and wisdom. Because of this, prayer including family prayer ought

66. Ibid. The quotes are from nn. 51, 58, 73 and 59 respectively. Cf. also nn. 54-5; and McDowell and Day (see note 1), 385-6.

67. The quotations are from Pope John Paul II, FC, n. 76; and PCF (see note 59), nn. 45 and 72; respectively. Cf. also PCF, n. 56; Robert DeMoss Jr., *Teen Tune-Up: A Parent's Primer on Popular Youth Culture* (Pomona, California: Focus on the Family, 1989); Judith A. Reisman, Ph.D., *"Soft Porn" Plays Hardball: Its Tragic Effects on Women, Children and the Family* (Lafayette, Louisiana: Huntington House Publishers, 1991); and Bibby and Posterski (see note 37), 199-206.

to be an integral part of family life. From a Christian perspective, the word of God should be read and lived with love, and the truths of faith and morality taught, understood and studied with reverence. Parents should also set an example and take a lead in involving their children in the wider Church community, including regular Church attendance and receiving the sacraments and good spiritual guidance. The Christian family needs to be organically connected as a "cell" to the larger Body of Christ to be truly alive and flourish as a "domestic Church". As explained above (see under Ch. 5.A.5), Christian marriage is a sacrament, a special means of God's grace. Among other things, this means that God offers married Christians all the help they need to fulfill all of their responsibilities including their responsibilities as parents. The Pontifical Council for the Family also teaches that "God sustains single parents with a special love", and other persons who are called in certain cases to take the place of parents "will receive the grace of their state of life" to educate "children and young people in an overall sense as well as in chastity..." Together with God's grace, good human resources including good and appropriate books of formation and audiovisual materials can also be most helpful with regard to parents fulfilling their responsibilities. All families, too, need the support of others.⁶⁸

68. The quotations are from PCF (see note 59), nn. 38-39. Cf. also nn. 37-49, 62-3, and 74-5; Bibby and Posterski (see note 37), 206-7; Flaman (see note 57), Ch. 4.6 and 7 regarding family prayer and spirituality; and E below regarding spirituality. For some good written resources for parents see, e.g., Mariele Quartana, *The Origins of Life: Sex Education in the Family* (New York: New City Press, 1983); Anne Marie Zanzucchi, *My Child and God: Religious Education in the Family* (New York: New City Press, 1978) and *The Difficult Role of a Mother* (New York: New City Press, 1979); Spartaco Lucarini, *The Difficult Role of a Father* (New York: New City Press, 1979); McDowell and Day (see note 1), *Why Wait? What You Need to Know About the Teen Sexuality Crisis* (I would also recommend this book for young people themselves, and Christian pastors and teachers working with them); *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC) - as a foundational resource regarding the truths of faith and morality; as well as the other sources referred to in this section. For some good written resources for young people see, e.g., Rev. Robert J. Fox, *Charity, Morality, Sex, and Young People* (Manassas, Virginia: Trinity Communications, 1987) and *The Gift of Sexuality: A Guide for Young People* (Huntington, Indiana: Our Sunday Visitor, Inc., 1989); and Michel

The Church

The mission which the Church (the People of God) has been given by Jesus Christ includes an important educational role. All baptized Christians have a right to receive an authentic Christian education, to know Jesus and what it means to follow him. This includes not only a religious education, but also a moral and sexual education in the light of the Gospel, the Good News of God's salvation.(cf. Ch. 5 above) The Second Vatican Council also speaks of the right of the Catholic Church to establish and run Catholic schools, including schools of higher learning (colleges and universities), taking into account contemporary needs. In collaboration with other educational institutes the Church has the responsibility to promote the full human development of all people.(see all of GE) With regard to this, we will note here a few of the responsibilities of Christian pastors, ministers and teachers including bishops, and theologians, with regard to collaborating with parents and helping young people.

Pope John Paul II says that the Church wishes to carry out her educational mission above all through families which have a specific "charism". He speaks of the family as a subject of both evangelization and the apostolate, the need for solidarity among families to be carried out in practical ways such as associations of families for families, and the invaluable apostolate of families to one another. In the light of serious difficulties that families face in fulfilling their educational task, he prays for a "civilization of love" which has its source in the love of God.(LF, n. 16)

Since it is not easy for parents to fulfill their educational commitments, including those with regard to sex and chastity education, the Pontifical Council for the Family says that it is the Church's

Pochet, *Sex Redeemed* (London: New City, 1990). For some other resources for parents and young people including audiovisual resources see the ones recommended by Newman and Richard (see note 58), Appendices AA-GG; and good Christian / Catholic libraries and bookstores.

"duty to give parents back confidence in their own capabilities and help them to carry out their task."

Other members of the church including clergy and religious, and ecclesial institutions including parishes and Catholic schools, are called to collaborate with parents, and support and encourage them in striving to form their own children. Those called to help parents in educating their children must be mature persons, have a good moral reputation, be faithful to their own Christian state of life, and be sensitive to the rights and role of parents (see this section above) and the needs and problems of children and young people.⁶⁹ Adolescents and young adults are generally in a searching stage of their lives, which some describe as a transition from dependence on their parents to independence to hopefully the balanced interdependence of mature adults. Because of this, as well as other factors including their social and cultural situation and the reality that many young people come from broken families (see B above), good Christian pastors, teachers, and others who minister to young people, can play a very important role in helping them to develop in healthy ways.

Researchers Bibby and Posterski report in 1992 that only approximately 20% of teenagers in Canada (15-19 years old) are regularly involved with organized religious institutions. Nevertheless, from a Christian perspective there is reason to hope since 80% say they believe in God and that Jesus is the divine son of God. Many young people are receptive to the spiritual including questions of meaning, purpose and life after death. Young people who are involved with organized religion are generally recipients of family-transmitted religion. Bibby and Posterski think that youth who are involved regularly in religious institutions and formal religious education have the advantage of learning about values and ethics in an organized way, and have a framework for their moral, faith and character development. Solid religious conclusions which have endured for centuries offer

69. PCF (see note 59), nn. 47, 146 and 148 (the quote is from n. 47). Cf. CCE (note 53), n. 53-4; and McDowell and Day (see note 1), 59.

people today, who often face many complex decisions, a "road map" or a reference point and clear criteria for coherent decision making and developing consciences (cf. Ch. 1) with well-reasoned convictions balanced with compassion. Ministry needs to meet young people in their culture where they are, including their concerns about freedom, the value they place on friendship and music, and their openness to the spiritual.⁷⁰

Kaster speaks of several stages of ministry to young people beginning with outreach relational ministry, that is, going to where the youth are (e.g. to a basketball game and out for pizza) and becoming their friend (cf. Jesus' ministry). One can then invite them into community participation. It is best to provide a variety of wholesome activities that respond to the variety of interests and needs of young people (e.g. youth group meetings, camps, retreats, dances, summer trips, Bible study). Due to the predominant value of friendship in their lives, whether or not many youth will come to a function depends on who will be there (i.e., the peers who have the most influence on them), say Bibby and Posterski. The organization needs to be warm and welcoming, and make room for their friends. Since friendship for young people is usually primarily affective, it is wise to enter first through their "heart" doors and then their "head" doors. Adult youth leaders need to be able to build rapport with young people and establish trust which takes time. Also, since one person can only influence a few others on a relational level, a team of adults is needed to work with a large group of young people.⁷¹

Christian ministry to young people will also be missionary and involve evangelization and

70. Bibby and Posterski (see note 37), 247-62.

71. Jeffrey J. Kaster, *Youth Ministry* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1989), Chs. 1 and 2; Bibby and Posterski (see note 37), 254-7; and Don Posterski, *Friendship: A Window on Ministry to Youth* (Scarborough: Project Teen Canada, 1986).

catechesis at appropriate times and in appropriate ways taking into account that many adolescents and young adults are in the "searching" stage of faith development. Reaching out to young people can involve listening, being present and getting to know them. Evangelization can involve witnessing to one's faith by one's life, sharing about one's personal journey of faith, sharing or proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ, who is central to Christian ministry, and discussing issues of relevance to young people in the light of the Gospel. Posterski wisely notes that we should limit the non-negotiables so as not to make it more difficult for teens turning to God. Compare the decision in the early Church not to make it more difficult for Gentiles who turned to God by limiting the rules they were required to follow (see Acts 15).⁷² With regard to this consider, for example, the distinction between immoral and proper expressions of love in premarital relationships (see Ch. 8.B).

When someone experiences a conversion, a new or deeper relationship with God/Jesus, this causes the person to change and want to learn more. Religious education or catechesis provides opportunities for people to learn more. Appropriate catechesis for young people includes education in God's plan concerning sex and marriage, chastity and pre-marriage catechesis (see B and Ch. 8.F above). Among other things, it is important to provide clear Christian teaching, distinguishing between God's Word, the authentic teaching of the Church, and personal interpretations (cf. Chs. 2-4). One should avoid both overpromising (unrealistic expectations set people up for disillusionment and rejection) and underpromising (people need something worth living and dying

72. Posterski (see note 71 above), 129-32. Cf. Kaster (see note 70 above), Ch. 3; and Department of Education, United States Catholic Conference of Bishops, *Young Adult Ministry Resources* (Washington, D.C.: USCC, 1988), 1-30, which includes a discussion of stages of faith: experienced (childhood), affiliative (school years), searching (adolescents and young adults) and owned (mature adult), 28-30.

for) regarding the role of religion and its claims in one's life.⁷³

Young people need safe places (although some young people have been abused by a few religious leaders, the vast majority are upright; cf. other professions including doctors and school teachers) where they can search honestly, raise healthy questions, and choose and develop a personalized faith. Young people need adults who are positive role models of integrity and excellence to demonstrate what can be done. They are best served by religious leaders who are really religious, balanced, trustworthy and model what they teach. Christian teachers and other leaders of young people should not overly control them, but help them to emerge as full-fledged responsible persons, who learn how to think with a Christian mind and discern regarding culture. There is a need not only to complement what is good in culture but also to counter appropriately mistaken cultural norms such as relativism, individualism, materialism and selfishness. Christian teachers and other leaders of young people should equip young people to move towards responsible freedom, provide them with opportunities to acquire adequate resources, and inject realism. Young people will discard a faith that does not work in terms of their relationships with God and others, and constructing a healthy inner self. They also need to be invited to reflective silence and to ponder the deeper questions of life such as 'Why am I here' and 'What happens to me after I die'.⁷⁴

Young people need to be empowered to play a responsible role in the present within the Church as well, by providing them with opportunities to serve and to share their gifts in love, for example, with other youth (cf. youth groups and the apostolate of youth to youth), in the parish, by visiting the elderly, and by responding to those in need. Bibby and Posterski point out that young people

73. Cf. Kaster (see note 70), Ch. 4; Posterski (see note 70), 131-2; and Bibby and Posterski (see note 37), 267-8; and McDowell and Day (see note 1), 59.

74. Cf. Bibby and Posterski (see note 37), 250-71; and Posterski (see note 70), 132-9.

today are generally concerned about the world and can be motivated to compassionate practical service in inner-city settings or underdeveloped regions, by baby-sitting for desperate families, and so forth.⁷⁵

Besides those mentioned here, Qubein speaks of some other qualities of an effective youth minister. Ideally, a youth minister has a positive mental attitude, knows how to communicate effectively, and is a loving, enthusiastic, courteous, considerate, grateful, dedicated, organized and cooperative leader who inspires cooperation.⁷⁶

In the "Pastoral Conclusion" of their book, *Catholic Sexual Ethics*, Lawler, Boyle and May speak of some other important attributes and responsibilities of Christian pastors and teachers, including those who work with young people. One should teach the truth indispensable for a full happy life on earth and hope in eternal life, as Jesus taught, courageously and compassionately. The faithful have a right to receive all the authentic teachings of the Church, including those on sexuality and marriage, taught with the conviction that they are true and can be lived with the help of God's grace. One should be honest regarding objectively gravely sinful actions while appreciating that people who commit such may or may not be subjectively culpable of grave sin, depending on various factors related to their moral awareness and freedom (cf. the distinctions in Ch. 5.A.3 regarding material and formal sin). "Advisors who have experienced how true it is that God enables very weak persons to do what he has required of them can speak with realistic encouragement to

75. Cf. Kaster (see note 70), Ch. 5; CCE (see note 53), n. 77; and Bibby and Posterski (see note 37), 258.

76. See Qubein (see note 4), Ch. 3.

even the weakest sinners."⁷⁷

Christian teachers and pastors need to instill a desire for holiness and a love of chastity, which is not repressive but involves a true sense of freedom. They need to teach with practical assistance including helping to remove impediments to chastity. People are heartened when pastoral leaders are aware of the burdens under which they labor to serve Christ (e.g. living with economic hardship and/or within a society in which a consumer and hedonistic mentality is widespread), and "are earnestly helping them in visible and realistic ways." People including young people need to be educated in moral alternatives to sinful practices, as well as in supernatural (God's grace, prayer, the sacraments received devoutly...) and natural helps. Regarding the latter, they need to be educated in critically evaluating modern culture including media and forms of entertainment, and assisted "to find forms of creative play and experiences of beauty that are in full harmony with their Christian vision of life."⁷⁸

Catholic pastoral leaders have the duty not to tolerate immoral forms of sex education. They must ensure that directors of Catholic programs of sex education understand well and "sincerely believe Catholic teaching in the whole area of sexuality". Those called to provide catechesis and/or education on human sexuality and chastity from a Catholic perspective, including those called to help parents in educating their children, are also called to be faithful to Catholic teaching, both with regard to content and method. They should be well-prepared competent persons of mature faith who are able to help those they teach to appreciate better the values and reasons underlying the teaching.

77. Ronald Lawler, Joseph Boyle and William May, *Catholic Sexual Ethics: A Summary, Explanation, & Defense* (Huntington: Our Sunday Visitor, Inc., updated ed. 1996), 247-53 (the quote is from 253).

78. *Ibid.*, 254-60 (the quotes are from 256 and 258-9). Cf. McDowell and Day (see note 1), 59.

Teachers of human sexuality should also be affectively mature, sexually integrated, and at ease discussing human sexuality, love, moral values and chastity. According to a Catholic perspective, striving for personal holiness and caring for a just social order go together. Pastors and teachers need to be compassionate and understand how difficult it can be to follow Catholic teaching faithfully in some circumstances. They need to lead the Christian community in helping people bear their burdens. Many people need help to understand that faithfully living and loving as God wants us to is not shallow legalism but is really best for us. One should not propose 'solutions' that involve approving of sin, since sin really wounds people rather than heals. Christ was aware of both the excellence and difficulty of his teaching on marriage and human sexuality. He also taught that his yoke would be a light one (Mt 11:30) and the paradox of coming to fullness of life and joy by taking up one's cross. The graces and gifts of the Holy Spirit make bearable and even light and pleasant what otherwise would be too difficult.⁷⁹

Bishops have the responsibility "to establish norms and guidelines adapted to the necessities of the individual churches" with regard to others in the Christian community (e.g., priests, Catholic schools, parishes and other ecclesial institutions) collaborating with the family in sex education, to help the baptized to know and live their obligations. Pope John Paul II says that bishops must devote personnel, resources, and personal interest and care to support families (FC, n. 73). With regard to the great need for good material for parents, they should welcome the assistance and supervision of the appropriate ecclesiastical authorities in removing or correcting inappropriate material and in preparing and promoting suitable material.⁸⁰

79. Cf. Lawler, Boyle and May (see note 77), 254-63 (the quote is from 259); PCF (see note 59), n. 146; CCE (see note 53), nn. 57 and 78-79; and USCC (see note 15), 81-2.

80. CCE (see note 53), nn. 54-5 (the quote is from 55); and PCF (see note 59), n. 147.

Theologians are invited by Pope John Paul II to unite and collaborate with the Magisterium of the Church in illustrating more clearly the biblical foundations, ethical grounds and personalistic reasons behind Catholic doctrine on the responsible transmission of human life. He also calls for further theological reflection and study of the anthropological and moral difference between contraception and Natural Family Planning, in the light of the experience of many couples and the data provided by the different human sciences.(FC, nn. 31-2) It seems to me that this invitation can be extended and adapted to other issues of human sexuality as well. This book is meant as a response to this invitation with regard to premarital sex and love and some related issues. Pope John Paul II also speaks of the responsibility of priests and deacons to support and care for family members in their difficulties and sufferings, and to help them to see their lives in the light of truth and the Gospel. Their teaching and advice should always be in full harmony with the Magisterium. Such fidelity will enable them "to make every effort to be united in their judgments, in order to avoid troubling the consciences of the faithful." Not only pastors but also the laity in the Church "share in the prophetic mission of Christ". Pope John Paul II speaks too of the importance of dialogue between families, pastors, theologians and experts so that the teaching of the Church can be better understood and open to progressive development, and a legitimate pluralism within the boundaries of the faith can be promoted.(FC, n. 73)

Schools

In many places the school's role for young people has increased due to factors such as the Church having less influence for many today, many families living in turmoil and many women working outside the home. Here we will consider especially the role of schools, public and Catholic, and some of the responsibilities of teachers and others with regard to sex education and

the healthy development of young people, because of their relevance to our topics of "Premarital Sex and Love".

Schools should not only prepare students for future careers, introduce them to the cultural heritage, and cultivate their intellects and capacity for good judgment. Among other things, they should also foster the harmonious personal development of students, their growth in responsibility, understanding between people of diverse backgrounds and temperaments, and the learning of social skills including skills of good communication, dialogue and cooperation (cf. A above). Schools must ensure that they "respect the rightful place of religious beliefs and values in the families they serve." Since no school setting is neutral, fundamental human and moral values including mutual respect should be taught and promoted. Teachers should care for students by listening to them and respecting them as fellow human beings and learners, instill a love of learning and desire for truth, and be competent professionals. The vocation of school teachers who are called to assist parents in fulfilling their task is beautiful and "requires extraordinary qualities of mind and heart, extremely careful preparation, and a constant readiness to begin anew and adapt."⁸¹

Schools established on a religious basis including Catholic schools have a right to select teachers "according to their adherence to a particular religious faith." Goals of Catholic schools include creating an atmosphere enlivened by the Gospel spirit of freedom and charity, and illumining knowledge and culture with the light of faith. Christian teachers have a true apostolate. They are called to love one another and their students and to "give witness to Christ, the unique Teacher, by their lives as well as by their teachings". Special care needs to be taken in preparing

81. The quotations are from USCC (see note 15 above), 76 (see 75-6); and the Second Vatican Council, GE, n. 5 (Abbott); respectively. Cf. also Bibby and Posterski (see note 37), 227, and 231-46.

teachers to give religious instruction.⁸² See this section above under "The Church" with regard to some additional requirements of teachers of sex and chastity education from a Catholic perspective.

Education in human sexuality can not be reduced to learning biological functions nor can it be taught in one isolated course. Ultimately its purpose is the affective maturation of the learner; a more mature understanding of oneself, interpersonal relationships, and the human values at stake; and appropriate self-control and behavior sustained by God's grace. From a Christian perspective the values at stake include relevant Christian values (cf. Chs. 1-5 above).⁸³ Pope John Paul II says too that "the Church is firmly opposed to an often widespread form of imparting sex information dissociated from moral principles" which leads to a loss of serenity and opens the way to vice.(FC, n. 37)

Since parents have a primary right and responsibility with regard to education including the sex education of their own children (see this section above under "Parents"), the school is bound to observe the law of subsidiarity "when it cooperates in sex education, by entering into the same spirit that animates the parents." "...school systems should supplement and enhance parental educational efforts, never override or countermand them, except in those exceptional situations where parental neglect or child abuse occur." The development of school sexuality programs should begin with parental involvement, include parents in all phases of the development of the program and have

82. The quotations are from *The Charter of Rights and Freedoms: A Guide for Canadians* (Ottawa: Publications Canada, 1982), 32 (see also 31); and the Second Vatican Council, GE, n. 8 (Abbott; see also n. 9); respectively. GE also speaks of Catholic colleges and universities including their role to transmit the treasures of Christian wisdom, foster dialogue with others, and evaluate modern problems, showing how faith and reason give witness to the unity of all truth (see nn. 10-11). In this book I have tried to do this with regard to some of the modern problems related to premarital sex.

83. Cf. CCE (see note 53), n. 70; and USCC (see note 15), 75.

parents integrally involved with evaluation. Open lines of communication and a free exchange of information and classroom materials that are proposed or in use will help to establish a better understanding and cooperation between parents and other educators. Great care is needed in the preparation and using of materials for sex education including printed and audiovisual materials for students to avoid harm, or creating trauma or unhealthy curiosity. It should also be noted here that there is a "diversity of opinion ... as to the value of formal instruction in human sexuality in general." If there is sex education in groups, time needs to be reserved for personal dialogue and a strict collaboration between the school and parents is required. Bishops have the responsibility "to establish guidelines for sex education in groups, above all if they are mixed", since these "require special precautions". The United States Catholic Conference of Bishops recommends that parents, other adult family members, and other siblings be involved in the program, ideally through simultaneous or parallel sessions adapted to their respective maturity levels and personal needs. It speaks as well of a need for lifelong learning in human sexuality education and for adult catechesis, both for the adults themselves and because "A solid catechetical preparation of adults on human love establishes the foundations for the sex education of children."⁸⁴

The Vatican's Congregation for Catholic Education says, "Individual sex education always retains primary value" and outstanding sensitivity is needed "in initiating the child and adolescent in the problems of love and life without disturbing their psychological development." It also says that competent and balanced persons who enjoy the trust of parents can be invited to provide "personal guidance", especially in more difficult cases, to help students develop "affective maturity"

84. The quotations are from FC, n. 37; USCC (see note 15), 74 and 80 (see also 75-9); and CCE (see note 53), nn. 72 (twice) and 63 (see also nn. 69 and 76); respectively.

and balance in "social relationships".⁸⁵

Among other things, the Pontifical Council for the Family says that educators should respect the right of the child and young person to be informed by his or her own parents on moral and sexual questions. Educators should respect the right of the child or young person to withdraw without discrimination from any form of sexual instruction imparted outside the home. Also, no educator, not even parents, can interfere with each child or young person's right to live chastely (cf. Mt 18:4-7).⁸⁶

Media and Others

The media or modern means of social communication play a major and increasing role in today's society with regard to disseminating information, forming culture including youth culture, and influencing public opinion. Although there are various forms of media including newspapers, magazines, books, radio, tape cassettes, compact disks, cinema, videos, and various computer resources including the Internet, perhaps the most influential is television.⁸⁷

A 1992 study found that the average teenager (15-19 years old) in Canada watched about 18 hours of television a week. Television has a significant effect on people although many deny this. It tends to create visual passive learners wanting to be entertained. Time spent watching television takes away from personal interaction (also in the family) and the development of social skills. Bibby and Posterski describe television as the norm-creator and permission-giver in the modern

85. CCE (see note 53), nn. 71 and 74.

86. PCF (see note 59), nn. 118-20.

87. Cf. the Second Vatican Council, "Decree on the Instruments of Social Communication" *Inter Mirifica* [IM] (Vat.II, Abbott), n. 1 (this whole document presents some excellent principles with regard to the use of the media); and CCC, n. 2493 (cf. all of 2493-99 regarding "The Use of the Social Communications Media").

world. Although the media often present distorted or reductionist views of love, sex, marriage, values and so forth, and caricatures such as women as sex objects and as sexually obsessed, clergy as abusers or misfits, and teenagers as criminals, the media can be and sometimes are used in healthy ways for good purposes.⁸⁸

In this section we have already noted briefly the responsibilities of parents and other educators with regard to guiding children and young people in their use of the media. Journalists, musicians, artists, "...writers, actors, designers, producers, exhibitors, distributors, operators, ...sellers, critics, and whoever else may have a part of any kind in making and transmitting products of communication" also have major responsibilities with regard to the proper use of the media. Since the media are in fact primary shapers and conveyors of values, media producers should acknowledge their own biases. They should edit with the total truth in mind (cf. e.g., Chs. 6-8 regarding premarital sex and related issues) and respect the legitimate rights and dignity of people. They have a responsibility to resist being manipulated by vested interest groups and to promote in a balanced way values needed for a humane society and good relationships. The media are uniquely positioned to foster better understanding among peoples, compassion for the suffering, active solidarity with those in need, and to be a force for justice around the world. Documentaries, narratives and other means can be used: to teach academic, social, relationship and communication skills; to involve people's minds more; and to foster treating people with due respect including appreciating them not as things or sex objects to be used, but as personal subjects, as real people with unique personalities and histories, and thoughts, feelings, dreams, problems, sufferings and joys. The media can be used not just to present the "bad news" or the sensational concerning relevant issues including youth

88. See Bibby and Posterski (see note 37), Ch. 8. Cf. CCC, n. 2496.

issues. They should be used to present more "good news" and moral solutions to problems such as teen pregnancies.(cf. A above) Thus the media can be used to help people to form their consciences, to make good decisions and to act responsibly.(cf. Ch. 1) Those involved in producing and distributing various media, like other people, need to be guided by sound moral norms so that they and others will really be benefited rather than harmed. "This requirement is especially needed when the subjects treated are entitled to reverence, or may all too easily trigger base desires" in people. With regard to this compare human sexuality. If they have not already done so, media professionals, like the members of a number of other professions, should develop sound codes of ethical conduct to regulate the various aspects of their work so that it will not harm but benefit people.⁸⁹

Christians who are involved in various ways in media production should try not only to carry out their roles skillfully and professionally, but also to animate the media with a genuine Christian spirit. The Second Vatican Council calls Catholics to use the media "effectively in the many fields of the apostolate, as the circumstances and the times require", to give "witness to Christ". With regard to this it speaks not only of the "Catholic press", but also of means such as the production of good films and making efforts "to establish Catholic stations" when the opportunity presents itself.⁹⁰

Civil authorities, in view of the common good of society, have responsibilities to regulate juridically "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 so forth. "It is the task of the State to safeguard its citizens against injustices and moral disorders, such as the abuse of minors and every form of sexual violence,

89. The quotations are from IM (see note 87), nn. 11 and 7. Cf. also nn. 4-6; Chapman (see note 4), 18-19; and Bibby and Posterski (see note 37), 282-4, 288-93, 295-6.

90. IM (see note 87), nn. 3, 13 and 14.

degrading dress, permissiveness and pornography..." Among other things, laws regarding pornography should "prevent and eliminate the exploitation of the sensitivity of children and adolescents".⁹¹

Civil society also has the task "to be watchful so that a wise physical and moral environment" is "secured in schools". Conditions which respond "to the positive requests of parents, or receive their free support" should be promoted. Implementing the principle of subsidiarity, civil society also has responsibilities to oversee the duties and rights of parents and others who have a role in education, and to provide educational resources and institutes as the common good requires.⁹²

The family needs the support of the state and society. According to the principle of subsidiarity, this should be done in such a way that, "Whenever the family is self-sufficient, it should be left to act on its own... Only in those situations where the family is not really self-sufficient does the State have the authority and the duty to intervene". Family and social policies should be promoted that foster healthy marriages and family life, and that provide families with the resources, means and support they need to bring up their children well. For example, many families are living in hardship or even in tragic poverty due to unemployment or other reasons. The causes of these as well as the social teaching of the Church should be studied carefully so that creative and courageous moral solutions can be found. Among other things, Pope John Paul II says that the work women do within the family unit should be deeply appreciated. Particularly in the early years of the upbringing of children, motherhood and all the hard work it entails "should be recognized as giving the right to financial benefits at least equal to those of other kinds of work undertaken in order to support the

91. The quotations are from CCE (see note 53), nn. 68 and 65; and PCF (see note 59), n. 45; respectively.

92. CCE (see note 53), n. 64. See also Vatican II, GE, n. 3.

family during such a delicate phase of its life."⁹³

Besides those already explicitly mentioned in this section, other people such as doctors, nurses, social workers, therapists, counselors, police, lawyers, judges, and relatives and friends, can sometimes or even often play important roles with regard to helping, educating and/or supporting people in the premarital stages of their lives and/or their parents. With regard to our topics, it should also be noted here that some organizations or movements provide chastity education and support for teenagers and/or single adults (cf. Ch. 6.A), and/or provide other means of assistance for those involved in crisis pregnancies, etc. Although it is beyond the purposes of this book to treat their respective responsibilities in detail here, many of the principles presented in this chapter can be appropriately adapted and applied to their roles.

According to the principle of subsidiarity, competent individuals themselves have the first responsibility with regard to trying to meet their own needs and making good decisions that concern themselves. Thus as young people mature and become more capable of choosing and acting responsibly, their own responsibilities increase. Among other things, with appropriate assistance from others and relying on God's grace, this includes their responsibilities: to inform and form their consciences adequately and to act responsibly with regard to premarital sex and other issues relevant to their lives (cf. Chs. I-8); to learn how to listen and communicate well (cf. A above), and to respond appropriately to peer pressure (cf. Ch. 7.J); to learn how to critically evaluate and use the media properly; to discern their personal vocations and adequately prepare for them (cf. Ch. 8.E-G); and to continue their self-education, including their education in human sexuality and chastity,

93. Pope John Paul II, LF, 68-9. Cf. also 67; and PCF (see note 59), nn. 48 and 145-8.

according to their needs and state in life.⁹⁴

D. Wholesome Sex Education

Today there is wide agreement with regard to the need for sex education, but some serious disagreements concerning approaches. Disagreements involve not only questions of methods and content, but also questions concerning the purpose of sex education. Different approaches to sex education are often based on different views or visions of human persons, sexuality, marriage, love and values. In this section some questions with regard to vision, purpose, methods and content will be addressed while focusing on some of the requirements of "wholesome" sex education.

Vision

First of all, wholesome sex education needs to be based on an integral vision of human persons, sex, marriage, love and values, and a proper understanding of the human vocation to love God, others and oneself in a properly ordered way. In the light of human experience human sexuality can not be reduced to the biological dimension. It is a sacred mystery with profound meaning related to the mystery and dignity of human persons, who ought to be revered also in their bodiliness.⁹⁵ Human sexual relations involve not just subjective pleasures and/or pain, but have inherent unitive / marital and procreative / generative meanings. Among other values, they are also related to self-giving and faithful love, truth, fairness, the dignity of human persons and the sacredness of human life. From a Christian perspective, human sexuality, marriage and love are also understood in the light of God's good creation, human sin, following Jesus and God's plan to reconcile and transform

94. Cf. e.g., CCE (see note 53), n. 67; Pope John Paul II, LF, 61; and USCC (see note 15).

95. Cf. PCF (see note 59), n. 122; Grisez (see note 20), 710; and Dietrich von Hildebrand, *Man and Woman* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1966), "The True Meaning of Sex", 7-31.

us in Christ. (For a fuller treatment of these and related themes see Chs. 2-5 above.)

Many forms of sex education today are not based on an adequate vision. The Pontifical Council for the Family points out, for example, that "*secularized and anti-natalist sex education*, which puts God at the margin of life and regards the birth of a child as a threat", needs to be rejected.

This sex education is spread by large organizations and international associations that promote abortion, sterilization and contraception. These organizations want to impose a false lifestyle against the truth of human sexuality. Working at national or state levels, these organizations ... promote ... the "anti-life" mentality. They spread false ideas about the "reproductive health" and "sexual and reproductive rights" of young people.

Professional associations of sex educators, sex counselors and sex therapists also need to be regarded "with great caution, no matter what official recognition they may have received", since "their work is often based on unsound theories lacking scientific value and closed to an authentic anthropology, and theories that do not recognize the true value of chastity".⁹⁶ (For a treatment of contraception and abortion including why they are immoral see Ch. 6.E above under "Premarital Pregnancy". Ch. 6, note 37, notes too that the newer methods of Natural Family Planning are highly effective when used properly and why these can be moral for just reasons within marriage. For a treatment of chastity see Ch. 6.A.)

Lawler, Boyle and May also point out that:

Many secular forms of sex education assume that most young people will adopt the lustful practices

96. PCF (see note 59), nn. 136 and 138. For an example of an approach to sex education that promotes contraception and abortion, etc., see The Alan Guttmacher Institute (the research arm of Planned Parenthood), *Sex and America's Teenagers* (New York: The Alan Guttmacher Institute, 1994). For a fuller discussion of some of the problems with this type of sex education, see, e.g., Dinah Richard, *Has Sex Education Failed Our Teenagers? A Research Report* (Pomona, CA: Focus on the Family Publishing, 1990), Chs. I-III.

so common in our society - masturbation, fornication, and the like; and they seek not so much to guide people away from immoral activity and the great harm that does to their inner lives, as to protect them from the most visible effects of immoral activity: venereal diseases and unwanted pregnancies. Often these programs assume the hedonistic attitudes of our time, and consequently set up sexual-education programs so as to help people realize for themselves and others as much pleasure as possible, in ways that do not "hurt" others. But the harm that is done by separating sexual activity from the indispensable human goods toward which it is essentially ordered tends to be entirely neglected.⁹⁷

In Chapters 6-8.B above we considered some of the harmful consequences of premarital sexual intercourse, masturbation and premarital sexual petting, and why these kinds of behavior are always wrong to choose since they always involve a serious failure to love properly. Also, many young people have not in fact engaged in such activities, and many who were no longer are. With proper formation and the help of God's grace people including young people can choose to avoid such immoral behaviors (cf. also the success of some of the better sex education programs that promote chastity which we will consider below).

We can note here as well that not only some "secular" forms of sex education assume hedonistic attitudes. For example, Gudorf, in her attempt to reconstruct Christian sexual ethics, proposes "accepting mutual sexual pleasure as the primary purpose of sexual activity". She also advocates contraception, access to abortion, and sex education that focuses on providing students with "the skills and information necessary for them to be able to responsibly pursue sexual satisfaction as both adolescents and adults."⁹⁸ Hedonism, however, fails to appreciate that true human fulfillment and

97. Lawler, Boyle and May (see note 77), 259.

98. Christine E. Gudorf, *Body, Sex & Pleasure: Reconstructing Christian Sexual Ethics* (Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 1994), Ch. 5 (the quotes are from 139 and 159).

authentic personal communion require that we subordinate our seeking subjective pleasures or satisfaction to loving God, oneself and others in a properly ordered way. With regard to sexual relations this requires subordinating seeking sexual satisfaction to respecting properly the marital / unitive and procreative meanings and God-given purposes of human sexual relations, as well as to respecting properly morally relevant inherently good values such as truth, the dignity of persons and the sacredness of human life. Hedonism, including Gudorf's version, is contrary to an authentic personalism and a proper understanding of the Christian vision and vocation (for a fuller treatment of this see Ch. 7.I and Chs. 2-5).

Purpose

The purpose of sex education is not merely to try to prevent the spread of sexually transmitted diseases and pregnancies in unfortunate circumstances. One of the purposes of sex education is "To give each learner an understanding of the nature and importance of sexuality as a divine gift, a fundamental component of personality, and an enrichment of the whole person ... whose deepest meaning is to lead the person to the gift of self in love." Another objective is "the harmonious and integral development of the person towards psychological maturity," including affective maturity, "with full spiritual maturity in view". Among other things, sex education should also involve: the proper formation of conscience in this area (cf. Ch. 1); gaining a proper appreciation of the profound marital / unitive and procreative human meanings and God-given purposes of human sexual relations, as well as the relevant values or goods such as truth, the dignity of persons, fairness and the sacredness of human life; and of learning and becoming capable of responsible behavior and attitudes including the self-control that is required to respect these meanings, purposes and values properly. Authentic sex education thus leads the learner to grow in a properly ordered love of God,

oneself and others. It involves formation and education in character and the virtues including the virtue of chastity (see Ch. 6.A and the index). From a Christian perspective, sex education should also include learning to appreciate and respect properly biblical values and norms with regard to human sexuality (cf. Ch. 2). From a Catholic perspective, sex education should also include learning to appreciate and respect properly Catholic teaching and moral norms concerning human sexuality, as well as the profound values and reasons on which these norms are based (cf. Chs. 2-5). Among other things, this includes young people learning why deliberate nonmarital including premarital sexual relations are wrong and why sexual relations within a loving committed marriage can be good (cf. Chs. 6-8).⁹⁹

Methods and Content

To achieve the goals of wholesome education in human sexuality and chastity good methods, along with suitable content, also need to be used keeping in mind certain principles. First of all, such education needs to be provided in the broader context of education for a properly ordered love of God, others and oneself. The moral dimension must also always be part of explanations of human sexuality. As Pope John Paul II says, knowledge and respect for moral norms is "the necessary and highly valuable guarantee for responsible personal growth in human sexuality." "...imparting sex information dissociated from moral principles ... would merely be an introduction to the experience of pleasure and a stimulus leading to the loss of serenity ... by opening the way to vice."(FC, n. 37)¹⁰⁰

Education, including education in human sexuality and chastity, should also be appropriately

99. The quotes are from USCC (see note 15), 74-5; and CCE (see note 53), n. 34 (cf. also nn. 4-6, 35 and 70). Cf., e.g., also Grisez (see note 20), 710-12.

100. Cf. also PCF (see note 59), nn. 68 and 70.

adapted to the needs, stage of development and situation of individuals (see B above for more details). The Pontifical Council for the Family says, "*Each child is a unique and unrepeatable person and must receive individualized formation*" and "*Only information proportionate to each phase of their individual development should be presented to children and young people*". Among other things, children should not be told everything at once. For example, giving children too explicit or premature sexual information during the latency period or "years of innocence", from about five years of age to puberty, violates their right to innocence, and "tends to shatter their emotional and educational development and to disturb the natural serenity of this period of life." Children, however, do need to be informed of certain things such as appropriate and inappropriate kinds of touches, and how to respond to situations of potential or actual sexual abuse, without overly frightening them (see Ch. 8.C). Also, girls should be informed of menstruation and boys should be informed of nocturnal emissions, at the appropriate time before they experience them. Answers to the questions of children and adolescents should be honest, but adapted to their individual needs. In short, young people have a right to an adequate clear education in chastity and human sexuality, including adequate sexual information. This should be provided with great delicacy and at the appropriate time, however, neither too early nor too late, neither too explicit nor too vague.¹⁰¹

Although the respective roles of parents and others, including the basic right and responsibility of parents with regard to the sex education of their own children, has already been treated above (see C), something more should be said here with regard to methods of sex education. With regard to sex education, Richard discusses a number of forms of parental involvement. These include a wide range from parents as the primary educators, to parents setting the criteria for and selecting sex

101. The quotes are from PCF (see note 59), nn. 65, 124, 78 and 83. Cf. also nn. 75, 78-108 and 144; Richard (see note 96), 28-29; and Grisez (see note 20), 710-12.

education materials as well as attending classroom presentations, to superficial means of involvement such as parents merely signing a permission slip for their children to take part. Referring to a number of studies she concludes that the more parents are involved, "the greater the effectiveness in positively influencing young people."¹⁰²

The Pontifical Council for the Family affirms that the "normal and fundamental method" of sex education is

...personal dialogue between parents and their children, that is, individual formation within the family circle. In fact there is no substitute for a dialogue of trust and openness between parents and their children, a dialogue which respects not only their stages of development but also the young persons as individuals.

.... Since parents know, understand and love each of their children in their uniqueness, they are in the best position to decide what the appropriate time is for providing a variety of information... No one can take this capacity for discernment away from conscientious parents.

Each child's process of maturation as a person is different. Therefore, the most intimate aspects, whether biological or emotional, should be communicated in a personalized dialogue. In their dialogue with each child, with love and trust, parents communicate something about their own self-giving which makes them capable of giving witness to aspects of the emotional dimension of sexuality that could not be transmitted in other ways.¹⁰³

(Regarding such dialogue see also A and B above for some principles of effective communication, legitimate cooperation, and appropriate adaptation.)

102. Richard (see note 96), 65-72 (the quote is from 65). Cf. e.g., also Stan E. Weed et al., *Predicting and Changing Teen Sexual Activity Rates: A Comparison of Three Title XX Programs* (Salt Lake City: The Institute for Research and Evaluation, December 1992).

103. PCF (see note 59), nn. 129 and 65-6.

The Pontifical Council for the Family is aware, however, that parents "are not always prepared to face up to the problematic side of education for love". When parents seek help from others, it explains that "there are various useful methods which can be recommended in the light of parental experience and in conformity with Christian prudence". With regard to this, it says parents can meet with other people prepared for education for love who can offer them explanations and provide resources approved by ecclesiastical authorities. Parents can take part in meetings with their children guided by trustworthy expert persons. "In some cases, in the interest of greater freedom of expression, meetings where only daughters or sons are present seem preferable." Parents can also "*entrust part of education for love to another trustworthy person* if there are matters which require a specific competence or pastoral care in particular cases." Catechesis on morality, with emphasis on sexual ethics at puberty and adolescence, but not including "the more intimate aspects of sexual information ... which belong to individual formation within the family", can be provided by other trustworthy persons. The Pontifical Council of the Family also notes that a "solid catechetical preparation of adults in the truth of love, builds the foundations of a mature faith that can guide them in the formation of their own children." Special formation courses which enable parents to carry out their educational work can be promoted. Parents themselves will benefit and receive much "in the very process of forming their children in love".¹⁰⁴

With regard to people other than parents being involved in sex education, we should also note here that today there is considerable controversy, also in Catholic circles, concerning classroom sex education. Although such education is common in public and Catholic school systems, many individuals and some organizations oppose this method. For example, the United States National

104. Ibid., nn. 129-34. Cf. also CCE (see note 53), n. 58.

Federation of Catholic Physicians' Guilds' Position Paper on Sex Education opposes "all distinct formal programs of classroom sex education for children and adolescents". This Federation holds that such programs treat "an intimate matter with inappropriate public discussion", invade the "child's privacy", affront his or her "natural modesty", desensitize the child, and increase "the likelihood of sexual experimentation." They support and say they are ready to participate in "the development of programs to help parents fulfill their role in the education of their children in matters relating to sex." Such programs should foster "wholesome chastity" in accord with "the traditional moral teachings of the Catholic Church" which "are rooted in the laws of nature." With regard to "education in matters relating to sex" and the schools' role, they recommend in part teaching biology as biology, teaching children to enjoy great literature so they can experience "vicariously and safely the conflicts and emotions of life", respecting the personal privacy of their students, providing students with ample opportunities "to develop strong characters", and counseling "troubled students discreetly and with Christian love, without imposing their difficulties on the rest of the class." They also recommend that Catholic schools "teach the Ten Commandments, neither excluding nor isolating the sixth and ninth", and "provide access to and encourage frequent use of the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Communion."¹⁰⁵

Although I think that the above Federation, and some others who argue along similar lines, make some valid criticisms and recommendations with regard to sex education, I think that they need to be carefully considered in the light of Catholic teaching concerning the respective roles of parents, the Church, schools and others (see C above). Among other things, we can note here that

105. National Federation of Catholic Physicians' Guilds' Position Paper on Sex Education, "Education in Wholesome Chastity", *Linacre Quarterly*, August 1995, 54-64 (the quotes are from 58 and 62-63). Cf. e.g., also Vernon J. Schaefer, "Classroom sex education", *Homiletic & Pastoral Review*, March 1995, 53-7.

caution is needed concerning even the limited positive role for the schools that the above Federation recommends. For example, the Pontifical Council for the Family warns parents to be attentive to ways in which sexual information which the parents should give in their own home can be inserted in the context of otherwise useful subjects such as "health and hygiene, personal development, family life, children's literature, social and cultural studies", and even catechesis, etc. Also, although Catholic teaching clearly affirms the primary role of parents and the subsidiary role of schools with regard to education including sex education, it does not exclude the possibility of sex education in groups. With regard to this, consider the following by the Vatican's Congregation for Catholic Education:

Education, in the first place, is the duty of the family... It is, in fact, the best environment to accomplish the obligation of securing a gradual education in sexual life....

Individual sex education always retains primary value and cannot be entrusted indiscriminately to just any member of the school community. ...as well as right judgment, sense of responsibility, professional competence, affective and decent maturity, this education requires from the teacher outstanding sensitivity in initiating the child and adolescent in the problems of love and life without disturbing their psychological development.

Also, though the teacher possess the necessary qualities for sex education in groups, it is necessary always to consider the concrete situation of such groups. This applies above all in mixed groups, since these require special precautions. In each case, the responsible authorities must examine with parents the propriety of proceeding in such a manner. Given the complexity of the problem, it is good to reserve for the pupil a time for personal dialogue in order to accommodate the seeking of advice or clarification - which a natural sense of decency would not allow to arise in front of others. Only a strict collaboration between the school and the family will be able to guarantee an advantageous

exchange of experience between parents and teachers for the good of the pupils. It is the responsibility of Bishops, taking account of school legislation and local circumstances, to establish guidelines for sex education in groups, above all if they are mixed.¹⁰⁶

Concerning the above, we can also note Whitehead's observation that while Catholic Church documents clearly emphasize the primary role of parents and carefully limit and qualify the role of the school with regard to sex education, in practice the role of the parents has often become qualified and limited and determined by the school and educational bureaucracy.¹⁰⁷

The Pontifical Council for the Family, besides recommending certain methods (see above), also speaks of several widely diffused methods and ideologies to be avoided which produce negative effects in the personality of children and young people. One of these, secularized and anti-natalist sex education, has already been treated under "Vision" above. Another approach considered unacceptable by the Pontifical Council for the Family is "values clarification", which encourages young people "to reflect upon, to clarify and to decide upon moral issues with the greatest degree of 'autonomy,' ignoring the objective reality of the moral law..." This method actually "impedes the true freedom and autonomy of young people at an insecure stage of their development." It "tends to be closely linked with moral relativism and thus encourages ... permissiveness."¹⁰⁸

Referring to several experts, Richard also says that relativistic values clarification or values neutral models of decision making are especially inappropriate for adolescents due to their typical

106. The quotations are from PCF (see note 59), n. 141; and CCE (see note 53), nn. 48 and 71-2; respectively.

107. Cf. K. D. Whitehead, "Sex Education: New Vatican Guidelines", <http://www.ewtn.com/library/ISSUES/SE-NVG.TXT>, 13 June 1997, 4 of 9. This article was taken from *Crisis*, May 1996.

108. The quotes are from PCF (see note 59), n. 140. See all of nn. 135-42 regarding "Methods and Ideologies to Avoid".

stages of cognitive and moral development:

...teenagers need moral guidance because they lack adequate cognitive development to make logical choices. When given only value-neutral decision-making models, teens will make their decisions based on immature moral reasoning, which is often hedonistic in nature.

(For a discussion of some of the inadequacies of relativism and hedonism see Ch. 7.I above)

Richard also notes that these approaches, which are commonly taught in "progressive sex education", are related to the mistaken belief "that morality cannot be taught in public schools."

These approaches, however, are not used in "drug education, driver's education, health education, and other subjects." Schools "already teach it is wrong to steal, cheat, lie, rape, murder, get drunk, and other acts that are harmful to both the individual and others. Schools also teach the positive attributes of charity, love, gratitude, forgiveness, and other favorable traits." Richard discusses as well a number of sex education curricula which have been used in thousands of public school districts and which involve parents in significant ways, foster parent-teen communication, give guidance and promote certain values. For example, "Sex Respect" teaches "that the best way to enjoy true sexual freedom in the long run is to say no to premarital sex"; and Teen-Aid's "Sexuality, Commitment, and Family" curriculum "emphasizes the deep meaning of sexuality in the context of the family, of self-respect, of respect for others, and of respect and love for one's future spouse and children."¹⁰⁹ (See also C above regarding the role of "Schools".)

The Pontifical Council of the Family also teaches that, "*No material of an erotic nature should be presented to children or young people of any age, individually or in a group*"; and "*No one should ever be invited, let alone obliged, to act in any way that could objectively offend against*

109. Richard (see note 96), 28-33, 38 and 43-72 (the quotes are from 47-8 and 55-6).

modesty or which could subjectively offend against his or her own delicacy or sense of privacy."

With regard to this consider, for example, the use of certain graphic materials or inviting students to share too intimately in groups. Such methods can desensitize young people and break down natural reservations that help protect modesty and chastity. Richard also recommends separating boys and girls when certain subjects are covered such as physiological development out of sensitivity to them and because "a mixed setting might inhibit the asking of important questions."¹¹⁰

Among other things, the Pontifical Council for the Family says:

... parents must also reject the promotion of so-called "safe sex" or "safer sex," a dangerous and immoral policy based on the deluded theory that the condom can provide adequate protection against AIDS. Parents must insist on continence outside marriage and fidelity in marriage as the only true and secure education for the prevention of this contagious disease.¹¹¹

With regard to this issue see the discussion of condoms and contraception in Ch. 6.E above under "Sexually Transmitted Diseases" and "Premarital Pregnancy". Among other things, condoms offer "little, if any, protection" against a number of STDs, because of their mode of transmission, including HPV and genital herpes which are incurable. Regarding other STDs and pregnancy, condoms have a high failure rate in practice, especially among young people. It is important to keep in mind too that STDs, serious problems related to them, and pregnancies in unfortunate circumstances are not the only problems in this area. Condoms and other contraceptive methods offer no protection against the serious emotional, relational, moral and spiritual problems associated with promiscuous and nonmarital including premarital sexual relations. Moreover, it is always

110. The quotes are from PCF (see note 59), nn. 126 and 127; and Richard (see note 96), 54; respectively.

111. PCF (see note 59), n. 139.

wrong to choose not only nonmarital sexual relations, but also directly contraceptive methods themselves because they violate the marital / unitive and procreative meanings of sexual relations. Chastity, including complete sexual abstinence before and outside marriage and fidelity within marriage, is not only moral and what a properly ordered love requires, it is also the healthiest and safest approach to human sexuality. (For a fuller treatment see Ch. 6-8.B.)¹¹²

There is also much evidence that sex education approaches, which promote "safer" sex using contraceptives and condoms, do not really work but are rather part of the problem. In general, they actually lead to an increase in such things as adolescent pregnancies. In some cases, the reported slight decline in birthrates was due to an increase in abortions rather than a decrease in pregnancies. On the other hand, there is also much evidence that sex education which promotes chastity including complete sexual abstinence before marriage does work in significant ways to reduce sexual promiscuity and related problems.¹¹³ With regard to these issues good principles of communication, legitimate cooperation, appropriate adaptation, and the respective roles of parents and others are also relevant (see A-C above).

With regard to promoting premarital sexual abstinence, Richard points out that it is important to promote such abstinence clearly as the best option and not just present it as one of several options (cf. also the criticisms of relativistic value-clarification or value neutral decision-making models

112. Cf. e.g., also Janet Smith, "The saga of condoms in Catholic schools continues", *Catholic Insight*, April 1995, 10-11; "Safest Sex Home Page" (<http://www.upbeat.com/family/cool.html>); and "Wait Trainer: Sound rationale for choosing premarital sexual abstinence" (<http://members.aol.com/WaitTrain/index.htm>).

113. Cf. e.g., the many reports and studies referred to in Richard (see note 96) regarding various kinds of sex and abstinence education; Guttmacher (see note 96), including 68; Thomas Lickona, "Where Sex education Went Wrong", *Educational Leadership*, Nov. 1993, 84-9; and Philip Lawler, "Keep Them in the Dark", *The Catholic World Report*, August/September 1993, 18.

presented above). Without condemning people or imposing a narrow rule-oriented approach, among other things, it is also important to give young people an absolute standard regarding premarital abstinence rather than tell them to wait until they are "ready" or "mature", since "some might assume they are ready by age fifteen". The approach she recommends, among other things, treats love, infatuation, dating and friendships, parenting and family life, the negative consequences of premarital sex and the freedoms that accompany premarital abstinence, and takes into account the importance of the development of character, building relationships, and making future plans (cf. Ch. 8.D-F above). Such an approach is supported by research findings.¹¹⁴

For example, Stan Weed and several other researchers studied three sex education programs used in public schools which presented a message of abstinence which was not limited to a simplistic "just say no" approach, gave attention to the qualities needed in healthy relationships and lifestyles, tried to involve parents in a meaningful way, and taught human sexuality in a context of values. Of the three programs, Sex Respect took the clearest and firmest position on premarital sexual abstinence and gave students clear direction on how to abstain in typical situations. While Teen-Aid explicitly presented premarital abstinence as the best choice, this central message could become diluted in its broad curriculum. Values & Choices presented premarital abstinence as one of the options to be considered with no clear direction on which is better. All three programs had some significant positive outcomes. For example, the overall rate of transition from virgin to non-virgin status, with a one year time lag, among high school students in the three programs was "40% lower" for students in the low-medium values group and 22% lower for students in the higher values group than similar students who had not been in the programs. Sex Respect, however, showed "the

114. Richard (see note 96), 50-60 (the quote is from 52).

largest and most consistent short term movement on key measures (Affirmation of Abstinence, Rejection of Permissiveness, Intentions)"; tested best "on more of the key factors" related to sexual involvement; and had the greatest impact on reducing the transition rate from virgin to non-virgin status. Teen-Aid was a close second after accounting for teacher differences.¹¹⁵

A number of sex education programs that promote chastity and premarital abstinence have also had a significant effect on reducing the rate of teenage pregnancy. For example, "After a two-year pilot program using the Sex Respect curriculum, the rate of pregnancy among girls who participated was 5 percent, as opposed to 9 percent for a control group and 10 percent for the general population."¹¹⁶ A number of "Parent-Training Workshops" that promote abstinence have also shown significant positive results. For example, at the beginning of the Educational Guidance Institute's Challenge Program, which brought parents and teens together, "51% of the parents felt prepared to teach their children about sexuality; at the end [of the first two-week phase of the multi-

115. Weed et al. (see note 102), 1-4, 58-65 and 70-6 (the quotes are from 2, 4, 59 and 75). With regard to predicting and influencing sexual intentions and behavior, on the basis of research, Weed et al. point out that the individual's value system is the most significant factor. The individual's social system (the influence of significant others including parents and peers) and related risk behaviors (drug and alcohol use, early frequent and steady dating, skipping school, etc.) are similar in influence and a close second. Personality variables (e.g. rebelliousness, future orientation, need for affiliation and acceptance, and personal vulnerability) have a comparatively modest impact. The individual's level of information is not strongly and directly related to behavior. Among other things, they say, "An important question then is how effectively are these factors addressed in program interventions, and how do the programs compare in terms of producing changes in students on these key measures." (31-2) For more information on Sex Respect contact Respect, Inc., P.O. Box 349, Bradley, Illinois 60915-0349, (815) 932-8389. Sex Respect also has a Catholic program, *Love and Life*, as well as an Internet home page (<http://www.lochrie.com/sexrespect/default.html>). For more information on Teen-Aid contact Teen-Aid, Inc., N. 1330 Calispel, Spokane, Washington 99201, (509) 328-2080. Richard (see note 96), 54-6, 61-2 and 67-8, also gives addresses and phone numbers for several other programs of abstinence education.

116. Lawler (see note 113), 18. Cf. Richard (see note 96), 57-60 and 71-2; as well as the Teen STAR program treated below.

year project], 91% did. At the beginning, 48% felt very confident as the moral teachers of their children; at the end, 71% did." Communication between parents and their teenage children also increased significantly on topics such as the difference between love and infatuation, sexual pressures on teens, dating guidelines, and the relationship between freedom and responsibility. Young people in the program also said they felt more comfortable talking to their parents about sex and they showed a greater understanding of the reasons to value premarital abstinence.¹¹⁷

Teen STAR (Sexuality Teaching in the Context of Adult Responsibility) is another program which has produced some very positive results. It conveys the values that procreation is a power to be respected and that "sex finds its full expression only in the totally committed relationship called marriage." It is a holistic approach that includes all aspects of young people's lives - physical, emotional, social, intellectual and spiritual. One of the unique features of this program is that it teaches the young women involved to appreciate their fertility in a concrete experiential way, by monitoring their own cycles using the cervical mucus marker (cf. the Ovulation Method of Natural Family Planning). The young men are taught to monitor their emotions, and to appreciate their own and women's fertility as a gift. According to one of its main developers, Hanna Klaus, M.D.:

[This approach helps young people to integrate] ...their newly-developed capacity to procreate life into their total personality as men and women. It would not have happened ... if the teens were encouraged to use contraception, which separates procreation from one's sexuality. It also would not have happened if all the teens heard was "just say no," without any education about sexuality.

Teen STAR is currently used with more than 5,000 teens in the United States and other countries.

"More than half of the teens who enter the program sexually active stop sexual activity; very few

117. Richard (see note 96), 67-72 (the quote is from 68). Cf. e.g., also Patience Akpan, "The Facts of life: Parents help other parents to preach chastity", *Western Catholic Reporter*, 26 May 1997, 1 and 7, which includes an account of the Briand family's experience.

initiate it." In a pilot program involving two hundred U.S. and 35 Guatemalan women aged 15-17 years, there was only one pregnancy after twelve months which was planned, a pregnancy rate of only .44%. In a two-year post-program follow up the pregnancy rate was still only 2.75%. The program required parental consent, encouraged parental involvement, and built bridges for parents not comfortable talking with their children about sexuality. Greater parental involvement correlated positively with their children discontinuing or not initiating sexual activity. Among other things, the Teen STAR program includes individual confidential sessions with the students which provide the opportunity for clarification and counseling. Teen STAR's approach which includes appreciating one's fertility as a good and integral part of oneself fosters self-esteem. It has also proven to significantly reduce the impact of negative peer pressure. When the programs are under Catholic auspices, as they usually are, the young people also reflect on relevant Catholic teaching (including Catholic teaching on family planning) which gives them a framework to arrive at responsible decisions concerning sexuality.¹¹⁸

118. The first two quotations are from William Bole, "Knowing why to say no: Teen STAR program teaches respect for fertility", *Columbia*, June 1989, 14 (cf. also 13). The last quotation is from Lickona (see note 113), 87. Cf. also Hanna Klaus et al. "Fertility Awareness/NFP for Adolescents and Their Families: Report of Multisite Pilot Project", *International Review of Natural Family Planning*, Summer 1988, 149-167; the NCCB's Committee for Pastoral Research and Practices, *Faithful to Each Other Forever: A Catholic Handbook of Pastoral Help for Marriage Preparation* (Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, Inc., 1989), 34-5; and Hanna Klaus, M.D., et al., "Teen S.T.A.R.: Sexuality Teaching in the Context of Adult Responsibility", Ch. 13 in *Values & Public Policy* (Washington, D.C.: Family Research Council, 1988), ed. by G. Regier. More recent results of the Teen STAR program are comparable to earlier results: see, e.g., Hanna Klaus, M.D., and Stan E. Weed, Ph.D., "Impact of the Teen STAR Program on Teen Sexual Behavior, U.S. 1993-4", *Journal of Adolescent Health*, Feb. 1996, 133. For more information contact Teen STAR Program P.O. Box 30239, Bethesda, MD 20824-0239. We can also note here that Hanna Klaus, one of Teen STAR's main developers, and Colleen Mast, author of Sex Respect's programs for public and Catholic schools, along with some 30 other experts from around the world, were invited to Rome by the Pontifical Council of the Family to do an in-depth study of its new document on sex education (see note 59) before it was made public: Bill Gurdian, 9 February 1996 (<http://www.lochrie.com/sexrespect/NewVaticandoc.html>).

With regard to Teen STAR's approach compare the needs of adolescents (see under B above), as well as the Pontifical Council for the Family's teaching in part: "...normally one should discuss the cycles of fertility and their meaning" with girls in puberty; adolescent boys should be helped to understand their physiological development, and both adolescent girls and boys should be given "sufficient information about the bodily and psychological characteristics of the opposite sex";

In later adolescence young people can first be introduced to the knowledge of the signs of fertility and then to the natural regulation of fertility, but only in the context of education for love, fidelity in marriage, God's plan for procreation and respect for human life....

....*sterilization and contraception* ... should not be discussed before adolescence and only in conformity with the teaching of the Catholic Church. Therefore the moral, spiritual and health values of methods for the natural regulation of fertility will be emphasized, at the same time indicating the dangers and ethical aspects of the artificial methods....¹¹⁹

With regard to self-esteem, Richard Wetzel, M.D., developer and instructor of a pro-chastity sex education program for adolescents who have been abused, says there is a strong association between early or promiscuous sexual relations and low self-esteem or insufficient self-love. Premarital sex leads to more problems and an often vicious cycle. He says that the greatest boost to an adolescent's self-esteem probably comes from doing good. We should encourage adolescents to love others in the sense of the Golden Rule. "Such love is respectful, responsible, disciplined, committed and honest in loving others we learn to love ourselves..."¹²⁰

We can also note here that some who lack an adequate vision of human sexuality (see this

119. PCF (see note 59), nn. 90, 91, 125 and 137.

120. Richard Wetzel, M.D., "Adolescent Sexuality and Chastity", *Linacre Quarterly*, February 1991, 67-75 (the quote is from 71).

section above under "Vision") have criticized sex education which promotes "abstinence until marriage as the only moral and healthy choice" as "very narrow" or "simplistic".¹²¹ Complete sexual abstinence before and outside marriage, however, is not a "narrow" human imposition, but is required by a properly ordered love of oneself, other people and God, which is necessary for authentic human fulfillment and communion (see Chs. 5-8.B above). In the light of the discussion of wholesome sex education in this section, including a number of sex education programs which promote such abstinence, it is also evident that such education when well done is not "simplistic" but realistic and responsible. It is also important to keep in mind that genuine chastity involves much more than sexual abstinence until marriage. Among other things, chastity, which is motivated by a properly ordered love, contributes to the healthy affective and sexual integration of people.

Although there are many very good human reasons apart from religious faith for complete sexual abstinence before and outside marriage, it should, nevertheless, be kept in mind that "a reason frequently given" by unmarried people who refrain from genital sexual activity "is that such activity goes against religious beliefs." From a Christian perspective it is, therefore, important to provide religious motivations in appropriate ways and contexts as well.¹²² With regard to this, we can note that the Pontifical Council for the Family says genuine education for love requires inculturation, creating a harmonious relationship between faith and culture. God's grace respects,

121. Guttmacher (see note 96), 68; and Peggy Brick (a Planned Parenthood Director of Education) and Deborah M. Roffman, "Abstinence, No Buts' Is Simplistic", *Educational Leadership*, Nov. 1993, 90-2. The description "narrow" calls to mind Jesus' saying: "Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is easy, that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard, that leads to life, and those who find it are few."(Mt 7:13-14 RSV)

122. NCCB's Committee (see note 118), 25-29 (the quote is from 28). Cf. e.g., also Chs. 2-5 and many other parts of this book.

heals and elevates human nature to participate in the divine life. While respecting what is good in various human cultures, Christians must not accept practices which are contrary to Christian morality. We are called to follow the way of Christ faithfully.¹²³ Concerning this and sex education, the following words of Aloysius Ambrozic, Archbishop of Toronto, are most appropriate:

...our aim cannot be merely 'to reduce teenage sexual activity' ... but to form loving hearts for Christ.

...there needs to be more emphasis on the need for conversion and the help offered us by Christ. The strength available through prayer needs to be highlighted, as well as the sacramental help offered by the church both to withstand temptation and, just as importantly, to restore the life of friendship with God.... We cannot live morally by depending on our own resources alone.¹²⁴

(Regarding this and our need for a good spirituality compare E below.)

Since wholesome education in human sexuality and chastity is so important, it is wise for parents and others called to collaborate with them in this area to evaluate what they are doing in the light of sound principles or criteria (cf. this section and related themes in this chapter and book). Also, is what one is doing effective? How could one improve one's approach? Since vastly different types of sex education with very different results exist, parents also ought to evaluate what their children are being exposed to elsewhere including in their schools, whether public or religious. More than a superficial evaluation is needed. With regard to this, Whitehead, for example, says that often "Catholic" sex education programs "are not essentially different from the secular programs" and contain only a "veneer" of "values" and "morality". The real need for vigilance and cautions against poorly done sex education, however, does not mean, according to an authentic Catholic perspective, that we should be opposed to "well-done Catholic-based sexuality education programs"

123. See PCF (see note 59), nn. 143-4.

124. From his letter to a Catholic School Board, as cited by Smith (see note 112), 10.

and "orthodox efforts". All methods of sex education including those used by parents should be judged "in the light of the principles and moral norms of the church, which express human values in daily life."¹²⁵

In concluding this section, I would like to point out that it is meant to be read in the wider context of this chapter and book. For parents involved or soon to be involved in the sex education of their children, I highly recommend that they read carefully and completely the Pontifical Council for the Family's 1996 document, "The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality", which was written to help "give parents back confidence in their own capabilities and help them to carry out their task." This document contains not only many excellent principles but also much very good practical advice based on a wide range of human experience and sound research findings. Many points of this document have been integrated into this chapter. For those called to collaborate with parents in wholesome education in human sexuality and chastity, I highly recommend that they read carefully and completely this document too, as well as the Congregation for Catholic Education's 1983 document, "Educational Guidance in Human Love: Outlines for Sex Education", which is summarized in Ch. 4.G above.¹²⁶ Finally, I would like to note that this whole book is meant as a

125. The quotations are from Whitehead (see note 107), 3 of 9; U.S. Bishops' Committees, "Reflection on 'The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality'", *Origins*, 20 June 1996, 79; and PCF (see note 59), n. 142; respectively. Cf. e.g., also ; Patricia Zapor, "Sex Education Opponents Denounced by Cardinal [Alfonso Lopez Trujillo, head of the Pontifical Council for the Family, which published "The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality" (see note 59)]", *Western Catholic Reporter*, 14 July 1997, 14; and Newman and Richard (see note 58) who present many very good criteria for evaluating sex education (Ch. III; cf. Appendix L). Of all the criteria Newman and Richard present, it seems to me that only two of them, n. 3 re contraception on p. 24 and n. 4 re parenting on p. 28, are in obvious need of improvement in the light of Catholic teaching on responsible parenthood, contraception and Natural Family Planning (see relevant parts of Ch. 4.C and E above and the index).

126. See PCF (see note 59; the quotation is from n. 47); and CCE (see note 53).

resource for those who have a responsibility for wholesome sex education. For some further reading see, for example, the many sources referred to in the notes.

E. Some Elements of a Good Christian Spirituality

Since we human persons have not only a bodily dimension but also a spiritual dimension, developing a good healthy balanced spirituality is important with regard to coming to a proper appreciation of our human sexuality. It is also important with regard to living well as sexual beings, growing in a properly ordered love of God, oneself and others, and finding true fulfillment. This is true for all people in the "premarital" stage of their lives as well as other people. Jordan Aumann, a spiritual theologian, points out that the "concept of spirituality is not restricted to any particular religion; it applies to any person who has a belief in the divine or transcendent, and fashions a lifestyle according to one's religious convictions." We can speak, therefore, not only of Christian spirituality but also of Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist and other spiritualities. Authentic Christian spirituality is centered in God through Jesus Christ and is Trinitarian. It involves participating in the mystery of Christ and the life of the one true God, Father, Son (Incarnate Word, Jesus) and Holy Spirit, by God's grace (cf. e.g., Mt 28:18-20; Jn 1:1-18; Eph 1:1-14 and Col 1:3-14).¹²⁷ Although secularism is widespread today, and many people "forget God, or simply retain him without meaning

127. Jordan Aumann, O.P., *Spiritual Theology* (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, Inc., 1980), 17-18 (the quote is from 17). In general it is beyond the purposes of this section to offer a critical commentary of biblical texts referred to here (see Ch. 2 for some of this), or to refer to every relevant or parallel biblical passage. Only some key texts are referred to for comparison. It is also beyond my purposes to discuss non-Christian spiritualities here. Any non-Christian readers, however, can find a number of points of congruence in their experience with elements of a good Christian spirituality since, as human beings, we share many common needs including spiritual needs. Cf. e.g., also the Second Vatican Council's "Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions" *Nostra Aetate* (Vat.II).

in their lives", there is also an ever-increasing "openness to a spiritual and transcendent outlook towards life" and "the return to a sense of the sacred and to prayer..."¹²⁸

According to the Acts of the Apostles, the early Christian community remained faithful to and "devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers."(Ac 2:42 RSV; cf. NJB) These remain 'pillars' for authentic Christian spirituality today. Along similar lines and with specific reference to sexuality, the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops says:

...the constant struggle to live in accord with the Christian vision of sexuality is sustained by divine grace, through the Word of God received in faith [cf. the teaching of the apostles], through prayer, and through participation in the sacraments [cf. the breaking of the bread].¹²⁹

With reference to these 'pillars' of a Christian lifestyle, this section will outline some elements of a good Christian spirituality.

The Word of God

Authentic Christian spirituality is necessarily based on the foundation of the Word of God as transmitted to us by Scripture and Tradition (cf. Chs. 2 and 3 above). As the early Christians were faithful to the teaching of the apostles chosen and commissioned by Jesus, according to a Catholic perspective, Christians today should be faithful to the teaching of their legitimate successors, the Pope and bishops teaching in union with him. They have authority to teach and authentically interpret the Word of God in the name of Jesus Christ (cf. Ch. 4 above).

One of the central or key themes of Scripture is that God is love (cf. 1 Jn 4:8 and 16). As our

128. Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation *Cristifideles Laici* on The Vocation and the Mission of the Lay Faithful in the Church and in the World [CL] (Ottawa: Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1988), n. 4.

129. USCC (see note 15), 75.

Heavenly Father, God loves each of us immensely as his very own dear children. "...from eternity God has thought of us and has loved us as unique individuals. Every one of us he called by name, as the Good Shepherd 'calls his sheep by name'(Jn 10:3)".¹³⁰ Out of love God created each of us, provides good things for us, and wants to share his infinite and eternal life and love with us (cf. Ch. 5 above). In response, we are called to love God, to seek to please him in everything, and to love his children, our brothers and sisters or 'neighbors' as ourselves (cf. Mt 22:34-40). Jesus, who modeled for us a life according to the will of God, emphasized how important it is for us to do God's will: "Not every one who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven."(Mt 7:21 RSV) With regard to this, Chiara Lubich speaks about trying to love God concretely by trying to do his will in each present moment, as this is made clear to us by our respective responsibilities, circumstances and God's grace. We can live God's will only in the present, since the past is gone and the future is not yet.¹³¹ With regard to our topics, we can note here, for example, that people in the premarital stages of their lives who try to live God's will well in the present will prepare themselves well to do so later in marriage.

The new commandment of Jesus expresses what is especially pleasing to him and according to God's will for us: "...you must love one another just as I have loved you. It is by your love for one another, that everyone will recognize you as my disciples."(Jn 13:34-5 NJB. Cf. Jn 15:12-14 which reports Jesus as also saying, "No one can have greater love than to lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends, if you do what I command you.") Loving as Jesus loves means loving,

130. Pope John Paul II, CL (see note 128), n. 58. Cf. Archbishop Joseph M. Raya, *The Face of God: Essays in Byzantine Spirituality* (Denville, NJ: Dimension Books, 1976), Chs. 2-8.

131. Chiara Lubich, *That All Men be One: Origins and Life of the Focolare Movement* (New York: New City Press, 1977), 10-11 and 37-45.

respecting and praying for everyone including any 'enemies' one may have. We are called to love perfectly as God loves us, to be pure as he is pure (Cf. Mt 5:43-8; 1 Jn 3; and Jn 15:8 regarding Jesus loving us as the Father loves him.) With regard to this call to love perfectly, the Second Vatican Council speaks of the universal vocation to holiness, God's will for our sanctification (see LG, Ch. 5; cf. 1 Th 4:3).

The call to love as Jesus loves, to be pure and holy, includes a call to live chastely, whether one is single or married (cf. Ch. 6.A) With regard to this, our sexuality, and a healthy spirituality, it is important to keep in mind that we are neither mere animals nor disembodied spirits. A holistic anthropology, including a sound theology of the body, and an integral understanding of the Christian vision and vocation, can be most helpful in developing a balanced spirituality.(see Ch. 5)

Among other things, loving as Jesus loves includes: being upright and fair with others and committed to justice (cf. Mt 5:6); being ready to take the initiative in loving others as God took the initiative with us (cf. Rm 5:7-11 and 1 Jn 4:10); empathetically making ourselves one with others except in sin (cf. Heb 4:15-16); responding to the real needs of others with solidarity, compassion, sensitivity, profound respect and concrete service (cf. Mt 25:31-46); and giving oneself sincerely to God and others in a properly ordered love. With regard to the last point, we can note that the Second Vatican Council teaches that since we are created in the image of God, we can only discover our true selves in sincerely giving of ourselves.(GS, n. 24)¹³²

The Second Vatican Council urges all the Christian faithful to frequently read Scripture accompanied by prayer:

132. Cf. e.g., also *ibid.*, Ch. IV "A New Law for a New City"; Lubich (see note 7), 15-26; Pascal Foresi, *Reaching for More* (New York: New City Press, 1972), Ch. IV; and Pope John Paul II, CL (see note 128), nn. 36-44.

For in the sacred books, the Father who is in heaven meets His children with great love and speaks with them; and the force and power in the word of God is so great that it remains the support and energy of the Church, the strength of faith for her sons, the food of the soul, the pure and perennial source of spiritual life.(DV, n. 21, Abbott. Cf. nn. 22-6; and Heb 4:12 and Ac 20:32.)

By humbly meditating on the Word of God, as transmitted to us by Scripture and Tradition, we can grow all the days of our lives in knowing and loving God, and understanding his wonderful will and plan for us, including his plan regarding sexuality and marriage. It is important to keep in mind, however, that we are called not only to meditate on the Word of God but to translate it into our lives, in a sense to continue the Incarnation (cf. Jn 1:1-18; and Gal 2:19-20 and 5:22-5).¹³³

Fellowship

As noted above, the early Christian community remained faithful to "fellowship" too (Ac 2:42). Christians today are called likewise to meet together as brothers and sisters to share and support one another in following Jesus. Indeed, we cannot live all of Jesus' teaching, including his new commandment to love one another as he loves us, if we do not experience fellowship and build Christian community together. The Church was founded by Jesus (see Mt 16:18). The word "Church" from the Greek *ekklesia* means "an assembly called together".(NJB, 1637, note g) "In the Church, God is 'calling together' his people from all the ends of the earth."(CCC, n. 751)¹³⁴

Christian spirituality is fundamentally communitarian. In healthy Christian community and human

133. Cf. also Louis Bouyer, *Introduction to Spirituality* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1961), Ch. II "The Spiritual Life and the Word of God"; Chiara Lubich, *The Word of Life* (New York: New City Press, 1975), 13-15; Foresi (see note 132), Ch. III; and Ch. 5.B.2 above.

134. For fuller discussions of the Church of Christ see, e.g., the Second Vatican Council, LG and GS; CCC, nn. 748-975; Rudolf Schnackenburg, *The Church in the New Testament* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1966); Jacques Maritain, *On the Church of Christ: The Person of the Church and her Personnel* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1973); and Avery Dulles, *A Church to Believe in: Discipleship and the Dynamics of Freedom* (New York: Crossroad, 1982).

friendships, where Jesus' new commandment of reciprocal love is practiced, one's great worth and dignity as a person and son or daughter of God will be profoundly respected and affirmed, and one can receive and give love and affection in moral ways. Among other things, experiencing wholesome Christian fellowship can thus be a great help in living chastely, in doing God's will in the sexual area of our lives (cf. Ch. 7.A and J; and 8.B and D).

In our lives and relationships, including those in Christian community, we often experience our limitations, differences, and various sufferings and divisions. Jesus, however, shortly before his death, prayed for his disciples: "May they all be one, just as, Father, you are in me and I am in you, so that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe it was you who sent me." (Jn 17:21 NJB) This prayer, which some have referred to as Jesus' last will or testament, no doubt expresses a profound desire of Jesus for us. Since Jesus prayed for our unity, we cannot accomplish this by our own efforts alone. Unity is above all a gift of God, a fruit of mutual love which the Holy Spirit pours into our hearts if we sincerely ask God to do this (cf. Lk 11:13; and Rm 5:5). This love involves free cooperation on our parts including renouncing selfishness, following Jesus by taking up our crosses everyday, and sharing in Christ's sufferings so as to collaborate with him in his work of redemption and to share with him his risen joy and glory (cf. Lk 9:23-26 and Col 1:24). Jesus also identifies with us in our needs and sufferings (cf. Mt 25:31-46 and Ac 9:1-6). In the light of all this, as well as her personal experience and that of many other Christians, Chiara Lubich speaks of loving Jesus Crucified and Forsaken (cf. Mt 27:46), in the sufferings of oneself and others and in our various divisions, as the key to unity with God and each other.¹³⁵

135. See Chiara Lubich, *Unity and Jesus Forsaken* (New York: New City Press, 1985). Cf. e.g., also Foresi (see note 132), Ch. 6; and Pope John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Ut Unum Sint* on "Christian Unity: On Commitment to Ecumenism" (Sherbrooke, Quebec: Médiaspaul, 1995).

With regard to Christian fellowship and community, we can also note that Jesus promised to be spiritually present in the midst where two or more meet in his name.(cf. Mt 18:20) We meet or relate 'in his name' when by God's grace and our cooperation we keep his new commandment, when we love one another as he loves us. Jesus can be present in our midst not only when we pray together. He will also be spiritually present in all our relationships, enlightening and empowering us, whenever we each choose to do God's will and live his new commandment of mutual love. The ideal for a complete Christian spirituality is to have Jesus present in our midst not only during our liturgical celebrations and when we pray together, but twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, during all of the wholesome activities that God wants us to do. Because of our human weaknesses we will no doubt fail at this many times. When we become aware of this it is important not to despair, but to begin to love again with God's help and to try to reestablish our unity by prayer, repentance, forgiveness and appropriate means of reconciliation (cf. Mt 5:9 and 23-4, 7:1-5, 18:15-22; Gal 5:13-26; Ph 2:1-11; and Col 3:12-17).¹³⁶

Sacraments

Acts 2:42 reports that the early Christian community was also faithful to 'the breaking of bread', which refers to the Eucharist. According to a Catholic perspective, the Eucharist is one of seven sacraments, special means of Christ's saving activity. In relation to the sacraments of Christ, we will consider here briefly several more elements of a good Christian spirituality. First of all, by means of Christian baptism one is immersed into the mystery of Christ and his Church (cf. Mt 28:19-20; Gal 3:27; Eph 4:22-4; Col 3:9-10 and Rm 12:5) and anointed by the Holy Spirit (cf. 2 Cor 1:21-22).

136. Cf. e.g., also the Second Vatican Council's Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (Vat.II), n. 7; Flaman (see note 57), 156-61 re helping those in conflict; and Lubich (see note 131), Ch. 7 "Jesus in Our Midst".

The baptized are called to share in Jesus' mission. For example, they share in his 'priestly' mission by prayer and offering themselves and their daily activities as "spiritual sacrifices made acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (1 Pet 2:5); they share in his 'prophetic' mission by accepting the Gospel, the Good News of Jesus Christ, in faith and by proclaiming it by lives lived in union with Jesus and by words in appropriate ways (cf. Ac 1:8; and 1 Pet 3:15-17); and they share in his 'kingly' mission of spreading the Kingdom of God by submitting themselves and all aspects of their lives to Jesus Christ, Lord and King of the Universe, so as to reign with him in freedom (cf. Eph 1:3-23).¹³⁷

Although there is one general Christian vocation to follow Jesus and to grow in loving God, oneself and others (see Ch. 5.B), each of also has a personal vocation. With regard to discovering and living out one's unique vocation Pope John Paul II says in part:

To be able to discover the actual will of the Lord in our lives always involves the following: a receptive listening to the Word of God and the Church, fervent and constant prayer, recourse to a wise and loving spiritual guide, and a faithful discernment of the gifts and talents given by God, as well as the diverse social and historic situations in which one lives.

...in the life of each member of the ... faithful there are *particularly significant and decisive moments* for discerning God's call and embracing the mission entrusted by Him. Among these are the periods of *adolescence* and *young adulthood*. No one must forget that the Lord ... calls *at every hour* of life so as to make his holy will more precisely and explicitly known. Therefore, the fundamental and continuous attitude of the disciple should be one of vigilance and a conscious attentiveness to the voice of God.

137. Cf. e.g., also Bouyer (see note 133), Ch. IV "The Sacramental Life"; Raya (see note 130), Ch. 10; Pope John Paul II, CL, nn. 10-14; and CCC, nn. 1213-84 re the sacrament of baptism; and nn. 1285-1321 re the sacrament of confirmation which gives one a special grace and strength of the Holy Spirit to live as true disciples and witnesses of Jesus.

It is not a question of simply *knowing* what God wants from each of us in the various situations of life. The individual must *do* what God wants.... We can rest assured that this is possible through the free and responsible collaboration of each of us with the grace of the Lord which is never lacking....(CL, n. 58)

With regard to the responsibility of each of us to develop our various talents and to employ the various gifts or graces that we have received from God like good stewards at the service of others see Mt 25:14-20 and 1 Pet 4:10 (cf. Rm 12:3-13; 1 Cor 12-14; and Eph 4:1-13). With regard to having recourse to a spiritual guide, Jordan Aumann, based on the experience and writings of a number of saints including Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross, discusses spiritual direction including selecting a spiritual director and the qualities of a good spiritual director. A spiritual director should have a profound knowledge of dogmatic, moral, ascetical and mystical theology, as well as the person directed, and be well versed in psychology. Among other things, a spiritual director should also be prudent, pious, compassionate and humble, and not seek any self-satisfaction but seek simply God's glory and to be an instrument of the Holy Spirit in guiding people to God according to God's various plans for them.¹³⁸

We can also note here that the Pontifical Council for the Family says that one of the objectives of educating young people for chastity is "to help them understand and discover their own vocation to marriage or consecrated virginity for the sake of the kingdom of heaven in harmony with and respecting their attitudes and inclinations and the gifts of the Spirit."¹³⁹ (See Ch. 8.E-G above regarding choosing a marriage partner, preparing for marriage and celibacy.) Since people in the

138. See Aumann (see note 127), 380-98. Cf. e.g., also CCC, n. 2690; and PCF (see note 59), n. 74: "Although it does not necessarily coincide with the role of confessor, spiritual guidance or direction is a valuable aid in progressively enlightening the stages of growth and as moral support."

139. PCF (see note 59), n. 22.

"premarital" stage of their lives by definition will get married, something should also be said here with regard to lay, conjugal and family spiritualities. The Second Vatican Council teaches in part that:

...lay spirituality will take its particular character from the circumstances of one's state in life (married and family life, celibacy, widowhood [cf. also single people who later marry]), from one's state of health and from one's professional and social activity [cf. also school, etc., for young people]....

[Lay people] ...who have followed their particular vocation and become members of any of the associations or institutions approved by the church, aim sincerely at making their own the forms of spirituality proper to these bodies.(Vat.II, Flannery, AA, n. 4)

With regard to different Christian movements and spiritualities, Aumann speaks of a diversity of styles and schools of Christian spirituality. This is justified because of the various gifts, cultures, temperaments, needs, states of life and vocations of people. For example,

...the history of Catholic spirituality demonstrates the variety of ways in which the Gospel teaching has been adapted and applied to the needs of nations, cultures and individuals. This is as it should be, for grace does not destroy but perfects nature, and the love which is the heart of Christian holiness has an almost infinite variety of manifestations.

Among other things, Aumann says that one's attitude toward diverse schools of spirituality should be "one of openness and tolerance, respecting the diversity of needs and charisms and approving whatever the Church approves." There is a need for discernment since there have been and continue to be not only good Christian movements and spiritualities, but also some unorthodox tendencies and movements.¹⁴⁰

140. The quotations are from Jordan Aumann, O.P., *History of Spirituality* (Manila: St. Paul Publications, 1979), 11; and Aumann (see note 127), 34 (see also 32-4 re "schools of spirituality")

People preparing for marriage (see Ch. 8.F) or already married should also learn about the special graces and requirements of an authentic conjugal and family spirituality. Pope John Paul II says that the vocation of Christian spouses and parents to sanctity is specified by the sacrament of matrimony (see "The Sacrament of Matrimony" under Ch. 5.A.5 above) which they have celebrated and "is carried out concretely in the realities proper to their conjugal and family life." He also speaks of "the grace and requirement of an authentic and profound *conjugal and family spirituality* that draws its inspiration from the themes of creation, covenant, cross, resurrection, and sign..."(FC, n. 56; see also n. 61) A number of the other themes presented in this section, such as living God's will in the present moment, Jesus' commandment of reciprocal love, unity and Jesus in the midst, are also especially relevant for conjugal and family spirituality.¹⁴¹

In the Eucharist, Jesus, who is true God and true man, is present fully, not only spiritually, but also in his Body and Blood (cf. Lk 22:10-20; and 1 Cor 10:16-17). The Eucharist is spiritual food (cf. Jn 6:51-8) which "preserves, increases and renews the life of grace received at Baptism."(CCC, n. 1392) If we receive Jesus in the Eucharist with proper dispositions we will be united in a more intimate communion with him and others in him. Among other things, Jesus in the Eucharist can heal us as he healed many during his public ministry; he can free us from "our disordered attachments" (CCC, n. 1394); he, who is perfectly chaste, can enable us to live chaste lives; and he

and 399-441 re "discernment of spirits"); respectively. See, e.g., also Pope John Paul II, CL, Chs. II and IV regarding the diversity and complementarity of various gifts and vocations in the Church.

141. For a serious attempt to develop a spirituality of married life see *Embodied in Love: Sacramental Spirituality and Sexual Intimacy: a New Catholic Guide to Marriage* by Charles A. Gallagher, George A. Maloney, Mary F. Rousseau and Paul F. Wilczak (New York: Crossroad, 1986). A couple of examples of marriage and family movements which promote a number of good elements of Christian conjugal and family spirituality are the Marriage Encounter and New Family Movements. The February 1981 issue of *Living City*, e.g., treats the New Family Movement fairly extensively.

can empower us to love others and ourselves as he loves us. It is no wonder that the Catholic Church encourages her faithful to receive the Eucharist worthily not only on Sundays and feast days, but more often, "even daily".(CCC, n. 1389)¹⁴²

The sacrament of reconciliation or confession is also called the sacrament of conversion, penance, and forgiveness. It is a powerful means instituted by Jesus in which one can personally encounter Jesus and experience his mercy, forgiveness of one's sins including any sexual sins one has committed, healing and peace (cf. Jn 20:21-3). With regard to this sacrament and the other sacraments, the Pontifical Council for the Family says:

God's help is never lacking if each person makes the necessary commitment to respond to his grace. In helping, forming and respecting their children's conscience, parents should see that they receive the sacraments with awareness, guiding them by their own example. If children and young people experience the effects of God's grace and mercy in the sacraments, they will be capable of living chastity well, as a gift of God, for his glory and in order to love him and other people. Necessary and supernaturally effective help is provided by the sacrament of reconciliation, especially if a regular confessor is available.¹⁴³

Prayer

142. It is beyond our purposes to treat in detail the various and profound meanings of the Eucharist as "the source and summit of the Christian life."(Vat.II, Flannery, LG, n. 11). For fuller treatments see, e.g., CCC, nn. 1322-1419; and Chiara Lubich, *The Eucharist* (New York: New City Press, 1977).

143. PCF (see note 59), n. 74. For a fuller treatment of the sacrament of reconciliation see, e.g., CCC, nn. 1422-98; and Rev. Robert J. Fox, *Charity, Morality, Sex, and Young People* (Manassas: Trinity Communications, 1987), Ch. 8, whose treatment of confession is addressed to young single people. It is beyond the purposes of this section to treat the sacraments of Holy Orders and Anointing of the Sick. For a treatment of these see, e.g. CCC, nn. 1499-1532 and 1536-1600. On a personal note, I have experienced the sacraments, in particular the sacraments of reconciliation and the Eucharist, as special means of encountering Jesus and experiencing his love, forgiveness, peace and joy.

Prayer is "a vital and personal relationship with the living and true God."(CCC, n. 2558) Jesus calls each of his followers to pray in private, saying in part that "your Father who sees all that is done in secret will reward you."(Mt 6:6 NJB) Christians today, like the early Christians, are also called to be faithful to praying together (cf. Ac 2:42). Concerning the Church's liturgical prayer, the Second Vatican Council teaches in part:

...Christ is always present in his Church, especially in her liturgical celebrations. He is present in the Sacrifice of the Mass not only in the person of his minister, "the same now offering, through the ministry of priests, who formerly offered himself on the cross," but especially in the eucharistic species. By his power he is present in the sacraments so that when anybody baptizes it is really Christ himself who baptizes. He is present in his word since it is he himself who speaks when the holy scriptures are read in the Church. Lastly, he is present when the Church prays and sings, for he has promised "where two or three are gathered together in my name there am I in the midst of them" (Mt 18:20).

Private prayer and liturgical prayer are complementary: private prayer helps one to participate in the liturgy more meaningfully and fruitfully, which in turn nourishes one's private prayer.¹⁴⁴

Various forms of prayer are presented in Scripture including blessing, adoration, petition (e.g.,

144. The quotation is from Vat.II, Flannery, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 7. Re the liturgy see, e.g., this whole document as well as CCC, nn. 1136-1209). Among other things, CCC speaks of the liturgy as "an 'action' of the *whole Christ (Christus totus)*" (n. 1136) including Jesus as head and the other members of his Body (the Church), the weekly celebration of the Lord's Day, the liturgical year, the Liturgy of the Hours, diverse liturgical traditions and the catholicity of the Church. Catholics are normally obliged to assist at Mass on Sundays and a few other holydays of obligation (e.g. Christmas and the feast of Mary the Mother of God), and to observe certain days of penance (Fridays and Lent). Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are also days of fast and abstinence for those of age. See CIC, canons 1246-53, and contact one's local pastor for more details. If one is aware of what the liturgy really is, one will find celebrating it very meaningful and want to celebrate it more often than the 'minimum' that the Church's laws require. For a good treatment of the value of the liturgy see, e.g., Dietrich von Hildebrand, *Liturgy and Personality* (Manchester, New Hampshire: Sophia Institute Press, 1986).

asking God for forgiveness and what we need), intercession (praying for others), thanksgiving and praise. These "remain normative for Christian prayer."(CCC, n. 2625; see nn. 2623-49) Some spiritual writers also discuss various expressions or grades of prayer including vocal prayer, meditation, affective prayer, contemplative prayer, prayer of quiet and prayer of transforming union. Although one should "Pray at all times in the Spirit..."(Eph 6:18 RSV) by inviting God into the events of each day and trying to live God's will in each present moment, one should also set aside certain times in which one can give one's full attention to God. Besides participating in the liturgy including reciting all or parts of the Liturgy of the Hours, in accord with one's personal vocation, one can pray in other ways and times according to one's needs and life situations. Some recommended ways of prayer, either individually or shared with others (e.g. family prayer), include: reading and meditating on the word of God; other good spiritual reading such as the writings of great saints, who were models of holiness and the virtues including chastity; morning and evening prayers, a daily examination of conscience, grace before and after meals, and praying before important decisions; certain devotions such as the Rosary and Stations of the Cross; and visiting Jesus present in the Blessed Sacrament. It is important to realize that prayer involves not only discipline and effort on one's part. Prayer is essentially a gift of God, a work of his grace in us. We should take Jesus as our model, try to pray according to God's will and the mind of Jesus Christ (cf. Ph 2:5), and humbly ask the Holy Spirit to teach and empower us to pray well.¹⁴⁵

145. See, e.g., Aumann (see note 127), Chs. 12 and 13; Bouyer (see note 133), Ch. III; Raya (see note 130), Ch. 11; Foresi (see note 132), Ch. XII; Fox (see note 143), Ch. X "The Holy Family and the Adolescent Christ"; Flaman (see note 57), Ch. III.7.f and IV.6; all of CCC, Part Four, which provides an excellent overview of Christian Prayer; PCF (see note 59), nn. 62-3; and FC, nn. 59-62. Pope John Paul II says that if parents educate their children in prayer, including by their example and living witness, and by praying together with them, they can "penetrate the innermost depths of their children's hearts and leave an impression that the future events in their lives will not be able to efface."(FC, n. 60) Among other things, he also says that "...authentic devotion to Mary, which

With regard to prayer and spirituality, it is important that prayer be integrated with one's whole life. Authentic prayer is not an escape from one's responsibilities but helps one to fulfill them more faithfully. Developing one's interior life, whether one is young or old, helps one to cultivate a proper sense of responsibility before God and makes one "capable of loving God and others better."¹⁴⁶ Personal difficulties and temptations, regarding premarital sex or other sins, can be opportunities to turn to God more deeply and to rely more on his grace. With regard to this consider, for example, 1 Jn 2:13-14: "I am writing to you, young people, because you have overcome the Evil One. ...you have come to know the Father you are strong, and God's word remains in you..."; and 1 Cor 10:13: "You can trust that God will not let you be put to the test beyond your strength, but with any trial will also provide a way out by enabling you to put up with it."(NJB) One's trials and sufferings can also be opportunities to grow in empathy and compassion for other people in their trials and sufferings. By sharing all of one's needs, hopes, disappointments, sufferings, joys and relationships with Jesus in personal prayer, one can experience Jesus as one's best friend and beloved (see Ch. 5.A.4). One can be more intimately united with Jesus in his Paschal mystery, in his passion and risen joy. Such intimacy will also fulfill one's deepest needs.(cf., e.g., also FC, n. 62; and CL, n. 46)

A good spirituality also includes, among other things, a healthy balance of prayer, work and recreation. In union with prayer, honest work can be a means not only of providing for the needs of oneself and any dependents one may have, of serving other people, and of human development and fulfillment. It can also be a means of sanctification and union with God. Created in the image

finds expression in sincere love and generous imitation of the Blessed Virgin's interior spiritual attitude, constitutes a special instrument for nourishing loving communion in the family and for developing conjugal and family spirituality. For she who is the Mother of Christ and of the Church is in a special way the Mother of Christian families, of domestic Churches."(FC, n. 61).

146. PCF (see note 59), n. 57.

of God, we are called to subdue the earth as good stewards, to govern the world in justice, holiness and wisdom, and to relate all things to God. Human work, even in the most ordinary everyday activities, is meant to share in the activity of God, the Creator.(cf. Gen 1; and GS, nn. 34-5) In our work we ought to try to collaborate with God who "makes all things well and wisely, beautiful to the last detail."¹⁴⁷ Jesus, who was a carpenter (cf. Mk 6:2-3), a man of work, further revealed the dignity of human work. He often referred to various kinds of human work in his teaching. Jesus set an example of service and calls us to mutual service (cf. Jn 13:14-15). All honest forms of human work serve people in some way and can also be seen as serving Jesus (cf. Mt 25:31-46). By enduring the 'toil' involved in all human work (cf. Gen 3), and by taking up our crosses everyday in union with Jesus who took up his Cross for us, we can also collaborate with him in the redemption of humanity and the development of the Kingdom of God.¹⁴⁸

With regard to recreation, Scripture teaches that there is "a time for laughter" and "a time for dancing" (Qo 3:4). Jesus compares the Kingdom of heaven or God to a wedding feast or banquet (see Mt 22:1-14 and Lk 14:15-24). One should avoid immoral or impure forms of 'recreation', however, such as drunkenness, sexual immorality and impurity in all their forms, and salacious talk and course jokes (see, e.g., Ep 5:1-20). Scripture and Christian traditions also speak of resting every

147. Jean Vanier, *Community and Growth: Our Pilgrimage Together* (Toronto: Griffin House, 1979), 194.

148. See Pope John Paul II's Encyclical On Human Work *Laborem Exercens* (Boston: St. Paul Editions, 1981), which includes some elements for a spirituality of work (Part V). He also speaks of certain problems regarding work such as unemployment, as well as the importance of just remuneration for work done and various social benefits (Parts III and IV). We can also note here that human work includes unpaid work such as volunteer work and much work in the home. With regard to work, young people (cf. most people in the "premarital" stage of their lives) can also consider their school work and any chores they may have. For a theological treatment of work, see, e.g., also Flaman (see note 57), Ch. IV.2.g.

"seventh day" and of celebrating certain important occasions and religious feast days. For example, the Catholic liturgical year includes Sundays and a number of special days and seasons which celebrate important events in the life of Jesus and the Church, as well as a number of feasts in honor of Mary and the Saints. St. Thomas Aquinas speaks of the need for rest of the body and soul, and of wholesome play as a virtue. He also speaks of indecent, harmful, and inordinate play, as well as too little play or being a kill-joy as wrong.¹⁴⁹ God's will for us thus includes not only prayer and work, but also times of recreation including rest, eating, exercise and celebrations, that are healthy, moral and appropriate for oneself, taking into account one's needs and circumstances. With regard to this one can also consider such things as games, sports, meals, music and socials. Healthy and moral forms of work and recreation can also help people, including young and single people, to avoid occasions of sin and temptation, and to live chastely. As St. Paul says, whatever we say or do, "...let it be in the name of the Lord Jesus, in thanksgiving to God the Father through him."(Col 3:17)¹⁵⁰

To develop a good Christian spirituality an ongoing integral spiritual formation is necessary.

With regard to this Pope John Paul II says in part:

There is no doubt that *spiritual* formation ought to occupy a privileged place in a person's life.

Everyone is called to grow continually in intimate union with Jesus Christ, in conformity to the

149. See St. Thomas Aquinas, ST, II-II, 168. See, e.g., also Hugo Rahner, S.J., *Man at Play* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1967); Pope John Paul II, *Laborem Exercens* (see note 148), n. 25; and CCC, nn. 1163-73.

150. Cf., e.g., also GS, nn. 53-62; Flaman (see note 57), Ch. IV.2.h; and Chiara Lubich, *Colloqui con i Gen* (Rome: Città Nuova Ed., 1978), 49-60, who speaks of love manifesting itself in us in many ways including work, sharing goods, Christian apostolate, prayer, receiving Jesus in the Eucharist, maintaining one's health for the service of God and the health of the Body of Christ, meeting together with other Christians, studying the things of God and wisdom, and communicating with others.

Father's will, in devotion to others in charity and justice.

He also speaks of Christian formation as a work of God (cf. Dt 32:10-12). An integral formation requires a systematic approach to catechesis, adapted to people's ages and situations (see B above). Such a formation includes a doctrinal formation (to give one a dynamic understanding of the Christian faith and the Church's social teaching), a Christian promotion of culture, a formation in moral principles, and a cultivation of human and Christian values. All the members of the Church are called to collaborate with God and each other in receiving and giving such a formation (see C above).¹⁵¹

The Pontifical Council for the Family's document on human sexuality points out that children and young people need much help to grow in the spiritual life, to grow in loving God and "an ever greater awareness of the dignity of each human person and his or her body." They should be given suitable advice "regarding how to grow in the love of God and one's neighbor, and how to overcome any difficulties..."¹⁵² A document on marriage preparation of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops of the United States also points out that:

The Church offers to young people, struggling to understand and integrate their sexuality, great resources of spiritual strength to help them rise above and overcome human weaknesses. Prayer, the sacred Scriptures, the Eucharist, the sacraments of penance and confirmation, retreats, renewal weekends, and support groups are but some of [the] divine fountains from which our youth can drink of God's grace, a grace that is sufficient for them and for us.¹⁵³

For further reading with regard to an ongoing integral Christian spiritual formation, Scripture

151. See Pope John Paul II, CL, nn. 57-63 (the quote is from n. 60).

152. PCF (see note 59), nn. 70-1.

153. NCCB Committee (see note 118), 29.

(cf. Ch. 2) and Christian tradition have much to offer to fill a whole lifetime. With regard to the latter, Chrysostom, Augustine and Aquinas, whom we considered in Ch. 3 because of their widespread influence, have also written profoundly regarding prayer and other things relevant to spirituality. Some other great saints who have written profoundly concerning the spiritual life and whose writings have benefitted many people are Benedict, Francis of Assisi, Catherine of Siena, Teresa of Avila, John of the Cross, Ignatius of Loyola, Francis de Sales and Teresa of Lisieux. Some contemporary Christians such as Mother Teresa of Calcutta, Jean Vanier, Chiara Lubich and Pope John Paul II have also shared many good spiritual insights in their various talks and writings.¹⁵⁴

In concluding this section on some elements of a good Christian spirituality, I would like to quote some of the teaching of Jesus as presented in Jn 15:1-17 (NJB):

I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in me that bears no fruit he cuts away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes to make it bear even more.... I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me, with me in him, bears fruit in plenty; for cut off from me you can do nothing.... If you keep my commandments you will remain in my love... I have told you this so that my own joy may be in you and your joy be complete. This is my commandment: love one another, as I have loved you.... You are my friends, if you do what I command you. ...I call you friends, because I have made known to you everything I have learnt from my Father. ...I chose you: and I commissioned you to go out and to bear fruit, fruit that will last....

154. These and other good Christian spiritual resources can be obtained in good Catholic and Christian libraries and bookstores. More and more resources are also becoming available on the Internet. Compare also the resources referred to in the notes of this section. This section is meant to provide a foundation for evaluating other spiritual writings and media which vary greatly in quality.