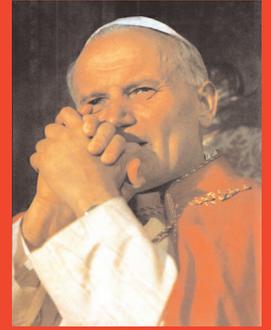


John Paul II on
Love &
Responsibility

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What it Means to be a "Person"

The Challenge of Human Sexuality

"Man must reconcile himself to his natural greatness," declares Pope John Paul II in his book, *Love & Responsibility*, written while the future Pope was still known as Fr. Karol Wojtyla.

John Paul II is a great man, but even more, he is a believer in our own greatness as human beings. Only the human being can love, and only the person is able to bring into this world another person capable of yet more love.

It is this *capacity* of man to love — and to bring love into the world — that gives us our "natural" splendor.

"Man must reconcile himself to his natural greatness...he must not forget that he is a person"
— Pope John Paul II

"As a young priest I learned to love human love," the Holy Father tells us. "This has been one of the fundamental themes of my priesthood — my ministry in the pulpit, in the confessional, and also in my writing."

This publication, *John Paul II on Love & Responsibility*, pulls together excerpts from the Pope's many writings on love — drawing from his works of philosophy, his literary endeavors as playwright, his statements as Pope, and two private letters he wrote to a young woman.

The Pope was popular with young people during his years of service as a university chaplain, and the book *Love & Responsibility* was born of his work with these young people who wanted to learn from him "how to live."

The Holy Father argues in *Love & Responsibility* that if love is to be beautiful, if it is to be whole and complete, it must be "fully integrated," meaning it must incorporate in correct order of priority all the elements of a true love.

"People generally believe that love can be reduced largely to a question of the genuineness of feelings," but "love in the full sense of the word is a virtue, not just an emotion, and still less a mere excitement of the senses."

The Pope hardly dismisses man's emotions and senses. On the contrary: "Every man must effectively deploy the energies latent in his sensuality and his sentiments, so they

become allies in his striving for authentic love... The sexual urge in man is a fact which he must recognize and welcome as a source of natural energy."

Our challenge is to make good use of the sexual urge and harness the "natural energy" it provides to serve a love that is genuine and true.

Here is where the importance of the "integration of love" becomes clear. A love that is merely an "excitement of the senses," that does not unite two persons in a true interpersonal union, is a love that "squanders" this "natural energy." True, enduring love remains elusive.

Thus, couples, "while cultivating as intensively as they can" the passions that draw them close, must "endeavor to achieve objectivity" for "only if it is objectively good for two persons to be together can they belong to each other."

Love's Objective Dimension

How can we know if a love is objectively good? For the character Christopher in the Holy Father's play, *The Jeweler's Shop*, only "one question is important: Is it creative?"

Here we arrive at the true "grandeur" of love: We each have the capacity to create, to give birth — to give new life to others — both physically, in the form of children, and spiritually, in a legacy of inspired friends and neighbors.

When we each confront ourselves with the question — Why am I alive? — we should know the answer. We have

(essay continued on back cover)

Love & Responsibility

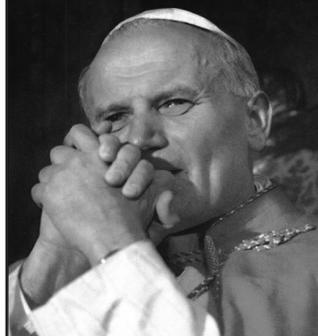
The excerpts featured in this publication are drawn from *Love & Responsibility*, written by Fr. Karol Wojtyla — now Pope John Paul II — in 1960.

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"The glory of God is man fully alive" — St. Irenaeus, Second Century Bishop of Lyon and Father of the Church

KAROL WOJTYLA (JOHN PAUL II)
Love & Responsibility



*From Karol Wojtyla's
introduction to
Love & Responsibility*

Love & Responsibility: why the book bears this title

It is sometimes said that only those who live a conjugal life can pronounce on the subject of marriage, and only those who have experienced it can pronounce on love between man and woman. In this view, all pronouncements on such matters must be based on personal experience, so that priests and persons living a celibate life can have nothing to say on questions of love and marriage. Nevertheless they often do speak and write on these subjects.

Their lack of direct personal experience is no handicap because they possess a great deal of experience at second-hand, derived from their pastoral work. For in their pastoral work they encounter these particular problems so often, and in such a variety of circumstances and situations, that a different type of experience is created, which is certainly less immediate, and certainly 'second-hand', but at the same time very much wider. The very abundance of factual material on the subject stimulates both general reflection and the effort to synthesize what is known.

That indeed is how this book came about. It is not an exposition of doctrine. It is, rather, the result above all of an incessant confrontation of doctrine with life (which is just what the work of a spiritual advisor consists of).

Doctrine — the teaching of the Church — in the sphere of 'sexual' morality is based on the New Testament, the pronouncements of which on this subject are brief but also sufficient. It is a marvel that a system so complete can be based on such a small number of statements.... You need only have these few texts to hand — *Matthew 5:27, 28, Matthew 19:1-13, Mark 10:1-12, Luke 20:27-35, John 8:1-11, 1 Corinthians 7* (throughout), *Ephesians 5:22-33*, to form sufficiently clear views on the subject. (p. 15-6)

Although it is easy to draw up a set of rules for Catholics in the sector of 'sexual' morality the need to validate these rules makes itself felt at every step. For the rules often run up against greater difficulties in practice than in theory, and the spiritual advisor, who is concerned above all with the practical, must seek ways of justifying them. For his task is not only to command or forbid but to justify, to interpret, to explain.

The present book was born principally of the need to put the norms of Catholic sexual morality on a firm basis...relying on the most elementary and incontrovertible moral truths and the most fundamental values or goods. Such a good is the person, and the moral truth most closely bound up with the world of persons is 'the commandment to love' — for love is a good peculiar to the world of persons. And therefore the most fundamental way of looking at sexual morality is in the context of 'love and responsibility' — which is why the whole book bears that title. (p. 16)

**Love & Responsibility
Foundation**

John Paul II on Love & Responsibility is a publication of the New York-based Love & Responsibility Foundation.

In establishing this foundation, we were motivated by the thought that not only is Pope John Paul II a good and great man worthy of our profound admiration, but it is also possible to know what he thinks.

The Holy Father, while a priest and later as Pope, has authored many books, encyclicals, poems, and plays. It is possible to read these writings.

The book *Love and Responsibility* is a particularly appropriate starting point for understanding the Pope's thinking, not only because it was published earlier in his life, in 1960, but also because of its focus on the great issue of our lives: love.

* * * * *

L&R Discussion Groups

The Love & Responsibility Foundation promotes the organization of "Love & Responsibility Discussion Groups." Participants in our New York L&R group have not only grown in their understanding of the Pope's thought on love and human sexuality, they've become great friends as well. Contact us for help in establishing a L&R Discussion Group in your area.

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For More Information...

Contact:

Peter McFadden
Alberto Mora

Love & Responsibility Fnd.
350 Third Avenue, #313
New York, NY 10010
(917) 846-3798
info@catholicculture.com

Visit us on the web:
www.catholicculture.com

CHAPTER ONE

The Person and the Sexual Urge

Analysis of the Verb 'to Use'

The Person as the Subject and Object of Action

We must, then, be clear right from the start *that every subject also exists as an object, an objective 'something' or 'somebody.'* (p. 21)

Because a human being — a person — possesses free will, he is his own master. (p. 24)

No one else can want for me. No one can substitute his act of will for mine. (p. 24)

I am, and I must be, independent in my actions. All human relationships are posited on this fact. All true conceptions about education and culture begin from and return to this point. (p. 24)

Anyone who treats a person as the means to an end does violence to the very essence of the other

The First Meaning of the Verb 'to Use'

A person must not be *merely* the means to an end for another person. (p. 26)

Anyone who treats a person as the means to an end does violence to the very essence of the other. (p. 27)

Nobody can use a person as a means towards an end, no human being, nor yet God the Creator. (p. 27)

If God intends to direct man towards certain goals, he allows them to begin to know those goals, so that he may make them his own and strive towards them independently. (p. 27)

'Love' as the Opposite of 'Using'

I may want another person to desire the same good which I myself desire. Obviously, the other must know this end of mine, recognize it as a good, and adopt it. If this happens, a special bond is established between me and this other person: the bond of a *common good* and of a common aim. This special bond does not mean merely that we both seek a common good, it also unites the persons involved internally, and so constitutes the essential core round which any love must grow. (p. 28)

Love is Demanding

The love which the apostle Paul celebrates in the *First Letter to the Corinthians* — the love which is “patient” and “kind,” and “endures all things” is certainly a demanding love. But this is precisely the source of its beauty: by the very fact that it is demanding, it builds up the true good of man and allows it to radiate to others...

Only the one who is able to be demanding with himself in the name of love can also demand love from others. Love is demanding. It makes demands in all human situations; it is even more demanding in the case of those who are open to the Gospel. Is this not what Christ proclaims in “his” commandment?

Nowadays people need to rediscover this demanding love, for it is the truly firm foundation of the family, a foundation able to “endure all things.”

What is important is not so much individual actions (whether selfish or altruistic), so much as the radical acceptance of the understanding of man as a person who “finds himself” by making a sincere gift of self. A gift is, obviously, “for others.”

We thus come to the very heart of the Gospel truth about *freedom*. The person realizes himself by the exercise of freedom in truth. Freedom cannot be understood as a license to do *absolutely anything*: it means a *gift of self*. Even more: it means an *interior discipline of the gift*...

Utilitarianism, based on an individualistic understanding of freedom — *a freedom without responsibilities* — is the opposite of love... When this concept of freedom is embraced by society, and quickly allies itself with varied forms of human weakness, it soon proves a systematic and permanent threat to the family. In this regard, one could mention many dire consequences, which can be statistically verified, even though a great number of them are hidden in the hearts of men and women like painful, fresh wounds.

The love of spouses and parents has the capacity to cure these kinds of wounds... This capacity depends on the divine grace of forgiveness and reconciliation, which always ensures the spiritual energy to begin anew. For this very reason family members need to encounter Christ in the Church through the wonderful sacrament of penance and reconciliation.

In this context, we can realize how important *prayer* is with families and for families, in particular for those threatened by division. We need to pray that married couples *will love their vocation*, even when the road becomes difficult, or the paths become narrow, uphill and seemingly insuperable.

— Pope John Paul II, in his 1994 *Letter to Families*

The Hymn to Love

What if I could speak all languages of humans and of angels?
 If I did not love others, I would be nothing more than a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.
 What if I could prophesy and understand all secrets and all knowledge?
 And what if I had faith that moved mountains?
 I would be nothing unless I loved others.
 What if I gave away all that I owned and let myself be burned alive?
 I would gain nothing unless I loved others.
 Love is kind and patient, never jealous, boastful, proud, or rude.
 Love isn't selfish or quick tempered.
 It doesn't keep a record of wrongs that others do.
 Love rejoices in the truth, but not in evil.
 Love is always supportive, loyal, hopeful, and trusting....
 For now there are faith, hope, and love.
 But of these three, the greatest is love.

— First Letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians 13:1-7, 13

When two different people consciously choose a common aim this puts them on a footing of equality. (p. 28)

Man's capacity for love depends on his willingness consciously to seek a good together with others, and to subordinate himself to that good for the sake of others, or to others for the sake of that good. (p. 29)

Love in human relationships is not something ready-made. It begins as a principle or idea which people must somehow live up to in their behavior. (p. 29)

The sexual relationship presents more opportunities than most other activities for treating a person — sometimes even without realizing it — as an object of use. (p. 30)

The belief that a human being is a person leads to the acceptance of the postulate that enjoyment must be subordinated to love. (p. 34)

A Civilization of Things...or Persons?

Utilitarianism is a civilization of production and of use, a civilization of "things" and not of "persons," a civilization in which persons are used in the same way as things are used. In the context of a civilization of use, woman can become an object for man, children a hindrance to parents, the family an institution obstructing the freedom of its members.

— Pope John Paul II, in his 1994 Letter to Families

Critique of Utilitarianism

'Utilitarianism' puts the emphasis on the usefulness (or otherwise) of any and every human activity. The useful is whatever gives pleasure and excludes its opposite, for pleasure is the essential ingredient of human happiness. (p. 35)

[Utilitarianism's] real mistake is the recognition of pleasure in itself as the sole or at any rate the greatest good. (p. 36)

Pleasure is essentially incidental, contingent, something which may occur in the course of action. (p. 36)

Pleasure (as opposed to pain) cannot be the only factor affecting my decision to act or not to act. (p. 36)

Quite obviously, that which is truly good, that which morality and conscience bid me do, often involves some measure of pain and requires the renunciation of some pleasure. (p. 36)

If, while regarding pleasure as the only good, I also try to obtain the *maximum* pleasure for someone else — and not just for myself, which would be blatant egoism — then I put a value on the pleasure of this other person only in so

The personalistic norm: the person is a good towards which the only proper and adequate attitude is love

far as it gives pleasure to me: it gives me pleasure that someone else is experiencing pleasure. If, however, I cease to experience pleasure, or it does not tally with my 'calculus of happiness' — (a term often used by utilitarians) then the pleasure of the other person ceases to be my obligation. (p. 38)

An objective common good is the foundation of love, and individual persons, who jointly choose a common good, in doing so subject themselves to it. Thanks to it they are united by a true, objective bond of love which enables them to liberate themselves from subjectivism and from the egoism which it inevitably conceals. *Love is the unification of persons.* (p. 38)

If I treat someone else as a means and a tool in relation to myself I cannot help regarding myself in the same light. (p. 39)

The Commandment to Love and the Personalistic Norm

The personalistic norm. This norm, in its negative aspect, states that the person is the kind of good which does not admit of use and cannot be treated as an object of use and as such the means to an end. In its positive form the personalistic norm confirms this: the person is a good towards which the only proper and adequate attitude is love. (p. 41)

The value of the person is always greater than the value of pleasure. (p. 41)

It is easy to go on from the experience of pleasure not merely to the quest for pleasure, but to the quest for pleasure for its own sake, to accepting it as a superlative value and the proper basis for a norm of behavior. This is the very essence of the distortions which occur in the love between man and woman. (p. 43)

Interpretation of the Sexual Urge

Instinct or Urge?

Man is by nature capable of rising above instinct in his actions. And he is capable of such action in the sexual sphere as elsewhere. (p. 46)

When we speak of the sexual urge in man we have in mind not an interior source of specific actions somehow 'imposed in advance', but a certain orientation, a certain direction in man's life implicit in his very nature. The sexual *urge* in this conception is a *natural drive born in all human beings, a vector of aspiration* along which their whole existence develops and perfects itself from within. (p. 46)

Man is not responsible for what *happens* to him in the sphere of sex [the awakenings of the natural drive born within him] since he is obviously not himself the cause of it, but he is entirely responsible for what he *does* in this sphere. (p. 47)

The Sexual Urge as an Attribute of the Individual

Sexual attraction makes obvious the fact that the attributes of the two sexes are complementary, so that a man and a woman can complete each other. (p. 48)

The sexual urge...is a natural drive born in all human beings, a vector of aspiration along which their whole existence develops

The sexual urge in a human being is always in the natural course of things directed towards another human being — this is the normal form which it takes. If it is directed towards the sexual attributes as such this must be recognized as an impoverishment or even a perversion of the urge. (p. 49)

The sexual urge in man has a natural tendency to develop into love simply because the two objects affected, with their different sexual attributes, physical and psychological, are both people. (p. 49)

The sexual urge does not fully determine human behavior but leaves room for the free exercise of the will. (p. 50)

The Sexual Urge and Existence

The species could not exist if it were not for the sexual urge and its natural results. (p. 51)

The Jeweler's Shop

TERESA

Andrew has chosen me and asked for my hand.
It happened today between five and six in the afternoon.

I don't remember exactly, I had no time to look at my watch,
or catch a glimpse of the clock on the tower of the old town hall.

At such moments one does not check the hour,
such moments grow in one above time.

But even had I remembered to look at the town hall clock,

I could not have done so, for I would have had to look above Andrew's head.

We were just walking on the right side of the market square when Andrew turned around and said,
"Do you want to be my life's companion?"

That's what he said. He didn't say: do you want to be my wife,

but: my life's companion.

What he intended to say must have been thought over.

He said it looking ahead, as if afraid

to read in my eyes, and at the same time as if to signify

that in front of us was a road whose end could not be seen

— there was, or at least, could be,

if I replied "Yes" to his question.

ANDREW

I went quite a long way before reaching Teresa, I did not find her at once.

I do not even remember if our first meeting was marked by a kind of presentiment.

And I don't think I even know what "love at first sight" means.

After a time I realized she had come into the focus of my attention,

I mean, I *had* to be interested in her,

and at the same time I *accepted* the fact that I had to.

Though I could have behaved differently from the way I felt I must,

I thought there would be no point.

There must have been something in Teresa that suited my personality.

I thought much at the time about the "alter ego".

Teresa was a whole world, just as distant

as any other man, as any other woman

— and yet there was something that allowed one to think of throwing a bridge.

— From the play by Fr. Karol Wojtyla, 1960

“One question is important”

I cannot go beyond you. One does not love a person for his “easy character”. Why does one love at all? What do I love you for, Monica? Don’t ask me to answer.

I couldn’t say. Love outdistances its object, or approaches it so closely that it is almost lost from view.

Man must then think differently, must leave cold deliberations

— and in that “hot thinking” one question is important: Is it creative?

— *The character Christopher, in “The Jeweler’s Shop,” a play by Fr. Karol Wojtyla, 1960*

Love between persons is essentially a creation of human free will. (p. 51)

Existence is the first and basic good for every creature. (p. 51)

I can only act while I am. (p. 51)

Man’s multifarious works, the creations of his genius, the fruits of his holiness are only possible if the man — the genius, the saint — comes into existence. (p. 52)

Man often accords the sexual urge a merely biological significance and does not fully realize its true, existential significance — its link with existence. It is this link with the very existence of man and of the species *Homo* that gives the sexual urge its objective importance and meaning. (p. 53)

The Religious Interpretation

The man and the woman who use the sexual urge in sexual intercourse and enter as it were into the *cosmic stream by which existence is transmitted*. (p. 54)

They can therefore look upon themselves as the rational co-creators [with God] of a new human being. (p. 54)

Love owes its fertility in the biological sense to the sexual urge but it must also possess a fertility of its own in the spiritual, moral and personal sphere. It is here that the full productive power of love between two persons, man and woman, is concentrated, in the work of rearing new persons. (p. 55)

The ‘Libidinstic’ Interpretation

[Man] possesses an inner self and an inner life peculiar to itself. A characteristic of this inner self is the ability to know, to comprehend the truth objectively and in its entirety. Thanks to this, man — the human person — is aware also of the objective end of the sexual urge, for he recognizes his place *in the order of existence, and at the same time discovers the part which the sexual urge plays in that order. He is even capable of understanding his role in relation to the Creator as a form of*

participation in the work of creation. But if instead the sexual urge is understood as fundamentally a drive for enjoyment this inner life of the person is almost totally negated. (p. 62)

Final Observations

Marriage, objectively considered, must provide first of all the means of continuing existence, secondly a conjugal life for man and woman, and thirdly a legitimate orientation for desire. (p. 66)

The Church, in arranging the objective purposes of love in a particular order, seeks to emphasize that procreation is objectively, ontologically, a more important purpose than that man and woman should live together, complement each other and support each other, just as this second purpose is in turn more important than the appeasement of natural desire. But there is no question of opposing love to procreation nor yet of suggesting that procreation takes precedence over love. These aims can, moreover, only be realized in practice as a single complex aim. (p. 68)

Man’s multifarious works, the creations of his genius, the fruits of his holiness are only possible if the man — the genius, the saint — comes into existence

Those who cut themselves off absolutely from the natural results of conjugal intercourse ruin the spontaneity and depth of their experiences, especially if artificial means are used to this end. Lack of mutual understanding, and of rational concern for the full well-being of a partner, leads if anything still more certainly to the same result. (p. 69)

CHAPTER TWO**The Person and Love****Metaphysical Analysis of Love***Love as Attraction*

Feelings arise spontaneously — the attraction which one person feels towards another often begins suddenly and unexpectedly — but this reaction is in effect ‘blind’. (p. 77)

The value of any attraction...depends on whether the good to which it is directed is really what it is thought to be. (p. 78)

There must be a direct attraction to the person: in other words, response to particular qualities inherent in a person must go with a simultaneous response to the qualities of the person as such, an awareness that a person as such is a value, and not merely attractive because of certain qualities which he or she possesses. (p. 79)

A human being is a person, a person whose nature is determined by his or her 'inwardness'. It is therefore necessary to discover and to be attracted by the inner as well as the outer beauty. (p. 80)

Love as Desire

Desire too belongs to the very essence of the love which springs up between man and woman. This results from the fact that the human person is a limited being, not self sufficient and therefore — putting it in the most objective way — needs other beings. (p. 80)

A genuine love is one in which the true essence of love is realized — a love which is directed to a genuine (not merely an apparent) good

The subject in love is conscious of [desire's] presence, knows that it is there at his or her disposal so to speak, but working to perfect this love, will see to it that desire does not dominate, does not overwhelm all else that love comprises. (p. 81-2)

Love as Goodwill

Love is the fullest realization of the possibilities inherent in man. (p. 82)

A genuine love is one in which the true essence of love is realized — a love which is directed to a genuine (not merely an apparent) good. (p. 82-3)

It is not enough to long for a person as a good for oneself, one must also, and above all, long for that person's good. (p. 83)

The love of man for woman and woman for man cannot but be love as desire, but must as time goes by move more and more in the direction of unqualified goodwill. (p. 84)

The Problem of Reciprocity

Love is not just something *in* the man and something *in* the woman — for in that case there would properly speaking be two loves — but is something common to them. (p. 84)

Love is by its very nature not unilateral but bilateral, something 'between' two persons, something shared. Fully realized, it is essentially an interpersonal, not an individual matter. It is a force which joins and unites. (p. 85)

A person who desires another as a good desires above all that person's love in return for his or her own love, desires that is to say another person above all as a co-creator of love, and not merely as the object of appetite. The 'selfishness' of love would seem then to lie only in seeking a response, a response which is love reciprocated. But since reciprocity is in the very nature of love, since the interpersonal character

Letters to a Young Woman...

Written while Fr. Karol Wojtyla, affectionately known as "Wujek," was a university chaplain:

December 1956

Dear Teresa,

People like to think that Wujek [Fr. Wojtyla] would like to see everyone married. But I think this is a false picture. The most important problem is really something else. Everyone...lives, above all, for love. The ability to love authentically, not great intellectual capacity, constitutes the deepest part of a personality. It is no accident that the greatest commandment is to love. Authentic love leads us outside ourselves to affirming others: devoting oneself to the cause of man, to people, and, above all, to God. Marriage makes sense...if it gives one the opportunity for such love, if it evokes the ability and necessity of such loving, if it draws one out of the shell of individualism (various kinds) and egocentrism. It is not enough simply to want to accept such love. One must know how to give it, and it's often not ready to be received. Many times it's necessary to help it to be formed....

— Wujek

January 1957

Dear Teresa,

Before I leave for Warsaw I have to tell you a few things (think together with you): 1) I don't want you ever to think this way: that life forces me to move away from the perspective of something that is better, riper, fuller, to something that is less good, less mature, less attractive. I am convinced that life is a constant development toward that which is better, more perfect — if there is no stagnation *within* us. 2) After many experiences and a lot of thinking, I am convinced that the (objective) starting point of love is the realization that I am needed by another. The person who *objectively* needs me most is also, for me, *objectively*, the person I most need. This is a fragment of life's deep logic, and also a fragment of trusting in the Creator and in Providence. 3) People's values are different and they come in different configurations. The great achievement is always to see values that others don't see and to affirm them. The even greater achievement is to bring out of people the values that would perish without us. In the same way, we bring our values out in ourselves. 4) This is what I wanted to write you. Don't ever think that I want to cut short your way. I want your way.

— Wujek

— From *Witness to Hope: The Biography of Pope John Paul II*, by George Weigel, pages 101-102.

“Makes them into one”

I was delicate no less than passionate — is not love a matter of the senses and of a climate which unites and makes two people walk in the sphere of their feeling? — this is the whole truth.

Adam, however, did not fully agree with this. Love is, according to him, a synthesis of two people’s existence which converges, as it were, at a certain point. and makes them into one.

— *The character Anna, in “The Jeweler’s Shop”*

of love depends on it, we can hardly speak of ‘selfishness’ in this context. The desire for reciprocity does not cancel out the disinterested character of love. (p. 85-6)

To be able to rely on another person, to think of that person as a friend who will never prove false, is for the person who loves a source of peace and joy. (p. 87)

Peace and joy are fruits of love very closely bound up with its very essence. (p. 87)

It is impossible to put your trust in another human being, knowing or feeling that his or her sole aim is utility or pleasure. It is equally impossible to put your trust in a person if you yourself have the same thing as your main object. (p. 87)

Sharing their lives gives them a continuous opportunity to test their good faith and to reinforce it by virtue. Life together becomes as it were a school for self-perfection. (p. 87)

Mere pleasure, mere sensual enjoyment is not a good which binds and unites people for long. (p. 87)

People should always carefully ‘verify’ their love before exchanging declarations. (p. 88)

From Sympathy to Friendship

Sympathy is a manifestation of experience rather than of activity: people succumb to it in ways which they sometimes find incomprehensible themselves, and the will is captured by the pull of emotions and sensations which bring two

A Helper Fit for Him...

Then the Lord God said, “It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.”

— *Genesis 2:18*

people closer together regardless of whether one of them has consciously chosen the other. (p. 89)

[Sympathy] often takes possession of one’s feelings and will, irrespective of the objective worth of the person for whom it is felt. The value of the emotion is what matters rather than the value of the person. (p. 90)

What makes sympathy so weak is, as we see, its lack of objectivity. Hand in hand with this, however, goes the great subjective force of sympathy, which also gives human loves their subjective intensity. Mere intellectual recognition of another person’s worth, however whole hearted, is not love. (p. 90)

Yet sympathy is not by any means the whole of love, any more than excitement and emotion are the whole of a human being’s inner life — it is only one element among others. The most profound, by far the most important element is the will, in which the power to create love in a human being and between people is vested. (p. 90)

Love between a man and a woman cannot remain on the level of mere sympathy but must become friendship. For in friendship — and here it is unlike mere sympathy — the decisive part is played by the will. (p. 90)

To be able to rely on another person, to think of that person as a friend who will never prove false, is for the person who loves a source of peace and joy

[Friendship] brings out the element of *benevolentia* or good-will (“I want what is good for you”), and also the characteristic ‘doubling’ of the subject, the doubling of the ‘I’: my ‘I’ and your ‘I’ form a moral unity, for the will is equally well inclined to both of them. (p. 90-1)

A mistake often made in love between people, and especially between man and woman, is to leave it, so to speak, at the level of sympathy, with no conscious attempt to mold it into friendship. One consequence of this mistake is the belief that when sympathy breaks down love is also at an end. (p. 92-3)

Love cannot be merely a matter of ‘consuming’ sympathy. (p. 93)

[Love] is of it very nature creative and constructive. (p. 93)

[Comradeship] rests on such objective foundations as joint work, common goals, shared concerns, etc. (p. 94)

Comradeship gives a man and a woman an objective common interest, whereas sympathy links them only in a subjective way. Comradeship favors the development of love’s objective side, without which it is always incomplete. (p. 94)

The emotions themselves are, as experience shows, rather fickle, and so cannot lastingly and exclusively determine the attitude of one human being to another. (p. 94)

People capable of creating and living in a milieu of their own are probably well prepared to impart the character of a closely knit community to the family, and to create a good atmosphere for family life. (p. 95)

Betrothed Love

[Love] is not just an aspiration, but rather a coming together, a unification of persons. (p. 95)

Betrothed love differs from all the aspects or forms of love analyzed hitherto. Its decisive character is the giving of one's own person (to another). The essence of betrothed love is self-giving, the surrender of one's 'I'. (p. 96)

The most uncompromising form of love consists precisely in self-giving, in making one's inalienable and non-transferable 'I' someone else's property

When betrothed love enters into this interpersonal relationship something more than friendship results: two people give themselves each to the other. (p. 96)

The fullest, the most uncompromising form of love consists precisely in self-giving, in making one's inalienable and non-transferable 'I' someone else's property. This is doubly paradoxical: firstly in that it is possible to step outside one's own 'I' in this way, and secondly in that the 'I' far from being destroyed or impaired as a result is enlarged and enriched. (p. 97)

In giving ourselves we find clear proof that we possess ourselves. (p. 98)

Psychological Analysis of Love

Analysis of Sensuality

Where we are concerned with immediate contact between a woman and a man we must recognize that what first reveals itself in the impression is the content immediately available to the senses. Thus there arises a sort of 'external' image of the other person. Is this image merely a reflection of a 'body'? No, it is a reflection of a 'human being', a human being of the other sex. (p. 104-5)

When [awareness of a person of the other sex] only stirs sensuality, a body is commonly experienced as a 'potential object of enjoyment'. Sensuality in itself has a 'consumer orientation' — it is directed primarily and immediately towards a 'body': it touches the person only indirectly, and tends to avoid direct contact. (p. 105)

Slaves to Our Weaknesses?

A love which is not "fairest," but reduced only to the satisfaction of concupiscence or to a man's and a woman's mutual "use" of each other, makes persons *slaves to their weaknesses*.

— Pope John Paul II, in his 1994 Letter to Families

This orientation of sensuality is a matter of spontaneous reflexes. In this form it is not primarily an evil thing but a natural thing. (p. 106)

A sensual reaction in which the body and sex are a possible object for use threatens to devalue the person. (p. 107)

Sensuality by itself is not love, and may very easily become its opposite. At the same time, we must recognize that when man and woman come together, sensuality, as the natural reaction to a person of the other sex, is a sort of raw material for true, conjugal love. (p. 108)

The yearning for a sexual value connected with 'the body' as an object of use demands integration: it must become an integral part of a fully formed and mature attitude to the person, or else it is certainly not love. (p. 108)

Sensuality must then be open to the other, nobler elements of love. (p. 108)

All this however most certainly does not go to show that sensual excitability, as a natural and congenital characteristic of a concrete person, is in itself morally wrong. (p. 109)

Emotions...are...rather fickle, and so cannot lastingly and exclusively determine the attitude of one human being to another

An exuberant and readily roused sensuality is the stuff from which a rich — if difficult — personal life may be made. It may help the individual to respond more readily and completely to the decisive elements in personal love. (p. 109)

Sentiment and Love

This susceptibility (which is different from sensual excitability) to the sexual value residing in a 'whole person of the other sex', to 'femininity' or 'masculinity', should be called sentiment. (p. 110)

Idealization of the object of love is a well-known phenomenon. (p. 112)

The ideal is more powerful than the real, living human being, and the latter often becomes merely the occasion for an eruption in the subject's emotional consciousness of the

The Pope on Affirmation of the Person

The affirmation of the person is nothing but acceptance of the gift [of self], which, by means of reciprocity, creates the communion of persons. This communion is created from within. It comprises also the whole “exteriority” of man, that is, everything that constitutes the pure and simple nakedness of the body in its masculinity and femininity.

— John Paul II, January 16, 1980 Wednesday audience:
“The Human Person Becomes a Gift in the Freedom of Love”

values which he or she longs with all his heart to find in another person. (p. 112)

[Sentiment] shows a characteristic ambivalence; it seeks to be near the beloved person, seeks proximity and expressions of tenderness, yet it is remote from the beloved in that it does not depend for its life on that person’s true value, but on those values to which the subject clings as to its ideal. This is why sentimental love is very often a cause of disillusionment. (p. 113)

If love remains mere sentiment it will equally be unlike love in the complete sense of the word

[Sentiment] is insufficient. It too needs to be integrated, as does sensual desire. If ‘love’ remains just sensuality, just a matter of ‘sex appeal’, it will not be love at all, but only the utilization of one person by another, or of two persons by each other. While if love remains mere sentiment it will equally be unlike love in the complete sense of the word. For both persons will remain in spite of everything divided from each other. (p. 113-4)

The Problem of Integrating Love

Psychology, which is, as its name indicates, the science of the soul, endeavors to lay bare the structure and the foundation of man’s inner life. Its investigations serve to confirm that the most significant characteristics of that inner life are the sense of truth and the sense of freedom. (p. 114-5)

His ability to discover the truth gives man the possibility of self-determination, of deciding for himself the character and direction of his own actions, and that is what freedom means. (p. 115)

A salient feature of sexual love is its great intensity — which indirectly testifies to the force of the sexual instinct and its importance in human life. (p. 116)

A man finds in [sexual love] a concentration of energies which he did not know that he possessed before this experience.

For this reason the experience is, for him, associated with pleasure, with the joy of existing, of living and acting. (p. 116)

However powerfully and explicitly [love] is dependent on the body and the senses, it is not the body and not the senses alone that form its peculiar base and its peculiar character. Love is always an interior matter, a matter of the spirit. To the extent to which it ceases to be an interior matter and a matter of the spirit it also ceases to be love. (p. 116-7)

The Ethical Analysis of Love

Experience and Virtue

Freedom of the will is possible only if it rests on truth in cognition. This is where the concept of duty comes in. For it is a man’s duty to choose the true good. It is, indeed, duty that most fully displays the freedom of the human will. The will ‘ought to’ follow the true good. (p. 119)

There is no possibility of psychological completeness in love unless ethical completeness is attained. (p. 120)

Love as experience should be subordinated to love as virtue, so much so that without love as virtue there can be no fullness in the experience of love. (p. 120)

Affirmation of the Value of the Person

Every person of the opposite sex possesses value in the first place as a person, and only secondarily possesses a sexual value. (p. 122)

The *sensual and emotional reaction* to a ‘human being of the other sex’ [must] be somehow adjusted to the knowledge that the human being concerned is a person. (p. 122-3)

The fundamental ethical characteristic of love: it is an affirmation of the person or else it is not love at all. (p. 123)

Love in the full sense of the word is a virtue, not just an emotion, and still less a mere excitement of the senses. (p. 123)

The fundamental ethical characteristic of love: it is an affirmation of the person or else it is not love at all

There can be no question of slurring over or neglecting the ‘sexual’ values to which the senses and emotions react. Our concern is simply to bind these values tightly to the value of the person, since love is directed not towards ‘the body’ alone, nor yet towards ‘a human being of the other sex’, but precisely towards a person. (p. 123)

It is only when it directs itself to the person that love is love. It cannot be called love when it directs itself merely to the ‘body’ of a person, for we see here only too clearly the

What Psychology Tells Us

Affirmation & Marriage

Affirmation is the perception on one human being's part of another's uniqueness as a person, the perception of his goodness, the perception of his value, and then the expression of this perception to that person which comes out, verbally and non-verbally, something like this: "you are good and it is good that you exist, it is good that you are alive, I take enjoyment in seeing and experiencing your goodness, your value, your uniqueness."

The opposite of affirmation is alienation. The Catholic psychiatrist Dr. Conrad Baars has described what he calls deprivation disorder, the profound alienation of people from one another in the modern world: alienation in marriage leading to a 50% divorce rate, the increasing tension and misunderstanding between the sexes, the breakdown of neighborhood structures, alienation from God, but particularly lack of affirmation in the family.

“Don't be afraid to do what is necessary to make love happen, to be people of affirmation”

The incidence of people who have not been affirmed, who have not been loved unconditionally for their own sake, is very high. This gives rise to various kinds of symptoms: deep senses of insecurity and inferiority, forms of depression, forms of behaving inadequately, inability to organize one's life.

All these symptoms are directly related to lack of affirmation from one or both parents — who often have suffered from this same lack of affirmation themselves. Today, people often enter marriage with one or both "lungs" missing — one is the maternal affirmation lung and the other is the paternal affirmation lung.

Where is there hope for us in all of this? I am of one heart and mind with Pope John Paul II. He says, "Do not be afraid." Don't be afraid to marry, don't be afraid to love, don't be afraid to do what is necessary for happiness. Don't be afraid to open your life to Christ. Don't be afraid to do what is necessary to make love happen, to be people of affirmation.

In the beautiful play, *The Jeweler's Shop*, by the Holy Father, the character Christopher says to Monica, whose family life has left her cynical about love: "Love is a constant challenge, thrown to us by God, thrown, I think, so that we should challenge fate." That's it. We must go bravely ahead, not blindly, but with God's love.

What can I say to young people more practically? The first thing I would stress is the profound value of pre-marital preparation, even for people who are not yet engaged but who are seriously dating each other.

In this preparation, we first open up the family of origin and the past, and ask if there are any major, not minor, injuries or deprivations. Are there any rejections that still hurt very deeply? What we find is that if people are willing to open this up and have this healed and come to peace with themselves, this not only helps them to love but also increases the stability of their future marriage, because the person is not going to bring into the marriage these unhealed wounds.

The second area is learning from one another how to communicate and resolve conflict on a whole variety of issues before getting married. How often I have seen couples, very intelligent couples, who did not share fundamental things in life and got married!

The third area is the exploration on both people of sexuality and love. How do they see love? How have they experienced love? How have they not experienced love in their loves? Where are they in their sexual development? Is it connected with a lot anxiety, guilt, shame, fear, addictions of any kind, insecurities?

The fourth area is: are both people authentically committed to Jesus and have an intimate relationship with Christ and the teachings of the Church? These couples have the highest rate of marital happiness and stability. In fact, they are able to overcome more issues in their lives because of their faith.

Love must be affirmative...if love is to flourish

Once married, couples need to keep in mind that the love of a husband and a wife for each other needs to be affirmative love if that love is to flourish.

Pope John Paul makes a statement that is very profound and true, that when a marriage loses for a time its sexual dimension, when the emotions "run dry," what remains when there is love is regard for the unique value of the person, appreciation that he or she exists.

I have seen that the emotional connection and the sexual connection very often returns when the spouses stop demanding the sexual and the emotional from each other and instead value the person for who he or she is.

—*Dr. Philip Mango, a New York City-based Catholic psychotherapist, is Director of the St. Michael's Institute. Visit the Institute's web site at: <http://www.saintmichael.net>. Dr. Mango's talk before the New York Love & Responsibility Discussion Group, "The Theological and Psychological Dimensions of a Healthy Marriage," can be found on-line at http://www.catholicculture.com/past_discussions.html.*

“Am I truly in you?”

Am I truly in you?
 Is my world also your world?
 Or do you enjoy feeling only on the surface —
 the gentle, warm wave flowing through your heart —
 and do you not even think
 that from that wave you must fish out the whole
 inner world,
 the world I call mine?
 The levels of emotion can, after all, slide past each
 other,
 touching whole people, leaving them behind...
 — *The character Adam, in “Radiation of Fatherhood” a
 play by Fr. Karol Wojtyla, 1964*

desire to use another person, which is fundamentally incompatible with love. Nor yet is love really love when it is merely an emotional attitude to a human being of the other sex. (p. 123-4)

Membership of One Another

[The gift of self] does not diminish and impoverish, but quite the contrary, enlarges and enriches the existence of the person. (p. 126)

The lover ‘goes outside’ the self to find a fuller existence in another. (p. 126)

Two persons belong to each other — this is the only full and satisfactory description of ‘betrothed love’, which finds its fulfillment in marriage. In the absence of these characteristics love is by definition impossible, and mere ‘use’ takes its place. (p. 126)

The unification of the two persons must first be achieved by way of love, and sexual relations between them can only be the expression of a unification already complete

[Love] finds its proper expression in the union of persons. The result of unification is that each belongs to the other, a reality expressed in various ways, among them full sexual intercourse, which we shall call marital intercourse since, as we shall see, marriage is the only proper place for it. (p. 126-7)

The unification of the two persons must first be achieved by way of love, and sexual relations between them can only be the expression of a unification already complete. (p. 127)

Betrothed love, which carries within itself an inner need to make a gift of one’s own person to another human being

has a natural grandeur of its own. The measure of this is the value of the person who gives himself or herself. (p. 128)

Take away from love the fullness of self surrender, the completeness of personal commitment, and what remains will be a total denial and negation of it. (p. 128-9)

A woman is capable of truly making a gift of herself only if she fully believes in the value of her person and in the value as a person of the man to whom she gives herself. And a man is capable of fully accepting a woman’s gift of herself only if he is fully conscious of the magnitude of the gift — which he cannot be unless he affirms the value of her person. Realization of the value of the gift awakens the need to show gratitude and to reciprocate in ways which would match its value. (p. 129)

Choice and Responsibility

There exists in love a particular responsibility — the responsibility for a person... It follows that one also has a responsibility for one’s own love: is it mature and complete enough to justify the enormous trust of another person? (p. 130)

Take away from love the fullness of self surrender, the completeness of personal commitment, and what remains will be a total denial and negation of it

Responsibility for love clearly comes down to responsibility for the person, originates in it and returns to it. (p. 130)

The greater the feeling of responsibility for the person the more true love there is. (p. 131)

Only if it is objectively good for two persons to be together can they belong to each other. (p. 131)

The choice of a person of the other sex as the object of betrothed love, and as the co-creator of that love by way of reciprocity, must depend to a certain extent on sexual values. This love must, of course, have a sexual aspect, must form the basis for the whole life together of two persons of different sex. Unless both parties respond to sexual values there is no possibility of all this. (p. 132)

The choice of a person is a process in which sexual values cannot function as the sole motive, or even as the primary motive. This would be at odds with the very concept of ‘choosing a person’. (p. 132)

[Love] is put to the test most severely when the sensual and emotional reactions themselves grow weaker, and sexual values as such lose their effect. Nothing then remains except the value of the person, and the inner truth about the love of those concerned comes to light. If their love is a true gift of self, so that they belong each to the other, it will not only

survive but grow stronger, and sink deeper roots. Whereas if it was never more than a sort of synchronization of sensual and emotional experiences it will lose its *raison d'être* and the persons involved in it will suddenly find themselves in a vacuum. (p. 134)

The love for a person which results from a valid act of choice is concentrated on the value of the person as such and makes us feel emotional love for the person as he or she really is, not for the person of our imagination, but for the real person. (p. 135)

The strength of such a love emerges most clearly when the beloved person stumbles, when his or her weaknesses or even sins come into the open. One who truly loves does not then withdraw his love, but loves all the more, loves in full consciousness of the other's shortcomings and faults, and without in the least approving of them. (p. 135)

The Commitment of Freedom

Love consists of a commitment which limits one's freedom. (p. 135)

Limitation of one's freedom might seem to be something negative and unpleasant, but love makes it a positive, joyful and creative thing. (p. 135)

Freedom exists for the sake of love. If freedom is not used, is not taken advantage of by love it becomes a negative thing and gives human beings a feeling of emptiness and unfulfillment. Love commits freedom and imbues it with that to which the will is naturally attracted — goodness. (p. 135)

From the desire for the 'unlimited' good of another 'I' springs the whole creative drive of true love — the drive to endow beloved persons with the good

Man longs for love more than for freedom — freedom is the means and love the end. (p. 136)

The will is a creative power capable of bestowing goods from within itself, and not only of appropriating goods which already exist. Willed love expresses itself above all in the desire of what is good for the beloved person. (p. 136-7)

From the desire for the 'unlimited' good of another 'I' springs the whole creative drive of true love — the drive to endow beloved persons with the good, to make them happy. (p. 138)

To desire 'unlimited' good for another person is really to desire God for that person. (p. 138)

The great moral force of true love lies precisely in this desire for the happiness, for the true good, of another person. This is what makes it possible for a man to be

Radiation of Fatherhood

ADAM (*soliloquy*)

Everyone carries in himself an unrealized substance called humanity...

I know who Adam was and who he is. He stopped once on the frontier between fatherhood and loneliness. Who cut him off from men; who made him lonely in the midst of them all? What if he became lonely of his own free will...

Why ask that he allow the radiation of Your Fatherhood to enter him so that he can refract it as a prism refracts light?...

I did not want to accept the suffering caused by risking love. I thought I would not be equal to it. My eyes were too fixed on myself, and in such a situation love is most difficult...

MOTHER (*to Adam*)

One must enter the radiation of fatherhood, since only there does everything become fully real... Think, all of you: one must choose to give birth! You have not thought about this. One must choose to give birth even more than to create...

ADAM

I have found, though, that I am not "lonely." I am, much more, "closed"...

MONICA (*the child*)

In the spring I picked flowers for someone, for someone, for someone...

Daddy was not by me; Daddy was not on earth.

I want my daddy on earth, close, very close to my heart.

I must find him, pluck him out of the still picture, And from all my hope give birth, give birth, give birth...

ADAM

Am I able now to give you birth again?

This is the framework.

MONICA

Fill it; fill it with yourself! You must fill it with yourself! Do you know how I need you, how much I took from you and am still taking?

But my need for you is not the reason. I want to love without any need,

aiming directly with my heart at a meaning that is both simple and great

and in which man is contained, being unable to contain it in himself.

— *From the play by Fr. Karol Wojtyła, 1964*

“The will of Andrew being Teresa”

Love — love pulsating in brows,
in man becomes thought
and will:
the will of Teresa being Andrew,
the will of Andrew being Teresa.

— *The Chorus, in “The Jeweler’s Shop”*

reborn because of love, makes him aware of the riches within him, his spiritual fertility and creativity: I am capable of desiring the good for another person, therefore I am in general capable of desiring the good. (p. 138)

True love compels me to believe in my own spiritual powers. (p. 138)

The Education of Love

Love is never something ready made, something merely ‘given’ to man and woman, it is always at the same time a ‘task’ which they are set. Love should be seen as something which in a sense never ‘is’ but is always only ‘becoming’, and what it becomes depends upon the contribution of both persons and the depth of their commitment. (p. 139)

Love is never something ready made, something merely ‘given’ to man and woman, it is always...a ‘task’

What develops from ‘promising’ raw material in the form of emotions and desires is often not true love, and often indeed sharply opposed to it, whereas a truly great love sometimes develops from modest material. But such a great love can only be the work of persons and — let us add here to complete the picture — the work of Divine Grace. (p. 140)

There is no need to be dismayed if love sometimes follows tortuous ways. Grace has the power to make straight the paths of human love. (p. 140)

CHAPTER THREE

The Person and Chastity

The Rehabilitation of Chastity

Chastity and Resentment

Has virtue, then, lost its good name? Has the virtue of chastity in particular ceased to be respectable? (p. 143)

Attaining or realizing a higher value demands a greater effort of will. So in order to spare ourselves the effort, to excuse our failure to obtain this value, we minimize its significance, deny it the respect which it deserves, even see it as in some way evil, although objectivity requires us to recognize that it is good. (p. 143)

The longing for true happiness for another person, a sincere devotion to that person’s good, puts the priceless imprint of altruism on love. But none of this will happen if the love between a man and a woman is dominated by an ambition to possess, or more specifically by concupiscence born of sensual reactions. (p. 145)

Attaining or realizing a higher value demands a greater effort of will. So...we minimize its significance

It is impossible to judge the value of a relationship between persons merely from the intensity of their emotions. The very exuberance of the emotions born of sensuality may conceal an absence of true love, or indeed outright egoism. (p. 145)

A very rich and rapid growth of such sensations may conceal a love which has failed to develop. (p. 145)

Sensual or emotional reactions to a person of the other sex which arise before and develop more quickly than virtue are something less than love. They are however more often than not taken for love and given that name — and it is to love thus understood that chastity is hostile, and an obstacle. (p. 146)

Since sensations and actions springing from sexual reactions and the emotions connected with them tend to deprive love of its crystal clarity — a special virtue is necessary to protect its true character and objective profile. This special virtue is chastity, which is intimately allied to love between man and woman. (p. 146)

Carnal Concupiscence

As soon as [sensual concupiscence] achieves its ends, its attitude to the object changes completely, all ‘interest’ in it disappears. (p. 149)

In the world of persons a serious danger of a moral nature arises when this happens. (p. 149-50)

Carnal concupiscence impels, very powerfully impels, people towards physical intimacy, towards sexual intercourse, but *if this grows out of nothing more than concupiscence it does not unite a man and a woman as persons.* (p. 150-1)

There is [when carnal concupiscence is left to itself] a serious possibility not only that love will be deformed, but also that its natural raw material will be squandered. For

sensuality furnishes love with ‘material’, but material which can only be shaped by the appropriate creative activity on the part of the will. Without this there can be no love, there is only the raw material which is used up by carnal concupiscence as it seeks an ‘outlet’. (p. 151)

Complete security against carnal concupiscence is something we find only in the profound realism of virtue, and specifically the virtue of chastity. (p. 152)

Subjectivism and Egoism

Emotion can develop and adapt itself to the shape which a man consciously wills. The integration of love requires the individual consciously and by acts of will to impose a shape on all the material that sensual and emotional reactions provide. (p. 153)

It would be absurd to want love to be ‘free of emotion’, as the Stoics and Kant did. On the other hand, we must not overlook the possibility that emotion may be excessively subjective. (p. 154)

Emotion as it were diverts ‘the gaze of truth’ from the objective elements of action, from the object of the act and the act itself, and deflects it towards what is subjective in it, towards our feelings as we act. (p. 154)

Emotion is of its very nature biased in the direction of pleasure: pleasure is to it a good, just as pain is an evil to be shunned. (p. 156)

[Pleasure] is a purely subjective good, [it is] not trans-subjective, nor even inter-subjective. At most we can want another’s pleasure ‘besides’ and always ‘on condition of’ our own pleasure. (p. 157)

The egoism of the emotions is not so transparent and it is therefore easier to be confused by it

The fixation on pleasure for its own sake, as the exclusive end of the association and cohabitation of man and woman, is necessarily egoistic. (p. 157)

This does not at all mean that we must see pleasure itself as evil — pleasure in itself is a specific good — but only points to the moral evil involved in fixing the will on pleasure alone. (p. 157)

Emotion, whether as a ‘strong’ sensation, or as a more durable state of feeling, favors concentration on one’s own ‘I’. (p. 157)

The egoism of the emotions is not so transparent and it is therefore easier to be confused by it. (p. 158)

“Love is a constant challenge”

Love is a constant challenge, thrown to us by God.

— *The character Christopher, in “The Jeweler’s Shop”*

Both persons involved, while cultivating as intensively as they can the subjective aspect of their love, must also endeavor to achieve objectivity. Combining the one with the other requires a special effort, but this is unavoidable labor if the existence of love is to be assured. (p. 158)

The Structure of Sin

Concupiscence is a consistent tendency to see persons of the other sex through the prism of sexuality alone, as ‘objects of potential enjoyment’. (p. 159)

Both persons involved...must also endeavor to achieve objectivity

Neither sensuality nor even concupiscence is a sin in itself, since only that which derives from the will can be a sin — only an act of a conscious and voluntary nature. (p. 161)

We must give proper weight to the fact that *in any normal man the lust of the body has its own dynamic*, of which his sensual reactions are a manifestation. (p. 161)

As soon as the will consents it begins actively to want what is spontaneously ‘happening’ in the senses and the sensual appetites. From then onwards, this is not something merely ‘happening’ to a man, but something which he himself begins actively doing — at first only internally, for the will is in the first place the source of interior acts, of interior ‘deeds’. These deeds have a moral value, are good or evil, and if they are evil we call them sins. (p. 162)

No-one can demand of himself either that he should experience no sensual reactions at all, or that they should immediately yield just because the will does not consent, or even because it declares itself definitely ‘against’. This is a point of great importance to those who seek to practice continence. (p. 162)

The affirmation of the value of the person, the aspiration to the person’s true good, to union in a common true good —

“Are you really afraid of love?”

You are afraid of love. Are you really afraid of love?

— *The character Adam, in “The Jeweler’s Shop”*

Sexual Urge

The sexual urge...is a *natural drive born in all human beings, a vector of aspiration* along which their whole existence develops and perfects itself from within... If...the sexual urge is understood as...a drive for enjoyment this inner life of the person is almost totally negated... The sexual urge in man is a fact which he must...welcome as a source of natural energy.

Attraction

Attraction is of the essence of love...although love is not merely attraction... The value of any attraction...depends on whether the good to which it is directed is really what it is thought to be... Attraction...must originate not just in a reaction to visible and physical beauty, but also in a full and deep appreciation of the beauty of the person.

Love as Desire

Desire...belongs to the very essence of...love.... The human person is a limited being, not self sufficient and...needs other beings... The subject in love... will see to it that desire does not dominate, does not overwhelm all else that love comprises... If one person wants another as a good for himself or herself, he or she must want that other person to be a real good.

Goodwill

Goodwill is the same as selflessness in love: not 'I long for you as a good' but 'I long for your good'... Love as goodwill...is the purest form of love... The love of man for woman and woman for man cannot but be love as desire, but must as time goes by move more and more in the direction of unqualified goodwill.

Reciprocity

Love is by its very nature not unilateral but bilateral, something 'between' two persons, something shared... It is a force which joins and unites... A person who desires another as a good desires above all that person's love in return for his or her own love, desires that is to say another person above all as a co-creator of love.

Virtue

There is no possibility of psychological completeness in love unless ethical completeness is attained... Love as experience should be subordinated to love as virtue, so much so that without love as virtue there can be no fullness in the experience of love.

Affirmation of the Value of the Person

The fundamental ethical characteristic of love: it is an affirmation of the person or else it is not love at all... Neither in the man nor in the woman can affirmation of the value of the person be divorced from awareness and willing acceptance that he may become a father and she may become a mother.

Objectivity ♦ Joint Striving for Good

Love between persons...must possess a clear-cut objective purpose... Man's capacity for love depends on his willingness consciously to seek a good together with others... From the desire for the 'unlimited' good of another 'I' springs the whole creative drive of true love.

The Will

Love between persons is essentially a creation of human free will... The will is...the final authority in ourselves, without whose participation no experience has full personal value... The will is a creative power... Willed love expresses itself above all in the desire of what is good for the beloved... A free commitment of the will is possible only on the basis of truth.

Sympathy

Mere intellectual recognition of another person's worth...is not love... Love is an emotional experience... Sympathy brings people close together...so that each is aware of the other's whole personality... A mistake often made in love between people...is to leave it...at the level of sympathy, with no conscious attempt to mold it into friendship.

Friendship

In friendship...the decisive part is played by the will... My 'I' and your 'I' form a moral unity... This unification is different in kind from that which goes with sympathy. There it depends solely on emotion or sentiment... Whereas in friendship the will is actively involved itself... Friendship truly takes possession of the whole human being.

Comradeship

Comradeship...rests on such...foundations as joint work, common goals, shared concerns... Comradeship gives a man and a woman an objective common interest, whereas sympathy links them only in a subjective way. Comradeship favors the development of love's objective side, without which it is always incomplete.

Betrothed Love ♦ The Gift of Self

Two people give themselves each to the other... The gift of self...does not diminish and impoverish... The lover 'goes outside' the self to find a fuller existence in another... Take away from love the fullness of self surrender, the completeness of personal commitment, and what remains will be a total denial and negation of it.

Sensuality

Sensuality...is directed primarily and immediately towards a 'body'... Sensuality by itself is not love, and may very easily become its opposite... Sensuality, as the natural reaction to a person of the other sex, is a sort of raw material for true, conjugal love... Every man must effectively deploy the energies latent in his sensuality...in his striving for authentic love.

Emotion ♦ Sentiment

People generally believe that love can be reduced largely to a question of the genuineness of feelings... The truth about the person...must play a part at least as important as the truth of the sentiments... Emotion...diverts 'the gaze of truth' from the objective elements of action...towards our feelings as we act... Emotion...favors concentration on one's own 'I'.

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• Tenderness

Tenderness is the ability to feel with and for the whole person... Tenderness demands vigilance against the danger that its manifestations may...become merely forms of sensual... gratification... Premature tenderness...quite often...prevents [love] from developing fully... Genuine human love...must combine...tenderness and a certain firmness.

• Sacrifice • Self-denial

That which is truly good, that which morality and conscience bid me do, often involves some measure of pain and requires the renunciation of some pleasure... Love between man and woman cannot be built without sacrifices and self-denial... The strength of...love emerges most clearly when the beloved person stumbles... One who truly loves...loves all the more.

• Unification of Persons

Love...is not just an aspiration, but rather a coming together, a unification of persons... Love is impossible for beings who are mutually impenetrable — only the spirituality and the 'inwardness' of persons create the condition of mutual interpenetration, which enables each to live in and by the other.

• Chastity

Only the chaste man and the chaste woman are capable of true love... Chastity frees their association...from that tendency to use a person which is...incompatible with 'loving kindness'... The essence of chastity consists in quickness to affirm the value of the person in every situation... Chastity...does involve a certain humility of the body.

• A Common Task

Love is never something ready made, something merely 'given' to man and woman, it is always at the same time a 'task' which they are set. Love should be seen as something which in a sense never 'is' but is always only 'becoming', and what it becomes depends upon the contribution of both persons and the depth of their commitment.

• Modesty • Shame

Sexual modesty is not a flight from love, but on the contrary the opening of a way towards it... It is a matter not just of protecting but of revealing the value of the person... Shame is a natural *form of self-defense for the person* against the danger of...being pushed into the position of an object for sexual use.

• Carnal Concupiscence

Carnal concupiscence impels, very powerfully impels, people towards physical intimacy, towards sexual intercourse, but *if this grows out of nothing more than concupiscence it does not unite a man and a woman as persons...* There is a serious possibility not only that love will be deformed, but also that its natural raw material will be squandered.

• Self-Control • Continenence

The dignity of the person demands control of concupiscence. If the person does not exercise such control it...allows an inferior...part of itself to enjoy freedom of action, and indeed subjects itself to this lesser self... *Control of concupiscence has as its objective not only the perfection of the person who attempts to achieve it, but also the realization of love in the world of persons.*

• Commitment of Freedom

Love consists of a commitment which limits one's freedom... Limitation of one's freedom might seem to be something negative and unpleasant, but love makes it a positive, joyful and creative thing... *Freedom exists for the sake of love...* Freedom is the means and love the end.

• Institution of Marriage

This institution [of marriage] is necessary to...testify that there is a love on which a lasting union and community can be based. The institution is needed...mainly in the interests of the persons who enter into a marriage... Sexual relations outside marriage automatically put one person in the position of an object to be used by another.

• Procreation and Parenthood

Becoming a father or a mother has...profound effects upon the 'interior' of the person... Willing acceptance of parenthood serves to break down the...egoism...behind which lurks the will to exploit the person... Any attempt to diminish human beings by...denying the...importance of maternity and paternity is incompatible with the natural development of man.

• Refrain from Artificial Means of Birth Control

Those who cut themselves off absolutely from the natural results of conjugal intercourse ruin the spontaneity and depth of their experiences... When a man and a woman...decisively preclude the possibility of paternity and maternity, their intentions are thereby diverted from the person and directed to mere enjoyment: 'the person as co-creator of love' disappears.

• Periodic Continence • Natural Family Planning

Periodic continence as a method of regulating conception...not only...preserves the 'naturalness' of intercourse, but...must be grounded in...virtue... *The love of man and woman loses nothing as a result of temporary abstention...but on the contrary gains: the personal union takes deeper root, grounded as it is...in affirmation of the value of the person and not...in sexual attachment.*

• Responsibility

Responsibility for love clearly comes down to responsibility for the person... The greater the feeling of responsibility for the person the more true love there is.

• Divine Grace

A believer...is also aware that his own spiritual reserves alone are inadequate to the development of his personality through love... The operations of Grace take man beyond the confines of his personal life and bring him within the orbit of God's activity... Every man must learn to integrate himself into the activity of God and respond to His love.

none of these things exist for a will subjectivistically fixed upon emotion as such. In these circumstances sin arises from the fact that a human being does not wish to subordinate emotion to the person and to love. (p. 163)

Sin is a violation of the true good. For the true good in the love of man and woman is first of all the person, and not emotion for its own sake, still less pleasure as such. These are secondary goods, and love — which is a durable union of persons — cannot be built of them alone. (p. 165)

The True Meaning of Chastity

Should we look for the essence of chastity in moderation? Is this, in fact, the best way of bringing out the real value and significance of chastity in human life? (p. 169)

The essence of chastity consists in quickness to affirm the value of the person in every situation

Chastity can only be thought of in association with the virtue of love. Its function is to free love from the utilitarian attitude. (p. 169)

To be chaste means to have a ‘transparent’ attitude to a person of the other sex — *chastity means just that.* (p. 170)

Chastity is very often understood as a ‘blind’ inhibition of sensuality and of physical impulses such that the values of the ‘body’ and of sex are pushed down into the subconscious, where they await an opportunity to explode. This is an obviously erroneous conception of the virtue of chastity, which, if practiced only in this way, does indeed create the danger of such ‘explosions’. (p. 170)

This (mistaken) view of chastity explains the common inference that it is a purely negative virtue. Chastity, in this view, is one long ‘no’. Whereas it is above all the ‘yes’ of which certain ‘no’s’ are the consequence. (p. 170)

The essence of chastity consists in quickness to affirm the value of the person in every situation, and in raising to the

“Safe Sex”

So-called “safe sex,” which is touted by the “civilization of technology,” is actually, in the view of the overall requirements of the person, radically *not safe*, indeed it is extremely dangerous. It endangers both the person and the family. And what is this danger? It is *the loss of the truth about one’s own self and about the family*, together with the risk of a loss of *freedom* and consequently of a loss of *love* itself.

— Pope John Paul II, in his 1994 Letter to Families

personal level all reactions to the value of ‘the body and sex’. This requires a special interior, spiritual effort, for affirmation of the value of the person can only be the product of the spirit, but this effort is above all positive and creative ‘from within’, not negative and destructive. It is not a matter of summarily ‘annihilating’ the value ‘body and sex’ in the conscious mind by pushing reactions to them down into the subconscious, but of sustained long-term integration; the value ‘body and sex’ must be grounded and implanted in the value of the person. (p. 171)

Only the chaste man and the chaste woman are capable of true love. For chastity frees their association, including their marital intercourse, from that tendency to use a person. (p. 171)

Every human being is by nature burdened with concupiscence and apt to find the ‘savor’ of love above all in the satisfaction of carnal desire. For this reason, chastity is a difficult, long-term matter; one must wait patiently for it to bear fruit, for the happiness of loving kindness which it must bring. But at the same time, chastity is the sure way to happiness. (p. 172)

[Chastity] does not lead to disdain of the body, but it does involve a certain humility of the body. Humility is the proper attitude towards all true greatness, including one’s own greatness as a human being, but above all towards the greatness which is not oneself, which is beyond one’s self. (p. 172)

Only the chaste man and the chaste woman are capable of true love

The human body must be ‘humble’ in face of the greatness represented by the person: for in the person resides the true and definitive greatness of man. (p. 172)

Furthermore, the human body must ‘humble itself’ in face of the magnitude represented by love — and here ‘humble itself’ means subordinate itself. (p. 172)

‘The body’ must also show humility in face of human happiness. How often does it insinuate that it alone possesses the key to the secret of happiness? (p. 172)

Still more certainly does the ‘body’ — if it is not ‘humble’, not subordinate to the full truth about the happiness of man — obscure the vision of the ultimate happiness: the happiness of the human person in union with a personal God. (p. 172-3)

The truth about the union of the human person with a personal God, which will be fully accomplished within the dimensions of eternity at the same time illuminates more fully and makes plainer the value of human love, the value of the union of man and woman as two persons. (p. 173)

The Metaphysics of Shame

The Phenomenon of Sexual Shame and its Interpretation

The essence of shame goes beyond such fear. It can only be understood if we heavily emphasize the truth that the existence of the person is an interior one, i.e. that the person possesses an interior peculiarly its own, and that from this arises the need to conceal (that is, to retain internally) certain experiences or values. (p. 175)

Sexual modesty is not a flight from love, but on the contrary the opening of a way towards it. *The spontaneous need to conceal mere sexual values bound up with the person is the natural way to the discovery of the value of the person as such.* (p. 179)

Law of the Absorption of Shame by Love

To say that shame is “absorbed” by love does not mean that it is eliminated or destroyed. Quite the contrary — it is reinforced, in man and woman, for only where it is preserved intact can love be realized in full. (p. 182)

Shame is a natural *form of self-defense for the person* against the danger of descending or being pushed into the position of an object for sexual use. (p. 182)

True love is a love in which sexual values are subordinated to the value of the person. (p. 183)

There is a danger that shame, and its absorption in the regular way by love, may be treated too superficially. (p. 185)

The view, so very often expressed or implied, that ‘the emotion (love) itself gives men and women the right to physical intimacy and to sexual intercourse’ — This is a mistaken view, for love as an emotional experience even if it is reciprocated, is very far from being the same as love completed by commitment of the will. (p. 185)

If the feeling of shame readily yields to the first emotional-affective experience, we have to do with a negation of shame and of sexual modesty. True shame gives way reluctantly (and as a result it does not ultimately leave the person in a shameful situation). (p. 186)

There is a need to *develop sexual shame by education.* (p. 186)

‘Healthy customs’, however, have nothing in common with puritanism in sexual matters. For exaggeration easily results in prudery. (p. 189)

The Problems of Continence

Self Control and Objectivization

The dignity of the person demands control of concupiscence. If the person does not exercise such control it jeopardizes its natural perfectibility, allows an inferior and dependent part of itself to enjoy freedom of action, and indeed subjects itself to this lesser self. (p. 194)

Control of concupiscence has as its objective not only the perfection of the person who attempts to achieve it, but also the realization of love in the world of persons. (p. 195)

“The most wonderful of all”

To create something, to reflect the absolute Existence and Love,
must be the most wonderful of all!
But one lives in ignorance of it.

— *The character Teresa, in “The Jeweler’s Shop”*

[Continence] has something to do with ‘containing’. This gives us a perfect image of those well-known interior crises in which the person undergoes something like an invasion, with its main forces based on sensuality, on carnal concupiscence or (at one remove) on natural sensibility. The person feels the need, natural to a reasonable being, to defend itself against the forces of sensuality and concupiscence, above all because their invasion threatens its natural power of self-determination. (p. 196)

Continence cannot be an end in itself. (p. 197)

The value of the person must ‘take command’, so to speak, of all that happens in a man. When it does, continence is no longer ‘blind’. It goes beyond mere self-restraint and interdiction and permits the mind and the will to ‘open up’ to a value which is both genuine and superior. (p. 198)

Control of concupiscence has as its objective not only the perfection of the person who attempts to achieve it, but...the realization of love in the world of persons

The practice of self control and of virtue is accompanied, especially in the early stages, by a feeling of loss, of having renounced a value. This feeling is a natural phenomenon, it tells us how powerfully the reflex of carnal desire acts upon the conscious mind and the will. As true love of the person develops, this reflex will grow weaker, the values will return to their proper places. Thus, *the virtue of chastity and love of the person are each conditional upon the other.* (p. 199)

Every man must effectively deploy the energies latent in his sensuality and his sentiments, so they become allies in his striving for authentic love, for they may, as we know, also be its foes. This ability to make allies of potential foes is perhaps an even more decisive characteristic of self-mastery and the virtue of chastity than is ‘pure’ continence. (p. 200)

“How much we have lost”

“What a pity that for so many years we have not felt ourselves to be a couple of children.

“Anna, Anna, how much we have lost because of that!”

— *Stefan, to his wife Anna, in “The Jeweler’s Shop”*

Some words carry weight, even small words... Such is the word “mine”

ADAM (*the father*)

...my child. When I first decided to think of you as my child,
by that very fact I accepted the meaning of the word “mine.”

What happened?...

Something

quite simple yet eternal.

Some words carry weight,
even small words... Such is the word “mine.”

With this word I accept as my own, but at the same time I give myself

...MY CHILD! My child! “Mine” means “own.”

ADAM

The word “mine” — a tiny, simple word. How long I had to stand
on its threshold. How long I looked into it through all the logic

of existence... This word has an eternal sense...

Do you know that we must not accept what emerges only

on the wave of heart until we assume responsibility for the truth of this word, the common simple word “mine”?...

But what emerges on the wave of the heart should not develop haphazardly, leading into blind alleys.

Every feeling, my child, must be permeated by light, so that one does not feel in darkness, but in the light, anew.

One must transfix feelings with thought.

MONICA (*the child*)

When I think of you as mine, I do not follow myself, only you,
and at the same time I go into myself to find you there. When I find you, I feel joy. But if I do not find you, I feel pain, and that is why sometimes I cry in secret...

ADAM

We are born also through choice...

But at a particular moment we may not become, may not be born.

This depends on us. And that is why — bit by bit — I try to find credibility

in the word “mine.” Do you also try to find it, child?

Giving birth begins with unity and aims at unity. In this love consists.

When you were conceived and your mother was to give birth to you,

first you had to penetrate the depths of her body...

If you are to be born of your father, you must first penetrate

the depths of his will... This is giving birth through choice.

And to choose means to accept what makes my world, what is in me and what is of me... Are you able to accept it?

For already I carry you under my heart and know that I must give you birth,

because I cannot think of you as other than mine.

MONICA

Oh, do not worry about giving birth... I know it is the woman who gives birth.

Do not fear what I say: how differently YOU ARE GIVING ME BIRTH!

You want to give me birth like this all the time —

to introduce me to what is and what has not yet come to be (and if it is somehow already,

it is thanks to you). Though born once,

I am also many times unborn and want to be born many times.

ADAM

Then I did not want to find myself in you. But now I want to.

Now if I am to find you in myself, I must find myself in you.

Do you know that if I do this, you are not altogether free?

For love denies freedom of will to him who loves — love liberates him from the freedom

that would be terrible to have for its own sake.

So when I become a father, I am conquered by love.

And when you become a child, you too are conquered by love.

At the same time I am liberated from freedom through love,

and so are you;

at last I am liberated from loneliness, which I do not want to exchange for love...

There is no giving birth without everything that is contained

in the word “mine”...

Gradually I learn through you what it means to be a father:

it means having the strongest bonds with the world...

So let us shape that world together!

— Excerpts from “Radiation of Fatherhood,” a play by Fr. Karol Wojtyla, 1964

Tenderness and Sensuality

Tenderness is more than just an inner capacity for compassion, for sensitive awareness of another person's feelings and state of mind. Tenderness includes all this, but its essence is elsewhere — in the tendency to make one's own the feelings and mental states of another person. (p. 201)

Tenderness, then, springs from awareness of the inner state of another person (and indirectly of that person's external situation, which conditions his inner state) and whoever feels it actively seeks to communicate his feeling of close involvement with the other person and his situation. (p. 202)

Genuine human love, love 'for' a person, and love 'between' persons, must combine two elements: tenderness and a certain firmness

Tenderness demands vigilance against the danger that its manifestations may acquire a different significance and become merely forms of sensual and sexual gratification. (p. 203)

Genuine human love, love 'for' a person, and love 'between' persons, must combine two elements: tenderness and a certain firmness. Otherwise, it will lose its inner soundness and resilience, and turn into sterile sloppiness and mawkishness. (p. 204)

Exterior manifestations of tenderness may create an illusion of love, a love which in reality does not exist. (p. 205)

Premature tenderness in the association of a man and a woman quite often even destroys love, or at least prevents it from developing fully, of ripening both internally and objectively into a genuine love. (p. 205-6)

Without the virtue of moderation, without chastity and self-control it is impossible so to educate and develop tenderness that it does not harm love but serves it. (p. 206)

Love between man and woman cannot be built without sacrifices and self-denial. (p. 208)

CHAPTER FOUR

Justice Towards the Creator

Marriage

Monogamy and the Indissolubility of Marriage

We shall consider marriage here mainly in the light of the personalistic norm, which bids us show 'loving kindness', and treat a person in a manner appropriate to his or her essential nature. This principle is fully compatible only with monogamy and the indissolubility of marriage. (p. 211)

Marriage is strictly a feature of man's physical and terrestrial existence, so that it is naturally dissolved by the death of one of the spouses. (p. 212)

Although remarriage after the death of a spouse is justifiable and permitted, to remain a widow or widower is nonetheless altogether praiseworthy since (among other things) it emphasizes more fully the reality of the union with the person now deceased. The value of the person, after all, is not transient, and spiritual union can and should continue even when physical union is at an end. (p. 212)

If we adhere consistently to the personalistic norm, we must admit that where there are serious reasons (marital

The Theology of the Body: Human Love in the Divine Plan

Shortly after his elevation to the papacy, Pope John Paul II delivered a series of Wednesday "audiences" over a five-year span presenting what was to become known as the "Theology of the Body." Themes addressed in these extraordinary talks included:

- The Unity and Indissolubility of Marriage
- The Meaning of Man's Original Solitude
- The Original Unity of Man and Woman
- By the Communion of Persons Man Becomes the Image of God
- The Nuptial Meaning of the Body
- The Human Person Becomes a Gift in the Freedom of Love
- The Mystery of Man's Original Innocence
- Man and Woman: A Gift for Each Other
- A Fundamental Disquiet in All Human Existence
- Spontaneity: The Mature Result of Conscience

- The Positive Function of Purity of Heart
- Marital Love Reflects God's Love for His People
- Reverence for Christ is the Basis of the Relationship between Spouses

- The Sacredness of the Human Body and Marriage
- Truth and Freedom—The Foundation of True Love
- Love is Ever Seeking and Never Satisfied
- The Importance of Harmonizing Human Love with Respect for Life
- Responsible Parenthood
- A Discipline that Ennobles Human Love
- Prayer, Penance and the Eucharist are the Principal Sources of Spirituality for Married Couples

— *"The Theology of the Body: Human Love in the Divine Plan," by Pope John Paul II, can be purchased through the Daughters of St. Paul: <http://www.pauline.org>.*

True Human Fatherhood

Whether we view fatherhood as fundamentally a biological act or fundamentally a spiritual vocation depends decisively on whether or not we seek to know and love God. For true human fatherhood — fatherhood that is loving and strong, consisting of the sincere gift of the self — must necessarily point beyond itself, allowing itself to become oriented toward something larger and better than the fragile human male. In this sense, true human fatherhood must always consist of what the Holy Father, when he was the playwright Karol Wojtyła, once called the “radiation” of fatherhood. That is, men must seek to let the perfect paternity of God the Father radiate through the frail man, understanding that the human father is genuinely authoritative only to the degree that he himself is under authority, recognizing himself as God’s obedient son.

— From *“Fatherhood Uprooted: A Sociologist Looks at Fatherlessness and its Causes,”* by David Blankenhorn (www.americanvalues.org), writing in the January/February 2001 issue of *Touchstone*.

infidelity is a particularly serious one) why husband and wife cannot go on living together there is only one possibility — separation, but without dissolution of the marriage itself. (p. 214)

[Thus] marriage preserves its character as an institution facilitating the personal union of man and woman, and not merely sexual relations between them. (p. 214)

[The personalistic norm] demands that the union be maintained until death. Any other view of the matter in effect puts the person in the position of an object ‘for use’, which amounts to the destruction of the objective order of love. (p. 215)

Without integration [of love] marriage is an enormous risk. A man and a woman whose love has not begun to mature, has not established itself as a genuine union of persons, should not marry, for they are not ready to undergo the test to which married life will subject them. (p. 215)

“Be water for me!”

I am putting my feet in the water. What a soothing coolness, what freshness, what rebirth!
Life enters anew into all my cells.
Ah, as I am being born anew from this forest stream,
I ask: Be water for me!
I ask: Be water for me!

— Monica, in *“Radiation of Fatherhood”*

The Value of the Institution

The inner and essential *raison d’être* of marriage is not simply eventual transformation into a family but above all the creation of a lasting personal union between a man and a woman based on love. (p. 218)

Marriage serves love more fully when it serves the cause of existence, and develops into a family. This is how we should understand the statement that ‘procreation is the principal end of marriage’. (p. 218)

If their love is already more or less ripe procreation will ripen it still further. (p. 218)

This institution [of marriage] is necessary to signify the maturity of the union between a man and a woman, to testify that there is a love on which a lasting union and community can be based. The institution is needed for this purpose not only in the interests of society, of the ‘other people’ who belong to it, but also, and mainly, in the interests of the persons who enter into a marriage. Even if there were no other people around them they would need the institution of marriage. (p. 220)

Sexual relations outside marriage automatically put one person in the position of an object to be used by another. Which is the user, which is the used? It is not excluded that the man may also be an object to be enjoyed, but the woman is always in that position in relation to the man. (p. 221)

A ‘marital’ sexual relationship outside the framework of marriage is always objectively a wrong done to the woman

A ‘marital’ sexual relationship outside the framework of marriage is always objectively a wrong done to the woman. Always — even when the woman consents to it, and indeed even when she herself actively desires and seeks it. (p. 221)

Procreation and Parenthood

In the sexual relationship between man and woman two orders meet: the order of nature, which has as its object reproduction, and the personal order, which finds its expression in love of persons and aims at the fullest realization of that love. We cannot separate the two orders, for each depends on the other. In particular, the correct attitude to procreation is a condition of the realization of love. (p. 226)

A human being is a person, so that the simple natural fact of becoming a father or a mother has a deeper significance, not merely a biological but also a personal significance. Inevitably, it has profound effects upon the ‘interior’ of the person, which are summarized in the concept of parenthood. (p. 227)

Acceptance [of the possibility of parenthood] is so important, so decisive that without it marital intercourse cannot be

said to be a realization of the personal order. Instead of a truly personal union all that is left is a sexual association without the full value of a personal relationship. (p. 228)

Neither in the man nor in the woman can affirmation of the value of the person be divorced from awareness and willing acceptance that he may become a father and she may become a mother. (p. 228)

If the possibility of parenthood is deliberately excluded from marital relations, the character of the relationship between the partners automatically changes. The change is away from unification in love and in the direction of mutual, or rather, bilateral, 'enjoyment'. (p. 228)

Willing acceptance of parenthood serves to break down...reciprocal egoism

In the order of love a man can remain true to the person only in so far as he is true to nature. If he does violence to 'nature' he also 'violates' the person by making it an object of enjoyment rather than an object of love. Acceptance of the possibility of procreation in the marital relationship safeguards love and is an indispensable condition of a truly personal union. (p. 229-30)

Willing acceptance of parenthood serves to break down the reciprocal egoism — or the egoism of one party at which the other connives — behind which lurks the will to exploit the person. (p. 230)

A man and a woman may 'be afraid of a child': often a child is not only a joy but also — there is no denying it — a burden. But when fear of having a child goes too far it paralyses love. (p. 231)

There is a solution to this problem, which conforms to the laws of which we know, and is worthy of human persons: continence, which however demands control over erotic experiences. It also demands a profound culture of the person and of love. (p. 231)

We cannot therefore demand of the spouses that they must positively desire to procreate on every occasion when they have intercourse. (p. 233)

Marital intercourse is in itself an interpersonal act, an act of betrothed love, so that the intentions and the attention of each partner must be fixed upon the other, upon his or her true good. They must not be concentrated on the possible consequences of the act, especially if that would mean a diversion of attention from the partner. (p. 233-4)

The positive exclusion of the possibility of conception deprives marital intercourse of its true character as potentially an act of procreation, which is what fully justifies the act, especially in the eyes of the persons taking part in it, since it enables them to see it as modest and chaste. (p. 234)

Too Little Human Life

Families today have too little "human" life. There is a shortage of people with whom to create and share the common good; and yet that good, by its very nature, demands to be created and shared with others: *bonum est diffusivum sui*: "good is diffusive of itself."

— Pope John Paul II, in his 1994 Letter to Families

When a man and a woman who have marital intercourse decisively preclude the possibility of paternity and maternity, their intentions are thereby diverted from the person and directed to mere enjoyment: 'the person as co-creator of love' disappears and there remains only the 'partner in an erotic experience'. (p. 234)

Man, as an intelligent being, can arrange things so that sexual intercourse does not result in procreation. He can do this by adapting himself to the fertility cycle — having intercourse during infertile periods, and abstaining during fertile periods. If he does this procreation is excluded in the natural way. (p. 235)

Deliberate prevention of procreation by human beings acting contrary to the order and the laws of nature is quite a different matter. (p. 235)

Willingness for parenthood is an indispensable condition of love

Since these means are artificial they deprive conjugal relations of their 'naturalness', which cannot be said when procreation is avoided by adaptation to the fertility cycle. (p. 235)

Man must reconcile himself to his natural greatness. It is especially when he enters so deeply into the natural order, immerses himself so to speak in its elemental processes, that he must not forget that he is a person. (p. 236)

Willingness for parenthood is an indispensable condition of love. (p. 236)

"Love cannot be irresponsible"

Responsible parenthood is the necessary condition for human love, and it is also the necessary condition for authentic conjugal love, because love cannot be irresponsible. Its beauty is the fruit of responsibility. When love is truly responsible, it is also truly free.

— From "Crossing the Threshold of Hope," by Pope John Paul II, published by Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1994

“Is that a true value?”

I saw her a few times — she was a shy and delicate child. Made on me the impression of a being enclosed in herself, whose true value gravitates inward so much that it simply ceases to reach other people. Is that a true value?

— *The character Teresa, in “The Jeweler’s Shop”*

Periodic Continence: Method and Interpretation

Continence is a condition of love, the only attitude towards a partner in marriage, and particularly towards a wife, compatible with affirmation of the value of the person. (p. 237)

The mutual need of the two persons for each other expresses itself also in the need for sexual intercourse. This being so, the idea of refraining from intercourse inevitably runs into certain difficulties and objections. (p. 237-8)

The personalistic value of periodic continence as a method of regulating conception is evident not only in the fact that it preserves the ‘naturalness’ of intercourse, but even more in the fact that in the wills of the persons concerned it must be grounded in a sufficiently mature virtue. And this is where we see how important it is to interpret periodic continence correctly: the utilitarian interpretation distorts the true character of what we call the natural method, which is that it is based on continence as a virtue and this is very closely connected with love of the person. (p. 241)

Inherent in the essential character of continence as a virtue is the conviction that *the love of man and woman loses nothing as a result of temporary abstention from erotic experiences, but on the contrary gains*: the personal union takes deeper root, grounded as it is above all in affirmation of the value of the person and not just in sexual attachment. (p. 241)

Particeps Creatoris

“*Particeps Creatoris*” means “one who shares in [the work] of the Creator.” This language echoes the Thomistic approach to natural law theory, which holds that unlike every other kind of creature, the human being shares something in the thought, the work, of the Creator, namely, knowing the law that the Creator designs into Creation. All creatures are subject to this natural law that God has designed, but human beings actually “share in [the work] of the Creator” by virtue of their nature as capable of knowing and choosing. Human beings have the ability to know this natural law that is within them and they share in the ability of the Creator to look out for the good of creatures (providence).

— *Fr. Joseph Koterski, S.J., Fordham University*

A determination on the part of husband and wife to have as few children as possible, to make their own lives easy, is bound to inflict moral damage both on their family and on society at large. (p. 243)

Acceptance of parenthood also expresses itself in not endeavoring to avoid pregnancy at all cost, readiness to accept it if it should unexpectedly occur. This acceptance of the possibility of becoming a father or a mother must be present in the mind and the will even when the spouses do not want a pregnancy. (p. 243)

Vocation*The Concept of ‘Justice Towards the Creator’*

Man is just towards God the Creator when he recognizes the order of nature and conforms to it in his actions. (p. 246)

Continence is a condition of love, the only attitude towards a partner in marriage, and particularly towards a wife, compatible with affirmation of the value of the person

Man, by understanding the order of nature and conforming to it in his actions, participates in the thought of God, becomes *particeps Creatoris*, has a share in the law which God bestowed on the world when He created it. (p. 246)

The value of the created person is most fully exhibited by participation in the thought of the Creator, by acting as *particeps Creatoris* in thought and in action. (p. 247)

Man can only be just to God the Creator if he loves his fellows. (p. 247)

Mystical and Physical Virginity

Within man’s relationship with God, understood as a relationship of love, man’s posture can and must be one of surrender to God. (p. 251)

This total and exclusive gift of self to God is the result of a spiritual process which occurs within a person under the influence of Grace. This is the essence of mystical virginity — *conjugal love pledged to God Himself.* (p. 251)

Man has an inborn need of betrothed love, a need to give himself to another. (p. 253)

Marriage, and still more spiritual virginity combined with betrothed love, must in the general belief be the result of ‘first love’, that is to say of one’s first choice. (p. 253)

The need to give oneself to another person has profounder origins than the sexual instinct, and is connected above all with the spiritual nature of the human person. (p. 253)

Considered in the perspective of the person's eternal existence, marriage is only a tentative solution to the problem of a union of persons through love. (p. 253-4)

Spiritual virginity, in the perspective of eternal life, is another attempt to solve the problem. The movement towards a final union through love with a personal God is here more explicit than in marriage, and in a sense spiritual virginity anticipates that final union in conditions of the physical and temporal life of the human person. In this lies the great value of virginity. (p. 254)

Spiritual virginity, the self-giving of a human person wedded to God Himself, expressly anticipates this eternal union with God and points the way towards it. (p. 255)

The Problem of Vocation

The word 'vocation' indicates that there is a proper course for every person's development to follow, a specific way in which he commits his whole life to the service of certain values. Every individual must plot this course correctly by understanding on the one hand what he has in him and what he can offer to others, and on the other hand what is expected of him. (p. 256)

A person who has a vocation must not only love someone but be prepared to give himself or herself for love. We have said already in our analysis of love that this self-giving may have a very creative effect on the person: the person fulfills itself most effectively when it gives itself most fully. (p. 256-7)

That man can give life to a being in his own likeness makes plain his intrinsic value

Paternity and Maternity

Parenthood is something more than the external fact of bringing a child into the world and possessing it. (p. 259)

Physically, a woman becomes a mother thanks to a man, while paternity in its psychological and spiritual aspects is the effect on a man's interior life of a woman's maternity. (p. 259)

For this reason paternal feelings must be specially cultivated and trained. (p. 259)

That man can give life to a being in his own likeness makes plain his intrinsic value. (p. 259)

Spiritual paternity and maternity have a much wider significance than physical parenthood. (p. 260)

Spiritual paternity and maternity involve a certain transmission of personality. (p. 261)

Natural Methods of Family Planning

Must spouses have as many children as is physically possible? This has never been the teaching of the Church. Spouses are expected to be responsible about their childbearing, to bring forth children that they can raise well...

Natural Family Planning is not the outmoded rhythm method, a method which was based on the calendar. Rather, NFP is a highly scientific way of determining when a woman is fertile based on observing various bodily signs. The couple who want to avoid a pregnancy, abstain from sexual intercourse during the fertile period. The statistics on the reliability of NFP rival the most effective forms of the Pill. And NFP is without the health risks...

Couples using NFP find that it has positive results for their marital relationships and their relationship with God... They learn to live in accord with the natural rhythms of their body... NFP may involve non-procreative acts, but never, as with contraception, anti-procreative acts.

Many find it odd that periodic abstinence should be beneficial rather than harmful to a marriage... Spouses using NFP find that the method helps them learn to communicate better with each other... As they learn to master their sexual desires, they find a new liberation in the ability to abstain from sexual intercourse.

Many find that an element of romance reenters the relationship during the times of abstinence and an element of excitement accompanies the reuniting. They have gained the virtue of self-mastery since now they can control their sexual desires rather than being controlled by their sexual desires.

Women using NFP generally feel revered by their husbands since their husbands do not make them use unhealthy and unpleasant contraceptives. Men using NFP generally have greater self-respect since they have gained control over their sexual desires and can now engage in sexual intercourse as an act of love not as an act of mere sexual urgency. A proof that NFP is good for a marriage is that...very, very few couples who use NFP ever divorce; they seem to bond in a deeper way than those who are contracepting.

In teaching that contraception is intrinsically immoral, the Church is...preaching only what nature and the gospel preach. By now we should have learned – the hard way – that to defy and overindulge our sexual nature, to go against the laws of nature and God, is to inflict terrible damage on ourselves as individuals and our society as a whole.

— For further reading by Dr. Janet E. Smith, please visit her website at: <http://www.udallas.edu/phildept/smith.htm>.

Can Periods of Abstinence Strengthen Marriage and Family Life?

Few teachings of the Catholic Church have inspired such dissent as its prohibition on the use of artificial means of birth control. Yet, the testimony of couples who practice Natural Family Planning speaks beautifully of the wisdom — deep, if mysterious — of the Church’s teaching. These couples, out of respect for each other, and for the meaning of the act, choose to abstain from sexual relations rather than use contraception at those times when the wife is fertile and they wish to avoid having a child. Here, they talk about the benefits to their marriage and family life:

- ❑ We were always a close couple, but I can’t believe how much closer we’ve become in the last three years since we started relying on fertility awareness. In fact, my husband told me that he feels we’ve grown more intimate during the past forty months than during all the previous years of our marriage put together. I agree.
- ❑ My wife and I have romantic memories of many of our abstinence periods. We have almost no romantic memories attached to the years when Barbara was on the Pill. We have also learned that abstinence isn’t always positive unless we really work at it.
- ❑ Some of our abstinence times have been funny and wry, others filled with yearning and romance, and a few, just plain dreary. Because of NFP, we are continually writing new chapters to our love story. Some chapters are better than others but we both realize that we would have a very small book if we could make love whenever we wanted.
- ❑ In the beginning we thought that if my wife went on the Pill, the freedom of having intercourse as often as we wanted would bring us closer together... But now that we are using NFP, our marriage is growing better every day. It didn’t on the Pill. We’ve learned that there is more to marriage than sex.

“NFP has forced us to communicate”

- ❑ Our desire for intercourse is at its highest during the most fertile days. It is nearly impossible for us to refrain on these days, but we are learning to manage... NFP has forced us to communicate. This area has always been weak with us. We “grew up” so to speak by taking responsibility for our drives.
- ❑ Since using natural methods I feel more of the power and responsibility of sex.
- ❑ When we first started using the method there was that longing for Phase III; now we are realizing a great happiness even during the abstinence.... I feel like a young bride when I prepare one of his favorite meals and take walks in the new snow in the evenings followed by cuddling up in bed with a great feeling of being loved even though we are in a short time of abstinence. I always

“We were always a close couple, but I can’t believe how much closer we’ve become in the last three years...”

thought, “Well, life will begin when we reach the OK part of the cycle,” but now I realize that life is special every day of the cycle.

- ❑ Strange as it may seem, the abstinence has had a positive effect on our marriage. I feel that my husband has to love me deeply in order to abstain.

“My spouse loves me for me”

- ❑ I feel so secure and loved. My spouse loves me for me and not as a sex/bed partner. I know this because during our abstinence, he is still loving and faithful and has self-control.
- ❑ Natural methods offer us a greater knowledge of ourselves and each other and make our fertility as a couple a joint responsibility.
- ❑ Before using NFP, I spent many evenings thinking about how I was going to convince Joyce to have intercourse that night. Meanwhile, she was thinking about how she was going to convince me that we *didn’t* need it that night. Now that we’re using NFP, many nights are spent discussing problem areas in our marriage — ourselves, the children, etc. Overall, I would never trade NFP for any artificial method because it has helped us together. I’m also relieved that my wife is not in any medical danger from side effects of the Pill.
- ❑ I know my husband feels that NFP is highly satisfactory because he’s so enthusiastic about it... Sometimes the abstinence period gets me down, but my husband has the ability to really get me through it and into the infertile phase. He makes the method worthwhile.
- ❑ Abstinence seems to highlight certain problems in our marriage. But if we had not learned to use NFP, I believe that these problems would have been unidentified, remained under the surface, and would have ended up causing more difficulties.

- ❑ Sex used to be *the* subject in our marriage and created a lot of pressure. Now it’s back to a more supportive position. Also, when sex was *the* subject, it wasn’t very good. Now that it’s more in the background, it’s much, much better. NFP has freed us to be more comfortable with sex and each other. Now we’re more open and talk about things more.

“Deeper sexual love between me and my spouse”

- ❑ After having used the method for twenty-two months, I can honestly say that the sexual tension created by the abstinence period is healthy and contributes to deeper sexual love between me and my spouse during the infertile phase.

- At certain times my husband tends to treat me more specially — like a fiancée rather than a wife. He doesn't take me quite so much for granted, like a cookie he can have anytime. I believe in some ways that abstinence keeps his mind from wandering to other women because he's anxious to have intercourse just with me. I respond to that by keeping up my appearance; I also make sure that my personality remains appealing to him.
- Abstinence sharpens or rekindles my wife's attractiveness to me and prompts demonstrations of love and affection that I probably would neglect.

“We had never talked about things so intimately”

- When we started using the methods, we really had to discuss a lot of new things... Soon we were discussing how seriously we really wanted to forestall pregnancy. This came up especially during the times when abstinence was particularly difficult for one of us or both of us. In fact, we discussed the abstinence problem very extensively — how to cope creatively with the sexual tensions. We also planned how to enjoy intercourse after the abstinence period and our physical relationship took on a special excitement. We had never talked about things so intimately, so personally, or in such detail until we started using natural birth control.
- The biggest surprise to me was the fact that *my wife* found the abstinence terribly difficult. I thought that I would have the problems... I was terribly flattered to realize that my wife enjoyed relations with me so much. For years I have been grateful to her for always responding to my “request” for intercourse. But after twenty-eight months of using natural methods, we finally see intercourse as something that we share and give to each other. She gives to me; I give to her.

“My husband and I are much more affectionate and open, and we communicate better”

“Now she trusts completely”

- There were many times when I'd feel affectionate and loving and want to hug and kiss Jenny, or just give her a squeeze. But she'd freeze me out... She didn't want us to get the least bit excited sexually because she worried about control — specifically *my* control. We worked out that problem for nearly three years. But now she trusts completely that I can — and will — handle our abstinence.
- My parents found it very hard to talk to me about sex... But I'm not much different... I, too, find it difficult to talk to my children about sex. But the simple fact that we rely on NFP forces me and Bob to talk about sex and sexuality a great deal. I found that our discussions over the years have made me so comfortable with the subject that it has been easier than I would have ever expected for me to talk to my daughters about the changes in their bodies and what they mean. Even Bob has said that he feels surprisingly at ease when the girls ask him birds-and-the-bees questions.

- One night my youngest son was talking to me about his girlfriend. To my astonishment, he was actually wondering out loud whether or not he should sleep with her... Suddenly I knew just how I felt about premarital sex: I want my son's first sexual intercourse to take place under circumstances of mutual love and total commitment. That's how his father and I had had our first experience — on our wedding night.

I also realized why it had been so hard to deal with the subject with our oldest children. We had used the Pill, so it was fine for us to say, “Wait until you get married.” The message was: “Don't have sex now; then after you get married, you can have all you want.”

Now that we're using natural family planning, the message is different: “You can't have intercourse anytime you please. Look at us: We're married and even we can't have intercourse whenever we want. And I know what you mean: Sometimes it's very hard holding off. I can really sympathize with you because Dad and I deal with the problem all the time.”

“Thinking in terms of mutual responsibility”

- Danny came home from fifth grade one day having received the school's mandatory sex lecture, complete with a full description of all the contraceptive paraphernalia that's available. I was very annoyed: I had wanted his sex education to come from us. Anyway, home he arrived, bright with this brand-new knowledge. Suddenly he asked me if I could tell him what Daddy and I use for birth control.

It was the first time in my life that I was completely relieved that I wasn't on the Pill. I was able to tell my son that Daddy and I don't use anything; that if we want to have intercourse during a time of the month that I could get pregnant, why, we just wait a week or two until I can't get pregnant anymore. Then when we *do* want to get pregnant, we wait for that time of the month when we're fertile.

Danny was very impressed by all of this. He told me that that's the method he wants to use when he gets married, and that he'll wait until his wife is fertile when they want a baby. But when they have to postpone pregnancy, they'll wait for the infertile time.

Already at age ten he's thinking in terms of mutual responsibility for sexual intercourse and family planning.

— *Statements drawn from Nona Aguilar's “The New, No-Pill, No-Risk Birth Control,” published by Simon & Schuster. Nona's talk before the New York Love & Responsibility Discussion Group, “How NFP Enriches Married Life,” can be found on-line at http://www.catholicculture.com/past_discussions.html.*

Nona encourages those interested in learning more about Natural Family Planning to visit the web site of the Couple to Couple League at <http://www.ccli.org>.

Spiritual parenthood as a sign of the inner maturity of the person is the goal which in diverse ways all human beings, men and women alike, are called to seek, within or outside matrimony. This call fits into the Gospel's summons to perfection of which the 'Father' is the supreme model. So then, human beings will come particularly close to God when the *spiritual parenthood of which God is the prototype* takes shape in them. (p. 261)

Any attempt to diminish human beings by depriving them of spiritual paternity and maternity, or to deny the central social importance of maternity and paternity, is incompatible with the natural development of man. (p. 261)

CHAPTER FIVE

Sexology and Ethics

A Supplementary Survey

Marriage and Marital Intercourse

We have defined love as an ambition to ensure the true good of another person, and consequently as the antithesis of egoism. Since in marriage a man and a woman are associated sexually as well as in other respects the good must be sought in this area too. From the point of view of another person, from the altruistic standpoint, it is necessary to insist that intercourse must not serve merely as a means of allowing sexual excitement to reach its climax in one of the partners, i.e. the man alone, but that climax must be reached in harmony, not at the expense of one partner, but with both partners fully involved. (p. 272)

***There is...a real need for sexual education...
The main objective of this education is to
create the conviction that 'the other
person is more important than I'***

Sexologists state that the curve in arousal in woman is different from that in man — it rises more slowly and falls more slowly. (p. 272)

The man must take this difference between male and female reactions into account, not for hedonistic, but for altruistic reasons. (p. 272)

There exists a rhythm dictated by nature itself which both spouses must discover so that climax may be reached both by the man and by the woman, and as far as possible occur in both simultaneously. (p. 272)

Non-observance of these teachings of sexology in the marital relationship is contrary to the good of the other partner to

the marriage and the durability and cohesion of the marriage itself. (p. 273)

There is a need for harmonization, which is impossible without good will, especially on the part of the man, who must carefully observe the reactions of the woman. If a woman does not obtain natural gratification from the sexual act there is a danger that her experience of it will be qualitatively inferior, will not involve her fully as a person. (p. 273)

***Any attempt to diminish human beings
by...denying the central social importance
of maternity and paternity is incompatible
with the natural development of man***

A woman finds it very difficult to forgive a man if she derives no satisfaction from intercourse. (p. 273-4)

The natural kindness of a woman who (so the sexologists tell us) sometimes 'shams orgasm' to satisfy a man's pride, may also be unhelpful in the long run. (p. 274)

There is here a real need for sexual education, and it must be a continuous process. The main objective of this education is to create the conviction that 'the other person is more important than I'. (p. 274)

This is where the 'culture of marital relations' comes in and what it means. Not the 'technique' but the 'culture'. Sexologists often put the main emphasis on technique, whereas this should rather be thought of as something secondary, and often perhaps even inimical to the purpose which it is supposed to serve. The urge is so strong that it creates in the normal man and the normal woman a sort of instinctive knowledge 'how to make love' whereas artificial analysis (and the concept of 'technique' implies this) is more likely to spoil the whole thing, for what is wanted here is a certain spontaneity and naturalness (subordinated of course to morality). This instinctive knowledge must subsequently mature into a 'culture of marital relations'. I must refer here to the analysis of 'tenderness' and especially of 'disinterested tenderness' to be found in section 3 of Chapter II. This ability to enter readily into another person's emotions and experiences can play a big part in harmonization of marital intercourse. (p. 274-5)

Precisely because a slower and more gradual rise in the curve of sexual arousal is characteristic of the female organism the need for tenderness during physical intercourse, and also before it begins and after its conclusion, is explicable in purely biological terms. (p. 275)

If we take into account the short and more violent curve of arousal in the man, an act of tenderness on his part in the context of marital intercourse acquires the significance of

an act of virtue — specifically, the virtue of continence, and so indirectly the virtue of love. (p. 275)

Love should help one to understand and to feel for a human being, for this makes it possible to educate him, and in married life for husband and wife to educate each other. The man must reckon with the fact that the woman is in a sense in another world, unlike himself not only in the physiological but also in the psychological sense. Since he has to play the active role in the marital relationship, he must get to know that other world, and indeed as far as possible project himself into it emotionally. (p. 275-6)

The woman too must try to understand the man, and simultaneously to educate him to understand her. (p. 276)

Sexology itself consistently favors natural sexual and marital morality, because it attaches so much importance to the psychological and physical health of man and woman, understood in the most fundamental sense. Thus, harmonious sexual intercourse is possible only where it involves no conflict of consciences, and is not troubled by fears. (p. 276)

It is, then, quite certain that marriage, as a stable institution which protects her in the event of maternity to a considerable extent liberates a woman from those reactions of fear which not only play havoc with her psyche, but may also disturb her natural biological rhythm. Not the least of these is the fear of having a child — the main source of female neuroses. (p. 276-7)

Love should help one to understand and to feel for a human being... The man must reckon with the fact that the woman is in a sense in another world, unlike himself not only in the physiological but also in the psychological sense

The Problem of Birth Control

A man and a woman who have marital relations must know when and how they may become parents and regulate their sexual life accordingly. They have a responsibility for every conception, not only to themselves but also to the family which they are founding or increasing by that conception. (p. 279)

Every woman can observe in herself the changes which occur in the relevant phase of the cycle. Apart from this there exist objective scientific methods known to biology and medicine, which help us to determine the moment of ovulation, i.e. the beginning of the fertile period. (p. 280)

The factors which disturb the regularity of the biological cycle in women are above all of psychological origin. (p. 281)

Fear then is a powerful negative stimulus that can destroy the natural regularity of the female sexual cycle. (p. 281)

“I am also many times unborn”

Though born once, I am also many times unborn and want to be born many times.

— Monica, in *“Radiation of Fatherhood”*

Fear of pregnancy also deprives a woman of that ‘joy in the spontaneous experience of love’ which acting in accordance with nature brings. (p. 281)

All this implicitly shows the decisive importance [of] two elements: readiness during intercourse to accept parenthood (‘I may become a mother’, ‘I may become a father’), and that readiness to practice continence which derives from virtue, from love for the closest of persons. This is the only way in which a woman can achieve the biological equilibrium without which the natural regulation of conception is unthinkable and unrealizable. (p. 281)

It must be clearly stated that one basic method underlies all natural methods of regulating fertility: the ‘method’ of virtue (love and continence). (p. 282)

Contraceptives are of their very nature harmful to health. Biological methods besides causing temporary barrenness, may bring about serious and irreversible changes in the organism. Chemical means are in their very nature cellular poisons, otherwise they would not have the power to kill genital cells, and so they must be physically harmful. Mechanical means cause local injuries in the woman’s reproductive tract, and what is more interfere with the spontaneity of the sexual act, which is something that women in particular find intolerable. (p. 282)

The only natural method of regulating conception is that which relies upon periodic continence. It demands precise knowledge of the organism of the woman concerned and of her biological rhythm, and also the peace of mind and the biological equilibrium of which a great deal has already been said. (p. 283)

A more important task for the man than adapting himself to the biological cycle of the woman is the creation of a favorable psychological climate for their relationship without which the successful application of natural methods is out of the question. (p. 283-4)

Be Not Afraid!

Do not be afraid of the risks! God’s strength is always far more powerful than your difficulties! Immeasurably greater than the evil at work in the world is the power of the *sacrament of reconciliation*, which the Fathers of the Church rightly called a “second baptism.”

— Pope John Paul II, in his 1994 Letter to Families

How We Give “Birth” to Each Other

The key is to affirm the other as self. This affirmation gives “birth” to the person, gives him or her existence as person... We image the Father’s giving birth to the Son by giving “birth” to others by affirming them. This establishes them as good. “It is good that you exist.” “You are good.” This empowers people, now with an identity, to give themselves since they now have someone to give: the self.

— For more by Fr. Bob Connor on the gift of self, visit http://www.catholicculture.com/past_discussions.html.

It is, however, impossible to apply natural methods on the spur of the moment, and mechanically, without mastering the whole biological rhythm. (p. 284)

If a man and a woman use these methods with full understanding of the facts and recognizing the objective purpose of marriage, natural methods leave them with a sense of choice and spontaneity (‘naturalness’) in their experience, and — most important of all — the possibility of deliberate regulation of procreation. (p. 284)

There is no analogy for the enormous feeling of resentment which [abortion] leaves in the mind of a woman. She cannot forget that it has happened and cannot get rid of her grudge against the man who has brought her to it. (p. 284-5)

Every man is capable of self-determination with regard to the sexual urge

Sexual Psychopathology and Ethics

There is a widely held view that to go without sexual intercourse is harmful to the life of human beings in general and of men in particular. No-one, however, has given the description of any set of morbid symptoms which might confirm this thesis. Our previous discussion showed that sexual neuroses are mainly the consequence of abuses in sexual life and that they result from failure to adapt to nature and to its processes. So that it is not continence, as such, that produces real diseases, but the lack of it. (p. 285)

The sexual urge in man is a fact which he must recognize and welcome as a source of natural energy — otherwise it may cause psychological disturbances. The instinctive reaction in itself, which is called sexual arousal, is to a large extent a vegetative reaction independent of the will, and failure to understand this simple fact often becomes a cause of serious sexual neuroses. (p. 285)

The indispensable requirement of correct behavior and health is training from childhood upwards in truth and in

reverence for sex, which must be seen as intimately connected with the highest values of human life and human love. (p. 286)

Therapy

It is often necessary to relieve people of the widespread conviction that the sexual drive is something naturally bad which must be resisted in the name of the good. (p. 286)

The indispensable requirement of correct behavior and health is training from childhood upwards in truth and in reverence for sex

Sexual reactions are on the contrary perfectly natural, and have no intrinsic moral value. Morally they are neither good nor bad, but morally good or morally bad uses may be made of them. (p. 287)

People must be further persuaded of the possibility and necessity of conscious choice. We must, as it were, ‘give back’ to people their consciousness of the freedom of the will and of the fact that the area of sexual experience is completely subject to the will. (p. 287)

Every man is capable of self-determination with regard to the sexual urge and the impulses born of it. This in fact is the starting point of sexual ethics at large. (p. 288)

A thorough knowledge of biological and physiological sexual processes is very important, very fitting, very valuable, but it cannot, either in education or in sexual therapy, achieve its proper end unless it is honestly grounded in an objective view of the person and the natural (and supernatural) vocation of the person, which is love. (p. 288) ■

“Father, child, and love”

Yes, it could happen in the end that You will put aside our world. You may let it crumble around us and, above all else, in us; then it will transpire that You remain whole only in the Son, and He in You, and whole with Him in Your Love. Father and Bridegroom. And everything else will then turn out to be unimportant and inessential except this: father, child, and love.

And then, looking at the simplest things, we will all say, could we have not learned this long ago? Has this not always been embedded in everything that is?

— Adam, with sights raised toward heaven, in the “Radiation of Fatherhood,” a play by Karol Wojtyła, 1964

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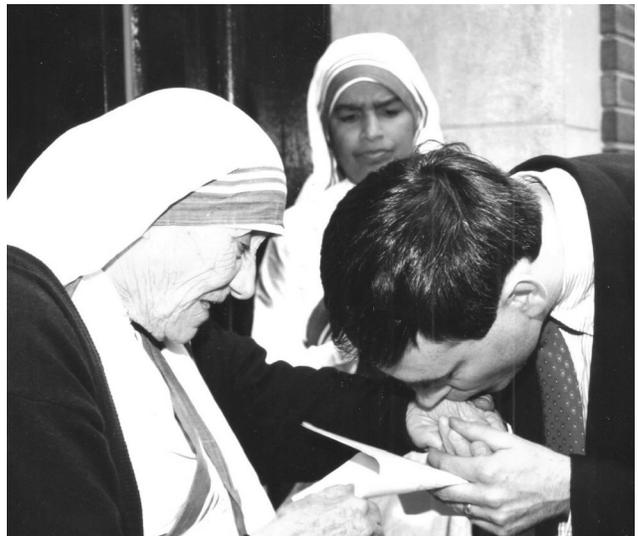
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EMC President Chris Slattery presents Mother Teresa with the plans for his South Bronx pregnancy center

"In firmly rejecting 'pro-choice' it is necessary to become courageously 'pro-woman,' promoting a choice that is truly in favor of women. It is precisely the woman, in fact, who pays the highest price, not only for her motherhood, but even more for its destruction, for the suppression of the life of the child who has been conceived. The only honest stance, in these cases, is that of radical solidarity with the woman. It is not right to leave her alone. The experience of many counseling centers show that the woman does not want to suppress the life of the child she carries within her. If she is supported in this attitude, and if at the same time she is freed from the intimidation of those around her, then she is capable of heroism... Numerous counseling centers are witness to this."

— Pope John Paul II, in Crossing the Threshold of Hope

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(essay continued from front cover)

been born so that we may give birth to others — in all that we do. Our physical birth is a metaphor for the spiritual birth we are called upon — continually — to give to others.

“I am also many times unborn”

Our mission of giving spiritual rebirth to others — being “spiritual parents” to those we come across in our lives — is a beautiful vocation, and we must know it, for who among us cannot say, along with the child Monica in *Radiation of Fatherhood*, “though born once, I am also many times unborn and want to be born many times.”

Or, as the playwright Pope has Monica, looking up to her father, more poetically say:

I am putting my feet in the water. What a soothing coolness, what freshness, what rebirth!

Life enters anew into all my cells.

Ah, as I am being born anew from this forest stream,

I ask: Be water for me!

I ask: Be water for me!

We are born to “be water” for others.

It’s all so beautiful, and yet the Church has a reputation for being too “strict.” Why? Because the Church quite correctly insists that we cannot bring out the best in others — we cannot “be water” for them — if instead we use others to satisfy our own pleasure-seeking.

The Pope is nothing but realistic when he notes that “the sexual relationship presents more opportunities than most other activities for treating a person — sometimes even without realizing it — as an object of use.”

In the face of this very powerful drive within us, the “challenge of human sexuality” is to be on guard against using others, to maintain what the Pope beautifully calls the “interior discipline of the gift” — to remain in possession of ourselves so that we remain free to give ourselves to others.

It is the irrevocable gift of self, whether made to a spouse or directly to God Himself, that is the decisive act of our lives. Through this gift, “the lover ‘goes outside’ the self to find a fuller existence in another.”

“Take away from love the fullness of self surrender, the completeness of personal commitment, and what remains will be a total denial and negation of it.” Strong words, indeed, but “a fuller existence” has its demands.

The Matter of Birth Control

No discussion of the Catholic Church’s teaching on sexuality would be complete without reference to the question of birth control. At first glance, nothing seems more absurd than the Church’s total prohibition on the use of artificial means of birth regulation. Yet, the Church is correct.

To understand why, we need to return to where we began: “Man must reconcile himself to his natural greatness.” The Church insists that we revere that most precious part of ourselves: our ability to bring new life, new love into this world.

As the Pope emphatically declares, “any attempt to diminish human beings by...denying the central social importance of maternity and paternity is incompatible with the natural development of man.”

The Church does not demand that families have as many children as possible. The Church advocates, instead, “responsible parenthood” through the practice of Natural Family Planning — which relies on awareness of the wife’s fertility cycle and self-possession on the part of the couple.

Couples who practice NFP — which is highly effective using modern methods — report not only a deeper appreciation for the mystery of life but also an enriched married and family life (*read their comments on pages 26-27*).

This Marvelous Truth

Pope John Paul II understands it is “humanly difficult to live this marvelous truth” of the Church’s teaching on sexuality. Is it, in fact, possible? Is a genuine, generous love realizable in this materialistic, me-first world we live in?

We must believe so, and it is, if we — men and women — help each other, and if, together, we “bow our knees before the Father,” God, who is love. Prayer is “the breath of life to our soul.” Let us pray together.

John Paul II on Love & Responsibility: Credits

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Dr. Janet E. Smith is Visiting Professor in Life Issues, Sacred Heart Seminar, Detroit, MI and Visiting Professor of Philosophy, Ave Maria College, Ypsilanti, MI, on leave from the Dept. of Philosophy, University of Dallas.

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