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CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE

and the FAMILY



Family Life Section
Social Action Department
N. C. W. C.
1312 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D. C.

1932



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INTRODUCTION

We take great pleasure in presenting to the reading public this booklet on *Christian Marriage and the Family*. We feel that it will fill a very real need. In spite of the great interest shown by the Church in the family down through the centuries, popular literature on this subject from the Catholic viewpoint is very limited. This is particularly to be regretted today when naturalistic views towards matrimony have become so prevalent and when unstinted publicity is given to theories subversive of the Christian ideals of marriage.

The articles contained herein are all reprinted from *Catholic Action*, particularly from the July, 1932, issue which was prepared conjointly by the editor of the publication and the director of the Family Life Section of the N. C. W. C. Social Action Department.

The Family Life Section is especially grateful to the Right Reverend Martin Veth, O.S.B., president of St. Benedict's College, for making the printing of this brochure possible, to the editor of *Catholic Action* for permission to reprint the articles, and to the individual collaborators for their contributions.

Rev. Edgar Schmiedeler, O.S.B.,
Director, Family Life Section,
N.C.W.C. Social Action Department.

As the family, according to the teaching of Leo XIII, is the unit of civil society, and as a nation is made up of distinct families, it follows that the strength and welfare of a nation depend largely on the ideals of family life. It was the Order of St. Benedict, exemplifying in its organization true Christian family life, that did so much to build up Christian civilization in Europe during the early Middle ages. This fact makes it a pleasure for a Benedictine Abbot to recommend and encourage every effort that aims to strengthen the Christian family in our country.

Martin Veth, O.S.B., Abbot

St. Benedict's Abbey,
Atchison, Kansas.

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CONSERVING *the* FAMILY

By Rev. Edgar Schmiedeler, O.S.B., S.T.L., Ph.D.

THE realm of the family is a field that insistently invites action today. This is due in part to the fundamental importance of the family institution, in part to its present critical condition. The former reason has always invited action on behalf of the home; the latter impels it today if the family is to be conserved. The importance of the family is due to its vital relation to the entire social system. It is the cell, as it were, of society, the heart of the social organism. A vigorous home life means a vital society. A decadent family life implies a decaying social organism.

The latter unfortunately is the condition that we see today—a multitude of decadent families and a rapidly decaying society. Hence the need for action for the conservation of the home. That our family life is showing alarming symptoms of disease and unmistakable signs of decay is apparent to all who care to see. The press daily tells its pitiful stories of broken and disorganized homes; the statistician constantly sums up his sickening totals of disintegrated families. Indeed, things have come to such a pass that the common Father of Christendom has been impelled to call the attention of the entire human race to the critical condition of our domestic world. There is every reason, therefore, to speak of conserving the family. It is high time for action on behalf of the home. Such action to be really effective will have to seek out the causes of the family's troubles and apply the remedies there. This implies serious study of the family situation before more direct action can intelligently follow.

The influences that are at work disintegrating the home are manifold indeed, and the remedies that might be applied to help and conserve it are not less few in number. The present family situation is a most involved

and complex one. It leaves little room for such simple remedies as spontaneous action, blind instinct, and mere intuition. Serious study, a thoroughgoing analysis, is a necessary preliminary to intelligent and effective action to conserve our domestic world. Space will only permit our singling out here one or the other cause and remedy by way of example, yet this should serve to point the way to further study and remedial activity.

Perhaps the two outstanding causes of our sorry family plight today are the prevailing pagan tendencies and our changing social order. In the following we shall call attention particularly to the former of these and only incidentally to the latter.

The pagan tendencies of the time are largely embodied in what the modern calls individualism. The latter is truly a pagan force. It is, moreover, a highly disintegrating influence. Excessive individualism enthrones self and worships it; it knows not love of God or neighbor. As such it is the antithesis of Christianity—a divisive, a separative force in society. Unfortunately, this socially destructive influence is abroad in the land today. It is playing the part of the cankerworm within the social system. It is playing the role of the moth within the family fabric. And disintegration is going on apace. Not only is the general structure of society being affected, but also all of its component parts, including the most fundamental unit, the family.

Here, then, is the strategic point of attack upon the pagan influences that are bringing about the decay of our domestic life. Here is the logical starting point for any effective program of action that seeks to conserve the home. The divisive and separative force of selfishness must give way to the binding and attractive influence of altruism if family life is to flourish. The integrating love of God and neighbor must replace the disintegrating love of self if the home is to endure. Individualism must be routed if the family is to be conserved. The domestic world, the family hearth itself, is preeminently the place for such an attack; it is the logical field for action to protect and conserve the home. Nothing is more instrumental in curbing selfishness, noth-

ing more influential in promoting an altruistic spirit than precisely complete and wholesome living within the circle of the home. This is due to various influences that normally find lodging there.

First of all, there is the fact of parenthood. Normal parenthood directs selfish elements into altruistic channels within the home. Marriage sympathy naturally centers in offspring. The children are the parents' treasures and their main sources of interest. And next to the possession of the treasured interest there is no richer experience than the sharing of it with another to whom it means much the same. Because they must sacrifice together for their little ones and must work out in unison their destiny, parents find in them a mutual interest more cohesive than any other binding force within the domestic world. To parents there is nothing more engrossing than the triumphs connected with the development of their offspring. Moreover, the keener their insight into their children's natures, the more engrossing and more successful will their efforts at training be. Parents' natural interest in children opens up, therefore, an immense field for the cultivation of the affections. It draws the family group together. Parenthood is a powerful influence making for the conservation of the home.

Besides the interests immediately connected with parenthood, however, there are many others within the home. These, too, serve to foster an altruistic spirit and thereby help to conserve the family. In fact, if the home begins with an endowment of companion interests and new ones are added as time goes on, reasonable harmony and happiness within the familial group is practically assured.

Outstanding among these home interests in the past have always been those of play; for play is naturally an integrating force. It tends to bind group members together. It arouses sentiments common to all. It promotes unity of thought, feeling, and purpose. It fosters affection within the home circle and makes for loyalty to the family and its members. Unfortunately, however, play no longer centers so extensively within the home today as it did in earlier times. The reason for this is

not far to seek. It is to be found in that other far reaching cause of our family disintegration, our changing social situation. The shift from an agricultural regime to a machinofacture culture has tended to drive play out of the home. The transition from a rural to an urban life has brought congestion and lack of play space in and around the home. Commercialized urban recreation and entertainment have taken on gigantic proportions and constantly lure the pleasure seeker away from the family hearth. Thus the home is robbed of an integrating influence that it formerly exercised through pleasure and play.

Here again we find opportunity for action for the conservation of the home. With zealous and painstaking effort much can be done again to develop recreational interests within the domestic world. Parents can show greater interest in the hobbies of their children. Grown-ups can participate more in the recreational activities of the little ones. Many of the former indoor games can be reinstated. All such measures would serve to foster a spirit of altruism and help to integrate our family world. They would constitute a genuine contribution towards the conservation of the family. Here, then, is another inviting field for action for those who revere the home.

Then there are also the many apparently trifling attentions towards fellow members within the family circle. These, too, contain great possibilities for fostering familial affection and for integrating the home. Even the observance of the ordinary courtesies and conventions within the home circle can be most influential in developing goodwill and sympathetic feeling between the family members, and thus redound to the good of the home.

If we add to all this the fact that home life holds sway in about nine-tenths of life, that ninety per cent of the interests of parents naturally center in their homes and in their loved ones, we have indeed an impressive picture of the possibilities within the domestic world itself for the development of familial love, for action needed to conserve and integrate the family. Indeed, home life

is by far the most effective means for drawing the individual out of his selfish shell and for developing a spirit of altruism within him. The home is the normal arena for action against the pagan forces that threaten it. It offers to the generality of mankind a most inviting place for effort in behalf of the family.

Not only, however, must the love of self be counteracted by the love of neighbor if family life is to prosper; not only must individualism yield to altruism if the home is to endure. Domestic life needs more than human love if it is to remain permanently integrated. Divine love must find a place to play a part within the familial circle if home life is really to flourish. God's interests must reign supreme and Christ must be King within the domestic empire if the family is to remain worthy of its high origin. Nothing less can assure it harmonious unison and permanent conservation. This implies, of course, a lively faith and unfailing religious observance. More than that, it involves religion's presence within the family circle. It implies giving expression to one's faith through the practice of family devotions and the use of sacred symbols within the home.

But here again we find the hampering influence of our changing social order. The latter has contributed in many ways to the decline of common family prayers and to failure in other religious practices. Yet with due care and earnest effort, these observances can again be made to flourish within the domestic world. Even in the most mobile parts of our cities this is not an impossibility. It is true, of course, this will require more effort than formerly. Yet it will be effort well worth while, for these practices foster divine love within the home; they invite God's grace and blessing; they furnish a sacred field for action for the conservation of the home.

The foregoing considerations intimate that the task of conserving the family demands action on the part of the many rather than on the part of the few. They suggest that without much effort on the part of the generality of families and their members, all other activities in behalf of the home will prove useless and vain.

And yet there is also need for action other than that of the individual within his home. There is need, for example, for organized and community efforts to help and protect the home. There is need for the activities of specialists and experts to solve the problems of family life. There is need for the help of the social institutions if the home is to be conserved. These are the fields mainly of leaders and professionals, yet the generality can lend their influence too. All who are intent upon conserving the family will make use of these opportunities, too. They realize that the home is not only deserving of all their efforts but also that it stands in need of them today.

WHY *the* ENCYCLICAL on CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE

By Rev. James M. Gillis, C.S.P.

THIS preliminary chapter, notwithstanding what may seem an impertinent "why?" in its title, is to be in no sense a justification of the Holy Father's motive in issuing the Encyclical *Casti Connubii*, on Christian marriage. Papal documents need no justification. The pope is never precipitate, never too quickly alarmed. The Catholic Church is not easily stampeded: the head of the Church does not scan the daily papers like a sensation-mongering preacher seeking some new horror as a text for next Sunday's sermon.

Therefore, the word "why" in the caption affixed to this chapter means merely that I shall attempt a brief summary of the conditions that made a new papal proclamation on the sacredness of marriage necessary and inevitable.

Count Keyserling in *The Book of Marriage*¹ published some six years ago speaks of "a complete change in attitude" towards marriage and of "a violent revolt against the former ideals and customs of the marriage relation." It may interest us Americans to know that, speaking in his capacity as a "travelling philosopher," he thinks that the "general uncertainty and instability" about marriage are more marked amongst us than amongst any other people.

Yet the agitation for a change of view and a modification of custom cannot be said to have originated in America. More than forty years ago Ellen Key, the Scandinavian feminist, proclaimed the right to motherhood without marriage, and complete freedom of divorce.

¹ *The Book of Marriage*. A New Interpretation by Twenty-four Leaders of Contemporary Thought. Harcourt, Brace & Company, New York, 1926.

At the time her views were considered extreme, or at least her expression of them over-frank, but in this generation her book would create little comment and indeed some of her contentions for example that mothers must surrender other interests in order to care for their own children, are held antiquated and illiberal by the very school which she founded. "The home is the enemy of woman," wrote W. L. George some twenty years ago, not so much speaking his own mind as summarizing the opinions of the advanced feminists—with whom, by the way, he was in sympathy. And he added that after a thorough study of feminist literature he was convinced that the ultimate object of feminism was the abolition of the home and the family. The two coryphaei of modernism in England, Bernard Shaw and H. G. Wells, with thousands of their devoted satellites, have advocated motherhood without marriage as a complement to marriage without motherhood.

In the half century that has elapsed since the debut of Ellen Key, and her contemporary, Olive Schreiner, modernistic opinion about marriage has "advanced" so rapidly that we have arrived at a condition in which marriage is no longer marriage. His Holiness the Pope says, "Every true marriage carries with it an enduring bond, and every union contracted without that perpetual bond is no marriage at all."²

The conservative G. K. Chesterton (conservative in matters moral if not economic) quite agrees with his radical compeers, Shaw and Wells, that it is folly to talk of the "impending dissolution" of marriage. All three concur in saying that marriage as an institution (apart from the Catholic Church) is already destroyed. "Don't ask me," says Wells, "if I believe that marriage should be abolished. We are abolishing it piecemeal every day."

Further, the Pope, who is evidently *au courant* with the latest matrimonial novelties, speaks of those who "concoct new species of unions suited as they say to the

² *Marriage*. Authorized English Text of the Encyclical Letter of His Holiness Pius XI, National Catholic Welfare Conference, 1931, p. 15.

present temper of men and the times, which various new forms of matrimony they presume to label 'temporary' 'experimental' and 'companionate.'” Such unions are, of course, not marriage in the traditional Christian sense of the word. Indeed there are sociologists, not a few, who eschew the word marriage and speak rather of “mating.” Edward Carpenter, another celebrated pioneer of the new era, insisted that there should be no vows in marriage even for one year. And there was the very accommodating American woman preacher, Anna Howard Shaw, who used to ask the bride and groom what kind of compact they wished to make, and then marry them with the formula of their own choosing. This idea, too, dates from Ellen Key who had written, “Each fresh couple, whatever form they may choose for the cohabitation, must themselves prove its moral claims. Only cohabitation can decide the morality of a certain case.”³

The notion that one cannot determine antecedently whether adultery or fornication be moral or immoral occurs repeatedly in the writings of the new school. “The cramping of love by institutions” (for example by marriage), says Bertrand Russell, “is one of the major evils of the world. Every person who allows himself to think that an adulterer must be wicked adds his stone to the prison in which the source of poetry and beauty and life is incarcerated by priests in black gowns.”⁴ And again, “Relations between adults who are free agents are a private matter and should not be interfered with either by the law or by public opinion, because no outsider can know whether they are good or bad.” Bold though these assertions are, they cannot be called novel. August Bebel, a generation before Bertrand Russell, had said, “The sexual act does not concern morality at all. It is simply a question of individual taste.” Evidently we have come a long way from the *Scarlet Letter* and a still longer way from the Sixth Commandment. Most of the new moralists do not pay the Ten Commandments the

³ *Love and Marriage*, p. 16-17.

⁴ *Our Changing Morality, A Symposium*. Edited by Freda Kirchwey. Albert and Charles Boni, New York, 1924, p. 14-15.

compliment of even adverting to their existence. Ellen Key refers to them only to repudiate them: "The new morality," she says, "no longer accepts commandments from the mounts of Sinai or Galilee. Here as everywhere else evolutionism can only regard continuous experience as revelation."⁵

The idea of an elastic and ever-varying sex-morality is expressed grandiloquently by Isabel Leavenworth (professor in Barnard College): "Sex experiences," she says, "like other experiences can be judged of only on the basis of the part they play in the *creative drama of the individual soul* (I take the liberty of italicizing a particularly poetic phrase). There are as many possibilities of successful sex-life as there are men and women in the world. A significant single standard can be attained only through the habit of judging every case, man or woman in the light of the character of the individual and of the particular circumstances in which he or she is placed."⁶ Such euphemisms as "poetry, beauty and life," and "creative drama of the individual soul," used to describe what have been hitherto more bluntly called sins of the flesh are characteristic of the literature of the subject. And the hopeless confusion of ethical ideas is even more characteristic. Perhaps the limit is reached by one commentator upon Ellen Key, J. B. Kerfoot, who expresses a doubt as to whether we should not call it a sin when the spirit conquers the flesh.

It must be remarked that the logic of those who love to call themselves the "new" moralists is quite as uncertain as their ethics. Miss Leavenworth, for example, speaks of a "single standard" in the same breath with the declaration that there are and must be as many moral standards as there are men and women in the world, and she seems altogether unaware that her logic and her ethics are equally nihilistic.

Bertrand Russell, who used to be considered a professional logician, seems to feel the necessity of defending the thesis of an elastic sex-morality by an appeal to

⁵ *Love and Marriage*, p. 52.

⁶ *Our Changing Morality*, p. 101.

scientific anthropology. "Economic causes," he says, "determine whether a tribe will practice polygamy, polyandry, group marriage, or monogamy, and whether monogamy will be lifelong or dissoluble."⁷ And Ellen Key, who is particularly fascinated with the idea of moral evolution, demands that "individuals should be granted that liberty which was allowed to the same nation at different periods, namely, the liberty within certain limits of choosing its own form of sexual life."⁸

These few examples of the complete demoralization of sex-ethics may suffice. They can be augmented *ad lib* by anyone who has the industry and the patience to read the newspapers and the magazines of the day and the slightly more pretentious bound volumes that may be found in any bookshop or even on tables in the "drug stores" (significant word) which cater to the popular taste. It is not too much to say that we have arrived at a condition of chaos. And, says Miss Freda Kirchwey in the introduction to the symposium already cited, "No one seeks to argue chaos away. . . . Men and women are ignoring old laws. In their relations with each other they are living according to tangled, conflicting codes. Remnants of early admonitions and relationships, the dictates of custom, the behavior of their friends, their own tastes and desires, elusive dreams of a loveliness not provided for by rules—all these are scrambling to fill the gap that was left when Right and Wrong finally followed the other absolute monarchs to an empty, nominal existence somewhere in exile."⁹

Naturally the chaotic condition of the theory and practice of marriage has been reflected in the legislation of the day. An unholy rivalry exists among nations, and even amongst states within nations, all striving to make marriage unstable, divorce cheap and easy and the family impossible.

Time was when Reno occupied a position of supremacy as the purveyor of quick and convenient divorces. But

⁷ *Our Changing Morality*, p. 17, interpreting Mueller-Lyer.

⁸ *Love and Marriage*, p. 6-7.

⁹ *Our Changing Morality*, p. vi.

the state of Arkansas entered into the competition and lured away some of the profits from Nevada. Then Yucatan in Mexico underbid them both and sold divorces for \$25 spot cash. Russia makes it still easier and cheaper to get rid of one's "husband" or "wife" and—latest in the ungodly game—is the new Spanish Republic which provides divorces on demand.

In view of these facts and tendencies, any further delay upon the part of the Pope in the attempt to set the world straight on the question of marriage, the home and family might well seem sinful. A clear, forceful reaffirmation of the spiritual and religious purport of the Holy Sacrament of Matrimony was imperatively demanded.

PREPARATION *for* MARRIAGE

By Rev. Felix M. Kirsch, O.M.Cap., Ph.D., Litt.D.

POPE PIUS XI tells us that the happiness of married life "depends in large measure on the due preparation, remote and proximate, of the parties for marriage: for it cannot be denied that the basis of a happy wedlock, and the ruin of an unhappy one, are prepared in the souls of boys and girls during the period of childhood and adolescence."

His Holiness goes on to explain why it is necessary to begin thus early to educate boys and girls for marriage. Marriage does not make our young people over. After marriage they will generally be what they were before. Consequently, if before marriage they were self-willed and sensual, they will be the same after they are joined in wedlock. In fact, matters will probably be worse after the two young people with their unconquered passions have been joined in the bonds of matrimony for life, because they will then be reaping what they have sown in their early years. Therefore we need not be surprised to find in their home, as the Pope reminds us, "sadness, lamentation, mutual contempt, strifes, estrangements, and weariness of living together under one roof."

Hence the plain duty of all who are charged with the education of the young—parents, priests, and teachers—is to begin as early as possible with the proper preparation for marriage. The home has the first opportunity in this respect. But how could we expect parents to prepare their children properly for marriage if they themselves have a worldly view of the sacrament of matrimony? And how widespread even among our Catholic parents is the ignorance of the rights and duties of Catholic marriage.

Our priests should therefore heed the regulation laid down by Canon 1,018 of the Code of Canon Law: "Let the pastor not fail to instruct his people prudently about

matrimony and the matrimonial impediments." Now "instruct," here means more than elementary instruction. It does not mean merely the hurried and perfunctory *instructio sponsorum* on the eve of the marriage. Some priests would seem to expect too much from the half-hour's instruction given on the eve of the wedding to a young couple when they are dizzy with love and distracted with thoughts about temporal and secular affairs. The pastor may speak to them with the voice of a prophet, and the young man and woman may be hearing his every word, but they fail to grasp what the priest is saying. Their minds are busy with other things.

As an observation on this point, we are often grieved to learn that the minds of our young people have been poisoned by those who should have their best interests at heart and we are shocked at the attitude of some mothers who abuse their great influence by spreading the malicious propaganda of naturalism. In such cases the pastor's short instruction to prospective brides and grooms is futile in its effects—his advice has come too late.

view In view of these facts, we recognize the wisdom of the rule obtaining in some dioceses that every pastor must give six instructions previous to the marriage. At all events let no priest imagine that his people are sufficiently informed on the subject of Catholic marriage if the matter has been dealt with in mission sermons, or in a Lenten course of conferences. These means have been tried and have not proved adequate.

Some time ago the present writer submitted the following question to 500 pastors: *What means would you suggest as helpful in educating our young people to have clear and adequate knowledge of, and training for, Catholic marriage?* The replies received from 460 pastors were tabulated into 5 groups, and have been published in the writer's book, *Sex Education and Training for Chastity* (New York, Benziger Brothers, pp. 431 ff.).

The limitations of space prevent us from quoting extensively from the replies received. Suffice it therefore to say that the respondents insisted that the priest may never fail to give in the confessional whatever information may be required by his married or unmarried penitents.

In the pulpit, too, the priest must deal explicitly with the Catholic doctrine on marriage and birth control. With regard to individual instruction, it was stated that the priest must make certain that young people marrying are fully instructed about their rights and duties. Much could be accomplished if no couple were married until the priest had made sure that both parties had read and understood some good Catholic book on marriage, for instance, *Plain Talks on Marriage* by Father Fulgence Meyer, O.F.M., (St. Francis Book Shop, Cincinnati, Ohio). Since so many marriages turn out unhappy because of the prevalence of the social diseases, those about to marry should voluntarily offer to each other a certificate indicating freedom from communicable disease.

While carrying out these and other specific suggestions, the pastor may never lose sight of the fact that the preparation for marriage is but one phase of a larger campaign. The Pope insists that the low standard of present-day marriage is only one phase of the naturalism that is threatening to destroy all Christian ideals. The pastor, therefore, while preparing his young people for Catholic marriage, may not content himself with the sporadic instructing and warning, but must attack the evil at the root, drive out naturalism, and be consistent in preaching and practising the Gospel of Christ Crucified. He must make it plain to his congregation that the Gospel of Christ Crucified must not only be preached in the pulpit and confessional, but must also be practised in the heart of the home, in the market place, in the shop, in the office, in the press, and in the thousand other ramifications of Catholic life. But such consistency is impossible without complete character education of both young and old.

The Catholic home could and should do much more to provide such character education. But with the breaking-up of so much of our Catholic home life, our schools must shoulder even more than their due share of Catholic character education. Let our Catholic schools therefore do all they can in this direction. In each and every school—whether elementary, secondary, or higher—the young people should be trained to know and to prac-

tice Christian self-denial. The Catholic doctrine on vocation should be studiously inculcated. Vocation is not what the creature desires but what the Creator demands. Vocation means answering the call of God. Consequently, if the individual is to realize his God-given vocation, he must strive to occupy that niche for which the Lord has destined him from all eternity.

In this connection we must refer to the mistake made frequently not only by religious teachers but by priests as well when dealing with the subject of vocation. Is it not true that all too often both priests and sisters regard as a vocation only the calling to the priesthood or to the religious life? In consequence the children receive the impression, generally retained through life, that marriage is an unworthy thing, and thus they never rise to the heights of the sublime view that both Christ and the Church have of the state ennobled by a special sacrament.

More specific preparation for marriage should begin on the high-school level. It is then that the child discovers the other sex and that he is passing through the fire and water of the fiercest temptation. It might prove fatal in many a case to ignore the fact that adolescent boys and girls are thinking and discussing problems of sex. A research project recently conducted at the Catholic University in Washington produced evidence that the subject of marriage and home-making appealed in the fourth year of the Catholic high school to 75 per cent of the boys and to 80 per cent of the girls. The topic of morals has a frequency of 68 per cent in the first year for boys and increases to 86 per cent in the fourth year, while the frequency in the girls' table ranges from 72 per cent in the first year to 93 per cent in the fourth year. The appeal of the topic of mixed marriages ranges from 41 per cent in the first year to 73 per cent in the fourth year for boys, and from 68 per cent in the first year to 73 per cent in the fourth year for girls.* During the past scholastic year the present writer conducted a question box in connection with a high school and found that 80

*Sister M. Antonia, S.D.P., *Religious Instruction in the Catholic High School*, Washington, D. C., 1930, Ch. X.

per cent of the questions dealt with moral and marriage problems. How futile there for the teacher of religion in the Catholic high school to ignore a subject that is of vital concern to these young people not only during the period of their schooling but especially after they leave the safeguards of this Catholic environment.

It is true, both priests and teachers will often be at sea as to how they ought to meet the needs of these adolescents. However, so long as the priest succeeds in having the young people continue frequent in the reception of the sacraments, he will have in the confessional abundant opportunity for the individual direction that is so essential. In Holy Communion the adolescents will find the support that will not only carry them safely through these critical years, but will also give them reserve strength and habits for their later married life. The teacher on his part will find it helpful to make available to his students the question box. Here the boys and girls will have an opportunity of revealing their individual needs and doubts.

To sum up: the preparation for marriage should include a broad Catholic character education, the training in habits of prayer and the frequent reception of the sacraments, the instilling of a high appreciation of the vocation to marriage, the giving of proper information on sex both at the proper time and by the proper authority, and practical information regarding the building of happy homes. Given such a preparation for marriage, the young people should be well fitted under God for the important task of choosing their life partners.

On this head, too, Pope Pius XI offers pertinent and practical advice. He counsels wisely that those about to enter wedlock should pray diligently for divine help, so that they may make their choice in accordance with Christian prudence, not indeed led by the blind and unrestrained impulse of lust, nor by any desires of riches or other base influence, but by a true and noble love and by a sincere affection for their future partner. It is well that the Pope insists that the young people should not omit to ask the prudent advice of their parents with regard to selecting the partner for life. Nor should they

fail betimes to take into their confidence their pastor whose experience may well fit him to prevent their making serious mistakes in choosing the one person who is to be primarily their helpmate in reaching heaven. In his instructions to young people, the priest must stress the sacred character of Catholic marriage. The priest must offer telling proof that love and marriage are not things to play with, or to take lightly. He may use plain language to bring home to his charges the fact that those who fall in love easily are apt to fall out of love quite as readily. Many unhappy marriages can be traced to the circumstances that adolescents are rather prone to "fall" in love. Our Catholic youth should recognize that being in love implies the realization that here is a life-partner—a realization that calls for serious adjustments. The new state of life is not to be entered into lightly, certainly not a situation to *fall* into!

With regard to the large subject of courtship, we cannot do better than to quote the old rule of the theologians: Company keeping will be proper if these conditions are observed: (1) there must be the intention to marry; (2) there must be a probability or at least a possibility of marriage; (3) the proprieties must be observed.

CHIEF EVILS *of* MODERN MARRIAGE

By Patrick J. Ward

CHRIST, says our Holy Father, ordained in an especial manner that marriage should be "the principle and foundation of domestic society and therefore of all human intercourse."* At the same time, He restored marriage "to the original purity of its divine institution" by making it a sacrament of the New Law.

The failure of the world to recognize this fundamental principle and this divine character of marriage gives rise to those modern evils which threaten with extinction the Christian family and the society which is built upon it and depends upon it for continuance and stability.

Even though men may deny the *sacramental* nature of marriage, still *natural* marriage retains its binding character and is subject to the divine law. It is of divine origin and can not be dissolved at will by any individual, by mutual consent of the parties, or by the civil power.

Some believe that in denying this sacramental character of matrimony and in acknowledging the married state simply as fulfilling a function of nature, marriage becomes a convention, which may be regulated, changed, or discarded entirely at the whim of society. The false assumption is that men may change or thwart the course of nature as they please or as they are able to do without any consideration of the relation between the natural order and the divine order of things.

Man and his intelligence is wrongly assumed to be in constant conflict with nature. From this false premise flows the belief that nature must in some way or other be changed or frustrated in order to bring it into the service of man.

*All quotations are from the *Casti Conubii* Encyclical.

Man comes into conflict with nature as the laws of nature are ignored or distorted. The divine law is the law of nature and of man's intelligence, and in so far as man departs from the law he conflicts with the divine purpose of nature and destroys its harmony. When those who recognize in marriage only a natural, in the sense of a physical, function attempt to sustain society on that understanding, they overlook the abiding principle which society has long accepted in the development of its jurisprudence, namely, the identity of the divine and the natural law. That principle is expressed in our own charter of American liberty which speaks of the "law of nature and of nature's God."

From the denial of the divine character of marriage comes two of our greatest social evils, divorce and deliberate frustration of conception, both leading directly to the disintegration and dissolution of society. We hear outside the Church much condemnation of these two growing evils. Their bad moral and social results are evident in many ways. They are condemned because they are not in the interest of society. They are seldom arraigned and denounced, outside the Church, because they are in conflict with the law of God. The material welfare of society and national prestige are the motives which seek to keep a balanced order in society.

In the words of our Holy Father "there are those who, striving as it were to ride a middle course, believe, nevertheless, that something should be conceded in our time as regards certain precepts of the divine and natural law. But these likewise, more or less wittingly, are emissaries of the great enemy who is ever seeking to sow cockle among the wheat."

Excuses are advanced for divorce as they are for birth control "that the laws, institutions and customs by which wedlock is governed, since they take their origin solely from the will of man, are subject entirely to him, hence can and must be founded, changed and abrogated according to human caprice and the shifting circumstances of human affairs; that the generative power which is grounded in nature itself is more sacred and has wider range

than matrimony—hence it may be excused both outside as well as within the confines of wedlock.”

Christian marriage is a figure of the union between Christ and the Church. That which disrupts the true Christian marriage breaks down the union between man and wife and Christ, and in consequence between society and Christ. To preserve the marriage union requires unity of spirit and not merely union of body “for where there exists diversity of mind, truth and feeling the bond of union of mind and heart is wont to be broken, or at least weakened.”

The spirit of the world then which endeavors to separate man from Christ that it may accomplish his perdition seeks to justify not only divorce, but encourages in marriage a false independence of husband and wife often fatal to domestic tranquility. It praises particularly a supposed independence in religious viewpoints which ignores the friendly but serious counsel of the Church in warning of mixed marriages. The mixed marriage in the majority of cases is a source of spiritual danger and scandal not only to the parties of the contract but to the offspring of such marriage. The mixed marriage makes it specially difficult to avoid sinful relations and makes almost impossible family peace and happiness where one party or the other believes in the practice of contraception.

The mixed marriage very often is a step in the direction of separation and divorce with ensuing evil results to the souls of both parties. Further, it encourages that view which denies marriage its sacramental character. Those who hold that marriage is a civil contract or an arrangement which may be voided on mutual consent of the parties, see no reason why a marriage between a Catholic and a non-Catholic should not be contracted without regard to religious or moral beliefs or ecclesiastical laws.

In favor of divorce it is argued that the innocent party should have the right to separate from the guilty party, but the insincerity of such an argument and the uselessness of such action is disclosed by the claim that the guilty

party should have the right to withdraw from the union if it is displeasing to that party. Such a claim can be only viewed in most cases as a dishonest excuse for relations outside the marriage bond. The guilty party has quite evidently no intention from the beginning to be loyal to the marriage bond, knowing well that because of the easy path to divorce, there is no effectual bar to indiscriminate sexual relations. Relations between the guilty one and a new partner will not be any more permanent or loyal than in the case of the first.

No claim for divorce can legitimately be laid to the welfare of the children of an unhappy or disloyal marriage. In nine cases out of ten those who enter such marriages and seek to leave them on the slightest provocation take means to have no children. Where there are children at least equal damage is done both to their spiritual and material welfare by the divorce as by the dissatisfaction inside the union.

But the law of God and the indissolubility of a properly contracted marriage can not in the slightest degree be weakened or set aside by such claims. A lawful marriage including that legitimately contracted by non-Catholics before the civil authorities "can never be deprived of its force by the decrees of men, the ideas of a people, or the will of any legislator."

The practice of contraceptive birth control, like that of divorce, has arisen from the same utter disregard for the law of God and the sacramental sanctity of marriage. Offspring is not desired so that there may be no interference with freedom of action and improper conduct either inside or outside the marriage bond.

Specious arguments are advanced from a social and economic point of view which if analyzed prove to have as their inspiring motive even more selfish and dishonest reasons than divorce. "But," states the Holy Father, "no reason, however grave, may be put forward by which anything intrinsically against nature may become conformable to nature and morally good." Therefore, he has declared, "any use whatsoever of matrimony exercised in such a way that the act is deliberately frustrated in its natural power to generate life is an offense against

the law of God and of nature, and those who indulge in such are branded with the guilt of a grave sin."

As the law of God and of nature forbids the sinful frustration of the conception of life so does it also condemn abortion or the taking or destruction of life after conception. Neither medical science nor public authority has any right to destroy the innocent life in the womb, to accomplish "the direct murder of the innocent." The progress of medicine and surgery has shown on many occasions that life may be preserved which in the past it had been considered impossible to save. Means have been discovered by which may be successfully accomplished a parturition which a few years ago meant the sacrifice of an innocent life. In the United States today medicine is faced with a shameful and inexcusable record of infant and maternal mortality which, it is admitted, can in large measure be avoided or greatly reduced.

The false conception of the law of nature and of the relation between our natural functions and the moral order of things has led not only to frustration of the legitimate purpose of marriage, but has also been the cause in recent years of the removal or rendering sterile of the organs of reproduction. God is forgotten in the function of creation. Contraception, abortion, and sterilization thus unite to defy the purpose of the Creator and the cooperation with Him of the created.

As the Sovereign Pontiff points out the individual soul and the family is vastly more sacred than the state. Indeed if their sacred rights are to be ignored and trampled upon the ultimate breakdown of the state is the inevitable result. "Public magistrates have no direct power over the bodies of their subjects," and therefore, where there is no question of crime or punishment they cannot "directly harm or tamper with the integrity of the body either for eugenics or for any other reason."

"Christian doctrine establishes and the light of human reason makes it most clear that private individuals have no other power over the members of their bodies than that which pertains to their natural ends." There is nothing more certain from medical experience than that men cannot ignore or abuse the laws of nature without

complete breakdown of bodily functions and eventual dissolution in death. As certain is the result of the abuse of the moral law which not only becomes evident in the individual but in society of which he constitutes a part.

THE CHURCH *and* *the* DIGNITY *of* WOMAN

By Grace H. Sherwood

ONCE, as a young and immature girl, I accompanied an older friend to a sermon by a noted Catholic orator of that time. The church was huge and packed, even to its aisles, with men and women who sat spell-bound under the power of the preacher's eloquence. In the course of his remarks he spoke of the changes which the gospel had wrought in the pagan civilization of Christ's time, ending with, "And the woman heard and lifted up her head."

It was a Good Friday sermon and those few words were, I dare say, merely an aside. Perhaps they remained that to most of the others there, the day being what it was. But to myself, still in my teens, enjoying all the freedom that women enjoy nowadays, they were startling. "What did he mean?" I asked myself, going home, knowing little then of the long centuries of degradation and oppression which had been the lot of women before the Christian era. All the rest of the sermon, moving as I remember it to have been, faded quickly from my mind but those few words remained. The man who uttered them has been dead for several years but long before he died I had found the answer to the question he raised in my young mind that spring night.

For the history of the Catholic Church is the story of a long battle waged for the dignity of woman under the new dispensation. She found woman the slave and chattel of man; she found her the victim of laws which deprived her of the right to dispose of her person, her life or the children that she bore. And steadily, the Church labored to change these laws, to infuse the spirit of her own law into the code of every country into which her

missionaries penetrated. And that law was that men and women, equally, are the children of God.

Inch by inch, century by century, she fought for the rights of her daughters as well as her sons, beating down, one by one, the ancient customs which had enslaved women, clearing out the muck of polygamy, divorce, concubinage, raising woman to be man's partner in the marriage state, where before she had been but the creature of his fancy, to be discarded when her charms grew stale. So steadily did she work that in spite of the ruin of the Roman empire and the hordes of barbarians that swept over Europe by the tenth century her law of indissoluble marriage, so distasteful to the lust of man, had been incorporated into the civil legislation of every country of Europe. Divorce, with its attendant evils, came back only with the Protestant revolt.

It was the law of the Church, not the civil law, which first declared that a woman ought not to be given in marriage without her consent. It was the Church which first declared a widow had the right to marry again, although the Justinian code forbade it. The Church led and, after a while, the civil codes fell in line with her teachings. At the first council of the Church in England, in 673, the bishops declared openly for indissoluble marriage, quoting older canons of the Church in support of their position. Divorce, that is for the man, was common among almost all savage tribes. Christianizing them, the Church eliminated divorce and made the wife's position secure and honored.

For the Church has always had Mary in mind, Mary full of Grace, Mary, the beginning of Christianity, one may say in all reverence. God had appointed men to be rulers and priests, but it was to a woman not to a man that the angel, Gabriel, was sent to say that the long time of waiting for a Redeemer was over. Gabriel, the archangel, stood before the simple maid of Nazareth, and when he left her the chains of contempt with which men had loaded women since the world began commenced to fall asunder, although none knew it as yet.

Apparently, the world went on as before. The priests in the temple who would have scoffed, no doubt, at the

thought of a village girl being taken into the confidence of God, went about their duties in the temple that *her* Son would soon cause to fall about their ears; merchants sold their wares; men crowded the streets as usual; even Joseph agonized in secret, not knowing what to do. But Mary told no one, not even Joseph. The thing that had happened to her was a secret of the Most High. He, in His own way, would straighten out whatever difficulties it brought with it. Full of it, she journeyed swiftly to another woman, her kinswoman, busy only about the business of her sex.

And so, not to the notables of earth but to a woman, Elizabeth, was the actual presence of the Redeemer upon earth first made known. Her husband, Zachary, was a high priest and entitled, one would say, to such an honor. But he had failed in faith and had been smitten dumb for his incredulity. Now he sat in silence while his wife and her cousin, Mary, spoke of the wonders of God. Elizabeth and Mary spoke together and today, after 2,000 years, what they said, two obscure women greeting each other, is still echoed by millions of tongues every day, every hour. Popes, bishops, kings and martyrs die with the name of Mary on their lips and Elizabeth's prophetic "Blessed are thou among women" to give them hope. The vesper service is intoned in lofty cathedrals; and Mary's "My soul doth magnify the Lord" gladdens hearts today as it did hers then. No wonder that the Church with unerring wisdom, has incorporated these words of theirs into her liturgy.

Nor has the Church stopped with incorporating these words to and by the Blessed Virgin into the services by which she moves men's hearts. She points to Mary always as her greatest. Wise and holy men have walked the earth in countless thousands since Mary's time but the Virgin of Nazareth shines out, in her sinlessness, above them all. And the wisest of men and the holiest have been the readiest, always, to proclaim her eminence, and loving her, to honor all women for her sake.

The Church has been the friend of women because Christ, her Founder, was. It was to the respect of a

woman, His Mother, that we owe the lovely beginning of miracles that was done in Cana of Galilee, performed to set her mind at rest about a question of hospitality, a woman's concern. And the Church, remembering that Christ answered her wish so promptly, bids us go to Mary when in difficulty.

Likewise the Church has preserved for us, in the gospels, the story of Claudia Procula, the wife of Pontius Pilate, who was the only one to raise a voice in behalf of Christ on the terrible night of His passion. In the same gospel, it is told that men had been His companions and friends and had shared with Him the Bread of Life that very night, but amidst the tumult of Pilate's judgment hall there was no one to defend Him but her, "Have nothing to do with this just man." Similarly the Church has preserved the story of Magdalene at the tomb, the first to be gladdened by the sight of Christ's glorified face, a woman whom men, having brought her to what she was, spurned. Each has her place in the Gospel, the purest, the ordinary, the worst of women, each emphasizing, in her own way, that woman had her part to play as well as man.

The Catholic woman knows that there is room in the Church for all, for the great and the little, the gifted and the ignorant, the virgin, the widow and the wife. Does the world talk of feminism? The Catholic woman remembers that before the word was coined there was Catherine of Sienna, there was the great Theresa, there was the Abbess, Hilda, to whom men journeyed to be taught—all proving that intellect, courage, ability, vision, holiness, any great quality, can be the dower of women as well as men. One of our glorious saints, Joan of Arc, was the very quintessence of feminism. "There are enough to cook and to sow," she retorts as she sallies forth to save her country.

But woman's greatest privilege, after all, her supreme and abiding privilege is that of motherhood, sanctified for all time by the Divine Maternity of Mary. All lesser privileges lead up to it, exist because of it. Moreover, most of the work that women do most happily is some extension of motherhood, when we examine it narrowly.

But this privilege of motherhood has its price as does every privilege, every honor. Above the road to it is set the sign of sacrifice. Everywhere upon it is to be found, suffering, toil, self-forgetfulness. Motherhood is the result of marriage, and marriage, to be successful, means the subordination of the wife's interests to that of her husband's. The Pope has put it another way but every happily married woman knew it before he spoke. There *is* an order in marriage, as in everything else in life. And in that order the husband's interests come first. To make a home for him, to encourage him and comfort him, to have children, God willing, these are the first duties of a married woman. After they are done, properly, then can come outside things, the cultivation of what talents she may possess. But when outside things interfere with home life, *they* must be curtailed, not home duties.

It sounds like a hard law, to some women. But life is not easy, at the best, and hardly ever for women. And after all one is free to choose, marriage or freedom from this subordination of personal interests. But once having chosen the path is clear.

BLESSINGS *of* MARRIAGE

By Rev. Albert F. Kaiser, C.P.P.S.

MARRIAGE is a contract between a man and a woman who by free and untrammelled mutual consent enter a spiritual and physical relationship, whose primary purpose, which may never be withheld nor directly thwarted, is the procreation and education of children. Secondary ends, which likewise justify marriage and its use, are mutual aid and relief from concupiscence. By nature and divine institution, this contract, once made and consummated, is one and indissoluble. For Christians, it is a sacrament.

This sacred institution derives from God, who created man male and female and bade them leave father and mother and cling to each other, as two in one flesh, for what God hath joined together, let no man put asunder. God likewise laid down the indispensable ends for which it was established, the sacred laws that must govern it and the rich blessings that flow from it. These very ends, laws and blessings are one with marriage and inseparable from it. One cannot truly consent to marriage without at least implicitly intending to act in accordance with nature and divine law. The brazen intention to exclude children, to ignore conjugal fidelity, to break the bond at will, or to spurn the sacramental form, renders the attempt not only sinful and vicious but even null and void from the beginning. Real marriage cannot therefore be contracted as a mere childless, triangular, temporary, secular affair.

As instituted by God, who knows human nature and human needs far better than short-sighted "rational" animals, marriage is not a mere venture or temporary expedient, much less an experiment; but rather a fixed permanent state, arising from a physical and spiritual bond, with exclusive rights and inclusive duties. Exclusiveness protects conjugal fidelity. Inclusiveness, strik-

ing a balance between rights and obligations, prevents mere gratification for its own sake. Stability tends to keep the bond sacred and secure.

The benefits flowing from an unbreakable bond are quite obvious to anyone who is willing to disengage himself from self-interest and emotion and look at the matter objectively in the light of social and spiritual welfare.

First, the spouses possess a positive guarantee of the enduringness of this stability which a generous yielding of persons and an intimate fellowship of hearts by nature strongly require, since true love is everlasting.

Secondly, a strong bulwark is set up against incitements to infidelity, should any be encountered from within or from without; all anxious fear lest in adversity or old age the other spouse would prove unfaithful is precluded and in its place there reigns a calm sense of security.

Thirdly, stability tends to maintain conjugal and parental dignity and the ascendancy of the spiritual outlook which in turn guards moral integrity and domestic virtue.

Fourthly, mutual aid is guaranteed, and secured. Lovers, who from the very beginning realize that marriage makes companions for life, since the divine law tolerates no divorce, will make an honest effort to obtain a suitable and dependable mate. Once married, they are more likely to appreciate the all-important psychological fact that happiness lies in their own hands, depending to a very great extent upon mutual understanding, sympathy, aid.

Fifthly: only in an atmosphere of unassailable stability can parents muster up sufficient mutual trust to shoulder the responsibility connected with the physical upbringing and spiritual training of children, especially nowadays when social and economic instability keep one guessing about his next job or next meal.

Sixthly: The continuance of Church and State rests on the unshakable firmness of the home, which is the one mother cell of domestic, social, religious life.

A second blessing closely connected with stability and

designed to buttress the natural firmness with a supernatural "prop" is contained in the sacramental graces, to which Christians have a right in virtue of the sacrament. Considering all the innate and acquired difficulties of married life, we can easily understand why the Son of God, in His broad sympathy and deep love for fallen man, elevated the natural union to a sacramental one. If natural marriage to a great extent had failed, it was because men refused to invite God to the marriage feast to bless their union. Christ attended the marriage feast of Cana and probably on this occasion sanctified marriage with sacramental graces. We recall this scene not merely because He provided a little wine but also a great sacrament, through which human love was to be consecrated to higher and nobler ends. And the sacrament was to be an efficacious sign and source of that peculiar internal grace perfecting that which is naturally imperfect; sanctifying what naturally tends to gratification; supernaturalizing the sentimental, spiritualizing the carnal, confirming what nature already made an indissoluble union. (See Trid Council. Session XXIV.)

Christian marriage, stable and sacramental, therefore opens up to the faithful who with sincere mind and pure heart enter the contract, a treasure of sacramental grace from which flows the supernatural power to live holy lives and persevere in the faithful performance of conjugal and parental duties. The sacrament, when received in the state of grace and without any impediment of divine or ecclesiastical law and according to the prescribed form, not only increases the permanent principle of the supernatural life—namely sanctifying grace, but also adds particular gifts, dispositions, seeds of grace. The latter elevate and perfect the natural powers in such a way that the parties are assisted not only in understanding but in knowing intimately, in adhering to firmly, in willing effectively, and in successfully carrying out the aims and ideals of the sacramental contract. We call these things seeds of grace in so far as they convey actual assisting grace, when the need arises. Like seeds, they give one the right to expect fruit in due season.

A third blessing of Christian marriage is unity, or ex-

clusiveness. Marriage makes man and wife two in one flesh so that conjugal union belongs by right and privilege exclusively to these two. No other may step in between to mar love's holy compact or share love's intimacies. Deliberate infidelity, whether in desire or in act, is a heinous crime against the marriage contract, since thereby the sanctity of the bond is defiled and dragged into the mire.

There is a four-fold infidelity to be rigidly guarded against; the unreasonable refusal of conjugal rights to one's lawful spouse, the shameful advancing or cowardly yielding to a third party, the deliberate abuse of sex, whether solitary or mutual, the artificial and unnatural interference with birth or conception by positive means or interceptive devices. Infidelity to the divine law of chastity, hiding under the veil of respectability, becomes all the more despicable.

Peace and harmony require oneness in authority, or as St. Augustine calls it, order of love. This order includes primacy of the husband with regard to the wife and children, and the ready subjection and willing obedience of the wife. As regards obedience, the wife is by no means the slave or chattel of her husband. Hers is the dignity of a human being, the position of a life-companion and life-partner. She is not to be treated as a minor or dependent but as an equal, worthy of confidence, consideration and respect. If the husband renders himself incapable or unworthy or in any way neglects his duty, it falls to the wife to take his place in directing the family. As a matter of order, the structure of the family and its fundamental law established by God must always and everywhere be maintained intact.

The divine law positively establishes marriage as one and inseparable and the Christian dispensation makes it a sacrament. Whether a particular marriage is blessed with children or not, man and wife remain one and inseparable unto death. Unity and indissolubility are positive divine law. The law of offspring, however, is not a positive command in the strict sense, since men and women are free to marry or not to marry, and once married are free to use or (with mutual consent) refrain from using

conjugal relations, presupposing a worthy cause and unblemished conduct. Because God told Adam and Eve to increase and multiply and fill the earth, one need not conclude that this was necessarily a command at all, much less a universal one. St. Thomas and other theologians interpret it as a counsel and a blessing.

To bring children into the world and rear them in a truly Christian home, adorning their impressionable minds and hearts with the science of the saints, conducting them by precept and example to the highest reaches of virtue, to say nothing of the self-evident duty of educating them for some honorable worldly career, if not unto a religious vocation, should they be so inclined and adapted, is indeed a privilege and an honor.

Around the hearth-fire of love glows the innate and almost divine love for children. Children complete, perfect and bless a home. Little bundles of love, little packages of sunshine, dropping from heaven into the self-sacrificing lap of motherhood:

A partnership with God is motherhood;
 What strength, what purity, what self-control,
 What love, what wisdom should belong to her
 Who helps God fashion an immortal soul.

Fathers and mothers, as it were, help God in creating new life and in sanctifying that life by their guidance of the child to the Church and Christ's sacraments. To educate and train children for heaven is an occupation worthy of the highest angels. What else are parents but God's intermediaries in a physical way as the ordained priest is in a spiritual way!

This wonderful privilege, entailing as it does many burdens—which true love makes a joy—may be used only by men and women who are joined in wedlock according to the divine law and ecclesiastical form. Catholics, to enjoy this honor, must be married by the Church's official witness, the priest.

Only those are truly married in the sight of God, who like Tobias and Sarah, wed for the sake of offspring, not merely for self-indulgence. Self-sacrifice, self-forgetfulness, the power to do without—these and similar Christian virtues must be reinstated, before smiling, fair-eyed,

happy children, like morning sunshine, find a welcome in the modern home.

Selfishness with much can do little, but love with little can do much. We never learn the sweetness and richness of life until we realize what it means to live for others—to pray, to labor, to sacrifice for others—yea, for our own flesh and blood, our own dear little ones, our own types and representatives for the future. Nothing is eternal but love—the love of God which inspires self-devotion to others.

PRESERVING *the* INTEGRITY of MARRIED LIFE

By Mabel H. Mattingly

THE fullness of the efficacy of any sacrament depends on our cooperation, on our entering into the spirit of the sacrament, which is ultimately the spirit of Christ Himself. This spirit, naturally, we find only in the Church which is the continuation of the living Christ. If we are Catholic not only in word but in the interpretation of all knowledge, there is special appeal in the beautiful and inspiring words of our Holy Father in reference to the spiritual remedies for the abuses of marriage. With simple clarity he lays down the firmly established principle that "whatever things have deviated from their right order can not be brought back to that original state which is in harmony with their nature except by a return to the divine plan." Man must subject himself to God and by the aid of divine grace overcome the power of unbridled lust. "Due preparation remote and proximate" is suggested as an essential requisite for the continuing and beneficial effects of the sacrament.

Nearly a quarter of a century ago, a well-known priest addressing the graduates of a Catholic college for women, closed his inspiring baccalaureate sermon with these words: "*Be women of prayer and I will answer for you.*" No one who was privileged to hear his voice on that occasion could have failed to be impressed with the challenge of this spiritual preparation for a life of activity in the world. It is doubtful, however, how far such an appeal can be effective with adults if the habit of prayer has not been established in early childhood. Peace of soul is necessary as a foundation of fruitful activity. Not only in the case of the great saints whose lives have been recorded, but many of the most successful married couples, whose heroic histories will never be written, know full well the

mainspring of their accomplishments. They attribute whatever success they have attained to the fact that God is acting through them. By prayer and mortification they have achieved that intimate union with God which gives balance not only to their thoughts but to their actions. The spiritual influence which radiates from the sacramental life of the Church is a true source of strength. Unless man can discern with certainty what are the laws of the Church, the restoration of these laws in the divine harmony can not be brought about.

“For this reason, Christ Himself made the Church the teacher of truth in those things which concern the right regulation of moral conduct . . . a filial and humble obedience towards the Church should be combined with devotedness in God.”

It may not be amiss to mention in passing that when our Holy Father speaks of the Church as teacher, he is likewise mindful that the interpretation of knowledge must rest with those who may have all the attributes of holiness, but who may fail as teachers. There is a grave danger of routinization which must be constantly guarded against. Who, indeed, could understand the full interpretation of the words of Cardinal Bellarmine, quoted in the encyclical and fail to exemplify in his life all of its beautiful implication. “For it is a sacrament like to that of the Eucharist, which not only when it is being conferred but also while it remains, is a sacrament; for as long as the marriage parties are alive, so long is their union a sacrament of Christ and the Church.”

Just as the crystallized thought and prayer of the saints and martyrs of the centuries have served in that great prayer of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass to provoke that sublime entreaty “*Sursum Corda*,” so the meditations of the laity will, under the guidance of those imbued with a true teaching spirit, with equal fervor make the joyful response—“*Habemus ad Dominum*.”

One of the most beautiful passages in the encyclical concerns itself with the necessity of guarding against “exaggerated private judgment and the false autonomy of human reason.” This is all the more true of the observance of the divine law which demands sometimes

hard and repeated sacrifices, for which, as experience points out, a weak man can find so many excuses for avoiding the fulfillment of the divine law."

Our Holy Father explicitly differentiates between religious training in regard to Christian marriage and "exaggerated physiological education by means of which . . . is learned the art of sinning in a subtle way rather than the virtue of living chastely."

The necessity of using wisely the rights of marriage in the early years of wedlock makes easier the virtue of continence, which may need to be practiced later. Discipline is something interior and involves not only the intellectual but the volitional element as well. Throughout the encyclical, stress is laid on the fact that the beneficent effect of the other sacraments can be utilized to assist us over the difficult places.

The priest prays daily in his preparation before Communion: "Let the partaking of Thy Body, O Lord Jesus Christ . . . be to me as a safeguard and a remedy both to *mind* and *body*." If one who lives within the sanctuary and in such intimate union with our Divine Lord needs the spiritual strengths for "mind and body," how much more necessary are these strengths for those who by force of circumstances may not be able to partake daily of the Eucharist but are suffering all of the family tensions which the present economic situation has created.

It is incumbent then on those contemplating marriage to make due preparation in a material as well as a spiritual way, to understand the nature of the sacrament and, in order to attain its fullest benefits, to cooperate actively through constant prayer and frequent reception of the sacraments. Subjecting oneself to Our Divine Lord, who speaks through His Church as His teacher, involves true humility. Divine grace must flow constantly into us from its Source, if the divine harmony of Revelation is to echo effectively in the temples of our souls.

It is also incumbent on those united in marriage to serve "the noble purposes of wedlock for their own welfare, for that of their children, of the community, and for that of human relationship." Knowledge that comes

through understanding and appreciation of the nature of the sacrament, action and conduct that emerge with the aid of divine grace, constitute the spiritual remedies for the abuse of marriage.

The obligations of the individual connote a corresponding obligation on the part of the State. There are civil remedies that can and should be utilized to prevent the abuses of marriage.

Wherever "conjugal integrity encounters difficulties by reason of straitened circumstances, their necessities must be relieved as far as possible." The injustices brought about in the social and economic order by the lack of suitable dwellings, by unemployment, inadequate wages and exorbitant prices of commodities make it incumbent on the rich to help the poor and also for public authority to supplement private resources wherever necessary. There is a clarion call to look on poverty as a spiritual phenomenon rather than a "social process" and to deal with it as a significant phase of the failure of the Christian scheme of life.

There is a note of the practical however in the admonition: "Care, however, must be taken that the parties themselves, for a considerable time before entering upon married life, should strive to dispose of, or at least to diminish, the material obstacles in their way. The manner in which this may be done effectively and honestly must be pointed out by those who are experienced."

With fatherly solicitude and rare understanding, our Holy Father deplores the necessity of "working mothers" and also points out how easy it is for the married couple to lose heart when oppressed by poverty and confronted with the extraordinary expenses of child birth. Grave harm can result to the State if these needs of families are neglected. The possibilities of social upheaval as a result of social injustices should not be entirely disregarded. A cardinal principle in the guidance of a happy and well integrated life implies a certain amount of faith in the existing social and economic structure.

If we accept in principle that the foundations of the State rest on the moral order, it follows naturally that the State draws its life from the family. It is well to

remember in this connection that, notwithstanding some of the current sociological doctrines, human society both in its primitive and organized form originated by marriage and not, as some would have us believe, marriage by society. In a day when well-intentioned but misguided reformers are seeking to subvert the ends of marriage through propaganda of various kinds, it is like a breath of fresh air to find our Holy Father advocating that the State protect the chastity of the marriage bond by eliminating the *causes* that lie in the social and economic structure, rather than devising means which are repulsive and contrary to the natural law. The recent experience of the Holy See in concluding the pact with the Kingdom of Italy is an illustration of the possibilities of working out associations with the State which will be of mutual benefit; because both Church and State, built on the same moral foundations have similar objectives in the welfare of the souls who constitute the State.

“For the preservation of the moral order neither the laws and sanctions of the temporal power are sufficient . . . Religious authority must enter in to enlighten the mind, to direct the will, and to strengthen human frailty by the assistance of divine grace. Such an authority is found nowhere save in the Church instituted by Christ the Lord.”

May these inspiring words serve to quicken and revivify the Christian mind throughout the world; to bring back all of the remembered benedictions and the revered sanctities which characterized that Holy Family at Nazareth. May there be made possible for parents and children everywhere something of that glorious vision that the prophet Zacarias saw in the New Jerusalem.

N.C.C.W. COMMITTEE *on* FAMILY *and* PARENT EDUCATION *By* Mary G. Hawks

NATURE and grace accord to the family a place of paramount importance. Destined by God, in the order of nature, to perpetuate the race, the family was endowed by Christ with special grace to mirror the life and the love of God Himself. Such has been the unchanging ideal of the Church through the ages, an ideal she has fortified by her sacraments and fostered by her education. Inevitably, therefore, from its very creation, the National Council of Catholic Women has had, as a central theme and a major preoccupation, the protection and the preservation of the Christian family.

One of the earliest study outlines of the National Catholic Welfare Conference, circulated by the national council, was on "The Christian Family." By pamphlet and address it has constantly given information and inspiration to mothers. And its member groups have consistently offered a solid phalanx of opposition to any and all attempts to break down those safeguards of the family ideal provided by state and federal laws. While believing that opposition to such destructive forces as divorce and artificial birth control must be continued as an essential expression of Catholic Action, it was the mind of the convention of 1929 that "the National Council of Catholic Women should appoint a committee to study the situation and formulate a more positive program to offset this insidious propaganda." This was the first step taken towards the formation of a definite Committee on Family and Parent Education, although the committee did not emerge under this title until the convention of 1931.

The committee appointed to study the situation re-

ported to this convention of 1931 some very definite recommendations based on the resolutions of the Fourth International Congress on Home Education, held at Liege in 1930, and on certain obvious trends. Notable among these latter was a sharp swing of the pendulum from regarding the woman in the home as "a woman without a career" to granting her professional status with a recognized need for training in this, her most important profession—parenthood and homemaking. As a recent writer expressed it in the *N. Y. Times Magazine* of May 1:

"After a half century of ignoring the home as beneath academic contempt in the days when it was woman's sole sphere, the liberal arts college has begun its attempt to orient her in the modern world by helping her find her bearings within her own four walls . . . The family, in short, emerges in academic consciousness as a potential sphere of respectable professional endeavor."

This back to the family movement, with its implication of necessary training was no new thought in Catholic consciousness. The "half century of ignoring the home" had, however, through contact with Protestant culture, had its effect upon Catholic living, as is evidenced by the stress laid by our Holy Father, Pius XI, in his Encyclical on "Christian Education," on the parent as educator. Evident, therefore, was the obligation for organized Catholic womanhood to assume its share of the labor of building and rebuilding the Catholic ideal of family life from the child up and of providing to this end the best material available in economics, hygiene, psychology, that was in harmony with Catholic doctrine and Catholic moral teaching.

That the National Council of Catholic Women might meet this obligation, a vast field of endeavor was visioned by its Committee on Family and Parent Education. Its program includes:

1. Outlines for study clubs of varied elements and organization;
2. Assembling simple and suggestive material for religious and character training in the home;
3. Aids to mothers in selecting literature for children;
4. Aids for mothers of handicapped children, developed by specialists in the care of such children;

5. Analysis of expert works with view to popularizing their content for the average busy parent;
6. Making available what is being done in the field of education for the instruction of adolescents in the duties of parenthood;
7. Introduction in Catholic P. T. A. of study of family and parent education;
8. Compilation of supplementary literature for Catholic P. T. A.;
9. Preparation by older mothers of heart to heart talks with younger and less experienced mothers;
10. Planning with Americanization experts as to ways and means of extending to foreign-born mothers help in family life and child care and training.

As the first requisite for the achievement of its program, the committee set out to invite and mobilize the services of as many women competent in the fields of economics, hygiene, psychology, pedagogy, etc., as possible, and especially those who had shown ability in their high profession as Catholic mothers. To date the committee has secured a number of such co-laborers and a high type of cooperation. What further accomplishment can be noted?

In cooperation with the Catholic Rural Life Conference the N. C. C. W. has furthered the publication of the *Parent Educator* symposium of 1930 and 1931 and has promoted its distribution for study club material. It can also report, through its efforts, the success, as study club material, of a pamphlet, *Parent and Child*, by Rev. Edgar Schmiedeler, O.S.B., Ph.D. The *Monthly Message*, N. C. C. W., has carried continuously a study outline on "The Family" based on *An Introductory Study of the Family* and *Readings on the Family*, also by Dr. Schmiedeler. Study club outlines are now in preparation on Allers *Psychology of Character* and in the field of economics, on "Family Budgeting" and "Nutrition."

Book lists of juvenile literature are available and a program of helps for the foreign-born mother is well under way. A special committee interested in youth is preparing a report on how pre-marital education might be given advisedly to young women in the extra-home agencies, in the settlement, the sodality, the fraternity, and the Newman club. A special plan for the pre-school

child is being developed by an expert in that field. These small beginnings will, it is hoped, develop slowly but surely, a program and materials that will serve the Catholic mother and homemaker, both present and prospective, to fulfill to the utmost her high calling in this difficult age.

Allied to the work of the Committee on Family and Parent Education is the cooperation of the National Council of Catholic Women in the study commissions of the International Union of Catholic Women's Leagues. The report of these commissions, published in 1930, summarized facts gleaned from 16 countries, enumerating and evaluating the forces destructive of the moral, religious and economic welfare of the family. The study, now under way, in which the N. C. C. W., through chosen experts, is likewise participant, will report on the constructive forces, in each of these countries, laboring for the moral, religious and economic welfare of the family. The questionnaires cover: Religion: family education, psychology, pedagogy: intellectual life: industrial life: agricultural life: delinquents: preventive work for children: sex education, its methods and results: education for public and civic life.

In the modern world where social changes have their bewildering effect on family life, the religion of Christ alone offers a permanent ideal and moral support. To assist the individuals and groups united in the N. C. C. W. to adjust to world changes, to avail themselves of true knowledge and to build securely on the sure support of Catholic teaching for the welfare of family life is, in its modest way, the far-distant goal towards which the work of the Committee on Family and Parent Education, N. C. C. W., directs its effort.

CATHOLIC ACTION

and the FAMILY

By Rev. Edgar Schmiedeler, O.S.B., S.T.L., Ph.D.

IN his Encyclical on "Christian Marriage," Pius XI points unerringly to the fundamentals of our primary social institution, the family, and condemns the errors of the day that run counter to it. But he does not rest satisfied with that. He points the way to action. He indicates the remedies that must be applied if Christian marriage is to blossom forth again into the full bloom of an earlier day.

Some months earlier, in his Encyclical on "Christian Education," His Holiness also called attention to the fundamental part the family must play in the scheme of Christian education. Here also he called for action. He followed up his statement of principle with an urgent appeal to parents for active interest in the cause of parent education in order that they might the more effectively fill their high positions as educators within their own domestic realms. He called for preparation for the tasks of parenthood in this encyclical as he called for preparation for family life generally in the one on marriage.

In the entire field of the Christian family, therefore—in upholding its fundamentals, in combating the evils that assail it, in preparing for a useful and successful married life and for the specific duties of parenthood—Pius has shown the way and issued his call for action. His unexcelled authority and exalted position and the gravity of the subject in question join in demanding our most respectful attention and our unhesitating compliance with his wishes.

A complete program of action in behalf of the family would embrace almost an infinite variety of possible activities. There is much that the serious student of the family can do. There are a multiplicity of tasks for the

masses to accomplish. There are opportunities almost without number for individual and for organized efforts in behalf of the home. At best, however, only a broad, sketchy program can be outlined here.

Perhaps one of the most promising first steps towards the promotion of sound family life would be the formation of a conference group on marriage and the family, made up of the more capable students of this fundamental social institution. Indeed, such a conference seems essential if suitable guidance and leadership in this work are to be furnished, if thoroughgoing study of the entire field is to be undertaken, if a fitting literature is to be developed and the necessary inspiration and enthusiasm for a determined and progressive movement are to be engendered. It is, in fact, very surprising that with so many national Catholic organizations in existence, there is not one whose prime purpose is the promotion of the welfare of our domestic life. After all, but little can be expected from the efforts of even the most zealous and efficient organizations unless there is to begin with a sound family basis to work on. There are not a few scholarly leaders in this country who are fighting a valiant battle in behalf of Christian marriage and the family. But how much more effective and far reaching their efforts would be if they would band themselves together into a conference for mutual counsel, for united effort, for inspiration and concerted action!

The formation of such a conference of specialists or students of the family, however, represents but one avenue of approach to this important subject, but one step towards the promotion of the welfare of our family life. There are many others that should lead to most beneficial and far-reaching results. For example, there is our school system. Particularly does it offer an inviting opportunity for the preparation for marriage and parenthood that is so fundamental and that Pius XI recommends so urgently. Much could be done in this regard in both the lower and the higher reaches of our educational system. The child in the grades is capable of grasping the correct principles of marriage and the family if properly presented to him. He could develop the deep-

est respect for wholesome and happy home life under intelligent and constructive guidance. Even in the grade school, therefore, should it be considered the privilege, if not the duty, of every teacher to emphasize the importance of the family as the richest field ever given for the development of human life and to stress, in season and out of season, the fundamentals and the genuine values of marriage and the home. In its higher reaches the school should be able to prepare the individual not only for success in his own marriage career, but also for leadership in activities that aim at the promotion of a sound and satisfying family life generally.

As a matter of fact, not a little is being done along these lines. Indeed, one of the most promising developments in the entire field of endeavor in behalf of the family is the present rapid growth in Catholic colleges, both for men and for women, of special courses on marriage and the family and on parent education. The intense interest universally elicited by these courses is indicative of their practical value and of their promise for much further growth. Typical of many commendatory remarks of students who have had the advantage of such study is the following: "I consider the course on 'The Family' one of the most valuable I have taken in school. It has given me a higher appreciation of the married state than I had before. It has led me to a greater realization of the social importance of marriage and of the opportunities it affords for useful and happy living. Strange as it may seem, the thought of marriage as a career had never occurred to me before attending this class." A teacher in one of the largest Catholic colleges in the country, who but recently completed a course on "The Family" with a class of over a hundred students, makes the following remark: "I have never been more gratified with the results of any class that I have taught." Catholic students who have been shown the genuine social, as well as the religious values of Christian marriage will give little heed to doctrines subversive of the family or to the lurid filth so commonly emblazoned on our printed page today. And after all, the vast majority of students marry. It should be but the logical and expected thing, therefore, that the

schools help to give them due preparation for this career of careers.

A copy of a school publication that recently came to the writer's attention suggests one very promising possibility for the development of leadership among students in this inviting field of Catholic action. The particular issue in question contained two forceful articles by students on the marriage encyclical of Pius XI. The articles were written after a thorough study of the encyclical in conjunction with a course on the family and compared very favorably with many on the subject that have appeared in the better Catholic publications. The staffs of other college publications might well emulate this example and devote a generous amount of attention and space to such worthy projects.

There are also a great number of Catholic organizations that might well show a definite interest in this subject of the family. Sodality groups, local units of larger organizations, even special circles or clubs organized for the purpose, might fittingly encourage among their members the study of the fundamentals of Christian marriage, the principles of successful parenthood, and the elements of a satisfying and happy home life. The N. C. W. C. Family Life Section and Study Club Committee and the National Council of Catholic Women are making special effort to arouse interest in this particular work on the part of various organizations, and not without appreciable results.

There is, however, still much room for further development. Ours is the day of adult education. In various ways is our unprecedented amount of leisure time being used for self-improvement through study. Catholics in ever-increasing numbers are falling in line with this praiseworthy movement. It is to be hoped that much of their time will be centered in the study of the family and kindred subjects.

Study alone, however, is insufficient. The knowledge acquired must be carried over into action. It must make its influence actively felt within the individual home circle. Ultimately, effective Catholic action in behalf of Christian marriage and the family must come from the

masses of individuals within their own domestic worlds.

Some of the ways and means of promoting such action within the home are indicated in the first article of this booklet, but there is one specific suggestion that may very fittingly be added here, one that deals directly with the religious life of the family. It would undoubtedly prove of the highest benefit to the family life of our day if Catholic families generally would enroll themselves again in the *Association of the Holy Family* and faithfully fulfill the simple conditions that membership therein implies. This association, launched by Leo XIII some time after he gave to the world his Encyclical on "Christian Marriage," still enjoys the selfsame privileges that were attached to it when he first called it into being. These very privileges, not to mention the many indulgences attached to membership in the association, should serve as a powerful inducement to make it flourish again today. Pastors, for example, in whose parishes the association is organized enjoy the benefits of a privileged altar on any three days of the week they choose, provided they have not the benefits of a privileged altar for some other reason. Then, too, the Mass for a deceased member at any altar whatever has all the benefits of a privileged one.

Another consideration that gives this association particular appeal is its extreme simplicity. It can hardly be called an "organization," the only indispensable conditions to membership being the following: (1) the head of the family must be enrolled in the association by the pastor; (2) a picture of the Holy Family must find a place in the home; (3) a prayer must daily be recited before the picture.

There is even greater need of this association today than there was in the days of Pope Leo. Irreligion has made greater inroads. Fewer families are grounded on a religious foundation. Even many Catholic families are feeling the impact of the pagan ideals of the day and of our disturbed social conditions. As a result, there is lacking on the part of many that sense of responsibility that only a spirit of religion can give. The Association of the Holy Family provides a simple and effective means for making religion again a more vital and active force within the

generality of Christian homes. Organized on a diocesan basis it offers a most promising medium for Catholic action in the sense in which Pius XI defines it—the organization of the laity working under the hierarchy.

Such, then, are a few possible lines of action in behalf of our home life: the launching of a special Catholic conference on the family, greater emphasis in our schools upon preparation for marriage, more interest on the part of adult education groups in the study of successful family life and parenthood, and a renewal of the religious life of individual families by enrollment in the Association of the Holy Family. A program of action along these lines, initiated and carried forward with the zeal and enthusiasm worthy of the cause in question, should result in a vast crusade that would eventually bring into its own again the flourishing Christian family life of the past. And no less a consummation than that is to be hoped for.

