

Marriage Preparation

Session 4

**Sexuality: God's Plan for the Body,
Sex and Marriage**

- Dioceses of Colorado Springs

Introduction: Human Vocation to Love

“Man cannot live without love. He remains a being that is incomprehensible for himself, his life is senseless, if love is not revealed to him, if he does not encounter love, if he does not experience it and make it his own, if he does not participate intimately in it.” (John Paul II, *Redemptor Hominis*, 10)

- God made the human person in His own image.
- God is love (1 Jn 4:8).
- Therefore, the essence of human nature is “the vocation, and thus the capacity and responsibility, of love and communion. Love is therefore the fundamental and innate vocation of every human being.” (*Familiaris Consortio*, 11)
- Love is the essence and the vocation of every human person.
- Man is called to love with his whole being, both body and soul.

Introduction: Human Vocation to Love (con't)

- This vocation to love is revealed in the very flesh of the human person as male or female.
- Marriage and virginity are the two states of life in which the whole person, body and soul, promises to love exclusively.

“Christian revelation recognizes two specific ways of realizing the vocation of the human person, in its entirety, to love: marriage and virginity or celibacy.” (FC, 11)

- By examining the first three chapters of Scripture, marriage and sexual love are revealed as the original way in which the vocation to love is lived out.
- John Paul II illuminates God’s original plan for the body, sex, and marriage in his “theology of the body”: how the human body as male and female reveals God.

“Male and female he created them.”

- **Original Unity**

- Original unity is the fact that from the beginning, there were two distinct and equal ways of being in the image of God: male and female.
- Man and woman are perfectly equal in their dignity as persons. (CCC 369)
- They perfectly complement each other in their masculinity and femininity.
- Genesis reveals that man and woman were willed together and for each other (Gen 2:18-20).
- God created man as male and female so that they could enter into a unique relationship that makes them “two in one flesh.” (Gen 2:24)
- Human sexuality from the beginning is therefore an invitation to communion inscribed in our very flesh as male or female.

“Male and female he created them.”

Original Unity (con’t)

- Femininity and masculinity together are a more perfect image of God than either one standing alone (although man and woman are always both fully human).
- Human sexuality and the acts proper to marriage are therefore part of the image of God in man.
- They are ordered to the fulfillment of the human person in a communion of love with one another and Creator.
- Communion: a union of love between two or more persons
- Communion is essentially personal; it possesses the characteristics of the person: free and conscious.
- This is the “nuptial meaning of the body”, as JP II says.

“Male and female he created them.”

Original Unity (con’t)

- *The Nuptial Meaning of the Body*

“The human body, with its sex, and its masculinity and femininity...is not only a source of fruitfulness and procreation, as in the whole natural order. It includes right from the beginning *the nuptial attribute*, that is, the capacity of expressing love, that love in which the person becomes a gift and—by means of this gift—fulfills the meaning of his being and existence.” (1/16/80; italics added)

- Nuptial (marital, spousal) love is a particular kind of love: it is the love of total and exclusive self-donation.
- Nuptial love is particular to marriage (and virginity) precisely because it includes the gift of the body.
- The nuptial meaning of the body is rooted in the fact that the human person is willed for his/her own sake by God who created us out of gratuitous love.

“Male and female he created them.”

- **Person as Gift**

- The human ability to give and receive each other as gifts affirms the unique and unrepeatable gift that each person is from the beginning, “someone chosen by eternal love.” (1/16/80)
- This is what John Paul II means when he says, “Become what you are.”
- Vatican II affirmed that “man cannot fulfill himself except by a sincere gift of self.” (GS 24)
- Freely making a gift of self is the only way the human person “fulfills the very meaning of his being and existence” (TOB, 1/16/80).
- The vocation to marriage gives spouses this opportunity to live their identity as gifts in and through their bodily communion.

“Male and female he created them.”

Person as Gift (con’t)

- Since human bodies always belong to human persons, bodily union is more than biological. It is personal.
- Humans don’t mate. We love.
 - *Ordered to Life*
 - The one-flesh union of man and woman in marriage is ordered to the transmission of human life. (CCC 372)
 - Man and woman together participate in God’s work of creation. They cooperate with His providence to build up and govern His creation. (CCC 373)
 - Marriage is therefore not merely a private reality.
 - It is inherently ordered to the building up of a civilization of love (society).

“Male and female he created them.”

- **Original Nakedness**

- In the beginning, the naked human body fully revealed the person, the Creator, and the call to a loving communion of persons for which man was made “male and female.”
- Man and woman discovered the “nuptial meaning” of their naked bodies in their very first encounter. (Gen 2:23-25)
- They saw with the “purity of the inner gaze” that their bodies, as male and female, were capable of expressing love.
- Through their sexual difference, they realized that they are meant to be gifts to each other. Hence they were “naked and unashamed (Gen 2:25).”

“Male and female he created them.”

Original Nakedness (con’t)

- Their nakedness was not a cause for shame, rather rejoicing, since each recognized in the other another person like himself and at the same time different in just such a way that permitted their full communion as body-persons.
- Fatherhood and Motherhood
 - In their conjugal knowledge of each other, man and woman come to know themselves as father and mother.
 - Fatherhood and motherhood reveals the full meaning of masculinity and femininity. (3/12/80)

“Male and female he created them.”

- **Original Sin**

- The harmonious relationship between man and woman, characterized by the purity of the inner gaze, was broken by original sin.
- Lust entered the heart of man and continually threatens love and the dignity and fulfillment of the human person who is called to divine love.
- Rather than receiving the other as a gift and making a reciprocal gift of oneself, there was a temptation to appropriate the other for self-gratification.
- There is now a permanent temptation to view the other as an “object of use” rather than a “subject of love” whose sexuality is for communion. (6/4/80)
- Shame therefore became necessary to protect the inner dignity of the person from a “gaze of lust” that would reduce the person to merely his/her sexual value.
- Hence, Adam and Eve clothed themselves each other’s gaze and hid from God.

“Male and female he created them.”

Original Sin (con’t)

- From here on, the “heart has become a battlefield between love and lust. The more lust dominates the heart, the less the heart experiences the nuptial meaning of the body. It becomes less sensitive to the gift of the person.”
(7/23/80)
- Man’s identity as “willed for his own sake” is obscured and his capacity to “fully discover himself only through a sincere gift of himself” is endangered.
“Lust . . . attacks this ‘sincere giving.’ It deprives man of the dignity of giving, which is expressed in his body through femininity and masculinity. In a way it depersonalizes man, making him an object ‘for the other.’ Instead of being ‘together with the other’—a subject in unity, in the sacramental unity of the body—man becomes an object for man, the female for the male and vice versa....The subjectivity of the person gives way to the objectivity of the body.”
(TOB 7/23/80)

The Redemption of the Body

- The good news is that Jesus Christ came to restore the purity of the human heart.
- He came to restore marriage to its full dignity as the original communion of persons and a true means of human fulfillment by enabling man and woman to love.
- He calls man to task for his “hardness of heart” and warns of sins of the heart. (Mt 5:28; 19:8).
- Christ calls us again, as we were called at creation, to love as He loves → “Love one another as I have loved you” (Jn 15:12)
- How did Christ love? → “Greater love has no man than this . . .” (Jn 15:13)
- He laid down His life → “This is my Body, given for you.” (Lk 22:19)
- Christ’s Body on the Cross is the source of all grace, of all the sacraments
- Through His gift of self, Christ elevated marriage to a sacrament and gives His grace to spouses to enable them to live out the reality of their marriage as a communion of total, self-donating love.

The Value of Children

- **Procreation**

“By their very nature, the institution of matrimony itself and conjugal love are ordained for the procreation and education of children and find in them their ultimate crown.” (Gaudium et spes, 48)

- **Earth:** propagation and preservation of the human race on earth.

- **By the conjugal act:** marital relations are directly ordered to the procreation of children

- **Heaven:** propagation of children “who are to become members of the Church of Christ, to raise up fellow citizens of the Saints and members of God’s household” (Pope Pius XI, Casti Connubii, 13)

- **By catechesis:** by teaching their children the true faith and proper moral living in virtue, parents form their children in the truth and equip them to fulfill their potential as human persons

The Value of Children

Procreation (Heaven) (con't)

- **By Baptism:** offering their children to Holy Mother Church through whom they receive second birth and become members of Christ's Body (and through which they can enter into the Family of God)
- **Talent:** "Both husband and wife, however, receiving these children with joy and gratitude from the hand of God, will regard them as a talent committed to their charge by God, not only to be employed for their own advantage or for that of an earthly commonwealth, but to be restored to God with interest on the day of reckoning." (Pope Pius XI, Casti Connubii, 15)
 - Must remember that our children are not our own
 - Since our own selves are not our own, then another is definitely not our own
 - God entrusts them to parents that they might cooperate in Providence in bringing them to beatitude and ultimate fulfillment in union with God

The Value of Children (con't)

- **Education:** duty of the parents on account of the indissolubility of marriage
“Graced with the dignity and office of fatherhood and motherhood, parents will energetically acquit themselves of a duty which devolves primarily on them, namely education and especially religious education.” (Gaudium et spes, 48)
- The good of offspring in marriage not only means their procreation, but always entails their education as well

The Value of Children Education (con't)

- The family is meant to be the foundation of a child's education (this is how God set it up)
 - Parents as the primary educators have the responsibility to see to this education
 - This is a blessing for the child (and the family in general) and a grave duty for the parents
 - Parents are “forbidden to leave unfinished this work and so expose it to certain ruin” (Pope Pius XI, Casti Connubii, 16)
- Right: which no other level of society can take away
 - To take this right from the family is gravely evil (just as to fail in one's duty)
 - ...unless subsidiarity requires it

Natural Family Planning (NFP)

Introduction

- **Introduction**

- **Natural Family Planning (NFP)**

- “If then, there are serious motives to space out births, which derive from the physical or psychological conditions of the husband and wife, or from external conditions, the Church teaches that it is then licit to take into account the natural rhythms immanent in the generative functions, for the use of marriage in the infecund periods only, and in this way to regulate birth without offending the moral principles which have been recalled earlier.” (Humanae Vitae 16)

- Physical: would die if pregnant
 - Psychological: mother and/or father could not care for children adequately
 - External: could not possibly afford to feed another child with money now have...

Natural Family Planning (NFP)

Introduction (con't)

- *BUT REMEMBER, it must be a SERIOUS MOTIVE...you just cannot use NFP whenever you want to (you don't like the way you look when you are pregnant, you get a little sick when pregnant, kids take up a lot of time and you want time to hang out with friends, need a new Jacuzzi in back yard, want a bigger house, always wanted to travel to the Far East, have been dreaming of getting a corvette)*
 - If using NFP, the decision must be made in dialogue between the spouses and, above all, prayer...every month the decision must be completely renewed and reexamined to determine if it is morally legitimate to use NFP (AGAIN it is possible to use NFP illicitly and evilly, incurring sin)...
 - “But in their manner of acting, spouses should be aware that they cannot proceed arbitrarily, but must always be governed according to a conscience dutifully conformed to the divine law itself, and should be submissive toward the Church’s teaching office, which authentically interprets that law in the light of the Gospel.” (GS 50)

Natural Family Planning (NFP)

Introduction (con't)

- **Prophetic Consequences (HV 17)**
 - Wide and easy road...of conjugal infidelity and general lowering of morality...
 - Lose respect for the woman and, no longer caring for her physical and psychological equilibrium, may come to the point of considering her as a mere instrument of selfish enjoyment and no longer as his respected and beloved companion...
 - Who will stop rulers from favoring, from even imposing upon their peoples...the method of contraception which they judge to be most efficacious (UN and China)

“In such a way men, wishing to avoid individual, family or social difficulties encountered in the observance of the divine law, would reach the point of placing at the mercy of the intervention of public authorities the most personal and most reserved sector of conjugal intimacy.”
 - Must recognize limits “to the possibility of man’s dominion over his own body and its functions”

Parenting

- Two income families
 - Will both of you retain jobs?
 - How do you decide who stays home with children and who goes to work?
- Practical sacrifice
 - How many children would you like?
 - Are both of you willing to sacrifice personal and monetary goals to have children?
- Practical discipline
 - Who will discipline your children?
 - How will you discipline them?

Credit

- A significant amount of this material has been graciously provided to us by Dr. Marlon De La Torre, Director of Evangelization and Missionary Discipleship, from the Archdiocese of Detroit. Prior to his recent hiring at the Archdiocese of Detroit, Dr. De La Torre was the Director of Evangelization and Catechesis for the Diocese of Fort Worth where he was heavily involved with developing their diocesan marriage preparation program.