

## ARTICLE 45

### Legio Sanctae Familiae – The Legion of the Holy Family

#### Marriage a gift from God

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#### Marriage! The Way of Society



#### **Holy Catholic Marriages necessary for Society**

In a previous article I mentioned that the solution to the western world's current problems, is for Catholics to become Holy. This is highlighted by the story, which is often told, that G K Chesterton was once sent the question “What's wrong with the world today?” by a certain newspaper, and allegedly he sent back the reply “I am”. It is also my contention that Ireland, and the western world, will be re-conquered for Christ by families striving for holiness.

Pope Saint John Paul II said in his apostolic exhortation *'Familiaris Consortio'*, “The future of humanity passes by way of the family. It is therefore indispensable and urgent that every person of good will should endeavour to save and foster the values and requirements of the family.”

#### **Fundamental Nature of Family is Distorted**

But the reality that we are faced with in today's society, is that the fundamental nature of the family has been distorted, and that this distortion of what the family means has also penetrated deep within the Catholic church. Courses are presented by Catholics, and for Catholics, which do not truly conform to Church teaching. The courses are generally very good but certain statements are inserted which could lead to an ambiguous interpretation of marriage.

Take for example the following statement, which comes from the course material of a respected Catholic institution, concerning *Gaudium et Spes*. Course participants are asked to read certain sections of the document and asked if anything strikes them as especially significant. The course material then goes on to say “Until this document the primary purpose of marriage was considered to be the procreation and education of children. How is that presented in the sections you just read?” In another passage from the course it says “In summary, the Church now speaks of two purposes of Christian marriage: the love between the spouses and their openness to create and educate new life. It is a both/and notion. Neither is given priority over the other.”

#### **The Primary End of Marriage is Children**

Now, we know that marriage was instituted by God in order to give Him glory and for the salvation of souls. The primary end of marriage therefore, has been designated by God, and it cannot, and does not, change. The primary end of marriage is children! This is the constant and perennial teaching of the Catholic Church which has not been changed by Vatican II, as indeed it cannot be changed. The documents of Vatican II and subsequent writings of the popes, which laid a great emphasis on the love of the spouses, were not meant to be interpreted as meaning that there are joint primary ends of marriage. This in itself would be a contradiction for a thing can only ever have one primary end.

#### **Some Catholics imply that Church Teaching on Marriage has Changed**

The quotations from the course material above could be interpreted as implying that the Church's understanding of marriage has somehow changed. Phrases such as “Until this document”, and “the Church now speaks of”, imply that prior to this document the Church thought differently. It implies

that the Church suddenly discovered the 'marital love' of husband and wife at the second Vatican council! Such an understanding is absurd.

### **Emotional Love now seen as Paramount**

What has happened in the modern secular world is that our understanding of what it means to love has been diminished. Emotional love has become the standard measurement of love, and feelings have usurped the place of intelligence and will when it comes to speaking of love.

Christ speaks to us of love in its proper sense in the Gospels and He shows us the meaning of love in how He lived His life.

“If you love me, you will keep my commandments” (John 14:15)

“Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” (John 15:13)

### **Love is a Duty and a Sacrifice**

From this we can see that true love expresses itself both in duty and in self sacrifice. It seeks nothing for itself but it gives all to the other. It is this notion of sacrificial love that the Church seeks to re-awaken in modern man and not just with regard to the vocation of marriage.

### **Erroneous modern interpretations lead to a Degradation of Marriage**

The erroneous modern interpretation, that somehow the Church no longer sees the primary end of marriage as being children and their education, and the promotion of this idea within Catholic institutions has, I believe, led to the degradation of marriage amongst Catholics and has also aided the widespread use of contraceptives amongst Catholics. For if children are no longer the primary end of marriage, then the prevention of conception, even if by licit means, is no longer seen to be acting against the primary end of marriage. This in turn leads to natural family planning being used as a form of Catholic contraception, because the love of the spouses is placed above the primary end of marriage in terms of order, whereas the love of the spouses, should be at the service of the primary end of marriage.

### **Go Forth and Multiply, cornerstone of Marriage**

Every effort at evangelisation, catechesis and family ministry must rest on the foundation and under the shadow of God's ordinance to “go forth and multiply”, otherwise there is a danger of distorting the true nature of marriage as God intended. This understanding does not deny or somehow undermine the love of the spouses, rather it becomes the true measure of love. The reciprocal total gift of husband and wife leads to a reciprocal and total gift from God whereby He entrusts an innocent child, created in His own image and likeness, into their care to be brought up as a son or daughter and future heir in the Kingdom of God and in the kingship of Christ.

### **Families Seeking Holiness within Marriage**

It is this understanding of children and their education as the primary end of marriage, that we need to once again uphold, teach and promote, if we ever hope to regain the ground we have lost to the secular world in the area of marriage. This will be done best by families coming together to seek holiness and to help each other to recapture the correct understanding of marriage so that we can pass it on to our children.

## **Legio Sanctae Familiae**

I am currently working to establish such an organisation and I would be delighted to hear from other readers who are interested in becoming involved in this project or who would like to join such an organisation. You may contact me via my website [www.truedevotions.ie](http://www.truedevotions.ie), by e-mail [john@truedevotions.ie](mailto:john@truedevotions.ie) or by phone (Ireland) 085-1208779

May God bless you.

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