



‘Legio Sanctae Familiae’ The Legion of the Holy Family

Under the Patronage of
The Sacred Heart of Jesus
The Immaculate Heart of Mary
The Most Chaste Heart of St Joseph



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In the last article on this great encyclical *Casti Connubii*, Pope Pius XI began to look at one of the most contentious issues for many Catholic women today. The teaching that wives are to be subject to their husbands. The great enemy of the family, the devil, has used both men and women to give a distorted understanding of this teaching. The feminist culture promotes a false understanding of equality. The macho culture promotes a false understanding of what it means to be a man. So let us look again at what Pope Pius XI teaches us in this regard.

“This subjection [of wives to their husbands], however, does not deny or take away the liberty which fully belongs to the woman both in view of her dignity as a human person, and in view of her most noble office as wife and mother and companion; nor does it bid her obey her husband’s every request if not in harmony with right reason or with the dignity due to wife; nor, in fine, does it imply that the wife should be put on a level with those persons who in law are called minors, to whom it is not customary to allow free exercise of their rights on account of their lack of mature judgment, or of their ignorance of human affairs. But it forbids that exaggerated liberty which cares not for the good of the family; it forbids that in this body which is the family, the heart be separated from the head to the great detriment of the whole body and the proximate danger of ruin. For if the man is the head, the woman is the heart, and as he occupies the chief place in ruling, so she may and ought to claim for herself the chief place in love.” (*Casti Connubii* 27)

“Again, this subjection of wife to husband in its degree and manner may vary according to the different conditions of persons, place and time. In fact, if the husband neglect his duty, it falls to the wife to take his place in directing the family. But the structure of the family and its fundamental law, established and confirmed by God, must always and everywhere be maintained intact.” (*Casti Connubii* 28)

This is a very important point. In my recent writings on the Substack platform I have been writing about the proofs for the existence of God. Once we accept



God the Father - Jacob Herryngs 1 (1643 - 1732)

that God exists, that He created the universe according to His Will and that God does everything for a reason, we must then discern what God requires of mankind. God, being all good, teaches us how to be like Him; how to become good. The commands of God are not arbitrary, they are there for our good. God created the family with a certain form which is designed for the best possible eternal outcomes for all concerned.

However, God also gave us free will, and this too is for our good even though it can be abused for evil purposes. The secular State cannot pass a law that will make all men behave well. In a similar way, our free will allows us to defy God and to disobey Him. No good will come of our disobedience but sometimes men choose an illusory concept of freedom which in fact enslaves them to their passions and vices.

God does not force us to accept Him because that would encroach on our free will. It is free will that allows us to love. However, it is also our free will that allows us to choose hatred instead. The great mystery is why do many men choose hatred rather than love.

God has also permitted our love to be tested. In the Gospel for the first Sunday in Lent, we read about Christ’s own temptation in the desert. Christ allows Himself to be tempted by the devil in order to teach us how we must resist the devil and his snares. The devil is a liar and a murderer from the beginning and he seeks the ruination of souls in the prideful belief

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that this somehow diminishes God. The devil sows the seeds of discord against Catholic Church teaching and the teachings on marriage and family life are no exception.

In the book of Genesis we see God's reaction to the fall. God tells the man and the woman of the punishments that are to befall them on account of their disobedience.

"To the woman also he said: I will multiply thy sorrows, and thy conceptions: in sorrow shall thou bring forth children, and thou shalt be under thy husband's power; and he shall have dominion over thee. And to Adam he said: Because thou hast hearkened to the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou should not eat, cursed is the earth in thy work; with labour and toil shall thou eat thereof all the days of thy life. Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shall eat the herbs of the earth. In the sweat of thy face shall thou eat bread till thou return to the earth, out of which thou wast taken: for dust thou art, and into dust thou shall return." (Genesis 3:16-19)

These punishments serve God's justice. They are the consequence of the grievous sin of Adam and Eve. The woman shall have pain in childbirth and her husband will tend to dominate her. The man will struggle to make ends meet and will be involved in continuous toil. Part of our salvation lies in accepting these punishments and in striving to bear them with good grace. Our fallen nature leaves in us a tendency to behave badly towards others and to become selfish. We are all called to recognise these sinful tendencies and to strive against them.

In the area of marriage, husbands have a tendency to dominate their wives in a way that is disrespectful to their wife's inherent dignity. Husbands must recognise this tendency and strive to overcome it. Wives have a tendency to resent the authority of their husband.

Together, the husband and wife, recognising their fallen nature, must strive to help one another to become holy by conforming their married lives to the order created by God. This is what Pope Pius is speaking about in the last paragraph of Casti Connubii quoted above. He speaks of the husband who neglects his duty. This husband sins against his wife and puts her in the position that she must strive to take on his duties. However, this husband's neglect does not change the nature of marriage as established by God.

Pope Pius XI now quotes Pope Leo XIII's encyclical on marriage, *Arcanum Divinae Sapientiae*, to teach us how these teachings can be lived out.

"With great wisdom Our predecessor Leo XIII, of happy memory, in the Encyclical on Christian marriage which We have already mentioned, speaking of this order to be maintained between man and wife, teaches: "The man is the ruler of the family, and the head of the woman; but because she is flesh of his flesh



Expulsion of Adam & Eve - Benjamin West (1738 - 1820)

and bone of his bone, let her be subject and obedient to the man, not as a servant but as a companion, so that nothing be lacking of honour or of dignity in the obedience which she pays. Let divine charity be the constant guide of their mutual relations, both in him who rules and in her who obeys, since each bears the image, the one of Christ, the other of the Church." (Casti Connubii 29)

When the husband and wife understand what God wants from their marriage, through an understanding of Catholic Church teaching on the matter, they increase their chances of marital harmony. They will then strive together, in their different roles, to create an atmosphere of deep charity in their homes which will radiate outwards to the world.

"These, then, are the elements which compose the blessing of conjugal faith: unity, chastity, charity, honourable noble obedience, which are at the same time an enumeration of the benefits which are bestowed on husband and wife in their married state, benefits by which the peace, the dignity and the happiness of matrimony are securely preserved and fostered. Wherefore it is not surprising that this conjugal faith has always been counted amongst the most priceless and special blessings of matrimony. (Casti Connubii 30)

Pope Pius XI now comes to the greatest blessing that has been bestowed on marriage by Christ Himself. This is the sacramental nature of marriage.

"But this accumulation of benefits is completed and, as it were, crowned by that blessing of Christian marriage which in the words of St. Augustine we have called the sacrament, by which is denoted both the indissolubility of the bond and the raising and hallowing of the contract by Christ Himself, whereby He made it an efficacious sign of grace. (Casti Connubii 31)

"In the first place Christ Himself lays stress on the indissolubility and firmness of the marriage bond when He says: "What God has joined together let no man put asunder," (Matthew 19:6) and: "Everyone that puts away his wife and marries another commits

adultery, and he that marries her that is put away from her husband commits adultery.” (Luke 16:18) (**Casti Connubii 32**)

We have seen in recent generations the legalisation of divorce and so called re-marriage by most Western governments. Such legislation is an offence against God and an offence to every married man and woman. Pope Pius XI probably could not have imagined that most Western governments would also redefine marriage to include sinful same-sex relationships putting these aberrations on the same legal plane as natural marriage. It is no surprise to witness the collapse of the family in the countries that have enacted such abominable legislation.

That such a tremendous blessing from God could be discarded so casually and ushered in with pious words claiming to care for the unfortunates who made a “mistake” in getting married, will not go well for the countries involved. This is why it is so important for Catholics to have a correct understanding of what God wants from our marriages.

“And St. Augustine clearly places what he calls the blessing of matrimony in this indissolubility when he says: “In the sacrament it is provided that the marriage bond should not be broken, and that a husband or wife, if separated, should not be joined to another even for the sake of offspring.” (St. August., De Gen. ad litt. lib. IX, cap. 7, n. 12.) (**Casti Connubii 33**)

Sad to say, this advice of St Augustine is being challenged within the Church in our day by those who encourage those living in adulterous relationships to stay together for the sake of the children even calling for blessings on these relationships.

Pope Pius XI emphasises this teaching by repeating that it was Christ who said that “What God has joined together let no man put asunder,”

“And this inviolable stability, although not in the same perfect measure in every case, belongs to every true marriage, for the word of the Lord: “What God has joined together let no man put asunder,” must of necessity include all true marriages without exception, since it was spoken of the marriage of our first parents, the prototype of every future marriage.

Therefore although before Christ the sublimeness and the severity of the primeval law was so tempered that Moses permitted to the chosen people of God on account of the hardness of their hearts that a bill of divorce might be given in certain circumstances, nevertheless, Christ, by virtue of His supreme legislative power, recalled this concession of greater liberty and restored the primeval law in its integrity by those words which must never be forgotten, “What God has joined together let no man put asunder.”

Wherefore, Our predecessor Pius VI of happy memory, writing to the Bishop of Agrigina, most wisely said: “Hence it is clear that marriage even in the state of nature, and certainly long before it was raised to



the dignity of a sacrament, was divinely instituted in such a way that it should carry with it a perpetual and indissoluble bond which cannot therefore be dissolved by any civil law. Therefore although the sacramental element may be absent from a marriage as is the case among unbelievers, still in such a marriage, inasmuch as it is a true marriage there must remain and indeed there does remain that perpetual bond which by divine right is so bound up with matrimony from its first institution that it is not subject to any civil power.

And so, whatever marriage is said to be contracted, either it is so contracted that it is really a true marriage, in which case it carries with it that enduring bond which by divine right is inherent in every true marriage; or it is thought to be contracted without that perpetual bond, and in that case there is no marriage, but an illicit union opposed of its very nature to the divine law, which therefore cannot be entered into or maintained.” (Pius VI, Rescript. ad Episc. Agriens., 11 July 1789.) (**Casti Connubii 34**)

It is beautiful to read what these earlier Popes teach us about marriage. How they defend the indissolubility of marriage from the secular authorities. They clearly show that the concessions given to men by Moses were abrogated by Jesus Christ. The Catholic Church is more than two thousand years old and has always defended the indissolubility of marriage in the strongest of terms. Today, there exists in certain Catholic circles an aura of compromise. However what is being compromised is the commandments of God and His ideal for married life.

Given that the traditional married family, consisting of a husband who is a biological male, a wife who is a biological female, and their natural offspring, constitutes the fundamental unit of a civilised society, it is no wonder to see the growing perversions that are happening within modern Western societies.

These societies will never be corrected until Catholic Church teaching on marriage and family life is restored to the civil legislature of these countries. All other efforts at correcting the abuses within society will fail if the foundation is not that the Traditional Catholic Family which was created and laid down by Jesus Christ and His Catholic Church.

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