

Study and Discussion Guide

Bold italicized sections are quotes from the document

Highlighted words defined in glossary



The Pontifical Council For The Family

THE TRUTH AND MEANING OF HUMAN SEXUALITY

Guidelines for Education
Within the Family

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*Noontime Prayer At Harvest Time –
Theodor Schüz*

EDITORS' REMARKS AND PREFACE

Background

In December of 1995 the Vatican's Pontifical Council for the Family published *The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality – Guidelines for Education Within the Family*. Immediately prior to its publication, Cardinal Alfonso López Trujillo, Prefect of the Pontifical Council, published an *Announcement* of its release in the Vatican's newspaper, L'Osservatore Romano, describing the document and the reason for it: *There is certainly nothing new in observing the serious stage we have reached in the area of sexuality. It is enough to open our eyes and look around. Every day the mass media bear witness to the deep wounds inflicted on individuals and society when people live human sexuality apart from the truth.* The Pontifical Council wanted to offer a remedy to this most serious situation and recognized that any correction of, or remedy for societal errors regarding sexuality must begin within the family

The goal of *Truth and Meaning* is to support parents and their rights and responsibilities in providing education in chastity and sexuality for their children. Acknowledging having received many letters of concern and dissatisfaction regarding group based or classroom sex education, the Pontifical Council set forth in a positive tone – along with doctrinal, pastoral principles and norms – the Church's longstanding belief and teaching regarding the indispensable educational role of parents in the sensitive matter of education in sexuality.

It made a clear distinction between the presentation of sexual details which are always to be communicated by the parent to the child or young person, individually, in private, in the home, and the supportive but subsidiary role of the school in teaching the moral applications surrounding the 6th and 9th Commandments as they apply to persons and the surrounding culture. In fact, TMHS emphatically states that the child has a right to receive information regarding the intimate aspects of sexual information, whether biological or affective, in the home and compliant with his or her *desire to be chaste and to be formed in chastity*. This is a key truth that cannot be overemphasized. The child has a right to chastity and personal purity! *Since each child or young person must be able to live his or her own sexuality in conformity with Christian principles, and hence to be able to exercise the virtue of chastity, no educator – not even parents – can interfere with this right to chastity.* TMHS 118 cf. Matt 18: 4-7 *This right is further qualified by a child's stage of development, his or her capacity to integrate moral truth with sexual information, and by respect for his or her modesty, sense of privacy, innocence and tranquility.* TMHS 119

Bearing this principle in mind, TMHS states that *the child or young person has the right to withdraw from any sexual instruction imparted outside the home.* TMHS 120 Given the sad situation of the sexual abuse of minors it seems very wise indeed for the Church to insist that education in sexual details be returned to the home as a protection for both the child and the teacher. An associated right of the child is to be educated in these matters by the parents, and in fact TMHS states that if parents do not provide this, they are remiss in their duty and responsibility. TMHS 44

Foundational Principles

TMHS thoroughly expresses the Catholic Faith by defining education in human sexuality as only one part of a wider and deeper ‘education for love and self-giving.’ Scripture, the Church Fathers and Church teaching underlie the Gospel message that permeates TMHS. Love of God and union with Him through the Sacraments and prayer remain paramount. This ‘education for love’ must always take into account Original Sin, that is to say, human weakness and the need for the grace of God to overcome temptations and avoid sin. Catholic doctrinal principles must be presented and *in an age where the mystery has been taken from human sexuality, parents must take care not to trivialize it*. Conjugal love is a holy mystery reflective of the Trinity and in a certain sense, of our final union with God in heaven.

Support For Parents

TMHS states that the Church needs to help parents reclaim their task, which is *original and primary, irreplaceable and inalienable*, by providing solid formation materials for them in conformity with the principles put forth in the document. TMHS strives to give parents confidence in their own capabilities and to help them carry out their own inalienable task in the midst of firmly entrenched school programs of classroom sex education. In addition, ecclesiastical authorities need to be active in removing or correcting what does not conform to the principles of TMHS concerning doctrine, timing and the content and method of such education. Other apostolates, clergy and religious should support and encourage parents in striving to form their own children and in helping maintain a right order between their educational work and the supportive work of the school.

It is sincerely hoped that this *Study and Discussion Guide* will strengthen families by helping parents carry out their responsibilities and reestablish the right balance and relationship between them and the Catholic school with regard to the sensitive matter of education in sexuality. In addition, because TMHS itself offers a thorough catechesis in the virtue of chastity, it is of immense help in forming and educating parents so that they may become leaven in a society that has surely lost its moorings to the virtue of sexual purity.

Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality is a very rich document, on both the theological and practical levels. It presents a picture of the ideal Christian Catholic family where children and parents together share a life seeking virtue and holiness. These are the families needed to form the foundation of a healthy, vigorous and productive society, *innocent and straightforward children of God beyond reproach in the midst of a twisted and depraved generation...shining like stars in the sky while holding fast to the Word of Life. Philippians 2:15*

How to Use This Study Guide

Parents and others will find the *Study Guide* helpful for their own individual use as well as for parish based parental or adult education classes. Various settings can include the use of a facilitator and group discussion. The material can be utilized online, or sections downloaded in sequence and printed, for ease in making notes or comments to aid in discussion. The document is broken into sections, each followed by a number of questions to aid in the assimilation and understanding of the concepts being presented. **It is highly recommended that the user begin by reading first, the Announcement Letter by Cardinal Trujillo.**

TMHS Has Four Parts:

The introduction presents the current and difficult “sex education” situation, but without dwelling on problems. It sets a positive tone: encouragement and help for parents “*who possess the secrets and resources of true love*” and whose role is “*indispensable.*” (7)

1. Doctrine (chapters 1-3),
2. Pastoral Principles (chapters 4-5),
3. Applications in Family Life (chapter 6) and
4. Recommendations and Norms (chapter 7).

The Conclusion (chapter 8) is short, but significant.

Three Words of Importance to Note in TMHS: Always... Never... and Must...

For example:

1. Each child is a unique and unrepeatable person and **must** receive individualized formation. (65)
2. The moral dimension **must always** be part of their [parents’] explanations. (68)
3. Formation in chastity and timely information regarding sexuality **must** be provided in the broadest context of education for love. (70)
4. Such catechesis [outside of the home] **must not** include more intimate aspects of sexual information, whether biological or affective, which belong to individual formation within the family. (133)
5. Such assistance **never** means taking from parents or diminishing their formative right and duty because they remain original and primary, irreplaceable and inalienable...the role of others is always subsidiary and subordinate. Assistance **must** be given first to parents rather than to their children. (145)
6. Explicit and premature sex education can **never** be justified in the name of a prevailing secularized society (143) (In other words, our desensitized and immoral surroundings do not justify the teaching of graphic information in the classroom. The teaching of intimate aspects of sexuality is the right and responsibility of parents in the home.)

A Word About the Images

These were chosen to add an additional dimension to the teaching and concepts presented. Artists who have been trained in the classical tradition are most able to portray the human figure and to convey the infinite subtleties of human thought, expression and emotion. It is hoped these works help to deepen the reader’s understanding of the written word. Towards this end, an additional last question can be added to the Questions For Discussion: **How does the image relate to the material in this segment of TMHS?**



L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO

ANNOUNCEMENT OF RELEASE OF TRUTH AND MEANING OF HUMAN SEXUALITY

by **Cardinal Alfonso López Trujillo - 14 Feb. 1996**

Published by the Pontifical Council for the Family

The reason for this document

There is certainly nothing new in observing the serious stage we have reached in the area of sexuality. It is enough to open our eyes and look around. Every day the mass media bear witness to the deep wounds inflicted on individuals and society when people live human sexuality apart from the truth.

One often gets the impression that they want to hastily patch up the disordered effects produced by some forms of concrete behaviour, while really it is the spirit which has fallen dangerously ill because of an erroneous and false anthropology that is becoming widespread in countless ways.

The Pontifical Council for the Family is a good observation point for perceiving and ascertaining the bitter extent of the breakdown. Not only the young and the inexperienced personally sample and experience the negative effects. Couples are also being led astray. Without realizing it, they are becoming victims of a mentality that contradicts their own human nature and the mission they accept as married people.

Scientific research itself has become enslaved to the industry that, through its successful research, serves a commercial vision of life, in which profit seems to be the only real goal over and above the good of persons and society.

While in the natural order sex was understood as being connected with the responsible use in the family, in the 60's a "revolution" began. In the beginning it seemed to be an expression of emancipation, of liberation from sexual "taboos," in order to gain recognition for the right to pleasure, free from any responsibility. It is true that this tendency is as old as humanity itself; however it seems that the new feature lies in the effort to justify this transition from the responsible use of sex to the search for selfish pleasure. This not only introduces the separation between sexual expression, the act and its meaning, but it entails a breakdown in the area of relationships.

The *other* is not recognized as a person, he or she is considered an instrument for enjoyment and treated without respect for his or her dignity, like a "thing." This "ideological" form of justification is supposed to open the way to a modern liberation. Today, however, the failures it has caused at the very heart of human relationships is a fact recognized by many, including non-Christians.

The “sexual revolution” in fact was encouraged and accelerated by new scientific discoveries, especially the “pill.” The separation between the sexual act and its meaning thus became a greater possibility for the couple themselves, without their being able to see any harm to love in it, and much less the betrayal of love. The “revolution” has not only overwhelmed so many young people like an avalanche, it has invaded the couple’s responsible relationship and falsified their mutual self-giving. All of this has been both an occasion and an expression of a “social sickness.” Is this not an aspect of what is called “social sin” (*Reconciliatio et Paenitentia*, n 16)?

Today the constant contradiction is very clear and it cannot hide a serious ongoing tension which, however, could also open the way to hope. Sex is increasingly trivialized. In many cases the communication media give the impression that everything is permitted and licit (it is enough to look at some television channels and advertising).

Society is more eroticized in an artificial way. Many “texts” for sex education become an apologia for even the most deviant kinds of behaviour. Therefore, the need arises to correct and discipline, and to defend oneself, even with rigorous and “puritanical” expressions. It is as if the dikes were foolishly destroyed, and then an attempt were made to halt the disaster and divert the raging currents back to their natural channel. However, in the reaction to all this, a seed of hope is certainly concealed.

The effects of this revolutionary, anthropological conception have given rise to what we all know is the deadly process of “separation from what is human”: the separation of sexuality from marriage and the family, of love from life within marriage, of the unitive from the procreative dimension within the conjugal act, thereby giving great support to the campaigns in favour of abortion, contraception and family planning.

This revolution has also had political implications. In fact it was the radical ideology that made sex a revolutionary arm (sex revolution) for breaking down every bond with tradition, thus also breaking down the educational relationship between parents and children, in order to contest the family institution and set up the most exaggerated individualism. The followers of Marcuse* who are responsible for this revolution obviously knew – although it was never said – that in this way young people would be better prepared for the real and proper political revolution. This revolution as a whole has had as its effect a deep slavery together with the spread of spiritual confusion.

Pushed onward by the euphoria of hedonism, the affluent society has offered sex for sale, sex as entertainment and a “leisure-time activity” outside the family, without a vision inspired by the good of the person but by consumerism. The mass media, pornography and erotic telephone services have given children the emotional impetus to enter the market, where they are regarded more as the object rather than the subject of the alienating mechanisms.

Then came the dual plague of drugs and AIDS to which sex is connected like a glue and a go-between, or as an effect of dependency. Drugs are expensive, and in order to get them, big money is needed that can be obtained through prostitution and pornography. The use of drugs spreads infections and sexually transmittable diseases – including AIDS – and paradoxically this fact suggests to many “experts” not the need for temperance and self-control, but rather access to another market of “free and safe sex” where there is no true freedom or safety.

This panorama of dissipating the reserve of love and youth causes many chain reactions in the family and society, spreading psychological and marriage breakdowns, and much violence towards children and women.

The reaction of the public authorities in many countries has been to try and solve the problem by promoting health information in the schools; however, this is often “reduced” to a weak vision and exclusively about health. The only concern is for possible contagion, and above all precautionary measures are offered which have been and will be ineffective outside a framework of values.

In any case, the family has been shut out, and the “sex” education provided usually lacks a valid concept of sexuality.

On the other hand, pastoral experience has confirmed more and more clearly that the future family’s unity and its sound spiritual and moral capacity presuppose a valid education in moral values in general, and a sound guidance with regard to sexuality during adolescence. Many times a family falls before it is formed.

The document, which the Pontifical Council for the Family has been working on for some time, aims at making a dual contribution to offer an anthropological framework as the basis of sexual education and to provide methodological guidelines that involve the family. The presuppositions of the present document are found above all in the Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris consortio* (1981) and the Letter to Families from the Holy Father *Gratissimam sane* (1994), in addition to the many addresses by His Holiness during the Year of the Family.

An underlying anthropology

Sexuality, inborn in the body, is a dimension of the whole person. It pertains not so much to what a person can do or possess, but to what a person is. It totally involves the personality in physical, affective and spiritual life and is necessarily reflected in social relations. All psychologists teach – (to whom?) – that emotional immaturity can endanger a person in how he or she adapts and behaves, and that it threatens the marriage bond and the capacity for interrelationships between parents and children and with the social environment.

Therefore, the anthropological question is more than legitimate. How is a person’s sexuality written into his or her growth, into the complementary relationship between one sex and another, and in openness to self-giving? In brief, the question regarding the “meaning and truth” of sexuality and love is essential.

As the Church continues to teach, the whole of society, on the other hand, must ask itself what type of young person, woman and man it wants to form for tomorrow, what is the relationship between sexuality and the person, between sexuality and the family, and if sexuality is legitimate or tolerable as a mere private function of aimless pleasure without reference to the family. Moreover, it is obvious that it is not just a matter of giving information to young people – which is often not exact – but of giving them values and testimonies of love.

The waters of a torrent are precious as sources of life and energy if they have two qualities: they must be free from poisonous and unhealthy pollution, and they must be contained by the banks that prevent overflows, the breaking of dams and destructive flooding.

The energy of sexuality is too precious for a person not to consider it a value that involves the self and one’s destiny. Marcel* stated, “le corps c’est moi”* and it should also be said that “le sexe c’est moi.”* Indeed, sex is the capacity to build love and self-giving, the family and a

social vocation, fatherhood and motherhood, it is also virginity transcending earthly love for a universal and eschatological vocation. The virtue capable of guiding the living current of love toward self-giving is called chastity. The document states, *“Chastity is the joyous affirmation of someone who knows how to live self-giving, free from any form of self-centered slavery.”* This presupposes that the person has learned how to accept other people, to relate with them, while respecting their dignity in diversity. The chaste person is not self-centered, not involved in selfish relationships with other people. Chastity makes the personality harmonious. It matures it and fills it with inner peace. This purity of mind and body helps develop true self-respect and at the same time makes one capable of respecting others, because it makes one see in them persons to reverence, insofar as they are created in the image of God and through grace are children of God, re-created by Christ Who *‘called you out of darkness into His marvelous light’* (1 Pt 2-9).

Anyone who may think that the Church is estranging herself in this area from the climate of the times, or has been overtaken by a desire to be cloistered far from society ought to think again. Precisely in order to restore society to health and once more propose values of hope and life, many groups of young people, associations and movements are asking the Church to speak out for the dignity of the person, the dignity of women and the family, through a complete human and rich way of seeing sexuality. This is the first step towards a healthier future that is non-violent and free from the exploitation of youth.

Moreover, in recent years, the Pontifical Council has received many letters and appeals to take a stand with regard to erroneous and harmful information that circulates in different countries, and to offer assistance to families on this subject.

Why in the family?

The parents’ right to be the first educators of their children, especially during childhood and adolescence, is a requirement of the natural order and represents a constant high point in the teaching of the Church. In the Letter to Families, *Gratissimam sane*, the Holy Father had already stated, *“If it is true that by giving life the parents share in God’s creative work, it is also true that by raising their children they become sharers in His paternal and at the same time maternal way of teaching. Through Christ all education, within the family and outside of it, becomes part of God’s own saving pedagogy, which is addressed to individuals and families and culminates in the Paschal Mystery of the Lord’s Death and Resurrection”* (n. 16).

The recently published document comments, *“On the other hand, parents are rich in an educative potential which no one else possesses. In a unique way they know their own children; they know them in their unrepeatable identity and by experience they possess the secrets and the resources of true love”* (n. 7).

Of course, the Pontifical Council for the Family realizes that not all families are fully aware of this right and duty that is their own and irreplaceable, under normal circumstances. Families sometimes leave this task to silence, to the indirect, but often unhealthy influence of chance, the television or the school, because of the objective difficulty the delicate subject entails, or out of a kind of neglect passed on from the preceding generation. In this way a kind of expropriation has taken place by the schools, or rather by personnel who are not in harmony with the parents, who act using methods not in accord with the parents, and who are often only concerned with promoting their own pragmatic or ideological conceptions or the interest of agencies outside the real interests of persons and families. Nonetheless, many persons of good will called on in the schools to present sexual education also feel the need for valid guidelines.

Moreover, we must not overlook the fact in this situation that the organizations promoting family planning and guided by the precepts of anti-natalism have found ways of inserting themselves into the “education” of adolescents and of taking the place of families. The document certainly does not exclude the school or other educational associations, but it does strongly reclaim the irreplaceable role of parents and the family environment as the primary, irreplaceable educational factor, and as the constant reference points for schools, religious communities and associations.

A methodology

It should be added that in the great, almost countless, number of publications about sexuality coming from university, specialized or simply informational sources, the part lacking is that concerned with offering parents both elementary and yet fundamental points and methodological guidelines for carrying out their task. Publications of this kind can be counted on one hand.

The present document does not pretend to be a didactic manual. It is a brief, clear synthesis, accessible to all cultural levels, offering methodological guidelines and the essential moral and pedagogical content to be borne in mind, together with a precise synthesis of the parents’ rights to intervene in society and in the schools. The fundamental elements of the Magisterium, especially the rich and plentiful teaching of John Paul II, are presented synthetically.

The first four chapters of the document refer to the content of an anthropological and pedagogical nature, as their titles indicate: *Called to True Love, True Love and Chastity, In the Light of Vocation, Father and Mother as Educators*.

The other three chapters refer to methodology: *Paths of Formation within the Family, Learning Stages, Practical Guidelines*. The conclusion reminds parents of the source and resources from which they can confidently draw in order to carry out a task that is difficult but not impossible, which is recognized as a primary and noble task. *“In the face of the many challenges to “Christian chastity, the gifts of nature and grace which parents enjoy always remain the most solid foundations on which the Church forms her children. Much of the formation in the home is indirect, incarnated in a loving and tender atmosphere, for it arises from the presence and example of parents whose love is pure and generous. If parents are given confidence in this task of education for love, they will be inspired to overcome the challenges and problems of our times by their own ministry of love” (n. 149).*

Cardinal Alfonso López Trujillo President of the Pontifical Council for the Family

Bishop Ello Sgreccia Secretary of the Pontifical Council for the Family

*Herbert Marcuse – German born American Leftist philosopher. Condemned in 1969 by Pope Paul VI who blamed him – along with Sigmund Freud – for promoting the “disgusting and unbridled” manifestations of eroticism and the “animal, barbarous and subhuman degradations” commonly known as the sexual revolution.

*Gabriel Marcel – French philosopher, playwright, music critic and Christian existentialist whose focus was the modern individual’s struggle in a technologically dehumanizing society.

“le corps c’est moi” - the body is me; *“le sexe c’est moi.”* - sex is me.

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...an eclipse of the truth about man, which, among other things, exerts pressure to reduce sex to something commonplace... Then the school, making itself available to carry out programmes of sex education, has often done this by taking the place of the family... TMHS 1

INTRODUCTION

The situation and the problem

(1-7)

Review:

1. The document begins by stating that many parents experience particular difficulty with regard to preparing their children for adult life, particularly with regard to education in the true meaning of sexuality, and gives a number of reasons why this is so. Society and the mass media have a great influence and much of this premature “education” is harmful. In the past, the general culture was permeated by respect for fundamental values and hence served to protect and maintain them. In the greater part of society, both in developed and developing countries, the decline of traditional models has left children deprived of consistent and positive guidance, while parents find themselves unprepared to provide adequate answers. *This new context is made worse by what we observe: an eclipse of the truth about man, which, among other things, exerts pressure to reduce sex to something commonplace. In this area, society and the mass media most of the time provide **depersonalized**, recreational and often **pessimistic** information. Moreover, this information does not take into account the different stages of formation and development of children and young people, and it is influenced by a distorted **individualistic** concept of freedom, in an **ambience** lacking the basic values of life, human love and the family.*

*Then the school, making itself available to carry out programmes of sex education, has often done this by taking the place of the family and, most of the time, with the aim of only providing information. Sometimes this really leads to the **deformation of consciences**. In many cases parents have given up their duty in this field or agreed to delegate it to others, because of the difficulty and their own lack of preparation.*

At times, parents themselves have brought up their difficulties when they are confronted by teaching given at school and thus brought into the home by their children. The Pontifical Council for the Family has received repeated and pressing requests to provide guidelines in support of parents in this delicate area of education.

2. *The Council wishes to put forward pastoral guidelines, drawing on the wisdom which comes from the Word of the Lord and the values which illuminate the teaching of the Church. Therefore, above all, we wish to tie this help for parents to fundamental content about the truth and meaning of sex, within the framework of a genuine and rich **anthropology**.*

*This guide is meant to be neither a treatise of moral theology nor a compendium of psychology. But it does owe much to the gains of science, to the socio-cultural conditions of the family, and to the proclamation of gospel values which are always new and can be **incarnated** in a concrete way in every age.*

3. *In this field, the Church is strengthened by some unquestionable certainties that have also guided the preparation of this document.*

Love is a gift of God, nourished by and expressed in the encounter of man and woman. Love is thus a positive force directed towards their growth in maturity as persons. In the plan of life which represents each person's vocation, love is also a precious source for the self-giving which all men and women are called to make for their own self-realization and happiness. In fact, man is called to love as an incarnate spirit, that is soul and body in the unity of the person. Human love hence embraces the body, and the body also expresses spiritual love. Therefore, sexuality is not something purely biological, rather it concerns the intimate nucleus of the person.

The use of sexuality as physical giving has its own truth and reaches its full meaning when it expresses the personal giving of man and woman even unto death. As with the whole of the person's life, love is exposed to the frailty brought about by original sin, a frailty experienced today in many socio-cultural contexts marked by strong negative influences, at times deviant and traumatic. Nevertheless, the Lord's Redemption has made the positive practice of chastity into something that is really possible and a motive for joy, both for those who have the vocation to marriage (before, in the time of preparation, and afterwards, in the course of married life) as well as for those who have the gift of a special calling to the consecrated life.

4. Original sin's effects (a darkened intellect and weakened will) tend against lifelong fidelity and chastity but the graces won by Christ through the Redemption make entirely possible the full practice of this most beautiful virtue both before and after marriage, and in celibate single and religious life. *In the light of the Redemption and how adolescents and young people are formed, the virtue of chastity is found within temperance — a cardinal virtue elevated and enriched by grace in Baptism. So chastity is not to be understood as a repressive attitude. On the contrary, chastity should be understood rather as the purity and temporary stewardship of a precious and rich gift of love, in view of the self-giving realized in each person's specific vocation. Chastity is thus that "spiritual energy capable of defending love from the perils of selfishness and aggressiveness, and able to advance it towards its full realization."*

The Catechism of the Catholic Church describes and in a sense defines chastity in this way: "Chastity means the successful integration of sexuality within the person and thus the inner unity of man in his bodily and spiritual being".

5. *In the framework of educating the young person for self-realization and self-giving, formation for chastity implies the collaboration first and foremost of the parents, as is the case with formation for the other virtues such as temperance, fortitude and prudence. Chastity cannot exist as a virtue without the capacity to renounce self, to make sacrifices and to wait.*

In giving life, parents cooperate with the creative power of God and receive the gift of a new responsibility — not only to feed their children and satisfy their material and cultural needs, but above all to pass on to them the lived truth of the Faith and to educate them in love of God and neighbour. This is the parents' first duty in the heart of the "domestic church". The Church has always affirmed that parents have the duty and the right to be the first and the principal educators of their children. Taking up the teaching of the Second Vatican Council, the Catechism of the Catholic Church says: "It is imperative

to give suitable and timely instruction to young people, above all in the heart of their own families, about the dignity of married love, its role and its exercise". The document reaffirms the duty and right of parents *to be the first and the principal educators of their children*. With regard to education in chastity and sexuality, *above all in the heart of their own families*, parents should not be discouraged as their work is urgently necessary and indeed, *indispensable*.

6. *The challenges raised today by the mentality and social environment should not discourage parents. In fact it is worth recalling that Christians have had to face up to similar challenges of materialistic hedonism from the time of the first evangelization. "This kind of critical reflection should lead our society, which certainly contains many positive aspects on the material and cultural level, to realize that, from various points of view, our society is a society which is sick and is creating profound distortions in man. Why is this happening? The reason is that our society has broken away from the full truth about man, from the truth about what man and woman really are as persons. Thus it cannot adequately comprehend the real meaning of the gift of persons in marriage, responsible love at the service of fatherhood and motherhood, and the true grandeur of procreation and education"*.

“...our society has broken away from the full truth about man, from the truth about what man and woman really are as persons. Thus it cannot adequately comprehend the real meaning of the gift of persons in marriage, responsible love at the service of fatherhood and motherhood, and the true grandeur of procreation and education”. TMHS 6

7. In teaching, parents are united with God in a kind of divine *pedagogical* relationship. *“Through Christ all education, within the family, and outside of it, becomes part of God’s own saving pedagogy, which is addressed to individuals and families and culminates in the Paschal Mystery of the Lord’s Death and Resurrection”*. *“If it is true that by giving life parents share in God’s creative work, it is also true that by raising their children they*

become sharers in His paternal and at the same time maternal way of teaching...Parents are rich in an educative potential, which no one else possesses. In a unique way they know their own children; they know them in their unrepeatable identity and by experience they possess the secrets and the resources of true love.

In their at times delicate and arduous task, parents must not let themselves become discouraged, rather they should place their trust in the help of God the Creator and Christ the Redeemer. They should remember that the Church prays for them with the words that Pope Saint Clement I raised to the Lord for all who bear authority in His name: “Grant to them, Lord, health, peace, concord and stability, so that they may exercise without offence the sovereignty that You have given them. Master, heavenly King of the ages, You give glory, honour and power over the things of the earth to the sons of men. Direct, Lord, their counsel, following what is pleasing and acceptable in Your sight, so that by exercising with devotion and in peace and gentleness the power that You have given to them, they may find favour with You”.



*He who is chaste in flesh should not be proud
for he should know he owes the gift of continence to another.
Pope Saint Clement I*

Pope Saint Clement I of Rome

Questions For Discussion

1. There are undoubtedly many reasons people might want to embark on a study of the Church's teaching on sexuality, both personal and as regards their family. What do you wish to share with the group about your expectations? What you hope to gain?
2. TMHS begins by stating that the truth about the nature of man, created in the image of God is in eclipse. Human sexuality, which in itself is something sacred and holy, has been reduced to the level of "something commonplace." Is this concept of sexuality as something holy and sacred a new concept for you? Do you tend to think more in terms of its biological or relational aspects? If indeed it is holy, why? Does the mass media support or hinder this concept?
3. For a number of years, many parents have been dissatisfied with sex education programs, including those in Catholic schools. Graphic detail, stage readiness of the child, classroom setting versus privacy, modesty and the child's right to chastity are concerns most frequently expressed by parents. They have asked for programs to help them carry out this type of education in their families. Were you aware of this document, *Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality*, offered by the Pontifical Council for the Family, to help them in this regard?
4. In paragraph 3, which of the truths about sexuality stated there are most significant for you and why?
5. Discuss the following statement: "*Chastity cannot exist as a virtue without the capacity to renounce self, to make sacrifices and to wait.*" What personal character quality is the foundation of a successful practice of this virtue? Does our society help or hinder it?
6. The Church has always said that parents are the primary educators of their children. Our system of schools, even Catholic schools, is relatively recent in history. Do you think that by enrolling their children in Catholic schools, parents tend to believe their role as educators is then largely satisfied and that this religious system of education is more important or effective than their own teaching and witness?
7. What is your understanding of the following statement and give examples if you can: (ours is) "*a society which is sick and is creating profound distortions in man. Why is this happening? The reason is that our society has broken away from the full truth about man, from the truth about what man and woman really are as persons.*"
8. TMHS says that "*If it is true that by giving life parents share in God's creative work, it is also true that by raising their children they become sharers in His paternal and at the same time maternal way of teaching..... Through Christ all education, within the family, and outside of it, becomes part of God's own saving pedagogy, which is addressed to individuals and families and culminates in the Paschal Mystery of the Lord's Death and Resurrection". This is a very rich statement. Discuss.*
9. What concept(s) in TMHS paragraph 7 are most significant for you?

CHAPTER I

CALLED TO TRUE LOVE

(8-15)

Review:

8. *As the image of God, man is created for love. This truth was fully revealed to us in the New Testament, together with the mystery of the inner life of the Trinity: “God is love (1 John 4: 8) and in Himself He lives a mystery of personal loving communion. Creating the human race in His own image... God inscribed in the humanity of man and woman the vocation, and thus the capacity and responsibility, of love and communion. Love is therefore the **fundamental** and **innate** vocation of every human being”. The whole meaning of true freedom, and self-control which follows from it, is thus directed towards self-giving in communion and friendship with God and with others.*

Human Love as Self-Giving

9. *The person is thus capable of a higher kind of love than **concupiscence**, which only sees objects as a means to satisfy one’s appetites; the person is capable rather of friendship and self-giving, with the capacity to recognize and love persons for themselves. This love is capable of generosity, desires and sees the good of the other person as his or her own good as well. This is a love which generates communion between persons, because each considers the good of the other as his or her own good.*

Each person is called to love as friendship and self-giving. Each person is freed from the tendency to selfishness by the love of others, in the first place by parents or those who take their place and, definitively, by God, from Whom all true love proceeds and in Whose love alone does man discover to what extent he is loved. Here we find the root of the educative power of Christianity: “Humanity is loved by God! This very simple yet profound proclamation is owed to humanity by the Church”. In this way Christ has revealed his true identity to man: “Christ the new Adam, in the very revelation of the mystery of the Father and of His love, fully reveals man to himself and brings to light his most high calling”.

The love revealed by Christ “which the Apostle Paul celebrates in the First Letter to the Corinthians...is certainly a demanding love. But this is precisely the source of its beauty: by the very fact that it is demanding, it builds up the true good of man and allows it to radiate to others”. Therefore it is a love which respects and builds up the person because “Love is true when it creates the good of persons and of communities; it creates that good and gives it to others”.

Love and Human Sexuality

10. *Man is called to love and to self-giving in the unity of body and spirit. Femininity and masculinity are complementary gifts, through which human sexuality is an integrating part of the concrete capacity for love which God has inscribed in man and woman. “Sexuality is a fundamental component of personality, one of its modes of being, of manifestation, of communicating with others, of feeling, of expressing and of living human love”. This capacity for love as self-giving is thus “incarnated” in the nuptial meaning of the body, which bears the imprint of the person’s masculinity and femininity. “The human body, with its sex, and its masculinity and femininity, seen in the very mystery of creation, is not only a source of fruitfulness and procreation, as in the whole natural order, but includes right ‘from the beginning’ the ‘nuptial’ attribute, that is, the capacity of expressing love: that love precisely in which the man-person becomes a gift and — by means of this gift — fulfils the very meaning of his being and existence”. Every form of love will always bear this masculine and feminine character.*

11. *Human sexuality is thus a good, part of that created gift which God saw as being “very good”, when He created the human person in His image and likeness, and “male and female He created them.” (Genesis 1:27)*

Insofar as it is a way of relating and being open to others, sexuality has love as its intrinsic end, more precisely, love as donation and acceptance, love as giving and receiving. The relationship between a man and a woman is essentially a relationship of love: “Sexuality, oriented, elevated and integrated by love acquires truly human quality”. When such love exists in marriage, self-giving expresses, through the body, the complementarity and totality of the gift. Married love thus becomes a power which enriches persons and makes them grow and, at the same time, it contributes to building up the civilization of love. But when the sense and meaning of gift is lacking in sexuality, a “civilization of things and not of persons” takes over, “a civilization in which persons are used in the same way as things are used. In the context of a civilization of use, woman can become an object for man, children a hindrance to parents...” TMHS 11

But when the sense and meaning of gift is lacking in sexuality, a “civilization of things and not of persons” takes over, “a civilization in which persons are used in the same way as things are used. In the context of a civilization of use, woman can become an object for man, children a hindrance to parents...” TMHS 11

12. *The gift of God: this great truth and basic fact stands at the centre of the Christian conscience of parents and their children. Here we refer to the gift which God has given us in calling us to life, to exist as man or woman in an unrepeatable existence, full of endless possibilities for growing spiritually and morally: When God Yahweh says that ‘it is not good that man should be alone’ (Genesis 2:18), He affirms that ‘alone’, man does not completely realize his existence.*

He realizes it only by existing ‘with some one’ — and even more deeply and completely: by existing ‘for some one.’ Both married love and the vocation to the consecrated life involve self-giving, taking the form of a total gift that belongs to this state of life. Moreover, the vocation to the consecrated life always finds its meaning in self-giving, sustained by a special grace, the gift of oneself to God alone.... Grace...the divine life of God, received in Baptism, makes this Gift ever more wondrous, because by Baptism we become “partakers

of the divine nature” of God. (2 Peter 1:4) and are called to live the supernatural communion of love together with God and with our brothers and sisters. Even in the most delicate situations, Christian parents cannot forget that the gift of God is there, at the very basis of all personal and family history.

13. *“As an incarnate spirit, that is, a soul which expresses itself in a body, and a body informed by an immortal spirit, man is called to love in his unified totality. Love includes the human body, and the body is made a sharer in spiritual love”. “Sexuality characterizes us not only on the physical level, but also on the psychological and spiritual levels, making its mark on each of their expressions. Such diversity, linked to the complementarity of the two sexes, allows thorough response to the design of God according to the vocation to which each one is called.”*

“As an incarnate spirit, that is, a soul which expresses itself in a body, and a body informed by an immortal spirit, man is called to love in his unified totality. Love includes the human body, and the body is made a sharer in spiritual love”. TMHS 13

Married Love

14. *Love in marriage surpasses friendship. Love between a man and woman is achieved when they give themselves totally, each in turn according to their own masculinity and femininity, founding on the marriage covenant that communion of persons where God has willed that human life be conceived, grow and develop. To this married love, and to this love alone, belongs sexual giving, “realized in a truly human way only if it is an integral part of the love by which a man and a woman commit themselves totally to one another until death”. The Catechism of the Catholic Church recalls: “In marriage the physical intimacy of the spouses becomes a sign and pledge of spiritual communion. Marriage bonds between baptized persons are sanctified by the Sacrament”.*

Love Open to Life

15. *The revealing sign of authentic married love is openness to life: “In its most profound reality, love is essentially a gift; and conjugal love, while leading the spouses to the reciprocal ‘knowledge’.... does not end with the couple, because it makes them capable of the greatest possible gift, the gift by which they become cooperators with God for giving life to a new human person. Thus the couple, while giving themselves to one another, give not just themselves but also the reality of children, who are a living reflection of their love, a permanent sign of conjugal unity and a living and inseparable synthesis of their being a father and a mother”. From this communion of love and life spouses draw that human and spiritual richness and that positive atmosphere for offering their children the support of education for love and chastity.*



*Creation of Adam –
Michelangelo*

Questions For Discussion

1. Man is created in the image of God. Can you think about, and then explain how the family is an image on earth, of the Trinity? This is foundational if we are to understand the full truth about the family, love and marriage.
2. From what you know already, what do you think makes us capable of a higher kind of love than concupiscence?
3. Explain in your own words what is meant by the term: “the nuptial meaning of the body.” Can you see how promotion of the idea that there are multiple sexes or that a person can decide their gender is a direct attack on the truth that God created two sexes and the “nuptial meaning” of the body? Discuss.
4. What is the source of the Church’s belief that sexuality is “very good,” both in itself and in its relation to the community and society? Describe how this is so.
5. Explain the concept of *sexuality as gift*, showing the difference in the attitudes and actions of people when this concept is present, and when it is not.
6. What is an essential element that is active in both marital love and virginal consecrated love?
7. Does it surprise you to read that conjugal love involves both the physical and the **spiritual**? How do you think the spiritual aspect is affected in a person when he or she becomes involved in unchaste activity or otherwise violates the vow of marital fidelity?
8. What are the effects of the Sacraments of Baptism and Matrimony on conjugal love?



*The Guarded Bower –
Arthur Hughes*

CHAPTER II

TRUE LOVE AND CHASTITY

(16-25)

Review:

16. This section presents the two forms of love; both involve the commitment to chastity. *... As the Catechism of the Catholic Church says, sexuality “becomes personal and truly human when it is integrated into the relationship of one person to another, in the complete and mutual lifelong gift of a man and a woman”. Insofar as it entails sincere self-giving, it is obvious that growth in love is helped by that discipline of the feelings, passions and emotions which leads us to self-mastery. One cannot give what one does not possess. If the person is not master of self — through the virtues and, in a concrete way, through chastity — he or she lacks that self-possession which makes self-giving possible. Chastity is the spiritual power which frees love from selfishness and aggression. To the degree that a person weakens chastity, his or her love becomes more and more selfish, that is, satisfying a desire for pleasure and no longer self-giving.*

Chastity as Self-Giving

If the person is not master of self — through the virtues and, in a concrete way, through chastity — he or she lacks that self-possession which makes self-giving possible. TMHS 16

17. *Chastity is the joyous affirmation of someone who knows how to live self-giving, free from any form of self-centred slavery. This presupposes that the person has learnt how to accept other people, to relate with them, while respecting their dignity in diversity. The virtue of chastity frees the person from any form of selfish slavery. Chastity makes the personality harmonious. It matures it and fills it with inner peace. This purity of mind and body helps develop true self-respect and at the same time makes one capable of respecting others, because it makes one see in them persons to reverence, insofar as they are created in the image of God and through grace are children of God, re-created by Christ Who “called you out of darkness into His marvelous light” (1 Peter 2:9).*

Self-Mastery

18. *“Chastity includes an apprenticeship in self-mastery which is a training in human freedom. The alternative is clear...either man governs his passions and finds peace, or he lets himself be dominated by them and becomes unhappy”. Every person knows, by experience, that chastity requires rejecting certain thoughts, words and sinful actions, as Saint Paul was careful to clarify and point out (cf. Romans 1:18; 6: 12-14; 1 Corinthians 6: 9-11; 2 Corinthians 7: 1; Galatians 5: 16-23; Ephesians 4: 17-24; 5: 3-13; Colossians 3: 5-8; 1 Thessalonians 4: 1-18; 1 Timothy 1: 8-11; 4: 12). To achieve this requires ability and an attitude of self-mastery which are signs of inner freedom, of responsibility towards oneself and others. At the same time, these signs bear witness to a faithful conscience. Such self-mastery involves both avoiding occasions which might provoke or encourage sin as well as knowing how to overcome one’s own natural instinctive impulses.*

19. *When the family is providing real educational support and encouraging the exercise of all the virtues, education for chastity is made easy and lacks inner conflicts, even if at certain times young people can experience particularly delicate situations. For some who find themselves in situations where chastity is offended against and not valued, living in a chaste way can demand a hard or even a heroic struggle. Nonetheless, with the grace of Christ, flowing from His spousal love for the Church, everyone can live chastely even if they find themselves in unfavourable circumstances. Everyone can be in situations where heroic acts of virtue are indispensable, whether in celibate life or marriage, and that in fact in one way or another this happens to everyone for shorter or longer periods of time. Therefore, married life also entails a joyous and demanding path to holiness.*

Chastity in Marriage

20. “Married people are called to live conjugal chastity; others practise chastity in continence”. *Parents are well aware that living conjugal chastity themselves is the most valid premise for educating their children in chaste love and in holiness of life.*

In order to live chastely, man and woman need the continuous illumination of the Holy Spirit. TMHS 21

*God’s love is present in parents’ conjugal love...and hence their sexual giving should also be lived out in respect for God and for his plan of love, with fidelity, honour and generosity towards one’s spouse and towards the life which can arise from their act of love. Only in this way can their love be an expression of charity. Therefore, in marriage Christians are called to live this self-giving in a right personal relationship with God. This relationship is thus an expression of their faith and love for God with the fidelity and generous fruitfulness which distinguishes divine love. Only in this way do they respond to the love of God and fulfil His will, which the Commandments help us to know. There is no **legitimate** love, at its highest level, which is not also love for God. To love the Lord implies responding positively to His commandments: “If you love Me, you will keep My commandments” (John 14:15).*

21. The Holy Spirit is an indispensable aid in practicing chastity and in understanding the presence of God in married conjugal love. *In order to live chastely, man and woman need the continuous **illumination** of the Holy Spirit. “At the centre of the spirituality of marriage...lies chastity, not only as a moral virtue (formed by love), but likewise as a virtue connected with the gifts of the Holy Spirit — above all the gift of respect for what comes from God (**donum pietatis**)... So therefore, the interior order of married life, which enables the ‘manifestations of affection’ to develop according to their right proportion and meaning, is a fruit not only of the virtue which the couple practise, but also of the gifts of the Holy Spirit with which they cooperate”.*

*On the other hand, convinced that their own chaste life and the daily effort of bearing witness are the premise and condition for their educational task, parents should also consider any attack on the virtue and chastity of their children as an offence against the life of faith itself that threatens and **impoverishes** their own communion of life and grace (cf. Ephesians 6:12).*

Education for Chastity

22. Presents three objectives for the education of children in the virtue of chastity, in the family: (a) to maintain in the family a **positive atmosphere of love, virtue and respect for**

the gifts of God, in particular the gift of life; (b) to help children to understand the *value of sexuality and chastity in stages*, sustaining their growth through enlightening word, example and prayer; (c) to help them *understand and discover their own vocation to marriage or to consecrated virginity* for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven in harmony with and respecting their attitudes and inclinations and the gifts of the Spirit. The document then states:

23. Other educators can assist in this task, but they can only take the place of parents for serious reasons of physical or moral incapacity. On this point the Magisterium of the Church has expressed itself clearly, in relation to the whole educative process of children: “The role of parents in education is of such importance that it is almost impossible to find an adequate substitute. It is therefore the duty of parents to create a family atmosphere inspired by love and devotion to God and their fellow-men which will promote an integrated, personal and social education of their children. The family is therefore the principal school of the social virtues which are necessary to every society”... “Parents are the first and most important educators of their children, and they also possess a fundamental competency in this area: they are educators because they are parents. They share their individual mission with other individuals or institutions, such as the Church and the State. But the mission of education must always be carried out in accordance with a proper application of the principle of subsidiarity. This implies the legitimacy and indeed the need of giving assistance to the parents, but finds its intrinsic and absolute limit in their prevailing right and their actual capabilities. The principle of subsidiarity is thus at the service of parental love, meeting the good of the family unit. Subsidiarity thus complements paternal and maternal love and confirms its fundamental nature, inasmuch as all other participants in the process of education are only able to carry out their responsibilities in the name of the parents, with their consent and, to a certain degree, with their authorization”. The former quotes are of great importance with regard to the rights and duties of parents in education in chastity.

24. In particular, the project of education in sexuality and true love, open to self-giving, is confronted today by a culture guided by positivism, as the Holy Father notes in the Letter to Families: “..the development of contemporary civilization is linked to a scientific and technological progress which is often achieved in a one-sided way, and thus appears purely positivistic. Positivism, as we know, results in agnosticism in theory and utilitarianism in practice and in ethics... Utilitarianism is a civilization of production and of use, a civilization of things and not of persons, a civilization in which persons are used in the same way as things are used... To be convinced that this is the case, one need only to look at certain sexual education programmes introduced into the schools, often notwithstanding the disagreement and even the protests of many parents...”. Parents must be the primary providers in education in chastity; it is their responsibility and domain; the Church asserts and supports this fact.

In this context, based on the teaching of the Church and with her support, parents must reclaim their own task. By associating together, wherever this is necessary or useful, they should put into action an educational project marked by the true values of the person and Christian love and taking a clear position that surpasses ethical utilitarianism.

For education to correspond to the objective needs of true love, parents should provide this education within their own autonomous responsibility. Parents are not to hand over their own responsibility in this matter, to schools. Parents must form associations with others and reclaim their task.

In this context, based on the teaching of the Church and with her support, parents must reclaim their own task. TMHS 24

25. Moreover, in relation to preparation for marriage the teaching of the Church states that the family must remain the main protagonist in this educational work. Certainly “the changes that have taken place within almost all modern societies demand that not only the family but also society and the Church should be involved in the effort of properly preparing young people for their future responsibilities”. It is precisely with this end in view that the educational task of the family takes on greater importance from the earliest years: “Remote preparation begins in early childhood in that wise family training which leads children to discover themselves as being endowed with a rich and complex psychology and with a particular personality with its own strengths and weaknesses”.



*Noontime Prayer
At Harvest Time –
Theodor Schütz*

1. Discuss the statements in paragraph 16-18 regarding the need for self-mastery and self-control as needed for true self-giving love. To the degree that a person weakens chastity, his or her love becomes more and more selfish, that is, satisfying a desire for pleasure and no longer self-giving. Look up and read the Scripture quotes on chastity/purity.
2. Does the following statement help you understand the HOLINESS of marital love and therefore help with accepting and appreciating the Church’s teaching regarding contraception? *...parents should be aware that God’s love is present in their love, and hence that their sexual giving should also be lived out in respect for God and for His plan of love, with fidelity, honour and generosity towards one’s spouse and towards the life which can arise from their act of love. Only in this way can their love be an expression of charity. Therefore, in marriage Christians are called to live this self-giving in a right personal relationship with God. This relationship is thus an expression of their faith and love for God with the fidelity and generous fruitfulness which distinguishes divine love. Only in this way do they respond to the love of God and fulfill His will, which the Commandments help us to know. There is no legitimate love, at its highest level, which is not also love for God. To love the Lord implies responding positively to His commandments: “If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.” (John 14:15).*

3. How/why is the Holy Spirit necessary in the practice of chastity? And why should **parents ... consider any attack on the virtue and chastity of their children as an offence against the life of faith itself that threatens and impoverishes their own communion of life and grace...**? (cf. Ephesians 6:12).
4. What are the three important objectives to keep in mind in educating children for chastity?
5. Paragraph 23 heavily emphasizes the right and DUTY of parents to provide education in sexuality for their own children. TMHS repeats this concept many times and in various expressions throughout the document: *Parents are the first and most important educators of their children, and they also possess a **fundamental competency** in this area: **they are educators because they are parents**. They share their individual mission with other individuals or institutions, such as the Church and the State. But the mission of education must always be carried out in accordance with a proper application of the **principle of subsidiarity**. This implies the legitimacy and indeed the need of **giving assistance** to the parents, but finds its intrinsic and absolute limit in their prevailing right and their actual capabilities. The principle of subsidiarity is thus at the service of parental love, meeting the good of the family unit.* Keep a count of the number of times TMHS speaks of education in chastity (sex education) as a right and duty of parents. Also discuss what is meant by this statement: *Other educators can assist in this task, but they can only take the place of parents for serious reasons of physical or moral incapacity.*
6. Explain the concept of subsidiarity and how it applies to sex education. Do you understand that “giving assistance” does not mean justifying the school’s action of taking over the role of parents or of parents relinquishing their responsibilities to the school?
7. What is meant by the terms Positivism? Utilitarianism? How do they negatively affect education in chastity?
8. Since the Church and TMHS state that parents are to reclaim and provide this education, is there a need for programs for parents to encourage and help them in this regard? Can you find resources/programs in your diocesan Marriage Office or elsewhere, to review and recommend? (See listing in Resources)
9. Do you appreciate the importance also of the family providing education for marriage, especially now that essentially “marriage” has been redefined in the US and elsewhere to include persons of the same sex?

In the family, children and young people...can gradually discover that a stable Christian marriage cannot be regarded as a matter of convenience or mere sexual attraction. Marriage is not, then, the effect of chance or the product of evolution of unconscious natural forces; it is the wise institution of the Creator to realize in mankind His design of love. TMHS 27, 28

CHAPTER III IN THE LIGHT OF VOCATION

(26-33)

Review:

26. *The family carries out a decisive role in cultivating and developing all vocations, as the Second Vatican Council taught: “From the marriage of Christians there comes the family in which new citizens of human society are born and, by the grace of the Holy Spirit in Baptism, those are made children of God so that the People of God may be perpetuated throughout the centuries. The parents by word and example, are the first heralds of the Faith with regard to their children. They must foster the vocation which is proper to each child, and this with special care if it be to religion”. Yet the very fact that vocations flourish is the sign of adequate pastoral care of the family: “where there is an effective and enlightened family apostolate, just as it becomes normal to accept life as a gift from God, so it is easier for God’s voice to resound and to find a more generous hearing”. Here we are dealing with vocations to marriage or to virginity or celibacy, but these are always vocations to holiness. “Strengthened by so many and such great means of salvation, all the faithful, whatever their condition or state — though each in his own way — are called by the Lord to that perfection of sanctity by which the Father Himself is perfect”.*

1. The Vocation to Marriage

27. *Formation for true love is always the best preparation for the vocation to marriage. In the family, children and young people can learn to live human sexuality within the solid context of Christian life. They can gradually discover that a stable Christian marriage cannot be regarded as a matter of convenience or mere sexual attraction. By the fact that it is a vocation, marriage must involve a carefully considered choice, a mutual commitment before God and the constant seeking of His help in prayer.*

Called To Married Love

28. *Humanae Vitae stated that: Marriage is not, then, the effect of chance or the product of evolution of unconscious natural forces; it is the wise institution of the Creator to realize in mankind His design of love. By means of the reciprocal personal gift of self, proper and exclusive to them, husband and wife tend towards the communion of their beings in view of mutual personal perfection, to collaborate with God in the generation and education of new lives. For baptized persons, moreover, marriage invests the dignity of a sacramental sign of grace, inasmuch as it represents the union of Christ and of the Church”.*

To repeat: it is important to understand that Baptism elevates marriage and all that it involves, to the high level of a Sacrament infusing it with a sacred and holy nature that images the union of Christ with His Bride, the Church.

Pope Saint John Paul II's Letter to Families teaches that the family is a communion of persons, just as is the Holy Trinity and that similarity allows the family to *live in truth and love*, which is what each person really needs. *It opens the person to God...to other people, to living in communion, and to marriage and the family. Going back to the teaching of the Second Vatican Council, the Holy Father teaches that such a communion involves "a certain similarity between the union of the divine Persons and union of God's children in truth and love"*.

29. As the Encyclical *Humanae Vitae* affirms, married love has four characteristics: it is human love (physical and spiritual), it is total, faithful and fruitful love. In marriage man and woman become one flesh and though different, they are complementary and both able to live in truth and in love, both in a bodily and spiritual dimension. The family that results from this union is solidified in its unity through the **covenantal relationship of the parents, from that Sacrament of marriage. Their promise of fidelity is capable of being lived out because it draws its strength from God, from the Trinity and from the Sacramental graces of marriage. The family draws its proper character as a community, its traits of communion, from that fundamental communion of the spouses which is prolonged in their children. 'Will you accept children lovingly from God, and bring them up according to the law of Christ and His Church?' the celebrant asks during the Rite of Marriage. The answer given by the spouses reflects the most profound truth of the love which unites them. With the same formula, spouses commit themselves and promise to be "faithful forever" because their fidelity really flows from this communion of persons which is rooted in the plan of the Creator, in Trinitarian Love and in the Sacrament which expresses the faithful union between Christ and the Church.**

Going back to the teaching of the Second Vatican Council, the Holy Father teaches that such a communion involves "a certain similarity between the union of the divine Persons and union of God's children in truth and love". TMHS 28

30. Especially significant is the following: *Christian Marriage is a Sacrament whereby sexuality is integrated into a path to holiness, through a bond reinforced by the indissoluble unity of the Sacrament: "The gift of the Sacrament is at the same time a vocation and commandment for the Christian spouses, that they may remain faithful to each other forever, beyond every trial and difficulty, in generous obedience to the holy will of the Lord: 'What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder'"*.

Parents Face a Current Concern

31. Though divorce rates are high parents must respond with optimism and help their children with the ability to overcome conflicts in mutual charity and affection, that which is fostered and formed through the witness of their own truly Christian marriage. *Nevertheless, in spite of the rising number of divorces and the growing crisis of the family, they should respond with optimism, committing themselves to give their children a deep Christian formation to make them able to overcome various difficulties. Actually, the love for chastity, which parents help to form, favours mutual respect between man and woman and provides a capacity for compassion, tolerance, generosity, and above all, a spirit of sacrifice, without which love cannot endure.* This training and example will help children later

in their own marriages. *Children will thus come to marriage with that realistic wisdom about which Saint Paul speaks when he teaches that husband and wife must continually give way to one another in love, cherishing one another with mutual patience and affection* (cf. 1 Corinthians 7: 3-6; Ephesians 5: 21-23).

...the love for chastity, which parents help to form, favours mutual respect between man and woman and provides a capacity for compassion, tolerance, generosity, and above all, a spirit of sacrifice, without which love cannot endure. TMHS 31

32. In the family the adolescent and young person learns *to live sexuality in its personal dimension, rejecting any kind of sexuality separated from love, and any separation of the love between husband and wife, from the family. Parental respect for life and the mystery of procreation will spare the child or young person from the false idea that the two dimensions of the conjugal act, unitive and procreative, can be separated at will. Thus the family comes to be recognized as an inseparable part of the vocation to marriage.*

A Christian education for chastity within the family cannot remain silent about the moral gravity involved in separating the unitive dimension from the procreative dimension within married life. This happens above all in contraception and artificial procreation. In the first case, one intends to seek sexual pleasure, intervening in the conjugal act to avoid conception; in the second case conception is sought by substituting the conjugal act with a technique. These are actions contrary to the truth of married love and contrary to full communion between husband and wife.

Forming young people for chastity should thus become a preparation for responsible

fatherhood and motherhood, which “directly concern the moment in which a man and a woman, uniting themselves in one flesh, can become parents. This is a moment of special value both for their interpersonal relationship and for their service to life: they can become

The two dimensions of conjugal union, the unitive and the procreative, cannot be artificially separated without damaging the deepest truth of the conjugal act itself. TMHS 32

parents — father and mother — by communicating life to a new human being. The two dimensions of conjugal union, the unitive and the procreative, cannot be artificially separated without damaging the deepest truth of the conjugal act itself. Sterilization, abortion and fornication are additional serious evils with consequences physical, emotional and spiritual. In the family education in chastity and in these matters at the proper time and age level is essential and if carried out is also a benefit to a stable and orderly society.

It is also necessary to put before young people the consequences, which are always very serious, of separating sexuality from procreation when someone reaches the stage of practising sterilization and abortion or pursuing sexual activity dissociated from married love, before and outside of marriage. Much of the moral order and marital harmony of the family, hence also the true good of society, depends on this timely education, which finds its place in God’s plan, in the very structure of sexuality and the intimate nature of marriage.

33. This section ends with the beautiful quote from Tertullian, one of the Fathers of the Church: *“How can I ever express the happiness of the marriage that is joined together by the Church, strengthened by an offering, sealed by a blessing, announced by angels and ratified by the Father.... They are both brethren and both fellow servants; there is no separation between them in spirit or flesh.... Christ rejoices in them and He sends them His peace; where the couple is, there He is also to be found, and where He is, evil can no longer abide.”*



*Blessing of the Young Couple Before Marriage –
Pascal Dagnan-Bouvere*

*Love is tragic if it is not redeemed...to fall in love is fairly easy...
but to live love is very difficult. And there we have to acknowledge failure
and to have to acknowledge that without God we cannot do it.*

*We are much too imperfect, we are much too limited,
we are going to need prayer...and super-nature.*

What is the fountain of super-nature here on earth? It is the Church.

*What does the Church do, the Bride of Christ
the source of graces in the Sacrament?*

The Church is going to teach us how to love.

*Human love, beautiful as it is, noble as it is, great as it is,
is bound to fail in some fashion and to end tragically.*

*Through the gift of super-nature, this can totally be transfigured,
totally changed. We are very poor, very limited, very imperfect lovers
but called upon to become great lovers through grace.*

Alice Von Hildebrand – Human Life International Conference 1997

Questions For Discussion

1. Do you understand that all vocations including marriage and the single life are vocations to holiness?
2. Paragraph 27 states that the vocation to marriage should be undertaken as a conscious choice. Do you think that many people marry with this in mind? Is it just rather “assumed” that one will marry?
3. The inherent nobility and dignity...the holiness of conjugal love has its roots in its creation and design by God Himself as a mirror of the relationship of the Holy Trinity. Moreover, it has been further elevated because Baptism transforms the human person and gives him or her a sharing in the divine nature of Christ. Therefore all human activity becomes holy. Do you think that people, even good Catholics fully realize this great dignity and holiness? If not, why?
4. The family is a ‘community of persons’ living in a relationship that reflects and is somehow drawn into the Divine Communion of the Trinity. Thus, the family must relate both in truth and in love, for God is both. How does this openness to truth particularly apply in marriage?
5. What are the four characteristics of married love?
6. *Christian marriage is a sacrament whereby sexuality is integrated into a path to holiness, through a bond reinforced by the indissoluble unity of the Sacrament...* Do these paragraphs (29-30) help you to realize the sacred nature of conjugal love? Discuss.
7. Why does love for chastity foster the qualities needed for a stable successful marriage? How does the separation of sexuality from love foster selfishness?
8. Discuss the various offenses against God’s order for marital love that have come because we have separated its unitive and procreative dimensions? *The two dimensions of conjugal union, the unitive and the procreative, cannot be artificially separated without damaging the deepest truth of the conjugal act itself.* Discuss. Does the realization of the sacred nature of conjugal love as created by God and a reflection of the union and action of the Trinity help respect the unity of these two dimensions?

The moment that Adam and Eve sinned together, what happened?

A chasm was created between them.

One of the things I heard first from Dietrich Von Hildebrand

when I was a student at Fordham University;

it made a tremendous impression on me when he said:

“When two people sin together they separate themselves from each other.”

When you take two young people [committing the sin of fornication] and they say ‘how marvelous, now we are united’... there’s a chasm between them – there’s an abyss between them – that cannot be breached except by grace.

Alice Von Hildebrand – Human Life International 1997 Conference



In A Convent Garden – George Dunlop Leslie

“When marriage is not esteemed, neither can consecrated virginity or celibacy exist; when human sexuality is not regarded as a great value given by the Creator, the renunciation of it for the sake of the kingdom of heaven loses its meaning”. TMHS 34

2. The Vocation to Virginity and Celibacy

(34-36)

Review:

34. Both marriage and virginity are two ways of living out the Christian vocation to love. Christian revelation presents the two vocations to love: marriage and virginity. *In some societies today, not only marriage and the family, but also vocations to the priesthood and the religious life, are often in a state of crisis. The two situations are inseparable: “When marriage is not esteemed, neither can consecrated virginity or celibacy exist; when human sexuality is not regarded as a great value given by the Creator, the renunciation of it for the sake of the kingdom of heaven loses its meaning”.*

If families are generous in accepting new life, children will develop a sense of that same virtue and be better able to live out their vocation of self-giving with that same spirit of generosity. *“Families must once again express a generous love for life and place themselves at its service above all by accepting the children which the Lord wants to give them with a sense of responsibility not detached from peaceful trust”, and they may bring this acceptance to fulfillment not only “through a continuing educational effort but also through an obligatory commitment, at times perhaps neglected, to help teenagers especially and young people to accept the vocational dimension of every living being, within God’s plan...* Parents must help children and young people to develop the understanding that their life is to be a gift of self and to teach and encourage the vocation to virginity as Pope Saint John Paul II said in *Familiaris Consortio*: *the supreme form of that self-giving that constitutes the very meaning of human sexuality.*



*Mass In A
Connemara
Cabin –
Aloysius O'Kelly*

Parents and Priestly or Religious Vocations

35. Parents should therefore rejoice if they see in any of their children the signs of God's call to the higher vocation of virginity or celibacy for the love of the Kingdom of Heaven. Parents should adapt education for chaste love to the needs of children who are expressing interest in a

religious vocation; and respect the choice of vocation, not try to impose it on the child. Both

parents and the entire Christian community have the task of fostering religious vocations;

the young person's involvement in parish life helps enlighten an awareness of the needs of

the Church and provides a healthy setting for hearing the call of Christ. ***The Second Vatican***

Council clearly set out this distinct and honourable task of parents, who are supported

in their work by teachers and priests: "Parents should nurture and protect religious

vocations in their children by educating them in Christian virtues". "The duty of fostering

vocations falls on the whole Christian community.... The greatest contribution is made

by families which are animated by a spirit of faith, charity and piety and which provide,

as it were, a first seminary, and by parishes in whose abundant life the young people

themselves take an active part". "Parents, teachers and all who are in any way concerned

in the education of boys and young men ought to train them in such a way that they will

know the **solicitude** of the Lord for His flock and be alive to the needs of the Church. In

this way they will be prepared when the Lord calls to answer generously with the prophet:

'Here am I! Send me' (Isaiah 6:8)". This necessary family context for maturing religious

and priestly vocations brings to mind the serious situation of many families, especially in

certain countries, families with an impoverished life because they have chosen to deprive

themselves of children or where they have only one child, a situation in which it is very

difficult for vocations to arise and even difficult to develop a full social education.

36. Parents must also encourage and support chastity for those children who, for various

reasons are not capable of entering either the religious or the married state. They must assist

them in discovering their own fulfilling call from Christ in service to the Gospel and others

in a spirit of hope and peace. ***If they are formed well from childhood and during their***

"Parents should nurture and protect religious vocations in their children by educating them in Christian virtues." TMHS 35



*Maternity –
Edmund Blair
Leighton*

youth, they will be equipped to face their own situation more easily. Likewise, they will be able to discover the will of God in such a situation and so find a sense of vocation and peace in their own lives. These persons, especially if they have some kind of physical disability, need to be shown the great possibilities for self-realization and spiritual fruitfulness which are open to those who make a commitment to help their poorest and most needy brothers and sisters, sustained by faith and the love of God.

Questions For Discussion

1. Paragraph 34 begins by stating that in some societies both marriage and the family and priestly and religious life are often in a state of crisis. Discuss the following: *The two situations are inseparable: “When marriage is not esteemed, neither can consecrated virginity or celibacy exist; when human sexuality is not regarded as a great value given by the Creator, the renunciation of it for the sake of the kingdom of heaven loses its meaning”.*
2. What attitudes should prevail with parents regarding the acceptance of more children?
3. What attitude is at the core of a truly human and fulfilling life?
4. Explain in your own words the document’s valuable statement that parents need to have *an obligatory commitment, at times perhaps neglected, to help teenagers especially and young people to accept the vocational dimension of every living being, within God’s plan...* Consider how a young person’s appreciation of the vocational choice of each person they meet or know, can help them foster respect for that person, and treat them accordingly.
5. What should the attitude be of parents whose children are considering the call to priesthood or religious life?

As regards education, parents are enlightened by “two fundamental truths: first, that man is called to live in truth and love; and second, that everyone finds fulfillment through the sincere gift of self. TMHS 37

CHAPTER IV FATHER AND MOTHER AS EDUCATORS

(37-47)

Review:

37. God gives parents *special spiritual energies* (graces) they need to carry out their role. *As regards education, parents are enlightened by “two fundamental truths: first, that man is called to live in truth and love; and second, that everyone finds fulfillment through the sincere gift of self.* Both mother and father share the education of their children in mutual dialogue that *“has a new specific source in the Sacrament of Marriage, which consecrates them for the strictly Christian education of their children: that is to say, it calls upon them to share in the very authority and love of God the Father and Christ the shepherd, and in the motherly love of the Church, and it enriches them with wisdom, counsel, fortitude and all the other gifts of the Holy Spirit in order to help the children in their growth as human beings and as Christians”.*

Parents should not ever feel alone in this task. The Church supports and encourages them, confident that they can carry out this function better than anyone else. TMHS 40

38. With regard to education in chastity, God gives single parents and adoptive parents special graces to carry out this role with the same sensitivity and generosity as they care for their children in other areas of life. *The task of a single parent is certainly not easy because the support of the other spouse and the role and example of a parent of the other sex is lacking. But God sustains single parents with a special love and calls them to take on this task with the same generosity and sensitivity with which they love and care for their children in other areas of family life.*

39. Others who permanently take the place of parents in some way, such as those who care for abandoned or orphaned children also receive the graces of their state in life to carry out education in chastity according to the same principles that guide Christian parents.

It is extremely important for parents to understand and know their own rights and duties, particularly in the face of the state or a school that initiates programs of sex education. TMHS 41

40. Parents should not ever feel alone in this task. *The Church supports and encourages them, confident that they can carry out this function better than anyone else. She also encourages those men or women who, often with great sacrifice, give children without parents a form of parental love and family life. ...All of them must approach this duty in a spirit of prayer, open and obedient to the moral truths of faith and reason that integrate the teaching of the Church, and always seeing children and young people as persons, children of God and heirs to the Kingdom of Heaven.*

The Rights and Duties of Parents

41. Before going into the specifics of education in chastity, *it is extremely important for parents to understand and know their own rights and duties, particularly in the face of the state or a school that initiates programs of sex education. The Holy Father John Paul II reaffirms this in Familiaris Consortio: “The right and duty of parents to give education is essential, since it is connected with the transmission of human life; it is original and primary with regard to the educational role of others, on account of the uniqueness of the loving relationship between parents and children; and it is irreplaceable and inalienable, and therefore incapable of being entirely delegated to others or usurped by others”, except in the case, as mentioned at the beginning, of physical or psychological impossibility.*

The Pope insists upon the fact that this holds especially with regard to sexuality: “Sex education, which is a basic right and duty of parents, must always be carried out under their attentive guidance, whether at home or in educational centres chosen and controlled by them. In this regard, the Church reaffirms the law of subsidiarity, which the school is bound to observe when it cooperates in sex education, by entering into the same spirit that animates the parents”. TMHS 43

42. *This doctrine is based on the teaching of the Second Vatican Council, and is also proclaimed by*

the Charter of the Rights of the Family: “Since they have conferred life on their children, parents have the original, primary and inalienable right to educate them; hence they ...have the right to educate their children in conformity with their moral and religious convictions, taking into account the cultural traditions of the family which favour the good and the dignity of the child; they should also receive from society the necessary aid and assistance to perform their educational role properly”.

No one is capable of giving moral education in this delicate area better than duly prepared parents. TMHS 43

43. *The Pope insists upon the fact that this holds especially with regard to sexuality: “Sex education, which is a basic right and duty of parents, must always be carried out under their attentive guidance, whether at home or in educational centres chosen and controlled by them. In this regard, the Church reaffirms the law of subsidiarity, which the school is bound to observe when it cooperates in sex education, by entering into the same spirit that animates the parents”.*

The Holy Father adds, “In view of the close links between the sexual dimension of the person and his or her ethical values, education must bring the children to a knowledge of and respect for the moral norms as the necessary and highly valuable guarantee for responsible personal growth in human sexuality”. No one is capable of giving moral education in this delicate area better than duly prepared parents.

This right also implies an educational duty. If in fact parents do not give adequate formation in chastity, they are failing in their precise duty. Likewise, they would also be guilty were they to tolerate immoral or inadequate formation being given to their children outside the home.
TMHS 44

The family has an affective dignity... suited to making acceptable without trauma the most delicate realities and to integrating them harmoniously in a balanced and rich personality.
TMHS 64

The school's task is not to substitute for the family; rather it is "assisting and completing the work of parents, furnishing children and adolescents with an evaluation of sexuality as value and task of the whole person, created male and female in the image of God". TMHS 64

The Meaning of the Parents' Duty

44. *This right also implies an educational duty. If in fact parents do not give adequate formation in chastity, they are failing in their precise duty. Likewise, they would also be guilty were they to tolerate immoral or inadequate formation being given to their children outside the home.*

45. *Today this task encounters a particular difficulty with regard to the dissemination of pornography, through the means of social communication, instigated by commercial motives and breaking down adolescent sensitivity. This must call for two forms of concerned action on the part of parents: preventive and critical education with regard to their children, and courageous denunciation to the appropriate authorities. Parents, as individuals or in associations, have the right and duty to promote the good of their children and demand from the authorities laws that prevent and eliminate the exploitation of the sensitivity of children and adolescents.*

Parents, as individuals or in associations, have the right and duty to promote the good of their children and demand from the authorities laws that prevent and eliminate the exploitation of the sensitivity of children and adolescents. TMHS 45

46. *The Holy Father stresses this parental task and outlines guidelines and the objective in this regard: "Faced with a culture that largely reduces human sexuality to the level of something commonplace, since it interprets and lives it in a reductive and impoverished way by linking it solely with the body and with selfish pleasure, the educational service of parents must aim firmly at a training in the area of sex that is truly and fully personal: for sexuality is an enrichment of the whole person — body, emotions and soul — and it manifests its inmost meaning in leading the person to the gift of self in love".*

47. *We cannot forget, however, that we are dealing with a right and duty to educate which, in the past, Christian parents carried out or exercised little. Perhaps this was because the problem was not as acute as it is today, or because the parents' task was in part fulfilled by the strength of prevailing social models and the role played by the Church and the Catholic school in this area. It is not easy for parents to take on this educational commitment because today it appears to be rather complex, and greater than what the family could offer, also because, in most cases, it is not possible to refer to what one's own parents did in this regard. Therefore, through this document, the Church holds that it is her duty to give parents back confidence in their own capabilities and help them to carry out their task.*



*An Interlude –
William Sargeant
Kendall*

Questions for Discussion

1. What do you discover in this section that encourages you to take up the education of your own children, in chastity and purity? What two fundamental truths should guide your work in this regard?
2. Do single parents, adoptive parents, guardians of orphans etc. share in this spiritual assistance to the same degree?
3. In Paragraphs 41-43 read and discuss Pope John Paul II's statements on parental rights regarding sex education. What parts are most meaningful or helpful to you? Does it help you understand that this is not only a right, but a duty as well? Discuss the four aspects of these essential rights and duties: *original, primary, irreplaceable, and inalienable*.
4. Pornography makes the work of teaching and encouraging chastity more difficult. Impurity can reach a child's soul in an instant via a television commercial. Do you make attempts to screen your children from these things? How can this be done, practically? Have you ever confronted stores for advertising that promotes/utilizes impurity or immodesty?
5. TMHS recognizes that in the past many parents did not exercise this right and duty to educate for chastity and that today due to the decline of Christian morality they may feel even more unable to do so. Take note of the last statement: ***Therefore, through this document, the Church holds that it is her duty to give parents back confidence in their own capabilities and help them to carry out their task.***

"Faced with a culture that largely reduces human sexuality to the level of something commonplace, since it interprets and lives it in a reductive and impoverished way by linking it solely with the body and with selfish pleasure, the educational service of parents must aim firmly at a training in the area of sex that is truly and fully personal: for sexuality is an enrichment of the whole person — body, emotions and soul — and it manifests its inmost meaning in leading the person to the gift of self in love". TMHS 46

As the domestic church, the family is the school of the richest humanity. This is particularly true for the moral and spiritual education on such a delicate matter as chastity. TMHS 48

CHAPTER V

PATHS OF FORMATION WITHIN THE FAMILY

(48-63)

Review:

48. *The family environment is thus the normal and usual place for forming children and young people to consolidate and exercise the virtues of charity, temperance, fortitude and chastity. As the domestic church, the family is the school of the richest humanity. This is particularly true for the moral and spiritual education on such a delicate matter as chastity. Physical, psychological and spiritual aspects are involved in chastity, as well as the first signs of freedom, the influence of social models, natural modesty and strong tendencies inherent in a human being's bodily nature. All of these aspects are connected to an awareness, albeit implicit, of the dignity of the human person, called to collaborate with God and, at the same time, marked by fragility.* Parents have a great opportunity and the strength to lead their children to maturity of their personalities in Christ in all these things. In a Christian society the State should support and assist the family with its policies, but always in the spirit of subsidiarity, for parents are the primary educators. ***“It can happen...that when a family does decide to live up fully to its vocation, it finds itself without the necessary support from the State and without sufficient resources. It is urgent therefore to promote not only family policies, but also those social policies which have the family as their principle object, policies which assist the family by providing adequate resources and efficient means of support, both for bringing up children and for looking after the elderly...”***

49. In countries where moral degradation has taken over, ***parents are urged to dare to ask for more and to propose more. They cannot be satisfied with avoiding the worst — that their children do not take drugs or commit crimes. They will have to be committed to educate their children in the true values of the person and of virtue, of faith, hope and love: the values of freedom, responsibility, fatherhood and motherhood, service, professional work, solidarity, honesty, art, sport, the joy of knowing they are children of God, hence brothers and sisters of all human beings, etc.***



*Peace Concluded –
Sir John
Everett Millais*

The Essential Value of the Home

50. *In their most recent findings, the psychological and pedagogical sciences come together with human experience in emphasizing the decisive importance of the affective atmosphere that reigns in the family for a harmonious and valid sexual education, especially during the first years of infancy and childhood, and perhaps also during the prenatal stage, because children's deep emotional patterns are established in these phases.* The atmosphere of the home is extremely important... *a serene relationship between husband and wife, on the value of their positive presence (both father and mother) during these important years for the processes of (same sex) identification, and on the value of a relationship of reassuring affection toward their children.*

Parents must find time to be with their children and take time to talk with them. Children are more important than work, entertainment and social position... Parents will succeed better if they are able to dedicate time to their children and really place themselves at their level with love. TMHS 51

51. Certain things can also have a negative affect; *privations or imbalances between parents (for example, one or both parents' absence from family life, a lack of interest in the children's education or excessive severity) are factors that can cause emotional and affective disturbances in children. These factors can seriously upset their adolescence and sometimes mark them for life. Parents must find time to be with their children and take time to talk with them. Children are more important than work, entertainment and social position.* Parents should learn to recognize the bit of truth that may be present in a child's attitude of rebellion and at the same time, help him or her to channel anxieties and aspirations correctly, teaching them to reflect on the reality of things and how to reason. An attitude of love is most important. *At the same time, parents will have to be able to help*

their children to channel their anxieties and aspirations correctly, and teach them to reflect on the reality of things and how to reason. This does not mean imposing a certain line of behaviour, but rather showing both the supernatural and human motives that recommend such behaviour. Parents will succeed better if they are able to dedicate time to their children and really place themselves at their level with love.

Formation in the Community of Life and Love

52. Knowing we are loved helps us to love more. The family should have an attitude of reciprocal love between husband and wife and children that overcomes all fears and makes possible the giving of love and service to others. *This bond will refine the intellect, the will and the emotions by rejecting everything that could degrade or devalue the gift of human sexuality. In a family where love reigns, this gift is always understood as part of the call to self-giving in love for God and for others. “The family is the first and fundamental school of social living: as a community of love, it finds in self-giving the law that guides it and makes it grow. The self-giving that inspires the love of husband and wife for each other is the model and norm for the self-giving that must be practised in the relationships between brothers and sisters and the different generations living together in the family. And the communion and sharing that are part of everyday life in the home at times of joy and at times of difficulty are the most concrete and effective pedagogy for the active, responsible and fruitful inclusion of the children in the wider horizon of society”.*



*The Thankful Poor –
Henry Ossawa Tanner*

53. Education for authentic love begins in the family relationships, with parents, siblings, with God and others of both sexes outside the family. *Children, adolescents and young people should be taught how to enter into healthy relationships with God, with their parents, their brothers and sisters, with their companions of the same or the opposite sex, and with adults.*

54. Education in love is an overall reality. *The attitude toward other persons depends largely on the way spontaneous feelings for them are handled, the way some feelings*

From this it follows that in order to educate in chastity, “self-control is necessary, which presupposes such virtues as modesty, temperance, respect for self and for others, openness to one’s neighbour”. TMHS 55

are cultivated and others are controlled. As we have already mentioned, education in chastity, as education in love, is at the same time education of one’s spirit, one’s sensitivity, and one’s feelings. Chastity as a virtue is never reduced to merely being able to perform acts conforming to a norm of external behaviour. Chastity requires activating and developing the dynamisms of nature and grace which make up the principal and immanent element of our discovery of God’s law as a guarantee of growth and freedom.

55. Therefore, it must be stressed that education for chastity is inseparable from efforts to cultivate all the other virtues and, in a particular way, Christian love, characterized by respect, altruism and service, which after all is called charity. Sexuality is such an important good that it must be protected by following the order of reason enlightened by faith: “The greater a good, the more the order of reason must be observed in it”. From this it follows that in order to educate in chastity, “self-control is necessary, which presupposes such virtues as modesty, temperance, respect for self and for others, openness to one’s neighbour”. Also of importance are what Christian tradition has called the younger sisters of chastity (modesty, an attitude of sacrifice with regard to one’s whims), nourished by the Faith and a life of prayer.

Modesty protects the mystery of persons and their love. It encourages patience and moderation in loving relationships; it requires that the conditions for the definitive giving and commitment of man and woman to one another be fulfilled.

Modesty is decency. It inspires one’s choice of clothing. It keeps silence or reserve where there is evident risk of unhealthy curiosity. It is discreet.

CCC 2522

In particular, with regard to use of television, the Holy Father specified: The life-style — especially in the more industrialised nations — all too often causes families to abandon their responsibility to educate their children... Parents as recipients must actively ensure the moderate, critical, watchful and prudent use of the media. TMHS 56

56. The practice of decency and modesty in speech, action and dress is very important for creating an atmosphere suitable to the growth of chastity, but this must be well motivated by respect for one’s own body and the dignity of others. Parents, as we have said, should be watchful so that certain immoral fashions and attitudes do not violate the integrity of the home, especially through misuse of the

mass media. Unfortunately this does not change the fact that in some countries especially there are many shows and publications abounding in all sorts of violence with a kind of bombardment of messages that undermine moral principles and make it impossible to achieve a serious climate in which values worthy of the human person may be transmitted.

In particular, with regard to use of television, the Holy Father specified: “The life-style — especially in the more industrialised nations — all too often causes families to abandon their responsibility to educate their children. Evasion of this duty is made easy by the presence of television and of printed materials in the home. These occupy the time for children and young people. No one can deny the justification for this when the means are lacking, to develop and use to advantage the free time of the young and to direct their energies”. Another circumstance that facilitates this is the fact that both parents are busy

with their work, in and outside the home. “The result is that these young people are in most need of help in developing their responsible freedom. There is the duty — especially for believers, for men and women who love freedom, to protect the young from the aggressions they are subjected to by the media. May no one shirk from this duty by using the excuse that he or she is not involved”. “Parents as recipients must actively ensure the moderate, critical, watchful and prudent use of the media”.

Legitimate Privacy

57. *Respect for privacy must be considered in close connection with decency and modesty, which spontaneously defend a person who refuses to be considered and treated like an object of pleasure instead of being respected and loved for himself or herself. If children or young people see that their legitimate privacy is respected, then they will know that they are expected to show the same attitude towards others. This is how they learn to cultivate the proper sense of responsibility before God by developing their interior life and a taste for personal freedom that makes them capable of loving God and others better.*

Self Control

58. This is a necessary attitude for cultivating a spirit and attitude of self-giving. *Children and young people should be encouraged to have esteem for, and to practise self-control and restraint, to live in an orderly way, to make personal sacrifices in a spirit of love for God, self-respect, and generosity towards others, without stifling feelings and tendencies, but channeling them into a virtuous life.*

Parents as Models for Their Children

59. *The good example of each parent is essential for fostering an attitude of chastity in children. A mother who values her maternal role in the family will inspire her daughters and set an example for her sons. A father who rejects ‘machismo’ for a true dignified presentation of masculinity will influence his sons and set an ideal for his daughters.*

60. *This is also true for education in a spirit of sacrifice in families, subject more than ever today to the pressures of materialism and consumerism. Only in this way will children grow up “with a correct attitude of freedom with regard to material goods, by adopting a simple and austere life style and being fully convinced that ‘man is more precious for what he is than for what he has’. In a society shaken and split by tensions and conflicts caused by the violent clash of various kinds of individualism and selfishness, children must be enriched not only with a sense of true justice, which alone leads to respect for the personal dignity of each individual, but also and more powerfully by a sense of true love, understood as sincere solicitude and disinterested service with regard to others, especially the poorest and those in most need”. “This education is fully a part of the ‘civilization of love’. It depends on the civilization of love and, in great measure, contributes to its upbuilding”.*

Children and young people should be encouraged to have esteem for, and to practise self-control and restraint, to live in an orderly way, to make personal sacrifices in a spirit of love for God, self-respect, and generosity towards others, without stifling feelings and tendencies, but channeling them into a virtuous life. TMHS 58



Mother Mary Bestowing Blessing – Tadeusz Styka

...the family first of all should be a home of faith and prayer, in which God the Father's presence is sensed, the Word of Jesus is accepted, the Spirit's bond of love is felt, and where the most pure Mother of God is loved and invoked. TMHS 62

A Sanctuary of Life and Faith

61. No one can deny that the first example and the greatest help that parents can give their children is their generosity in accepting life, without forgetting that this is how parents help their children to have a simpler lifestyle. Moreover, "...it is certainly less serious to deny their children certain comforts or material advantages than to deprive them of the presence of brothers and sisters, who could help them to grow in humanity and to realize the beauty of life at all its ages and in all its variety".

62. Lastly, we recall that in order to achieve these objectives, the family first of all should be a home of faith and prayer, in which God the Father's presence is sensed, the Word of Jesus is accepted, the Spirit's bond of love is felt, and where the most pure Mother of God is loved and invoked. This life of faith and "Family prayer has for its very own object family life itself, which in all its varying circumstances is seen as a call from God and lived as a filial response to His call. Joys and sorrows, hopes and disappointments, births and birthday celebrations, wedding anniversaries of the parents, departures, separations and home-comings, important and far-reaching decisions, the death of those who are dear, etc. — all of these mark God's loving intervention in the family's history. They should be seen as suitable moments for thanksgiving, for petition, for trusting abandonment of the family into the hands of their common Father in heaven".

63. In this atmosphere of prayer and awareness of the presence and fatherhood of God, the truths of faith and morals should be taught, understood and deeply studied with reverence, and the Word of God should be read and lived with love. In this way Christ's truth will build up a family community based on the example and guidance of parents who "penetrate the innermost depths of their children's hearts and leave an impression that the future events in their lives will not be able to efface".



*The Family at Prayer
(La Prière) – Pierre
Jean Edmund Castan*

Questions For Discussion

1. One might observe that all the things described in this section of TMHS are obviously what good Christian families should be doing. Perhaps we tend to take them for granted, not realizing the potential they have towards fostering and forming children in purity and chastity. Do you think this is so? Give an example of something you read in this section for which you have gained a new appreciation or understanding as to how it might positively form children with regard to chastity.
2. Here we meet again the term: subsidiarity. Describe and give an example of how it operates.
3. Describe/list some of the ideas presented in this section that should be qualities of every good home and family.
4. Discuss how family relationships, the negotiating in charity of difficulties, disagreements, joys and sorrows of life can help a child learn how to act and live in the wider society once they leave the family. Can you see how a positive attitude in the family towards the body and chastity thus can become ingrained as a child grows and matures?
5. *“Chastity as a virtue is never reduced to merely being able to perform acts conforming to a norm of external behaviour.”* Discuss why it is more than mere conformity.
6. What primary virtue must chastity be related to when teaching?
7. What about television in the home and its influence today?
8. Discuss this section’s presentation of the values of privacy, self control, parents as good examples, a spirit of sacrifice in the family, and how these contribute towards formation in chastity.
9. Discuss how the spirit of generosity in accepting more children into the family, family prayer, devotion to Mary and other devotional practices, will *“penetrate the innermost depths of children’s hearts and leave an impression that the future events in their lives will not be able to efface”*.

The family has an affective dignity which is suited to making acceptable without trauma the most delicate realities and to integrating them harmoniously in a balanced and rich personality. TMHS 64

CHAPTER VI LEARNING STAGES

(64-76)

Review:

64. *Parents in particular have the duty to let their children know about the mysteries of human life, because the family “is, in fact, the best environment to accomplish the obligation of securing a gradual education in sexual life. The family has an affective dignity which is suited to making acceptable without trauma the most delicate realities and to integrating them harmoniously in a balanced and rich personality.” The school’s task is not to substitute for the family; rather it is “assisting and completing the work of parents, furnishing children and adolescents with an evaluation of sexuality as value and task of the whole person, created male and female in the image of God”. In this regard, we recall what the Holy Father teaches in Familiaris Consortio: The Church is also totally opposed to giving sexual information separate from moral principles. That would be an introduction to the experience of pleasure, disturb the child’s serenity and innocence and open the way to vice.*

TMHS here provides four general principles to be followed by examining the child’s stages of development.



*Joseph the Carpenter
and Jesus –
Artist unknown*

Four Principles Regarding Information About Sexuality

65. 1. *Each child is a unique and unrepeatable person and must receive individualized formation. Parents who know love and understand their child in their uniqueness and are in the best position to decide what the appropriate time is for providing a variety of information, according to their children's physical and spiritual growth. No one can take this capacity for discernment away from conscientious parents.*

66. *Each child's process of maturation as a person is different. Therefore, the most intimate aspects, whether biological or emotional, should be communicated in a personalized dialogue.* In talking to their own child in love and trust, parents are able to give a witness to their own experience of self-giving and communicate something of the emotional aspects of sexuality that cannot be transmitted other ways. The role of the parent is invaluable.

67. *Experience shows that this dialogue works out better when the parent who communicates the biological, emotional, moral and spiritual information is of the same sex as the child or young person.* The natural bond of mothers with daughters and fathers with sons should be respected. ***Therefore, parents who are alone will have to act with great sensitivity when speaking with a child of the opposite sex, and they may choose to entrust communicating the most intimate details to a trustworthy person of the same sex as the child.*** This is always to be a subsidiary role, done with great caution, and only in extreme cases.

68. 2. *The moral dimension must always be part of their explanations. Parents should stress that Christians are called to live the gift of sexuality according to the plan of God who is Love, i.e., in the context of marriage or of consecrated virginity and also celibacy. They must insist on the positive value of chastity and its capacity to generate true love for other persons. This is the most radical and important moral aspect of chastity. Only a person who knows how to be chaste will know how to love in marriage or in virginity.*

69. *From the earliest age, parents may observe the beginning of instinctive genital activity in their child. It should not be considered repressive to correct such habits gently that could become sinful later, and, when necessary, to teach modesty as the child grows.* It is always important to base one's teaching in this regard on ***adequate, valid and convincing grounds*** based on reason and faith in a positive spirit. ***Many parental admonitions are merely reproofs or recommendations which the children perceive more as the result of fear of certain social consequences, or related to one's public reputation, rather than arising out of a love that seeks their true good. "I exhort you to correct, with the greatest commitment, the vices and passions that assail us in every age. For if in some stage of our life we sail on, deprecating the values of virtue and thereby suffer continuous shipwreck, we risk arriving in port devoid of all spiritual charge". (St. John Chrysostom)***

70. 3. *Formation in chastity and timely information regarding sexuality must be provided in the broadest context of education for love. It is not sufficient, therefore, to provide information about sex together with objective moral principles. Constant help is also required for the growth of children's spiritual life, so that the biological development and impulses they begin to experience will always be accompanied by a growing love of God, the Creator and Redeemer, and an ever greater awareness of the dignity of each human person and his or her body. In the light of the mystery of Christ and the Church, parents can illustrate the positive values of human sexuality in the context of the person's*

original vocation to love and the universal call to holiness.

71. *Therefore, in talks with children, suitable advice should always be given regarding how to grow in the love of God and one's neighbour, and how to overcome any difficulties: "These means are: discipline of the senses and the mind, watchfulness and prudence in avoiding occasions of sin, the observance of modesty, moderation in recreation, wholesome pursuits, assiduous prayer and frequent reception of the Sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist. Young people especially should foster devotion to the Immaculate Mother of God".*

72. *To teach children how to evaluate the environments they frequent with a critical sense and true **autonomy**, as well as to accustom them to detachment in using the mass media, parents should always present positive models and suitable ways of using their vital energies, the meaning of friendship and solidarity in the overall area of society and of the Church.*

When deviant tendencies and attitudes are present, which require great prudence and caution so as to recognize and evaluate situations properly, parents should also have recourse to specialists with solid scientific and moral formation in order to identify the causes over and above the symptoms, and help the subjects to overcome difficulties in a serious and clear way. Pedagogic action should be directed more to the causes rather than to directly repressing the phenomenon, and, if necessary, they should seek the help of qualified persons, such as doctors, educational experts and psychologists with an upright Christian sensitivity.

73. *Parents should communicate to their children that conviction **that chastity in one's state in life is possible and that chastity brings joy. Joy springs from an awareness of maturation and harmony in one's emotional life, a gift of God and a gift of love that makes self-giving possible in the framework of one's vocation. "Man can fully discover his true self only in a sincere giving of himself". "Christ gave laws for everyone...I do not prohibit you from marrying, nor am I against your enjoying yourself. I only want you to do this with temperance, without indecency, guilt and sin. I do not make a law that you should flee to the mountains and deserts, rather that you should be good, modest and chaste, as you live in the midst of the cities"**.*

*You know the instructions we gave you in the Lord Jesus.
It is God's will that you grow in holiness;
that you abstain from immorality,
each of you guarding his member in sanctity and honor,
not in passionate desire as do the Gentiles who know not God;*

1 Thessalonians 4:2-5

74. God's help is always there, especially in the Sacraments, and parents should see that their children receive them frequently and provide them with their own example. *Reading well-chosen and recommended books of formation is also of great help both in offering a wider and deeper formation and in providing examples and testimonies of virtue.*

75. *4. Parents should provide this information with great delicacy, but clearly and at the appropriate time. Parents are well aware that their children must be treated in a personalized way, according to the personal conditions of their physiological and psychological development, and taking into due consideration the cultural environment of life and the adolescent's daily experience. Parents should discuss together and pray for guidance so that their words will be neither too explicit nor too vague. Giving too many details to children is counterproductive. But delaying the first information for too long is imprudent, because every human person has natural curiosity in this regard and, sooner or later, everyone begins to ask themselves questions, especially in cultures where too much can be seen, even in public.*

76. *In general, the first sexual information to be given to a small child does not deal with genital sexuality, but rather with pregnancy and the birth of a brother or sister. The child's natural curiosity is stimulated, for example, when it sees the signs of pregnancy in its mother and experiences waiting for a baby. Parents can take advantage of this happy experience in order to communicate some simple facts about pregnancy, but always in the deepest context of wonder at the creative work of God, who wants the new life He has given to be cared for in the mother's body, near her heart.*



*In The Orchard –
Evert Pieters*

Questions For Discussion

1. TMHS says that parents have the duty of letting their children know about the “mysteries of life.” Note the use of the word “mystery.” How can we value that word and its application to the sexual realm? We live in an age of scientific research and discovery where literally any and all aspects of sex are dissected and described in great detail. Does this approach really teach the true meaning of sex and sexual relationships? Does the full truth about sex lie in the physical aspects or more in the spiritual?

2. Discuss the statement regarding the value of communicating, in a gradual manner and “without trauma” the more intimate aspects of sexuality to the child by his or her parents, rather than in a classroom group setting of both boys and girls.

Four Principles:

- *Individualized formation...*
- *Always with the moral dimension...*
- *In the context of education for love of God and others...*
- *Clear, delicate and at the appropriate time...*

3. The school is not to substitute for the parents. What then is their role?
4. Why does TMHS state individualized instruction is the best approach, and as it involves the parents, has the added value of them being able to surround the more delicate and intimate physical aspects of sexuality with the emotional dimension: their own witness to the love between them?
5. Discuss the recommendation and advantages that the child-parent dialogue should be one involving the same-sex parent. What about single parent families?
6. We are living in a culture experiencing a great loss of the sense of sin, yet parents are to always teach the moral dimensions of sexuality along with the physical. Surely then, this is going to be more difficult. Where can conscientious parents get the information and formation they themselves need to be able to form their children in a positive manner to love other persons in chastity and an attitude of true authentic Christian love whether in the single life, marriage, clerical or religious life?
7. Discuss: *“Only a person who knows how to be chaste will know how to love in marriage or in virginity.”*
8. How should parents handle instinctive genital activity in small children? What virtue is important to begin to speak of here? What attitude/explanation is helpful and positive? And what kind of reaction is less so?
9. What is meant by the statement: *“Formation in chastity and timely information regarding sexuality must be provided in the broadest context of education for love.”*? Discuss how the call for personal holiness and authentic Christian love are involved, and what practices both social and spiritual should be encouraged and cultivated in daily living?
10. What does TMHS recommend if parents have to deal with serious deviant tendencies or situations? What attitude should prevail?
11. In what spirit and attitude should parents communicate the virtue of chastity? Discuss: *“Man can fully discover his true self only in a sincere giving of himself”*. What are the supernatural and natural helps for parents in teaching and living chastity?
12. What aspects guide the fourth principle of teaching sexual information to their children? Review as well, the first, second and third principles in this section of TMHS. (

It can be said that a child is in the stage described in John Paul II's words as "the years of innocence" from about five years of age until puberty... This period of tranquility and serenity must never be disturbed by unnecessary information about sex. TMHS 78

CHILDREN'S PRINCIPAL STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT

(77-111)

Review:

77. Parents are aware of the levels of their children's development and should adapt their education in love to each child's particular needs and stages.

1. The Years of Innocence (78-86)

78. It can be said that a child is in the stage described in John Paul II's words as "the years of innocence" from about five years of age until puberty — the beginning of which can be set at the first signs of changes in the boy or girl's body (the visible effect of an increased production of sexual hormones). This period of tranquility and serenity must never be disturbed by unnecessary information about sex. During those years, before any physical sexual development is evident, it is normal for the child's interests to turn to other aspects of life. The rudimentary instinctive sexuality of very small children has disappeared. Boys and girls of this age are not particularly interested in sexual problems, and they prefer to associate with children of their own sex. So as not to disturb this important natural phase of growth, parents will recognize that prudent formation in chaste love during this period should be indirect, in



In some societies today, there are planned and determined attempts to impose premature sex information on children. But, at this stage of development, children are still not capable of fully understanding the value of the affective dimension of sexuality. They cannot understand and control sexual imagery within the proper context of moral principles and, for this reason, they cannot integrate premature sexual information with moral responsibility. Such information tends to shatter their emotional and educational development and to disturb the natural serenity of this period of life. Parents should politely but firmly exclude any attempts to violate children's innocence because such attempts compromise the spiritual, moral and emotional development of growing persons who have a right to their innocence. TMHS 83

A Breezy Morning – John George Brown

preparation for puberty, when direct information will be necessary.

79. *During this stage of development, children are normally at ease with their body and its functions. They accept the need for modesty in dress and behaviour. Although they are aware of the physical differences between the two sexes, the growing child generally shows little interest in genital functions. The discovery of the wonders of creation which accompanies this phase and the experiences in this regard at home and in school should also be oriented towards the stages of catechesis and preparation for the sacraments which takes place within the ecclesial community.*

80. *Nonetheless, this period of childhood is not without its own significance in terms of psycho-sexual development. A growing boy or girl is learning from adult example and family experience what it means to be a woman or a man. Certainly, expressions of natural tenderness and sensitivity should not be discouraged among boys, nor should girls be excluded from vigorous physical activities. Parents should also protect themselves from an exaggerated opposition to what is defined as a "stereotyping of roles". The real differences between the two sexes should not be ignored or minimized, and in a healthy family environment children will learn that it is natural for a certain difference to exist between the usual family and domestic roles of men and women.*

81. *During this stage, girls will generally be developing a maternal interest in babies, motherhood and homemaking. By constantly taking the Motherhood of the most holy Virgin Mary as a model, they should be encouraged to value their femininity.*

82. *In this period, a boy is at a relatively tranquil stage of development. This is often the easiest time for him to set up a good relationship with his father. At this time, he should learn that, although it must be considered as a divine gift, his masculinity is not a sign of superiority with regard to women, but a call from God to take on certain roles and responsibilities. Boys should be discouraged from becoming overly aggressive or too concerned about physical prowess as proof of their virility.*

83. *In some societies today, there are planned and determined attempts to impose premature sex information on children. But, at this stage of development, children are still not capable of fully understanding the value of the affective dimension of sexuality. They cannot understand and control sexual imagery within the proper context of moral principles and, for this reason, they cannot integrate premature sexual information with moral responsibility. Such information tends to shatter their emotional and educational development and to disturb the natural serenity of this period of life. Parents should politely but firmly exclude any attempts to violate children's innocence because such attempts compromise the spiritual, moral and emotional development of growing persons who have a right to their innocence.*

84. *A further problem arises when children receive premature sex information from the mass media or from their peers who have been led astray or received premature sex education. In this case, parents will have to begin to give carefully limited sexual information, usually to correct immoral and erroneous information or to control obscene language.*

85. *Sexual violence with regard to children is not infrequent. Parents must protect their children, first by teaching them a form of modesty and reserve with regard to strangers, as well as by giving suitable sexual information, but without going into details and*

particulars that might upset or frighten them.

86. Parents should encourage a spirit of collaboration, obedience, generosity and self-denial in their children, as well as a capacity for self-reflection and sublimation. In fact, a characteristic of this period of development is an attraction toward intellectual activities.

Using the intellect makes it possible to acquire the strength and ability to control the surrounding situation and, before long, to control bodily instincts, so as to transform them into intellectual and rational activities.

An undisciplined or spoiled child is inclined toward a certain immaturity and moral weakness in future years because chastity is difficult to maintain if a person develops selfish or disordered habits and cannot behave with proper concern and respect for others. Parents should present objective standards of what is right and wrong, thereby creating a sure moral framework for life.

Questions For Discussion

1. Note the description of the “years of innocence” sometimes called ‘latency’ and that it is important not to disturb this period in a child’s life with premature sexual imagery or information. In our sex-saturated culture, discuss ways parents can protect their children, while still encouraging modesty in dress and behavior.
2. With today’s frequent dismissal of the gender roles of men and women common in the past, discuss the possibility of this influencing a child or young person’s difficulty with personal gender identity. How can parents strike a balance?
3. How can parents foster and encourage femininity and love and respect for motherhood in their daughters? How can they help their sons understand and appreciate masculinity as a gift for taking on certain roles and responsibilities without regarding women as inferior? How might our culture’s excessive emphasis on male virility, physical prowess and violent behaviour both in the media and in professional sports, cast a negative self-image onto a non-athletic boy, even perhaps leading him to question his sexual identity?
4. Discuss paragraph 83 in depth in order to understand the reasons why premature sex information can be so detrimental to a child’s emotional, psychological and spiritual development. Thoughtfully consider that children have a right to their innocence and to violate this is a grave sin and injustice committed against them.
5. What can/should parents do in a positive sense, if they find their children have been exposed to premature sex information?
6. What are some concepts parents can instill in their children that, without violating their purity, might be of great help in protecting them in situations of possible sexual abuse by adults? Currently, child protection programs focus exclusively on secular/non-religious strategies. Consider how instilling a deep respect for personal privacy due to the holy and sacred nature of the body, the seriousness of sins against purity, attentiveness to the warnings of conscience and a listening heart towards God and their guardian angel are extremely valuable protections.
7. Discuss the character qualities listed in paragraph 86. Note the emphasis on intellectual

activities and how a fully developed intellect “*aids in acquiring the strength and ability to control the surrounding situation and, before long, to control bodily instincts, so as to transform them into intellectual and rational activities.*” How does a child who is self-indulgent and undisciplined have difficulty later in life with chastity as well as in other situations that require maturity and self-control?

Message to the Children of Portugal and of the Whole World

*Seek to imitate the Little Shepherds in these virtues:
be humble, be pure, be chaste.*

*Do not forget that among the commandments
there is one which bids us to observe chastity
and do not let anyone approach you
who would cause you to fail in this commandment,
for this is a sin which degrades the human person,
confusing his intellect, darkening his spirit and perverting his will.*

*Keep before your eyes the two Little Shepherds
who would not consent to play with others
who were not correct in their words or actions.*

*In this way keep away from bad company
so you may not be led along the wrong path
and may not soil the purity of your heart.*

Keep before your mind what Jesus said:

‘Blessed are the pure of heart for they shall see God.’

*Yes it is true, impurity blinds us and prevents us from seeing God;
because the Little Shepherds were pure,
they were granted the grace of seeing God.*

Sister Lucia of Fatima, one of the three Shepherd Children who saw Our Lady at Fatima



*The Coquette –
John George Brown*

Parents should pay particular attention to their children's gradual development and to their physical and psychological changes, which are decisive in the maturing of the personality. Without showing anxiety, fear or obsessive concern, parents will not let cowardice or convenience hinder their work. TMHS 88

2 Puberty (87-97)

87. Puberty...is a time of self-discovery and “of one’s own inner world, the time of generous plans, the time when the feeling of love awakens, with the biological impulses of sexuality, the time of the desire to be together, the time of particularly intense joy connected with the exhilarating discovery of life. But often it is also the age of deeper questioning, of anguished or even frustrating searching, of a certain mistrust of others and dangerous introspection, and the age sometimes of the first experiences of setbacks and of disappointments”.

88. Parents should pay particular attention to their children’s gradual development and to their physical and psychological changes, which are decisive in the maturing of the personality. Without showing anxiety, fear or obsessive concern, parents will not let cowardice or convenience hinder their work. This is naturally an important moment for teaching the value of chastity, which will also be expressed in the way sexual information is given.... In this phase, educational needs also concern the genital aspects... a presentation both on the level of values and the reality as a whole... within the context of procreation, marriage and the family, a context which must be kept present in an authentic task of sexual education.

89. Parents are thus bound to give more detailed explanations about sexuality (in an on-going relationship of trust and friendship) each time girls confide in their mothers and boys in their fathers. This relationship of trust and friendship should have already started

Parents are thus bound to give more detailed explanations about sexuality (in an on-going relationship of trust and friendship) each time girls confide in their mothers and boys in their fathers. TMHS 89

in the first years of life.

90. Mothers should help their daughters to joyfully to accept the development of their femininity in a bodily, psychological and spiritual sense. Therefore, normally, one should discuss the cycles of fertility and their meaning. But it is still not necessary to give detailed explanations about sexual union, unless this is explicitly requested.

91. It is very important for adolescent boys to be helped to understand the stages of physical and physiological development of the genital organs before they get this information from their companions or from persons who are not well intentioned. The physiological facts about male puberty should be presented in an atmosphere of serenity, positively and with reserve, in the framework of marriage, family and fatherhood. Instructing both adolescent girls and boys should also include detailed and sufficient information about the bodily and psychological characteristics of the opposite sex, about whom their curiosity is growing.

In this area, the additional supportive information of a conscientious doctor or even a psychologist can help parents, without separating this information from what pertains to the Faith and the educational work of the priest.

92. Through a trusting and open dialogue, parents can guide their daughters in facing any emotional perplexity, and support the value of Christian chastity out of consideration for the other sex. Instruction for both girls and boys should aim at pointing out the beauty of motherhood and the wonderful reality of procreation, as well as the deep meaning of virginity. In this way they will be helped to go against the hedonistic mentality which is very widespread today and particularly, at such a decisive stage, in preventing the “contraceptive mentality”, which unfortunately is very common and which girls will have to face later in marriage.

93. During puberty, the psychological and emotional development of boys can make them vulnerable to erotic fantasies and they may be tempted to try sexual experiences. Parents should be close to their sons and correct the tendency to use sexuality in a hedonistic and materialistic way. Therefore, they should remind boys about God’s gift, received in order to cooperate with Him “to actualize in history the original blessing of the Creator — that of transmitting by procreation the divine image from person to person...”; and this will strengthen their awareness that, “Fecundity is the fruit and the sign of conjugal love, the living testimony of the full reciprocal self-giving of the spouses”. In this way sons will also learn the respect due to women. The parents’ task of informing and instructing is necessary, not because their sons would not know about sexual reality in other ways, but so that they will know about it in the right light.

94. In a positive and prudent way, parents will carry out what the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council requested: “It is important to give suitable and timely instruction to young people, above all in the heart of their own families, about the dignity of married love, its role and its exercise; in this way they will be able to engage in honourable courtship and enter upon marriage of their own”.

Positive information about sexuality should always be part of a formation plan so as to create the Christian context in which all information about life, sexual activity,

anatomy and hygiene is given. Therefore, the spiritual and moral dimensions must always be predominant so as to have two special purposes: presenting God's commandments as a way of life, and the formation of a right conscience.

To the young man who asked him what he had to do in order to attain eternal life, Jesus replied: "If you would enter life, keep the commandments" (Matthew 19:17). After listing the ones that concern love for one's neighbour, Jesus summed them up in this positive formulation: "You shall love your neighbour as yourself" (Matthew 19:19). In order to present the commandments as God's gift (written by His hand, cf. Exodus 31: 18), expressing the Covenant with Him, confirmed by Jesus' own example it is very important for the adolescent not to separate the commandments from their relationship with a rich interior life, free from selfishness.

95. The formation of conscience requires being enlightened about: God's project of love for every single person, the positive and liberating value of the moral law, and awareness both of the weakness caused by sin and the means of grace which strengthen us on our path towards the good and towards salvation.

"Moral conscience, present at the heart of the person" — which is "man's most secret core and sanctuary", as the Second Vatican Council affirms, "enjoins him at the appropriate moment to do good and to avoid evil. It also judges particular choices, approving those that are good and denouncing those that are evil. It bears witness to the authority of truth in reference to the supreme Good to which the human person is drawn, and it welcomes the commandments". Therefore, the formation of conscience requires being enlightened about the truth and God's plan and must not be confused with a vague subjective feeling or with personal opinion.

96. In answering children's questions, parents should offer well-reasoned arguments about the great value of chastity and show the intellectual and human weakness of theories that inspire permissive and hedonistic behaviour. They will answer clearly, without giving excessive importance to pathological sexual problems. Nor will they give the false impression that sex is something shameful or dirty, because it is a great gift of God who placed the ability to generate life in the human body, thereby sharing His creative power with us. Indeed, both in the Scriptures (cf. Song of Songs 1-8; Hosea 2; Jeremiah 3: 1-3; Ezekiel 23, etc.) and in the Christian mystical tradition, conjugal love has always been considered a symbol and image of God's love for us.

97. Since boys and girls at puberty are particularly vulnerable to emotional influences,

Positive information about sexuality should always be part of a formation plan so as to create the Christian context in which all information about life, sexual activity, anatomy and hygiene is given. Therefore, the spiritual and moral dimensions must always be predominant so as to have two special purposes: presenting God's commandments as a way of life, and the formation of a right conscience. TMHS 94

Therefore, the formation of conscience requires being enlightened about the truth and God's plan and must not be confused with a vague subjective feeling or with personal opinion. TMHS 95

Even if they are socially acceptable, some habits of speech and conduct are not morally correct and represent a way of trivializing sexuality, reducing it to a consumer object. Parents should therefore teach their children the value of Christian modesty, moderate dress, and, when it comes to trends, the necessary autonomy characteristic of a man or woman with a mature personality. TMHS 97

through dialogue and the way they live, parents have the duty to help their children resist negative outside influences that may lead them to have little regard for Christian formation in love and chastity. Especially in societies overwhelmed by consumer pressures, parents should sometimes watch out for their children's relations with young people of the opposite sex — without making it too obvious. Even if they are socially acceptable, some habits of speech and conduct are not morally correct and represent a way of trivializing sexuality, reducing it to a consumer object. Parents should therefore teach their children the value of Christian modesty, moderate dress, and, when it comes to trends, the necessary autonomy characteristic of a man or woman with a mature personality.

Questions For Discussion

1. Describe the positive...and the negative or problematic aspects that can be common as children go through the stage of puberty, and how parental assistance and concern is needed to contribute in a real way towards children's emotional and spiritual maturity.
2. Discuss the value of parental teaching on chastity and the importance of the physical aspects of sexuality always being related to the family, marriage and procreation as well as celibacy and consecrated virginity and how those attitudes of trust and friendship between parent and child that were forged in earlier years, now bear even greater fruit as deeper and more personal aspects are discussed.
3. Note that there is still a gradual unfolding and revelation of sexual information at this stage, both for boys as well as girls, that it is not necessary to give detailed information regarding sexual union at this age. The most important information is as regards physical and physiological development, including that of the opposite sex.
4. Why should parents of both sexes encourage modesty in dress and behavior so as to protect the purity of the opposite sex?
5. Why is it important for parents to pay particular attention to their son's attitude and activities pertaining to sex via movies, posters, literature? And to foster respect for women?
6. Discuss: *"It is important to give suitable and timely instruction to young people, above all in the heart of their own families, about the dignity of married love, its role and its exercise; in this way they will be able to engage in honourable courtship and enter upon a marriage of their own"*.
7. Why is it important to always provide the spiritual and moral dimensions of sexuality?
8. Discuss conscience and conscience formation. Do you understand the difference between subjective feeling and personal opinion as contrasted with the truth of God's plan as revealed in the Commandments and the teaching (magisterium) of the Church?
9. Discuss the importance of parents communicating reasoned arguments on the value of chastity and how it can help the young person navigate through any emotional, physical and psychological damage they might suffer from our hedonistic society. How does an encouraging and positive attitude that encourages chaste behavior (speak to the child where you want them to be) go a long way towards fulfilling that goal? How can the beauty of conjugal love as relating to God's union with His Bride the Church also help in avoiding the **trivilization** of sex in this regard?

Christian parents should “educate the children for life in such a way that each one may fully perform his or her role according to the vocation received from God”. This is an extremely important task which basically constitutes the culmination of the parents’ mission. TMHS 98



*The Bridge in the Woods –
Rafail Levitsky*

3. Adolescence in One's Plan In Life (98-108)

Review:

98. During adolescence young people discover their vocation for life. *Both for physiological, social and cultural reasons, this period tends to be longer today than in the past.*

Christian parents should “educate the children for life in such a way that each one may fully perform his or her role according to the vocation received from God”. This is an extremely important task which basically constitutes the culmination of the parents’ mission. “Therefore, in the life of each member of the lay faithful there are particularly significant and decisive moments for discerning God’s call...Among these are the periods of adolescence and young adulthood”.

99. *It is very important for young people not to find themselves alone in discerning their personal vocation. Parental advice is relevant, at times decisive, as well as the support of a priest or other properly formed persons (in parishes, associations or in the new fruitful ecclesial movements, etc.) who are capable of helping them discover the vocational meaning of life and the various forms of the universal call to holiness.*

100. *For centuries, the concept of vocation was reserved exclusively for the priesthood and religious life. However, the Second Vatican Council renewed the universal call to holiness.*

It is possible to say that this call to holiness is precisely the basic charge entrusted to all the sons and daughters of the Church by a Council which intended to bring a renewal of Christian life based on the Gospel. This charge is not a simple moral exhortation, but an undeniable requirement arising from the mystery of the Church". God calls everyone to holiness. He has very precise plans for each person, a personal vocation which each must recognize, accept and develop. To all Christians — priests, laity, married people or celibates — the words of the Apostle of the Nations apply: "God's chosen ones, holy and beloved"(Colossians 3:12).

101. *Therefore, in catechesis and the formation given both within and outside of the family, the Church's teaching on the sublime value of virginity and celibacy must never be lacking, but also the vocational meaning of marriage, which a Christian can never regard as only a human venture. As St. Paul says "This is a great mystery, and I mean in reference to Christ and the Church" (Ephesians 5:32). Giving young people this firm conviction is of supreme importance for the good both of the Church and humanity which "depend in great part on parents and on the family life that they build in their homes".*

102. *Parents should always strive to give example and witness with their own lives to fidelity to God and one another in the marriage covenant. Their example is especially decisive in adolescence, the phase when young people are looking for lived and attractive behaviour models. Since sexual problems become more evident at this time, parents should also help them to love the beauty and strength of chastity through prudent advice, highlighting the inestimable value of prayer and frequent fruitful recourse to the sacraments for a chaste life, especially personal Confession.*

Since sexual problems become more evident at this time, parents should also help them to love the beauty and strength of chastity through prudent advice, highlighting the inestimable value of prayer and frequent fruitful recourse to the sacraments for a chaste life, especially personal Confession. TMHS 102

Furthermore, parents should be capable of giving their children, when necessary, a positive and serene explanation of the solid points of Christian morality such as, for example, the indissolubility of marriage and the relationship between love and procreation, as well as the immorality of premarital relations, abortion, contraception and masturbation.

The two dimensions of conjugal union, the unitive and the procreative, cannot be artificially separated without damaging the deepest truth of the conjugal act itself. TMHS 102

With regard to these immoral situations that contradict the meaning of giving in marriage, it is also good to recall that: "The two dimensions of conjugal union, the unitive and the procreative, cannot be artificially separated without damaging the deepest truth of the conjugal act itself". In this regard, an in-depth and reflective knowledge of the documents of the Church dealing with these problems will be of valuable assistance to parents.

103. *Masturbation particularly constitutes a very serious disorder that is illicit in itself and cannot be morally justified, although "the immaturity of adolescence (which can sometimes persist after that age), psychological imbalance or habit can influence behaviour, diminishing the deliberate character of the act and bringing about a situation whereby subjectively there may not always be serious fault". Therefore, adolescents should be helped to overcome manifestations of this disorder, which often express the inner conflicts of their age and, in many cases, a selfish vision of sexuality.*

104. *A particular problem that can appear during the process of sexual maturation is homosexuality, which is also spreading more and more in urbanized societies. This phenomenon must be presented with balanced judgement, in the light of the documents of the Church. Young people need to be helped to distinguish between the concepts of what is normal and abnormal, between subjective guilt and objective disorder, avoiding what would arouse hostility. On the other hand, the structural and complementary orientation of sexuality must be well clarified in relation to marriage, procreation and Christian chastity.*

Especially when the practice of homosexual acts has not become a habit, many cases can benefit from appropriate therapy. In any case, persons in this situation must be accepted with respect, dignity and delicacy, and all forms of unjust discrimination must be avoided. If parents notice the appearance of this tendency or of related behaviour in their children, during childhood or adolescence, they should seek help from expert qualified persons in order to obtain all possible assistance.

These persons are called to fulfill God's will in their lives and, if they are Christians, to unite to the sacrifice of the Lord's Cross the difficulties they may encounter from their condition". "Homosexual persons are called to chastity".

It must never be forgotten that the disordered use of sex tends progressively to destroy the person's capacity to love by making pleasure, instead of sincere self-giving, the end of sexuality and by reducing other persons to objects of one's own gratification. In this way the meaning of true love between a man and a woman (love always open to life) is weakened as well as the family itself. TMHS 105

105. The goal in formation is to communicate *the positive significance of sexuality for personal harmony and development, as well as the person's vocation in the family, society and the Church.*

It must never be forgotten that the disordered use of sex tends progressively to destroy the person's capacity to love by making pleasure, instead of sincere self-giving, the end of sexuality and by reducing other persons to objects of one's own gratification. In this way the meaning of true love between a man and a woman (love always open to life) is weakened as well as the family itself. Moreover, this subsequently leads to disdain for the human life which could be conceived, which, in some situations, is then regarded as an evil that threatens personal pleasure. "The trivialization of sexuality is among the principal factors which have led to contempt for new life. Only a true love is able to protect life".

106. *We must also remember how adolescents in industrialized societies are preoccupied and at times disturbed not only by the problems of self-identity, discovering their plan in life and difficulties in successfully integrating sexuality in a mature and well-oriented personality. They also have problems in accepting themselves and their bodies. In this regard, out-patient and specialized centres for adolescents have now sprung up, often characterized by purely hedonistic purposes. On the other hand, a healthy culture of the body leads to accepting oneself as a gift and as an incarnated spirit, called to be open to God and society.*

*...a healthy culture of the body leads to accepting oneself as a gift and as an incarnated spirit, called to be open to God and society.
TMHS 106*

Without taking away their rightful autonomy, when necessary, parents should know how to say “no” to their children and, at the same time, they should know how to cultivate a taste in their children for what is beautiful, noble and true. TMHS 108

In the face of what hedonistic groups propose, especially in affluent societies, ***it is very important to present young people with the ideals of human and Christian solidarity and concrete ways of being committed in Church associations, movements and voluntary Catholic and missionary activities.***

107. Friendships are very important in this period. According to local social conditions and customs, adolescence is a time when young people enjoy more autonomy in their relations with others and in the hours they keep in family life. Without taking away their rightful autonomy, when necessary, parents should know how to say “no” to their children and, at the same time, they should know how to cultivate a taste in their children for what is beautiful, noble and true. Parents should also be sensitive to adolescents’ self-esteem, which may pass through a confused phase when they are not clear about what personal dignity means and requires.

108. Through loving and patient advice, parents will help young people to avoid an excessive closing in on themselves. When necessary, they will also teach them to go against social trends that tend to stifle true love and an appreciation for spiritual realities: “Be sober, be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking some one to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experience of suffering is required of your brotherhood throughout the world. And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, establish, and strengthen you.” (1 Peter 5:8-10)

*I thought that continence arose from one’s own powers,
which I did not recognize in myself.
I was foolish enough not to know...
that no one can be continent unless You grant it.
For You would surely have granted it if my inner groaning
had reached Your ears and I with firm faith had cast my cares on You.*

St. Augustine, Confessions 6 11, 20 CCC 2521

Questions For Discussion

1. TMHS states that the time of adolescence is extremely important with regard to the young person's listening and then responding to God's particular call for his or her life, and that they should not be left entirely alone in discerning their vocation. Discuss. Do you think many parents are aware of their important role in this regard or do they often simply take for granted their child will eventually figure things out for themselves? Can you recognize the importance of solid Catholic lay/religious groups and activities for young people that help them remain open and listening to the voice of God as to their vocation and for ways of actively living their Catholic Faith?

2. TMHS reminds us that the idea of vocation includes not only priesthood and religious, but the single state and marriage, which, the document states, **must never be regarded as only a human venture**. Can you see the great importance of this fact for our time and cultural situation? Discuss.

3. Even though by this time, adolescents are aware of the details of sexuality and conjugal love, how can parents continue to assist them in the practice of purity and chaste relationships? What would be good resources for parents to help them *explain the indissolubility of marriage and the relationship between love and procreation, as well as the immorality of premarital relations, abortion, contraception and masturbation*?

4. How can parents address the issue of masturbation, particularly as it may not be entirely obvious? Are there some ways the subject can be brought up in a positive spirit and general way so that the young person hears the objective truth and can be given a fuller understanding of this matter from a Christian perspective, thus counteracting the influence of a surrounding pagan culture that promotes selfishness and excessive individualism?

5. The problem of homosexuality needs a correct and more developed understanding on the part of parents as well as clergy, because it has become politically charged, controversial and rarely discussed. Much information regarding research on homosexuality and the findings of science and psychology is suppressed by the media if it does not favor their viewpoint so that the formation of the public's attitudes and beliefs is almost exclusively within their power. Are you aware of organizations like National Association for Research and Therapy for Homosexuality (NARTH Institute) Courage and EnCourage? Take some time before the next discussion session to gather information about these groups/resources and share with the group next time you meet. Note NARTH has a new title - Alliance For Therapeutic Choice and Scientific Integrity - ATCSI.

6. Do you think many parents today, if they would observe homosexual or feminizing tendencies in their sons would think of considering professional help towards counseling or therapy? Why or why not?

7. What are the results of a disordered use of sex?

8. Adolescents sometimes become overly focused and concerned regarding their self-identity and their physical appearance. This can lead to a narrowing self-absorption. Additionally, they may experience difficulty in going against the crowd for fear of not fitting in. How might group involvement in charitable work, Church associations and the development of healthy Catholic and Christian friendships help to counteract these tendencies?

9. Notice the recommendation *that parents should know how to cultivate a taste in their children for what is beautiful, noble and true.* Give some ideas/possibilities to work towards carrying this out.

The female body is a temple of life because let us not forget that it is in the female body and not in the male body that God creates the soul of a new human being.

In some way you can see the female womb as a temple belonging to God and that must remain closed until God gives us permission to give the key to the person we intend to marry and remain faithful to for life.

Alice Von Hildebrand – Human Life International 1997 Conference



*My Fair Lady –
Edmund Blair
Leighton*

Young persons should learn how to choose models of thought and life for their future and how to become committed in the cultural and social area as Christians, without fear of professing that they are Christians and without losing a sense of vocation and the search for their own vocation. TMHS 110

4. Towards Adulthood (109-111)

Review:

109. *TMHS states that it must be kept in mind that the parents' mission does not end when their children come of legal age which, in any case, varies according to different cultures and laws. Some particularly significant moments for young people are also when they enter the working world or higher education, moments when they come into contact with different behaviour models and occasions that represent a real personal challenge — a brusque contact at times, but a potentially beneficial one.*

110. *By keeping open a confident dialogue that encourages a sense of responsibility and respects their children's legitimate and necessary autonomy, parents will always be their reference point, through both advice and example. Care should be taken that children do not discontinue their faith relationship with the Church and her activities which, on the contrary, should be intensified. Young persons should learn how to choose models of thought and life for their future and how to become committed in the cultural and social area as Christians, without fear of professing that they are Christians and without losing a sense of vocation and the search for their own vocation.*

In the period leading to engagement and the choice of that preferred attachment which can lead to forming a family, the role of parents should not consist merely in prohibitions, much less in imposing the choice of a fiancé or fiancée. On the contrary, they should help their children to define the necessary conditions for a serious, honorable and promising union, and support them on a path of clear and coherent Christian witness in relating with the person of the other sex.

111. *Parents should avoid adopting the widespread mentality whereby girls are given every recommendation regarding virtue and the value of virginity, while the same is not required for boys, as if everything were licit for them. For a Christian conscience and a vision of marriage and the family, St. Paul's recommendation to the Philippians holds for every type of vocation:*

*“...whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just
whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious,
if there is any excellency,
if there is anything worthy of praise,
think about these things.”*

Philippians 4:8

Questions For Discussion

1. TMHS states that *parents' mission does not end when their children come of legal age which, in any case, varies according to different cultures and laws* and lists significant times such as entering the full-time work world, higher education, or facing a particularly difficult situation that challenges their Catholic values. Discuss and offer suggestions for parental guidance.
2. Unfortunately, this can be a time when some young persons leave the practice of their Catholic Faith. How might parents react? Discuss ideas and ways to prevent this and/or to encourage their return.
3. With regard to the vocation of marriage, discuss the importance of communicating with the young adult regarding the important character qualities for a good marriage and practices for maintaining an honorable and chaste courtship and engagement. This should include both sexes.



*The End Of the
Quest – Sir Frank
Bernard Dicksee*

*“...whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just,
whatever is pure,
whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious,
if there is any excellency, if there is anything worthy of praise,
think about these things”*

Philippians 4:8

Since each child or young person must be able to live his or her own sexuality in conformity with Christian principles, and hence to be able to exercise the virtue of chastity, no educator – not even parents – can interfere with this right to chastity. TMHS 118 (cf. Matt 18: 4-7)

CHAPTER VII PRACTICAL GUIDELINES

(112-120)

Review:

112. *In the context of education in the virtues, parents thus have the task of making themselves the promoters of their children’s authentic education for love. Through its very nature, the primary generation of a human life in the procreative act must be followed by the secondary generation, whereby parents help their child to develop his or her own personality.*

Therefore, summing up what has been said so far and putting it on a practical level, whatever is set out in the following paragraphs is recommended.

Recommendations For Parents and Educators

113. *It is recommended that parents be aware of their own educational role and defend and carry out this primary right and duty.*

It follows *that any educative activity, related to education for love and carried out by persons outside the family, must be subject to the parents’ acceptance of it and must be seen not as a substitute but as a support for their work. In fact, “Sex education, which is a*



Do not let anyone look down on you because you are young, but be an example to all the believers in the way you speak and behave, and in your love, your faith and your purity
1 Tim 4:12

*The Country
Gallants –
John George Brown*

...respect to be given to the right of the child and the young person to be adequately informed by their own parents on moral and sexual questions **in a way that complies with his or her desire to be chaste and to be formed in chastity.** This right is further qualified by a child's stage of development, his or her capacity to integrate moral truth with sexual information, and by respect for his or her innocence and tranquility. TMHS 119

basic right and duty of parents, must always be carried out under their attentive guidance whether at home or in educational centres chosen and controlled by them”.

Frequently parents are not lacking in awareness and effort, but they are quite alone, defenceless and often made to feel they are wrong. They need understanding, but also support and help by groups, associations and institutions.

1. Recommendations For Parents

114. 1. **It is recommended that parents associate with other parents, not only in order to protect, maintain or fill out their own role as the primary educators of their children, especially in the area of education for love, but also to fight against damaging forms of sex education and to ensure that their children will be educated according to Christian principles and in a way that is consonant with their personal development.**

115. 2. **In the case where parents are helped by others in educating their own children for love, it is recommended that they keep themselves precisely informed on the content and methodology with which such supplementary education is imparted. No one can bind children or young people to secrecy about the content and method of instruction provided outside the family.**

116. 3. **We are aware of the difficulty and often the impossibility for parents to participate fully in all supplementary instruction provided outside the home. Nevertheless, they have the right to be informed about the structure and content of the programme. In all cases, their right to be present during classes cannot be denied.**

117. 4. **It is recommended that parents attentively follow every form of sex education that is given to their children outside the home, removing their children whenever this education does not correspond to their own principles. However, such a decision of the parents must not become grounds for discrimination against their children. On the other hand, parents who remove their children from such instruction have the duty to give them an adequate formation, appropriate to each child or young person's stage of development.**

It is recommended that respect be given to the right of the child or young person to withdraw from any form of sexual instruction imparted outside the home. TMHS 120.

2. Recommendations For All Educators

118. 1. **Since each child or young person must be able to live his or her own sexuality in conformity with Christian principles, and hence be able to exercise the virtue of chastity, no educator — not even parents — can interfere with this right to chastity (cf. Matthew 18: 4-7): “Therefore, whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. 5 And whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me. If anyone causes one of these little ones — those who believe in me — to stumble, it would be better for them to have a large millstone hung around their neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea. 7 Woe to the world because of the things that cause people to stumble! Such things must come, but woe to the person through whom they come!”**

119. 2. *It is recommended that respect be given to the right of the child and the young person to be adequately informed by their own parents on moral and sexual questions in a way that complies with his or her desire to be chaste and to be formed in chastity. This right is further qualified by a child's stage of development, his or her capacity to integrate moral truth with sexual information, and by respect for his or her innocence and tranquility.*

120. 3. *It is recommended that respect be given to the right of the child or young person to withdraw from any form of sexual instruction imparted outside the home. Neither the children nor other members of their family should ever be penalized or discriminated against for this decision.*



*Christ and the Young Child –
Carl Bloch*

Since each child or young person must be able to live his or her own sexuality in conformity with Christian principles, and hence to be able to exercise the virtue of chastity, no educator – not even parents — can interfere with this right to chastity. TMHS 118 (cf. Matt 18: 4-7)

Questions For Discussion

1. Discuss this interesting statement from TMHS: ... *parents help their child to develop his or her own personality*. Have you ever considered that you have an important role to play in the formation/development of your children's **personalities**? Have you rather thought that personality is genetic or more of a 'given.'?
2. Referencing paragraph 113, in today's educational climate where classroom sex education is the norm both in public as well as Catholic schools, discuss the difficulties parents may encounter in trying to carry out their own educative role with regard to sexuality, offering some positive suggestions towards changing this situation and strengthening the role of parents.
3. Discuss the **Four Points recommended for parents** in paragraphs 114 – 117 as related to the above.
4. Look up and read the Scripture reference (Matthew 18:4-7) Even though well-intentioned, can you see how teachers as well as other students discussing sexual details in a classroom setting could easily violate any child's purity and right to chastity? **Each child always has the right to remain chaste**. This is an extremely important point and one not sufficiently recognized or understood in the development of educative curriculums. Can you see how maintaining this principle in practice both in the family and at school can be of great help in the child's development of modesty and personal private space so as to warn and arm them when encountering dangerous situations?
5. Continue discussion regarding **Three Points for educators** in paragraphs 118 – 120 and make a list of them.

*If the people of the world
could only see the beauty of one's soul
when it is in the grace of God,
all sinners and unbelievers would be instantly converted.
Saint Padre Pio*

No one should ever be invited, let alone obliged, to act in any way that could objectively offend against modesty or which could subjectively offend against his or her own delicacy or sense of privacy. TMHS 127

FOUR WORKING PRINCIPLES AND THEIR PARTICULAR NORMS

(121-127)

Review:

122. 1. Human sexuality is a sacred mystery and must be presented according to the doctrinal and moral teaching of the Church, always bearing in mind the effects of original sin. Catholic Doctrinal principles must be presented. *In an age when the mystery has been taken from human sexuality, parents must take care to avoid trivializing human sexuality, in their teaching and in the help offered by others. In particular, profound respect must be maintained for the difference between man and woman which reflects the love and fruitfulness of God himself.*

123. At the same time, when teaching Catholic doctrine and morality about sexuality, the lasting effects of Original Sin must be taken into account, that is to say, human weakness and the need for the grace of God to overcome temptations and avoid sin. In this regard, *the conscience of every individual must be formed clearly, precisely and in accord with spiritual values. But Catholic morality is never limited to teaching about avoiding sin. It also deals with growth in the Christian virtues and developing the capacity for self-giving in the vocation of one's own life.*

124. 2. Only information proportionate to each phase of their individual development should be presented to children and young people. This principle of timing has already been presented in the study of the various phases of the development of children and young people. Parents and all who help them should be sensitive: (a) to the different phases of development, in particular, the “years of innocence” and puberty, (b) to the way each child or young person experiences the various stages of life, (c) to particular problems associated with these stages.

Human sexuality is a sacred mystery and must be presented according to the doctrinal and moral teaching of the Church, always bearing in mind the effects of Original Sin... In an age when the mystery has been taken from human sexuality, parents must take care to avoid trivializing human sexuality, in their teaching and in the help offered by others... TMHS 122

125. Timing is also very important with regard to approaching particular issues or sexual problems.

(a) In later adolescence, young people can first be introduced to the knowledge of the signs of fertility and then to the natural regulation of fertility, but only in the context of education for love, fidelity in marriage, God's plan for procreation and respect for human life.

(b) Homosexuality should not be discussed before adolescence unless a specific serious problem has arisen in a particular situation. This subject must be presented only in terms of chastity, health and “the truth about human sexuality in its relationship to the family as taught by the Church”.

(c) Sexual perversions that are relatively rare should not be dealt with except through individual counselling, as the parents’ response to genuine problems.

126. 3. No material of an erotic nature should be presented to children or young people of any age, individually or in a group. This principle of decency must safeguard the virtue of Christian chastity. Therefore, in passing on sexual information in the context of education for love, the instruction must always be “positive and prudent” and “clear and delicate”. These four words used by the Catholic Church exclude every form of unacceptable content in sexual education.

Moreover, even if they are not erotic, graphic and realistic representations of childbirth, for example in a film, should be made known gradually, so as not to create fear and negative attitudes towards procreation in girls and young women.

127. 4. No one should ever be invited, let alone obliged, to act in any way that could objectively offend against modesty or which could subjectively offend against his or her own delicacy or sense of privacy.

No material of an erotic nature should be presented to children or young people of any age, individually or in a group. This principle of decency must safeguard the virtue of Christian chastity. TMHS 126

This principle of respect for the child excludes all improper forms of involving children and young people. In this regard, among other things, this can include the following methods that abuse sex education: (a) every “dramatized” representation, mime or “role playing” which depict genital or erotic matters, (b) making drawings, charts or models etc. of this nature, (c) seeking personal information about sexual questions or asking that family information be divulged, (d) oral or written exams about genital or erotic questions.



*The Mother –
Sir Frank
Bernard Dicksee*

Questions For Discussion

Four Working Principles:

1. Note the TMHS reference in paragraph 122 to human sexuality as a “sacred mystery” and the importance of maintaining this aspect of mystery and of not trivializing sexuality. Is this particularly difficult today when science dissects and reveals everything? How have the effects of Original Sin contributed to this difficulty?
2. Discuss the need and benefits of bringing Original Sin and its effects and the formation of a correct conscience into any teaching on sexuality and how this can move forward into a positive teaching emphasis on the development of related virtues and the self-giving necessary in any vocation in life?
3. Make a summary list of the Four Working Principles in paragraphs 123 - 128
4. Regarding timing, list and discuss TMHS recommendations for teaching about natural signs of fertility (NFP) homosexuality and perversions.



*The Nest –
John Everett
Millais*

PARTICULAR METHODS

(128-134)

Review:

128. *Parents and all who help them should keep these principles and norms in mind when they take up various methods which seem suitable in the light of parental and expert experience. We will now go on to single out **these recommended methods**. The main **methods to avoid will also be indicated, together with the ideologies that promote and inspire them.***

Recommended Methods

129. *The normal and fundamental method, already proposed in this guide, is personal dialogue between parents and their children, that is, individual formation within the family circle. In fact there is no substitute for a dialogue of trust and openness between parents and their children, a dialogue which respects not only their stages of development but also the young persons as individuals. However, when parents seek help from others, there are various useful methods which can be recommended in the light of parental experience and in conformity with Christian prudence.*

130. *1. As couples or as individuals, parents can **meet with others who are prepared for education for love to draw on their experience and competence.***

131. *2. Parents who are not always prepared to face up to the problematic side of education for love can **take part in meetings with their children, guided by expert persons who are worthy of trust, for example, doctors, priests, educators. In some cases, in the interest of greater freedom of expression, meetings where only daughters or sons are present seem preferable.***

132. *3. In certain situations, parents can **entrust part of education for love to another trustworthy person, if there are matters which require a specific competence or pastoral care in particular cases.***

133. 4. Catechesis on morality may be provided by other trustworthy persons, with particular emphasis on sexual ethics at puberty and adolescence. Parents should take an interest in the moral catechesis which is given to their own children outside the home and use it as a support for their own educational work. Such catechesis must not include the more intimate aspects of sexual information, whether biological or affective, which belong to individual formation within the family.

134. 5. The religious formation of the parents themselves, in particular solid catechetical preparation of adults in the truth of love, builds the foundations of a mature faith that can guide them in the formation of their own children.

This adult catechesis enables them not only to deepen their understanding of the community of life and love in marriage, but also helps them learn how to communicate better with their own children.

Furthermore, in the very process of forming their children in love, parents will find that they benefit much, because they will discover that this ministry of love helps them to “maintain a living awareness of the ‘gift’ they continually receive from their children”. To make parents capable of carrying out their educational work, special formation courses with the help of experts can be promoted.

*Such catechesis must not include the more intimate aspects of sexual information, whether biological or affective, which belong to individual formation within the family.
TMHS 133*

Questions For Discussion

1. State the “normal and fundamental method” of education for love that is the basis of TMHS and repeated again, here. Then list the five practical methods in paragraphs 130 – 133. What stands out as very important? What are the benefits of this method?
2. What are the benefits, both spiritual and practical, of education for parents themselves? Discuss the statement: *Furthermore, in the very process of forming their children in love, parents will find that they benefit much, because they will discover that this ministry of love helps them to “maintain a living awareness of the ‘gift’ they continually receive from their children.”*

Today parents should be attentive to ways in which an immoral education can be passed on to their children through various methods promoted by groups with positions and interests contrary to Christian morality... parents must reject secularized and anti-natalist sex education, which puts God at the margin of life and regards the birth of a child as a threat. TMHS 135, 136

METHODS AND IDEOLOGIES TO AVOID

(135-142)

Review:

135. *Today parents should be attentive to ways in which an immoral education can be passed on to their children through various methods promoted by groups with positions and interests contrary to Christian morality. Here are presented only some of the more widely diffused methods that threaten the rights of parents and the moral life of their children.*

136. *...parents must reject secularized and anti-natalist sex education, which puts God at the margin of life and regards the birth of a child as a threat. This sex education is spread by large organizations and international associations that promote abortion, sterilization and contraception. These organizations want to impose a false lifestyle against the truth of human sexuality... these organizations try to arouse the fear of the “threat of over-population” among children and young people to promote the contraceptive mentality, that is, the “anti- life” mentality. They spread false ideas about the “reproductive health” and “sexual and reproductive rights” of young people. Furthermore, some anti-natalist organizations maintain those clinics which, violating the rights of parents, provide abortion and contraception for young people, thus promoting promiscuity and consequently an increase in teenage pregnancies.*

*“As we look towards the year 2000, how can we fail to think of the young?
What is being held up to them? A society of ‘things’ and not of ‘persons’.
The right to do as they will from their earliest years,
without any constraint, provided it is ‘safe’.
The unreserved gift of self, mastery of one’s instincts,
the sense of responsibility —
these are notions considered as belonging to another age”.*

*Pope Saint John Paul II - Letter to President Clinton
April 5 - 1994*

137. *Before adolescence, the immoral nature of abortion, surgical or chemical, can be gradually explained in terms of Catholic morality and reverence for human life. As regards sterilization and contraception, these should not be discussed before adolescence and only in conformity with the teaching of the Catholic Church. Therefore, the moral, spiritual and health values of methods for the natural regulation of fertility will be emphasized, at the same time indicating the dangers and ethical aspects of the artificial methods. In particular, the substantial and deep difference between natural methods and artificial methods will be shown, both with regard to respect for God's plan for marriage as well as for achieving "the total reciprocal self-giving of husband and wife" and openness to life.*

138. *In many areas worldwide ...professional associations of sex-educators, sex-counsellors and sex-therapists are operating. Because their work is often based on unsound theories, lacking scientific value and closed to an authentic anthropology, and theories that do not recognize the true value of chastity, parents should regard such associations with great caution, no matter what official recognition they may have received. When their outlook is out of harmony with the teachings of the Church, this is evident not only in their work, but also in their publications which are widely diffused in various countries.*

139. *Another abuse occurs whenever sex education is given to children by teaching them all the intimate details of genital relationships, even in a graphic way. Today this is often motivated by wanting to provide education for "safe sex", above all in relation to the spread of AIDS. In this situation, parents must also reject the promotion of so-called "safe sex" or "safer sex", a dangerous and immoral policy based on the deluded theory that the condom can provide adequate protection against AIDS. Parents must insist on continence outside marriage and fidelity in marriage as the only true and secure education for the prevention of this contagious disease.*

140. *One widely-used, but possibly harmful, approach goes by the name of "values clarification". Young people are encouraged to reflect upon, to clarify and to decide upon moral issues with the greatest degree of "autonomy", ignoring the objective reality of the moral law in general and disregarding the formation of consciences on the specific Christian moral precepts, as affirmed by the Magisterium of the Church. Young people are given the idea that a moral code is something which they create themselves, as if man were the source and norm of morality.*

One widely-used, but possibly harmful, approach goes by the name of "values clarification... This unacceptable method tends to be closely linked with moral relativism, and thus encourages indifference to moral law and permissiveness. TMHS 140

However, the values clarification method impedes the true freedom and autonomy of young people at an insecure stage of their development. In practice, not only is the opinion of the majority favoured, but complex moral situations are put before young people, far removed from the normal moral choices they face each day, in which good or evil are easily recognizable. This unacceptable method tends to be closely linked with moral relativism, and thus encourages indifference to moral law and permissiveness.

141. *Parents should also be attentive to ways in which sexual instruction can be inserted in the context of other subjects which are otherwise useful (for example, health and hygiene, personal development, family life, children's literature, social and cultural studies etc.).*

In these situations it is more difficult to control the content of sexual instruction. This method of inclusion is used in particular by those who promote sex instruction within the perspective of birth control or in countries where the government does not respect the rights of parents in this field. But catechesis would also be distorted if the inseparable links between religion and morality were to be used as a pretext for introducing into religious instruction the biological and affective sexual information which the parents should give according to their prudent decision in their own home.

142. *Finally, as a general guideline, one needs to bear in mind, that all the different methods of sexual education should be judged by parents in the light of the principles and moral norms of the Church, which express human values in daily life. The negative effects which various methods can produce in the personality of children and young people should also be taken into account.*

Questions For Discussion

1. Discuss the quote in paragraph 136 from Pope Saint John Paul II's April 1994 Letter To President Clinton: "As we look towards the year 2000, how can we fail to think of the young? What is being held up to them? A society of 'things' and not of 'persons'. The right to do as they will from their earliest years, without any constraint, provided it is 'safe'. The unreserved gift of self, mastery of one's instincts, the sense of responsibility — these are notions considered as belonging to another age".
2. Discuss the TMHS recommendation regarding timing for teaching about abortion, sterilization and contraception. What is always to be included in this teaching?
3. In the public school system, sex education often includes programs and literature offered by organizations such as Planned Parenthood. How can parents deal with this situation in a manner that is effective?
4. Discuss the topic of "safe sex." On what false assumption is it based? What is the best education as regards the prevention of AIDS?
5. Values clarification is an educational tool that has been around since the 70s. Describe and discuss the procedure enough so that you would be able to recognize it in any teaching curricula you might encounter. Are some of the situations presented to students familiar to you? How is this method harmful to a young person's spiritual and moral formation?
6. Sex instruction can also be encountered in virtually any subject taught in school. How can parents creatively deal with this situation?
7. Discuss the statement: "But catechesis would also be distorted if the inseparable links between religion and morality were to be used as a pretext for introducing into religious instruction the biological and affective sexual information which the parents should give according to their prudent decision in their own home."
8. What principles enlighten parents as they come into contact with various programs and methods of sex education?

...the Christian Faith is, on the one hand, compatible with all cultures insofar as they conform to right reason and good will, and, on the other hand, to an eminent degree, is a dynamizing factor of culture. A single principle explains the totality of relationships between faith and culture: Grace respects nature, healing in it the wounds of sin, comforting and elevating it. TMHS 143

INCULTURATION AND EDUCATION FOR LOVE

(143-144)

Review:

143. *As a union between professed faith and concrete life, inculturization means creating a harmonious relationship between faith and culture, where **Christ and his Gospel have absolute precedence over culture.** “Therefore, because it transcends the entire natural and cultural order, the Christian Faith is, on the one hand, compatible with all cultures insofar as they conform to right reason and good will, and, on the other hand, to an eminent degree, is a **dynamizing** factor of culture. **A single principle explains the totality of relationships between Faith and culture: Grace respects nature, healing in it the wounds of sin, comforting and elevating it. Elevation to the divine life is the specific finality of grace, but it cannot realize this unless nature is healed and unless elevation to the supernatural order brings nature, in the way proper to itself, to the plenitude of perfection”.***

Therefore, explicit and premature sex education can never be justified in the name of a prevailing secularized culture. On the contrary, parents must educate their own children to understand and face up to the forces of this culture, so that they may always follow the way of Christ.

144. *In traditional cultures, parents must not accept practices which are contrary to Christian morality,*

*Thus the authorities of the Church are to judge whether local customs are compatible with Christian morality. **But, the traditions of modesty and reserve in sexual matters, which characterize various societies, must be respected everywhere. At the same time, the right of young people to adequate information must be maintained. Furthermore, the particular role of the family in such a culture must be respected, without imposing any Western model of sex education.***

...explicit and premature sex education can never be justified in the name of a prevailing secularized culture. TMHS 143

...the traditions of modesty and reserve in sexual matters, which characterize various societies, must be respected everywhere. At the same time, the right of young people to adequate information must be maintained. Furthermore, the particular role of the family in such a culture must be respected, without imposing any Western model of sex education. TMHS 144

Questions For Discussion

1. Discuss the relationship of the Christian Faith to culture. Why do we say that Christ and His Gospel have absolute precedence over culture? If you can, give examples from history as to how Christianity addressed certain damaging or anti-life aspects of cultures when they evangelized them. Note also there must be a balance in judgment on the part of Christians with regard to judging aspects of other cultures and that this balance has not always been respected.
2. Why do we say nature must be 'healed of the wounds of sin'? Isn't nature perfect? What does St. Paul say in Romans 8:19-22 about the healing of nature?
3. Discuss: *Explicit and premature sex education can never be justified in the name of a prevailing secularized society.* There are many who would use this as a reason for early sex education.



Blessing of the Wheat Fields in Artois – Jules Breton

There are various way of helping and supporting parents in fulfilling their fundamental right and duty to educate their children for love. Such assistance never means taking from parents or diminishing their formative right and duty, because they remain “original and primary”, “irreplaceable and inalienable”... (a) subsidiary, because the formative role of the family is always preferable, and (b) subordinate, that is, subject to the parents’ attentive guidance and control. TMHS 145

CHAPTER VIII – CONCLUSION

(145-150)

Review:

Assistance for Parents

145. *There are various way of helping and supporting parents in fulfilling their fundamental right and duty to educate their children for love. **Such assistance never means taking from parents or diminishing their formative right and duty, because they remain “original and primary”, “irreplaceable and inalienable”.***

Therefore, the role which others can carry out in helping parents *is always (a) subsidiary, because the formative role of the family is always preferable, and (b) subordinate, that is, subject to the parents’ attentive guidance and control. Everyone must observe the right order of cooperation and collaboration between parents and those who can help them in their task. It is clear that the assistance of others must be given first and foremost to parents rather than to their children.*

146. *Those who are called to help parents in educating their children for love must be disposed and prepared to teach **in conformity with the authentic moral doctrine of the Catholic Church. Moreover, they must be mature persons, of a good moral reputation, faithful to their own Christian state of life, married or single, laity, religious or priests.***

They must not only be prepared in the details of moral and sexual information but they *must also be sensitive to the rights and role of parents and the family, as well as the needs and problems of children and young people. In this way, in the light of the principles and content of this guide, they must enter “into the same spirit that animates parents”. But if parents believe themselves to be capable of providing an adequate education for love, they are not bound to accept assistance.*

Valid Sources For Education For Love

147. *The Pontifical Council for the Family is aware of the great need for valid material, specifically prepared for parents in conformity with the principles set out in this guide. Parents who are competent in this field and convinced of these principles should be involved in preparing this material. They will thus be able to offer their own experience and wisdom in order to help others educate their children for chastity. Ecclesiastical authorities **need to be active in promoting suitable material and in removing or correcting what does not conform to the principles set out in this guide, concerning doctrine, timing and the***

The Pontifical Council for the Family is aware of the great need for valid material, specifically prepared for parents in conformity with the principles set out in this guide... Ecclesiastical authorities need to be active in promoting suitable material and in removing or correcting what does not conform to the principles set out in this guide, concerning doctrine, timing and the content and method of such education. TMHS 147

content and method of such education. These principles also apply to all the modern means of social

communication. In a special way, this Pontifical Council for the Family is counting on the work of sensitization and support by the Episcopal Conferences, who will know how to vindicate, where necessary, the right of the family and parents and their proper domains, also with regard to State educational programmes.

Solidarity with Parents

...in parishes or apostolates, clergy and religious should support and encourage parents in striving to form their own children. TMHS 148

148. *Parents should enjoy the support and cooperation of the other members of the Church. The rights of parents must be recognized, protected and maintained, not only to ensure solid formation of children and young people, but also to guarantee the right order of cooperation and collaboration between parents and those who can help them in their task. Likewise, in parishes or apostolates,*

clergy and religious should support and encourage parents in striving to form their own children. In their turn, parents should remember that the family is not the only or exclusive formative community. Thus they should cultivate a cordial and active relationship with other persons who can help them, while never forgetting their own inalienable rights.

Hope and Trust

149. *In the face of many challenges to Christian chastity, the gifts of nature and grace which parents enjoy always remain the most solid foundations on which the Church forms her children. Much of the formation in the home is indirect, incarnated in a loving and tender atmosphere, for it arises from the presence and example of parents whose love is pure and generous. If parents are given confidence in this task of education for love, they will be inspired to overcome the challenges and problems of our times by their own ministry of love.*

In the face of many challenges to Christian chastity, the gifts of nature and grace which parents enjoy always remain the most solid foundations on which the Church forms her children... The Pontifical Council for the Family therefore urges parents to have confidence in their rights and duties regarding the education of their children, so as to go forward with wisdom and knowledge, knowing that they are sustained by God's gift. TMHS 150

150. *The Pontifical Council for the Family therefore urges parents to have confidence in their rights and duties regarding the education of their children, so as to go forward with wisdom and knowledge, knowing that they are sustained by God's gift. In this noble task, may parents always place their trust in God through prayer to the Holy Spirit, the gentle Paraclete and Giver of all good gifts. May they seek the powerful intercession and protection of Mary Immaculate, the Virgin Mother of fair love and model of faithful purity. Let them also invoke Saint Joseph, her just and chaste spouse, following his example of fidelity and purity of heart. May parents*

constantly rely on the love which they offer to their own children, a love which “casts out fear”, which “bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things” (1 Corinthians 13:7). Such love is and must be aimed towards eternity, towards the unending happiness promised by Our Lord Jesus Christ to those who follow Him: “Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God” (Matthew 5:8).

Vatican City, December 8, 1995

Alfonso Card. López Trujillo – President of the Pontifical Council for the Family

+ Most Rev. Elio Sgreccia – Titular Bishop of Zama Minor -
Secretary of the Pontifical Council for the Family



Adoration – Giuseppe Magni

Inviolata, intacta, et casta es
Hymn for the Presentation of the Lord – February 2

Inviolata, untouched and chaste are you, Mary Who have been made the bright gate of heaven.

*O dear Mother of Christ, most dear, Receive the devout declarations of our praises.
That our souls may be pure, Devout hearts and lips beseech you now.*

*By your melodious supplications, Grant us your favor for ever,
O gracious one, who alone have remained inviolate!*

translated by James Monti – Magnificat - February 2016

Questions For Discussion

1. What does TMHS say must never be a part of parental assistance in providing their children with education for love? Why? What are the two principles that are necessary for achieving a 'right order' of cooperation and collaboration between parents and those who might be offering assistance in this regard?
2. What are the necessary qualities of those who would be assisting parents?
3. Are parents bound/required to accept assistance with regard to education in chastity?
4. TMHS says there is a great need for solid and appropriate materials for parents to help them in their educative role in chastity formation. Both laity and clergy need to be active in this regard. Clergy especially are called to promote good material and to remove that which does not conform to the principles in TMHS. What four aspects of teaching are mentioned as significant?
5. What is the important relationship to be cultivated between parents and educators for the very best outcome?
6. Note TMHS reference to 'nature and grace' as the gifts parents have as a foundation for educating their children for love, and that 'much formation in the home is indirect'. Discuss.
7. Summarize the last paragraph of TMHS emphasizing the significant and important points.

*Within us there is a palace of immense magnificence.
The entire edifice is built of gold and precious stones....
truly there is no building of such great beauty as a pure soul,
filled with virtues, and the greater these virtues,
the brighter these stones sparkle.
In this palace the great King lodges,
Who has been pleased to become your Guest...
He sits there on a throne of tremendous value: your heart.*

St. Teresa of Avila

TMHS GLOSSARY

Words defined as regards their usage in the document

Aggression

An offensive or attacking spirit or mental attitude.

Agnosticism

Belief that created matter is the only reality and that God is unknowable.

Ambience

An atmosphere or environment.

Anthropology

The study of man and his origin, culture and social relations.

Antinatalist

A philosophy that stands in opposition to birth and life.

Arduous

Most difficult to achieve.

Autonomy

Being free from outside control or influences. Can be positive if based on truth, or negative if truth is rejected in favor of hedonistic/sensual desires.

Cardinal Virtues

Prudence, justice, fortitude, temperance. Latin *cardo*: meaning hinge, as all other virtues flow from them. Source in ancient philosophies and the Bible.

Competency

Having the required qualities or abilities; sufficiency.

Complementarity

The quality of being able to supply what another person or thing lacks.

Concupiscence

Attraction towards persons or things for the purpose of satisfying sensual desire.

Consecrated Life

Permanent state of life dedicated to Christ with vows of poverty, chastity and obedience.

Covenantal

From 'covenant' - the complete/total giving of two persons, each one to the other.

Depersonalized

A lack of appreciation for the dignity and goodness of a person.

Deformation of Conscience

Warping or erosion of the natural conscience implanted in the soul; usually brought about by bad example, environment or false teaching.

Deviant

Straying from the good or accepted way of acting.

Dissemination

To spread widely throughout society; usually by means of the media or teaching.

Domain

Area of influence or control.

Domestic Church

Refers to the family, the first teacher of the Faith to children. From *Lumen Gentium* of Vatican II.

Donum Pietatis

Latin: the gift of piety.

Dynamyzing

From dynamic - meaning powerfully active.

Ethics

Study of moral principles and values.

Fundamental

Basic.

Hedonism

From Hedone: Greek goddess of pleasure. Doctrine that pleasure or happiness is the main goal of life.

Illumination

Flooding the mind with the light of deeper or more profound understanding.

Impoverishes

Makes poor; deprives of richness or strength.

Incarnated

To give bodily form. Latin: carne meaning flesh, and nat to be born.

Indispensable

Absolutely necessary.

Individualistic

Self-centered focus as opposed to caring about the true good of the other person.

Inherent

Belonging to the essential character of something.

Innate

Belonging to the essential nature of a thing.

Integration

Process of uniting something (chastity) with a normal effective personality.

Legitimate

To make lawful or legal.

Materialistic

Emphasis on physical or material things as opposed to intellectual or spiritual.

Nucleus

Center; soul.

Nuptial Meaning of the Body

The design of the human body, male and female orients one towards the other in a complementary nuptial or marital relationship, with the fruitfulness of children.

Original Sin

The sin of disobedience of the first man and woman, Adam and Eve; inherited by us.

Pedagogical

Relating to pedagogy: teaching.

Pessimistic

Expecting the worst possible outcome.

Positivism

Philosophical system, a 'religion of humanity' elaborated by Auguste Comte that denies the validity of the spiritual and maintains that sense experience is the source of human knowledge. It denies the existence of a personal God and makes humanity instead the object of its worship.

Potential

Able to develop into actuality; educative potential – capable of development.

Procreation

To beget (create) children.

Profound

Very deep.

Protagonist

Leader of a cause or contest.

Realization

Fulfillment of one's abilities.

Self-mastery

Self control.

Self-possession

Control of one's reactions or emotions; confidence.

Self-realization

The fulfillment of one's potential according to our God-given human nature.

Solicitude

Quality of having care or concern.

Sovereignty

Over or above; freedom from external control; having supreme power or authority.

Subsidiarity

An organizing principle that matters ought to be handled by the smallest, lowest or least centralized competent authority.

Synthesis

Combining elements or parts to make a whole.

Temperance

Moderation in action, thought, or feeling; restraint or self-control.

Theory

Idea or set of principles thought to explain something.

Trivialization

Cheapening or minimalization of the value of something good or holy.

Utilitarianism

Belief system that the usefulness of a thing or action determines its goodness.

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The Church and Human Sexuality (excerpt) by Dr. Wanda Poltawska, *Linacre Quarterly*, November, 1985. Wanda Poltawska was a Polish psychiatrist who influenced Pope John Paul II's views on sexuality and the human person.

APPENDIX

ADDITIONAL READING

Previous Church Statements on Sex Education

Excerpts From *Divini Illius Magistri* - Pope Pius XI - 1929

Nevertheless, Venerable Brethren and beloved children, We wish to call your attention in a special manner to the present-day lamentable **decline in family education**. The offices and professions of a transitory and earthly life, which are certainly of far less importance, are prepared for by long and careful study; **whereas for the fundamental duty and obligation of educating their children, many parents have little or no preparation, immersed as they are in temporal cares**. The declining influence of domestic environment is further weakened by another tendency, prevalent almost everywhere today, which, under one pretext or another, for economic reasons, or for reasons of industry, trade or politics, **causes children to be more and more frequently sent away from home even in their tenderest years**. And there is a country where the children are actually being torn from the bosom of the family, to be formed (or, to speak more accurately, to be deformed and depraved) in godless schools and associations, to irreligion and hatred, according to the theories of advanced socialism; and thus is renewed in a real and more terrible manner the slaughter of the Innocents. DIM 73

Since however the younger generations must be trained in the arts and sciences for the advantage and prosperity of civil society, and since the family of itself is unequal to this task, it was necessary to create that social institution, the school. But let it be borne in mind that this institution owes its existence to the initiative of the family and of the Church, long before it was undertaken by the State. **Hence considered in its historical origin, the school is by its very nature an institution subsidiary and complementary to the family and to the Church. It follows logically and necessarily that it must not be in opposition to, but in positive accord with those other two elements, and form with them a perfect moral union, constituting one sanctuary of education, as it were, with the family and the Church. Otherwise it is doomed to fail of its purpose, and to become instead an agent of destruction.** DIM 77

...Another very grave danger is that naturalism which nowadays invades the field of education in that most delicate matter of purity of morals. Far too common is the error of those who with dangerous assurance and under an ugly term propagate a so-called sex-education, falsely imagining they can forearm youth against the dangers of sensuality by means purely natural, such as a foolhardy initiation and precautionary instruction for all indiscriminately, even in public; and, worse still, by exposing them at an early age to the occasions, in order to accustom them, so it is argued, and as it were to harden them against such dangers.

Such persons grievously err in refusing to recognize the inborn weakness of human nature, and the law of mind (Romans 7:23), and also in ignoring the experience of facts, from which it is clear that, particularly in young people, evil practices are the effect not so much of ignorance of intellect as of weakness of a will exposed to dangerous occasions, and unsupported by the means of grace.

In this extremely delicate matter, if, all things considered, some private instruction is found necessary and opportune, from those who hold from God the commission to teach and have the grace of state, every precaution must be taken. Such precautions are well known in traditional Christian education, and are described adequately by Silvio Antonio cited above, when he says:

“Such is our misery and inclination to sin, that often in the very things considered to be remedies against sin, we find occasions for and inducements to sin itself. Hence it is of the highest importance that a good father, while discussing with his son a matter so delicate, should be well on his guard and not descend to details, nor refer to the various ways in which this infernal hydra destroys with its poison so large a portion of the world; otherwise it may happen that instead of extinguishing this fire, he unwittingly stirs or kindles it in the simple and tender heart of the child. Speaking generally, during the period of childhood it suffices to employ those remedies which produce the double effect of opening the door to the virtue of purity and closing the door upon vice”
DIM 65-67

To Fathers of Families - Pope Pius XI - September 18, 1951

What a heartfelt joy it is for Us to see this pilgrimage of fathers of families! How many times—in connection with the most varied questions—have We insisted on family sanctity, on its rights, on its duties as the fundamental cell of human society? Its life, health, vigor and activity ensure the life, health, vigor and activity of society as a whole. Since God has given the family its existence, its dignity, its social function, it must answer to God for them. Its rights and its privileges are inalienable, sacrosanct; it has the duty, primarily before God and secondarily before society, to defend, to vindicate and to promote effectively these rights and these privileges, not only for its own good, but for the glory of God and the welfare of the community.

How many times have been sung the praises of the mother, hailing her as the heart, the sun of the family? But if the mother is the heart, the father is the head of the family, and consequently its health and efficiency depend on the vigor, the virtues and activity of the father.

Beloved sons, you understand—and for this reason you have come here—the necessity for the fathers of families to know individually, socially, and in a Christian manner the function confided to them and their inherent duties. You are here and it is your intention to ask the advice and the blessing of the Common Father, the Head of the great human family.

It is clear that your first duty in the sanctuary of the family home is to provide—with due respect and the perfection, humanly possible, of its integrity, of its unity, of the natural hierarchy which unites the members among themselves—for the preservation of the physical, intellectual, moral and religious sanctity of the family. Evidently, this obligation includes that of defending and promoting its sacred duties; in the first place that of fulfilling the obligations due to God, to constitute a Christian society in the full sense of the word; secondly to defend the rights of the family against all attacks or external influences which could attack its purity, faith, and holy stability.

Promote these same rights by demanding from the civil, political and cultural society the means, at least those which are indispensable, for their free exercise.

The Cell of Society

The Christian has a rule which permits him to determine with certainty the extent of the rights and duties of the family in the community of the State. It is thus conceived: *the family is not made for society; rather it is society which is made for the family*. The family is the fundamental cell, the constitutive element, of the community of the State, because—to use the expression of Our Predecessor, Pius XI, of happy memory—*the State is what it is made to be by the individuals and families which compose it, as a body is composed of its members*. The State then, should, as it were, in virtue of the instinct of self-preservation fulfill that which, essentially according to the design of God, Creator and Savior, is its first duty, namely guarantee in full measure the values which ensure to the family order, human dignity, health, and happiness. These values, which are also the very elements of the common good, may never be sacrificed for what may apparently be the common advantage.

Let Us point out, as an example, some of these benefits which are greatly threatened today: the indissolubility of matrimony; the protection of prenatal life; suitable housing for the family, and that not merely for the family composed of one or two children or a childless family, but for the normal larger family; the possibility of finding work, for a father lacking employment is one of the bitterest worries of a family; the rights of the parents over their children in the eyes of the State; their full freedom to raise them in the True Faith, and, consequently, the right of Catholic parents to Catholic schools; a condition of public life, and above all, public morals such that the families and especially young people will not have the moral certainty of being corrupted.

On this and other points which concern family life more intimately there are no differences between family and family. On other questions of an economic or political nature they may find themselves in very different conditions, and sometimes in competition or even in opposition. Here there is a great need—and Catholics should be the first to give a good example—to promote a balance of interests, even at the cost of sacrificing particular interests, but having in view an internal peace and stable economy.

But when it is a question of the essential rights of the family, the true faithful of the Church will pledge themselves in support from beginning to end. It may be that on this or that particular point, there must be a retreat before the superiority of political forces. But here it is not capitulation but a matter of patience. In such cases it is necessary that doctrine be safeguarded, that all efficacious means be adopted to arrive little by little at the goal which has never been given up.

The Union of Fathers of Families

Among these efficacious means, even of those which look to a distant future, certainly one of the most powerful is the union between fathers of families who are guided by the same convictions and the same desires. Your presence here is a testimony that such is even your thought.

Even before obtaining a desired result, in the absence of or while awaiting the success which your group continues to pursue, the aim of this association of fathers is to use fruitful means of enlightening public opinion and little by little to pervade it to favor the triumph of truth and justice. No effort to act upon public opinion must be disdained or neglected.

Sexual Initiation

There is another field in which this education of public opinion is needed and this with tragic urgency. It is in this field perverted by propaganda which one, does not hesitate to call evil, even if at times it takes its origin from Catholic sources and aims at making headway among Catholics,—and even if those who promote it do not seem aware that they are deluded by the spirit of evil.

Here We intend to speak of writings, books, and articles regarding sexual initiation, which today very often achieve fame as “best sellers,” and flood the whole world, taking possession of infancy, submerging the new generation, and disturbing engaged couples and the newly married.

The Church has treated this question regarding instruction on this matter, both as concerns the physical development and normal psychology of adolescence, and as concerns particular cases arising from different individual conditions, with all the gravity, attention, and decency that the argument permitted. The Church can rightly declare that, profoundly respectful of the sanctity of marriage, she has in theory and in practice left husband and wife free in that which the impulse of a wholesome and honest nature concedes without offense to the Creator.

One becomes terrified by the intolerable impudence of certain literature; and while paganism itself seemed to halt in respect before the secret of married intimacy, it is our lot to see the mystery violated and its vision, sexual and degraded, offered as a meal to the public and even to youth.

One must ask oneself if there still remains sufficiently marked out the boundaries between the initiation which is called Catholic, and the press with its erotic and obscene illustrations, which, with serious deliberation, aims at corruption, and basely exploits the lowest instincts of fallen nature for despicable interests.

Would that it ended here. Such a propaganda also threatens Catholics with a double calamity, not to use a stronger expression. First of all, it exaggerates out of all proportion the importance and significance of the sexual element. It may be admitted that these authors, under the purely theoretical aspect, keep within the limits of Catholic morals. But no less true is it that their manner of explaining sexual life is such that it acquires in the mind and conscience of the average reader the idea and value of an end in itself, making him lose sight of the true primordial purpose of matrimony, which is the procreation and upbringing of children, and the grave duty of married couples as regards this purpose—something which the literature of which We are speaking leaves too much in the background.

Secondly, this literature—if it deserves such a title— seems to hold in no account the universal experience of past, present and future ages, although such experience is based on nature itself, which attests that in moral education neither initiation nor instruction offers of itself any advantage; that indeed, it is seriously harmful and prejudicial where it is not firmly restrained by constant discipline, by a vigorous self-control, above all, by the use of the supernatural means of prayer and the Sacraments. All Catholic educators, worthy of the name and their mission, are fully aware of the overwhelming importance of supernatural forces in man’s sanctification—youth or adult, married or single. But in the writings mentioned, hardly a word is said about these things, even when the whole matter is not passed over in complete

silence. Even the principles so wisely explained by Our Predecessor, Pius XI, in the Encyclical *Divini illius Magistri*, regarding sexual education and the related problems, are pushed aside with a smile of compassion: Pius XI, it is said, wrote these things twenty years ago for his own times! The world has gone a long way since then!

Fathers here present: in every corner of the globe, in every country, there are other Christian fathers of families such as yourselves, who share your sentiments. Unite yourselves therefore with them—naturally under the direction of your Bishops. Call to your help all Catholic mothers and with their powerful support fight together, without timidity or human respect, to halt and curtail these movements which authorize and mask themselves under any name or patronage. Not without reason you have placed your pilgrimage under the special care of the great Pope of the Eucharist, Blessed Pius X. Have faith in the help of the Immaculate Virgin, Mother most pure, Mother most chaste, Help of Christians; have faith in the grace of Christ, source of all purity, Who never abandons those who work for the coming and establishment of His kingdom.

Classroom Sex Education - By Rev. Vernon J. Schaefer - *The Homiletic & Pastoral Review* – March 1995

*Allan Guttmacher, former president of Planned Parenthood was asked,
“What makes abortion so secure in America?” He answered in two words:
“Sex education.”*

*Atheist Madelyn Murray O'Hare wrote: “The issue of
abortion is a red herring. . . . The fight is over sex education,
including information on birth control.”*

Abortion is the effect and sex education is the chief cause if not the root cause of our sexual revolution. One of the driving forces of the revolution was making or taking sensuality public, and that started, and of all places, in the classroom. Yes, even now in the classrooms of some Catholic schools.

Classroom sex education initiates children into the sensual. It is the gateway to all forms of sexual immorality. Corrupted morals is the link between sex-ed and abortion.

It appears to me that the Catholic clergy are all but oblivious to the evils of classroom sex education. It is never discussed in any clergy gathering I have ever attended. We discuss a lot of things in our deanery meetings but never that. It is as if the clergy are completely unaware of the evils of classroom sex education.

I was no different. When sex-ed was quietly introduced into the public school in my parish many years ago, a few of my more conservative parishioners objected. I didn't like the idea but it didn't look like a big deal to me. Like so many, I lamented that parents were not doing the job at home so maybe the school has to give them a hand. But I always had a great distrust of public schools and was uncomfortable with the idea that the children in my parish were learning about the holy faculty of sex in an institution where God has been banned. I would have much rather have the parents take over that delicate task.

I asked a very devout mother in the parish, a graduate of a Catholic college, to teach a Catholic course of sex education as part of our CCD program. I knew the kids would never

get the proper slant on this subject in a public school. But at the same time, I was willing to allow them to participate in the classroom sex-ed of the public school, so little did I know about that program.

I sat in on a few classes of our own sex-ed course. They were using a film which Kathy, the teacher, said was approved by the diocesan education office, but I decided, approved or not, my children are not going to be subjected to any more of that kind of sexual audio-visual. Several good parents who were uneasy with the whole program seconded my decision to revise our sex-ed course.

Meanwhile, I received a brochure from the NCCL, National Coalition of Clergy and Laity. This organization puts out quite a case against classroom sex education. At first, I thought they must be an extreme right wing outfit who see a rat in every nursery. I gave the brochure to Kathy and asked her to give me her opinion. The upshot of the whole thing was that we eliminated our “Catholic” sex-ed course and proceeded to teach sexual morality in connection with the regular religion curriculum - not as a separate subject.

Sex education should never be taught as a separate subject but integrated into the moral teachings of the Church. As a separate subject it emphasizes the physical side of sex too much. The parents were instructed that it was their responsibility to teach the intimate physical aspects of sex to their children when they judged it was the proper time and even then not to go into very much detail. In the meantime, they were to immediately pull all of their children out of the classroom sex-ed curriculum of the public school.

Why the latter action? Because I was finally educated about what classroom sex education in the public school was like. That didn't come from any Catholic source, sad to say. A couple of devout Christian mothers in a nearby city, Rochester, Minn., had accidentally found some literature given to their children in sex-ed but the children were not supposed to take the literature home. These two good mothers were appalled at what was given their children - literature published by Planned Parenthood.

Does the Magisterium ban sex-ed?

These devoted mothers proceeded to research the sex-ed curriculum of their local public schools. They were college educated and did a magnificent job of research. Soon they formed an organization to fight public school sex-ed called, *Rochester Supporters of Value-Based Programs* and published a fact-filled booklet entitled, *Sex Education: A Summary for Policymakers*. I obtained a copy of that publication, and that was my long delayed education concerning classroom sex education.

About that time I found a copy of Randy Engel's book, *Sex Education, the Final Plague*. It distressed me no end to discover how blind I had been all this time concerning the poison ladled out to innocent children right under my nose and how parents were being so deceived. They thought it was good that the school was helping their children in the field of sex.

Incidentally, when I informed the parents one Sunday morning what the agents of Planned Parenthood were feeding their children in sex-ed they wouldn't believe it, and failed to pull their children out of these classes.

But the NCCL had been aware all along of the evil of classroom sex-ed, and perhaps we might summarize here what they stand for and what they are trying to accomplish.

The National Coalition of Clergy and Laity, vowed to advance the mission of the Magisterium and support the Holy Father, work to strengthen and sanctify families. In pursuing this objective they have announced that for the 1990s they will work to secure a ban on classroom sex education in every diocese and archdiocese of the United States and the world. In their explanatory brochure, they state:

We are convinced that once sex-ed is banished from the classroom, a genuine Catholic restoration will have commenced. We fear, on the other hand, that should the evil not be dispelled, dire consequences for the Church and the western civilization will inevitably follow.

In answer to the question why classroom sex education is so evil, they state:

Classroom sex education is a perversion of nature. It makes that which is by its very nature private and intimate, public and open.

All education is an activity which is essentially public, but because matters of sex are private and intimate (and pertain fundamentally to the family), the teaching of sex can not ever be accomplished in the classroom without violating that privacy and intimacy.

Such a violation is an abominable form of scandal, scandal of the sort which Our Lord solemnly and literally condemned when he declared: *“And whoever receives one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it were better for him to have a millstone hung around his neck, and to be drowned in the depths of the sea”* (Matt. 18:5-6).

NCCL maintains that classroom sex education attacks the virtue of holy bashfulness and erodes the sense of common shame and clears the way to all forms of sexual immorality. The laity seem to understand this last statement very quickly so that when I presented it at a Health Committee meeting at the school, while they took no action on eliminating classroom sex education, the committee directed the principal and sex-ed teachers to immediately separate the boys from the girls in sex-ed classes. And when I presented the argument to my people they took action for the first time to start pulling their children out of sex-ed. We are making progress.

Does the Magisterium of the Church prohibit classroom sex-ed by name?

...if, all things considered, some private instruction is found necessary and opportune, from those who hold from God the commission to teach and have the grace of state, every precaution must be taken.

Such precautions are well known in traditional Christian education.... Hence it is of the highest importance that a good father, while discussing with his son a matter so delicate, should be well on his guard not to descend into details.”

Later, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith on March 31, 1931, backed up the teaching of Pope Pius XI in his Encyclical of 1929. They disapproved the method called “sex education”: and added that the first place is to be given to a *full, sound and continuous instruction in religion*. That’s why Kathy suggested we teach sound doctrine in religion in CCD classes, treat the morality of the use of sex when we come to the sixth and ninth commandments, but stay away from physical detail.

On September 18, 1951 in a solemn address delivered to French Fathers of Families, His Holiness reiterated the teachings of his predecessor, Pius XI, in his encyclical *Divini Illius Magistri*, on sex education and questions connected thereto.

The teaching of sex education in the classroom is a violation of the natural law. The authoritative pronouncements of the Popes and the clarification of the Holy Office prove that classroom sex education is immoral, and, because it is prohibited, also illicit.

The question might be asked now why this prohibition of classroom sex-ed is not being heeded. The word, apparently, got around that the Church has changed its position, but the NCCL challenges the dissenting proponents of classroom sex-ed to cite the exact documents which revoke or nullify the statements of Pope Pius XI, the Holy Office, or Pope Pius XII.

But surely the “chastity programs” like C. Mast’s *Love and Life Series* are safe? The NCCL doesn’t think so. In fact, they think the so-called “chastity programs” are in a certain sense even more dangerous to youth because, as they say in their brochure:

... the child is deliberately exposed to information which focuses on and stimulates the sexual function - while at the same time he is being told to be chaste, i.e. pure in thought, word, or deed. This causes a tremendous (and unnatural) psychological, moral and spiritual conflict in the young, especially considering that stimulation of the sexual function, which is cumulative, will find away to express itself.

The final question is then, what should be taught and how? As emphasized before, teaching classroom sex education is always objectively and intrinsically evil. The NCCL believes what should be taught is a sound and complete doctrinal and moral catechesis designed to produce holiness in the student. There should be no separate class for sex-ed. Parents have both the primary right and duty to teach their children the morality of human sexuality. Catholic schools have the right and duty to assist parents in this undertaking, but sexual morality must not be imparted in a group setting while this moral education must conform to the tradition and teaching of the Magisterium. Information should be given in the abstract rather than descriptive language. The parents can teach the child as they perceive the need but without going into detail.

Now comes a new organization of mothers against school sex-ed. It’s called Mother’s Watch and headquartered in Washington, D.C. These Catholic mothers have been appalled how the bishops have been deceived concerning sex-ed and permit it in Catholic schools.

The major point of Mother’s Watch is that sex education doesn’t belong in schools to begin with. They maintain with the Magisterium that sex education is a God-given parental right and duty, and not even bishops can take away a God-given right and duty.

As Ann Polcha, the spokeswoman for Mother’s Watch, says,

“We are trying to get the bishops to pay attention to the real experts in sex education: the parents. The bishops should really read the Vatican documents on the rights of parents with regard to sex education. The reason they have such a problem with this sex education issue is that they do not have the grace that parents receive through marriage to teach children matters related to sex. Their job is to teach the faith.”

Why is it that they need to teach our kids about sex, anyway?

Mother's Watch is concerned because the bishops have permitted their bureaucracy in Washington (NCCB) to okay sex- ed in Catholic schools and promoted the use of some very objectionable texts like the so-called pro-life chastity programs: Benziger's *New Creation, In God's Image* by Franciscan Communications, and also Molly Kelly's *Let's Talk to Teens About Chastity*, Hannah Klaus's *Teen STAR* and *Sex Respect* by Coleen Kelly Mast.

Ann says these texts are not pro-life; nor are they Catholic in any way. They have the same basic components as the Planned Parenthood programs. They promote values clarification, and encourage children to choose their own "options," "to make their own decisions" when it comes to sex.

Mother's Watch published an open letter in the *Washington Times* on April 28, 1994 espousing certain features of a sex education curriculum used in some Catholic schools, asking the bishops, *What in the name of God are you doing to our children?*

Parents have been asking the same question of public schools for a long time already. Perhaps the whole matter can be summarized by saying: *Sex education doesn't belong in schools to begin with.*

Reverend Vernon J. Schaefer, Pastor of Holy Redeemer Church, Eyota, Minn., is a priest of the Diocese of Winona. He writes regularly for the diocesan paper, The Courier and writes a syndicated column for small town papers on rural issues. He also contributes to various Catholic periodicals.

Fr. Schaefer authored a book on growing up on a Minnesota farm during the Depression, We Ate Gooseberries. His last article in HPR was in January 1993

Father Schaefer passed to his Eternal reward on November 16, 2000

NOTES ON EDUCATION IN CHASTITY

WHAT TO TEACH THE CHILD

On The Theological Level ... **BEAUTY ... SILENCE ... MYSTERY**

These concepts are essential for the child's formation

They lay the foundation for all formation in chastity.
Just as the heavy clay soil of a garden must be prepared
by adding organic matter and other nutrients
so that air and water can penetrate,
these three qualities “prepare the soil” of the child's soul, so to speak,
to receive the seed of the real truth and meaning of human sexuality.

BEAUTY – Beauty is an icon of Christ

God speaks directly to the soul through beauty
and there is scarcely any way to resist it when it comes.
This is one way God directly moves to overwhelm
a hardened intellect or will set against Him,
to show His goodness and
to stir a smouldering wick into a flame of faith in Him.

Beauty is a healing refuge

It soothes and heals the injured soul
by infusing it with the goodness and presence of God

Conversations between parents and their children about sexuality must communicate the truth of the holiness of marriage and conjugal love in order to repair what the trivialization and public display of sex has destroyed. The Sacrament of Baptism supernaturalizes the human person, body and soul, and lifts all human activity to a higher level. When parents, in a setting that is loving, quiet and private speak to their child about these holy realities in a spirit of reverence, something of the beauty of God is communicated to the child and floods their soul with peace and tranquility. This would not be possible in a classroom setting.

SILENCE – God speaks in the silence

and the soul must remain in silence
in order to hear and absorb His truth.
This cannot be done in the midst of noise or distraction.

A strong and heavy wind was rendering the mountains and crushing rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake – but the Lord was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake there was a fire – but the Lord was not in the fire.

After the fire there was a tiny whispering sound. When he heard this, Elijah hid his face in his cloak and went and stood at the entrance to the cave.

1Kings 19:11-13

The scientific, clinical approach to sex education often presents too much information, that which is unnecessary for children and youth who are still far from marriage. It frequently utilizes the flashy techniques of mass media at the expense of communicating the more hidden spiritual aspects and holiness of conjugal love. **Silence in certain aspects leaves room for a gradual unfolding of mystery.**

*All attempts to describe the sexual act fail to transmit essential content:
all descriptions, drawings, photographs become pornography,
since they cannot render the great interior dimension
but show only one dimension, thereby degrading this sublime act. ...
It is mystery, and that is precisely what the children must be told:
these matters are so great that they are indescribable...
silence in sexual matters ...
may give more real wisdom than irresponsible talking.*

Dr. Wanda Poltawska from the Pontifical Council For the Family
Church and Human Sexuality
Linacre Quarterly - November 1985

MYSTERY— God is a Transcendent Mystery and a Trinity of Persons

and human sexuality is a reflection of,
and a participation in that Mystery and Trinitarian relationship.
This participation is a “great mystery” says St. Paul, that is a holy and sacred reality -
a created reality on earth that mirrors the uncreated
Communion of Persons of the Most Holy Trinity.

Isaiah witnessed this holy mystery of the Triune God in which he saw
three six- winged Seraphim angels:

*I saw the Lord seated on a high and lofty throne, with the train of His garment
filling the Temple. Seraphim were stationed above, each of them had six wings:
with two they veiled their faces, with two they veiled their feet,
and with two they hovered aloft.
'Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of hosts!' they cried, one to the other.
'All the earth is filled with His glory!'*

Is. 6:1-3

It is this concept of mystery that must be recovered again if the real truth and meaning of human sexuality is to be restored in the world. Isaiah's vision of the Seraphim veiling their faces and hovering aloft as they worship face to face and contemplate the Triune Communion of Persons communicates something of this reality of mystery to us. **Sex must go back under the veil of mystery because to reveal everything about it falsifies and degrades its holy and sacred nature. When we recover understanding and esteem for the holiness of conjugal union, we will be better able to esteem the holiness of the celibate priesthood.**

THE IMMACULATA

In this day and age when we have suffered such violation of our own purity and witnessed the destruction of that of others, how can this even be possible? Only by the power and through the intercession of the Immaculata, the Blessed Virgin Mary for she says:

*“But mine is also an Immaculate Heart, that is to say, a motherly heart
that has never been tarnished by any shadow, by any sin,
limpid as a spring, clear as light.
The priests of my Movement must restore purity in souls
and fight firmly against the Demon of Lust in all its manifestations.
To those who have fallen I will give a new purity;
I will call them to a second and more beautiful innocence of repentance and love.
I want it to be the Movement of my priests
which will bring back the fragrance of purity to the world:
for it is only on the billow of this perfume
that my Son Jesus will once again become the King of hearts and of souls”.*
To The Priests Our Lady's Beloved Sons - 21

The Human Body and the Holiness of all Human Activity

It is well worth recalling that the human body is given incredible dignity due to the Incarnation of Jesus Christ Who took a human body to His divine Person. This dignity is further deepened because in Holy Communion we receive the living glorified Person of Jesus Christ: His Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity, comes into our body.

Additionally, in Baptism, the human body receives the divine life of God and the Holy Spirit. Thus we say that our bodies “are a temple of the Holy Spirit.” Flowing from that truth, therefore ALL human activity is elevated to the level of the divine, and has such great and infinite worth because it is done in Christ. Conversely that is why sin is such a tragedy because it scourges and defaces this Divine Image in us.

Fr. John Hardon wrote: “St. Thomas Aquinas believed that man is more than a composite of body and soul, that he is nothing less than elevated to a supernatural order which participates, as far as a creature can, in the very nature of God. Accordingly, a person in the state of grace, or divine friendship, possesses certain enduring powers, the infused virtues and gifts, that raise him to an orbit of existence as far above nature as heaven is above earth, and that give him abilities of thought and operation that are literally born, not of the will of flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.”

Father Hardon Archives - The Meaning of Virtue in St. Thomas Aquinas - The Real Presence Association ”

WHAT TO TEACH THE CHILD

On The Concrete Practical Level ... Programs and Teaching Materials:

The best program is one that aids parents in the instruction of their own children. Each family knows best when and how to educate their children in these delicate areas — there is no ‘one size fits all’ program for young children. Each child is at his or her own distinctive moment in emotional and physical development — it is the right of parents to determine when and how to educate their children in these matters. **But a parish program that aids parents is a good plan...***Mary Jo Anderson, Voices, Women for Faith & Family, Eastertide 2005*

SEE RESOURCES

RESOURCES FOR PARENTS

The Joyful Mysteries of Life – Catherine and Bernard Scherrer – Ignatius Press

Written by Catholic parents for their own children, in a reverent and respectful manner by presenting the biological facts in the context of meditations on the Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary. Chastity is shown to be the Christian way of living out God's will as it encourages an attitude of reverence for the mysteries of procreation.

The Joyful Mysteries of Life is a response to the Church's call for good resources for education in sexuality. With its predominantly spiritual and moral emphasis, in a positive, clear and delicate way, this book is designed to assist parents in their task of formation."

Cardinal Alfonso López Trujillo, President, Pontifical Council for the Family

Harrisburg PA Diocesan Program – *Formation in Christian Chastity*

Follows the principles of TMHS that parents are primary educators and provide detailed information via the home. The natural innocence of young children is protected. The school supports this principle.

hbgiocese.org/religious-education/chastity/

DVD - *A Parent's Guide: Teaching Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality* – available from Catholic Parents Online. View trailer and order form at www.catholicparents.org/parents-guide-teaching-truth-meaning-human-sexuality-featured-ewtn/ Video is based on the 1995 document by the Pontifical Council for the Family *The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality*. Also available in Spanish: ***El Verdadero Significado de la Sexualidad Humana***. Catholic Parents OnLine, PO Box 130815, St. Paul, MN, 55113

PUREly YOU! purelyyou.org Recognizes the delicacy of the subject matter, the uniqueness of each child, which requires them to be given individualized instruction on the delicate subjects, the lack of confidence that many parents experience and the necessity for children to receive formation in chastity which is age appropriate. **PUREly YOU!** provides direct assistance and insight to parents so they may (re)claim their duty in a spirit of love & confidence.

Family Honor familyhonor.org Providing a Catholic framework on the truth and meaning of sexuality, love, and family. **Offers speakers and parish based programs for parents and children together.**

A Parent's Guide to Preventing Homosexuality - Joseph Nicolosi

Joseph Nicolosi uncovers the most significant factors that contribute to children's healthy sense of themselves as male or female. Listening to moving recollections from ex-gay men and women who describe what was missing in their own childhoods, Dr. Nicolosi provides clear insight for identifying potential developmental roadblocks and gives practical advice to parents for helping their children securely identify with their gender. *A Parent's Guide* offers compassion and hope for all those parents who seek to lay a foundation for a healthy heterosexual identity in their children.

Dr. Nicolosi was one of three founding members--and former President--of the National Association for Research and Therapy of Homosexuality (NARTH), a 1,000-member professional association founded in 1992

The NARTH website is viewed by over 100,000 visitors each month. It is the only secular group in the U.S. which protects the rights of therapists to counsel clients with unwanted homosexuality.

The NARTH website now directs to a new organization with the same goals and mission: Alliance for Therapeutic Choice and Scientific Integrity - therapeuticchoice.com/

Courage and EnCourage – A Roman Catholic Apostolate in support of Catholic teaching on homosexuality. Courage members are men and women who experience same-sex attractions and who have made a commitment to strive for chastity. They are inspired by the Gospel call to holiness and the Catholic Church's beautiful teachings about the goodness and inherent purpose of human sexuality. Through this Apostolate, people who experience same-sex attraction receive pastoral support in the form of spiritual guidance, community prayer support, and fellowship.

EnCourage offers support for family and friends of those experiencing same sex attraction. couragerc.net

TRUTH AND MEANING OF HUMAN SEXUALITY

STUDY AND DISCUSSION GUIDE

NOTES FOR FACILITATORS

The organization and formatting of the Study/Discussion Guide follows the original formatting and section breaks of the original document from the Pontifical Council for the Family. Some sections are shorter; others longer.

At the end of each section, a number of questions are presented. Some sections have more questions than others, the reason being the questions are geared towards helping the participant acquire the information and principles being presented. It is not necessary for the individual or group to discuss all of the questions offered; the facilitator can select and announce them to the group before the next session. The participants as well might select a question(s) they themselves wish to discuss within the group

Some questions are more difficult; below are answers that might be found useful for the facilitator in guiding the group:

Introduction - The Situation and the Problem

Chapter I - Called to True Love

Question 6 - answer: self sacrifice

Question 8 - answer: raised to a supernatural level and made sacred, holy

Chapter II - True Love and Chastity

Question 4 - answer: paragraph 22

Chapter III - In the Light of Vocation

1. The Vocation to Marriage

Question 5 - answer: paragraph 29

2. The Vocation to Virginity and Celibacy

Question 2 - answer: generosity, responsibility and peaceful trust

Question 3 - answer: self giving

Chapter IV - Father and Mother as Educators

Question 1 - answer: special graces, the Holy Spirit, sharing in God's authority

Chapter V - Paths of Formation Within the Family

Question 6 - answer: charity love and respect for others; other virtues described in paragraph 55

Chapter VI - Learning Stages

Question 3 - answer: no sexual details instruction, rather application of moral principles and virtue

Question 8 - answer: **a** our bodies are sacred/holy; **b** reproofs based on negativity

Question 12 - answer: **a** with delicacy yet clearly, at the appropriate time, neither too early nor late; **b** individual/personalized; moral dimension according to God's plan; education for love in its broadest context relating to God and other persons.

Children's Principal Stages of Development

The Years of Innocence

Puberty

Question 5 - answer: **a** to correct hedonistic or materialistic tendencies; **b** because together in marriage they become co-creators with God of another human being with an immortal soul

Question 7 - answer: paragraph 94 - present God's commandments as a way of life, and aid in the formation of a right conscience. Also, it is very important for the adolescent not to separate the commandments from their relationship with a rich interior life, free from selfishness. This helps develop maturity and autonomy.

Question 9 - answer: **a** speak to the child where you want them to be; **b** uplifts it to a transcendent and mysterious reality that combats the trivialization of sex

Adolescence in One's Plan in Life

Question 3 - answer: regular family practice of Sacrament of Reconciliation, Mass...prayer, devotion to Mary and St. Joseph.

Question 7 - answer: reduces capacity to love, objectification of other persons, end goal of sex is personal pleasure over self-giving, disregard for human life seen as an interference, trivialization of sex.

Towards Adulthood

Chapter VII - Practical Guidelines

Four Working Principles and their Particular Norms

Particular Methods

Methods and Ideologies to Avoid

Inculturation and Education For Love

Chapter VIII - Conclusion

Question 2 - answer: inculcate the principles in TMHS and be of one mind and heart with the parents.

Question 4 - answer: doctrine, timing, content, method