

CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE

Rev. Edgar Schmiedeler, O. S. B.



The Catholic Action Series of Textbooks for Religious Discussion Clubs

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A Study of the Sacrament of Matrimony and of Christian Family Life by REV. EDGAR SCHMIEDELER, O.S.B., Ph.D., LL.D., St. Benedict's Abbey, Atchison, Kansas, former Director of the Family Life Bureau of the National Catholic Welfare Conference, Washington, D. C. Arranged for use of Religious Discussion Clubs by Rt. Rev. Msgr. Leon A. McNeill, M. A., former Director of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Diocese of Wichita.

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To

Mrs. Catherine Bartholome, St. Cloud, Minnesota, beloved by millions as the "First Catholic Mother of the Year," whose distinguished son, the Most Reverend Peter W. Bartholome, D.D., is Bishop of St. Cloud and Episcopal Moderator of the Family Life Bureau, N.C.W.C.

Nihil Obstat

REV. STANISLAS ESSER

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INTRODUCTION

CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE, by Rev. Edgar Schmiedeler, O.S.B., presents a series of brief instructions on the sacrament of Matrimony and Christian family life. It is intended for young people who look forward to marriage, and for married people who wish to obtain a better understanding, according to the mind of the Church, of the holy state of life which they have embraced.

The author has well been named the "father of the Family Movement in the United States." He was appointed first Director of the N.C.W.C. Family Life Bureau in 1931, and rendered twenty-five years of distinguished service in that capacity until his resignation in February of 1956. Father Schmiedeler founded the National Catholic Conference on Family Life, wrote a number of authoritative books and pamphlets on problems of marriage and the family, served as editor of several magazines, and gave countless lectures, addresses, conferences, and retreats on subjects related to Christian family life in all parts of the United States and abroad. The publishers consider it a distinct privilege to issue this booklet, which summarizes, as it were, the thinking and experience of his long and fruitful apostolate.

The text of *Christian Marriage* is divided into sixteen chapters, sufficient for two eight-week semesters of discussion club activity. Each chapter is subdivided into convenient sections for reading and study, is implemented with numerous discussion aids, and is followed by suggestions for devotional and apostolic practices. In subject matter, arrangement, and format, the booklet conforms in every respect to standards for discussion club texts established by the National Center of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine.

With the publication of *Christian Marriage* the Catholic Bookshop, Inc., begins a new series of textbooks for religious discussion clubs. Plans call for the preparation of additional textbooks on Christian Apologetics, Holy Scripture, the Spiritual Life, and other suitable subjects within the next few years. Previous units in the Catholic Action Series have been used widely throughout the United States and Canada during the past quarter century. The cordial reception which they have received engenders the hope that units in the *Second Series* will also

render significant service to the many thousands of lay people who wish to become enlightened and articulate leaders in Catholic Action.

Grateful acknowledgement is made to His Excellency, Most Reverend Mark K. Carroll, S.T.D., Bishop of Wichita, for the official sanction which he has given to the publication of these textbooks; to the author, Father Schmiedeler, for favoring us with a treatise on the timely and important subject to which he has devoted so many years of his life; and to Rev. Stanislas Esser, Censor Librorum of the Diocese of Wichita, for critical reading of the manuscript.

We place this booklet under the patronage of St. Joseph, Spouse of the Immaculate Mother of God, Foster Father of the Child Jesus, and Patron of the Universal Church, whose feast we celebrate today. May he obtain for all who study this textbook the grace to model their lives after the example given to the world by the Holy Family in their humble home at Nazareth.

RT. REV. MSGR. LEON A. McNEILL, M.A.

Wichita, Kansas
March 19, 1956
Feast of St. Joseph

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THE RELIGIOUS DISCUSSION CLUB

A religious discussion club is a group of from six to twelve persons who meet weekly to study and discuss a religious subject, in order to gain a better understanding of their religion, to develop a facility in presenting the teachings of the Church to others, and to put religious truths into practice in daily living.

ORGANIZATION

1. A religious discussion club is ideally made up of a leader, a secretary, and some four to ten additional members.
2. A religious discussion club should always be under the guidance of a priest, who will be its spiritual director.
3. A suitable textbook should be selected for the club, preferably one which conforms to established CCD standards for discussion club texts. Each member should purchase a copy of the textbook and bring it with him to the meetings of the group.

DUTIES OF OFFICERS

1. The spiritual director encourages the members in their study, shows his interest by attending meetings occasionally, provides answers to questions referred to him by the secretary, and directs the members in works of the lay apostolate which develop out of the discussion.
2. The leader, who is also a learner, asks the members in turn to read passages of the text aloud while the others follow silently; he then guides the discussion with the help of the aids given in the textbook. Members should be encouraged to ask additional questions, but discussion should be limited to topics included in the lesson.
3. The secretary calls the roll, keeps a brief record of each meeting, and reduces to writing questions that cannot be answered within the group. The secretary submits these questions to the spiritual director and reports on his responses at the next meeting of the club.

MEETINGS

1. Eight weekly meetings during the fall term and again during the spring term will be sufficient to cover the material in this textbook, which is divided into sixteen brief chapters.
2. Meetings are held wherever it is convenient for the members to assemble. Experience has shown that the discussion club will be more appealing and successful if meetings are held in the homes of the members.
3. Each meeting should last not more than an hour or, at most, an hour and a half, and informality should at all times mark the procedure of the club.
4. The Order of Meetings and the opening Prayer to the Holy Spirit will be found on the following page.
5. Emphasis should be placed on putting into immediate practice the truths presented in the text, and members should be encouraged to adopt the practices suggested at the end of each chapter.
6. The members of the group should establish a policy in regard to serving refreshments or including other social activities in the program. The question should be considered from every angle before a definite policy

is established, but in no case should the social element be allowed to interfere with the more serious work of the club.

7. At the close of the season, it is well to arrange a Day of Recollection for all discussion-club participants. Discussion groups of a parish or of several parishes may also wish to hold a joint meeting at which a pageant, tableau, play, lecture, or other suitable program may be presented.

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS

1. The members may wish to choose a patron saint and an appropriate Christian name for the discussion club.
2. Non-Catholics who are willing to learn with their Catholic neighbors may gain and contribute much in religious discussion. Sometimes they are able to inspire them with a new appreciation of the beauty and simplicity of Catholic doctrine.
3. Books, magazine and newspaper articles, pictures and other illustrative materials which pertain to the subject of discussion should be brought to the attention of the club.
4. The books and pamphlets included in the reference list at the back of this textbook are recommended to those who wish to do further reading on the subject of Christian marriage.
5. The following pamphlets are especially recommended to those who are responsible for organizing and directing religious discussion clubs: *The Religious Discussion Club*; *Instructions for Religious Discussion Club Leaders*; and *Suggested Preparatory Course for Discussion Club Leaders*. They are available from Confraternity Publications, 508 Marshall St., Paterson, N. J.

ORDER OF MEETINGS

1. Open with prayer.
2. Roll call.
3. Brief review of previous meeting by secretary.
4. Report by secretary of replies to difficulties referred to the spiritual director.
5. Reading and discussion of current assignment.
6. Assignment for the next meeting.
7. Announcement of time and place of next meeting.
8. Adjournment, with prayer.

PRAYER TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of the faithful and enkindle in them the fire of Thy love.

- V. Send forth Thy Spirit and they shall be created.
R. And Thou shall renew the face of the earth.

Let us pray

O God, who didst instruct the hearts of the faithful by the light of the Holy Spirit, grant us in the same Spirit to be truly wise, and ever to rejoice in His consolation. Through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

(Indulgence of five years. Plenary indulgence, under the usual conditions, if the prayer has been recited daily for a month. S. P. Ap., Dec. 22, 1932.)

I

CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE

a Sacrament

A God-given mark of human marriage that has in no small measure been lost sight of in our day is its sanctity. It is well to recall this property and to impress it anew upon our minds. Even natural marriage, as God constituted it, is sacred. But Christian marriage is far more sacred. It is one of the seven sacraments of the Church.

Which property of human marriage should we impress anew upon our minds? Why is Christian marriage far more sacred than natural marriage?

MARRIAGE AN HONORABLE INSTITUTION. The view that marriage is an honorable and lawful institution has always been vigorously upheld by the Church against those who have denied it. In doing so, she recognized such obvious facts as the following: that marriage is based on the diversity of sexes established by the Creator Himself; that its primary purpose is the very praiseworthy one of preserving the human race by the procreation and education of offspring; and that it is normally a manifestation of the noblest emotion of the human heart, namely, love. Hence she has relentlessly condemned the erroneous views of the Manicheans and Albigensians, who maintained that the marriage state is ignoble and even sinful.

The latter two groups arrived at their false conclusion by assuming that everything corporeal, including the human body, was produced by the powers of darkness, and as a result is intrinsically evil. The Church, on the contrary, declared that all things in the visible universe have been created by God, and, consequently, that the use of the sexual faculties for the purpose intended by Him could not be degrading and sinful so long as the manner in which they were employed was in harmony with the plans of the Almighty.

What view of marriage has always been upheld by the Church? In doing so, which are some of the obvious facts that the Church has recognized? State the erroneous view maintained by the Manicheans and Albigensians. How did they arrive at their false conclusion? Under what condition is the use of the sexual faculties noble and lawful?

MARRIAGE HAS A NATURAL SANCTITY. But marriage is even more than just an honorable and lawful institution. It is a sacred institution. And it is that even as a natural institution. Its very purpose suggests the fact. Through marriage man and woman cooperate with the Almighty in bringing into existence and in training human beings destined for an eternity of happiness in heaven.

Holy Writ shows us God's special interest in the marriage state. Thus, the Book of Genesis tells us that, when God created the first man and woman, He blessed them, not merely as individuals but also as husband and wife.¹ Furthermore, in the Old Law He promulgated an elaborate code of marriage laws for the Chosen People.² Even primitive people who have had no contact with Christianity look upon marriage as something sacred. Christ, while upon this earth, gave a striking sanction to marriage by attending the wedding feast at Cana and there working His first miracle.

How does the very purpose of marriage suggest that it is sacred even as a natural institution? Mention two passages from the Old Testament which show us God's special interest in the marriage state. In what way did Christ give a striking sanction to marriage?

MARRIAGE UNDER CHRISTIANITY A SACRAMENT. Christ did more than give sanction to marriage by attending the nuptials at Cana. He elevated it to the great dignity of a sacrament, a grace-giving institution. Such has always been the view of the Church. Theologians do not agree on what particular occasion Christ instituted the sacrament, but they do agree on the fact. For instance, they cite the passage from St. Paul's *Epistle to the Ephesians* in which he says that the union of husband and wife in Christian marriage is a symbol of the union of Christ with His Sacred Spouse, the Church.³

The implication here is that just as the union of Our Blessed Redeemer with the Church assures an unending source of supernatural blessings for mankind, so the matrimonial contract is productive of divine graces for husband and wife. The early writers of the Church extol the sanctifying power of Christian marriage, and do not hesitate to compare it, as a means of grace, with the sacraments of Baptism and Holy Orders. That marriage is a sacrament is, of course, a defined doctrine of the Church.

Like all other sacraments, that of Matrimony requires Baptism as a prerequisite for its valid reception. The unbaptized cannot receive a sacrament. Their marriage, while an honorable and sacred contract, is not a sacrament.

Besides giving sanction to marriage at Cana, what else did Christ do? To what does St. Paul compare the union of husband and wife in Christian

1. Genesis 1, 28.

2. Leviticus 18.

3. Ephesians 5, 22-33.

marriage? What is the implication here? What did the early writers of the Church have to say about Christian marriage? What is a prerequisite for the valid reception of the sacrament of Matrimony?

THE GRACES OF THE SACRAMENT. The sacrament of Matrimony, like other sacraments of the living, increases in the spouses the spiritual life of the soul that is sanctifying grace, that spiritual life of the soul that we call a participation of the divinity. Furthermore, it gives them the title to actual graces that assist them in meeting the obligations they assume in their lifelong union. They have only to cooperate with that grace.

In other words, just as the sacrament of Holy Orders, for instance, gives those who receive it a title to special graces to assist them in fulfilling the duties of their priestly state of life, so the sacrament of Matrimony gives a title to special graces to the couple who receive it, to help them to fulfill the duties of their state of life. Thus, it provides that Christian spouses are not left alone and unaided in facing the inevitable difficulties that will come their way, but that they have an ever-present source of help and strength in the graces of the sacrament.

What graces are given by the sacrament of Matrimony? Compare the sacramental grace of Matrimony with that of Holy Orders.

A NEVER-ENDING WELLSPRING OF HOLINESS. Here, then, is the first great central fact regarding Christian marriage: it is a sacrament, a grace-giving institution. In view of the circumstances of the times, it is most important that individuals impress that upon themselves anew. They must vigorously reject the view of those who think it merely a natural contract or agreement, or just a formality required by Church or State authorities before a man and woman can live together as husband and wife.

So, too, must they reject the view of those who consider it something, so to speak, on the borderline of Christianity — something just tolerated by the Church. They must accept it for all that it is, a sacred thing, a supernatural thing. They must recognize it as a union of two personalities throbbing with the supernatural Christ-life of grace, as a never-ending wellspring of holiness that sanctifies husband and wife in their life together. Only when they do that can they appreciate the sublime dignity and the excellence of Christian marriage.

What, then, is the first great central fact regarding Christian marriage? What views in regard to marriage must be rejected? How alone can we appreciate the sublime dignity and excellence of Christian marriage?

SUGGESTED PRACTICES

1. Read the passages from Holy Scripture to which reference has been made in Chapter I.
2. Read Pope Pius XI's *Encyclical on Christian Marriage* (Casti Connubii). The following excerpts from this great papal pronouncement will re-emphasize the doctrine presented in this chapter.

Excerpts from the Encyclical on Christian Marriage

How great is the dignity of chaste wedlock, Venerable Brethren, may be judged best from this that Christ Our Lord, Son of the Eternal Father,

having assumed the nature of fallen man, not only, with His loving desire of compassing the Redemption of our race, ordained it in an especial manner as the principle and foundation of domestic society and therefore of all human intercourse, but also raised it to the rank of a truly and great sacrament of the New Law, restored it to the original purity of its divine institution, and accordingly entrusted all its discipline and care to His Spouse, the Church.

. . . let it be repeated as an immutable and inviolable fundamental doctrine that Matrimony was not instituted or restored by man but by God; not by man were the laws made to strengthen and confirm and elevate it but by God, the Author of nature, and by Christ Our Lord by whom nature was redeemed, and hence these laws cannot be subject to any human decrees or to any contrary pact even of the spouses themselves.

Yet, although Matrimony is of its very nature of divine institution, the human will, too, enters into it and performs a most noble part. For each individual marriage, inasmuch as it is a conjugal union of a particular man and woman, arises only from the free consent of each of the spouses; and this free act of the will, by which each party hands over and accepts those rights proper to the state of marriage, is so necessary to constitute true marriage that it cannot be supplied by any human power.

Therefore the sacred partnership of true marriage is constituted both by the will of God and the will of man. From God come the very institution of marriage, the ends for which it was instituted, the laws that govern it, the blessings that flow from it; while man, through generous surrender of his own person made to another for the whole span of life, becomes, with the help and cooperation of God, the author of each particular marriage, with the duties and blessings annexed thereto from divine institution.

Christ the Lord, the Institutor and Perfecter of the holy sacraments, by raising the Matrimony of His faithful to the dignity of a true sacrament of the New Law, made it a sign and source of that particular internal grace by which "it perfects natural love, it confirms an indissoluble union, and sanctifies both man and wife."

These parties, let it be noted, not fettered but adorned by the golden bond of the sacrament, not hampered but assisted, should strive with all their might to the end that their wedlock, not only through the power and symbolism of the sacrament, but also through their spirit and manner of life, may be and remain always the living image of that most fruitful union of Christ with the Church, which is to be venerated as the sacred token of most perfect love.

II

THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY

a Replica of the Mystical Body of Christ

In speaking in the foregoing of the fact that marriage is a sacrament, reference was made to the inspiring truth taught us by St. Paul, namely, that the union of husband and wife in Christian marriage is a symbol, or representation, of the sacred union of Christ with His Spouse, the Church. This teaching implies, in brief, that the Christian family, which is based on Christian marriage, is in a sense the Mystical Body of Christ in miniature. In other words, it means that the Christian family is a replica, or copy, in miniature of the Church of God.

What inspiring truth in regard to Christian marriage is taught us by St. Paul? What does this teaching imply?

BASIS FOR THIS TEACHING. The basis for this sublime teaching, which lends such great dignity to Christian marriage and the family, is found in the Epistle of St. Paul to the Ephesians. It is in the fifth chapter of that letter that the Apostle of the Gentiles notes that the union of husband and wife in Christian marriage is a representation of the sacred union of Christ with the Church. It is there that he infers that the latter sacred union — that, namely, of Christ with His Church — should be the model for the former, or the union of the two spouses in Christian marriage.

The pertinent words of the text have been quoted time without number. The following are some of them: "Let wives be subject to their husbands as to the Lord; because a husband is head of the wife, just as Christ is head of the Church." "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the Church, and delivered Himself up for her, that He might sanctify her."

Where do we find the basis for St. Paul's sublime teaching in regard to Christian marriage and the family? Of what is the union of husband

and wife in Christian marriage a representation? Quote some pertinent passages from St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians.

MINIATURE REPLICA OF THE MYSTICAL BODY OF CHRIST. In its entirety, this particular chapter of St. Paul to the Ephesians implies that the Christian family, based on Christian marriage, is, as already noted, a miniature replica of the Mystical Body of Christ, the Church. That is, if we visualize the family as the Church in miniature, we see that the husband and father is the head of the body, representing Christ there; that the wife and mother is the body itself, representing the Church; and that the children are the members of the body, representing the faithful.

This is, of course, truly sublime doctrine, lending great dignity to Christian marriage. But it must also be said to be mysterious doctrine. In fact, St. Paul explicitly states that he is speaking of a great mystery. But the practical thing to note is, that there is not question of a mere figure of speech or of a figment of the imagination. To the contrary, there is question of an eternal truth, of a belief, or mystery, of Christianity.

Explain how the Christian family is a miniature replica of the Mystical Body of Christ, the Church. Discuss St. Paul's teaching as "sublime but mysterious doctrine." What is the practical thing to note here?

IMPLICATIONS OF THE TEACHING. But, even though there is question of a mystery, some of the implications of this teaching of St. Paul are quite clear. Thus, one thing that is obviously implied is that the bond that unites Christ and the Church — His Spouse, as she is called — should be mirrored in the bond that unites husband and wife in Christian marriage. And certainly the former is an unbreakable bond. There cannot be even a thought of a separation or divorce between Christ and His Church.

So, too, does it imply that the attributes, or properties, that distinguish the union of Christ and the Church are reflected in the attributes, or properties, that characterize the union of husband and wife in marriage. And most assuredly one of these properties is unity. There is to be one husband and one wife, as there is one fold and one Shepherd, one Church and one Christ.

What relation does the bond that unites Christ and His Church have to the bond that unites husband and wife in Christian marriage? What does St. Paul's teaching imply in regard to the permanency of the bond? in regard to the unity of Christian marriage?

THE FAMILY RELATIONSHIP OF LOVE. A further implication that flows logically from this teaching of St. Paul is that the relationship between members of a Christian family must be most ideal. Certainly this relationship is put on the highest plane by St. Paul when he speaks of love. Thus he points out that the guide or measuring rod of the husband's love for his wife is to be the love which Christ has for His Church. Since that is the case, it follows that the love of the wife for the husband, in turn, is to be like the love of the Church for Christ. It is quite impossible to conceive of any higher love.

By the same token, one must conclude that the children are to look up to their father and mother with something of that same reverent love and

respect that they bear Christ and His Church, who are represented, respectively, by the father and the mother.

What further implication flows logically from St. Paul's teaching? What should be the measuring rod of the husband's love for his wife? of the wife's love for her husband? of the children's love and respect for their parents?

A "HEAVEN-BORN" LOVE, SAYS POPE LEO XIII. Much to the point here are some words of Pope Leo XIII, written in his *Encyclical on Christian Marriage (Arcanum)*. Referring to the love that should exist between Christian spouses, he called it a "heaven-born" love. "Since the husband represents Christ," he wrote, "and since the wife represents the Church, let there always be, both in him who commands and in her who obeys, a heaven-born love guiding them in their respective duties. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the Church."

Naturally, then, any difference that may arise between them should not be settled by show of authority or by fine distinctions between mine and thine, but by a spirit of true Christ-like love. Obviously, too, this heaven-born love of the husband and father and the wife and mother, of which Pope Leo speaks, should extend to the children of the family, for they represent the faithful of the Church.

How did Pope Leo XIII characterize the love that should exist between Christian spouses? In what way should differences between husband and wife be settled? Why should the love of parents extend also to the children of the family?

THE NATURE OF CHRIST'S LOVE FOR THE CHURCH. If one considers the nature of Christ's love for His Spouse, the Church, he finds that it is characterized by two outstanding properties, namely, a spirit of giving and a desire for unity.

Obviously the love of Christ for the Church, for those whom He came to save, implies a spirit of giving. In truth, He died for us. He gave His all for us. He "emptied Himself," as St. Paul says.¹ Greater gift, greater generosity, greater sacrifice could not be imagined, even when God Himself is the Giver and the Lover.

So also was the love of Christ characterized by a longing for unity. He desired unity with His Spouse, the Church; He wanted most intensely a unity among its members and with Himself. He desired a unity that was modeled after that of the Triune God Himself. "Holy Father, keep in Thy name those whom Thou hast given Me, that they may be one even as We are. . . . Yet not for these only do I pray, but for those also who through their word are to believe in Me, that all may be one, even as Thou, Father, in Me and I in Thee; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me."² The unity that is a mark of Christ's love for His Church is found, of course, in the unity of the Church, His Mystical Body.

Name two outstanding properties which characterize Christ's love for

1. Philippians, 2, 7.

2. John 17, 11; 20-21.

His Spouse, the Church. Discuss the spirit of giving which is implied by the love of Christ for the Church. Describe the unity which is a mark of Christ's love for His Church.

MODEL FOR HUSBAND AND WIFE IN CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE. A love, then, characterized by giving, even to the last drop of His blood, and a love distinguished by a longing for unity, a longing finding realization in the oneness of members in a single Mystical Body, that is the love of Christ for His Spouse, the Church. And that, according to St. Paul, is the model for husband and wife in Christian marriage. It is a love that sacrifices gladly, always giving cheerfully and wholeheartedly. It is a love that finds its joy in unity, a unity of heart and soul as well as of body, a unity by which husband and wife are no longer two apart, but two in one, a unity that will tolerate no separation until death intervenes to part them.

How may we describe the love of Christ for His Church which is the model for husband and wife in Christian marriage? Explain how the true love of husband and wife finds expression in their life together.

SUGGESTED PRACTICES

1. Try to obtain a clear understanding of what is meant by the term "Mystical Body of Christ." (Cf. Baltimore Catechism No. 2 or No. 3, question 169.)
2. If you are married or planning to marry, try sincerely to make the love between you and your spouse a Christ-like love, characterized by "a spirit of giving and a desire for unity."

III

THE PRIESTLY ASPECTS OF PARENTHOOD

One of the things that most forcefully shows the great dignity of Christian fatherhood and motherhood is the fact of their priesthood. Husband and wife, father and mother, have in a very real sense priestly functions to perform in the family circle. This should explain why the Church holds Christian parenthood in such high regard. It should induce parents to have a profound respect for their office.

Why does the Church hold Christian parenthood in such high regard? What effect should this have on the attitude of parents toward their office?

BASES FOR THIS TEACHING. There are a number of bases for the teaching that Christian parenthood is a priestly office. Thus there is the fact, for instance, that the two parties to the marriage contract themselves administer the sacrament. That is really to say that they confer the grace of the sacrament on each other. Obviously, to confer grace is to perform what is normally a priestly function.

Again, there is the fact that the Christian home is a church in miniature. That is to say, religious rituals, devotional exercises — priestly functions, in a word — should be in place within its walls. As a matter of fact, exemplary Christian homes have traditionally been characterized by religious devotions and rituals.

Who are the ministers of grace in the sacrament of Matrimony? What do we mean when we say that the Christian home is a church in miniature?

PARENTS HAVE PRIESTLY FUNCTIONS TO PERFORM. That, specifically, the husband and father has priestly functions to perform in

the home should appear obvious from the fact that in the Christian family, which is, as already noted, a replica of the Mystical Body of Christ, the Church, he represents Christ as the head of the home. Nor should the fact be overlooked in this connection that, as St. Paul teaches, the mother represents Holy Mother Church. Hence, she, too, must logically be expected to have priestly functions to perform. One cannot conceive of a church without a priesthood and priestly functions.

Why is it obvious that the husband and father has priestly functions to perform in the home? Whom does the mother represent in the Christian family, and what does this imply?

THE FATHER'S MISSION INVOLVES CARE OF SOULS. Then, too, this teaching of the priesthood of Christian parenthood is also indicated elsewhere in the Scriptures, and, in addition, in the Church's liturgy and in tradition. In the last-mentioned connection, the following incident from the life of St. Augustine may well be recalled. Speaking one day to a group of fathers in his own diocese, he addressed them with the following striking salutation: "My dear fellow bishops." Then he went on to say to them, "Each and every one of you has in the home the bishop's office, to see to it that neither his wife nor his son nor his daughter nor even his servant fall away from truth. For they are bought with a great price."

The obvious meaning of the words is, that it is a duty of the head of the family to watch over the spiritual welfare of its members. In other words, it means that the father has a mission that involves the care of souls. In fact, according to St. Augustine's words, much as the bishop is accountable before God for his diocesan flock, so is the father accountable for the spiritual welfare of his little sheepfold. That is to say, he is pastor of the flock; he has priestly duties to perform toward its members.

Where else do we find indications of the priesthood of Christian parents? What did St. Augustine say on one occasion to a group of fathers in his diocese? Explain the meaning of St. Augustine's words.

WHAT THE PRIESTLY PARENTAL OFFICE IMPLIES. To see what is implied by the priestly office of the father in the home, one should recall the office of Christ. For the father represents Him as the head of that Mystical Body in miniature, the home. Now Christ was called by the Father to be a Priest. He was to have the care of souls. In the fulfillment of that office, as He Himself tells us, all power was given Him in heaven and on earth. That power He shared in varying degrees with His followers before leaving this earth to return to His Father.

To the Holy Father, His Vicar and the head of His "family" on earth, He gave powers that He gave to none other. Then in lesser measure He gave powers to bishops and priests. The basis for it is the sacrament of Holy Orders. Then, too, He gave some to the generality of the faithful, the "royal priesthood," as St. Peter called them.¹ The basis for this is the consecration given them through the sacrament of Baptism, and normally also the sacrament of Confirmation. But some of the members of this lay priesthood receive still another consecration. They are husbands and wives, those who have received the sacrament of Matrimony.

1. I Peter 2, 9.

Discuss the office of Christ as Priest. What powers did He give to the Holy Father? What is the basis for the powers which He gave to bishops and priests? to the general body of the faithful? to husbands and wives?

PARENTS AS EDUCATORS OF THEIR CHILDREN. Pope Pius XII has clearly indicated, in great part at least, in his *Encyclical on the Mystical Body* what the priestly office of Christian parents consists in. He there points out, namely, that Matrimony implies a solemn consecration of the married partners that dedicates them to a *joint teaching office* in the Church, the Mystical Body of Christ. "Through Matrimony," he says, "in which the contracting parties are ministers of grace to one another, provision is made for the duly regulated increase of the Christian society, and what is of greater importance, for the correct religious instruction of children, without which the Mystical Body would be in grave danger."

These words indicate with unquestionable clarity one of the main priestly offices of Christian parents, the teaching, or instructing, of their children in their religion. The parents are the little ones' first teachers. And of the utmost importance is the teaching of the truths of religion, since the very end and purpose of their coming into this world is the attainment of ultimate union with God. Obviously this is a most noble task. It actually implies on their part, as the *Encyclical on the Mystical Body* puts it, the safeguarding of Holy Mother Church. Little wonder, therefore, that it has been said that, for parents to fulfill this teaching office toward their children, is to participate in the lay priesthood "in its most glorious form."

What did Pope Pius XII have to say, in his Encyclical on the Mystical Body, about the priestly office of Christian parents? Why is it of the utmost importance for parents to teach religion to their children?

PARENTS AS MEDIATORS WITH GOD. Teaching, however, is not the only priestly office that parents have as representatives, respectively, of Christ and of the Church. They must also be mediators for their children with God. That is, they must intercede for them with the Almighty, even as Christ, the great High Priest, was Mediator for men.

How important this priestly office is may well be seen from the example of St. Monica. This saintly woman was the mother of St. Augustine. The latter had strayed far from the path of virtue in his younger years. However, the saintly Monica never ceased to pray for him, and with the ultimate result that has been the inspiration of millions down through the centuries. Augustine not only gave up his sinful ways, but in time became a great bishop and eventually an outstanding saint of the Church. Unquestionably great numbers of other children have been kept to the path of virtue, or brought back to it, through the mediation of a holy father and mother.

What is the duty of parents as mediators for their children with God? How did St. Monica fulfill this duty in regard to her son, St. Augustine, and with what results?

PARENTS IN THE PRIESTLY ROLE OF SANCTIFIERS. Still another office typified in Christ the Priest is that of sanctifier. This also comes within the scope of the priestly office of parenthood. To be sure,

fathers and mothers normally cannot transmit supernatural life to their children. But they have the obligation of seeing to it that supernatural life is transmitted to them. That is, it is for them to bring their children to Christ, in the person of the priest, that through Baptism they may be given supernatural life; in other words, that they may be made children of God and heirs to His Kingdom.

Furthermore, they can unquestionably help their children much, as they can also help each other, in working out their eternal salvation, after they have been made children of God through Baptism. That follows logically from the fact that, under the sacrament of Matrimony, Christian husbands and wives live constantly in a sacramental state, and, as a result, have a constant title to the graces of the sacrament, both for the spiritual good of each other and of the children committed to their care.

How do parents see to it that supernatural life is transmitted to their children? What special graces are available for parents in helping each other and their children to work out their eternal salvation?

RE-EMPHASIZING THE PRIESTLY NATURE OF CHRISTIAN PARENTHOOD. Few things could do more for family life today than to re-emphasize the priestly nature of Christian parenthood. To do so would accomplish much toward impressing on the fathers and mothers of the day their great dignity and the profound holiness that must be expected of them as a result of it. Likewise would it do much toward inducing young potential parents to prepare themselves zealously to be truly worthy of the same high and dignified office in the years ahead.

What effect will a re-emphasis on the priestly nature of Christian parenthood have on fathers and mothers? on young potential parents?

SUGGESTED PRACTICES

1. If you are married, pray for the grace to realize and fulfill your "priestly" office in the home.
2. If you have children, be zealous for their spiritual welfare, give them religious instruction and moral training, edify them by your good example, pray for them, and encourage them in the practice of their religion.

IV

THE PRIMARY PURPOSE OF MARRIAGE

The dignity of Christian marriage also shows forth from its primary purpose. That purpose is the child. As the encyclical of Pope Pius XI concisely puts it, "In marriage the child holds first place." It is because of the child that God has given us the institution of marriage.

What did Pope Pius XI say about the place of the child in marriage? Why did God give us the institution of marriage?

GOD'S HELPERS AND AGENTS. An all-wise and omnipotent God could, of course, have propagated the human race in any of a number of different ways. For instance, He could have created all mankind directly, as He did the first man and woman. But actually He did not. He chose this one particular way. He instituted marriage.

God made man and woman His helpers in begetting the children of the race. He made them, as the *Encyclical on Christian Marriage* puts it, "ministers, as it were, of the Divine Omnipotence." In fact, he did more. He also made them His agents in the training of the children of the race, in their training for this life and the next, for time and eternity. It should be needless to add that all this lends great dignity, high excellence, to Christian marriage.

How did God choose to propagate the human race? Could He have done it in any other way? Explain how parents are God's helpers and agents in marriage.

THE CHILD AND HIS PURPOSES. It should help still further to show the high excellence of Christian marriage from the viewpoint of the child, to consider for a moment what he is, what his intrinsic dignity is,

and what his sublime end consists in. Regarding the first, we find that the child is a creature far above all other visible creatures, "little less than the angels," as we read in the Book of Psalms.¹ He is a being created according to the very image and likeness of God. As to his end, or purpose, he is born, of course, for an earthly, or natural, community, but, much more, he is born for a supernatural community. He is born to be a member of Christ's Church on earth. He is born to be a fellow-citizen of the saints, a member of God's household. He is born for eventual eternal union with God Himself.

Truly remarkable, then, is the fruit of marriage, children born by the omnipotent power of God through the cooperation of those bound in holy wedlock. Sublime indeed is the dignity of marriage as seen in the child, the primary purpose for which God established it.

What is the child? For what end is he born? To what conclusion does this lead in regard to the dignity of marriage?

THE DIGNITY OF CHRISTIAN PARENTHOOD. From the dignity of the child naturally follows the dignity of parenthood, of fatherhood and motherhood. With regard to the former, it is recorded in Holy Writ that all fatherhood is of God. As St. Paul reminds us in his *Epistle to the Ephesians*, all fatherhood in heaven and on earth receives its name from the Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ, that is, from God. The obvious meaning of the words is that all honor, all dignity, all power attaching to earthly fatherhood are a reflection of the Divine Fatherhood, of the Fatherhood of God.

In view of this it can hardly surprise us that God, in a special commandment of the Decalogue, ordered mankind to honor their fathers and mothers, both their parents. "Honor your father and your mother, that you may have a long life in the land which the Lord, your God, is giving you."²

In what way does Holy Writ emphasize the dignity of fatherhood? What obligation does the Fourth Commandment of God impose upon children?

THE BASIS OF THE FATHER'S DIGNITY. It should be well to note that the basis of the father's dignity, and therefore of the respect that is owed him, is not to be found in his personality, or in the particular qualities that characterize him as an individual. Rather it is found in his office, or position, as father.

We honor him, therefore, for such reasons as the following: because, under God, he represents authority in the home, an authority which, like all other authority, is a reflection of the authority of God; because every father, under God, is the divinely appointed head of the home; and again, because the father, under Christianity, represents Christ in the home. These are not things that depend on the father's particular personality. They are things that are a part of the very office of parenthood.

What is the basis of the father's dignity? Give some of the reasons why the father of the family is honored.

1. Psalm 8, 6.

2. Exodus 20, 12.

THE FATHER'S DIGNITY ENHANCED UNDER CHRISTIANITY.

The dignity of the father, and therefore the respect due him, is founded in nature itself. Actually the Fourth Commandment, "Honor thy father and thy mother," is but an expression in words of a law already written in the hearts of men by the God of nature. Hence it cannot be surprising that even pagan people who maintained a respect for the natural virtues, had a high regard for fatherhood.

However, under Christianity, the dignity of fatherhood and respect for the paternal office were greatly enhanced. One reason for his great dignity has already been noted. It is the fact that, under Christianity, he represents Christ in the home. That alone gives him the sublimest dignity.

In what is the dignity of the father founded? What effect has Christianity had on the dignity of fatherhood and respect for the paternal office?

THE CHURCH INCULCATES RESPECT FOR FATHERHOOD.

As a matter of fact, the Church has always inculcated a profound respect for paternity. She glories, as it were, in applying the revered title of father as a special mark of distinction. Thus, her own head — the head of Christ's "family" on earth, to use the expression of St. Paul — is esteemed and revered by all her children under the title of the "Holy Father." Again, the teachers and writers of the Church of the early years of Christianity are called by her the "Apostolic Fathers." A title of particular distinction conferred by her at times is that of "Father of the Church." Her bishops and priests are considered spiritual fathers by the faithful and are respectfully addressed as "Father" by them.

In harmony with this same spirit, religious orders of men in the Church — spiritual families we may well call them — almost universally apply to their superiors, or heads, the title "Father." Thus, they use the terms: "Father Rector," "Father Guardian," "Father Provincial," "Father Prior," "Father Abbot."

Such are some of the ways in which the Church has gloried in the past, and glories today, in applying the revered title of father as a special mark of distinction. She has a profound respect for fatherhood.

Discuss the use of the title of father as a special mark of distinction in the Church. Which are some of the titles that religious orders of men in the Church apply to their superiors?

THE DIGNITY OF CHRISTIAN MOTHERHOOD.

Respect for motherhood, like respect for fatherhood, is founded in nature. The Fourth Commandment of God applies equally to both parents. Nevertheless, the history of mankind shows a rather considerable lack of respect for motherhood, as well as for womankind in general, among pagan peoples. But it also shows a noteworthy change in mankind's attitude toward woman with the coming of Christ upon this earth.

The story of that change is one of the most thrilling and consoling ones in the annals of mankind. Its details are known to any well-instructed Catholic. In brief, it tells how Christ, the God-man, when coming upon this earth to redeem fallen mankind, chose for His Mother a woman whom He made the greatest and the grandest of His creatures in heaven and on earth. He, for her sake and in her, raised up womankind generally from

the degradation of paganism. He made her, as wife and mother, the partner and equal of her husband and the heart of the family. He dignified all motherhood, all womanhood, in Mary, the Mother of God.

Thus, Mary appeared to man as a person of beauty and dignity indescribable. The serene light of her glory falling upon the rest of her sex, transformed them in their own eyes and in the eyes of their brethren. A new concept of womanhood was born upon earth. The sinless Madonna became an object of virtue and the ideal and champion of womanly honor.

In what is respect for motherhood founded? What was the status of motherhood, and of womankind in general, among pagans? How did Christianity bring about a noteworthy change in mankind's attitude toward woman? Discuss Mary, the Mother of God, as the ideal and champion of womanly honor.

THE ORIGIN OF THE CHRISTIAN HOME. It was then that there appeared on this earth that most beautiful creation, the Christian home, the unique sphere of woman that made her, in the capacity of mother, the greatest power for good on earth, second only to the Church of God of which she is the symbol. It was then that Christian woman rocking the cradle in the home, and guiding the faltering steps of the young, became one of the potentates of the world.

Chivalrous man honored that Christian woman. He was uplifted and elevated by her. He gloried in referring to her under the honored titles of wife and mother, of sister and daughter. The results were exceedingly beneficial to man and woman, to the family and to all society.

Describe the position of the mother in the Christian home. What effect has the new dignity of Christian woman had upon man?

SUGGESTED PRACTICES

1. Discuss with one or more of your friends, outside of the discussion group, the great dignity of Christian marriage.
2. Practice great devotion to the Blessed Virgin, and be conscious of the dignity of all motherhood, all womanhood, in Mary, the Mother of God.

V

THE HOME

the Child's Primeval School

The home has always been the child's first and most important school. Other schools have helped the home, but they have not been able to take its place. Other teachers and instructors have assisted the parents in their tasks of child training, but they have not been able fully to substitute for them. The home is the school of schools. The parent is the teacher of teachers. That is how the Author of nature has disposed matters. That is the view that the Church has always upheld.

We have a striking expression of this, for instance, from the pen of the great American Churchman, James Cardinal Gibbons. "The home," he wrote, "is the primeval school. It is the best, the most hallowed, and the most potential of all the academies; and the parent, especially the mother, is the first, the most influential, and the most cherished of all teachers. The education of the child should begin at the mother's knee."

In the education of the child, how do home and parents compare with other schools and teachers? What did Cardinal Gibbons write regarding the home as a school?

ALL-EMBRACING EDUCATION BY GOOD PARENTS. Mention has already been made of the child's religious training. But, profoundly important as that unquestionably is, it does not represent the whole of his education. That education must be all-embracing. It must extend to the physical and mental, the social and emotional, as well as to the religious. It must extend to body and soul, to mind and character, to heart and will. It could be rightly argued, of course, that some phases of education are more important than others. But the fact remains that all are important.

Not all parents are successful educators of their children. That is true

only of good parents, of parents who are truly zealous and who have properly prepared themselves for their tasks. It cannot be assumed, therefore, that a home, by the mere fact that it happens to be a home, will in some mysterious fashion prove itself an effective instrument for the training of children. That is to say, it cannot be assumed that a home will produce satisfactory results in the field of child training irrespective of all efforts or ability on the part of the father and mother who preside over it. It will do that only if the parents are properly prepared for their tasks of child training in the home, and if they faithfully fulfill their duties toward their little ones in this regard.

How extensive should the child's education be? What kind of parents are successful educators of their children? Under what conditions will the home produce satisfactory results in the field of child training?

SPECIAL PARENTAL TRAINING A NEED OF TODAY. Special training for parents — parent education, so-called — has become a necessity today. At all events, when parenthood was less difficult than it is in our time, formal education or specific instruction and guidance from extra-domestic sources as a preparation for child-training tasks was far less essential. The home-school was reasonably successful without it.

Parental love, native intelligence, and Christian understanding, coupled with reasonably favorable environmental circumstances, enabled many fathers and mothers quite satisfactorily to fulfill their obligations toward their children. Through normal contacts within the confines of the little home world, the children gradually learned the lessons of life that prepared them for the tasks of founding their own homes and rearing their own families. Step by step they became equipped with the knowledge and practice of homemaking, their training customarily ranging all the way from the physical side of housekeeping to the varied aspects of child training.

In earlier days what enabled parents quite satisfactorily to fulfill their obligations toward their children? How did children gradually learn the lessons of life in the home?

RESULT OF CHANGED SOCIAL CONDITIONS. But social conditions have changed over more recent decades, and one of the unfortunate results that has followed is seen in the fact that the more formal type of education carried on in the homes of the past has in no small measure broken down. Particularly in our highly complex and constantly changing urban civilization has family life become more involved, and the entire matter of the child's education more difficult. Under the circumstances the parental instinct and traditional customs no longer suffice for his guidance.

Apparently it was this situation that Pope Pius XII had in mind when, in speaking to a group of mothers (and teachers) in 1941, he cautioned them with these words: "It is not enough to be conscious of an obligation and to have the desire to discharge it competently."

Obviously the Holy Father thought by these words to impress upon those whom he was addressing the need for serious preparation on their part for the difficult work of educating the child. Beyond a shadow of a doubt, if parents are to meet their obligation in their field adequately and successfully, it is necessary both that they take the task seriously and that

they devote to the subject of child training the thought and attention and meticulous preparation that it demands.

What impact have changed social conditions had on family life and child education? Quote from the address of Pope Pius XII to a group of mothers and teachers in 1941. What was the Holy Father trying to impress upon his audience?

MUCH NEW INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO PARENTS. In at least one important regard, child training might well be better today than it was in the past. Reference is made to the new knowledge that has been provided in this field. Invaluable new material has come to parents through the social and psychological sciences. Such is the case regarding the causes of behavior in children and regarding the methods of moulding their conduct.

While it is true, of course, that those sciences deal with the natural only, it must not be overlooked that grace works through nature. Hence Catholic parents should eagerly avail themselves of the newer knowledge provided by modern research, but taking care to add to it, and fuse into it, the Catholic spirit and supernatural motives and means. Incidentally, some appreciable advances have also been made in our day in methods of training children in their religion.

No attempt can be made here to go in any detail into the vast field of child training. Nor is there need for that. There is available today an excellent popular literature on it. We mention, in passing, for instance, the following publications of the Family Life Bureau of the National Catholic Welfare Conference, Washington, D. C.: *The Child's World; Parenthood; Childhood Religion; Your Baby's Health; The Child and Problems of Today.*

Discuss one reason why child training might well be better today than in the past. How should parents make use of the new knowledge that is available for them? Mention some of the publications of the Family Life Bureau, N.C.W.C., in the field of child training.

THE STATE'S PLACE IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION. There are many things that parents must keep in mind today in regard to the education of their children. Three of these are singled out here for special mention because of their timeliness.

First of all, the Catholic parent should be informed about the place that the State has in the field of education. At times there are governments that seek to trespass on the rights of parents in this regard. Pope Pius XI expressed the Church's unbending view in the matter when he wrote as follows in his *Encyclical on the Christian Education of Youth*: "The family holds directly from the Creator the mission and hence the right to educate the offspring, a right inalienable because inseparably joined to the strict obligation, a right anterior to any right whatever of civil authority of the State; and therefore inviolable on the part of any power on earth."

Those words go to the heart of the matter of the relation of family and State. They imply, in a nutshell, that the State exists for the family, and not the family for the State. They imply that, although the State may indeed insist on a measure of education for the child that is in harmony with the common good of society, it may not force upon the child a particular

type of education. It is for the parents to decide the particular type of education that is to be given him.

What did Pope Pius XI say about the mission and right of the family to educate the offspring? Discuss the relation of family and State, and their respective rights in the field of education.

FURTHER CAUTIONS FOR PARENTS. Secondly, parents must guard against excessively farming out their children, so to speak, to the numerous public and private agencies that deal with children today. Actually there is more danger in this country today from parents delegating parental tasks too extensively to these agencies than there is from any State encroachment on their rights towards their children's education.

Finally, parents should keep in mind that, for truly effective child training, contact between parent and child is absolutely essential. That is difficult to bring about in our complex urban civilization today. But it becomes quite impossible when both parents work away from home, or otherwise absent themselves from it, leaving the child to the care of baby-sitters or any number of child-caring agencies. The home is the child's primeval school. The parents are his first and irreplaceable teachers.

What caution should parents exercise in regard to the numerous agencies that deal with children today? Discuss the necessity of contact between parent and child for effective child training.

SUGGESTED PRACTICES

1. If you are blessed with children, strive to prepare yourself for the task of teaching them, especially in matters of religion.
2. Fulfill conscientiously your serious duty to give religious instruction and moral training to your children.

VI

THE PROPERTIES OF MARRIAGE

When one considers the high purposes which God proposed for marriage, notably the training of children, one cannot be surprised that He should have assigned to it some very special properties. By a property of marriage is meant a quality that cannot be dissociated from its very concept as God instituted it for mankind. The Almighty gave marriage two such essential qualities, unity and indissolubility.

What is meant by a property of marriage? What two special properties has God assigned to marriage?

UNITY AND INDISSOLUBILITY. By unity in marriage is meant monogamy, or the fact that there can be but one husband and one wife. By indissolubility is meant permanence of the marriage bond resulting from the marriage contract, or the fact that it cannot be broken by human power. Taken together the two properties constitute the basis of an unbreakable bond. And an unbreakable bond is necessary for carrying out effectively the two great purposes appointed it by Almighty God, namely, the child's proper training and the mutual assistance the two spouses owe each other.

Pope Pius XI adverts to the matter of parental education in his *Encyclical on Christian Marriage*: "Now it is certain that both by the law of nature and of God," he says, "this right and duty of educating their offspring belongs in the first place to those who began the work of nature by giving them birth, and they are indeed forbidden to leave unfinished this work and so expose it to certain ruin. But in matrimony provision has been made in the best possible way for this education of children that is so necessary, for, since parents are bound together by an indissoluble bond, the care and mutual help of each is always at hand."

What is meant by unity in marriage? by indissolubility? Why is an unbreakable marriage bond necessary? What did Pope Pius XI say in the passage quoted?

THE UNITY OF MARRIAGE VINDICATED. It should require no lengthy process of reasoning to show that polygamy, the opposite of monogamy, or unity, in marriage, is forbidden by the natural law. Obviously it tends to subvert the domestic peace and to divide conjugal love, factors of most vital import to the marriage state. Of the two forms of polygamy, namely polyandry, or a plurality of husbands wedded to one wife, and polygyny, or a plurality of wives wedded to one man, the former is the more baneful, since conjugal association of one woman with several men is harmful even to the first element of the primary object of matrimony, namely, the procreation of children.

What is polygamy? Show that it is forbidden by the natural law. Distinguish between polyandry and polygyny.

UNITY OF MARRIAGE UPHeld IN BOTH OLD LAW AND NEW LAW. In both the Old and the New Law is the unity of matrimony upheld. At the very infancy of the human race, God proclaimed the unity of marriage. He promulgated for all mankind through the lips of our common father Adam the fundamental principle of marital relationship in this concise statement: "... the two become one flesh."¹ Only *two*, therefore — one man and one woman — are by God's decree to constitute the conjugal society. Furthermore, we learn from the pages of the Old Testament that this law was generally observed in primitive times by the descendants of Adam. After the deluge, however, in order to accelerate the propagation of the human race, God made a temporary exception to the law, permitting polygyny, or the union of one man with several wives, to both Jews and Gentiles.

Under the New Law, however, that dispensation ceased. Christ Himself, Incarnate God, made it clear that strict monogamy was to prevail again. As a matter of fact, the natural law in this matter is so clear that all civilized nations, and indeed many uncivilized tribes, regard monogamy as the only lawful form of wedlock.

What does the Old Testament have to say about the unity of marriage? How was this law observed by the descendants of Adam? What about the unity of marriage under the New Law?

INDISSOLUBILITY UNDER THE NEW LAW. Not so common, however, is the quality of indissolubility of marriage. In fact, the Catholic Church stands practically alone today in proclaiming that there is absolutely no instance when the bond of a consummated Christian marriage can be sundered by divorce. She continues relentlessly, in spite of all scorn and protest, to teach without modification the doctrine of the indissolubility of the marriage bond that she has ever taught since her institution by Jesus Christ. It is well for the Catholic to know what this doctrine is in detail, and what are the grounds on which it is based.

Our Divine Savior made it very evident that under the New Law the principle of the indissolubility of the marriage tie was to prevail. Certainly clear in this regard is the Gospel of St. Mark, which relates as follows the words of Christ: "What therefore God has joined together, let no man put asunder. . . . Whoever puts away his wife and marries another, commits adultery against her; and if the wife puts away her husband, and marries

1. Genesis 2, 24.

another, she commits adultery."² The words of St. Luke (16, 18) are substantially the same.

What doctrine has the Church always taught in regard to the indissolubility of marriage? How did Christ make it clear that under the New Law the indissolubility of marriage was to prevail?

DIFFICULT PASSAGE IN ST. MATTHEW'S GOSPEL. The Gospel of St. Matthew, however, contains a passage that offers some difficulty. Thus, the ninth verse of chapter 19 reads as follows: "And I say to you, that whoever puts away his wife, except for immorality, and marries another, commits adultery." At first sight the words might seem to imply that Christ made an exception to the law of indissolubility by permitting divorce to a married person whose partner had been guilty of infidelity. However, careful study of the text shows that such an interpretation is untenable. First of all, if this one particular text is to be interpreted as granting an exception to the law in the case of adultery, how is the fact to be explained that the texts of the other New Testament writers forbidding divorce make no such exception?

Moreover, all scholars of the Scriptures admit that the text of St. Matthew, taken alone, is ambiguous and is open to several interpretations. One interpretation is this: There was a diversity of opinion among the official teachers of the Jews whether divorce could be granted *under the Old Law* for several reasons or only for one reason, namely, conjugal infidelity. It was regarding this disputed interpretation of the Old Law that the Pharisees consulted Christ, posing to Him the question, "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for *any* cause?"³ The Savior simply answered the question in the sense in which it had been asked. In doing so, He upheld the stricter view that only adultery justified divorce under the Mosaic Law. That law was still in force. Then, immediately afterward, when speaking to His disciples, Christ promulgated His own law of indissolubility, allowing no exception even in the case of adultery, and it is these words that are related in the Gospels of Sts. Mark and Luke.

Such early writers of the Church as Clement of Alexandria, Origen, St. Augustine, and St. Jerome uphold the view that Christian marriages can never be dissolved, not even for the most serious transgressions against conjugal fidelity. This indicates that such was the teaching of the Church from the very beginning.

What difficulty is found in the passage from St. Matthew's Gospel? Explain this passage in the light of other New Testament texts. Discuss one interpretation which solves the difficulty found in chapter 19 of St. Matthew. What is the significance of the teaching of early writers of the Church on the indissolubility of Christian marriage?

TWO EXCEPTIONS. It must be noted, however, that not man, but God Himself, the Supreme Legislator, who gave a dispensation from the law of indissolubility under certain conditions to the Jewish people, made two exceptions under the New Testament. One is the case referred to as the Pauline privilege; the other, the case of an unconsummated Christian marriage.

2. Mark 10, 9-12.

3. Matthew 19, 3.

The Pauline privilege is this: Two unbaptized persons contract a lawful marriage. Later on, one of the two embraces the Christian faith and is baptized. The other refuses to dwell any longer with the convert to Christianity, or renders the practice of religion very difficult for him or her. In such circumstances, St. Paul teaches (I Cor. 7, 12-16), the baptized party "is not under bondage," that is, he is permitted to contract another marriage (with a Christian) and thus dissolve the previous marriage bond.

Which two exceptions to the law of indissolubility are made under the New Testament? Discuss the Pauline privilege.

UNCONSUMMATED CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE. As to an unconsummated Christian marriage, when adequate proof has been adduced that there has been no marital intercourse, the Pope can dissolve the marriage tie if there are good reasons for doing so. Tradition and the practice of the Church testify that this power is vested in the Supreme Pontiff.

All this is something quite different, for instance, from what is known as a declaration of nullity. Such a declaration is in no sense a divorce, or dissolution of the marriage bond. It is simply a declaration by the Church, based on careful investigation of the facts in the case, that no marriage existed in the first place.

What power does the Pope have over unconsummated Christian marriage? What is a declaration of nullity?

SEPARATION AT TIMES PERMISSIBLE. The distinction between a divorce and separation should be kept in mind. While the Church is adamant in her stand against divorce, she teaches that the separation, or living apart, of husband and wife, either for a time or permanently, may be permissible. There must be grave reasons for this, and there is absolutely no right on the part of either to contract another marriage. An example of a grave reason would be infidelity on the part of a spouse. It is for the Church to pass judgment in the reasons brought forward for a separation, and Catholics should not separate permanently without her approval in the case. As a general rule, the Church is opposed to separations. Hence, even when grievous wrong has been done by one spouse to the other, she urges the guilty one to repent and the innocent one to forgive.

Such a separation is not a divorce. The latter — that is, a dissolution of the marital union that confers on either party or both the right to marry again — is, according to the Church, forbidden by both the natural and the positive law of God.

What is the difference between divorce and separation? Under what conditions does the Church sometimes permit separation? What is her general attitude toward separation?

SUGGESTED PRACTICES

1. In your marriage life, practice at all times the fidelity, charity, patience, and forbearance that will help you to preserve the two essential properties of Christian marriage, unity and indissolubility.
2. If any of your friends or acquaintances are threatening to make shipwreck of their marriage, pray for them and try to help them to compose their differences.

VII

THE

MARRIAGE CEREMONY

The Church shows her recognition of the great dignity of Christian marriage in a variety of ways. One of these ways is her beautiful marriage ritual. Young folks looking forward to marriage should acquaint themselves thoroughly with this ritual.

Three things must be distinguished in the marriage ceremony. First, there is the rite by which the sacrament itself is administered. Then there is the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass that follows immediately afterward. Finally, there is the special Nuptial Blessing which is bestowed in the course of the Mass.

What is recommended to young folks looking forward to marriage? What three things are to be distinguished in the marriage ceremony?

THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE SACRAMENT. A number of different ceremonies can be distinguished in the ritual for the administration of the sacrament of Matrimony. Thus, there is the reading of the short exhortation the priest directs to the couple, the mutual consent given by the contracting parties—the essence of the sacrament—the blessing and conferring of the ring or rings, the blessing of the priest and his final exhortation and prayer.

Catholics generally are fairly familiar with the words of exhortation that the priest addresses to those about to be married as they kneel before the altar on their wedding day. They remind the couple of the seriousness of the situation and suggest some guiding thoughts to them that should serve as a last-moment preparation for the step they are about to take. The two do well to read the words carefully even far in advance of their

wedding day. The wording commonly used in the past has been slightly changed in a more recent ritual. But it remains substantially the same.

Enumerate the different ceremonies that can be distinguished in the ritual for the administration of the sacrament of Matrimony. What is the gist of the words of exhortation that the priest addresses to the bridal couple?

THE ESSENTIAL MATTER OF CONSENT. Next come the all-important matter of expressing consent to the marriage. In this connection the priest who is officiating at the marriage, in the presence of two witnesses, asks the man and woman separately whether they wish to be united in the bond of marriage. By their simple answer, "I will," the two administer to each other the sacrament of Matrimony. The priest then says these words: "I join you in Matrimony: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen." He then sprinkles them with holy water.

The words spoken by the priest, in his capacity of official witness for the Church, bear witness to the fact that by the mutual consent of the two the reception of the sacrament has been accomplished.

Describe the ceremony in which the bridal couple give their consent to the marriage. What do the words spoken by the priest signify?

THE RING CEREMONY. The foregoing is immediately followed by the blessing and conferring of the ring. This is not infrequently referred to as the ring ceremony. The ring symbolizes the bridal party's conjugal union. In some countries both spouses are given a ring. This has also become fairly common practice in the United States over the past few decades.

After the priest has read the words of the blessing and sprinkled the ring with holy water, the bridegroom puts it on the ring finger of the bride, saying, "With this ring I thee wed, and I plight unto thee my troth." If the double-ring ceremony is used, the bride puts the other ring on the finger of the bridegroom, reciting the same words.

A different wording that is coming into use today is the following: "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Take and wear this ring as a pledge of my fidelity."

Finally, the priest makes over the two the Sign of the Cross, with the usual accompanying words, "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen," and then concludes with a few verses and a prayer.

What is the ring ceremony, and what does the ring symbolize? Describe the ring ceremony.

THE NUPTIAL MASS. All the foregoing takes place as the couple stand or kneel at the foot of the altar, flanked by witnesses and other attendants. Immediately following, they go, accompanied by their attendants, to the places assigned them in the sanctuary. Then the celebrant begins the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

There is a special Nuptial Mass for the occasion. This Mass illustrates the supreme importance of marriage in the eyes of the Church. It is really the only sacrament administered with a special Mass for the occasion. Holy Orders is administered at Mass, but it has no special Mass strictly speaking; the Mass of the day is celebrated and a few prayers are added for those being ordained. But with Matrimony all this is different. Every part of the Mass is a special prayer for the bridal couple. The only time that the priest interrupts his own and the congregation's preparation for Holy Communion is to impart the solemn Nuptial Blessing in a wedding Mass.

Where do the bridal couple usually assist at the Nuptial Mass? What is so special about this Mass?

TEXT OF THE NUPTIAL MASS. It is well for a couple contemplating marriage to secure a copy of the Nuptial Mass in advance of the wedding, and go over it carefully. The English text can easily be secured in handy booklet form today. Since that is the case, it will not be quoted here at any length. Only a few references to important parts will be made.

Thus, it might well be noted that the Epistle of the Mass is taken from St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, referred to elsewhere in these lessons, in which the union of husband and wife in Christian marriage is said to symbolize the union of Christ and His Spouse, the Church. As to the Gospel, it is taken from St. Matthew and proclaims the properties of the unity and indissolubility of marriage. "Therefore now they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man put asunder." These words, recorded by the Evangelist, were originally spoken by Our Divine Saviour Himself.

What is recommended to the bridal couple in advance of the wedding? Comment on the Epistle of the Nuptial Mass; the Gospel.

HOPE AND TRUST IN GOD. The words of the Offertory of the Nuptial Mass are these: "In Thee, O Lord, have I hoped. I said, Thou art my God; my times are in Thy hands." The words are plainly an expression of hope and trust in God. And both hope and trust are necessary in Christian marriage if, despite its many consolations and comforts, its hardships and difficulties are always to be borne in true Christian fashion. The Secret of the Mass makes specific mention of the holy bond of wedlock and is an expression of resignation to God's will. Similarly are all other parts of the Mass adapted to suit the particular occasion. In other words, they are for the bridal party.

As to the reception of the Holy Eucharist, it should be noted that the Missal always assumes that the bride and groom will receive Communion at their Nuptial Mass. However, reception of Holy Communion is not an integral part of the sacrament of Matrimony. But the bridal pair should receive it. In fact, while the universal law of the Church does not demand it, the statutes and regulations of some dioceses of the United States prescribe it. It is also quite customary for the witnesses to receive Communion.

Quote the words of the Offertory of the Nuptial Mass. Of what are these words an expression? Comment on the Secret of the Nuptial Mass.

What is to be said about reception of Holy Communion by the bride and groom? by the witnesses?

THE NUPTIAL BLESSING. As the Nuptial Mass immediately follows the reception of the sacrament of Matrimony, so the special sacramental known as the Nuptial Blessing is incorporated in the Mass itself. This gives a striking unity to the entire marriage ceremony.

This solemn rite consists of three meaningful prayers, followed by the priest's blessing. Two of the prayers are said after the Pater Noster of the Mass. The third is recited over the husband and wife just before the last blessing of the Mass and follows an exhortation, given the two parties by the officiating priest, to remain faithful to the obligations they have assumed in marriage.

The first prayer asks God's help for the two who have been united in the holy institution of marriage which God Himself has founded. The second draws a detailed picture of what the life of a truly Christian wife should be. The third, read just preceding the last blessing of the Mass, calls upon "the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob" to fulfill His blessing in them.

While the Nuptial Blessing is ordinarily given on the day of the marriage, there are cases in which it is conferred long after the marriage has been entered upon. For instance, if a non-Catholic becomes a Catholic after a mixed marriage with a Catholic, the Nuptial Blessing can and should be given. While it does not refer to the substance or validity of the marriage, it is a part of the Church's solemn rite and ceremony. It does much to show the high esteem in which wedded life is held by the Church.

Of what does the Nuptial Blessing consist, and when are the prayers of this blessing said in the Nuptial Mass? Comment on each of the three prayers. May the Nuptial Blessing be given at any other time than in the Nuptial Mass itself?

SUGGESTED PRACTICES

1. Read the full text of the Nuptial Blessing which is included in the prayers of the Nuptial Mass.
2. Ask God to help you to cooperate at all times with the special graces of the sacrament of Matrimony.

VIII

THE HOME

a Church in Miniature

As noted in an earlier lesson, the Catholic family is a replica in miniature of the Mystical Body of Christ. Since such is the case, it is very fitting that the house in which the family lives should resemble a church in miniature.

In the early years of Christianity the home was actually referred to as a little church. Thus St. John Chrysostom applied to it the Greek equivalent of the English term for a little church, namely, *ecclesiola*. Significantly, St. Benedict, who was almost a contemporary of St. John Chrysostom, applied much the same term to the home of his religious, namely, the monastery. He called it a "house of God."

What should the Christian home resemble? What term did St. John Chrysostom apply to the home? What did St. Benedict call the home of his religious?

MAKING THE HOME A HOUSE OF GOD. Particularly in the Ages of Faith that followed, did Christian families in reality make of their homes little churches. Prayers and religious rituals therein, the father leading the way and all the other members participating, were common. Unfortunately in our own day such practices in the home have been more or less neglected by many. They should be zealously restored again. That is, the Christian's home should again be made a house of God.

Among the many ways of doing this the following would seem particularly deserving of emphasis: restoring to the family hearth the practice of using religious expressions; restoring the use of sacramentals to the home; celebrating religious anniversaries, or milestones, in the family circle; adapting the religious life of the family to the seasons and feasts

of the liturgical year. Attention will be devoted to the first three of these in the remainder of the lesson. The fourth will be considered in the lesson following.

How did Christian families in the Ages of Faith make of their homes little churches? What is to be said of such practices in our own day? Which are some of the ways of making the home a little church?

RELIGIOUS EXPRESSIONS AND SACRAMENTALS IN THE HOME. Using religious expressions in the family circle can do much to make of the home a house of God. Such expressions are, as a matter of fact, still found among many foreign peoples — among the Italians and Poles, French and Germans, Spaniards and Portuguese, Irish and others. Common examples of them are the following: "Praised be Jesus Christ," "God bless you," "Thanks be to God," "If God wills," "Our Lady, help me." These have real spiritual significance. They keep the thought of God to the fore in the daily life of the home, thereby serving as an effective antidote for the deadly poison of secularism in the family circle.

The sacramentals, or so-called "little sacraments," should definitely have a place in conjunction with home life. There are a number of reasons for this. First of all, many of them have a direct bearing on family life. Furthermore, they are a relatively simple means of union between altar and home. Again, they are so many media for channeling from the one great spiritual reservoir, given into the Church's keeping by Christ, the living and transforming waters of grace from the Savior's fountains. Then, too, they are simple but powerful means of counteracting secularism.

Give examples of religious expressions that are still used in the homes of many foreign peoples. What effect do they have? Why should sacramentals have a place in conjunction with home life?

EXAMPLES OF SACRAMENTALS FOR HOME LIFE. Specifically, sacramentals are blessings or blessed articles. Thus, they are, for instance, the blessing the priest gives, the blessing we give ourselves as we devoutly make the Sign of the Cross, the blessing parents give their children. They are holy water, the blessed medal we may wear or have in the home or in our auto, the blessed pictures on the walls of the home. They are the wedding ring blessed by the Church on the day it is placed on the bride's finger before the altar.

There are three different blessings for the Catholic home itself. They are the ordinary blessing given it when it is first occupied by the family, the more solemn blessing given it with Easter water on Holy Saturday, and the so-called three Kings' blessing given in conjunction with the Feast of the Epiphany.

Not only the house, but also its various appurtenances can be blest. For instance, there are special blessings for the kitchen, for the bridal chamber, for the room of the father and mother. So, too, are there blessings for food, for medicine, and other household items.

What are sacramentals? Give examples of sacramentals for home life. What three blessings are there for the Catholic home itself? Mention some special blessings for appurtenances in the home.

BLESSINGS FOR MEMBERS OF THE FAMILY. Then, too, there are special blessings for members of the family, particularly for the child, the primary purpose of the family. There is also one for mother and child together, and one for the pregnant mother. The words in all these are beautiful and highly significant. For instance, in bestowing the last-mentioned blessing, the Church prays "that the hand of Thy mercy may assist her delivery and her child may come to the light of day without harm, be kept safe for the holy birth of Baptism, serve Thee always in all things, and attain to everlasting life."

Particularly significant, too, is the parental blessing. This may already be given immediately following the birth of a child, the father and mother each sprinkling the infant with holy water and reciting these words: "May the Almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, bless you, my child, for time and eternity, and may this blessing remain forever with you. Amen." Very properly is the blessing repeated by the parents after the child's rebirth in Baptism.

Furthermore, this inspiring practice should be continued as the child advances in years under the parents' care. He should be blest, for instance, before he retires in the evening, or when he leaves the home, going into the dangers of the streets or on a considerable journey. Simple as the practice is, it both lends dignity to fatherhood and motherhood and does much to cultivate mutual respect between parents and children.

Discuss the blessing which the Church gives to the pregnant mother. What form may the parents use in blessing the infant immediately after birth, and again after Baptism? Mention other occasions on which parents should bless their children.

OBSERVING RELIGIOUS FAMILY MILESTONES. The observance of religious anniversaries, or milestones, in the family is also a means for making of the home a little church. There are many of these that deserve to be celebrated—marriage, Baptism, First Communion, patron saints' days, etc. However, some are more important than others. Certainly, since marriage is the basis of the family, wedding anniversaries are important and should be celebrated. Hence, the day on which the parents received the sacrament of Matrimony, no matter what the anniversary, should be the occasion for family rejoicing and for some special religious observances in common for the members.

For example, the family members might very fittingly attend Mass together and receive Communion as a group. Again, the anniversary could be made an occasion for a few words to the children about the character of Christian marriage and about the liturgy of the wedding Mass and ceremony. An ever-increasing understanding of these from early childhood in the home should do much to give Catholic young folks a true realization of the dignity of Christian marriage and a reverent attitude toward Christian fatherhood and motherhood.

Then, too, the anniversary can be made the occasion for putting before the children some thoughts on vocation. Thus, the parents can, in speaking of their own vocation, contrast it with the religious life and the priesthood. It is said that the first seeds of vocation are normally planted in the home. The marriage anniversary of the father and mother affords a ready opportunity for planting such a seed.

Which are some of the religious anniversaries that would be celebrated in the home? How may the wedding anniversary be fittingly observed? What may be done on the wedding anniversary to plant the first seeds of vocation in the hearts of the children?

OTHER RELIGIOUS CUSTOMS IN THE HOME. Every home-church, too, should have either the Sacred Heart enthroned on the hearth, or, at least, have a little altar or shrine there. In other words, a place should be provided where the family can kneel and pray together.

And so there are still other religious customs admirably suited to the home, or that can be suited to it. Certainly this is true of such daily devotions in common as the recitation of morning and evening prayers, grace before and after meals, and the Angelus. These, too, like other religious customs, help make of the home a church in miniature and keep from the hearth the spirit of secularism.

Mention some other religious customs that help make the home a church in miniature. What other effect does the observance of such customs have?

SUGGESTED PRACTICES

1. Develop the habit of using appropriate religious expressions and sacramentals in your home.
2. Make it a practice to observe significant religious anniversaries of members of your family.

IX

THE LITURGICAL YEAR AND THE FAMILY

One of the most effective ways of making the home a church in miniature is the observance within its walls of the liturgical year. The family can find almost endless material for religious observances in the home in the feasts and seasons of that cycle.

By the liturgical year is meant the sacred cycle of solemnities by which we commemorate each year the work of Redemption wrought by Our Divine Savior. It consists of such seasons as Advent, Lent, Christmastide, Eastertide, and such feasts as those of Our Lord, His Blessed Mother, and the saints.

Name one of the most effective ways of making the home a church in miniature. What is the liturgical year?

FAMILY OBSERVANCE OF THE LITURGICAL YEAR. Just as the Church lives and breathes, so to speak, in the cycle of the liturgical year, so should the church in miniature, the home, do the same. Parents and children will do so, first of all, if they participate, insofar as possible as a family group, with their fellow parishioners whenever the mysteries of Redemption are publicly and officially celebrated in their parish church.

But they should also do so by special devotional practices in their own little church, or home. This they can do by careful preparation for the seasons and feasts of the church year, and by a variety of religious practices in the spirit of those seasons and feasts. By this they will bring about a blessed wedding between altar and home and will also lend variety to the prayer life of the family.

How may members of the family best participate in liturgical functions in their parish church? What good results will come from devotional practices in the home in keeping with the seasons and feasts of the church year?

OBSERVING THE ADVENT SEASON IN THE HOME. The church year begins with the Advent season. Advent means "the coming." The season, beginning, not January 1, as does the regular or chronological year, but with the fourth Sunday before Christmas and extending to the high feast of Christmas itself, is a time set aside for preparation for the coming of Our Lord on Christmas Day, just as Lent, for instance, is a time of preparation for Easter, or the Feast of Our Lord's Resurrection.

One particular feature of the Advent season, well suited to the home, is the Advent wreath. This has come so much into prominence the past few years that printed material regarding it is readily available. Hence space need hardly be given it here.

Perhaps not so prominent today, however, though well known in the past, is the Advent candle. This is a large candle that is put into a candlestick which is covered with white silk. It is meant to symbolize the Immaculate Mother from whom came the Light of the World, Christ Our Savior. It serves, therefore, as an eloquent reminder of the Incarnation of the Son of God, born of the Virgin Mary.

When does Advent begin and end, and what is its purpose? Can you describe the Advent wreath and tell how it is used in the home? What is the Advent candle, and whom does it symbolize?

CHRISTMAS IN THE HOME. The Advent season is immediately followed by Christmas. This feast gives particularly rich opportunities for religious observances in the family circle. The crib should be the center of attention in the home at this time. But candles are also in place. First of all, there should be a large candle burning before the crib, reminding that Christ, the Light of the World, is now with us. From this candle, smaller candles placed before the crib, one for each member of the family, may then be lighted. This is to signify that from Him who is the Light of the World all light comes.

A number of beautiful rituals for a Christmas observance in the home have been suggested. These contain several or all of the following practices: the singing of a Christmas hymn by the family members; the reading of the Gospel and Oration of one of the Christmas Masses; the recitation of the Creed by all; the singing of another appropriate hymn. This might well be carried out at the family Christmas crib on the eve of the feast, and then be followed immediately by an expression of Christmas good wishes and the bestowal of gifts.

How may candles be used at the crib in the home, and what is their significance? Mention some of the beautiful rituals that have been suggested for Christmas observance in the home.

OBSERVANCE OF THE FEAST OF ST. JOHN. The Feast of St. John, Apostle and Evangelist, which falls on the second day after Christmas, and is therefore well within the Christmas season, has long been celebrated in the home by some of the peoples of Europe, notably the Germans. St. John is known as the beloved disciple of Our Lord, and the observance of his feast in homes takes on the semblance of a love feast.

The ritual observed is the following very simple one. Wine will be

blest "in honor of St. John" at the morning Mass and taken to the home. Before the main meal of the day the father fills the loving cup, or goblet, with it, and as it is then passed from member to member, each is greeted with the words: "Drink the love of St. John, the Apostle . . . And where charity is and love, there is God." Or the father may simply raise the goblet with the expression: "I give you the love of St. John," the mother replying, "I thank you for the love of St. John."

The words "where charity is and love, there is God," used in the first-mentioned greeting, form the opening line of one of the most beautiful hymns of the Holy Week observance. It is referred to as *Ubi Caritas* (where charity is), after the first two words of the Latin version of the hymn. It is highly popular among the German peoples, and is used by them both as a wedding song and as a family prayer.

Among other feasts of the Christmas season that are distinguished by family religious observances among some peoples are Epiphany, the Holy Family, and Candlemas. The practices associated with them serve to cultivate a religious spirit on the part of the family members and to keep the spirit of secularism from the home hearth.

When does the Feast of St. John occur, and what is the nature of the home observance of his feast? Describe the ritual followed in this observance. Whence come the words "where charity is and love, there is God"? Name other feasts of the Christmas season that are distinguished by family religious observances.

LENTEN SEASON OBSERVANCES. The season of Lent also offers opportunities for religious practices suited to the home and family. Particularly is that true of Holy Week, the closing week of the Lenten season. Shrove Tuesday, the day preceding the opening of the penitential season, already presents such an opportunity. Very fittingly might the prayer which is said by the Church after the bestowal of ashes on Wednesday be said by the family on that evening. It is a prayer for grace in inaugurating the holy season of fasting.

The liturgy of the Church for Holy Week is unusually rich. That, of course, cannot come as a surprise, portraying, as it does, such outstanding events of the church year as the institution of the Blessed Sacrament, the Passion and death of Our Divine Savior, and His glorious Resurrection from the dead. Family members should attend the church services of these days insofar as possible. But there are observances for the home, too. These can do much to keep the family members in the spirit of this sacred season.

On Good Friday, for instance, the home should be characterized by peace and quiet. This should particularly be the case from noon to three o'clock, if the members are not in the church attending the *Tres Ores* services held in remembrance of Our Lord's sufferings and death. The time may very fittingly be spent in prayer and meditation and spiritual reading. Furthermore, as the altar is stripped in the church, so the table in the home may well be left bare of all cover for the meals of the day.

What opportunity does the season of Lent offer for religious practices suited to the home and family? Why is the liturgy of the Church for Holy Week unusually rich? Discuss the fitting observance of Good Friday in the home.

EASTER AND PENTECOST. On Easter, too, there are observances suited for the home. In preparing for the festive Easter Sunday meal, for instance, effort may well be centered, at least if there is a budding artist in the home, in decorating Easter eggs with pictures of an Easter lamb, the Risen Savior, and the Blessed Mother.

In preparation for the Feast of Pentecost, the family may fittingly include novena prayers in honor of the Holy Ghost in their evening prayers, begging the Holy Spirit to come, with His sevenfold gifts, and sanctify the members of the family. Many beautiful prayers for such a novena can be found in the Mass texts for the Vigil of Pentecost, for the feast itself, and for its octave.

The customs mentioned in the foregoing may not all fit into every family circle. However, a sufficient number of them have been mentioned to insure a satisfactory selection for any and every home. There are still others that have not been mentioned. Furthermore, a variety of adaptations is possible and feasible. Hence no family should find difficulty in finding suitable ones to enable its members to make of the home in a real sense a church in miniature, and to live in the spirit of Holy Mother Church throughout the entire ecclesiastical year.

Comment on home observance of the Easter festival. How may the family prepare for the Feast of Pentecost? Besides the customs mentioned in this chapter, are others available for the home?

SUGGESTED PRACTICES

1. Plan to observe in your home the principal seasons and feasts of the liturgical year.
2. Make a special effort to Christianize the family observance of great religious feasts that are often celebrated by the world in a secular and even pagan manner; e.g., Christmas and New Year's Day.

X

THE HOME

a School of the Virtues

Almighty God, in His designs for mankind, has attached many wonderful compensations to faithful and successful family life. Such, for instance, are the joys of parenthood. But, wonderful as are these natural compensations, one must not lose sight of the supernatural, the spiritual, as it relates to family living. Family life is meant not only to be a source of natural joys and happiness. It is also, and indeed more so, meant to be a means of obtaining happiness eternal, of working out our eternal salvation.

In this connection it is well that Christian spouses often recall, from the earliest days of the founding of their homes, that the family is a school of the virtues. Virtuous living is necessary for the attainment of the end for which God created man. In fact, the practice of the supernatural virtues is necessary for the attainment of that end. The reason for this is that the end for which God destined man is a supernatural one, and can be attained only by supernatural means. The more genuinely virtuous we are, the greater will be our reward in heaven.

What are some of the compensations that God has attached to faithful and successful family life? Why is it important for Christian spouses to keep in mind that the family is a school of the virtues?

DOMESTIC VIRTUES. Some virtues are so closely associated with family life that they might be called the "domestic" virtues. Such are, for instance, obedience, chastity, patience, and charity. But all virtues can be said to be in a very considerable measure associated with family life. All can be practiced there. All can be taught there. In other words, the family is a highly important medium for virtuous living.

Many and ready-made opportunities to practice acts of virtue are nor-

mally offered in the family. Its members should make good use of them. Thus, instead of perhaps being disheartened when occasions or opportunities for the practice of virtue present themselves, or even force themselves upon them, they should welcome them. For instance, when there is something to make them impatient, they should welcome the opportunity to practice the virtue of patience. Again, when there is privation, they should gladly make of it an occasion for the practice of moderation; or when there is humiliation, they should accept it as an opportunity for the practice of humility.

Name some of the "domestic" virtues. Why is it said that all virtues are associated with family life? Give examples of ready-made opportunities to practice virtue in the home.

GRACE AND THE PRACTICE OF VIRTUE. It was said at the beginning of this lesson that the practice of the supernatural virtues is necessary for the attainment of the end for which God created man. It should be recalled in this connection that supernatural acts of virtue cannot be practiced without grace. They are beyond our natural powers. All powers to practice them come from God. Not only are the virtues, or faculties themselves, infused into the soul by Him, but the individual is also dependent on His actual graces in order to use these powers rightly; that is, to perform acts of virtue. Hence he must constantly seek these graces. Prayer and the sacraments are the ordinary channels for this. We cannot live a supernatural life without these. On the other hand, with their diligent use, all can expect to make progress in all the virtues.

We cannot possibly expect to treat all the virtues here. The field is too immense. In the remainder of this lesson we shall discuss the virtues generally; in the next we shall devote attention to a number of specific ones, making application to home life in each case, by way of example.

Why is grace necessary for the practice of supernatural acts of virtue? Which are the ordinary channels of God's grace? What will be discussed in the remainder of this chapter? in the next chapter?

DEFINITION, ORIGIN, AND MAJOR CATEGORIES. A virtue can be defined as a habit, or permanent disposition, which inclines the individual to do good or avoid evil. This definition makes clear, and rightly so, that a virtue and a virtuous act are not one and the same thing. A virtue is more than a virtuous act. It is a habit or endowment, a sort of faculty of the soul or abiding disposition to act.

Some virtues are infused. For example, the virtue of faith is infused at Baptism. Other virtues are acquired. We acquire the virtue of patience, for instance, by repeated acts of patience. Again, we acquire, or at least develop, the virtue of humility by repeated acts of humility.

The major categories into which the virtues are customarily divided are the theological, the cardinal, and the other moral virtues. We say the "other" moral virtues because the cardinal virtues are at the same time moral virtues. Hence, really all are reducible to theological and moral virtues.

Define a virtue. Distinguish between infused and acquired virtues. Into what major categories are the virtues customarily divided?

THEOLOGICAL AND MORAL VIRTUES. The theological virtues have God as their immediate material and formal object. They are the virtues that relate to God, that, as was said, have God for their object. They are these three: faith, hope, and charity. In other words, they are belief in God, hope in Him, and love of Him.

The moral virtues, on the other hand, do not have God, or the Creator, for their immediate object, but some created good. They are concerned with the means whereby we tend to God. They are called moral virtues because they dispose us to lead good and upright lives. They do so by aiding us to treat persons and things in the right way. By doing that, of course, we press on toward God. Hence, ultimately God is also the object of these virtues.

We apply the term cardinal virtues to certain of the moral virtues, not because they are the chief or most important ones, but because all the other moral virtues depend on them. The term comes from the Latin word "cardo," which means a hinge. Prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance, therefore, are four hinges, so to speak, from which hang all the other virtues or, let us say, from which flow all the other moral virtues. For example, there are a whole group of moral virtues that are linked with, or that flow from, the cardinal virtue of justice.

What is the immediate material and formal object of the theological virtues? Name the theological virtues. Why are the moral virtues so-called? Which are the cardinal virtues, and why are they so-called?

MEANS OF CULTIVATING THE VIRTUES. There are a number of effective means for cultivating acts of virtue. These are chiefly the following: meditation; actual practice; examination of conscience — more specifically, what is known as the particular examen; the practice of mortification; the use of the means of grace.

It should be obvious that meditating upon virtue, that is, thinking upon its worth and beauty, its advantages and necessity, leads one to love it, and to strive to acquire it — in a word, to practice it.

Actual practice of virtuous acts is definitely a means of acquiring virtue. Here one sees the application of the saying "Practice makes perfect." By repeating virtuous acts we acquire ease and facility and steadiness in their practice. We acquire virtuous habits.

Which are the chief effective means for cultivating acts of virtue? Discuss meditation; actual practice of the virtues.

EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE. A regular check on ourselves will show us how we stand with regard to the practice and acquisition of virtue. This, of course, should be accompanied by a resolution to do better when we find reason to believe that we are not doing as well as we should.

The particular examen, so-called, is an even more effective means in this regard. This type of examination focuses attention for some time every day, or even over a period of weeks or months, upon one particular virtue or its opposite vice, and calls for a persistent and intensive effort to develop the former and eradicate the latter before going on to another virtue or vice. This particular type of examination is undoubtedly more effective than

a general or rambling type. One will usually get much further by resolving to practice a specific virtue than by resolving to be more virtuous generally. The practice of the particular examen is common in religious communities. But it should not be limited to them. It would be very much in place in the home.

Discuss the examination of conscience as a means for cultivating virtue. How is the particular examen made? How does it compare in effectiveness with the general examination of conscience? Where is the particular examen commonly practiced?

MORTIFICATION AND USE OF THE MEANS OF GRACE. Unquestionably mortification is also a great aid to cultivating virtues. By removing obstacles to virtue, mortification lends facility to its practice. By frequently denying himself things that are innocent and lawful, the individual becomes able, with relative ease, to deny himself things that are forbidden and unlawful.

Certainly faithful use of the means of grace contributes to the effective practice of virtuous acts, giving us, as grace does, supernatural aid to that end.

In what way does mortification aid in the cultivation of the virtues? How does grace help us to practice virtue?

SUGGESTED PRACTICES

1. In your family life make a sincere effort to practice the virtues, especially the so-called "domestic" virtues.
2. Form the habit of making a particular examen of conscience each day.

XI

THE

THEOLOGICAL VIRTUES

IN FAMILY LIFE

By way of examples of specific virtues that should be practiced in family life, attention will be devoted in this lesson to the three theological virtues, namely, faith, hope, and charity. Logically we take the fundamental virtue of faith first, inquiring into its meaning, pointing out some of the opportunities for its practice in the home, and noting some of its compensations.

Faith is a virtue by which we firmly believe all the truths that God has revealed. While it is an infused virtue, one must nevertheless practice acts of faith. Certainly without that, faith will not remain strong and firm. In other words, this virtue must be exercised. It must be professed and practiced.

Which virtues will be treated in this lesson? Into what points shall we inquire in regard to the fundamental virtue of faith? What is faith, and why must this virtue be exercised?

LIVELY FAITH IN THE HOME. The example of faith on the part of parents means much to a child. Hence practices like the following should be observed by them: prayer and other religious devotions within the family circle; attendance at Mass and reception of the Holy Eucharist as a family unit; the presence of religious articles — reminders of faith — in the home; the use of religious expressions in the family circle; the use of sacramentals in the home.

A lively faith in the home carries with it many rewarding compensations. Beyond a doubt, the misfortunes and heartbreaks of life are borne far more easily in the home characterized by faith than in one in which its benign and strengthening influence is not felt. When sickness and poverty

enter the home of faith, though pain indeed be experienced, its keen edge is very considerably dulled by hope, and by the knowledge that even God's chastisements are accompanied by love. Then, too, in the solemn hour of death, faith mitigates the pain of dying in such a home and brings great consolation to those who remain behind. Thus, the home of faith has manifold compensations which others do not have.

Enumerate some of the religious practices by which parents may give an example of faith to their children. Give some examples of how faith makes its benign and strengthening influence felt in the home.

HOPE AND ITS PRACTICE IN THE HOME. Hope is a virtue that leads us confidently to place our trust in God, and to do so because of His almighty power and His infinite goodness and promises. By this virtue we hope to obtain from God life everlasting and the means needed to attain it. As we pray in the *Act of Hope*: "O my God, relying on Thy almighty power and infinite mercy and promises, I hope to obtain pardon of my sins, the help of Thy grace and life everlasting, through the merits of Jesus Christ, my Lord and Redeemer."

Left to ourselves we have little reason indeed for hope. But, relying on God's power and mercy and promises, as the prayer says, we have every reason for hope. He can and will help us if we confidently ask it of Him.

Zealous Christian parents will be characterized by the virtue of hope. They will not succumb, on the one hand, to despair of God's mercy, and, on the other, to presumption of His mercy. They will confidently place their trust in God. Such parents, too, will strive diligently to instil this virtue into their little ones. They can do this by giving the *Act of Hope* a prominent place in the prayers of the family. Again they can do so by prayers in the home for deceased members of their own immediate family and those of their wider family relationship. Such prayers are a beautiful expression of supernatural hope, a hope built on the other two theological virtues, namely, faith and charity.

What is the theological virtue of hope? What is the basis for our hope in God? Discuss the practice of hope in the home.

THE THEOLOGICAL VIRTUE OF LOVE. In love we have, as St. Paul teaches, the greatest of the three theological virtues. We define supernatural love as a virtue by which we love God for His own sake, and our neighbor as ourselves for the love of God.

Since we are really brought into being for the purpose of loving God, it should be the holy ambition of everyone to increase this virtue constantly in his soul. This is a most important consideration. Ever greater and greater love means ever closer nearness to God, greater friendship with Him, greater merit, and eventually greater glory in heaven.

Spiritual writers emphasize four particular ways of increasing love in the soul. They are: 1) striving for more perfect knowledge of God; 2) striving for greater purity of heart and detachment from creatures; 3) striving for the gradual purification of our love of God; 4) frequent exercise of charity, or the performance of acts of love of God. A few words about each will follow.

What is the theological virtue of love? Why should everyone wish to increase this virtue constantly in his soul? What four ways of increasing love in the soul are emphasized by spiritual writers?

INCREASING LOVE IN THE SOUL — I. 1. *Striving for more perfect knowledge of God.* The better a good is known to us, the more lovable it becomes to us. And God is infinite good. He is, as we say in the *Act of Love*, all-good and worthy of all love. It is really the profound knowledge of God in heaven on the part of the blessed that makes their love for Him so full and overflowing. Hence we on this earth should strive to know Him more and more. To this end we should meditate on His perfections — on His goodness and power and mercy and the like. We should carefully avoid centering all our attention on earthly interests and pursuits.

2. Striving for greater purity of heart and detachment from creatures. It is self-evident that the more we divest ourselves of self, and the more we diminish in our hearts the love of created things, the more we grow in love of our Creator. It is preoccupation with self and the things of this world that disputes our heart with God.

Why should we strive for more perfect knowledge of God? Discuss striving for greater purity of heart and detachment from creatures.

INCREASING LOVE IN THE SOUL — II. 3. *The gradual purification of our love of God.* By the gradual purification of our love of God, or the gradual perfecting of our love, is meant a striving to love God for Himself, and not, for instance, because that gives us some satisfaction or because we expect a reward in return. As we say in the *Act of Love*: "O my God, I love Thee above all things, with my whole heart and soul, because Thou art all-good and worthy of all love."

4. The actual practice of love. In the actual practice of love, or the performance of deeds of love, we have the fulfillment of the dictum "Practice makes perfect." Every act of love disposes the soul toward the increase of love. Every fresh act makes the heart more ready to break forth into a further act of love. Hence this love or perfection is really open to unlimited development.

What is meant by the gradual purification of our love of God? What is accomplished by the performance of deeds of love?

LOVE OF NEIGHBOR. The second part of the law of love, the love of neighbor, is also very important insofar as the family is concerned. By neighbor, of course, we do not just mean the person living next door. Indeed, we mean, first of all, those of our own household. In its full meaning, of course, it extends to all mankind. Recalling our definition of love, we find that it is a virtue by which we love God above all things for His own sake, and our neighbor as ourselves for the love of God. Love of neighbor is, like love of God, a theological virtue, if we love God Himself in our neighbor, that is, if we love our neighbor for God's sake.

We are reminded in this connection of the words of Holy Writ: "As long as you did it for one of these, the least of My brethren, you did it for Me."¹ It would not be genuine charity if we loved our neighbor only for his

¹ Matthew 25, 40.

own sake or because of the services he may render us. Only when we see God in him can we give him a love that is supernatural. Only when we see the interests of God and the will of God in our neighbor can we love him with a love that is, as we say, "like unto" the love we owe God.

What is the meaning of the term "neighbor" in the second part of the Act of Love? What is the proper motive for love of neighbor?

THE FAMILY A GREAT SOURCE OF LOVE. The rightly constituted family is a great source of love. Indeed for the great majority of mankind there is in it greater opportunity for the practice of the fundamental Christian law of man than in any other sphere of life. It is safe to say that by far the greatest amount of love and unselfishness in this world is found in that divinely constituted wellspring of love, the family.

Family life calls for innumerable daily compromises and sacrifices. It calls for the constant shouldering of responsibilities and hardships for the common good of the whole group. And if that sacrifice of self for the good of those around us in the home is made out of love of God, then indeed we have the fulfillment of the great Christian law of love. The members of such a family should be well on the way of working out their eternal salvation.

Where do we find the greatest amount of love and unselfishness in this world? Discuss the fulfillment of the great Christian law of love in family life.

SUGGESTED PRACTICES

1. Make a special effort to practice faith, hope, and charity in your family life.
2. Do all you can, by prayer and good example, to make the law of love operative in American life, regardless of creed, race, or color.

XII

THE

CHURCH'S LEGISLATIVE POWER OVER MATRIMONY

In the case of two baptized persons the contract of marriage and the sacrament of Matrimony are one and the same thing. The contract is the sacrament. Hence, whenever two baptized persons contract a valid marriage, they receive the sacrament of Matrimony.

There are two corollaries that follow from this identification of contract and sacrament. One is, that the same individuals who make the contract also administer the sacrament. That such is the case is the definite teaching of the Church. A second is, that the authority to legislate for and to pass judgment on the marriage of baptized persons resides in the Catholic Church.

In the case of two baptized persons, what is the relationship between the contract of marriage and the sacrament of Matrimony? What two corollaries flow from this identification of contract and sacrament?

THE CHURCH AND MARRIAGE LAWS. Obviously marriage, being of such vital importance to the common good, must be subject to the jurisdiction of some public authority. But, since marriage of baptized persons is a sacrament, and the Catholic Church possesses a divinely granted authority over the administration of all the sacraments, it necessarily follows that she has the right to make laws and to pass judgment in regard to whatever pertains to the validity and to the licitness of the marriage of baptized persons, both as a sacrament and as a contract.

The Church has developed a truly remarkable body of marriage laws over the centuries. Some repeat the law of God; others prescribe merely a ruling of the Church.

Prove that the Church has jurisdiction over the marriage of baptized persons. How may we classify the marriage laws of the Church?

PRELIMINARY STEPS DEMANDED UNDER CHURCH LAW. The Church, in her legislation, demands the observance of certain formalities before she approves of a marriage. These are specifically: investigation by the pastor; the securing of certain documents; the publication of the banns; the giving of instructions to the couple.

There is an obligation on the part of the pastor to investigate a proposed marriage before he performs the wedding ceremony. The purpose of this is to establish the freedom of the two parties to marry. To this end the pastor must acquaint himself concerning such matters as age, religion, freedom from forbidden near-kin relationship, and other matters that might render the marriage either illicit or invalid. Ordinarily today a formal pre-nuptial investigation form is used in this connection. This consists of a list of questions which are proposed individually to the prospective bride and the prospective groom. The answers given are sworn and subscribed to by each, and the record of the same is kept in the files of the parish or the diocese.

What formalities must be observed before the Church approves of a marriage? Describe the procedure by which the pastor establishes the freedom of the two parties to marry.

BAPTISMAL RECORDS AND BANNS OF MARRIAGE. The baptismal records of the two parties to the contract are required under church law. If these records are not at the church where the marriage takes place, a copy of each must be provided for the pastor. In each parish an accurate record is kept of the persons baptized within its boundaries. On it are given the full name of the person baptized, the date of the baptism, the names of the parents, of the sponsors, of the minister of the sacrament, and of the church and place of the marriage. If in course of time the baptized child is confirmed, or contracts marriage, or pronounces solemn vows in religion, or receives the major order of subdeacon, the fact is noted on the record.

When the two parties to a pending marriage are Catholic, church law requires the proclamation of the banns of marriage. This announcement of the forthcoming marriage must be made both in the church of the bride and in that of the groom. The faithful are obliged to make known any real reason they may know why the couple should not be admitted to marriage. This safeguards marriage and is also for the good of the engaged couples. If there is any real reason why the marriage in question is undesirable or prohibited, true charity towards the couple demands that the fact be made known to them through the proper channels of the Church.

Which records of the two parties are required under church law? What information is included in the baptismal record, and what data may later be added? What is meant by "the proclamation of the banns of marriage"? What is its purpose?

MARRIAGE IMPEDIMENTS. By virtue of the Church's authority over marriage she has declared or established a number of matrimonial impediments. That is, she has ruled that certain circumstances constitute a hindrance to the proper contracting of marriage. Some of these impediments are merely *prohibitive*; that is, they render the contract of marriage unlawful, but not invalid. There are three such impediments, namely, simple vows, adoption, and mixed marriage.

Although there is no impediment, strictly so-called, prohibiting the marriage of a Catholic with a fallen-away who has not joined another church, or with one who is affiliated with a society condemned by the Church (for instance, the Masons), the Church urges her members not to enter such unions. Furthermore, she does not allow a priest to officiate at the wedding without first submitting the case to the judgment of the bishop of the diocese.

Other impediments to marriage are called *diriment*. These invalidate a marriage. In other words, those who attempt marriage in spite of them are actually not married. There are thirteen of these impediments. Probably the more common ones are: age; previous marriage bond; disparity, or difference, of worship; consanguinity; affinity; spiritual relationship.

What is a marriage impediment? What are "prohibitive" impediments? Name them. Mention some unions that the Church urges her members not to enter. What are diriment impediments? Which are the more common ones?

RESTRICTIONS NOT UNREASONABLE. At times individuals who are not too friendly toward the Church accuse her of arrogance in claiming and in exercising authority over marriage. Yet, they must admit that the Church is absolutely consistent in the matter. The Catholic principles that the marriage of baptized persons is a sacrament, and that the Catholic Church, as the one true Church of Christ, has authority over the sacraments, lead with unflinching logic to the conclusion that jurisdiction over the marriage of all baptized persons resides in the Catholic Church.

It should hardly be necessary to add, too, that the restrictions imposed by the Church in this matter are not at all unreasonable. As a matter of fact, not a few of the civil laws of marriage regarding impediments are today in fundamental harmony with those of the Church. For example, the impediment of consanguinity, or blood relationship, which in the Church extends to second cousins, is found in the statutes of many of our States, at least as far as first cousins.

Which two principles show that the Church is consistent in claiming and in exercising authority over the marriage of baptized persons? Mention one indication that the marriage restrictions imposed by the Church are not unreasonable.

DISPENSATIONS FROM IMPEDIMENTS. In connection with the foregoing consideration, it should also be well to recall that the Church can and will give a dispensation from certain impediments which she has established. To be sure, a dispensation is not an ordinary or normal thing. Laws are not made by the Church for the purpose of being dispensed. They are made for the purpose of being observed. That is particularly true in regard to the impediments by which the Church declares that certain marriages are undesirable for the individual and for society. Nevertheless, there are at times serious reasons and unusual circumstances that can render a forbidden marriage desirable under one or the other consideration. In such instances, the Church is willing to give gracious release from the binding force of her law if she has full control over it.

What is meant by a dispensation from a marriage impediment? Is a dispensation an ordinary thing? Under what conditions may the Church grant a dispensation?

SAFEGUARDING FREEDOM REGARDING MARRIAGE. Profoundly aware that for the great majority of individuals the way to both temporal and eternal happiness is the state of wedlock, the Church has consistently upheld the inalienable right of every individual to marry, provided he is physically and mentally qualified, and has not, by his own free will, bound himself to a life of celibacy. Particularly has she shown her opposition to undue parental coercion regarding marriage. She upholds the view that the decisions whether to marry or not to marry, and whom to marry, rest ultimately with the individual concerned, rather than with his or her parents.

Thus, by the aforementioned and other laws, the Church safeguards the sacrament of Matrimony, the individual, and society.

What is the attitude of the Church toward the right of every individual to marry? What is to be said about undue parental coercion? What is accomplished by the marriage laws of the Church?

SUGGESTED PRACTICES

1. If you plan to marry, or if you have children who look forward to marriage, see that the marriage laws of the Church are conscientiously observed.
2. Whenever you hear a proclamation of marriage banns, pray for the couple who are about to enter the holy state of Christian marriage.

XIII

MIXED MARRIAGE

The subject of mixed marriage is well deserving of special study and attention. There are many such marriages in this country, and they do much harm.

The Church in her marriage legislation strictly forbids her members to contract marriage to persons of other religions or with those who profess no religion. An important distinction is made in this ecclesiastical law between those who are baptized and those who are not baptized. The marriage of a Catholic to a baptized non-Catholic, without the proper dispensation, is unlawful; but, provided there is no diriment impediment and the marriage is contracted before an authorized priest and two witnesses, it is valid. However, the marriage of a Catholic with an unbaptized person is null and void unless the Church has granted a special dispensation from this impediment. More correctly, in this latter case the impediment is called disparity of worship rather than mixed marriage. But the other term is also popularly used.

Why does the subject of mixed marriage deserve special study and attention? What is the law of the Church on mixed marriage? Discuss the marriage of a Catholic to a baptized non-Catholic; to an unbaptized person.

WHY THE CHURCH FORBIDS MIXED MARRIAGE. The practice of legislating against marriages of Catholics with non-Catholics has existed in the Church since the first centuries of the Christian era. It should be observed, too, that although substantially an ecclesiastical statute, the law forbidding such unions contains an element of divine legislation. For, if a Catholic by marrying one who is not of his religion should jeopardize his own faith or that of his children, he would fail not only against the law of the Church but also against the law of God.

The Church is not infrequently criticized in this country for her stand against mixed marriages. But the criticism is really difficult to understand, even when considered from the merely natural viewpoint. Sameness of religion on the part of the spouses is a powerfully integrating factor in their union. On the other hand, where there is dissimilarity of religion, not only are integration and agreement often lacking, but outright disagreement and consequent disintegration frequently result.

Peace and contentment in the homes of such parties cannot reasonably be expected. Especially is that true when one of the parties to such a marriage is a Catholic; for the Catholic religion is so radically different from other creeds and so uncompromising in its exactions, that it is almost impossible for a Catholic in such circumstances to remain a practical member of his Church without encountering some opposition on religious matters from his or her partner.

Why is it said that the law of the Church which forbids mixed marriage contains also an element of divine legislation? What influence does sameness of religion on the part of the spouses have on their marriage? What frequently results from dissimilarity of religion? Why is the position of a Catholic party to a mixed marriage especially difficult?

REAL UNION DIFFICULT, IF NOT IMPOSSIBLE. Young people, before marriage, may not be aware of the danger inherent in mixed marriage. Or they may at least minimize it. They see only each other's perfections and are quite unaware that years of association as husband and wife will bring out quite a sufficient number of discordant qualities to be harmonized, without having a discordant note from the very beginning caused by diversity of religious belief. But the fact remains nonetheless.

And of all the differences there are none more serious, none more stubborn and disastrous in their results, than differences of a religious character. Religion deals with the most fundamental attitudes of life. And where there are differences in fundamentals, serious discord is usually not far distant. Hence, even when husband and wife agree on all other subjects, one is driven to ask how there can be real union so long as there is lack of agreement, if not outright disagreement, regarding the most important question of life, namely, religion.

Why are young people, before marriage, often unaware of the danger inherent in mixed marriage? Why are differences of religion on the part of the spouses so serious?

SPECIFIC WAYS IN WHICH TENSIONS CAN ARISE. Actually, there are many different ways in which tense situations may develop over differences in religion. Hostility may easily arise in the home over such practices as Friday abstinence from meat, over the baptism or Catholic education of children, over the practice of confession, or over matters involving the morals of married life.

At times the constant wrangling may end in one party's yielding or compromising in matters of serious importance, thus causing much unhappiness because of the betrayal of conscience involved. It may even happen that one party will become a veritable enemy of the other's religion, ridiculing it, even forbidding its practice within or outside the home.

At any rate, wherever religious difference obtains between two spouses, there is generally very real danger that their home will become a house divided against itself.

Mention some of the ways in which tensions may arise in the case of a mixed marriage. How serious may such tensions become?

NO GENUINE ORGANIZATION OF HOME LIFE POSSIBLE. Even when differences in religious belief and practice do not lead to outright disagreement and disunion, they prevent genuine organization of the home life. No matter how well disposed toward each other the two spouses may be, the fact remains that one treads one path, the other another. The pair remains as before marriage, not one but two. There is no real union of minds and hearts, no full harmony of sentiments, because a common faith is wanting.

With no community of feeling between them with regard to what should be the chief sentiment of life, love itself may readily lose its ardor. The situation was well expressed as follows by a convert to the Catholic religion who had spent twenty-eight years in a mixed marriage relationship: "The difference in religion is like an invisible wall separating husband and wife at the most intimate and solemn moments of life. . . . There is a dark cloud hovering over the family circle always, and at times one can almost feel it, so heavily does it weigh upon all."

Fifteen centuries ago St. Ambrose wrote as follows: "Where there is discord in faith, how can there be accord in charity?" The question may still be asked today.

Explain how religious differences prevent genuine organization of home life. What impact may religious differences have on the love of husband and wife? Read the statement of a convert who had spent twenty-eight years in a mixed marriage. What question did St. Ambrose ask on this subject?

MIXED MARRIAGES ENDANGER FAITH. The principal reason why the Church is so unbending in her opposition to mixed marriages is because of her conviction that the Catholic religion alone is the correct embodiment of Christian faith, and that the Catholic Church alone is the true Church. Hence she deems it an immeasurable evil for a Catholic to dissociate himself from his Church or to abandon the practice of his religion. But mixed marriages tend toward such evil results.

The intimate association of a Catholic with someone of another or of no creed — even when the latter is fully tolerant of the Catholic religion — is liable to weaken the religious convictions of the Catholic individual and to render him careless in the practice of his faith, and especially to imbue him with the notion that it makes little or no difference what religion a person professes, so long as he leads an honest life. Because such consequences not infrequently result from mixed marriages, the Catholic Church cannot but dissuade her members from contracting these unions.

What is the principal reason why the Church is so unbending in her opposition to mixed marriages? What may easily result from the intimate association of a Catholic with a non-Catholic in married life?

CHILDREN LOST TO THE FAITH. There is even greater danger that the children of mixed marriages will be lost to the faith. Seeing that fathers and mothers, both of whom they love and respect, are of different religions, the children may readily conclude that all creeds are equally good, and so will be estranged to the faith or become indifferent to its practice. Any priest with wide experience will bear out the truth of that assertion.

It is true, the Church at times grants a dispensation from her law, permitting a Catholic to marry one not of his faith. But it must be said that she does so reluctantly, and oftentimes only to avoid greater evils. Furthermore, in granting a dispensation, she demands of the non-Catholic a solemn promise not to hinder the Catholic in the practice of his or her religion, and insists that both parties agree to have the children to be born of their union baptized and reared in the Catholic religion.

The attitude of the Church on mixed marriage is criticized by not a few. But all must admit that it is the only attitude tenable by those who firmly believe that the Catholic Church alone is in possession of the one true religion, and that all temporal considerations must be subordinated to the spiritual good of souls, including even the soul of the new-born infant.

What effect does mixed marriage often have on the faith of the children? What promises does the Church exact of those who wish to enter a mixed marriage? Why must the Church be in opposition to mixed marriage?

SUGGESTED PRACTICES

1. If you are a party to a mixed marriage, strive by prayer and good example for the conversion of your consort.
2. Encourage in whatever way you can the youth program of your parish so that the young people may have an opportunity to associate with boys and girls of the Catholic faith.

XIV

ADJUSTMENT IN MARRIAGE

A good adjustment in marriage implies cordial or harmonious relationships between husband and wife, a satisfactory adaptation to each other. Viewed negatively, it implies the absence of tensions and antagonisms, of conflict and clash between the spouses.

It takes a certain amount of care and effort to bring about a satisfactory adjustment in marriage. One cannot simply leave the matter to chance or to the force of circumstances. Hence it should be well to examine in advance the things that may stand in the way of a good adjustment and those that can be made to contribute towards it.

What does a good adjustment in marriage imply? Why is it well to study this phase of the marriage relationship?

SOURCES OF MALADJUSTMENT. There is a very considerable variety of things that tend to lead to maladjustment or to more or less serious difficulties between partners in marriage. Such are, for example, cultural factors, religious differences, health factors, interference from outsiders, such as in-laws, economic factors, personal factors, such as disposition or temperament, moral character, and differences between the two sexes. Attention will be given to several of these in the following by way of example. Religious differences that arise from mixed marriages have already been discussed elsewhere.

Undoubtedly the most profound differences in human beings are those founded in sex, that is, the differences that exist between man and woman, between male and female. Not only are there more obvious physical differences between them, but also less obvious psychic, or spiritual, ones.

Man, for instance, reasons more than woman. He is more the philosopher. Woman, on the other hand, uses her imagination more freely. She is

less the philosopher. Happily the reasoning contribution of man and the imagination of woman can very properly complement each other. Where such is the case in marriage, the differences can prove very beneficial to the husband and wife. But, if they are taken to constitute irreconcilable differences rather than to complement each other, they could readily lead to many misunderstandings and antagonisms.

Mention some of the things that tend to lead to difficulties between partners in marriage. How may we classify the profound differences in human beings that are founded in sex? How do man and woman differ as to reasoning and the use of the imagination? What should be the result of this difference?

WOMAN MORE FLEXIBLE AND SENSITIVE. Well worth noting, too, is the fact that woman is normally much more flexible than man. This implies that it is easier for her to adapt herself to her husband's ways and views than it is for him to adapt himself to hers. A recognition of this fact on her part, and conduct that is in harmony with it, will undoubtedly go far toward avoiding conflicts between the two. To be sure, both should make every reasonable effort to compromise, to compose differences in views and attitudes that may exist between them.

Another difference of no little importance between man and woman is to be found in their feelings. As a rule, man's feelings are less sensitive than woman's. It might be argued whether this is due to natural causes or to cultural status, but the fact itself cannot be questioned. It implies that little attentions in daily life mean much more to the wife than to the husband. The former will easily be pained by their absence. She may conclude, as a result, that there is a want of genuine love on the part of the husband. The latter, on the other hand, may not even notice the absence.

What is implied by the fact that woman is more flexible than man? Discuss the relative sensitivity of man and woman and its implications in married life.

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES AND MARITAL MALADJUSTMENT. By cultural differences are meant differences that center in the racial, recreational, educational, and religious mores and folkways of individuals. These affect a person's life pattern. They affect his outlook on life. They may even affect his personality. It should be self-evident that, when the culture, or life-patterns, of husband and wife are similar, there is a sound basis for harmonious adjustment on their part; and that when, on the other hand, there is considerable dissimilarity in culture, there is danger of division and discord.

Differences and dissimilarities readily lead to incompatibilities and tensions between spouses. At all events, they hinder rather than help the development of a community of interests and a sympathetic association between husband and wife that a truly successful married life demands. Every reasonable effort should be made, therefore, to avoid such differences or to compose them when they exist. Much can be done in this regard even before marriage, namely, by selecting as a life-partner an individual characterized by much the same cultural background as one's own.

What is meant by cultural differences? What may reasonably be ex-

pected when life-patterns of husband and wife are similar? when they are dissimilar? What should be done when cultural differences exist?

PERSONAL FACTORS IN MARRIAGE. The term "personal factors" is taken here to extend to both the disposition and moral character or conduct of an individual. We speak popularly of individuals with even temperaments and kindly dispositions, with impulsive temperaments and querulous dispositions. Certainly the former are easier to get along with, both in married life and social life generally, than the latter.

The term "moral character" as used here is taken to refer especially to ideals and moral standards. It cannot be questioned that an individual with noble ideals and high moral standards normally makes a more satisfactory partner in marriage, than one with ignoble ideals and low moral standards. Beyond any doubt, a spouse ornamented with virtues is easier to adjust to than a spouse decharacterized by vicious habits or unsocial ways of living. Such practices, for instance, as unselfishness, mildness, patience, humility, and considerateness smooth the way to harmonious adjustment in marriage. Jealousy, impatience, pride, and irritability, on the other hand, work against such adjustment.

What is meant by "personal factors"? What do temperaments and disposition have to do with compatibility in married life? What does the term "moral character" mean? Discuss the significance of ideals and moral standards in married life. Mention some of the practices that make for harmonious adjustment in marriage; some practices that work against such adjustment.

HELPS TOWARD MARRIAGE ADJUSTMENT. Not a little can be accomplished toward a successful marriage adjustment by the careful selection of a life partner. Such a selection would eliminate in advance, at least in considerable measure, certain factors that would prove disturbing to the subsequent marriage. Nevertheless, such a preliminary precaution is not wholly sufficient. Some positive efforts must also be put forth if harmonious relations and a sound adjustment are to be developed and maintained.

The average marriage will call for a measure of constant adjustment. No matter what the similarities that may exist between spouses by virtue of a careful selection of partners, some differences will still exist. They will not be composed automatically. They will call for intelligent and determined effort. They will demand thinking and planning and the faithful following out of conclusions arrived at.

Knowledge of each other on the part of husband and wife is a very important factor in marriage adjustment. Not a little can also be accomplished toward this end during courtship days. The attainment of a reasonable knowledge of each other, on the part of the intended spouses, is one of the main purposes of courtship. But that knowledge can undoubtedly be enlarged upon after marriage.

Knowledge alone, however, is not sufficient. After the two spouses realize what causes irritation or what gives pleasure to each other, they must be determined to avoid the former and to encourage the latter in their daily lives. Wishful thinking will mean little here. What is demanded is a

sense of responsibility, a real measure of self-discipline and self-sacrifice, a determined will.

Why is the careful selection of a life partner important? Is it sufficient to assure harmonious relations and sound adjustment in marriage? Discuss the importance of knowledge of each other on the part of husband and wife. To what should such knowledge lead?

A LIVELY SENSE OF DUTY. Most closely allied with the foregoing consideration is a sense of duty. Husbands and wives have very serious obligations toward each other and toward their offspring. They must keep themselves keenly aware of that fact. They must also keep themselves alert to the fact that, without a reasonable amount of harmony between them, they cannot properly fulfill these duties. All this calls for the cultivation of a sense of duty. Nothing else can take its place. All marriages involve differences and hardships, ups and downs, disappointments and setbacks. It would be counting on the unlikely to expect the spouses to face up to these, through thick and thin, without a sensitive conscience; in other words, without a lively sense of duty.

The surpassing importance of religion in this connection should be self-evident. It is the individual who is alive to his duty to God who will be alive to his duty to spouse and offspring. Only the deeply religious individual will stand up to these obligations when faced by difficulties. Often, therefore, should spouses meditate on the words of the Psalmist, "Unless the Lord build the house, they labor in vain who build it."¹ Doing so will keep before their minds consistently the important fact that a well-adjusted marriage without the aid of the supernatural, without the sustaining grace of God, is out of the question.

What place has a lively sense of duty in married life? Discuss the surpassing importance of religion in well-adjusted marriage.

1. Psalm 126, 1.

SUGGESTED PRACTICES

1. If you look forward to entering the married state, pray that God may direct you in the selection of a life partner.
2. If you are married, try to apply what you have learned about "harmonious relations and a sound adjustment" in the married state.

XV

THE RELIGIOUS ORDER

and

THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY

Religious orders are not infrequently said to resemble Christian families. And there is unquestionably much resemblance between the two. That this is true in the case of the Benedictine Order, for instance, appears from passages in its Rule of Life. But even more does it appear from a consideration of the basic fundamentals that are common to the two family units. Thus, the ultimate ends of the two are identical. Again, both are founded on a solemn and sacred contract. Furthermore, there are striking resemblances between the office of abbot as head of the monastic family and the Christian father as the head of the domestic unit. There should be both value and interest in an examination of these contrasting features.

Where do we find indications of a resemblance between the Benedictine Order and the Christian family? Mention some basic fundamentals which are common to the two family units.

THE ENDS OF THE TWO WAYS OF LIFE ARE IDENTICAL. Actually the ends of the two types of families, the monastic and human, are not only similar but identical. The ultimate purpose of both is union with God, the attainment of the Beatific Vision. The two simply constitute two different ways of reaching that same goal.

As the *Encyclical on Christian Marriage* points out, the two partners in marriage are bound to help each other in working out their eternal destiny. There must be under the sacred bond of marriage, it states, "a mutual interest or spiritual molding of the two spouses, a determination and ambition to perfect each other spiritually." That is to say, after the two have made their solemn promises to take each other as man and wife

until death, they must move along life's pathway together toward their final destination. They must no longer work toward that end alone, as they did before marriage, or as do single persons in the world; they must seek God together, hand in hand.

But that is also the purpose of the monastic life. The test that is applied when an aspirant seeks admission into a Benedictine monastery is simply this: "whether he truly seek God." Only on that basis is he permitted to enter. In other words, the purpose is the same as that of the marriage state. What differences exist in the two ways of life are found, not in their ultimate purpose, but in the means for obtaining it.

What is to be said of the ultimate end of each of these two types of families? Discuss the responsibility that rests upon the two partners in marriage to help each other spiritually. What test is applied to the aspirant who seeks admission into a Benedictine monastery?

SOLEMN CONTRACT AND SACRAMENT. Both the monastic order and the Christian family unit are based on a sacred and solemn contract, the religious vows in the case of the former, the sacrament of Matrimony in the case of the latter. Both involve a solemn consecration. Both are intimately linked with grace.

The Christian family is based on an unbreakable promise, on a contract that is at the same time a sacrament, or grace-giving institution, namely, the sacrament of Matrimony. By it husband and wife are consecrated to special spiritual functions in the Mystical Body of Christ. So, too, is the religious life of the solemnly professed Benedictine monk based on a sacred and unbreakable contract, namely, his solemn vows. Through these vows the religious is totally consecrated to the service of God and the Church. As the sacrament of Matrimony lifts an office of nature to a supernatural plane, so the vows supernaturalize all the acts performed in the religious life that are in harmony with their purposes. Through the vows a religious is consecrated for the service of God, one might say, much as a chalice or other sacred vessel of the altar is consecrated to His service.

What constitutes the sacred and solemn contract on which the monastic order is based? that on which the Christian family unit is based? Discuss the marriage contract as a sacrament, or grace-giving institution. What is the effect of the solemn vows of a religious?

VITALLY SPIRITUAL SOCIETIES. Both the domestic and the monastic families are also most intimately bound up with grace. Both are vitally spiritual societies. As seen elsewhere, in considering marriage as a sacrament, Christian spouses live constantly in a sacramental state. They have a continuing title to the graces of the sacrament of Matrimony. In other words, Christian marriage, the basis of the human family, is a union of two personalities throbbing with the Christ-life of grace. It is a partnership of two beings suffused with grace, a union of two souls redeemed by Christ, destined for eternal union with God, and bound to work together toward that end.

Similarly is the monastic family something vitally spiritual. While the members do not, as is the case with married partners, live in a special sacramental state, they are nonetheless blest with many graces. In their

daily life they are constantly surrounded with many and varied means of grace. Their lives are guided and controlled by the graces of vocation. They have ready access to the sacraments of Penance and Holy Communion, with their concomitant graces. They have the opportunity of frequent assistance at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and at the many religious exercises of the community.

What do we mean by saying that the domestic and the monastic families are "vitally spiritual societies"? Why is it said that Christian spouses live constantly in a sacramental state? In what way is the monastic society something vitally spiritual?

MUTUAL AID. As a counterpart to the mutual aid that comes to married spouses from their close union in sacramental marriage is the aid that comes from a religious life in common in the monastic family; in other words, that comes from the example and encouragement and strivings of many monastic brethren. It might be added, too, that, while the religious vows do not constitute a sacrament, the eminent theologian of the Church, St. Thomas, likens the monastic profession to the *ex opere operato* effect of the sacraments.

It should be obvious from the foregoing, then, that there is a striking similarity in what might be called the foundation stones of both types of families, the domestic and the monastic. As was seen, both are built on solemn and sacred promises made to God and ratified in heaven; both imply a solemn consecration with a title to an abundance of the spiritual aid of grace.

Discuss mutual aid in sacramental marriage and in the religious life. Summarize what has been said about the striking similarity in the foundation stones of the domestic and monastic families.

THE STATUS OF CHRISTIAN AND MONASTIC FATHERS ANALOGOUS. Turning to what might be called the capstone or keystone of the monastic family and human family, namely, the heads, we find an equally striking resemblance. Both bear the title of father, and both are said to represent Christ at the head of their respective units.

From time immemorial the head of the human family has been known under the title of father. In the case of the head of the religious families of men, he is also, as already indicated, quite universally given the title of father. St. Benedict, in his Rule for the monastic family, written over 1400 years ago, refers to the head of the monastery as "abbot," a term that means father. The law of the Church applies to him the title of "father of the monastery."

In what ways do the heads of the two families, monastic and human, bear a striking resemblance to each other? What name is applied to the head of the human family? the head of the monastic family?

BOTH FATHERS REPRESENT CHRIST. But much more important than the term used, or the name applied to the head of each of the two groups, is the fact that in both cases his is the profound dignity of representing Christ. Insofar as the human father is concerned, it has

already been shown that the father represents Christ as the head of the Christian home. That is unmistakably clear from St. Paul's *Epistle to the Ephesians*. The same is true of the abbot, or father, of the monastery. He is to appear to the monks as representing Christ at their head.

To quote the unmistakably plain words of St. Benedict's Rule: "The abbot is believed to hold the place of Christ in the monastery." And again: "Let the abbot, since he is believed to hold the place of Christ in the monastery, be called Lord and Father . . . out of reverence and love of Christ." Then there immediately follows this weighty admonition—an admonition that might also well be applied to the human father: "Let him (the abbot) be mindful of this and show himself worthy of this honor."

Whom do both the father of the Christian family and the abbot of the monastic family represent? Which epistle of St. Paul emphasizes the dignity of the Christian father? What does St. Benedict say in his Rule about the dignity of the abbot of the monastic family?

BASIC PRINCIPLE OF MONASTIC LIFE. One might well think that St. Benedict, who showed such great familiarity with the Scriptures, had the fifth chapter of St. Paul's *Epistle to the Ephesians* in mind when he wrote those words about the abbot. At any rate, we have in them the key principle to the well-known chapter of his Rule on the abbot. He represents Christ in the midst of his monks; the latter are to submit to him as to Christ.

This is a principle that is most basic to the entire ordering of the monastic family. It suggests the abbot's norm of conduct, his rule of life. Similarly it suggests the norm that should guide the monks, the children of the monastic family, in their relationships with him. The abbot is, in the measure possible to human frailty, to reproduce in his life and in the discharge of his official duties the person and the actions of Jesus Christ. The monks are to show him the respect that such a position demands.

Which part of the Holy Scripture may St. Benedict have had in mind when he wrote the chapter of his Rule on the abbot? How is the entire monastic life ordered according to the abbot's dignity as the representative of Christ?

SUGGESTED PRACTICES

1. If you are married, be mindful of the duty of Christian spouses to help each other in working out their eternal salvation.
2. Make the dignity of the father as the representative of Christ in the home a basic principle in the ordering of your Christian family life.

XVI

RELIGIOUS PRACTICES IN HOME AND MONASTERY

Referring further to the analogy that exists between the monastic and Christian homes, attention may advantageously be directed to the striking similarity in the religious customs and practices of the two.

In this connection it should be well to recall that St. John Chrysostom referred to the Christian home as a church, and St. Benedict referred to the monastic institution as a house of God. Thus, in St. John Chrysostom's writings we read these words: "Prayer and teaching in the church are not enough. They must be accompanied by prayers and reading at home; for the home is a little church, an *ecclesia domestica*." As to the term "house of God" that St. Benedict used in his Rule, it obviously referred to the monastic institution as such, and not merely to its chapel or abbey church.

What further striking similarity between monastic and Christian homes will be given attention in this chapter? How did St. John Chrysostom refer to the Christian home? To what did the term "house of God" in St. Benedict's Rule refer?

RELIGIOUS PRACTICES IN HOME AND MONASTERY. The official or public worship of the Church—the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, the Divine Office, the administration of the sacraments, and certain approved devotions—normally takes place in the church edifice rather than in the monastery. Similarly the official liturgical services of the Church take place in the parochial edifice rather than in the home. But there are, nevertheless, many religious practices and devotions that are entirely in place both in the monastic home and at the domestic hearth. Many have, as a matter of fact, been found in both over the centuries. And herein, again, we find a considerable analogy between the two family groups.

There is, for instance, the large field of the sacramentals, or the so-called "little sacraments." Many of these are in place alike in the miniature church that is the home and in the house of God that is the monastery. Such sacramentals are, for example: the use of holy water;

making the Sign of the Cross before beginning a task or a prayer; the use of medals; the presence of blest evidences of religion, such as crucifixes, pictures, and statues; the ordinary blessing of a house; the special blessing given a home at Eastertide or Epiphany; the blessing of medicine and of food for the table. Well, too, might mention be made in this connection of the many agricultural blessings the Church has given us. Insofar as the more highly urbanized families and industrialized monasteries are concerned, mention might be made of what might be called the industrial sacramentals — the blessing of typewriters, printing presses, dynamos, and such like.

Where do the official liturgical services of the Church normally take place? Where else may certain religious practices and devotions properly be held? Mention some of the sacramentals which are in place in both home and monastery.

BLESSINGS FOR INDIVIDUALS. More important still are the Church's blessings for individuals. Some of these are in place, no less in the monastic than in the domestic family. There is, for instance, the parental blessing. Reference was made earlier to the wholesome practice of parents blessing their children, particularly before they retire in the evening and before they go into the dangers of the street or on any considerable journey.

The equivalent of this practice is both well known and faithfully observed in monastic families. Thus, it is customary for the member of the community, whenever he leaves the monastery and when he returns to it, to present himself to the abbot, or to his more immediate superior, and ask his blessing. Furthermore, every evening when the monastic family has completed Compline and night prayers in the chapel, the abbot of the community, sprinkling the brethren with holy water, gives them the final blessing of the day.

What is the parental blessing and on what occasions is it usually given? Tell of the equivalent of this practice in monastic families.

FAMILY PRAYERS AND SPECIAL DEVOTIONS. Again, there is a variety of prayers and devotions that are equally appropriate in the monastery and at the family hearth. Mention might be made in this connection of prayers before and after meals, morning and evening prayers, suffrage for deceased members and prayerful remembrance of absent ones, the reading of the Scriptures and other religious books at meals and at other times, the observance of special religious devotions during certain months of the year or various liturgical seasons.

Where differences exist in regard to these practices, as between home and monastery, they will be found rather in extent and manner of use than in their suitability or unsuitability for either group. And even though they may take somewhat different forms in the home and in the monastery, this does not detract from their general resemblance. They still remain fundamentally counterparts of each other.

Normally, as already noted, the monastery has attached to it a special church or chapel in which the monks carry out in common many religious exercises of the day. Similarly the home should have at least a small altar or shrine, before which the family members can gather for prayers and

devotions in common. Herein, again, there is a measure of resemblance between the two groups.

Which are some of the prayers and devotions that are equally appropriate in monastery and Christian home? What is to be said of differences in regard to these practices? What should be found in the home as a counterpart to the monastic church or chapel?

FAMILY DEVOTIONS IN CHURCH. Mention might also be made of devotions that should be assisted at in unison by family members in their church edifices. Thus, just as it is customary for members of the monastic family to participate together in religious exercises in their chapel or abbey church, so should parents and children join with one another in services in their parish church. Happily this practice is growing in our day. It is seen, for instance, in the increasing popularity of family Communion, the family Mass, the family holy hour, and the family retreat.

In spite of all the analogies that have been pointed out, and still others not indicated, there are also some noteworthy differences in practice in the actual lives of the two types of families considered. To indicate some of the more outstanding of these should open the way, in bringing this study of marriage and the family to a close, to some practical resolutions that might well go far toward lifting Christian family life of our day to levels as high as those at which religious life finds itself.

Perhaps mention might well be made with particular benefit in this regard of the religious novitiate, the annual spiritual retreat, and the renewal of their vows by religious. The equivalent of these might very suitably be introduced for the benefit of family life. Properly adapted to its needs, they should go far in eliminating the differences that exist in the spiritual lives of the two groups.

Discuss participation of monks in religious exercises in their chapel or abbey church; of parents and children in their parish church. What should follow from emphasizing differences in the religious practices of home and monastery? Mention three practices of monastic families which, with proper adaptation, might suitably be introduced into domestic life.

PREPARATION FOR RELIGIOUS LIFE AND FAMILY LIFE.

A novitiate might well be called an apprenticeship for religious life. As novices, candidates for a religious order are taught the principles of ascetical life. They are also taught, in both theory and practice, the details of the particular religious rule under which they are to live if they eventually join the community. This period of training and trial implies a careful preparation for the life ahead.

Something similar to this may well be provided for those who enter the married state. Thus, candidates for the sacrament of Matrimony should receive careful preparation for the state of life they are entering upon. They should be made thoroughly acquainted with the fundamentals of Christian marriage and family living. They should be given a clear grasp of the spiritual aspects of family relationships. They should be taught the religious practices that should enable them to make of their future homes churches in miniature.

As a matter of fact, something is presently being done in this regard.

It can be seen in the multiplication of marriage courses in and outside of school, also of marriage forums and of a variety of discussion groups in which members devote themselves to the study of the field of preparation for marriage and family living. But the fact remains that much more could be done, and is also greatly needed.

What are candidates for a religious order taught in the novitiate? Explain the type of preparation that might well be provided for those who plan to enter the married state. What indications are there that something is already being done in this regard?

THE SPIRITUAL RETREAT. The spiritual retreat, the second practice referred to, is also found universally in religious life and has genuine spiritual value. This wholesome practice should not be denied to the family. Actually, it is being provided increasingly in the form of the family retreat.

This spiritual exercise focuses the attention of the marriage partners on the spiritual bases of married life, on the divinely ordained purposes of marriage and the family, and on the rights and duties of husbands and wives and the privileges and obligations of fathers and mothers. It has proved itself an excellent medium for bringing to the attention of spouses the varied possibilities for sanctification through Christian family living. There is much need for this type of retreat for married couples today. It should be increasingly provided for them.

What is a spiritual retreat? Mention some of the topics that are treated in a family retreat.

RENEWAL OF VOWS. Finally, there is the practice among religious of renewing their sacred vows. This may be done in private at any time. It is usually done publicly on the occasion of the annual retreat of a community. There is no valid reason why married couples should not also renew their nuptial promises occasionally. Actually the practice is growing in connection with family retreats and the family holy hour. It should be zealously encouraged. It carries with it no little promise of benefiting the spiritual life of the family.

While there have been some accomplishments, insofar as the family is concerned, in all the aforementioned fields, the fact remains that far more needs still to be done. In fact, insofar as religious practices and customs generally are concerned, they are still found far more extensively in monasteries than in homes. This suggests a far-reaching field for the family apostolate today.

On what occasion do religious usually renew their sacred vows? What advantage may reasonably be expected from the occasional renewal of nuptial promises? What is suggested by the present status of religious practices and customs in Christian homes?

SUGGESTED PRACTICES

1. Join with other members of your family in services in your parish church as often as possible.
2. Try to make a spiritual retreat each year; and if the opportunity presents itself, participate in a family retreat.

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