



# *Why* a Woman needs the **CATHOLIC FAITH**

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## *Why the Knights of Columbus Advertise Catholic Faith*

The reason is simple. We Catholics want our non-Catholic friends and neighbors to know us as we really are and not as we are some times mistakenly represented.

We are confident that when our religious Faith is better understood by those who do not share it, mutual understanding will promote the good-will which is so necessary in a predominantly Christian country whose government is designed to serve all the people—no matter how much their religious convictions may differ.

American Catholics are convinced that as the teachings of Christ widely and firmly take hold of the hearts and conduct of our people, we shall remain free in the sense that Christ promised (John VIII, 31-38), and in the manner planned by the Founding Fathers of this republic.

Despite the plainly stated will of the Good Shepherd that there be "one fold and one shepherd," the differences in the understanding of Christ's teaching are plainly evident. It has rightfully been called "the scandal of a divided Christianity."

If there is anything which will gather together the scattered flock of Christ, it is the nationwide understanding of the Savior, what He did and how He intended mankind to benefit by the Redemption.

To this end, we wish our fellow-Americans to become acquainted with the teachings of Christ as the Catholic Church has faithfully presented them, since the day the apostles invaded the nations of the world in willing and courageous obedience to Christ's command: "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations..." (Matt. XXVIII, 19).

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# THE DIVINE PLAN FOR WOMEN

When I was first asked the question, "Why does a woman need the Catholic Faith?" I answered almost without thinking: "Why I couldn't live without my religion." Since then I have been thinking about my spontaneous response. Is it true? And why is it true?

Yes, it is true. I know that I could not live a life worth living without it. It is simply a fact, for me, that nothing in this world, nor all the things put together in it would be worth the struggle if it did not have an ultimate and eternal purpose.

That is precisely why I do so need my Faith. With it I can have a successful life and because of it a triumphant death. Both depend, of course, on my being a *good* Catholic, that is, conforming my conduct to my Faith. For it is my Faith that makes my life not only worth living, but makes the only important thing to live it well.

For example, consider suicide. As a Catholic I can't deliberately commit suicide without going straight to Hell. Why? My life isn't my own to do with as I wish. It belongs to God; He decides how long it is



to last, and how it is to end. He has plans for me: Heaven—if I live according to His plan. With the words of St. Paul ringing in my ears, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of men, what things God hath prepared for them that love Him," it seems imperative

that I try to fit myself into God's plans. It is my Catholic Faith that shows me what God's plan is and how to follow it. Best of all, it is a lovely, clear blueprint that any woman can read.

And it is an exciting blueprint, too. When I consider the edict, "No suicide," because I belong to my Creator and must carry out His plans for me in order to reach my destined place in the next world, I find that I am extremely important. God wants ME; He made me for Himself; if I live as He shows me how to through His Church, I will be happy forever after. That is the reason why all the things of this world, that in themselves are relatively unimportant, become valuable. They are the means or the tools of my salvation. Not only am I important as an individual, but

everything I do here is important, too. Hence I want to live out God's design for me.

But "living a life," as everyone soon discovers, isn't a simple task. This is where the blueprint I have mentioned comes in. When our first parents, Adam and Eve, ate of the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden and disobeyed God, they lost, not only Heaven for themselves and all of us, but also those wonderful gifts such as freedom from sickness, that would have made our mortal lives much happier and easier. That is why, with our weakened wills, we find it very difficult to want God enough to do what He has commanded, and to avoid doing what He has forbidden.

And even when our weak wills reach out feebly toward God, our darkened minds don't know what to do or how to do it. This is the fallen nature we inherited from Adam and Eve. Of course, God knew all of this and was unwilling to let the men and women He had made for Himself remain astray. He decided to redeem us, reopen the entrance to Heaven, and again make it possible for us to find our way to Him if we wished to do so.

This second chance, as all Christians know, was given us through God's wonderful plan of Redemption; by which the Son of God, Jesus Christ, laid down His life that we, the children of His Heavenly Father, might be saved. Once again it became possible for us to reach Heaven and God, but only after a life of trial to prove our worthiness.

But though Heaven was re-

opened, we kept our fallen and weakened human nature. We would need a great deal of help. God is just and merciful and loving, so while He was yet on earth, after His glorious Resurrection and before His Ascension into Heaven, He provided such help, in the form of His Church, which He set up with Peter as its first head. And that this Church would endure and be infallible in its teachings, Christ promised Peter: "And I say to thee: that thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

This, then, is my exciting blueprint: God's plan for me and the means of carrying it out, are to be found in the true Church He began on that first Pentecost. It is there that I can find out what He wants me to do, how to do it, and there, too, that I can obtain all the tremendous strength (grace, we Catholics call it) that I need to be successful in living a good life. Nothing has been left out: what, how, and all the help I need to do it.

For a woman, one of the most satisfying and comforting things about being a Catholic is this conviction of *security*. I don't have to depend merely on my own faulty interpretation of the Bible. I don't have to rely merely on my instinct, intelligence or education to tell me what is right and wrong. The Church Christ left me is so clear and so definite and so precise that I can always be sure of what I must do, of what choices are right and those that would be wrong. Plus

all of this is the constant *aid to be strong* when I know that I am really weak. I just don't have to worry; I'm always on the right road when I think with the mind of Christ's Church.

So, first of all, what do I have to do?

My Duties Are:

To *GOD*:

Know Him

Love Him

Serve Him by Prayer  
Thanksgiving  
Reparation  
Petition

Obey His Ten Commandments  
The Commandments of His Church

To *MYSELF*:

Develop and increase the virtues of patience, humility, etc.

Self-preservation

Care of health, of life

Special duties of state of life:

Married

Single

Religious

to *OTHERS*:

Respect of their

life

health

body

property

liberty

right to truth

and to good name

Charity:

Think well of others

Wish well to others

Help others in need

This, at first glance, seems like a large order. But one word seems to cover all of my duties: love.

I must love God, myself, and my neighbors in the special ways I mentioned. By myself, of course, this would be quite impossible: But God did not set up His Church just to tell me *what* to do. The Church also tells me *how* to carry out God's laws and its own. For example, the commandment of God "Remember thou keep holy the Sabbath," is interpreted by the Church to mean: *Go to Mass on Sundays* and keep God's day in a seemly manner by refraining from servile works.

Still all the knowing and understanding of God's laws do not guarantee abiding by them. The doing is still to be done, and that is what is really difficult. But right here comes the most wonderful part of God's plan. He, through His Church, gives Himself to me (and to all of us) so that we may share in His strength to resist sin and do good. In the blueprint for my salvation all the help I'll ever need, and whenever I need it, will be mine.

This remarkable help is called God's actual grace, a free gift from God to us through His Church. When Adam and Eve sinned and left themselves and us ignorant and strongly inclined to evil, they cut themselves and us, their descendants, off from God. According to Scripture, before their fall they had "walked with God." This sharing in His life made them holy and good; they were constantly sanctified. They lived in a state of

sanctifying grace: a truly God-like life.

Therefore the first thing that God does through His Church when we are born into the world is to restore this state of holiness, this walking-with-God. This new or God-like life is made possible by sanctifying grace and first comes to us through what is called the sacrament of Baptism. Again we become children of God and heirs of Jesus Christ.

The seven sacraments of the Catholic Church are God's means of giving to us those helping graces which His life and death have merited for us. Grace is God's life within us, without which we could not do our duties consistently and save our souls. Of all the sacraments, Baptism is the most necessary, for without it we could not enter into Heaven. It removes us from the state of original sin and gives us the new life of sanctifying grace. It also makes us members of the Catholic Church and ready to receive the grace which the other sacraments have to give.

### But Humans Sin

We would have little trouble being good and loving God and our neighbor if we could stay in this state which Baptism gives us. And we do, so long as we keep from serious (mortal) sin. But, ignorant and inclined to evil as we are, we need another divine help to fight against doing wrong. This God gives us too. When we need it, actual grace comes to "enlighten our mind and strengthen our will" so that we can stay holy—faithful

to God—by avoiding sin and doing good.

Unfortunately we can reject this help or grace, and commit mortal sins, that is, we can do what we know to be grave wrong from our own consciousness of what God and His Church have said is wrong. Should we die in this state of sin, we would lose God and Heaven and go to Hell for all eternity. But God provides help in our failures, too, for He knows how weak we are and how likely to fall. Through His Church, He gives us two chief ways to maintain His friendship, and to increase our closeness to Him: our God-likeness. One is through our reception of the other Sacraments of His Church. The second is through prayer.

### The Sacraments

After Baptism we can receive five other sacraments—Penance, Holy Eucharist, Confirmation, Matrimony, and Extreme Unction. (Men may also receive the sacrament called Holy Orders when they become priests.) These sacraments are all, like Baptism, "outward signs, instituted by Christ, to give grace." It is through Penance (or Confession, as it is popularly known) that sanctifying grace is restored should we fall into grave sin and thus—we can again walk with God. Our sins are forgiven in Confession and in Holy Communion we actually receive God into our souls and bodies. The rest of the sacraments increase this state of sanctifying grace, and all of the sacraments give us special sacramental grace. For example, the sacrament of Mat-

rimony helps those who are married to do what they should for each other and for their children.

Besides these seven essential means for achieving and increasing our state of holiness, we can also simply ask through sincere prayer to be more God-like. Every prayer and good deed increases our friendship with God and brings us closer to Him.

Now, exactly what does all this mean to a woman, in meeting the trials and problems of every-day living?

It means that every minute of my life here can be full of happiness and achievement, for no good I do is useless or without reward. And when my time comes to die, all the joys, sufferings, and labor of my lifetime on earth will contribute, through God's Redemption, to my merit for the ultimate and eternal reward—Heaven and happiness forever with God.

I find in my Catholic Faith the strong and deep assurance that I

can accomplish this wonderful state of affairs: satisfaction here and perfect joy in Heaven. How could I doubt when I know that it is Christ's Church which tells me what I must do, how I must do it, and helps me to do it. None of it is easy, but a pointless existence isn't easy either, nor is it happy and satisfying.

For a woman to know that every small thing she does leads surely to God—that every peeled potato, every washed dish, every bandaged knee is, in the eye of God and in the design for her salvation, as great as the spanned river, the atom smashed, or the life saved—this is true security, real peace of mind, and living to the fullest.

Why does a woman need the Catholic Faith? With it she lives surely as God directs, and therein is her positive blueprint for successful life on earth and the final reward of the "things God hath prepared for them that love Him."

We begin the quest for peace in our own family, in our own neighborhood, in our own city. From there we go out to the world, always obeying the Commandment: Thou shalt love thy God with thy whole heart and with thy whole strength and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

Let all men know you by your speech. When God is driven from the hearts of men by persecutors, when His existence is denied, when He is excluded from the high councils of His creatures, make acts of reparation and atonement and by word and example lead others to know and love and serve God.

ARCHBISHOP JOHN F. O'HARA

# THOSE TERRIBLE TEENS

Flip, thoughtless, headstrong, immature, selfish! — How often we hear such criticisms of our teen-agers. I came in for my share, I remember. And I recall that I thought some of the criticisms justified. This, of course, I would not have admitted at the time. And at that age, I didn't want to be different, or better—I wanted to be just like other girls.

For me, and for many like me, it was in the seventh and eighth grades I first noticed the great gap between my parents and myself. Oh, they still loved me, I knew; and I loved them in a condescending sort of way. I would continue to try to do what they wanted in the big things. After all, they did support me. But they simply didn't understand how I felt about almost everything that mattered: like clothes and boys and what school I went to.

And they had gotten so bossy about little things, like what time I came home from a basketball game or party, and my stopping for a coke at the corner drug store. It seemed that mother intentionally forgot to put my blue jeans in the



laundry — because she hated them so.

Of course, the nuns at school were fussy, too. "Why wouldn't a party with only girls be just as nice?" Just as nice, maybe, but not nearly so much fun. And all the books we should read and those we shouldn't! And did our families let us look at just any TV program? And the constant talk about being "lady-like"—whatever that meant, and always dragging religion into every class. "What would God's mother think of so much lipstick?" Didn't we want to imitate Mary? Well, we did, of course, but we couldn't help wondering if Mary might not have used lipstick if it were being worn in her day. And did it really matter to the Blessed Virgin if we did "paint" our faces?

Yes, it was in my teens that my parents and the nuns became dull and staid old-fogies who either didn't know or had forgotten what really mattered in life. I rebelled against their authority and their opinions both at home and at school, but inwardly — for I was naturally timid and had been brought up never "to make scenes"



—I longed for the time when I would “be my own boss” to come and go as I pleased, dress the way I wanted, and read whatever I chose.

When I was a junior in high school, my rebellion against restrictions grew into a compelling urge to try out new things. I couldn't wait until my sixteenth birthday and my permit to drive the family car.

I was sick of the familiar cottage at a near-by lake. Why couldn't we really travel and see something for a change? I wondered if I would like smoking, or would it make me ill, like drinking did? Maybe I ought to go out with Jim at least once just to see, even though older girls I knew said he was a “wolf.” Oh, there were so many things I didn't know about. And I wanted to know about everything. I had to know.

### Frightened “Sophisticate”

Along with this tremendous urge to do, to try, to see, to know, I was filled with a thousand and one fears. I wouldn't have admitted this to anyone, of course. To appear self-assured was vital; in fact nothing else mattered quite so much. But I *was* afraid—right down into the marrow of my being. I was afraid of the very new things that I yearned so keenly to try out. Would I be inept, so much so that someone would know that I was a novice? I could see myself driving our car, nonchalantly and with assurance, but at the same time worrying about my ability to do so safely.

As for going out with Jim, well, I simply didn't want to. He would want to pet. Now, just a goodnight kiss wasn't wrong, I thought. But in one of our retreats at school, the priest had said that prolonged and intense kissing excited the passions. How long was too long? There was simply too much I didn't know. And would I be able to handle the situation? I liked boys, and I wanted them to like me. Did that mean I would have to pet?

### Made Me Ill

And I was frightened, too, about reading some of the books that became best-sellers. I had read part of one that the girls passed around. It had made me feel odd, as if I were going to be sick to my stomach, so I had never finished it.



Doing as one pleased seemed to have definite drawbacks, for I didn't know what I would like doing, nor how to do it. It was small satisfaction to know that all the other girls were equally at sea. We talked endless hours over malts, on

each other's front porches during the long summer evenings, at school, in the midst of homework. But despite the airs of braggadocio and the remarks, "Oh, don't be young," and "Aren't parents naive," and "Do you suppose he'll ever grow up," there were also breathless questions like, "And then what did you say?" and "Didn't you nearly die?" and "Wouldn't you be afraid to go out with him?"

Actually, as I look back now, I was far more secure than I knew. It was true that I lacked experience, for that is a characteristic of almost any young person. For the same reason I lacked good judgment, good taste, and the stability that maturity should give. But I did possess certain unshakable convictions that were as much a part of me as the color of my eyes and the shape and arrangements of my features. I took them as much for granted as I did the house we lived in and the food we ate.

### Security in Faith

In the midst of my teen-age problems, in the process of trying my wings, it was these convictions that kept me intact, good, fairly happy, and safe. I now know that they were nothing more than the simple principles of my Faith that I had learned and re-learned at home and at school as long as I could remember, for I had been born and raised a Catholic.

First of all, I believed that there is a God just as surely as I believed that two and one are three. This God could do anything or else He wouldn't be God. He made me,

expected certain things of me, loved me, and wanted me with Him some day in Heaven.

Secondly, I knew that there were certain things I had to do purely because I did belong to God. These actions included obedience to the Ten Commandments, the commandments of His Church, and generally being what I would have called "good." If I became confused about what is "good," I knew that I could, with no one knowing, ask any priest in Confession to tell me what was right.

Because I knew that there is a Hell, a Heaven, and that God is loving and watching over me, it became extremely important that I stay good. I wouldn't have talked about it to my best friend; perhaps I didn't admit it to myself—or exactly know it at the time—but the facts of my religion were there to be hung on to, and lived by.

And so I finished high school. On the surface I looked and acted pretty much like any other eighteen-year old girl. I was still flip, often sarcastic, thoughtless and eager for the future. My interests were largely superficial and almost entirely material. I wanted a car of my own; I constantly "needed" new clothes; I considered our house and everything in it shabby and outmoded, and secretly wondered why my father didn't make a lot more money.

Then, out of the blue, my mother asked me, "Would you like to work your way through college? We'll help you all we can. Or do you want to get a job?" It was a big decision, but a month at business

school had left me weary of typing and of the seemingly difficult-to-master shorthand. College looked simpler somehow, and more fun.

## The Searching

Actually, it wouldn't have mattered what my choice was. For a girl, college or a first job can both be labeled—the waiting period. The young girl is waiting for life to begin; she wants to do big things. The word sacrifice is real to her. All her earlier yearnings have merged into a burning desire to give herself—her enthusiasms, her talents, her vigor, her life. We Catholics call it: wanting to find her vocation.

The word vocation means a way of life; it is a choice of a pattern of living by which a person saves her soul. There are three possible vocations open to the young girl: the religious life, the single life, and the married life. All three lead to God; all three demand heroism, sacrifice, and virtuous living. For the young girl today the most important question in her mind is, "What am I going to do? What does the future hold for me?" And never, in all the eras of history, has that question been more difficult to answer. Never has a young girl needed more help.

## Marriage

Recently I worked with young women in college and in the preparation for marriage conferences that hundreds of Catholic parishes and schools now sponsor. I found these girls deeply serious about their lives, and it is to their religion that

they turn for help. In the very nature of things, since God made man and woman, most girls lean towards marriage as their vocation.

Each new generation of young women contemplating the married state must make their decisions in the light of prevailing social pressures. One of the greatest trends at present is that toward early dating, early courtship and early marriage.

A woman's basic education is her best dowry. Young women often must decide whether they will continue their education or enter marriage; whether they will marry during college or wait until the desired degree is obtainable.

The teachings of the Catholic



Church relative to courtship and the Sacrament of Matrimony enable the young woman to act with a maturity of judgment. The present attitude that there is no time, that if you aren't married and settled and have your career and a house before you are twenty-five, you are never going to get these things is a misleading and dangerous line of thought.

Marry in haste and repent for a lifetime. The Catholic girl is taught

that marriage is a sacred vocation requiring proper preparation for the responsibilities involved. When she enters marriage, she knows that her marriage is permanent and the vocation in life in which she freely chooses to save her soul. Should her marriage mean constant travelling, trailer camps, difficult living conditions with babies, illness, and being distant from friends and relatives—that, too, is her vocation.

For some girls another love to which to give themselves is the only possible vocation. This is the religious life. They become nuns. In a very real sense, they choose God as their life's companion, and, like their married sisters, love dominates their every act. To the outsider, the life of a nun looks singularly uncomplicated, secure, and even easy. But Sisters must be self-sacrificing, virtuous, and often heroic and it is through the constant use of their Catholic Faith that they are so. They give up completely their own personal freedom, going wherever their Superior sends them: it may be to serve India's starving millions, to deal with thirty squirming American fifth-graders, or to cook, scrub, serve the sick, the old, the orphaned. They give up the joys of family life, the comforts of personal possessions, modern clothing, and the ease that money can buy. They lean heavily upon God's promises to the pure of heart and upon the graces they can obtain through Him and His Church.

Some girls choose to love God in the world without the joys and privileges of either marriage or the

religious life in the convent. Too often the unobservant fail to realize that this single life is as truly a vocation, an answer to love, as are the married and the religious lives. It is true that the choice of a single life is forced on many girls today, but the Catholic girl knows that God uses circumstances to indicate His will, to show what He wants for her, what would be best for her. Dependent and aged parents sometimes make the choice of a religious life impossible, and the death of a fiance or the failure of the right man to appear rule out marriage.

### Promptings To Serve

An unmarried young Catholic woman today may dedicate herself to the service of her fellowman because her religion teaches her to see in everyone another Christ. For such women, it is often a lonely, heroic, selfless way. They are unknown, unheralded, and often undistinguishable from the non-Catholic girls with whom they work. In reality, they are as different from them as day is from night.

They live in the same de-Christianized world where God and His laws are often absent from business deals, social life and the routine duties of every day. They are surrounded by the same temptations to over-emphasize the importance of material things. They see the worldly success of others who live by such dictums as: "I'm not my brother's keeper," "Let the other fellow do it," and "Why shouldn't I take what I can get?" Yet they continue to live by such truths as:

"My brother and I are one in Christ; I must act as Christ would act."

It is because of the strength of their Catholic beliefs that young girls can ignore the yard-stick of material success and not follow in the ways of those who strive merely to "get ahead." While they wait for a God-made marriage, or come to accept a single life as their vocation, they live apostolic lives of service to those who need their help. I see examples of their generosity everywhere. In my city there are three girls, dedicated to the lay apostolate, who came solely to help families of limited means. For what we can afford to pay, they come into our homes and do whatever needs doing. The wonderful one I have had sings as she scrubs floors and walls. She took complete charge of my family of seven when I had to be in the hospital. She is a masterhand with a new baby, a sick mother, and four noisy boys.

I have many unmarried friends who give hours to clerking in the local St. Vincent de Paul store and

at the Catholic library and bookshop. Most of their leisure goes to working with the parish Catholic Youth Organization groups, the Legion of Mary, and helping at the day-school for retarded children. Many of them are taking care of their elderly parents and aiding financially a married brother or sister. Their lives are useful, happy and full because of one thing—their Catholic Faith and training.

### Talents Needed

So it is that the Catholic young girl need not be adrift, frustrated, restless and unhappy. There is a definite place for her in the world. She knows that whatever her talents may be, they are needed. And while she waits to try her skills and to find her niche, the Catholic beliefs that her school and her parents have taught her keep her pure of heart and of body, and ready for the work that is to be hers as a woman, and through them she will save her soul.

Bachelor girls who begin to think along lines of serving human beings, in their bodily and spiritual needs, as a fulfillment of their dedication to God, will not complain about single life being useless. They will see that for the family of their own they passed up they have substituted a family scattered over the nation, over the world. Thus single women can attain to full personal self-realization, achieve a life of great social usefulness, give themselves to the practice of endless good works and so reap a generous measure of genuine happiness, though they are single.

REV. HUGH CALKINS, O.S.M.

# ...For Better or For Worse...

For me God chose marriage.

I can think of no way of life that demands more of a woman. It literally uses all my strength, my talents, my time, my mind and heart and soul.

I would not have it otherwise. If the biblical story of the talents means anything, it means to use all of myself.

Every latent power, every gift and ability, every function of my body and soul God expects me to use and develop to their fullest.

God made my husband and me for each other throughout all eternity, just as surely as we chose each other individually and sacramentally in time on October tenth, 1936. To use myself fully in this vocation which God and I selected ... that is a life worth living.

My marriage, my adulthood, two-thirds of my entire life, has been—with God's help—a real success. My husband, my children and I are happy in an oftentimes miserable world, and I can and do look forward to being with them forever in Heaven.

Yes, this is a life worth living, but it is a full-time job to make it that way. I am constantly trying to



do more than I think I can really do. In fact, I am always doing more than I thought I could do. Because of my Catholic Faith—and my reliance upon God—I am able often to achieve the seemingly impossible. I just say to God, "I have this to do, God, and I just know that I can't do it. Will you

help me?" You see, I don't do it; God does it through me.

But you and I both know that even if God does see us through, the going is still not easy. And yet we see thousands of Catholic wives deliberately choosing the hardest way. For example, why does the good Catholic wife have all the children God chooses to send her? She could, as some women do, choose birth control because, as they say, more than three children are too much work, too expensive, too heavy a physical burden, or simply because a new car seems more desirable than a new baby.

Why does a Catholic wife go on living, year after year, with a husband many women would divorce?—the poor provider, the un-exciting plodder, the jealous unreasoning despot, the playboy, the arrested

adolescent, the habitual drinker, the sadistic introvert? She does it because Catholic women believe they have undertaken certain duties and responsibilities through their marriage vows that are irrevocable. How do they do it?—with God's help that comes to them through their Catholic Faith.

Because of what a Catholic wife believes and accepts as binding in the marriage contract, her attitude is entirely different from that of the wife who does not have the same religious viewpoint concerning the Sacrament of Marriage and the binding obligation it involves.

When I pledged myself to my husband, I said these words, "I, Helen, take thee, Paul, for my lawful husband, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, until death do us part." As much as anyone can realize before the actual experience, I knew that these words were absolutely binding and meant exactly what they said. I was promising, no matter what happened, to live with this man until one of us died.

### Anchor of The Home

Small wonder, then, that I, and millions of other Catholic wives, do not fall in and out of love, or run home to mother when the going is rough. We expected to stick to our bargain. Even should one of us have to live apart from her husband (because of insanity, contagious disease, physical brutality, and the like) she knows that he will always be her husband. There is no new partner, no second marri-

age, no chance to try a new love.

What else does a Catholic wife believe about marriage? Well, I know that in the literal sense of the term, my marriage was made in Heaven. Once my husband and I pronounced our vows, God ratified them; for each of us this spouse is now and henceforth "the one and only." Others may continue to whisper, "What does she see in him?" My parents may still wish that I had married someone else. But for me, my husband is the only husband I may have as long as he lives; and only with him can I save my soul.

### It's Sacred

I know, too, that my marriage is more than just a legal contract. Matrimony is a sacrament instituted by Christ to give my husband and me a life together that is above the worldly order. We are surrounded by God's overflowing grace, and the serious and binding promises we made on our wedding day were made with complete trust. God's grace fortifies us in every difficulty; it helps us find the answers to our problems, or it lifts us to the acceptance of the unanswerable and seemingly unendurable.

I also know that God meant it when He said, "These two are one." From the very beginning of time He has emphasized the unity of husband and wife: Eve was made from the flesh and bone of Adam; the sign of union in the marriage ceremony is the clasping of hands. To a Catholic wife this unity means far more than "the two shall become one flesh."

My husband and I are one flesh—that is our physical unity. But we should be one in mind and soul, too; this is our mental and spiritual unity. Surely when God made Paul and me for each other, and when we chose each other forever, this mutual gift of self included more than our bodies. In true love one wishes to give all to the one loved.

Thus it is that the unity God insists on implies complete and lasting love. In the ideal Catholic marriage, love, if it is to be all-inclusive and permanent, is constantly growing. In fact, it is my obligation to cultivate and increase my love for my husband. This has very practical and telling applications. I do not attend parties and dances with the husbands of my friends; I do not dwell upon, for my own enjoyment, the attractions of other men. This is spiritual infidelity and the fore-runner of physical infidelity, or at least a prelude to falling "out of love" with my own husband.

### Head of My House

On the positive side I think about, talk about, and thank God for the good qualities of my husband. My conversation with my friends is liberally sprinkled with "Paul said and Paul thinks..." I show Paul, too, in every way I can think of, that he is more important to me than any other person in the world. In times of family stress, severe illness, and life's innumerable difficulties it is his judgment I accept, his strength I lean upon, his presence I seek.

The children hear me say often,

"I don't know, but I'm sure Dad would. No, I can't fix that, but Dad can. Let's ask Dad if he wants to go." With five boys and an eight-room house I can't always look as if I just came out of a band-box, but I can and do have house dresses of the colors and style he likes. I try to show my interest in his hobbies and in his work. He knows that he is the center of my life. I am the center of his.

### God Comes First

Because in a Catholic marriage religion is the most important possession, my husband and I agree on the things that matter most. As a Catholic does not believe that "one religion is as good as another," tolerance of another way of worshiping God is very difficult, and frequently makes trouble in mixed marriages. Both of us agree that all of our children are to be raised Catholics, and, if at all possible, sent to a Catholic school. We go to Mass every Sunday and every other morning that it is possible in a hectic breakfast-school-work schedule of a large family. We think that it is necessary to go to Confession and to receive Holy Communion frequently. Baptism of the new baby, First Communion, Confirmation, being a server at Mass, constant conversation about God, His saints, Mary, and Heaven are important in our household. These common interests knit us and our family together as nothing else could.

Even our outside enthusiasms promote our unity. The center of our outside-the-home activities is



the parish, that individual Catholic church nearest to us. All religious events take place there (like Baptism) and many social ones as well: lawn parties, parish hall square dances, Holy Name, Altar Society, and Catholic Youth meetings. Even the Cub, Boy, and Girl Scouts are affiliated with the national groups through the parish.

So it is, mentally and spiritually, that the unity which must exist between my husband and me is promoted by our mutual concern in things Catholic.

Physically we are united, too. As "Christ and the Church are one Body," husband and wife are one flesh. "And the two shall become one flesh." Too often the Catholic Church is thought to frown upon sex. Perhaps because her priests and Sisters take the vow of chastity, the false conclusion is drawn that the Church considers sex bad. This is far from the truth. Precisely because the Church regards the sex urge made by God as good and highly important, does she ask her religious to give up its satisfaction. One does not give up what is bad; it is already forbidden.

### Unity Is Vital

The giving of my body to my husband (and his to me) is part of the trilogy of union in our marriage. It is truly a gift of great love, and a duty, too. Nothing so completely expresses our unity, particularly when it is added to mental, emotional, and spiritual unity as it is in an ideal marriage. But our marriage, or any other, does not rest merely upon sex love. Into the life

of every happy, normal couple comes times of abstinence from sex during serious or contagious disease, in times of separation, during late pregnancy, and by mutual consent. No good marriage fails during these times, nor do these periods of marital continence cause unhappiness or infidelity.

Another principle that a Catholic wife knows she must live by is the Biblical principle that the husband is the head of the household. St. Paul says in his epistle, read in the Nuptial Mass, "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. . . . Just as the Church is subject to Christ, so also let wives be to their husbands in all things."

### Proper Relationship

This, of course, does not mean anything that harms the dignity of a wife, for St. Paul goes on to say, "Husbands love your wives, just as Christ also loved the Church, and delivered Himself up for her."

Every well-run business has a president, and marriage is the business of my life. I, too, need someone to formulate a general policy and to make big and final decisions. Every wife knows that in the daily routine of living almost all choices are hers. But in important issues where the welfare of the family is seriously involved, the husband has the final say. Of course, the husband, bound by love too, must consider carefully the wishes, tastes, and opinions of his wife.

There are many less obvious implications to be drawn from the

headship of the husband. In the Catholic household the husband is first through love as well as by right. I defer to his opinions, I rely on his judgment, and I try to discuss everything with him. I never belittle him before the children or before his friends in spite of many temptations to do so. When I do not agree with his choice, I must not take refuge in bitter arguments before the children or even make small remarks to show that Dad's decision is ill-advised. In social groups I do not interrupt, add to, or correct my husband's conversation. Rather do I quote his ideas and laud his achievements.

### My Duties

These, then, are my obligations to my husband. And, if I love him a great deal, they become willing gifts instead of reluctant duties. But family life and today's hectic living can wear true love rather thin. Oftentimes the wear-and-tear of every-day existence makes a woman hate, the world, herself, and even those nearest and dearest to her. Love has been temporarily suffocated, or at least it lies dormant. In these situations, therefore, her Catholic Faith is the only answer. The woman with convictions of right and wrong, with a sense of duties that must be done, with a belief that God is truly with her, can and does survive these dreary, depressing and overwhelmingly unhappy intervals that can come to everyone.

When a wife and mother is worn out from child-bearing and too much work, when one of the children is stricken ill, when her first

teen-ager chooses bad companions in spite of Catholic training and the years of example and training at home, when her husband changes before her eyes into a morose and gloomy man with unpredictable moods, the Catholic wife goes on. She can go on, not merely because she wants to, which would be love, but because she must—for that is her Catholic Faith.

For me the success of my vocation—my way of life and my only road to Heaven—the happiness of my husband, the well-being of my children and the permanence of my marriage—all need faith. I must have it; without it I would fail. My talents, my work, the talents and work of my husband, our great love for each other, our education and common interests—all of this is not enough to insure the security of our union and of our continued happiness together. We need our Catholic religion.

### Right and Wrong

It is imperative that we be convinced of two things: there are right things that we must do, and there are wrong things that we cannot do—independently of our feelings, our wishes, and even of our love. Furthermore we must know that God gives us the strength, the courage and the persistence to do all that we should, no matter what hardships and difficulties come and no matter how impossible the doing may seem. With this kind of faith and this kind of grace no marriage can fail and every marriage will bring husband and wife to Heaven.

# MOTHER'S WORK...NEVER DONE

When my husband and I chose marriage to each other, we also chose to have children. The primary purpose of marriage, from the Catholic point of view, is cooperation with God through the marriage act in bringing new human beings into the world.

As Catholics we could not decide that we were sufficient unto ourselves and that we would never have any children. Only God could make that decision for us. So it was that we expected to have children. In fact, like most couples of any religion, we eagerly anticipated their coming.

But quite often the actuality of a baby is far different from what the young couple anticipated. The unending diapers, the sleepless nights, the unexplained crying and the constant physical demands tend to overshadow the first wonder and gratitude of a "baby of our own."

Far too many parents of an only child are heard to say, "One was enough for us," or they repeat the old joke, "We wouldn't take a million dollars for the one we have, or give a plugged nickel for another one." One doctor friend of



ours, who probably thought he was showing his great love for his wife, said to me, "I'd never let my wife go through THAT again."

I have been pregnant ten times and at no time during our seventeen years of marriage has my husband had more opportunities to show his love for me. Perhaps because of all the "extra" manifestations of his affection, I seem to be more aware of my love for him. This is especially true when our baby is being born.

It seems to me, therefore, that the begetting and raising of a family increases the love of the parents. I do not claim that this love in any way eliminates or decreases the suffering, the worries, the problems, and the economic pressures. But the knowledge of Catholic parents that they must have children if God sends them, that they want and will love all of these children, and that in helping to produce their bodies they have done a truly wonderful and meritorious thing—more human beings to love, honor, and serve God—all these build an attitude in complete variance with what is the vogue

of so-called parenthood in many homes these days.

For example, we know that our children belong to God. They are not our sole property to do with as we want, to push into molds of our choice. They are not mere extensions of ourselves through whom we live again and whom we try to coerce into doing all that we didn't do in our own lives. We are not proud of their achievements or ashamed of their seeming failures because these reflect upon us. We try, on the other hand, to see them as "loans" from God, given to us temporarily to love and cherish, to clothe and feed and educate, to develop the temperaments, the talents, and the character latent in them.

Truly a child is "a hostage to the future." For the next twenty years I, his mother, am responsible for him. Next to my work as a wife, this is the most important thing in my life. I must try with every means at my command to equip him to take his destined place in Heaven. I am not too concerned that he receive what is known as "every advantage," that is, the best schools, the better neighborhoods, perhaps dancing schools, music lessons and social contacts with the wealthy and powerful. What I really must see to is that his character is trained and that in his contacts at school, at home and socially, he grows in grace, in dignity, and with a knowledge of and belief in the things that really matter. This, my work as a mother, comes before my own comfort and health, before my own leisure, wants and pleasure. This is

my life's work.

Besides seeing our children as belonging to God and entitled to the training that should lead them back to Him, my husband and I, as Catholics, recognize their right to love.

Now I know non-Catholic parents love their children too, for parental love is God-given. But love can be misguided. How many of us know parents, Catholic and non-Catholic, who say, "My children are going to have all the things I didn't have when I was young." And the children are showered with every material gift so that they become selfish, demanding, and pampered, completely unaware of the joys of work, of wanting, and of giving to others. How often, too, do we see parents blinded by love to the faults and frailties of their own. Their children can do no wrong, so they grow up uncurbed and uncorrected, with lying tongues and uncontrollable tempers.

### A True Love

True love of our own demands restraint and a stern discipline of many of our natural urges. But children have a right to the love that gives them what is best for them, that is, training for life as it should and has to be lived. They must learn to want without gratification, to give without return, and to work without recompense. They must learn to lean not on places, things and people but upon themselves and God. This is the kind of love we must give to them.

Besides giving our children the right kind of love, we must teach

them how to love. This means how to love God and all of God's creatures. This is vitally important. And again, the Catholic mother needs her faith in order not to fall into the deceptive trap of the famous Golden Rule: "Do unto others as you would have done unto you," and to understand how the world overemphasizes love of self, even under the guise of humanitarianism (the Golden Rule) and religion (self-sanctification.) This produces a doctrine of kindness and decency to others so others will be kind and decent to you. Save your own soul, it suggests; never mind the destination of others. Preserve yourself, develop yourself, enjoy yourself. In contrast, we should realize that only love of God and neighbor will produce children who will grow up to care more about the welfare of others than their own ease and material gain.

But love of God and neighbor must be taught. This is begun and best done at home. I must talk about God as easily and as often as I talk about anything else. Because I am conscious of God's nearness and grace I often chat with Him, particularly in moments of stress or need. For my children's sake I must remember to talk to God out loud. "Please God, help me right now. Show me what to do. . . . Yes, Johnny, you can go on the field trip with the boys for God will take care of you, I know. . . . You are good, Jane, to help me; God is good to give me such a nice daughter."

There are many less direct ways in which we show our children that

we love God. Their father does not swear as he fixes their broken bicycles. We have to drive past our parish church to reach down town, and they soon notice that he always tips his hat as we pass God's house. We say grace before and after meals. Rain or snow, in season and out, nothing keeps us away from Mass on Sundays and the prescribed holydays. Because we believe that God cannot be separated from history and art and science, we send our children to Catholic schools at our own expense, even though our taxes help support the public schools and we live nearer to one. In fact, God is really a member of our family, part and parcel of our every-day life.

### Love Our Neighbors

For a mother to teach her children to love one's neighbor is not so easy, and yet, next to loving God, nothing is so important to the development of a child or the welfare of the world. Again the place to begin is at home and if the ordinary child can learn to love the superior, condescending older brother or bossy big sister, he has made a wonderful start toward understanding true brotherly love. Mere talk about loving one's neighbor gets nowhere; it is example that counts.

Then, after love of brothers and sisters might come the neighbor next door, the same one who fusses so if you step on her grass or throw a ball in her garden. Of course, I send over a casserole of meat and potatoes and a salad when she is ill, but that is the minimum. I also try to keep my children off her pretty

lawn and out of her tomato plants, and to respect the work that has gone into them. My patience with the door-to-door peddlers should be an example to my children. So also with clerks in stores, the other children in our yard, the trash man, the families in our block, no matter their race or religious beliefs. All of them were made by God and are all our "brothers in Christ." I must treat them that way.

## A Big Job

Loving my children in the right way and teaching them to love God and His creatures is really only half of my job as their mother. I still must live with them, and they with me. Of course, this would be simple if we all just remembered to practice our love for one another. But we learn to love as we live, and we are often inexperienced and ignorant. Always we have our faulty, frail selves to deal with. We find it so difficult to know what love really is, and even more difficult to show our love.

But, as always, God provides the help and direction, and gives us the grace to keep trying. I often wonder how my non-Catholic friends, many of them with no particular religion, do such a good job of raising their children. I find that raising my children takes more than common sense, books on child psychology, education and a firm determination to teach them what is right. It does take all of these, and in large measure, but, at least in my case, it takes a great deal more.

I need the instruction and direc-

tion that I receive from the principles of my Catholic religion and I need the help and encouragement that are constantly given to me through Mass and the Sacraments. When I realize that it is chiefly through example that my children learn, then I know that it is my own actions in the home that count most. Therefore, I cannot turn my responsibilities over to a succession of cleaning women, baby-sitters and mother substitutes. Perhaps housework is monotonous drudgery, but watching one's own children grow and develop can be wonderfully exciting and rewarding. In any case, it is my job and I must do it as well as I can.

So here I am, in my home, the chief source of example to my children. Unfortunately, this is just where most of us fail, and it is exactly the place where we cannot afford to fail. I must literally do all of the things that I want my children to learn to do. Just as they learn to handle their silverware correctly and with ease by watching how their father and I use ours, so do they learn to speak and almost to think as we do. This is a tremendous responsibility for parents and yet it must be shouldered.

## The Little Things

So I try frequently to take a frank look at myself. Am I shouting at my noisy Peter and Johnny, "Shut up, you two"? If I am, they will all too soon and too often be shouting, even louder, "shut up" at each other and at me. No brotherly love there, or parental respect either. If I scold and fuss as they track mud and sand

on my clean floors, if I become caustically impatient as they pick at a disliked vegetable or postpone the routine of getting to bed, then the virtue of patience is not growing within me and it isn't likely to start growing within them.

If I complain that I never have any new clothes or go any place that's fun, if I groan audibly and frequently as I hang the clothes, "With five children I certainly ought to have a dryer," then how will those children really feel secure and wanted? If I mutter about our old car everytime I struggle with its broken door handle, will my boys believe that I would rather have them than the latest model station wagon? Will they come to know that Paul and I really believe that children are more important than material possessions?

Will they know that we believe Catholic education is a necessity if we send them to the nearby public school because it is free and involves no transportation costs? If money and what it will buy is our main concern, will they believe us when we tell them that spiritual values are all that count?

No; I must do what I preach and

live what I believe. I know by now how hard this is, for I know myself—how weak-willed I am, despite my beliefs and the best of intentions. I would be certain that I could not be the kind of mother I must be, except for my Catholic faith. Because I know with absolute conviction that all the things I am trying to do for my children are right and good, I am sure of what kind of person I must be.

I must be kind, and loving, and patient. I must live all that I believe in the midst of a world that flatly disagrees with me: God is to be worshiped in His one, true, Catholic Church; the Ten Commandments are to be obeyed as are the laws of His Church. As a mother I must recognize the rights of my children—they belong to God. They are to be given clothing, food, and Catholic education, with example and discipline at home directed to making them mature and able to face life as it should be lived. Most of all I must try to put God's wishes and the welfare of all of His creatures first in everything that I do and say. In that way, and only in that way, will my children learn what Christian love really is.

By its very nature love is a sacred thing, an element of natural religion; and it is peculiarly fitting that in revealed religion the consummation of love in marriage should be elevated by Christ to the dignity of a sacrament. Matrimony places upon the shoulders of its recipients a mantle of holiness, indicating henceforth their partnership with God. Well has it been said:

A partnership with God is motherhood.  
What strength, what purity, what self-control,  
What love, what wisdom, should belong to her  
Who helps God fashion an immortal soul.

REV. JOHN A. O'BRIEN

# CATHOLIC WOMEN IN TODAY'S WORLD

While I have ever felt the great need to be a Catholic, especially after I grew up and took on the responsibilities of marriage and children, I think I am now becoming more and more conscious of an even greater need of my faith. If as a mother and wife in the home I have needed the principles of my religion, how much more do I find that I need them to do my part as a woman in the world! And today every woman finds herself thrust into the world whether she wants to be or not.

It remains true, of course, that a wife and mother's first place is in the home; this is especially so when the children are small. But, as the children grow older, more and more do their friends, their reading, their hobbies and their group activities expose them to influences far removed from the schoolroom and their own fireside. I feel, therefore, that it is imperative that I know all I can about this new world of my children. Starting with the community in which we live, I must take part in the organization and programs of the youth groups



whose aims agree with my principles. It takes time and effort to participate in a Scout-o-Rama and the Blue Birds' donut sale, to chaperone a CYO square dance, and real heroism to become a Den Mother. But what other way is there to know what is really going on and to try to direct things into the channels I want them to go?

And all this is but a very small beginning. I cannot be satisfied to take part in just what affects my own small community. This is shortsightedness; for even State, national and international affairs affect my children as well as the clubs they belong to and the city they live in. I must not, therefore, be ignorant of or indifferent to the social, economic and political world outside of my own small circle. Furthermore, the real concern I must have in everyone's children wouldn't permit me such smug isolation.

As a mother with older children, and along with widows, childless wives, and single women, I must heed the words of Pope Pius XII: "Every woman has then, mark it well, the obligation, the strict obli-



gation in conscience, not to absent herself, but to go into action in a manner and way suitable to the condition of each so as to hold back those currents which threaten the home, so as to oppose those doctrines which undermine its foundation, so as to prepare, organize and achieve its restoration."

It is impossible to overestimate the value to the world of a woman's achievement in the family. No wonder the Pope urges all women to safeguard what has been accomplished. The well-being of the entire nation is only as secure as the families that are in it. The very existence of all agencies depend upon the family.

## We Are Teachers

We mothers, no matter what our formal education may have been, are important educators. We are the ones who pass on the traditions of our Christian civilization, our Western culture, and our Catholic religion to the new generation. We really make the men and women of the future who in turn make a better world by their work in government, in teaching, in business, and in the arts and professions.

The mothers and fathers of the future are trained by us for marriage and their work as parents. The girls learned not only how to cook, sew, and to keep house, but also that these are occupations worthy of the dignity of women, not drudgery to be tolerated or to be put off upon paid help whenever possible. The boys learned to paint, to saw and to build, and to develop their masculine qualities of

firmness, justice, kindness, and objectivity.

And who can measure the effects of a wife's love for her husband upon his contacts with the world outside the home? He works in a highly competitive society where the pressure for speed, accomplishment and ability is very great. He needs the rest, the security and the comfort of his home, and most of all the inspiration and encouragement of his wife.

Actually, then, it appears that everything good in life benefits from happy and stable family life. Women must strive to keep it that way, because family life, according to God's plan, is in jeopardy. As the Pope has said, the new social and political situation today "threatens to prejudice her (the woman's) mission as a mother and the good of the family. It might even become still more precarious for the sanctity of the home, and hence for women's dignity. Your day is here, Catholic women and girls. Public life needs you... Your destiny is at stake."

What, practically speaking, can the ordinary Catholic women do? What can *I* do?

## Outside Duties

I must take part, insofar as my duties to my husband, my children and my home permit, in the political, social and religious activities about me that aim at helping the family develop and prosper. For example, with my vote I can choose for political office men and women of integrity. I can even campaign with other determined women for

necessary and good reforms, like better housing, strict pure food laws, and decent literature on our news and drug store stands. Even in world affairs, I can pray unceasingly for a Commonwealth of Nations and for a lasting peace.

Equally close to home are many social affairs upon which I can have an even more direct effect. In my own parish I can join the Altar and Rosary society instead of merely paying my dues and criticizing their policies. Keeping the linens spotless, cleaning the church, and decorating the altars is a holy work and pleasing to God. I also can organize and take part in study clubs in order to learn more about God and His laws and so love and serve Him more. Participation in these religious groups and in civic and charitable organizations is the very best way I can make articulate the Catholic principles that I believe in.

The destructiveness of gossip common among women is well known. Believing it wrong to harm another's reputation, perhaps I can change the trend of group conversations by my remarks about the victim's good qualities and my pleasure over her achievements or good fortune.

In any group a good woman can raise the level of its conversation, its entertainments, and its purposes. She can do this because she is a living example of the truths that she believes, and because of her very nature as a woman. God made every woman to be a mother, either physically or spiritually. All the characteristics of a woman reveal this purpose of the Creator. Her body is built to bear children; her mind and her emotions possess a sensitiveness and delicacy peculiarly feminine. This is the dignity of woman that the Catholic Church has proclaimed throughout all the centuries since the time of Christ. This is why the first place in Heaven is reserved for Mary, the perfect model for all women.

Everything, then, in my faith protects my position as a woman; everything in my faith shows me the work I can best do as a woman. God in my making gave me the very nature best fitted for doing what the world needs most: the preservation of the home, the family, and society. How glad I am to be a woman! And how blessed am I to have my Catholic Faith to guide me, to lean upon, to turn to for truth, understanding, strength and security.

Christ's clear teachings on marriage and divorce are being challenged today by many men and women . . . The challengers are of two kinds: the pagan-minded people who know nothing about Christ; and those people, still calling themselves Christians, who long ago gave up their loyalty to Christ's laws.

REV. ROGER L. VOSSBERG

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✠JOSEPH E. RITTER

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