

Introduction

Everyone knows that God's gifts to women exceed our understanding. But we observe that females use their genius to care for the needy people. This is most obvious in baby-care. Males can't begin to compete, because they lack the female genius that empowers women to nurse people, animals, even plants, into improved life. They help them flourish.

One way to express this female genius is that women nurture life. They love to help life grow. This general description is a good start. It distinguishes women's specifically female gifts from a long list of their other gifts, like beauty, serenity, and superior coordination. Most women take these gifts for granted. They are too busy using them to talk about them. They act them out quite naturally. Women don't wait for concepts or verbal description. What can words add to the unfolding of their genius in action? Most men stand in awe, struck dumb by the splendor of female gifts.

But taking ladies for granted can degenerate into abuse of the gentler, weaker, woman. So notorious is man's abuse of woman that for the past 50 years we have designated women a minority. By head-count women are the majority. But by dominance, their weakness resembles that of a numerical minority, overwhelmed by a majority.

Abuse of women in his native Poland urges Karol Wojtyla to defend them. His philosophical analysis of women uncovers the female genius. Ready to defend Polish women against Communists, he surprises everyone by being elected Pope in October 1978. He astonishes us even more by his magnificent accomplishments in many fields. He improves operations in the Church, in culture, and in politics. We struggle to identify and appreciate his improvements. How could he do so much so quickly? The main reason for his success in so many fields is his unity with God. His sanctity is the secret of his success. He devotes himself entirely to Our Lady. Because she serves her Son totally, she is the best shortcut to Jesus. Her love of her biological Son opens her heart entirely to God, Who is Love Himself. Because He is infinite Love, He overflows finite Mary, who showers this excess Love on all her adopted sons. John Paul opens himself wide to this Love-shower, and becomes intensely one with God.

Wherever Christ goes, He reveals the Father and Holy Spirit in His flesh. So Jesus brings the Trinity to live in John Paul. This unity is our destiny. God creates each of us to enjoy this divine synthesis. Mystical union with God in His total Personal love promotes John Paul toward divine perfection. This promotion is human unity with the Trinity. The Trinity then works spectacularly through John Paul. In him, the infinite Goodness of God expands ever more. People who meet John Paul are intrigued by his goodness. Our Heavenly Mother Mary propels this sanctity, and crowns it with an enlightened view of herself. This view reveals the perfect female genius. Like all moms, she shares everything she has. By sharing her perfect devotion to God, she raises John Paul into exalted divine union.

Perhaps the most striking expression of this unity is John Paul's success against the Soviet Union. He exploits Communism's intrinsic contradictions, so several leaders (Regan, Thatcher) could exploit Soviet weaknesses. This visible result manifests the invisible union between John Paul and God. To trace the bloodless fall of the Evil Empire, view Mr. and Mrs. Newt Gingrich's presentation of "The Seven Days That Changed the World". George Weigle's biography of John Paul lists more facts about this fall. Paul Klengor wrote *A Pope & A President*, with the most recent details (2017). St. John Paul's intense mysticism enlivens him to use the Solidarity union, to fold the Communist house of cards.

John Paul's mystic union with God also produces miracles and exorcisms during his lifetime. Avoiding sensationalism, the Vatican keeps his wonder-working secret. Even so, many documented miracles occur by his prayers. An example is an American Jew dying of a brain tumor. In a Papal audience, without officials knowing that he is Jewish, he receives Holy Communion from John Paul II, and is miraculously healed. Within hours all symptoms of the tumor are gone. Another example is Cardinal Marchisano, suffering paralysis of his right vocal cord, reducing his speech to whispers. Pope John Paul visits him, prays with him, and puts his hand on the throat. The Pope tells him, "Don't be afraid, you'll see, you'll see, the Lord will give you back your voice, I will pray for you." So it happens. Our final example: at the Pope's Mass, a Mexican boy is healed of Leukemia. See *Miracles of John Paul II*, by Pawel Zuchniewicz.

God moves John Paul to do amazing miracles during his lifetime. After his death, the Vatican thoroughly documents two other miracles for his canonization. These miracles show exceptional unity with God. They are concrete products of intense holiness. We expect that this sanctity enlivens all the Pope's accomplishments. This exceptional degree of unity with God does not make everything that John Paul does perfect. But it bolsters our confidence that what he thought and wrote is from God. His obvious sanctity enriches everything that we study in this introduction to female genius.

Where to Find Information in the Appendices

Appendix A is a sketch of his life, listing dates, places, and people who influence his theory of female genius. Appendix B is a summary of his orientation to three masterful teachers: two philosophers and a mystic. St. Thomas Aquinas enlightens John Paul's basic principles and world-view. Max Scheler inspires John Paul's exploration of new views,

especially the female genius, by using Phenomenology to investigate person and ethics. We don't need these appendices. We can gather golden nuggets of John Paul's thoughts without them. But they can be helpful. Common sense and intuition will provide valuable conclusions from the main presentation itself. While these philosophers stabilize John Paul's mind, St. John of the Cross inspires John Paul's heart, springing him upward into mystical heights.

Appendix C is the clearest expression of the acting female genius that John Paul ever wrote. I recommend that you read it, pray it, and read it again. Women fully expand their genius in families, and enable men to grow into their genius. This *Letter to Families* describes how woman and man complement each other. John Paul's letter to families inspires us to live fully. He provides even more details in his book: *Man and Woman He Created Them*.

Sketch of St. John Paul's Development of the Female Genius

Overview

We must admit that most of John Paul's philosophical writing is obscure, unclearly expressed, in Polish. Translators find flights of poetry in his prose, with symbols suggesting brand-new ideas. He does not have leisure to perfect his prose, because he's always active, writing in his spare time, almost as an after-thought of his spiritual adventures. His thought outruns his expression. His poetry leaps past his philosophy. We imagine him, at the end of his usually busy day, sitting down to compose several pages of his latest book-in-the-making. He races to capture flying thoughts which fit his extraordinary experiences. For example, his seminary formation, hiding underground from the Gestapo, was vividly dangerous, far from leisurely. To keep advancing under such stress, he contemplated profound truth. He hardly slept at all.

As another example of his rush, he completed his doctoral coursework and dissertation in just two years. At the Angelicum in Rome, the eminent Thomist, Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, refined John Paul's comprehension of the Aristotelian-Thomistic synthesis. John Paul mastered this rock-solid philosophy-theology, to be his reliable foundation. But God can't be confined to words. St. John's poetry is more effective to enshrine mystical experience. Because St. John was an accomplished Thomist, and a marvelous mystic, John Paul identified with him. This union completed the connection from St. Thomas Aquinas (1240's), through St. John of the Cross (1580's), to John Paul in the 1940's. The minds and hearts of these saints synthesized into a fascinating philosophical-theological-mystical unity.

But John Paul's homeland groaned under the Communist curse. How could he free his people? New problems required new methods. Max Scheler used Phenomenology to solve the problems that arose during the 1920's, particularly the problem of de-personalizing millions of people. The Industrial Revolution disoriented man by ripping him from his ancient life, and dumping him into an unlivable mechanized mess. Pseudo-science, like Freud's theory, demoted man from his spiritual reality into a merely material fantasy. Universities collapsed from studying everything to studying merely science. The list of new problems was long and dreary. Scheler applied Phenomenology to solve many of them.

So John Paul adopted Phenomenology to penetrate present problems, and expand upon Scheler's solutions. One example is that each person is made in the image and likeness of God. Naturally, there is an infinite difference between Everlasting God and mortal man. But this difference leaves their similarity intact. Though infinitely different, they are none the less alike. God Himself says so in Genesis 1:26. God's persons share something with human persons. Poets call this the divine spark in each human person. Much of this divine spark surpasses our capacity to understand. Personal value transcends all other created values. To dominate God's images, Fascists and Communists tried to de-personalize us, destroy our dignity as divine sparks. Then they could enslave what's left of us.

So John Paul built on the solid foundation of person, expressed by St. Thomas Aquinas. Then he employed Scheler's insights to emphasize personal value. With Phenomenological methods, John Paul expanded these insights to find solid reasons to protect persons. During this expansion from Scheler's groundbreaking work, he employed Edith Stein's analysis, to provide an extraordinary account of the female person, the genius proper to each woman.

We can picture his process in a grid of connected ideas from St. Thomas. E.g.: Aquinas develops each idea rather fully, supported by related ideas that remind us of the truth expressed in this scripture quote (Gen 1:26). Thomas is a masterful teacher because he relates each important idea to better-known ideas. So he provides reasons which mutually support each other. This tight-knit unit convinces us of this important truth, that he explains in *Summa Theologica PP, Q 29, Art 4*.

God	creates	man	in	His
image	and	likeness	So	he is
very	much	like	God	

John Paul applied Scheler's phenomenological analysis to key ideas, like person. Scheler spread these analyses around throughout his writings, but many of them are in *Ordo Amoris*. One of them is that God willed each person for that person's sake. Thus, each person transcends all non-human beings. John Paul develops this unique outpouring of God's creative love in his book *The Acting Person*. These publications further develop Thomas' grid by adding coordinated details. We could picture it as a finer, more specific developed grid, rather like this sketch: _____

The more John Paul contemplated God's creation of person, the more he understood that our person is our most significant similarity to God. Already, we gain some insight, just by reading these few words. Somehow, we recognize person in each and every human. Edith Stein developed the analysis of the phenomenon of person to clarify some parts of what person means. We know that person is each human's unity, the most important aspect of being human. But we seldom consider person. So we find it rather obscure, hard to understand. To dispel much of this obscurity, we follow John Paul's expansion of Scheler's and Stein's insights into person. This can increase our understanding. But we must admit from the start, that "person" is so vast and basic in every one of us, that we will never grasp all there is to know about it. After all, God gives a beloved bit of Himself when he creates our person. Though we will never exhaust what person means, we enjoy every bit that we learn about it. Person fascinates us.

Fr. Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, OP, teaching John Paul at the Angelicum, encouraged him to combine the work of Thomas and of St. John of the Cross in JP's doctoral dissertation: *Faith According to St. John of the Cross*. John Paul analyzed the person who chooses to believe with his entire being. Back in Poland, John Paul had to expand beyond St. Thomas to counter the new de-personalizing forces imposed by Nazis and Communists. Guided by Max Scheler and Edith Stein, John Paul experimented in Phenomenology. He profited from regular conversations with Roman Ingarden. "In Krakow I also tried to maintain a good rapport with the philosophers: Roman Ingarden... My personal philosophical outlook moves ... between two poles: Aristotelian Thomism and Phenomenology. I was particularly interested in Edith Stein, an extraordinary figure, for her life story as well as her philosophy. ... She had studied with Husserl, and had been a colleague of the Polish philosopher Ingarden. I had the joy of beatifying her in Cologne, and then canonizing her in Rome." Quoted from *Rise, Let Us Be on Our Way*, p 90. Consult chapter five of this book for the relationship of these three: Roman Ingarden, Edith Stein, and Karol Wojtyla. Recall that Edith Stein loved St. Teresa of Avila, and became a Catholic, after reading her masterpiece. Then she followed St. Teresa into the Carmelite order, taking the name Teresa Benedicta. To punish the Dutch bishops for resisting Hitler, the SS arrested many Jews who converted to Catholicism, and killed them, Edith included, at Auschwitz. We find a tight connection between these saints, centered upon a contemplative life, leading to intense personal union with God.

John Paul quite clearly outlined his spiritual journey toward this union. "So there were two stages to my intellectual journey: first, I moved from literature to metaphysics; second, metaphysics led me to phenomenology. This was the grounding for my intellectual work." *Rise...* p 95. With Thomistic metaphysics, JP analyzed the basic dynamic of all creatures, and the essential foundation for the study of the human person. This analysis provided the limits (matter) of the act (form). Here is a direct quote, to show how John Paul zoomed right through a very difficult analysis. We can then slow down, give examples, and catch up with his speeding thought.

Text "... there is apparently no danger of so isolating the body, and its role in the dynamic whole of the acting person, as to risk attributing an absolute significance to this one aspect. Obviously, we cannot discuss the human body apart from the *whole that is man*, that is, *without recognizing that he is a person*. Neither can we examine the dynamisms and potentialities proper to the human body without understanding the essentials of action and of its specifically personal character. In this connection, it seems appropriate to recall the vision of the human reality advanced in the traditional philosophy of Aristotle and Aquinas, which, from the likeness of man to the other beings of the visible world, discovers in him, alongside the hylic, or material element, also the *morphe*, or formal element; hence the theory of hylomorphism, and the analysis of the human being carried out within its frame. To accept the general principles of this vision, however, does not imply that we intend to repeat once again the formulations of the hylomorphic doctrine. So far, all our discussions have reflected clearly enough the effort to rethink anew the dynamic human reality in terms of the reality of the acting person." *Acting Person*, p 203

Comment If John Paul were here, he would speak our language, saying something like this. Previous discussions in *Acting Person* show the defects of isolating the human body, as if man were nothing else but flesh. If our one-and-only concern is tangible flesh, we miss the person's thoughts, decisions, and feelings. All these vital activities are spiritual, beyond touch. They are more variable and extensive than flesh-acts. When we look at a walking person, we realize that flesh can't move itself. Death stuns us because the something invisible and intangible, which had moved the visible tangible flesh, stops activating the body. We can't see the spirit leave, but the inert flesh assures us that it is gone.

So death reminds us that visible, tangible, flesh is the material element of each human. The Greek word for matter is *hylō*. Just as we would never ignore this hylic element, we should never ignore the active element that ceases to act when a person dies. When we consider this active element, we recognize that it is much more effective than flesh. Remember how difficult it is sometimes to get our flesh out of bed when the alarm rings. "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak", says the Lord, Mt 26:41; Mk 14:38. The spirit is the act of the human being. So it forms the flesh to do what the person decides. Aristotle called it the form, or *morphe* in Greek. Thus we see that every human is hylomorphic, named from these two Greek words: *hyle* and *morphe*. All humans express their spiritual acts through their material bodies.

This is the familiar Aristotelian-Thomistic understanding of man. Philosophers, using this theory for the last 2,300 years, account for most human activity. By it, Aristotle explains a lot of what humans do. Thomas explains even more. All this information is up-front, available by mere observation. Look and we see it.

For example, without the spiritual act, the material body is dead. With it, every cell lives to vitalize the body. The spiritual act is the life of the body. We generally skip the life of the body, unless we like Biology. Usually, we prefer the more important psychological human acts, like sensing, thinking, and choosing. Biology and Psychology both express the acting person. But Psychological acts are more interesting than organ-acts or cell functions. Psychological acts advance each person toward his life goals. Life goals advance us into the height of Philosophy, and the heart of Theology. These studies consider the truly important questions: who are we, what are we doing; where are we going; how will we get there? Our goals direct Psychological acts which guide and direct less important acts, like bodily motion. From these examples, we see that the reality of the acting person deserves our close attention, careful examination, and rethinking.

Perhaps we can begin rethinking the acting person by considering that our flesh and spirit are one. We observe this unity when we cut our hand. The size of the cut is not primary to us. Instead, what counts is personal injury. The person says: "I cut myself". It is not just my hand, but my "self" that is cut. This is the living reality of the damage. It is the person, the "self", which hurts. If the flesh were separate from the spirit, just a "meat-suit", then the person would not hurt. But the cut pains the person. Bodily pain proves that we are integrated flesh-spirit. We are spirited flesh; we are incarnate spirit. We are embodied spirit; we are spirited body. We remain so united until we die.

The word "person" expresses this integration into a whole, unified being. Maybe it helps us to consider our person's spirit and body. Our spirit is obviously limited: acts only so far in space. Our limit is our flesh. It is as far as our self goes into space. Our height is as far as we go from top to bottom. Similarly, our width is as far as we go from side to side. These measurements express limits of our bodies in space. These bodily limits do not exist on their own. Instead, they merely limit something which exists. They limit our living bodies. Living flesh and dead flesh (corpse) have the same limits. So it is clear that limits do not include the difference between the living body and the dead corpse. Limits miss life, the most important activity of each living being. This every-day experience, expressed simply, helps us account for body and spirit. The unified whole, the spirited flesh, is the person. As the whole, the person is the doer of everything he does. He is the responsible chooser of everything he decides. He is the "central control" of all his voluntary actions.

John Paul can race through all this analysis quickly, or he can slow down, giving examples as above. That's the advantage of the truth. It flows from experiences that everyone has. Therefore, we can express it in common words. Besides, we love to learn the truth, so our inner joy urges us on, even in hard times.

These words express, in simple terms, the starting point that Aristotle, Thomas, and John Paul share. From this launch pad, John Paul rises to fresh insights about the integrity of each human, expressed in his person. This dynamic view is new to us, but we can see its value to unify the person's visible outward-ness with his invisible inwardness (*Acting* p 204). Now we can turn to the final sentence that John Paul gives us. It is so important that it deserves its own section.

Rethinking the Traditional Analysis

John Paul does not simply repeat well-known traditional teaching. Instead, he rethinks afresh the "dynamic human reality, the totality of man, from the viewpoint of the acting person". Thus he extends Max Scheler's and Edith Stein's investigations of the real personal act. He also expands the work of French Personalists. See *Emmanuel Mounier and the New Catholic Left, 1930-1950*. Scheler startles us when he rethinks the foundation of the person.

Text "Before man is a thinking being (*ens cogitans*), or a willing being (*ens volens*), he is a loving being (*ens amans*). The fullness, the gradations, the differentiations, and the power of his love circumscribe the fullness, the functional specificity, and the power of his possible spirit, and of the possible *range* of contact with the universe." *Ordo Amoris*, in *Selected Philosophical Essays*, p 110-111.

Comment Perhaps we hear this for the very first time. Perhaps it sounds entirely too strange. Don't all humans need to know someone before loving him? Instead, Scheler claims that humans love before they know. Consider new-born babies. They settle right into loving mom, before they can pick her out of a group. Maybe Scheler is right. Our experience with babies seems to support his statement. Consider how babes relate to things. Their loving outreach is what we love about them. It's hard to resist their innocent love. We strive to keep them safe, to preserve their pervasive love.

We have yet another reason to agree with Scheler. It's true that God is His Thinking, and is His Willing. But Jesus reveals God to be His Love. Christ convinces us that God prefers to be known as Love. So love is more fundamental, according to God. Between babies, and Christ's revelation, we have enough reasons to agree that love is our primary action. This rethinking simplifies our older thoughts, helping them fit more beautifully. For example, the fullness of being is Love because God is the fullness of being. He loves all persons into existence. So, from the very beginning, all persons love first. This is their response to God's loving-creation. He loves us enough to create us, to make us be. This is a fine definition of love: to love is to want the beloved to be. So Love makes His beloved to be. This existence is the very bottom, sus-

taining everything else. So it “circumscribes” everything else, as Scheler says. Love is the actual spirit, or the spirit fresh from God’s loving-creation. Later, this actual spirit activates more specific possibilities like knowing and willing. These “functional specificities” are “individual powers of the possible spirit”, and include the “possible range of contact with the universe”. Scheler tells us that love comes first, and opens all other acts, as the baby develops. How do we develop?

Text In the same book, p 98, Scheler begins his *Ordo Amoris* essay with a fundamental personal experience. “I find myself in an immeasurably vast world of sensible and spiritual objects, which set my heart and passions in constant motion. I know that the objects I can recognize through perception and thought, as well as all that I will, choose, do, perform, and accomplish, depend on the play of this movement of my heart.”

Comment This view certainly rethinks personal experience. Scheler describes our experience, echoing the “booming, buzzing confusion” of sensory input that William James expressed in his *Principles of Psychology*. Then Scheler notes his emotional response to these sensations. This describes the traditional analysis so far. Then he proposes that his thought and will depend on his heart. This is not the Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition. But it does correspond to Augustine’s analysis, and to the way that St. John of the Cross communicated his spiritual message. So we can see that John Paul would agree with Scheler about heart. The “heart” means the most profound action of the person.

Text In *Ordo Amoris*, in *Selected Essays*, p 110, Scheler is even more explicit. His notion departs from the 2,300 year Aristotelian tradition. First we quote Scheler. Then we examine examples to explain how knowing occurs, and therefore what Scheler means. “In our account, love was thus always the primal act by which a being, without ceasing to be this one delimited being, abandons itself, in order to share and participate in another being as an intentional being (*ens intentionale*). This participation is such that the two in no way become real parts of one another. What we call ‘knowing’, which is an ontological relation, always presupposes this primal act of abandoning the self and its conditions, its own ‘contents of consciousness’, of *transcending* them, in order to come into experiential contact with the world as far as possible. And what we call ‘real’, or actual, presupposes that some subject wills the realization of something, while this act of willing presupposes an anticipatory loving, that gives it direction and content. Thus, *love* is always what awakens both knowledge and volition. Indeed, it is the mother of spirit and reason itself.”

Comment Here, Scheler describes traditional knowing quickly, then adds his primal loving insight. Aristotle is the first to realize that knowing a dog requires the knower to clear his mind of everything else. It’s obvious that if the person’s mind is already acting to know cat, it can’t do a different act to know dog. Once the person clears his mind, it is not clouded by anything at all. Then he can accept the “form”, or the act, of being a dog. In this sense, the knower “transcends” himself, or gets beyond his own act of being, to accept the act of the dog’s being. The person accepts the dog’s being by leaving behind the dog’s material limits: size, color, weight... This abstraction highlights the “dogging” action. The action, free of the material limits of the actual dog, escapes all parts which materially limit the dog. So knowing is accepting the dog’s spiritual act into the knower’s spiritual mind. This acceptance identifies the knower with the known, intentionally. Like our common “intentions”, knowing is a different way of being from material existence.

Our English word “intellect” expresses this act rather well. It comes from the Latin words *inter legere*. Literal translation: between to read. As we expand upon this translation, we get: to read between the lines. Written lines are excellent examples. So to “intellect”, or to grasp the meaning, requires us to read between the written lines. The lines are visible, while the meaning is invisible. Similarly, the sensory presentation of the dog is visible, while the “dogging” of the dog is invisible. It is this spiritual meaning “dog” which the knower knows. While knowing the dog, the knower transcends being a human, to accept being the dog. This knowing is easy. We do it thousands of times a day. In this case, the person knows the “dogging” of the dog, leaving behind all distracting details. Though we do it so often, this is probably the very first time we hear it expressed in words. So it sounds strange to us.

But we see that it’s necessary. If a person says I know “dog”, he could hardly be telling the truth if he actually knew “cat”. No other act than “dogging” would allow the person to know “dog”. The act of dogging is the only act that activates, or constitutes, the dog. Each dog has its specific limits, so it “dogs” only some of universal “dogging”. E.g. it is male or female, excluding the other possibility. If that sounds familiar, it’s the hylomorphic analysis again. To know is to select the spiritual act from its material limits in that specific dog.

Husserl was so impressed by this ancient analysis of knowing that he concentrated his phenomenological method upon this identity of knower and known. We review one further aspect of this identity. When the act of the dog activates the person who knows “dog”, the person is not materially the dog. The person does not shrink to the dog’s size, nor become hairy, nor weigh what the dog weighs, nor pant with hanging-out tongue. None of the limitations of the dog apply to the person who knows the dog. The knower identifies with the spiritual act and only the spiritual act. For the knowledge to be true, the spiritual act must be identical in both dog and knower. This different way to be is the intentional way. It is markedly distinct from the substantial way that the dog is the dog. Scheler calls this intentionality “to share and participate in another being as an *ens intentionale*”. All this is traditional so far.

Scheler departs from tradition when he claims that the knowing person abandons himself. John Paul recognizes this abandoning of self as a necessary condition for a person to know anything. In another dimension of human activity, abandoning self to another is a fair description of love. Because it comes before knowing, it is “primal”. The order of events, as Scheler sees it is: 1) love, giving a human act direction and content; 2) the directed person seeks the content by desiring that something be realized; 3) the realization of something that we call “actual” finishes these steps by knowing “dog”. The person actually knows the dog if these three steps unfold in that order. First, love orients the person in the direction of knowing the content “dog”. Second, the directed person desires to realize knowledge of “dog” from the clutter of shimmering sensations out there. Third, the person abandons himself, to actually know the dog.

Yes, this is very abstract, and a long way from simple life. But it sounds familiar. It seems to be right. John Paul took abandonment as the basic cure of the problems caused by the Communist curse. John Paul had a creative advantage because he realized that love animates everything that we do. It’s much more encouraging to look behind the surface furor, and find love everywhere. Sad to say, people can corrupt this love-animation into a pervasive hate. But hatred is a small defect in a large universe. Because God loves everything into existence, love is basic to everything. Knowing the love-flow, and the corruption of that flow, John Paul was more completely tuned in to what was happening. This true approach is very useful to understand John Paul’s boundless energy, and remarkable success. Love was precisely what he needed to deal with the hatred-unto-death machine that Communists impose. For an impressive account of corrupted love, see Scheler’s *Ressentiment*. For an equally impressive account of healthy love, see Scheler’s *The Nature of Sympathy*.

Perhaps this is enough introduction to John Paul’s thought process, showing his debt to the Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition, and to the Phenomenological development by Max Scheler. Further questions may arise as we explore his new departures into the acting person. For now, we summarize the results John Paul developed to highlight the female genius.

A Summary of John Paul’s Rethinking for the Female Genius

Sr. Prudence Allen, in *Concept of Woman*, p 442, summarizes John Paul’s contribution. “I identify Pope John Paul II as the *founder of integral gender complementarity* because he is the first person to provide a *completely integrated account* of woman’s identity in relation to man, drawing upon metaphysics, philosophical anthropology, philosophy of knowledge, ethics, and politics.” Other people provide some parts, but John Paul develops many parts, and unites them into a completely integrated whole. By itself, a metaphysical analysis would have contributed mightily toward understanding female genius. Similarly, if he had worked out some patterns of behavior in any of the other four fields, he would have helped us royally. But to unify his descriptions and applications across all five fields is a truly masterful achievement.

We can profit from this achievement for years to come, and apply its lessons to benefit everyone who is willing to learn. Most of John Paul’s contributions are in his books: *The Acting Person*; *Love and Responsibility*; *Man and Woman He Created Them*. His *Letter to Families* gives examples and recommendations that are clear and simple. The three books challenge even a trained philosopher. But the *Letter* expresses the female genius simply, and shows how she can foster the male genius, so each complements the other. As usual, God’s plan promotes maximum benefit for the entire family.

First we identify John Paul as founder of a completely integrated account of woman’s identity and function as an acting person. This account is aptly named the **female genius** because her activity is uniquely and successfully tuned to establishing a family, and organizing it to flourish. Nothing short of genius can express this great success. In many families, her genius amazes her husband and children, and inspires those observers who look past surface details, into the loving-expansion of all her family members. For many years, he was the main contributor to developing this account.

John Paul derived his vision of this loving-expansion from personal interaction with families, and from Dr. Wanda Poltawska’s detailed studies of both functional and dysfunctional women. At a deeper level, John Paul derived a definitive vision of woman from the only perfect woman born after Eve ate the apple. Mary Immaculate is perfect virgin and perfect mother. When John Paul lost his earthly mother, he turned to Mary for the feminine care which was now missing in his life. She adopted him immediately and completely. His faithfulness to his heavenly mother opened wide the flood gates of motherly love and support for John Paul. Between his publicly available observations and the private experience with Holy Mary, John Paul interacted very well with many women.

All the empirical data illuminates the basic reality that women differ significantly from men. Among the more significant are that men prefer mechanical repetition to personal diversion. Men are more aggressive than women, on the average. Men seek to dominate, by force if feasible, and by fooling if convenient. By any method, men cleverly impose their wills. They drive to dominate, at any cost. Perhaps a ghastly example of this domination is the promotion of “women’s liberation” that still devastates many women. The Hollywood producer Weinstein and his ilk illustrate how that “liberation” actually enslaves the women fooled into “the pill”, “safe sex”, and the rest of the con men’s clever ploys.

John Paul, living under Communism’s more violent imposition of male domination, would work more diligently to free women from sex-slavery. This motivation sustains his efforts to promote women’s welfare. A necessary step towards helping females is to show how different women are from men. Confusing one with another produces results we

can observe, and dearly desire to avoid. So John Paul organizes his expression of these differences in *Love and Responsibility*, first published in Polish in 1960. This study led the way into woman's genius. This book is reason enough to affirm John Paul as the "founder" of these studies.

Because humans and animals each have bodies, activated by souls, John Paul shows how they differ. Animals are limited to sensory interactions, while humans advance past these limitations into meaning and value. Mechanistic instinctual sexual pattern constrains animals to react to odors smell (pheromones). But humans consider the consequences of their sex behavior, thereby rising to a personal level. Persons see value, and therefore ethical, or moral, consequences. Sub-human animals do not. Therefore they are not responsible. We do not lecture, punish, or try to make them repent. Specific investigations show that these animals sense, remember, imagine, unify sensations, and interpret sensory data for its sensory results. That interpretation sets off emotions. We share our version of these activities with them. But humans abstract from sensory data to determine the meaning behind sensations. From this meaning, we determine value.

Each value is personal, of self or other. John Paul notices our primary difficulty with sexual value in *Love & Responsibility* p 30. "How is it possible to ensure that one person doesn't then become – the woman for the man, or the man for the woman – nothing more than a means to an end – i.e. an object used exclusively to attain a selfish end?" This fine statement expresses extortion of pleasure without responsibility for the abused person. John Paul says it so clearly that we grasp his meaning immediately. He then gives the solution to this selfish choice. Choose instead to treat each person as an end, a value that transcends trade-offs, never a means to attain some other value, p 41. Each person is more valuable than anything we could gain by using a person. This leads to the English expression: "he used me". Less frequently: "she used me", often for money. Then the devaluation of the persons during the sex-act is often called "a trick".

In spite of Communist abuse of persons, attempting to reduce them all to matter, John Paul strives to lift them up to the value God designs for them. Because men commit the majority depersonalizations against women, John Paul strives to promote woman-value, or the female genius. The chief value of woman is her direct identification of person, and her drive to help persons. Everyone knows this intuitive drive, but we don't understand it. John Paul examines the basis for this personal interest, and expresses it in several books. We can find a chart that summarizes the differences in *Concept of Woman* p 447. That sketch leaves some unanswered questions. So here is a fuller development of the chart.

Significant Differences Between Females and Males

Biological differences are the most obvious. Female sexual organs are located inside the woman, while male organs are outside the man. This profound difference is manifest. It also reveals complementary relations. Males fit female structure, as females fit male structure. This biological complementary difference fits female interiority and male exteriority, expressed in woman's skill with persons, and man's skill with things. Psychological differences are also obvious. Females direct their attention inwardly, while males direct theirs outwardly. This deeper difference also fits well. To be complete, the wife needs an outwardly directed husband, and he needs an inwardly directed wife. As a unified family, they become individually complete. Each way to be human complements the other. It is as if each person were made for the other, to fulfill the other. We do not see this in visible biological differences, but we accept the suggestion that each compliments the other. We find the reliable reason for these observable differences in biological facts.

From puberty to menopause, females ovulate. They produce ova, or eggs, which can develop into new persons. This ovulation affects the female's entire body. It occupies her person so thoroughly that it defines her. It is an unmistakable indicator that she can become the home and care-giver for new life, another inestimably valuable person. After about nine months of sharing life with this new person, the female can birth him. Down through all the ages, this process has mystified both females and males, and continues to amaze us, even against concerted efforts to devalue it.

While the female completes the processes of impregnation, protection, nourishment, and birth, the male's involvement is minimal. Contemporary laboratory methods can skip the male's complementary penetration to impregnate the woman. However, this artificial method is expensive, and plagued with frequent failures. Artificial insemination is probably doomed to extinction, except for people whose physiology prohibits normal insemination. The effort this minority is willing to make illustrates the value of new persons. Fresh life is worth more than we can express.

Biologists describe the coming-to-be of new life as the activation of a microscopic cell. The resulting human cell gets half of its amount from the new mother, and half from the new father. This follows the activation of inert matter that we considered earlier with the Aristotelian hylomorphic explanation. The new person is a fine example of spirited matter, or incarnate spirit. It is a biological unit, unlike either parent. The person is the entirety of the activation. As the baby grows, it perfects its sensory acts, and learns how to abstract meaning from mere sensations. Meaning expresses value, so both appear to the older child, around the age of seven, the age of reason.

Her inward focus usually alerts the woman to the fact that she has become pregnant. Perhaps she waits to be sure until she misses her monthly menstruation (ovulation process). Then she shares her joy with her deepest friends, ordinarily with the new father. His minimal, but essential, contribution now enters a lengthy process of development. The woman

can use this nine months to teach the man how to be a father. Sad to say, a man may reject his responsibilities. Women can overcome these rejections, as we shall see later. For now, let us consider a successful female support of the male's not-very-obvious need to be a father. He learns his fatherhood from the mother.

As he gradually learns, he becomes more masculine by accepting the responsibility of husbanding his wife, and fathering his child. The woman leads the way into this exceptionally difficult task. Forming a family is always a difficult challenge. It is particularly so for the male. Because he is external to child-generation, he can easily distract himself. Child care is internal to the female. In a sense, the interiority of female sex organs alerts us to the "maternal instinct" which naturally eases the task of "receiving and fostering the growth of another human being".

Most mothers are awash in sensory input and emotional responses. Some of these mothers are so fulfilled by this rush, that they pity their husbands, who entirely miss this sensation and emotion. In this sense, mothers experience much more of the fullness of nurturing new life than fathers do. It's complementarity again. Fathering is directly about protecting and sustaining the wife and new-born. Mothering is directly about nurturing the new-born. Often, the father seems to disappear from family life. What a challenge for the mother to nurture the new father as well as the babe. It is obvious that the mother is more emotionally involved, precisely because she is more sensually attuned. Fathers often feel left out because they are neither as attuned to sensation, nor as practiced in emoting, as mothers are.

Higher Human Powers

Now we advance from our biological base, through sensory reception and reaction, into meaningful acceptance and response. Earlier we noted that intellection abstracts from sensory starting points to gain meaningful messages enclosed in these sensations. A woman decides how to act with her intellect and her will. Similarly, a man uses his higher powers to decide his acts. But their focus differs markedly. Women focus primarily on persons and their care. They relate by loving emotion. By contrast, each man focuses on things with his intellect and will. He complements his wife's direct attention to the new baby by considering how to support them. What must he figure out, and decide to do, to ensure that his family flourishes in a hostile world? It is fairly obvious, again, that females and males complement each other.

Each woman can choose to nurture new life, or to reject it. Similarly, each man can accept or reject his fatherly responsibilities. We notice many failures, in whole or in part. Failures follow when parents refuse to open themselves to love. If they open to love, in varying degrees, then they accept responsibility in those degrees. The more a woman accepts responsibility, the more she acts. The more she acts, the more she exists. The more she exists, the more feminine she becomes. The same process occurs for a man. Each fulfills the life-purpose given by God. Therefore, "feminine" is a woman's way of being (acting) in the world. "Masculine" is a man's way of being (acting) in the world. Each woman fulfills her femininity by different forms of maternity. The more she "mothers", the more feminine she becomes. Each man fulfills his masculinity by different forms of paternity. The more he "fathers", the more masculine he becomes.

Summary of Significant Differences Between Females and Males

John Paul employs his personal experience, and Dr. Wanda's scientific studies, to affirm the obvious differences. Then he looks beyond the Biological differences into Psychological adaptations to them. Finally he penetrates to the Intellectual differences growing from the Psychological adaptations. This is the traditional analysis, started by Aristotle, developed by Aquinas, and reliable through the centuries. Everything fits with our experience. We know that sub-human animals share sensation and emotion with us, but have no intellect to share: no meaning and value. Because humans deal regularly with meaning and value, they are persons. As such, they transcend all lesser beings. Made in God's image and likeness, each person is inexhaustibly valuable. That's the main reason why John Paul reminds us that we must treat each person as an end, never as a means. Because God made man in His image, no person should ever be used to gain any end.

Complementarity of Females and Males

John Paul expresses many ways that females and males mutually complete each other. A helpful chart is in *Concepts...* p 448. The following presentation expands this chart. There are two major sections to consider. The first is readily observable natural actions, while the second is invisible spiritual actions. It is obvious that the woman welcomes new life, either directly by becoming pregnant, or indirectly by caring for persons in other ways. During her total occupation with that care, she is vulnerable to many dangers. Man's complementary action is to protect this vulnerable woman, caring for her as she cares for her developing child. The fine fit between male and female makes society possible. The entire human race depends on this mutual completion. If people reject this cooperation, the "birth dearth" initiates the "death spiral" for the group that refuses its natural function. Therefore, this complementarity is obviously essential for survival.

John Paul considers how a woman can upset this complementarity. She might use a man for pleasure. This simple misuse of a man is relatively obvious to a woman. But her second possible abuse, sentimentality, is a deeper and more dangerous misuse of sexuality than sensuality is. Sentimentality is an image, often exaggerated, of an ideal man, and how delightful it is for the woman to "dazzle" him with her marvelous abilities. She can captivate him, even lead him like a pet on a leash. Commanding him by her womanly wiles excites her for a while. All too often, a woman would initially be at-

tracted to a man by her desire for pleasure. As this pleasure inevitably fades, sentimental fantasies can arise. But neither of these desires is satisfactory. Neither can support a long-term, reliable, relationship. Instead, all superficial interactions end in frustration. Pleasure flits away, and sentimentality collapses into disappointment, even hatred. The woman suffers boredom, and is easily intrigued by some other man. Perhaps this more promising coupling will satisfy. We observe many women who shift from man to man, seeking an impossible ideal. There are many men eager to cooperate in her fantasy.

It is true that neither pleasure nor sentimentality satisfies the woman. But authentic love can grow out of these attractions if the woman moderates her desires. By mature acts of service, she can even sustain both physiological and psychological delight. Genuine service, mutually rendered by woman and man, can mature into stable married life, especially if the couple welcome children. See *Love and Responsibility* p 139. Integrated pleasure, sentimentality, and loyalty promote the most satisfying family life. Faithful spouses combine the best of life's gifts. But John Paul will develop that later.

The woman can overcome her tendency to use the man for sentimentality. The man can overcome his tendency to use the woman for sensuality. If they do, then they complement each other, and can grow into authentic love. During a suitable courtship, the couple can discover the mature joy of blending their differences into a delightful complementarity. In this secure commitment, the woman's genius flourishes, so that she can emphasize the dignity of persons. While this emphasis applies to every person, it flowers by reflecting her fiancé's dignity. Thus encouraged, the man's genius flourishes, producing material benefits for his fiancé, extending towards a home for his beloved and their children. This mutual encouragement expresses one aspect of female-male complementarity. From this example, we can imagine a wide range of mutually stimulating complements. John Paul mentions several of them. Women use their genius to overcome discrimination, violence, and exploitation of women. Men use their genius for the same purpose. The complementarity between females and males can accomplish great changes in society. A fine example is promoting civil rights for Blacks in the US.

When properly supported by a flourishing family, women can expand their genius to help every person advance toward the ultimate good, by progressing from benefit to benefit. Men can extend their genius to every person. Every person within the couple's range of influence would be a significant group. John Paul foresees a new feminism emerging from this mutual assistance movement. All these advances are natural, but rely upon supernatural encouragement, which Jesus brings to us when He joins us in human flesh, to show us how to live. We now advance to the supernatural gifts.

Our Blessed Virgin-Mother Mary, endowed with all grace by God's generous gift, is totally without sin. She is the new Eve, as pure as Eve was before biting the apple. Mary obeyed God by accepting the assignment of bearing Him when He incarnated. Her free obedience receives Jesus, so that He can save us from our sins. This supernatural activity lifts us beyond our comprehension. But the revealed fact of the matter is so clear that we can believe it, and delight in this mystery. St. Joseph, a just (but imperfect) man, accepted God's invitation to complement Our Lady by accepting her as his wife. He adopts her miraculous Son as his own. This spiritual complementarity enriches us every time we contemplate it. Therefore, we can probe its meaning forever. This mutual support, each providing what the other lacks, is the ultimate complementarity. The Holy Family inspires us to reach for the heights that God invites us to attain.

Because God entrusts his very own Son to the woman Mary, we recognize His universal entrusting of all children to other women. Beyond children, God entrusts all the helpless, weak, and disabled to the female genius to foster improvements in their lives. To complement the female genius, the male genius finds ways to supply material support for these persons. God so loves His created children that He provides these family networks to care for them. He gives us the Holy Family as a perfect example of female-male complementarity.

After these inspiring references to the perfect family, John Paul considers our sinful condition. The father of lies can fool a woman into killing the person entrusted to her. The plague of abortion is our all-to-familiar example. The father of lies can fool a man into destroying his child, and abandoning the woman he should protect. The male fulfills himself by protecting mother and child. But all-to-frequently he betrays his destiny by leaving mother and babe unprotected.

Both woman and man are most alive when they apply their complementary geniuses to eliminate the culture of death, by promoting life in every way possible. John Paul makes it clear that every step toward this ideal is rewarding, making the couple's life much richer than any other action. True, the couple must exert more energy, often facing crushing resistance to their life-affirming projects. Failure is frequent, but their efforts to personalize the defense of life unite the complementary couple more tightly with each other, and with God. On the way of the Cross, Jesus inspires people to rise after a fall, and struggle onward. There is no other way to advance. If we admit that without pain there is no gain, we build upon truth. Then we can follow John Paul's recommendation to personally commit to complementarity.

Difficulties to Overcome on the Way to Improving Complementarity

The man must overcome his strong tendency to value a woman merely for the pleasure he can pump from her during sexual intercourse. Obviously, a woman's bodily attractions overwhelm most men. If a woman cleverly displays her physical endowments, she completely captivates many men. That's why commercial advertisements decorate whatever they're selling with seductive women. It works because many men never look beyond bodily beauty. Altogether too fre-

quently, all interest in a woman's personal qualities evaporates in favor of ogling her bodily bloom. The challenge for each man is to overcome this destructive tendency, so he can rise to treat each woman as a person. Generally, a man has less control over his sexual powers than a woman. So it is more difficult for him to complement his wife in marriage.

However, a woman must overcome her sentimentality, so that she will not reduce a man to an object she can possess. Her tendency to de-personalize the man is not as rampant as a man's tendency to reduce a woman to a sex-object. But it is difficult to overcome, because we seldom recognize its subtle influence. John Paul does us a favor by identifying it as the principal challenge for women. Instead of reducing the person of the opposite sex to an object, each person can integrate the other as the natural complement to the self.

This integration is new to us. Allen in *Concepts...* p 450, helps us grasp its importance by identifying two integrations. First, each person integrates self by eliminating some sins, especially reducing a person to an object. Second, each person integrates with the other, becoming one, as God recommends in Genesis 2: 24. Once a woman and a man recognize their complementarity, they discover ways to fit together, becoming increasingly one. It is rather obvious that a woman is more directed to persons, relationships, and promoting life, than a man is. So she teaches the man how to do his part to integrate with her person. He is more interested in mechanical things, and would rather be fixing the car. But overcoming these difficulties enables both persons to flourish. Perhaps she can express how this integration works. Whether she can or can't, so long as she continues to strive for integration, with a little cooperation from the man, she can help the couple thrive. Then we say that their marriage "works", that it is good for husband and wife, and is a safe place for children to grow. If they grow up safe, they can grow up strong, and society improves, person by person.

This result is so worthwhile that even the great difficulties of unified life come into perspective. We can say that the value of society's survival is worth the difficulties required of married people. John Paul reminds us that marriage: "... aims not only at integration 'within' the person, but at integration 'between persons'. The Latin word *integer* means 'whole', so that 'integration' means 'making whole', the endeavor to achieve wholeness and completeness. The process of integrating love relies on the primary elements of the human spirit: freedom and truth." *Love & Responsibility*, p 116.

John Paul realizes that we have tremendous trouble freely attaining the truth. Original Sin disrupts all our abilities, leaving us discouraged at our failures. So John Paul tackles our troubles by establishing a set of truths that encourage us, in spite of our failures. He reminds us of our experience of difficulties, and works from there towards solutions. Married couples can flourish, enjoying even the trials of life. He begins his teaching in *Love...* on p 114-115

Text "Looked at in terms of psychology, love can be seen as a specific situation (condition of the person). It is on the one hand an internal situation, existing in a particular subject (person), and it is simultaneously a situation between two persons, a woman and a man. But whether we think of its internal or its external aspect, it is a concrete situation, and therefore unique and unreproducible. The external concreteness and uniqueness of the situation which we call love is closely connected with its internal aspect, with what is within each of the persons, who are, as it were, actors in the drama of their own love. Love is certainly a drama in the sense that it is made up of happenings and of action (to do, to act, is the meaning of the Greek word *drao* from which "drama" comes). Thus the *dramatis personae* discover the plot of this drama in themselves, perceive their love as a psychological situation unique of its kind, and one of great and absorbing importance in their inner lives. A person is, of course, among all the varied objects of the visible world, that unusual one which is endowed with an inner self of its own, and is capable of an inner life."

Comment Let's hope that John Paul's presentation is quite clear and emphatic. Then we can skip this alternative account, because we won't need comments that further clarify his words. Among the many things that people can do, psychological activity is one, and is very important to everyone. Remember that John Paul understands each person as beginning life by loving in a primal way. This love determines the approach that specific person will take to knowing and deciding. Love imitates our Creator, Who is Love Himself. Love is our clearest likeness to God. No wonder that it pervades our early life, and can grow to sanctify us on our journey to Sanctity Himself. Love defines us most accurately.

Several steps up from primal love, we find psychological love. Neither kind of love can be fully understood, but we know a lot about each. Psychological love is a condition that produces observable effects which John Paul traces. He reminds us that this type of love originates inside a person, but quickly develops on the outside as well. It is concrete rather than imaginary. While a fantasy can be duplicated, a concrete personal love is unique. As such, it can't be reproduced. For example, if a person experiences personal love with another, then loses this other person, a great grief overcomes each of the forever-separated persons. If one or both survive, they may love again, but this new love will be quite different from the previous one. The basic reason is clear enough for us: each person is unique and unrepeatable. Each growth in love between these people is unique and unrepeatable. It even varies day by day.

As John Paul notes, the loving interaction is a doing, a deciding: a series of acts. This establishes a drama, or a development of character. That dramatic feature of love establishes a firm connection between loving people, so that they can develop a life together in marriage. This unity of life, fosters new life, or children. Whether God blesses this union

with children or not, the married couple explore the plot of their lives together, blending their inner lives with their outer lives, to express the action that interests them the most: expansive love of each other. John Paul continues this theme.

Text “Psychology is, as the name indicates, the science of the soul (*psyche* = soul; *logos* = science). It endeavors to lay bare the structure and the foundations of man’s inner life. Its investigations serve to confirm that the most significant characteristics of the inner life are the sense of truth, and the sense of freedom. Truth is directly connected with cognition. Human cognition is not merely reflecting or producing “mirror images” of objects, but is inseparable from awareness of truth and falsehood. This constitutes the innermost and most important nerve in the human cognitive process. If cognition consisted only in “reflecting” objects, one might suspect that it was merely material. But awareness of truth and falsehood lies altogether outside matter’s limits. Truth is a condition of freedom, for if a man can preserve his freedom from the objects which thrust themselves on him as good and desirable in the course of his activity, it is only because he is capable of viewing these goods in the light of truth, and so adopting an independent attitude to them. Without this faculty, man would inevitably be determined by them. These goods would take possession of him, determining totally the character of his actions, and the whole direction of his activity. His ability to discover the truth gives man the possibility of self-determination, of deciding for himself the character and direction of his own actions, and that is what freedom means.”

Comment Probably, it is clear to us that psychology is the science of the soul. But the rest of John Paul’s analysis may need clarification. No doubt, psychology seeks to identify soul-functions, and show how they fit into soul-structure, which lay bare man’s inner life. Aristotelian-Thomistic psychology, in Aristotle’s *de Anima*, set the stage for this investigation. Robert Brennan, Francisco Irala, A.A.A. Terruwe, use these principles in our time. John Paul launches from these studies into a phenomenological analysis of deeper relationships. By this view, the spiritual basis for psychology emerges as the primary soul-act. Materialistic psychologists insist that the most that the human mind can do is make a “mirror image” of a material dog. But these materialists ask us to agree that this interpretation is true. What kind of material “mirror image” is truth? We see immediately that materialists ask us to make spiritual truth-judgments. In its most strict sense, the materialists ask us to make a spiritual truth-judgment that there are no spiritual truth-judgments. This is why John Paul says that human cognition is “inseparable from awareness of truth and falsehood”. There is no way to think consistently about thinking without identifying its spirituality. Many times a day we distinguish between true and false images, statements, and relationships. These judgments enable us to escape material limitations that would otherwise enslave us.

Escaping limitations is another way to say freedom. So truth is a condition of freedom. John Paul reminds us that if we could not tell the truth about goods that appear to us, to determine which are better than others, we could not be independent of them. If we were not independent, then we would depend on them. They would take charge, and order us to do their bidding. But because of our ability to find the truth, we can determine ourselves. We’re free, but still struggle. So John Paul gives this account to help people love authentically, *Love... p 114*.

Text Previous “psychological analysis of love between persons of different sex ... has shown that it originates in the sexual instinct. This ... [results] in an experience which, ... in each of the two persons, ... centers around a sexual value. This value is associated with a ‘person of the other sex’. When it is connected primarily with the “body”, and exhibits a distinctive propensity to use the other person for enjoyment, the subject’s feelings are dominated by sensual desire. On the other hand, when a sexual value as the content of an experience is not primarily connected with the “body”, the emphasis shifts in the direction of sentiment, and desire does not obtrude on the foreground. This experience may take any one of an enormous number of forms, according to the distribution of emphasis in the response to the sexual value. Each such form is strictly individual, because it takes shape in a specific interior, and also in specific external conditions. The dominant psychic energies will decide whether we have ... a violent affection, or passionate desire.

“This play of inner forces is fully mirrored in the consciousness. A salient feature of sexual love is its great intensity, which indirectly testifies to the force of the sexual instinct, and its importance in human life. This intense concentration of vital and psychic forces so powerfully absorbs the consciousness that other experiences sometimes seem to pale, and to lose their importance in comparison with sexual love. You only have to look closely at people under the spell of sexual love to convince yourself of this. Plato’s thinking on the power of Eros is forever being confirmed. If sexual love can be thought of as a situation internal to a person, it is psychologically an intensely pleasurable situation. A man finds in it a concentration of energies which he did not know that he possessed, until this experience. For this reason, the experience is, for him, associated with pleasure, with the joy of existing, of living and acting, even if, from time to time, discomfort, sadness, or depression, break into it.

“These are the salient characteristics of love in its subjective aspect, and it is in this form that it always constitutes a concrete situation internal to a human being, unique and unrepeatable. At the same time, however, it aims not only at integration “within” the person, but at integration “between” persons.” From *Love... pp 114-116*.

Comment John Paul captures the heart of the difficulties in personal love. “The sexual instinct” is a good way to include all the psychological features of sexual activity. These features are so variable that we can’t even list them. John

Paul isolates the central experience in each of the two persons. Each person focuses upon a sexual value in the other. This sexual value includes many factors, ranging from basic pleasure all the way to giving self away to the other. Sexual attraction is the most usual value, often limited to the male's idea of beauty, and the pleasure of sexual penetration. John Paul calls this set of values "connected with the body". When this connection dominates, one partner prefers to use the other for enjoyment. If this occurs, the partner obsessed with the "body" falls under the dominance of "sensual desire". The other person fades from concern during a storm of sensual desire.

John Paul notes, by contrast, a possible shift from the "body", and the pleasurable sensations of touching, kissing, and eventual penetration. When this shift to the next highest level occurs, desire does not overwhelm sentiment. This shift is more satisfactory for each person during copulation. To actually shift is quite difficult. Women find it easier than men to shift from sensation to sentiment. Women, therefore, must teach men how to advance into this shift. As John Paul mentions, there are an "enormous number" of ways to accomplish this shift. So there is no simple pattern that works for all people, all the time. Instead, the difficulty of shifting to higher levels confronts every couple during each copulation. Each person must make some effort to adapt to the other person, if their interaction increases in love. This adaptation is difficult indeed, especially for men. The female genius can ease this difficulty, and bring the man along toward more satisfying sentiment. Then, if the male cooperates, the female can bring him further into the higher orders of love: self-giving.

John Paul advances to the next step toward self-giving. This step is to apply the great intensity of sexual love to the entire person. This inclusion integrates higher conscious acts with lower physiological acts. This great sexual intensity is rather obvious to us from personal experience or observation. It is undeniably true. It demands attention. John Paul is the founder of the study of the female genius primarily because of this expression of facts that we usually ignore. As he tells us, the force of sexual drive "indirectly testifies to the force of sexual instinct, and its importance in human life". Actually, we can't survive without this forceful drive. It is vital for continuing the human race.

John Paul expresses the main reason for our difficulties with sexual behavior. "The intense concentration of vital and psychic forces powerfully absorbs the consciousness." Yes, forces of life overwhelm all other experiences for most people. All other experiences seem pale compared to the vivid experience of sexual activity. This surging sexual intensity overcomes most men and many women. They usually feel absorbed by the sexual experience, and unable to defend themselves against its aroused power. John Paul reminds us to "look closely at people under the spell of sexual love". That look convinces us of its force. Plato wrote about powerful "Eros". Everyone agrees through the twenty three centuries since. It is undeniable that "sexual desire" overwhelms many people. This power "is forever being confirmed".

If we limit our discussion of sexual desire to a person's internal conditions, we recognize "an intensely pleasurable" experience. This is especially true for men. John Paul expresses man's experience in vivid terms. "A man finds in it a concentration of energies which he did not know that he possessed..." Until he actually does the sex-act, the man has no idea he could explode so energetically. His sexual powers exceed his knowledge. No wonder that he is overwhelmed by them. Never before has he had such intense pleasure. Beyond this pleasure, the sex-act adds a joy of existence. It is a new way to live that is extremely satisfying. The man comes alive in ways that surprise him. No wonder that he can become completely absorbed in repeating this vivifying experience. The intensity of his difficulty is plain to see.

John Paul includes a seldom-considered added difficulty. Copulations can be painful. They can be disappointing enough to make both persons terribly sad. They can be so frustrating that one or both of the partners fall into dark depression. From this difficulty, people can spiral downward into increased anxiety, losing all hope. The way that John Paul expresses these difficulties reflects his profound understanding of the "concrete situation", or the real experience of sexual interaction. Authors in the self-help movement propose mechanical, one-size-fits-all solutions. John Paul admits that each pair of persons, and each coupling, is "unique and unrepeatable". From this realization, he moves on to solutions to difficulties by integrating each partner's ability, and integrating the couple.

Solutions to Difficulties with Sexual Development

John Paul prepares us for the long march from childish images to mature reality. He shows how the female genius emerges to guide and direct the couple's development, in *Love* p 116-118.

"Freedom and truth, truth and freedom, determine the spiritual imprint which marks the various manifestations of human life and human activity. They penetrate the remotest recesses of human action and experience, filling them with a content of which we never meet the slightest trace in the lives of animals. It is to this content that love between persons of different sexes owes its special consistency. However powerfully and explicitly it is dependent on the body and the senses, it is not the body, and not the senses alone, that form its peculiar base, and its peculiar character. Love is always an interior matter [activity], a matter [activity] of the spirit. [If it departs from interior spiritual activity], it ceases to be love. What remains of it, in the senses and in the sexual vitality of the human body, does not constitute its essential nature. The will is ... the final authority in ourselves. Without the [will], no experience has full personal value, or the gravity appropriate to the experiences of the human person. The value of the person is closely tied to freedom, a property of the will. It

is love, especially, that “demands” freedom. The commitment of freedom is, in a sense, its psychological essence. [Whatever] does not derive from freedom, [but] is [instead] marked by determination and compulsion, can’t be [identified] as love. [It can’t be love because] it lacks its essential character. Therefore, the process of psychological integration which accompanies sexual love within a person involves, not only commitment of the will, but unconditional commitment of the will. It demands that the will should commit itself in the fullest possible way, and in a way proper to itself.”

Comment John Paul begins with a general principle: “Freedom and truth determine the spiritual imprint ... of human life and activity”. This is true, but not familiar to us. Perhaps it helps us to say that: “Life is human if it is free, because each human knows basic truths.” Whichever way we say it, truth enables us to be free, and freedom identifies us as human. If the being is not intrinsically free, the being is not human. God’s image must be free, and His likeness must know truth. John Paul’s poetic presentation emphasizes God’s freedom and truth. In His image, we need both.

John Paul distinguishes humans from lower animals. They know sensory input, and relationships among these inputs. But they do not abstract universal meanings from these inputs. They never find truth. Without truth, they can’t be free. John Paul does not present the steps that we just reviewed. Instead, he states the fact, assuming we have figured it out. Then he notes that love between humans is consistent. This consistency continues because of inner spiritual commitment, one person to another. This love jump-starts integration of these people. Because the female is more inward than the male, she is more sensitive to love, a definitively inward act. This is her grand opportunity to lead the less-inward male toward the fullness of inward love. She can apply her female genius to solve the specifically male problem of overemphasizing sensual pleasure. Love is precisely the lover giving everything that he has and is to the beloved.

John Paul does not use these precise words yet, but he will: love is giving. Further along, he will be more explicit. For now, we can distinguish between love and lust. Love gives. Lust takes. Therefore love is the opposite of lust. Lust destroys personal integrity by directly opposing the person’s primal love, which is total giving. The person abuses giving when he imposes taking. He attacks his deepest activity: loving. John Paul adopts Scheler’s order of love. Fresh from Love Himself, the babe begins with primal love. From there, all other acts flow. Later, the child searches for truth. When the person attains truth, he can recognize its goodness. The person can then choose this good. This truth-to-love process is the tradition for the last 2,300 years. John Paul adds primal love so we can understand previously-hidden activity.

We humans complete our activity by willing it to be. That’s why it is “the final authority in ourselves”. Our will gives our experience “full personal value”. Until we will an act, it falls short of the full value we can give it; it lacks gravity. Our will exercises our freedom, which is vastly valuable because it expresses our likeness to God. After all, God is Freedom. Love especially “demands” freedom, because forcing love destroys its core being. After all, God is Love. Every step of John Paul’s thought is probably new to us. But when we hear what he says, it rings true. We know that freedom is essential to love. Therefore, the solution to our fundamental difficulties, the integration of each lover, and of the lovers together, requires total commitment, total gift of self. The female knows this truth naturally. Her genius is to be sure of this truth. Even if she can’t express it as John Paul did, she knows it. She can teach this truth to the man she loves. Her female genius is to be convinced of this truth, and to convey it. John Paul explores freedom in *Love...* p 117.

Text “A really free commitment of the will is possible only on the basis of truth. The experience of freedom goes hand in hand with the experience of truth. Every situation has its own psychological truth. Sensual desire has one truth; emotional commitment another. It is a subjective truth. A man truly desires x, since he discovers in his inner life an explicit feeling, directed specifically towards her. It originates in the impression which she has made on him. In the same way, a woman may be truly committed emotionally to a man, because she finds in her inner life such emotions, such a disposition to emotion, such a desire to be near him, and to lean upon him. His male strength made this impression, and she must recognize her interior state as love. Looking at the matter (activity) in its subjective aspects, we have true love.

“Love, however, also insists on objective truth. Only because of this, only on this basis, can the integration of love take place. As long as we consider it only in the light of its subjective truth, we can obtain no full picture of it, and can say nothing of its objective value. But [objective value] is, after all, what matters most. It is that that we shall try to bring out by the ethical analysis of love.”

Comment John Paul assumes that we know that: “freedom requires truth”. Maybe we do, and maybe not. We can bolster our recognition of this truth by recalling that each lack of truth, i.e. each lie, forces a false claim into our awareness. This force opposes freedom directly. Force attacks freedom. E. g. if the sun is really shining, to claim that it is not, attacks what’s happening (the shining). This lie attempts to replace what is real with what is not real. This denies what really is. This attack on “what is real” restricts our freedom. In this case, we are not free to say that the sun is shining. This lie attacks several related truths. If the sun is not shining, as the lie imposes, it should not be so warm; shadows should not appear... These examples help us realize that “freedom requires truth”. Truth opens the way for freedom to flourish.

The examples John Paul gives help us realize that every psychological condition has its own truth. Sensual desire actually is sensual, and is a desire. Similarly, emotional commitment really is emotional, and genuinely is a personal at-

tachment. These are truths for the subject (person). Subjective truths are nonetheless true for the subject. Objectively, many people may wonder what “he sees in her”, or “she in him”. This leads to the cliché: “beauty is in the eye of the beholder”. Something good in the beloved attracts the lover, even if it is highly subjective. But love can’t live on mere subjective truth. Real, objective, persons fulfill their love in a real, objective, world. Therefore, objective truth must sustain these people. While subjective truth can nourish subjective thoughts, objective truth quickly intrudes upon the couple, demanding that they find objective value. This objective value is “what matters most”. Therefore, John Paul seeks it in the ethical analysis of love. As he analyzes, he uncovers the accurate description of how a person integrates himself, while integrating with his wife. She is busy with self-integration, and applies her female genius to integrate with him.

Steps Toward Solutions of Couples’ Inter-personal Difficulties: Ethical Analysis of Love

Text: Introduction *Love...* p 119

“There exists in contemporary ethics a characteristic tendency which we call *situationism*. It is closely connected with existentialism in philosophy. Human existence is made up of a whole series of situations, each of which is supposed to furnish of itself a norm [rule] of action. Each concrete situation must be accepted and experienced in its totality, with no concern for anything outside it. Whatever is “outside the situation” cannot, for that very reason, be introduced into it, and applied to it. Human life admits of no general and abstract norms “outside the situation”. These are too inflexible and “essential, whereas life is always thoroughly concrete and existential. Applying these assumptions to our own problem, the love of man and woman, as a specific fragment of their existence (or co-existence), would be seen to be composed of a number of situations which in themselves decide its value. These psychological situations would fully determine the structure and content of sexual love. Every situation in the development of that love would be, at the same time, a norm beyond which nothing more, and nothing deeper, should be sought. This view proclaims the primacy of experience over virtue.

“At the same time, however, the view described above contains a false conception of freedom. It has already been said that freedom of the will is possible only if it rests on truth in cognition. This is where the concept of duty comes in. For it is a man’s duty to choose the true good. It is, indeed, duty that most fully displays the freedom of the human will. The will “ought to” follow the true good. But this “ought to” implies that it “may” equally well not do so. Situationism and existentialism, which reject duty allegedly in the name of freedom, thereby deny themselves any real understanding of free will, or at any rate of that which most fully reveals it. For the freedom of the human will is most fully displayed in morality through duty. But duty always grows out of the contact of the will with some norm. Hence one should look for the complete integration of human love, not [in] psychology itself, but in ethics.”

Comment In this quote, John Paul considers Situation Ethics, a once-popular theory of why human acts have value. After a description of this theory, we’ll review the reasons why John Paul rejects it. Situation Theorists notice that telling lies is generally sinful, but that it is virtuous to save a life by lying. They tell us that the situation, or the ethical condition a person is in, gives the act value. It certainly seems that way, from the example given. Each situation, according to these theorists, will provide its unique value. Each situation is its own determination of right and wrong. A lie in one situation is wrong; in another situation is right. This notion became quite popular. It seemed correct that nothing outside the given situation should interfere with the situation itself, as it determines the value of the person’s response to the situation. This arrangement made the situation the rule for behavior, or the norm by which to act. Our situation is two persons developing love. So nothing but the situation itself would count for ethical analysis. Experience of the situation rules out previous experience of other people, and general rules for behavior derived from the history of other people’s experience. A quick way to say this is that experience trumps virtue. The entire tradition of ethics disappears if this is the case.

But John Paul notes that Situation Theorists misunderstand freedom. It rests on truth. If the theory is not true, then the person’s will is not free. So John Paul reminds us of a well-known fact. The human will acts most perfectly when it does its duty. But duty is outside the situation. So Situation Ethics denies duty. If it makes so obvious an error, it is obviously false. If it is false, it cannot sustain freedom. This comment fills in some steps that can help us to follow John Paul’s streamlined argument. Because each falsehood claims that a lie is true, it cannot sustain freedom. John Paul provides a quick dismissal of Situation Ethics. He uses the external rule of duty. We take longer to show why Situation Ethics is false: it restricts freedom. This is ironic, because its theorists claim to promote freedom. Now that we reject this false theory, we can use a true theory for ethics. Because each person “ought” to integrate himself, and because each couple “ought” to integrate into a unified love, clearly integration is an ethical process. John Paul elaborates this, *Love...* p 120.

Text “Where love between man and woman is concerned, we must admit two meanings of the word. Love can be understood as a certain situation (condition) with a psychological significance. But it also has an ethical significance. So it is connected with a norm (rule stating how to act). The norm here is the personalistic norm, expressed in the commandment to love. Situationism refuses to recognize any norm. Therefore it restricts itself to a vulgar (unexamined) psychological understanding of love. For love in the psychological sense must be subordinated, in man, to love in the ethical sense,

otherwise there is no integration properly so called. As a result, there is no possibility of psychological completeness in love, unless ethical completeness is attained. Whether we look at love as a concrete situation, or as a whole series, a continuum of such situations, all of them, separately and together, are psychologically complete and ‘integrated’ to the extent that the ethical value of love is present in them. In other words, love as experience should be subordinated to love as virtue, so much so that without love as virtue there can be no fullness in the experience of love.”

Comment Full human love applies all the lover’s psychological activities to the beloved. That’s why it is fair to call it genuine love. But something very important is missing. A total commitment is absent. The partner with merely psychological love has not given himself unreservedly to his beloved. This total self-giving is the ethical factor that completes love. Psychological love lacks all ethical factors, so it falls naturally into subjection to ethical love. Ethical love is more complete because it includes obedience to the religious command to love God and our neighbors as ourselves, Mt 22:37-39; Mk 12:30-31; Lk 10:27. Each person in the love-relationship integrates himself more fully by completing the ethical requirements, by living up to what each person “ought” to do. Doing his duty unifies each person more fully. Each person must integrate himself first. Then a pair of lovers can integrate with each other. The more they integrate with each other, the more their love grows toward fullness. These examples describe love as virtue. John Paul realizes that we seldom consider virtuous love, so he delves into it. *Love...* p 120.

Text “It will then be well for us to take a look at love as a virtue in the relationship between man and woman. We must here note at once that Christian morality, basing itself on the Gospels, knows love as a supernatural, a divine, virtue. Let us take this as our starting point, and proceed to analyze primarily the way in which, on the human level, this virtue is formed, and manifests itself in the woman-man relationship. Every supernatural virtue takes root in nature, and assumes a human form as a result of man’s own actions, both in his interior and in his external behavior. We can therefore study and analyze it as an aspect of human nature, to bring out its moral value from that angle. This is the way in which we now intend to look at the love of man & woman. The fact that it is, that it must be, a virtue, may be taken as established as firmly as it can be, by all that the general & psychological analysis of love has previously shown. We must refer back to various elements of those two forms of analysis. We shall in particular try to bear in mind, that love between woman & man can take the form here called ‘betrothed love’, since it leads to marriage. Taking all this into account, we shall try to discover in what way this love can realize itself as a virtue. It is difficult to show this in full for the virtue of love, which, as a spiritual reality, can’t be observed. Hence we shall try to identify those elements which are most important, which also stand out most clearly in experience. The first and most basic of them appears to be affirmation of the value of the person.”

Comment In our time, virtue is almost forgotten. The Sexual Revolution wrecks virtuous relations between women and men. Degenerating far from virtue, sexual behavior is notably vicious. Christian morality seldom appears among us. So John Paul does well indeed to review virtuous woman-man interactions. He starts with the Gospels, which proclaim that love is supernatural because God initiates and sustains it. If we agree and cooperate, God’s love lifts us up into His being. Therefore, divine love unites man with God. We do not understand how this happens, but we take God’s word that it does. For a great Gospel account of this divine love, read the Final Discourse at the Last Supper, Jn 13:33-17:26. Jesus, Who is the Son of God, tells us in touching terms how much He loves us. Christ expresses so much of God’s love that He convinces us to love Him in return. Jesus brings us the gift of God’s love, formalized in the sacrament of Baptism. In sacramental Christ-life, the supernatural virtue of love takes root in our nature. We do not need to know how, because we rejoice in the fact that God’s power roots this divine virtue in our sin-ravaged selves.

Christian love is a virtue expressed in visible acts. Therefore, we can use general, psychological and theological methods to analyze it. All three coordinate into a unity that fascinates us, as it challenges us to rise into the supernatural destiny God has prepared for us. Most woman-to-man love is rightly called “betrothed love” because it aims at, and culminates in, marriage. People work to establish love as a virtue, before and after marriage. It is an ongoing effort to extend the spiritual activity of loving as far as we can, on the way to God in heaven.

Because love itself is spiritual, it is non-observable. Therefore, there is no sensory starting point. There is nothing to see, or to hear, to smell, to taste, or to grasp. So we must seek indirect evidence. The general principle is that observable generous service of persons flows from invisible love. It is absent if love is missing in the person. As a prime example, John Paul selects the affirmation of the beloved person’s value. This is observable in Mother Teresa of Calcutta, serving the poorest of the poor, especially the dying. With practice, we can find fairly obvious examples to observe. John Paul advances that observation in *Love...* p 121.

Text “The commandment to love is a form of the personalistic norm [rule]. We start from the existence of the person, and go on to acknowledge the peculiar [unique] value of the person. The world of existences is the world of objects. Amongst them we distinguish between persons and things. A person differs from a thing **in structure and in degree of perfection**. To the structure of the person belongs an ‘interior’ in which we find the elements of spiritual life. It is this that compels us to acknowledge the spiritual nature of the human soul, and the peculiar [unique] perfectibility of the hu-

man person. This determines the value of the person. A person must not be put on the same level as a thing, or ... as an individual animal. The person possesses spiritual perfectibility, and is, as embodied spirit, greater than a 'body' magnificently endowed with life. Between the psyche of an animal and the spirituality of a man, there is an enormous distance, an un-crossable gulf."

Comment In this paragraph, John Paul describes what a person is. The female genius is all about person, identifying each person, respecting all persons, and caring for them with a tenderness as unique as it is necessary. One of the first steps that oppressors (Nazis, Communists) take to dominate humans is to de-personalize them. Throughout our human history, men de-personalize women to oppress them. John Paul corrects that tendency among us by showing that to be a person is a glorious achievement. God creates all humans to be persons. Therefore, we must "start from the existence of the person". John Paul asserts that every human is a person. Then he affirms that every person is structured differently from lesser living beings. Each person is spiritual, or has an "interior". This interior spiritual activity establishes an "inside", which is more important than the outside of humans. While the outside body is doomed to destruction, the inside is too simple to decay. According to Plato, each spirit is so integrated, so unified that it has no parts. Therefore, it cannot come apart. Every spirit is immortal. John Paul assumes that his readers know this fact. He does not give examples. Instead, he says the "spiritual life ... compels us to acknowledge the spiritual nature of the human soul".

Perhaps we are not sure that the soul is immortal spirit. Maybe we need an example to convince us. One example is that each of us knows infinity. Infinity is unlimited. Matter is matter precisely because it is limited. So each person who knows infinity does a spiritual, unlimited, act. Something about us is spirit, springing free of all limits. As we age, our limited body deteriorates. Each of us knows that we shall die. Death destroys our body, which observers see turning to dust. But we somehow know that death does not extinguish our soul. This knowledge is deeply rooted in us. Our souls are immortal. Jesus teaches us that we will rise from the dead. We shall be reunited with our bodies. Resurrected bodies will be spiritualized, as Christ's was. This is a supreme confirmation of our perfectibility in the future.

John Paul calls this perfectibility "peculiar". He means that each person has his own unique perfectibility, specific to him individually. So we can replace "peculiar" with "unique". The translator of *Self and Responsibility* is an Englishman, H. T. Willets, whose words reflect his British use of the English word "peculiar". We grasp John Paul's meaning when we think of this perfectibility as perfectly personal, unique, individual, or specific. No one else can be perfected as any person can be. Our perfectibility is ours alone. No non-human has an immortal soul, so "there is an enormous distance, an un-crossable gulf" between non-humans and humans. Ancient authors concentrated on the human person's immortal soul. Their concentration culminated in amazement at God's handiwork. His creation of man is His masterwork, His most glorious creation, the outstanding success of His creativity. St. Irenaeus gives a fine example: "God became man so that man could become God". John Paul continues the long tradition of man's perfectibility in *Self...* p 122-123.

Text "The value of the person as such must be clearly distinguished from the particular values present in a person. These are either inborn or acquired, and are linked to the whole complex structure of human existence. These values ... find expression in love between man and woman... The love of man & woman is based on an impression accompanied by an emotion, and always having as its object a value. In the given case we have [discussed], it is a sexual value, since the love of man and woman originates in the sexual instinct. This 'sexual' value may be attached to a 'whole person of the other sex' or it may be more especially identified with that person's 'body' as a 'possible object of use'. The value of a person is bound up with the whole being of the person, and not with his or her sex. Sex is only an attribute of that being.

"That being so, every person possesses value, first as a person, and only secondarily possesses a sexual value. Psychologically, the love of a woman and man is an experience at the core of which is a reaction to a sexual value. In the context of that experience, the person is apprehended primarily as a human being of the other sex, even where there is no special emphasis on 'the body as a possible object of enjoyment'. But the mind is simultaneously aware of this 'human being of the other sex' as a person. This is intellectual and conceptual. The person as such is not the content of an impression, for no essence can be so contained. Since the 'person' is not the content of an impression, but only the object of conceptual knowledge, it follows that a reaction to the value of a person cannot be as immediate as a reaction to the sexual value connected with the 'body' of the specific person. Looked at more broadly, with the total phenomenon constituted by a 'human being of the other sex' ... what is immediately contained in an impression, and what the mind subsequently discovers in it, affect the emotions differently. None the less, the truth that a 'human being of the other sex' is a person, 'some-one' as distinct from any 'thing', is ever present in the consciousness. This it is that awakens the need for the integration of sexual love, and demands that the sensual and emotional reaction to a 'human being of the other sex' be somehow adjusted to the knowledge that the human being concerned is a person."

Comment John Paul assumes that his readers know the Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition, and can use Phenomenological analysis to launch into fresh re-thinking of this tradition. Perhaps we are not familiar with this tradition, especially its analysis of the human soul. Fortunately, the tradition is quite consistent. When we think along with Aristotle and

Thomas Aquinas, we join thinkers across 2,300 years of striving to understand what man does. Our common experience assures us that we move our limited bodies toward distant goals, many of them beyond all material limits. So we notice this blend of limit and surpassing limit. This is a way to say our body and our spirit. During life, they are together so completely that we know they are one. Each of us is spirited flesh. The spirit activates the flesh; the soul moves the body. Death stuns us by separating the body from the soul, the spirit from the flesh. Death is stunning evidence that something drastic is wrong. Man should not die. The fact of death is also convincing evidence that we are incarnate spirit. The hylomorphic theory clarifies what happens in death. John Paul assumes traditional psychology, its impressions and emotions. So let's follow him, to sketch the activities that John Paul assumes we know.

Excursion into the Traditional Psychology Which John Paul Uses

Obviously, we start with activities common to every member of the human race. Our inclusive use of the word man refers to both male and female varieties of humans. Each is a unit of body and soul. Bodily functions, studied in Biology, support Psychology. So we skip Biology. Psychology is the process of changing awareness. Our awareness changes when we sense things like color and sound. We know the 5 external senses: receiving color, sound, odors, flavors, and an array of tactile sensations. Sense organs are at the surface of our skin, to accept external sensations for vision, audition, smell, taste, and various touch inputs. In addition, Aristotle noted familiar internal sensations: memory and imagination. Children spend years learning to distinguish these two inner sensory activities. Memories are time-tagged, so they refer to a rough temporal ordering of sensations which were once external. Images are also sensations composed of once-external sensations, but arranged in ways which did not happen. That's why we call them imaginary. We can imagine ourselves floating to the moon in a lead balloon. But we can't remember doing that obviously impossible task.

These sensations, external and internal, are well-known, and easily accepted. But Aristotle notes that we do not first see a red fire truck, then hear its siren. Instead, we unify sight and sound, and odors, and memories... Since we unify external and internal sensations, we must have a unifying sense. William James called it the stream of consciousness. It corresponds to overall perception of various sensations as they present themselves. It is this unification which can fail to integrate a significant sensation, or add a significant sensation which is not actually present. Some such variations may be small enough to pass without notice. But some are so significant that they upset our activities. Many of our problems crop up because of false unifications of the internal big picture, representing rather accurately the external big picture.

The internal big picture is a unity of valuable sensations. A red fire truck, with siren blaring, is dangerous, so we scurry to escape its rapid approach. Since we evaluate our unified sensations as dangerous, we must have an evaluative sense. Though we probably hear of it for the first time, it operates, mostly accurately, most of the time. Many of our problems arise from falsely evaluating our big picture. A quick example is a child knocked over by a big black dog. The child reasonably evaluates all large black animals as bad, because one hurt him. Alert parents can help the child by introducing him to pleasing big black animals. We see how important it is to properly organize our evaluative sense. John Paul realized the value of these receptive senses, all nine of them, and rejoiced in the advantages that these truths provided.

Our next step in human Psychology is evaluation of unified sensations. As it completes sensory reception, it is the final receptive step, but interfaces with reaction. It is a transition because evaluated sensations arouse reactions called emotions. All this happens very quickly, often interrupted by other chains of reception/reaction. Such interruptions produce mixed emotions. Obviously, emotional reactions are super-important to us. Without them, we would not respond to sensations. With them, our responses are usually appropriate. But they can be unacceptable to ourselves and to bystanders, if our emotions run away with us. We need to control them. If we manage to control them, they can urge us toward good behavior, even propel us toward God. Therefore, emotions are central to John Paul's development of the female genius. He re-thinks primal emotions. But he follows our traditional analysis of the developed emotions described here.

The most important evaluation of unified sensory input is whether it is usual or unusual. If it looks like business as usual, then there is no emergency to rouse us beyond our accustomed activity. If the appearance is not ordinary, but extraordinary, then we need to provide a more intense emotional response. First, we consider hum-drum usual appearances. If the overall sensory input is ordinary, we then evaluate it as good or bad. If it is good, at first we merely notice it; it appears to us. If the good merely appears, we respond by loving it the way we love a Big Mac, (or asparagus for vegetarians). If we approach it, or it approaches us, we become more involved. Our response advances from mere love to desire. This driving emotion is absolutely required for us to seek goods that we need, like food. We could not survive without it. If we drive toward the good, and attain it, our response to eating the Big Mac is joy. Vegetarians, similarly, enjoy their asparagus. Emotional joy is required for a person to live well.

If we evaluate the unified sensation as bad, or evil, we can experience three emotions opposed to the trio responding to sensory good. If we merely apprehend a sensory evil, we respond with the emotion of sensory hatred. If we approach it, or it approaches us, our emotional response is aversion, turning away, revulsion. If we attain the evil, we respond with sadness. A simple example is a flat tire. The very notion arouses our hatred. The approach arouses "O no".

The fact makes us sad. This list completes the ordinary emotions, or responses to our evaluations. These 6 emotions cover our ordinary interactions on the sensory level. We can see that they are our usual emotions. Now we turn to unusual ones.

If we evaluate our integrated sensation as unusual, we gear up for extraordinary effort. Our next most important evaluation is whether the sensation is good or bad. If good, then we evaluate whether this unusual sensation is attainable or unattainable. If attainable, we respond with hope. This emotion is tremendously powerful, and can carry people to safety across deserts, or through raging storms. Hope includes extraordinary determination to attain personal safety. However, if we assess the extraordinary good to be unattainable, we respond with despair. This emotion can also be very powerful. It is such a sinking feeling that it can cause death. These are the two emotional responses to extraordinary goods.

If we evaluate an unusual sensation to be bad, our first concern is how close it is. If the evil is approaching, then we have time to further evaluate it. We can estimate whether the unusual evil is vincible (can be defeated), or not. If we assess that it is vincible, then we respond with courage. If we estimate that the extraordinary evil is invincible, then we respond with fear. If we evaluate the evil as present (upon us), our response is anger. All 3 are quite powerful.

John Paul learned this traditional emotional dynamic. He found it very useful because it is both accurate and simple. It is especially applicable to women, whose emotional life is notably richer than men's. He adopted Scheler's interpretation of emotions so that he could expand beyond this bare traditional analysis. This more expansive understanding is directly applicable to the female genius. We could say that primal emotional interaction, to support infants and family, is the hallmark of the female genius. Foundation emotions are more basic and more powerful than traditional emotions. We will examine primal emotions after we complete our review of Aristotle's traditional soul-activity.

Our sketch of traditional Psychology advances now from sensory interactions to intellectual and volitional activities. Humans receive sensory input directly into their sense organs. As Aristotle said: "There is nothing in the mind that was not first in the senses". Each person abstracts meaning from sensory data. To abstract is to isolate the general reality from its specific variations. We leave behind incidental (non-essential) details to seize the essence. Once we discard extraneous variables, we identify the one activity around which these details vary. When abstracting "dogging" from a dog, we find the activity common to each and every unimpaired dog. If we picture variables revolving around a central essential activity, we see why abstraction produces a universal. It is the *uni* = one, around which superficial variables rotate = *verso*. For example, the dog may be black, small, and male. We throw these specific variables out, because they do not apply to each and every dog. Similarly, we quickly abstract to the meaning, which is the "dogging" of the dog. We abstract, or read between the lines of sensory input, to pick out the activity common to all dogs. Thus we "intellect".

Everyone does this to gain meaning, thousands of times a day. We do not need to hear the traditional account of abstraction. John Paul knows this process. He realizes that taking away (abstracting) the non-essentials of dog leaves the basic activity which constitutes every dog. In this abstract form, this activity activates the knower's mind. The activities are identical in dog and in knower. So the knower becomes the dog, in a knowing way. Thinkers in the tradition call this way of knowing "intentional". The knower of dog is intentionally the dog. The two are one in the knowing process. Edmund Husserl used this traditional understanding to develop Phenomenology. John Paul expanded phenomenological analysis in extraordinary ways. One result of this unusual development was a clarification of the female genius.

So every human abstracts meaning from sensations. This intellection provides each person with truth. Receiving this truth, each human notices how good it is. We realize that the truth is good, and each specific truth is specifically good. For example, as soon as we consider the truth of justice, its goodness shines through. Specifically, it is clear to us that our employer is just if he pays us for our work. Immediately, we recognize that his just act is good. Then we react to this good by desiring it with our will. Intellect and will are our spiritual reception and reaction. Material worries may hide these two spiritual activities, but they continue to function even if some material input distracts us. We continue to accept truth, and to respond by desiring the good that truth is. Because both these activities are spiritual, they do not set off emotional responses. However, sensations are the starting points for intellect-ing, so sensory input and intellection fit well together. Sensory input assures that our emotions accompany even our spiritual actions.

This completes our review of traditional Psychology as John Paul uses it. Later we will see how he added a fresh analysis of emotions, to promote them from the usual "automatic response to sensations" to more important functions. Aristotle reduces the value of females precisely because they are so emotional. This devaluation of woman became the tradition. Later, we see that John Paul's reassessment of primal emotions helps us appreciate, and even admire, women, precisely because emotion is vital to the female genius. But that account must wait until we catch up with John Paul's rapid advance into new thoughts. For now, our description of the traditional psychological evaluation of each person's innate abilities helps us see deeper into John Paul's analysis of person in *Love...* p 123.

Continuing John Paul's Discussion of Each Person's Value

"So in every ... experience [of] the 'sexual' value of a person, love demands integration, i.e. the incorporation of that value in the value of the person. Indeed it [should be] subordinated to the value of the person. Here the fundamental

ethical characteristic of love is clearly expressed. It affirms the person, or it is not love at all. If it is informed with a proper attitude to the value of the person, ... it is love in all its fullness: 'integral' love. But if love is not instinct with this affirmation of the value of the person, it is an unintegrated love, and properly speaking not love at all, although the reactions or experiences concerned may have the most 'amorous (erotic) character possible.'

Comment This translation is hard to read. Even adjusted a bit, it still requires some comment. John Paul understands it very well. It is all clear to him because he is convinced of many things that are still vague to us. We recognize many sexually-charged events. Interactions between women and men often explode, because women want love, and men want sex. That means that women want full-loving commitment. This entire gift-of-self frightens men. Men want sensual delight. Women see far beyond sexual pleasure. This difference of desire sparks grave disagreements. One was expressed it: Women give sex to gain love; men give love to gain sex. Many and great difficulties flow from this disconnect.

So John Paul tells us that the woman is correct; the man is not. The man seeks a passing passion, often limited to a one-night stand. The woman seeks enduring personal love. Her view is correct because passionate encounters almost always fail. Cole Porter said it well: "our love affair was too hot not to cool down". At the other extreme: "Love demands integration". John Paul means that true love acts throughout each person, and throughout the couple. True love expands primal love into full bloom in each lover. Because women are more present to love in all its forms, and men less present, women can teach men to contact their primitive love, and expand it throughout their entire persons. When this teaching works, men grow into genuine personal love, and women delight in this difficult advance. All aspects of love become more perfect, from sensual desire to intimate personal union. This improvement is mutually satisfying for each person.

One important reason why each person derives so much satisfaction from true love is that each partner profoundly needs true love. Each one develops this love uniquely, and each pair of persons advances in a unique way. So this true love is a new creation. There is nothing like it anywhere in the universe. The woman's genius triumphs by adapting to her unique partner, and teaching him to be a genuine lover, a husband who will exhaust himself by serving his wife and children. Her good example of exhausting herself in making a home, challenges her husband to also give-his-all.

This is what John Paul means by "affirmation". When husband and wife attend to each other, they see acts of love which they previously missed. First they accept them, then they gratefully thank their beloved. This affirmation of the other person thrills the wife. Eventually, the husband learns to join this process. Once they mutually affirm each other, their love grows beyond their most extravagant images of what could be. This surprise growth can sustain the loving couple through all sorts of difficulties. It becomes "instinct", which means integrated into the very depths of the person, affecting everything he does. Acceptance overflows from way down deep inside, and produces mutual satisfaction beyond all expectations. At the beginning of their relationship, love is not "instinct", because it is not fully integrated into each person. It is not love at all. But it is a start, and can grow into integrated love. If love becomes integrated, the persons expand into true love. Because this love is spiritual, it is invisible. There is no direct sensory expression of true love. But when it flowers in a couple, each loving person properly interprets visible acts as definitive expressions of invisible spiritual love. Often the visible act is the husband bringing flowers to his wife, or the wife cooking her husband's favorite meal. Love makes them alert, accepting, and appreciative of each other. John Paul continues in *Love* p 123.

***Text** "This is particularly true of love between man and woman. Love in the full sense of the word is a virtue, not just an emotion, and still less a mere excitement of the senses. This virtue is produced in the will, and has at its disposal the resources of the will's spiritual potential. In other words, it is an authentic commitment of the free will of one person (the subject), resulting from the truth about another person (the object).

"Love as a virtue is oriented by the will towards the value of the person. The will, then, is the source of that affirmation of the person which permeates all the reactions, all the feelings, the whole behavior of the subject.

"Love as a virtue is connected with emotional love, and with the love contained in sensual desire. In the moral order, there can be no question of slurring over, or neglecting, the 'sexual' values to which the senses and emotions react. Our concern is simply to bind these values tightly to the value of the person, since love is directed, not toward the body alone, nor yet towards 'a human being of the other sex', but precisely towards a person. What is more, it is only when it directs itself to the person that love is love. It cannot be called love when it directs itself merely to the 'body' of a person, for we see here only too clearly the desire to use another person. This is fundamentally incompatible with love. Nor yet is love really love when it is merely an emotional attitude to a human being of the other sex. As we know, this feeling, which relies heavily on an emotional response to 'femininity' or 'masculinity', may in time fade in the emotional consciousness of a man or a woman, if it is not firmly tied to affirmation of the person: that specific person to whom the man owes his experience of 'femininity' or the woman her experience of 'masculinity'."

Comment John Paul shares with us his fresh re-thinking of the tradition. Because he views these ethical interactions in an original way, his description of them is so different from what we usually see, that we must race to catch up with his new investigation. To emphasize our context of female genius, John Paul expands on the personal basis for true

love. Persons are most important to females. Men must learn to focus on persons, because the masculine genius is to manipulate things. Men like to nail a board down, because it stays there. Women like to track personal development, because it forever changes. This difference is the reason for grave misunderstanding, confrontations, and even resentment. Wife and husband can reduce these differences to competition, which can flare into warfare. But if the love that John Paul describes grows, each person sees their differences complementing each other. The man repairs the house. The woman soothes personal interactions. The man does the taxes. The woman helps him get along with his boss. We see from these simple examples how the feminine genius complements the masculine genius, and vice versa.

John Paul calls love a virtue. Because virtue is not in style, we need to find its meaning. Traditionally, virtue is power. The Latin word *vir* stands for a powerful man, a man who achieves great things, in spite of strenuous opposition. So virtue, for man or woman, is the power to accomplish difficult deeds. Love is the virtue of consistent giving to the beloved. In its fullest sense, love is giving **self** to the beloved. When the beloved returns himself as a gift, each person becomes more powerful still. Over the years, married couples develop great love-strength, a marvelous virtue indeed. Virtues grow from decisions. A person exercises his will to choose the goodness of another person. Goodness is the flip-side of the truth. The greater the truth, the greater the goodness, whatever it is (justice or another person). Personal love is the decision to prefer the goodness of the beloved over other goods. By this choice, the chooser yields to the goodness of the chosen. The subject (who acts) decides to love the object (upon whom he acts).

Love thereby unites the lover with the beloved. This is another **identity**. Just as the knower identifies with the known, so the lover identifies with the beloved. Obviously, this identity is spiritual, as the bodies of the lovers remain separate in space. Frequently the sensations of making love absorb one or both of the persons. At the start of their advance toward genuine love, this absorption is acceptable. But it is not satisfactory to either person. Instead, the couple finds satisfaction if, and only if, the spiritual activity of unification becomes the norm. John Paul mentions these things in other parts of his book. So he refers to it with a single statement: “not just an emotion, and still less a mere excitement of the senses”. Engaging the spiritual person, the spiritual will, and the spiritual act of love spiritualizes the entire interaction. This loving spirit “permeates” everything. Therefore, it transforms emotional and sensory love into increasingly spiritual love. All sexual values, permeated with love, become more satisfactory, more unifying, so that the couple draws ever closer into one. Using her female genius, the woman understands this unification. She leads the way for the male because she is uniquely at the disposal of the person. She serves the person, especially the person she chooses to love.

Using a person reduces that person to a mere part of the user’s pleasure. The person who thus reduces the other person does not want unity with this mere part of momentary pleasure. That’s why disgust is the usual reaction to use. The user somehow knows that something disgusting just happened. Moreover, the user knows that he initiated the disgust. So how can unification follow this sex-abuse? Obviously, it can’t. Moreover, using a person destroys some of the integration of the manipulator. So unity declines for both the couple, and the abuser. Often, their disgust is so massive that the couple split, never to attempt to unite again. Frequently, they can’t stand to see each other again.

As John Paul says elsewhere, spiritual healing can occur after this sex-abuse. Jesus gives us the healing sacrament of Confession (Reconciliation, Penance). Because we are free, and Christ is generous, we can repent of any transgression. He took all our sins upon His sinless self, and paid the price of reconciliation. So if we simply confess our sins, He will forgive them. If we freely sin, we can freely repent. Because the complementarity of feminine and masculine is so attractive, it is difficult to manage. We expect, from this difficulty, that we will misuse this massive attraction frequently. Down the ages, sex-sin has been the most popular. We are amazed that some couples integrate themselves well enough to blend with each other in marriages that bless them with loving lives, and loving children. Usually, these marvelous marriages profit from frequent Confessions.

John Paul adopts Sheler’s discovery of primal love. Its most obvious expression is the love between mother and newborn. This love occupies mom and babe for a couple years. It spreads to every passer-by. No healthy person can ignore the baby. His living primal love attracts us because it is fresh from God. It is the original condition that we all enjoy. It is our deepest satisfaction. This satisfaction is our oldest and most delightful experience. It remains with us throughout life, though hidden. Without realizing it, we compare our plans to it, and select plans that might result in satisfaction like our original primal love. Whatever the outcome of our plans may be, we compare the result to our unrecognized primal love. This comparison always shows the present outcome falling way short of our original satisfaction with primal love.

But, people can develop virtues which enable them to integrate their abilities. As they become integrated their satisfaction approaches that of primal love. Integration with a member of the other sex increases satisfaction even closer. This unique person-to-person integration so increases mutual love that the married persons advance toward the perfection of their primal love. This increasing advance toward perfection is most obvious in mystical experiences of union with God. The ultimate goal of this advance is total unity with God in heaven. That is a long way from feminine attraction of man, and masculine attraction of woman. But it is God’s plan for us. John Paul considers sex-attraction: *Love... p 124.*

Text “Sexual sentiment is a continually shifting response to many experiences, to impressions obtained from many persons. In the same way, sensuality is a shifting response to many ‘bodies’ whose presence arouses the awareness of ‘a potential object of enjoyment’. For this very reason, love cannot be founded on sensuality alone, or on sentiment alone. Each of these bypasses, so to speak, the real person, prevents, or at any rate, is not conducive to, the affirmation of the person. This in spite of the fact that emotional love appears to bring one so close to another human being, and that human being so close to oneself. But even emotional love, while bringing the ‘human being’ closer, can easily miss the ‘person’. We shall have to return to this in the present chapter, and also in Chapter III. For observation of life leads us to think that emotional love is kindled, particularly in people of a certain psychological make up, by the phenomenon ‘human being’ itself, if it carries an adequate charge of ‘femininity’ or ‘masculinity’. But such love, in itself, does not have the mature inner cohesion which knowledge of the full truth about the person, the object of love, necessarily brings.”

Comment John Paul describes our common experience so well that we can identify with the stressful attractions that surge around and through us. Person after person intrigues us, offering possibilities for sexual enjoyment. This variation proves that passing sexual encounters fail to satisfy us. Satisfaction is stable, enduring, enriching by continual commitment. Pumping pleasure from various sex-partners is unstable, passing, disgusting because uncommitted, and uncommitted because at least one of the partners depersonalizes the other. This insult to the person attacks the entirety of the human being. Somehow, the person who denigrates the other person knows what a sin this is. That knowledge, which may be hidden from the denigrator, erupts into disgust. This disgust is obvious to the sinner.

These lurid examples illustrate that “love cannot be founded on sensuality ... or on sentiment alone”. John Paul expresses the basic reason: sensual and sentimental motivation “bypasses ... the real person”. This original contribution to understanding personal interaction is exceptionally valuable. Persons must affirm each other at a more basic level, the level of the entire human being: the person. Yes, emotional love can be quite close, and many couples can live together for a long time on nothing more solid than emotions. But emotions are so changeable and superficial that they drift off to others who display more “femininity or masculinity”. Emotions do not reach the inner levels of meaning and value, where people mature enough to respond to the truth and goodness of the person they truly love. Following: *Love...* p 124-125.

Text “Affirmation of the value of a person, in which the full truth about the object of love is reflected, must be allowed to take its place among the erotic experiences which originate in man’s sensuality or his sensibility. Affirmation of the value of a person generally leads in two directions, thus indicating, in a general way, two main areas of sexual morality. It may point the way to control over those experiences whose immediate source is man’s sensuality and emotionalism. This matter will be thoroughly discussed in Chapter III: ‘The Person and Chastity’.

“The other direction in which affirmation of the value of the person may lead is towards the choice of one’s principal vocation in life. A person’s vocation as a general rule involves another person or persons in his or her life. Obviously, when a man chooses a woman to be the companion of his whole life, he designates the person who will play a bigger part in his life than any other, and indicates the direction which his life vocation will take. There is the closest possible link between the two choices, so that the direction in which he feels himself called can only be an affirmation of that person’s value. This too will be dealt with more particularly in Chapter IV, and especially in the second part.”

Comment John Paul again affirms the fullness of true love. It includes an origin in sensual attraction, growing into sentiments of emotional attachment, but crowned by the value of the person. This integrated love is the only true love, because it affirms the basic reality of the whole being: the person. In stark contrast, attempts to love only a part of the person fail miserably, often after a single passionate night. John Paul reminds us that sexual interaction requires complete commitment person-to-person. If a lover gives his entire self to the beloved person, two possibilities open, depending upon the person who receives the gift. If the receiver is God, the giver lives a chaste life, skipping sexual interactions altogether. If the receiver is a human person, the giver lives a married life. Each choice follows a vocation, or God’s call. Each choice affirms the receiving person’s value. These ideas are so new that we don’t know how to say them. We need to think about them for a few years. For example, John Paul introduces “Membership of One Another”, *Love...* p 125.

Text “In the metaphysical analysis of love, it was stated that its true nature is most fully revealed in the gift of self, by the person who loves, to the beloved person. What we have called betrothed love has a specific quality of its own, which differentiates it from other forms and manifestations of love. We realize this just as soon as we understand what is meant by the value of the person. The value of a person ... is inseparable from the essential being of that person. By its nature, because it is what it is, the person is its own master (*sui juris*). [Its freedom] cannot be ceded to another, or supplanted by another... (It is *alteri incommunicabilis*). But love forcibly detaches the person ... from this natural inviolability and inalienability. It makes the person want to do just that: surrender itself to another, to the one it loves. The person no longer wishes to be its own exclusive property, but instead to become the property of that other. This means the renunciation of its autonomy and its inalienability. Love proceeds by way of this renunciation, guided by the profound conviction that it does not diminish and impoverish, but, quite the contrary, enlarges and enriches the existence of that person.

What might be called the law of *ekstasis* seems to operate here: the lover ‘goes outside’ the self to find a fuller existence in another. In no other form of love does this law operate so conspicuously as it does in betrothed love.”

Comment What a challenge John Paul proposes! True love is self-gift. The lover gives himself to the beloved. Betrothed love is unique because the person renounces his most cherished ability to rule himself. He freely gives his freedom away to his beloved. Say what? Can this be? No one can take the lover’s freedom from him. But he can give it away, if he loves completely. Isn’t this a powerful statement: “The person no longer wishes to be its own exclusive property, but instead to become the property of that other”. How can this be? It is downright un-American.

But it is true. John Paul shows how the gift-of-self propels the giver out of his usual condition. The Greeks noticed this propulsion. They called it *ek* = out of; *stasis* = standing, or state. Perhaps this notion is new to us. An example will illustrate how it works. We may remember learning to ride a bike. After many falls, some bruises and abrasions, we finally ride all the way around the block without a fall. We experience an ecstasy of joy. We seem to be outside ourselves, up above, so that we can see our entire circuit round the block. We transcend space and time. We get beyond our usual condition. We get into a new state. It is so delightful that we want to stay there. Just as our bike-riding success takes us out of our accustomed condition, so our more mature self-gift of true love follows the law of ecstasy. Instead of losing the self the lover gives away, he gains himself, somehow enlarged and enriched. The gift ricochets back to the giver, bigger than ever. His gift made him grow. Moreover, he gains the other, if the other loves him in return. This win-win return is most evident in betrothed love. It is the vocation for most people, as John Paul mentions next, p 126.

Text “This is the direction which love between man & woman should take. We have drawn attention on a number of previous occasions to its psychological intensity. This intensity is explained, not merely by the biological force of the sexual instinct, but also by the nature of that form of love which here shows itself. The sensual and emotional experiences which are so vividly present in the consciousness, form only the outward expression, and also the outward gauge of what is happening, or most certainly should be happening, deep inside the persons involved. Self-giving can have its full value only when it involves, and is the work of, the will. For it is free will that makes the person its own master, an inalienable and untransferable ‘someone’. Betrothed love, the love that is a gift of self, commits the will in a particularly profound way. As we know already, it means disposing of one’s whole self, in the language of the Gospels: ‘giving one’s soul’.

“Contrary to the superficial view of sex, according to which love (erotic love) culminates in a woman’s surrender of her body to a man, we should rightly speak of the mutual surrender of both persons, of their belonging equally to each other. Not mutual sexual exploitation, with ‘x’ giving her body for ‘y’ to possess, so that each can obtain the maximum of sexual pleasure, but the reciprocated gift of self, so that two persons belong each to the other. This is the only full and satisfactory description of ‘betrothed love’, which finds its fulfilment in marriage. In the absence of these characteristics, love is by definition impossible, and mere ‘use’ ... takes its place. Love cannot take the form of mere use, even if enjoyment is mutual and simultaneous. Instead, it finds its proper expression in the union of persons. The result of unification is that each belongs to the other, a reality expresses in various ways, among them full sexual intercourse, which we shall call marital intercourse, since marriage is the only proper place for it.”

Comment It is clear from John Paul’s presentation, that man-woman love should develop in this direction. Two new dimensions of the psychological intensity of sex include the personal commitment, which is satisfying in itself, and the extreme delight of ecstasy. We could add a third dimension: the return of self-gift from the beloved, and her ecstatic response. Consider the mutual ecstasies reinforcing each other, and we realize some of the intensity that John Paul sees in betrothed love. Integrated love can be identified externally by its visible sensual and emotional parts. They measure the invisible activities of free choice, self-gift, and ecstasy. We can’t see the Gospel expression: “give one’s soul”. But we can gauge its intensity by visible sensory and sentimental strength. John Paul gives us a practical way to trace love’s development. His analysis ranges from highly abstract metaphysical relationships right down to sensations.

He also corrects the general view that man takes from woman, who must surrender her body. Instead, he tells us that true love is **mutual** surrender. The persons should belong to each other. This belonging makes each person a member of the other person. This more intimate union is “reciprocated gift of self, so that two persons belong each to the other”. What a far cry from mutual exploitation, where each partner attempts to gain the most pleasure from the other. This “use” tries to reduce the other person to a thing to manipulate for pleasure. No wonder that people who denigrate each other in this way come to hate each other. “Love cannot take the form of mere use, even if enjoyment is mutual and simultaneous.” Nothing short of personal union will satisfy people, maturing into marriage, its only proper place.

Recall that John Paul adopted Scheler’s view of persons, and developed it to show the female genius, based on love. Indeed, primal love, flowing from Love Himself, is a wonderful way to contemplate creation of each person. As primary love, expanding into loving union with a person of the other sex, each person fits well with John Paul’s understanding of genuine personal love. No wonder he recognizes completion of genuine love in children, fresh primal loves, newly created by Love. This complete view is so beautiful that we can comprehend why it fascinated Scheler and John

Paul. We can be excused if we are astounded. Scheler called primal love the “root of the spirit. Love precedes and unites all our theoretical and practical activities.” *Listening* p 203.

The most obvious proof of the female genius is the mother’s immediate love for her newborn. They envelop each other in love inexpressible. The totality of this love amazes us. Still, we expect it. It is the norm. It warms our hearts, and fits neatly with Scheler’s analysis of persons. Somehow we know that love can expand forever. Because we are free, we can reject love. We can hate. But our primal love impels always. That is why our ultimate fate is undecided until our final choice during death. Our acts stay open to our original loving impulse until we close them with our final breath. We can see why John Paul adopted Scheler’s study of persons, love, and striving towards God. John Paul continues: *Love* p 127.

Text “From the ethical point of view, the important thing here is not to invert the natural order of events, and not to deny any one of them its place in the sequence. The unification of the two persons must first be achieved by way of love, and sexual relations between them can only be the expression of a unification already complete. It is worth recalling here what has already been said about the objective and the subjective aspects of love. Love in its subjective aspect is always a psychological situation (condition), an experience caused by a ‘sexual’ value, and hinging on awareness of that value in the subject, or in two subjects experiencing love, each for the other. Love in its objective aspect is an interpersonal fact, is reciprocity and friendship based on a shared good. It is, then, always the unification of two persons, with the result that they belong to each other. We cannot substitute two subjective loves, or their sum, for this objective love. the subjective and objective aspects are distinct, and not interchangeable.

“The objective aspect is the decisive one. It takes shape in two subjects, obviously drawing upon the wealth of sensual and emotional experiences which belong to the subjective aspect of love. But it is not to be identified with them. Sensual experiences have their own dynamic of desire, which depends upon instinctive feeling and the sexual vitality of the body. Emotional experiences also have a rhythm of their own. They serve to create those positive moods in which a feeling of closeness to the beloved, of spontaneous understanding, can flourish. Love, however, makes for unification through the reciprocal gift of self. This is a fact of great objective, indeed ontological, significance, and so belongs to the objective aspect of love. Sensual and emotional experiences are not to be identified with it, though they create the set of conditions in which it is realized in practice. Simultaneously, however, there exists another problem, which is more or less the converse. [It is] how to maintain and consolidate this reciprocity between two persons, amidst so many sensual and emotional reactions and experiences, characterized by great mobility and mutability.”

Comment As John Paul expands his analysis, we note the care he takes to see the whole whole-ly. He views each part of human love in its proper place. That’s why he sees the entirety entirely. He does not invert sexual love, to impose pleasure on top. Nor does he reject pleasure because it is too hard to consider. He faces all the difficulties of human love, and expresses how to integrate all the positive parts. He summarizes the examples that he has given to show that personal integration comes first. Then intercourse can fit into secure commitment from each person. If this order is not maintained, people use each other. It is possible to overcome this degrading use, but it is hard. So the most effective way for a man to court a woman is to develop betrothed love to its culmination in marriage, then consummate this personal integration with intercourse. People who observe this order, balance objective love with subjective love. Objectively, they belong to each other. Then they can express this definite belonging with subjective enjoyment of passionate sensuality and full flights of emotions. Any person who confuses objective love with subjective love, may engage in sensations and sentiments. They mimic objective love, but fail to satisfy either partner. John Paul wants us to avoid this disappointment.

The main way to avoid disappointing each member of the couple is to establish the objective mutual self-giving that constitutes objective love. This integration of each person, and of the couple, is a profound spiritual decision. It is a life-changing commitment. When each person gives himself entirely to the other person, they become spiritually one, in a union that transforms each person. It is true that millions of people give themselves mutually to one another, without any verbal expressions of this transformation. It is not necessary to say what the partners do, so long as they do it. It is not necessary that husband and wife speak their commitment, so long as they actually commit themselves to each other. John Paul thinks through many distractions to find the basic relationships of true love. He then expresses these relationships in rather clear language. His understanding and expression help us comprehend what is happening, so that we can apply his analysis properly to advance toward union with God. By her female genius, each woman zooms directly to identify persons and love. This immediate identification enables each woman to teach her man to gradually integrate himself, so that he can integrate with her. Meanwhile, she is integrating herself, becoming more united, so that she can give herself entirely to her beloved. Her integration occurs so naturally that she doesn’t need words to express it. John Paul recognizes his idealistic description, and returns to the practical problem of passion: *Love... p 128.*

Text “At this point, a problem ... arises yet again: sexual values, which in various forms, constitute the catalyst of sensual and emotional eroticism. [These strong passions] must be firmly welded in the consciousness and the will to the value of the person who provides ... the material of those experiences. Only then can we think of the unification of per-

sons, and of their belonging to each other. Without this, however 'love' can have only an erotic significance, and not its true (personal) significance. It can lead to sexual 'union' but with no warranty in a true union of persons. Such a situation has a utilitarian character. The decisive feature of the relationship between the two persons is that they 'use' each other ... One person belongs to another as an object of use, and tries to derive some pleasure from allowing that other to make use of him or her. Such an attitude, on both sides, is utterly incompatible with love, and there can be here no question of the unification of persons. Quite the contrary: all the conditions exist for a conflict of interests between the two parties, soon to break out. Egotism of the senses or emotions cannot forever be concealed in the recesses of the fictitious structure which, with every appearance of good faith, calls itself love. The ricketiness of the structure must show itself in time. It is one of the greatest sorrows when love proves to be not what it was thought to be, but its diagonal opposite.

"Such disillusionments must be avoided. Betrothed love, which carries within itself an inner need to make a gift of one's own person to another human being (a need realized between man and woman in surrender of the body, and in a full sexual relationship, as well as in other ways) has a natural grandeur of its own. The measure of this is the value of the person who gives himself or herself, and not just the degree of sensual and sexual enjoyment which accompanies the gift of self. It is very easy, however, to confuse the essence of the problem with what is really an indirect reflection of it. Take away from love the fullness of self-surrender, the completeness of personal commitment, and what remains will be a total denial and negation of it. This subtraction, taken to its conclusion, leads to what we call prostitution."

Comment Sexual attraction is so strong and pervasive that John Paul considers it again. He reiterates that complete love welds erotic enjoyment to personal commitment. Nothing short of this integration unifies persons enough to belong to each other. Instead, at least one of the persons uses the other. Perhaps the passions are mutual, and each uses the other. But this "conflict of interests" sets the user against the used. Before long, this unstable relationship will sink yet deeper into sorrow, exacerbated by profound betrayal. At all costs, John Paul wants us to avoid such disillusionment.

He wants us to glory in the grandeur of betrothed love. It is self-giving, fully spiritual. It transforms erotic passions into spiritualized emotions beyond our wildest expectations. At the other extreme, if someone removes the fullness of self-surrender, and the completeness of personal commitment, only a paper shell of true love remains. Taken to its conclusion, this subtraction becomes prostitution. In stark contrast, John Paul describes the joy of betrothed love, p 129.

Text "Betrothed love comprises, on the one hand, the gift of the person, and on the other hand, acceptance of that gift. Implicit in all this is the 'mystery' of reciprocity. Acceptance must also be giving; giving must also be receiving. Love is naturally reciprocal. He who knows how to receive, knows also how to give. I am, of course, speaking of a 'skill' in giving and receiving which is characteristic of love. There is also a skill of giving and receiving which is characteristic of egoism. The skill in giving and receiving which is typical of love is exhibited by the man whose attitude to a woman is informed by total affirmation of her value as a person, and equally by the woman whose attitude to a man is informed by affirmation of his value as a person. This skill creates the specific climate of surrender of the innermost self. Both man and woman need this genuine capacity for affirmation of the value of the person, if the gift of self is to be fully valid, and equally if acceptance of the gift is to be valid. A woman is capable of truly making a gift of herself only if she fully believes in the value of her person, and in the value as a person of the man to whom she gives herself. And a man is capable of fully accepting a woman's gift of herself only if he is fully conscious of the magnitude of the gift. He cannot be fully conscious of this magnitude unless he affirms the value of her person. Realization of the value of the gift awakens the need to show gratitude, and to reciprocate in ways which would match its value. We can also see how essential it is for betrothed love, a love which is a reciprocal giving of self, to contain the inner structure of friendship.

"At any rate, it is only when we consider the question on the plane of the person, and in the light of the essential value of the person, that the full objective importance of betrothed love (the reciprocal gift of the self and of the membership of man and woman in one another) becomes clear and comprehensible. We can go on discussing this theme from the 'position' of sexual values, and the play of emotions and connected passions, for as long as we like, and we shall never see the problem in its correct perspective. Nor, if we proceed in that way, shall we ever understand those principles of sexual morality which are intimately linked with the commandment to love. [This is] an expression of the personalistic norm. The commandment itself, and all its consequences, stand out clearly only when we rise to the plane of the person, to the height of its true value."

Comment Genuine love is always reciprocal: giving and receiving. Love is so active that it transcends the limits of merely giving. Receiving is a dimension of love that we seldom consider, so John Paul reviews it for us. Perhaps we ignore receiving because we take it for granted. If someone gives a gift, or course we accept it. There is nothing to consider. But John Paul notes that receiving the self-gift does not end with acceptance. Instead, it is a mystery of reciprocal giving and receiving. Somehow, receiving encourages giving, and giving induces receiving. We do not comprehend this mystery, but we love to contemplate it. Once more, the female genius exhibits this reciprocity mystery. Among many exhibitions, the clearest is mother-child interaction. On the surface, nothing significant seems to be happening. Mother holds the

babe, hugs it, tickles it, and kisses it. The watching male can't see anything worth doing. But both persons are totally engaged in their mutual interaction. The babe smiles, wiggles, and coos. The mom caresses, pats, and cradles. None of this seems to accomplish anything that a male would bother doing. Yet mom and babe are fully engaged, totally occupied with their seemingly useless activities. Something is happening that certainly is giving and receiving. Both mom and babe are content, even radiant, as they exchange love. Yes, mom is more conscious of this exchange than babe. But each person is mutually reciprocating according to his capacity.

A woman, exercising her female genius, can teach the male spouse to receive her self-gift. This is the example that John Paul gives. He describes a mutual reciprocal spiral that facilitates giving by warm receiving, and receiving by warm giving. The overall warmth of mutual love increases, because the receiver is so grateful for the gift that the giver overflows with love to give more of self. This invigorated giving stimulates more lively receiving. This dynamic reminds us that Love Himself created us to be like Him in His personal love. No wonder that our primal action is love, and that our lives are full of trials to become more loving, working toward Infinite Love. As friends identify with one another, so betrothed friends advance into reciprocal self-giving and receiving that unite them ever more. Nothing less than personal interaction comes close to married love. It is personal, or it doesn't exist. John Paul examines responsibility on p 130.

Text "Nowhere else in this whole book, is its title: *Love and Responsibility* more to the point than it is here. In love there exists a particular (unique) responsibility for a person who is drawn into the closest possible partnership in the life and activity of another. [He] becomes the property of whoever benefits from this gift of self. It follows that one also has a responsibility for one's own love: is it mature and complete enough to justify the enormous trust of another person, the hope that giving oneself will not mean losing one's own 'soul', but on the contrary enlarging one's existence. Or will it all end in disillusionment? Responsibility for love clearly comes down to responsibility for the person, originates in it, and returns to it. This is what makes it such an immense responsibility. But its immensity can only be understood by one who has a complete awareness of the value of the person. Anyone who is capable only of reacting to the sexual values connected with the person, and inherent in it, but cannot see the values of the person as such, will always go on confusing love and eros, will complicate his own life and that of others by letting the reality of life, its true 'relish' escape him. For this 'relish' goes with a sense of responsibility for the person, a concern for the true good of the person, which is the quintessence of altruism in any form, and also an infallible sign of a broadening of one's own existence, in contact with that 'other I', that other existence, which are as near and as dear as one's own. To feel responsibility for another person is to be full of concern, but it is never in itself an unpleasant or painful feeling, for it represents, not a narrowing or an impoverishment, but an enrichment and broadening of the human being. Love divorced from a feeling of responsibility for the person, is a negation of itself, is always and necessarily egoism. **The greater the feeling of responsibility for the person, the more true love there is.**"

Comment Love is giving self to the beloved. Therefore, the giving person belongs to the beloved. So the beloved immediately becomes responsible for the person who belongs to him. There is no closer possible partnership in the life and activity of another than betrothed love. John Paul reminds us that we are also responsible for maturing into love great enough to give to our beloved. This is the integration of each person that is required for them to integrate with each other. Love unites all people who are integral enough to reciprocate when the lover gives himself to them. This gift is the foundation of love. Betrothed love, built upon it, expands the lovers. Along this expanding way, growth can continue, but can also die of neglect, ending in severe disillusionment. As we describe this reciprocal acceptance and giving, we see more and more of the person's power. The person, and the person alone, can give himself away. Another person, and another person alone, can accept this personal gift. If the accepting person also gives himself away, the feed-back of love spirals upwards and onwards without practical end. How valuable the person is, more worthy than we can conceive! That's why John Paul says that the person is a mystery beyond our grasp.

Because this un-graspable mystery can give himself to us, we can accept him. We cannot conquer him. We can receive what we cannot take. Then if we give ourselves in return, we enter an unending exchange of gifts. This personal love resembles Our Creator more than anything else we can do. John Paul corrects the all-too-prevalent de-personalization of woman by showing that she is a person. Then he affirms the female genius in each woman. That's why he is the founder of the new feminism, which many of his followers continue to expand. Each human person is unique, and makes a difference in creation that no other person can make. In our present condition, we seldom see what difference people make, so we too often use our ignorance of a person's destiny to denigrate him. That's why John Paul wrote *The Acting Person*, to give examples of the value that each person has and is. Later, we will examine some of these examples.

But now, we acknowledge that the inestimable value of each person extends far beyond all sensation and sentiment. Personal value is a higher level than psychological interaction. But many people fail to rise to this exalted level. They continue to confuse love with eros. In this confusion, they frustrate themselves and many people around them. In place of the unique "relish" of true betrothed love, they flounder in sensuality, without satisfaction. They seek complete

union with the “other I”, the beloved, but frustrate their search by hanging up on pleasure. So quickly does the expected pleasure evaporate that they often leave immediately after they recover from their misguided passion.

But people who grow into genuine love become increasingly responsible for their beloved. So they must be with the person they love as often as possible. This enduring responsibility enriches the lover, and expands his range of care. While responsibility requires additional work, the effort expended is delightful. Nothing compares to the joy of fulfilling our responsibilities to our beloved. John Paul expresses his conclusion in memorable words: **The greater the feeling of responsibility for the person, the more true love there is.** From this striking statement, he considers choice, p 131.

Text “This truth: that responsibility = love, sheds a great deal of light on the problem of choice. We have not forgotten that when love between a man and a woman takes its natural course, they give themselves each to the other, become each other’s property. Before their love can take on its definitive form, become ‘betrothed love’, the man and the woman each face the choice of the person on whom to bestow the gift of self. Its consequence makes the choice a weighty matter. To choose a person is also to opt for ‘betrothed love’ for the reciprocal gift of self. The object of choice is another person, but it is as though one were choosing another ‘I’, choosing oneself in another, and the other in oneself. Only if it is objectively good for two persons to be together can they belong to each other. For a human being is always first and foremost himself (‘a person’), and in order not merely to live with another, but to live by and for that other person, he must continually discover himself in the other, and the other in himself. Love is impossible for beings who are mutually impenetrable. Only the spirituality and the ‘inwardness’ of persons create the conditions for mutual interpenetration, which enables each to live in and by the other.”

Comment Belonging to each other blends one person with another. Spirit, and spirit alone, can identify with another spirit, both by understanding and by choosing. Selecting the appropriate person to give self to, and to receive his self from, is difficult. But it is exhilarating because the other becomes “I”. It is indeed choosing another “I”. When this choice is mutual, I choose myself in another, and the other in myself. Then each person lives “by and for that other person”. Part of the joy of betrothed love is discovering self in the other, & the other in self. Then each partner lives in and by the other. We seldom say this, so we have to think a lot about how real this is. Though this terminology is unusual, women grasp the meaning of this personal relationship. Their genius is to live self-giving. Their example of living thus encourages all the people who observe it. Moreover, they can evoke self-giving from the male they choose to give themselves to. With practice, she belongs to him, and he to her. But attaining this mutual belonging is difficult, as John Paul notes on p 131.

Text “In this connection, a very interesting and complex subsidiary problem arises. It might be called the problem of the ‘psychology of choice’. What psycho-physiological factors make two people feel that they are suited to one another, that it is right for them to be together, and to belong to each other? Are there in all this any rules or regularities traceable to the psycho-physiological make-up of human beings? What part is played here by somatic and constitutional factors, and what by temperament and character? These are fascinating questions, but it seems to us that though various attempts have been made to find an answer of more or less general applicability, the way in which such choices are made remains one of the secrets of human individuality. There are no rigid rules, and philosophy and ethics owe their authority as teachers of practical wisdom to their insistence on explaining the facts only to the extent that they can be explained. Such sciences as physiology, sexology, and medicine would do well to adopt the same rule, and thus help philosophy and ethics to carry out their practical tasks.

“Starting from empirical premises, we are bound to recognize that the choice of a person of the other sex as the object of betrothed love, and as the co-creator of that love by way of reciprocity, must depend to a certain extent on sexual values. This love must have a sexual aspect, must form the basis for the whole life together of two persons of different sex. Unless both parties respond to sexual values, there is no possibility of all this. Sexual values are connected not just with the impression made by ‘the body as a possible object of enjoyment’, but also with the total impression made by a ‘human being of the other sex’, but the ‘womanliness’ or ‘manliness’ of that other person. This second impression is the more important, and also makes itself felt earlier in time. In a naturally healthy and unspoiled young person, the first experiences relating to sexual values have to do with a ‘human being of the other sex’, and not primarily with a ‘body as the possible object of enjoyment’. Where this latter interest is earlier and dominant, we have to do with a product of corruption, the breakdown of the natural sequence in the reaction to sexual values will make love, and especially the process of choosing a person to love, more difficult.”

Comment It’s a fascinating mystery how two people select each other for betrothed love, maturing into marriage. If possible, we could profit from generalities, even a few rules to guide our choice. Lacking these, could we at least say which physiological and/or psychological values initiate the process of mating? Are there moral qualities which determine how people pair into spouses? After extensive investigation, John Paul admits that there are no reliable regularities for choosing mates. It is important to admit the extent to which these questions can be answered. It is very small. The important reasons are lost in the mystery of individuality, in the uniqueness of each person, and in the unrepeatability of their

mutual interactions. It is clear that sexual values have their place, particularly during the initial attractions which each person has for the other. But sexual values are not enough, as John Paul reiterates often. He reminds us that unspoiled youngsters naturally include sexual values, but pay more attention to personal qualities. If corrupted, youngsters find everything about sexual relationships much more difficult, but especially selecting the person to love. Continued: *Love...* p 132.

Text “For the choice of a person is a process in which sexual values cannot function as the sole motive, or even, thoroughly analyzed, as the primary motive. This would be at odds with the very concept of ‘choosing a person’. If sexual values in themselves were the only, or even the primary, motive for choice, we could not speak of ‘choosing a person’, but only of choosing the opposite sex, as represented by a particular ‘human being’, or perhaps even by a ‘particular body which is a potential object of enjoyment’. Clearly, if we are to speak of choosing a person, the value of the person must itself be the primary reason for choice. Primary reason does not mean sole reason. A formulation in which it seemed to mean this would not satisfy the criteria of healthy empiricism, and would bear the imprint of an apriorism reminiscent of Kant’s formalistic personalism. The person as such must be the real object of choice, not values associated with that person, irrelevant to his or her intrinsic value. To choose these would be the behavior of, for instance, a man who has no thought for anything but the sexual values he finds in a woman. Such a choice is clearly utilitarian in character, and not on the level of love for a person. The sexual values which a man finds in a woman, or a woman in a man, must certainly help to determine the choice, but the person making it must in doing so be fully aware that what he or she is choosing is a person. So that although the sexual values in the object may disappear, and however they may change, the fundamental value of the person will remain. The choice is truly choice of a person when it treats that value as the most important and decisive one. So that if we consider the whole process by which a man chooses a woman or a woman a man, we can say that it is set in motion by recognition of and reaction to sexual values, but that, in the last analysis, each chooses the sexual values because they belong to a person, and not the person because of his or her sexual values.

“Only such an act of choice can be considered fully valid. Only thus can proper integration of the object of choice occur. Only then is the person’s truth fully apprehended. The truth about the object of choice is attainable when, for the chooser, the value of the person as such is primary (all others are secondary). Sexual values, which act upon the senses and emotions, are assigned their proper place. Whereas, if they were the sole, or the main motive for choosing a person, that choice would be faulty and invalid, since it would not conform to the full truth about the object of choice, the person. Such a choice is inevitably the starting point for a love incapable of integration, a love that is defective and invalid.”

Comment Because John Paul explores new territory, with fresh insight, we need some clarification of his different thoughts. Person is so valuable, so like God, that we stretch our minds to come close to what each person means. The full meaning of any person escapes our comprehension, but we understand enough that we refuse to manipulate a person. Therefore, we refuse to reduce a person to a pleasure-device. On the way to true love, we unite the person with all other values that person has. This union shows us more good qualities than we expected. All that personal value overwhelms us. Yet we recover from this shock, and refocus on the real person. Kant’s image of a logically perfect person remains mere image. So it falls short of the existing person. When we choose to love, we choose a real, concrete, existing being, with all his qualities. This intrinsically worthy person reflects his unique relationship to God. It is possible to upset our integrity by neglecting this relationship. In our neglect, we may devalue the person to a mere “thing” that we pump for pleasure. This is so common a sin that we must keep it in mind, so that we can reject this devaluation. Then we can strive to maintain our integrity, respect the person’s integrity, and work toward mutually integrating with this person in betrothed love.

Nothing short of personal love will endure. Obviously, the ravages of time destroy youth’s bloom. With it go many of the sexual values that sparked love between the partners. This is why original attraction can’t last. Full blooming love accepts sexual values because of the person who has them. False love accepts the person because of his sexual value. False love fails, as numerous examples hammer home. It is invalid because it is not integrated. This lack of unity is like a gap where wholeness should be. We trip over the gap, may even fall into it, but seldom close it. The all-too-frequent outcome is that the gap widens into an intolerable split, followed by divorce. Rejecting the person eventually means separation, whatever the sensory & emotional fun the partners could have. John Paul develops this process: *Love...* p 134-135.

Text “True love, a love that is internally complete, is one in which we choose the person for the sake of the person. A man chooses a woman, or a woman chooses a man, not just as a sexual ‘partner’, but as the person on whom to bestow the gift of his or her own life. ‘Sexual’ values vibrantly present in their sensual and emotional reactions, contribute to the decision, and make it a more intense psychological experience, but it is not they which determine its authenticity. The essential reason for choosing a person must be personal, not merely sexual. Life will determine the value of a choice, and the value and true magnitude of love.

“It is put to the test most severely when the sensual and emotional reactions themselves grow weaker, and sexual values as such lose their effect. Nothing then remains except the value of the person, and the inner truth about the love of those concerned comes to light. If their love is a true gift of self, so that they belong to each other, it will not only survive,

but grow stronger, and sink deeper roots. Whereas, if it was never more than a sort of synchronization of sensual and emotional experiences, it will lose its *raison d'être* and the persons involved in it will suddenly find themselves in a vacuum. We must never forget that only when love between human beings is put to the test, can its true value be seen.

“When a person’s choice is a mature and valid act, and love is integrated, as it should be in the inner life of the person, it is transformed both in its psychological and in its emotional aspect. For, while not only sensual, but emotional experiences too, are of their nature unstable and changeable, (therefore anxious, whether noticed or not) a love which has matured within the subject, frees itself from this anxiety by its choice of person. The emotion becomes serene and confident, for it ceases to be absorbed entirely in itself, and attaches itself instead to its object, to the beloved person. The purely subjective truth of the emotion has given way to the objective truth about the person who is the object of choice and of love. As a result, the emotion itself seems to acquire new properties. It becomes simpler and more sober. That idealization of which we spoke in our ‘psychological analysis’ is characteristic of purely emotional love. Emotions tend to endow their object with various values of their own creation. [But] the love for a person, from a valid act of choice, concentrates on the value of the person as such, and makes us feel emotional love for the person as he really is, not for the person of our imagination, but for the real person. We love the person complete with all his virtues and faults, and, up to a point, independently of those virtues, and in spite of those faults. The strength of such a love emerges most clearly when the beloved person stumbles, when his weaknesses, or even sins, come into the open. One who truly loves does not then withdraw his love, but loves all the more, loves in full consciousness of the other’s shortcomings and faults, and without in the least approving of them. For the person as such never loses his essential value. The emotion which attaches itself to the value of the person remains loyal to the human being.”

Comment The details that John Paul presents in this section reveal profound and prolonged thought about true love. If it is integrated within a person, that person can choose another person “for the sake of the person”. After all, this chosen person is the most important person, because he will receive the self-gift of the choosing person. The partners can choose to give each other to each other. This free gift of self to the other enables each to belong to each other, to be each other’s property. Sexual interaction is included, but resides within the personal self-giving, in its proper place. As their life together matures from betrothed love to marriage, the value of their choice, and the amount of their love, emerge in trials.

The most severe of these trials is the loss of sexual values. If there is nothing but sexual attraction for the couple, and it deteriorates, they fall into a vacuum. One way to say this is: “If you marry a body, you must live with a corpse”. As age blights the bloom of sex, nothing remains but the value of the person. It is better to marry a person, and live with that person. Each person is so rich in value that married persons grow stronger love for each other as trials test their commitment. Women and men complement each other to overcome challenges. Trials, and only trials, penetrate deep enough to reveal whether the partners love each other as persons.

Sexual sensations die out before sexual emotions do. These emotions vary without rhyme or reason. Their variation upsets us, arousing anxiety which can mount to troublesome heights. But personal integration enables each partner to integrate with the other. Then emotions calm down, even become “serene and confident”. The major reason for this emotional transformation is that the person who gives himself away emerges from self-absorption into other-absorption. Now he is secure because he belongs to his beloved. Everything looks different, and the giver of self can relax. “The purely subjective truth of the emotion gives way to the objective truth of the” beloved person. Emotional life for a person who gives himself away in love is much simpler, and more sober.

Because emotions run wild in most people, the very surge of an emotion seems to be a sensation. If we evaluate that sensation, we impose an imaginary value. A few layers of these imaginary values can look like a person. But this illusion is just imaginary, a phantasy foreign to reality. We want to reject these illusions, and concentrate on the value of the person as such. This is the person to love, warts and all. He will have virtues and faults. To love him is to give ourselves to him “independently of those virtues, and in spite of those faults”. The beloved’s stumble, or sin, is a supremely severe test of love is. Because the sinful beloved needs love more, true love loves even more. Without approving of his sin, the true lover deepens his love to assist the beloved in his time of need. “The person as such never loses his essential value. The emotion which attaches itself to the value of the person remains loyal to the human being.” By giving self to the other, the giver accepts responsibility for the beloved, agrees to care for the beloved “in sickness in health, until death do us part”. When the beloved falls, sickness rules, and the lover hastens to support the beloved. This is the natural nurturing response of women. It manifests the female genius in its most important function.

John Paul continues his analysis in *Love and Responsibility*, showing how freedom exists for love. There are so many valuable intuitions in this book, it is hard to shift from it. But we have learned enough about love to train our attention on his direct analysis of person. See *Thomistic Personalism, in Person and Community: Selected Essays, vol 4 of Catholic Thought from Lublin*. Because person is so important for each of us, John Paul sets his thought in the most relia-

ble of all systems. He traces the Thomistic tradition, and adds his phenomenological analysis, so that he can re-think the problems of our time.

Thomistic Personalism: Introduction

Text “St. Thomas presents an especially profound analysis of the human soul. In this *Compositum* it performs the role of the substantial form. This is a rational soul, the principle and source of the whole spirituality of the human being. Therefore it is the source of the person ... The human person is ... an individual of a rational nature. This definition is verified in every person. What is peculiar (unique) to the human person, however, is that this person has a rational nature only because of a spiritual soul, which is the substantial form of the body.” *Thomistic Personalism; (TP)*, p 168

Comment When we recall the fundamental analysis of every human being, we see a living body. Life is obvious because the being acts. Death marks the end of human activity. Activity disappears, and the unified spirit and flesh come apart. Human spirits make the individual human to be human. So the spirit forms the human into the substance that it is. Each substance exists independently, on its own, once God creates it. So the substantial form activates each independent being to subsist, i.e. to exist under its own created power. Accidents can then modify each substance. For example, the amount of the substance varies, but, heavy or light, the substance is human. The amount of the human is its matter, which is inextricably one with the spirit during life. After life, the amount remains the same, as careful measurements show. But from a living body, the amount becomes a dead body. We even change the name from body to corpse. Thomas Aquinas developed this analysis about 700 years ago, arriving at the truth that thinkers affirmed ever since.

That proves that this is a “profound analysis of the human soul”. The person is the operator of the soul, so each person is unique because of God’s creation of each human substance. The soul is rational. So the person is a rational individual (uniquely one). Rational means thinking and choosing. So the person is the agent who does (*ago* = I do) everything. Most significantly, the person thinks and chooses. John Paul added his analysis of freedom (*Love...* pp 135-139) to this description of person. Thereby, he expanded the work that Thomas did. Freedom without limit echoes God’s unlimited Goodness, so freedom illustrates the size of God’s gift to us. In His image and likeness, He made us infinitely free. As chips off the old block, we show divine sparks, like our freedom.

Here are a few of John Paul’s fresh insights. “Freedom for freedom’s sake has no justification in the Thomistic view of the cosmos. Freedom exists for the sake of morality, and together with morality, for the higher spiritual law, and order of existence, the kind of order that most strictly corresponds to rational beings, who are persons”, *TP* 172. “We must not only will something good, but we must will it in a good way”, *TP* 172. “...there are certain rights that every society must guarantee to persons, for without these rights, the life and development proper to persons is impossible. One of these basic rights is the right to freedom of conscience”, *TP* 174. John Paul adds details that fit with Thomistic thinking, but address problems coming long after Thomas died. Freedom allows us to love without restraint. So it serves love, ultimately God’s love that overflows His perfection into creation. The most precious of God’s gifts is the free person He creates so that His Persons and ours can love each other. Thus our Source and our Destiny are the same: God. Love is the dynamic of both, and freedom allows love to flourish.

As it flourishes, we enter into God’s perfect Love more completely. So delightful is this entrance that we want everything to improve, not only to do good, but to do it better than ever before. Wishing to share this delight, we strive to apply doing well to as many people as possible. Hence the drive to improve society until it guarantees freedom of conscience to all people. Another reason to revere persons is their immortality. “The eternity of the person is strictly connected with the spirituality of the rational nature in which the person subsists. What is spiritual cannot disintegrate, be destroyed, or die (in the ultimate sense)”, *TP* 174-175. We recall that spirit is simple. So it has no parts that could come apart. It is eternally integrated, so it can’t disintegrate. It has no parts to separate, to destroy it. It does not die, even though the person dies once when the immortal spirit leaves the mortal body. After this death fulfills our sinful rebellion, Jesus tells us that He will raise us from the dead, never to die again. These events transcend our understanding.

But John Paul assures us: “While it is true that Thomistic personalism is a philosophical view, it would be hard to deny that this supernatural perspective not only corresponds to it extremely well, but also even ultimately explains everything that, when viewed in the light of reason alone, must remain a deep and impenetrable mystery”, *TP* 175. Thomas united speculation with revelation in a synthesis that was the blueprint for Western Civilization. Ever since, thinkers profited from this unified view of philosophical and theological truth. When speculation fails, revelation often completes the thought. Moreover, revelation opens new views of reality that speculation can investigate. John Paul reminds us that without revelation to correct speculation, we would be lost in profound darkness. Between the two, we find tantalizing explanations that encourage us to rethink some parts of the Thomistic Synthesis.

Precisely this rethinking enabled John Paul to emphasize that woman is an acting person. Properly understood, she coordinates with, cooperates with, and complements other persons so well, that she is indispensable for society. Yes, many women specialize in the society of their family. But they can also promote improvements in larger groups. John

Paul concludes this by following his faith, to trace Mary's influence on her family, then on the Church. By this realization, John Paul rejects the Aristotelian tradition that all women are defective men. Their defect is precisely to be inactive, passive, lacking masculine activity. For 2,300 years everyone followed Aristotle's conclusion. To correct it, John Paul had to collect lots of evidence. He presents most of this proof in *The Acting Person*. We will not review it. But we can present John Paul's conclusion, which appears in *Lumen Gentium*, from Vatican II; 1962, # 56. "Rightly, therefore, the Fathers see Mary not merely as passively engaged by God, but as freely cooperating in the work of man's salvation through faith and obedience". Women do lack masculine activity, because they have activity proper to themselves.

Expanding reasons for this conclusion, John Paul writes, in *Sources of Renewal*, 105. The whole attitude of the ancient and modern church to the Mother of God is based not only on the exceptional honor due to her divine maternity, but also on her awareness of the redemption and her own **participation** in the work of Christ... This **active cooperation** on Mary's part is expressed above all in her obedience. By being thus obedient, she did **not merely submit passively** to the salvific action of the Most Holy Trinity, but with all her life and behavior **embraced it and shared in it**. So our consciousness of redemption must always see the **maternal act** as united to not only the 'act of Christ', but also 'under and with him', as the Council declares in the passage just quoted."

Comment Sr. Prudence Allen, in *Concepts of Woman*, p 456, added the above emphasis in bold letters. Because John Paul was devoted to Mary Our Mother, he dwelt in her activity, particularly her maternal love for him. His unified love of God and Mary enabled him to contemplate the Trinity's tender love for Mary. They expressed this surpassing love in Their request that she freely cooperate with Them to save us all. At the Annunciation, God waited for the maiden to exercise her freedom to obey. Once she said "Yes, I will be God's mother", she advanced from being the beloved daughter of the Father, to being the devoted mother of the Son, and the precious spouse of the Holy Spirit.

We notice that Mary was the acting person who enabled God to initiate our salvation. Once we follow John Paul into activity, we realize that we can become the activity that we observe. True, we cannot become all of the divine activity of the Annunciation, Incarnation, and Salvation. But we identify enough of it to dwell in these Divine Actions. As we dwell in them, we become more at home in them. The usual way to say "dwell" in God's acts is: we "contemplate" them. Remember our consideration of ecstasy? When we contemplate something uplifting, we can spring outside ourselves into the universal awareness of, or the profound knowledge of what God has done. Our usual route to contemplation is prayer. Perhaps you have prayed so successfully that you entered an ecstasy. This rising toward God pleased you so much that you defined satisfaction by this ecstasy. If you have yet to experience this ecstasy, then you can look forward to it.

Our Lady lived her actions through to their bitter end on the Way of the Cross, culminating in Calvary. She stood through her beloved Son's agony and death. She did not swoon. She did not escape this horror by fainting. Her activities, from the Annunciation to receiving Him in her arms, to burying Him, illustrate her personal involvement. John Paul adds other well-known actions in *Sign...*, p 65. "She conceived him as a true mother. He was her true son. But she conceived him also as 'the handmaid of the Lord'; "not of blood, nor of the will of flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God", Jn 1:13 Then she gave birth to him at night in a rough out-house, and soon after had to flee to Egypt. ... Simeon's words had rung in her ears: 'Behold, he is a sign of contradiction... a sword will pierce your soul ...', Lk 2:34. Mary could not fail to remember them. We do not know if at that moment she recalled the words of Genesis: 'I will place enmity...' Be that as it may, it was that pronouncement that bound her destiny to his."

Comment What a blessed combination of personal observations and Scriptural quotes! It is clear to us that God invited Mary to participate in a profoundly personal way, while her Son redeemed mankind. In the back of our minds, we realized that Our Lady was as closely associated as mothers can be in their son's projects. Christ's project was the most important in all history: to free us from our sins. No other activity is nearly as important as Jesus saving us from our the consequences of rebellion against God. Our review of Mary's cooperation is already magnificent. But Vatican II expands our view still more. In *Sign...* p 63-72, developing *Lumen Gentium*, #58, John Paul finds a step up to an even higher level.

Text "In the next level of **active** spiritual cooperation of Mary in the mission of her son, she becomes the **associate** of Christ: 'Man, quite obviously, could not save the world, just as he could not create it. These two great works (*magnalia Dei*) are on a par with one another. But God nevertheless wanted man to play a part in the redemption and salvation of the world: 'He who created you without your help will not save you without your cooperation.' God assigned the principal creaturely role in this work of salvation to the Mother of Christ. Mary's personal work as the active associate of Christ occurs in the historical context of the conflict between woman and evil. She will untie the knot that Eve tied, recorded in Gen 3:1-5, where Satan, characterized by the attitude: 'I will not serve', Jer 2:20, drew the first woman Eve into his web of rebelling against God. The third chapter of Genesis also contains an indication of how this battle between evil and good will be won. ... 'I shall place enmity between you and the woman, between your seed and her seed. He will crush your head, and you will trap him by the heel, Gen 3:15'. These words are full of mystery. They disclose what is to come, but the strictly divine meaning of it all remains hidden."

Comment In His mercy, God describes His infinite love, and His main actions, in Scripture. Master Teacher that He is, he provides starting steps that we can all take, and draws us into His infinity if we take the steps. An example of this teaching is analogy: As My creation provides unending good things, so My love provides unending good for you. Our baby steps start us into the hidden divine meaning by reviewing some of the creatures we know. We can never finish understanding and appreciating all God's creatures, but our start supports our contemplation of other creatures. The very fact that we can't know all those creatures encourages us to accept God's infinite creativity. Likewise, His love is without end. So it makes sense to leap into God's love, even if it seems to be jumping off a cliff into the unknown. It is into the unknown, but in the context of all the creatures God gives us, we are confident that God will support us somehow.

When we try it, we find that it works. We step on known creatures so that we can vault into God's unknown love. This leap turns out to be delightful. We do the best we can, and God takes us into Himself. He created us to jump into His infinite Love, into Himself. So we complete the cycle from creation to salvation, from our Source to our Destiny. The creatures we know beckon us into the Creator we love to know. John Paul is right: "the strictly divine meaning of it all remains hidden". But we gain fragments of His meaning each time we leap into His infinite Being. Moreover, Jesus took our nature upon Himself to provide other hints of His meaning. Christ took Mary to be His mother. She is also our mother, so she urges us along to ever-improving union with Him. She helps us unite with Him by knowing Him better, and by loving Him better. He knows and loves us perfectly, so we want to return His favor as best we can. How can we appreciate all that Jesus did for us? One way is to review His many gifts, as John Paul did in *Sign...* p 206.

Text "Subsequent events of the passion, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ provide continuity with Mary's actions. [She is *Alma Socia Christi*, which is Latin for: soul (beloved) associated with Christ. John Paul] drew a great spiritual analogy for this reality: 'The human body is given its life and its unity by the mother. Mary by the working of the Holy Spirit, gave unity to the human body of Christ. That is why our hope today turns towards her, when the Mystical Body of Christ (church) is being more fully reconstituted in unity.'" See *Concept...* p 457.

Comment Jesus showers blessings upon us. Remembering the main ones mentioned here, reminds us of His amazing generosity. Mary was there to suffer with him, mourn for him, and rejoice in His glorious victory over death. Down through the centuries, theologians referred to Mary as Christ's associate. This means personal cooperator, involved in all significant events with Jesus. So God raises her up, in the Person of His Son and hers, to such intimate association that He brings all women up in this process. Naturally, all women do not become God's mother, but they share in her exaltation. This raising coincides with Christ's own respect for women.

John Paul's analogy starts with the obvious: as mother unifies baby's body in her womb, so Mary unified Jesus in her womb (initiated by the Holy Spirit). Encouraged by this unification, John Paul turned his hope toward Mary to reunite the Church, the Mystical Body of Christ. It needs reunification to heal the splits following Luther's reformation. More and more investigation of God's work must rely upon analogies, because we can't get very far with merely human effort. Yet John Paul found analogies to show us that each person is distinguished as male or female. Here is his advance: *Sign* p 55.

Text He views creation. "To be something created is to be something 'endowed' with existence and nature. Nature reflects different levels of being, perfection, and goodness, from inferior beings (flies) to more perfect ones (dogs). St. Thomas declares that every being is perfect according to its kind. ... human beings are created as male and female. This is proved uniquely in the case of man. We discern from the second chapter of Genesis that not only was the world around Adam and Eve a gift to them, but also they themselves were, each of them, a gift bestowed on the other That reciprocity was to be the mark of their lives as human beings of different sexes. ... Love, which itself is gift, uncreated gift, ineffable, communicating itself to men as grace, gives one the impression that one is receiving the gift of the world, but especially the gift of one's humanity, the man's masculinity, the woman's femininity, the procreative ability of both."

Comment We follow John Paul saying that all creatures receive their existence, and then how they exist, or their nature. He skips the details that creatures change. They come and they go. Now we see them; now we don't. This observable change is important. All these changing things are unstable. If they exist, they must come from some stable source. Because they exist, they require a creator. As John Paul reminds us, the Creator endows, or gifts, or blesses beings with their existence. This endowment is magnificent. As he reflects upon it, John Paul gets excited at the wide variety of things God has created. Each exists differently from each other kind of creature. This different existence is the nature of the beast like fly or dog, etc. Our ability to identify existence and nature is a great gift. Using it, we review Gen 2, where we see that the entire world is God's gift to Adam. But "it is not good for man to be alone", so God provides Eve, a wonderful gift to Adam. They are mutual gifts to each other, more important than all the other creatures God gives.

Embedded in their flesh, Adam and Eve are different sexes from the beginning. They are expressions of God, Who is Love. So their most important and delightful activity is to love God above all, and each other as if they were loving themselves, anticipating Christ's command: Mt 22:38-39; Mk 12:30-31; Lk 10:27. We can tell that John Paul becomes very excited by Love's gift of love for His first creatures. His words flow vigorously in the stream of divine Love. Behind

this energetic flow, we notice “man’s masculinity” “woman’s femininity” and “the procreative ability of both”. These last gifts express God’s love because they incorporate man and woman in God’s creation. Man and woman assist intimately, so they pro-create. They can’t create, but they can cooperate with God’s creation of other human beings. With all this creative love in mind, no wonder John Paul is excited. He sees us all invited to imitate God by participating in His creation through expressing His love, male and female persons involved in procreating babies. God invites us to high dignity.

Text In 1964, John Paul delivered a talk “On the Dignity of the Human Person”, published in 1993, in *Person & Community*, p 178-179. He recalled for us that personal dignity “is also verified by the whole of humanity in its ongoing experience of history, culture, technology, creativity, and production. The effects of human activity in various communities testify to this dignity.” ... Because human beings continually transform nature, they experience themselves as higher than nature. ... The effects of human acts reveal that the human person has intellect and will. These properties constitute “the whole natural basis of the dignity of the person”. ... Persons do not live for any created thing, or groups of things, but use creatures as means towards their true purpose or call in life. *Concepts* 458. ... [This call is to community.]

“Human beings are like God not only by reason of their spiritual nature, which accounts for their existence as persons, but also by reason of their **capacity for community with other persons.**” *Person* p 318. “We are capable of giving ourselves because we possess ourselves, and also because we are our own masters in the dimension of ourselves as subjects.” *Person*, p 319. *Gaudium et Spes*, # 12 develops this understanding. “But God did not create man as a solitary. From the beginning ‘male and female he created them’, Gen 1:27. **Their companionship produces the primary form of interpersonal communication.** “the basis of the family is marriage... not just a partnership, but is a **real communion of persons** ... as *Gaudium et Spes* says.” “The category of gift takes on special meaning in the marriage covenant. The spouses’ mutually give themselves to, and accept, each other in a way proper to the marriage covenant, presupposing their difference in body and sex, and simultaneously their union in and through this difference. This marriage of man and woman usually opens out into a family. “the fact that the marital bond becomes ... a parental bond, has fundamental significance for bringing to light the true dimensions of this community of persons ...” They are “different in body and sex so that through this difference they would be able to make a gift to one another of the specific richness of their respective humanity.” ... “Because this union and fulfillment through parenthood occurs in man thanks to the woman, and in the woman thanks to the man, the entire structure of their personal communion takes on a new shape, a whole new dimension. It attains a new depth and a new level of affirmation, but it also imposes new demands to ensure that the mutual bestowal of humanity is not jeopardized.” *Person*, p 329 “The very essence of this social and communal system lies in the fact that the man’s fatherhood always occurs through the woman’s motherhood, and vice versa...” *Person* p 330.

Comment Tradition affirms many reasons for the dignity of persons. An overwhelming reason is the wealth of products that persons build. These are obvious, as John Paul summarizes some of them. Closely related to these products is the ongoing transformation of nature by persons. Because persons transform nature, they transcend nature. They stand above nature, changing it in various ways, most of them beneficial. These transformations are also obvious. Less noticeable is the drive beyond nature to its Creator. Persons are not satisfied by any of the changes they make to creatures. After a while for experience to grow, all persons recognize that creatures are inadequate. They do not satisfy. Only God satisfies persons. So this transcendent drive is definitive evidence of man’s surpassing dignity.

When John Paul considers our likeness to God, he highlights our spirituality, the source of our personhood. God is perfect spirit; we are imperfect spirits. But we are God’s image and likeness, as much like him as spirited flesh can be. As a surprise likeness, John Paul adds our requirement of community. We are inherently social. Our orientation to community is another image of God. He is a community of Persons. Each divine Person possesses Himself perfectly. We possess ourselves imperfectly, but as much as incarnate spirit can. “We are capable of giving ourselves because we possess ourselves, and also because we are our own masters in the dimension of ourselves as subjects.” Possessing ourselves would be impossible if we were mere matter. The best we could do is bend back over part of ourselves. Try it with a rubber band. Flexible though it is, it cannot totally reflect over itself. Only spirit can do this, because it has no parts to get in the way. We can totally reflect upon ourselves. Therefore, we can totally possess ourselves. This total possession enables us to give ourselves away totally. When we as doer (person) reflect upon ourselves as someone, we “are our own masters”. The person as knower means the personal object that knows. The person known means the personal subject known. Knowledge identifies. So knower and known are united, object with subject. This spiritual identity enables us to have complete control of ourselves. Therefore, we can give ourselves away totally.

The resulting community of mutual giving is the family, married parents and children (usually). This is the ideal. “The spouses’ mutually give themselves to, and accept, each other in a way proper to the marriage covenant, presupposing their difference in body and sex, and simultaneously their union in and through this difference.” As John Paul mentioned earlier in this document, mutual giving expands the goodness of each gift. This expansion enables married people to meet

the extreme demands of parenthood. Moreover, they meet these challenges joyfully, because they share human love with God. Life is no less painful, but a lot more joyful.

John Paul expresses this in a fresh way: “the fact that the marital bond becomes ... a parental bond, has fundamental significance for bringing to light the true dimensions of this community of persons ...” They are “different in body and sex so that through this difference they would be able to make a gift to one another of the specific richness of their respective humanity.” Each woman gives of her unique genius, sparking each man to receive this specific gift, and to give of his genius. They reciprocate, as John Paul noted earlier. Their differences enable them to compensate for each other’s inadequacies. They complement each other, filling in each other’s gaps. Many complements are surprises, stimulating the other person to rise to demanding occasions in unexpected ways. This illustrates the “specific richness” each brings to the marriage. Though John Paul’s fresh thought requires uncommon words, we can grasp his meaning as he continues.

“Because this union and fulfillment through parenthood occurs in man thanks to the woman, and in the woman thanks to the man, the entire structure of their personal communion takes on a new shape, a whole new dimension. It attains a new depth and a new level of affirmation, but it also imposes new demands to ensure that the mutual bestowal of humanity is not jeopardized.” In simpler terms, the woman’s love evokes love that the man did not know he had. His new-found love evokes her more generous response. We can see the upward spiraling out of yesterday’s dimension into today’s, and on into tomorrow’s. Love deepens and widens, giving and receiving more completely. People who speak of their longstanding love usually say: “we love each other more”. John Paul’s rethinking employs different terms, but the meaning is the same. Lest this look like a fairy tale, John Paul adds the “new demands”. They quickly arise, requiring the couple to protect their mutual loving, and to extend it to children. Maintaining this ever-rising, and ever-extending spiral of love is so difficult that few couples manage it well. That’s why John Paul rethinks marriage in these terms.

Text “A community of persons always requires the affirmation of parenthood in conjugal intercourse (at least potential parenthood). The spouses in their sexual relations must bring to this act both an awareness and a readiness that expresses itself as: “I could become a father”; “I could become a mother”. The rejection of such an awareness and readiness endangers their interpersonal relationship, their personal communion, which ... forms the very essence of their mutual relationship, but also imposes serious demands to ensure that this interpersonal communal relationship is realized in every aspect of their married life and sexual relations.” See *Person*, p 331-332.

Comment Obviously, a community continues to exist if, and only if, families rear the next generation. The Birth Dearth in rich countries is a fine example of what happens when reproductive-age families fail to reproduce. The main-spring of family life is just what John Paul describes. First the male understands, then he agrees with: “I could become a father”. Similarly, the female “could become a mother”. Over the years since 1968, we have seen people who reject the very possibility of parenthood. In large numbers, their interpersonal relationship crashed. For the first time, divorce divided huge numbers of families. Perhaps the gravest harm gripped the children trapped in these divorces. Spouses endured great harm as well. The overall result directly followed John Paul’s description. He now notes the joy of a baby’s birth.

Text “When a child is born, the parents’ communion of persons is enriched by a new person, who arises entirely from them both, and thanks to them both”, *Person*, p 332. [History of mutual giving.] “The mutual bestowal of themselves, the category of **gift** was inscribed in the human existence of man and woman from the beginning. The body belongs to this system, so it falls within the category of gift, and within the relationship of mutual bestowal. The body as an expression of a distinctiveness that is not just sexual, but holistic, is therefore personal as well. Original sin did not fundamentally destroy this system, but merely disturbed it. Moreover, man and woman, after original sin, find themselves not only in a fallen state, but also in a redeemed state. In this state, marriage became a sacrament.” *Person* p 325.

Commentary In natural intercourse, wife and husband are the only ones who bring about a child. Each contributes half of the genetic material required for the baby. That’s why John Paul says that this new person arises entirely from, and thanks to, them both. But neither parent provides the person. God creates the person as soon as the parents’ material contributions (ovum and sperm) unite. This completes the procreation process. Neither ovum nor sperm is a person. So the procreation activity depends for its material totally upon wife and husband, and for its unifying spirit (person) upon God.

If it is true that the primal act of each person is love, and love is giving self to beloved, then “the mutual bestowal of themselves” is indeed inscribed in human existence “from the beginning.” The wholeness, the entirety, of each human being is that human’s person. Therefore, each body expresses distinctiveness that is beyond sexual. It is holistic, so it is personal. Original Sin can’t destroy this system of loving self-giving, this continuation of God’s infinite love in His images and likenesses. But Adam’s revolt did disturb this system. In our fallen state, we hate more than we love. But Jesus redeemed us from our fall. He pours forth His redemption through His Church, especially in His sacraments of Baptism, Confession, and Eucharist. Those called to marriage receive His sacrament of Matrimony.

In His infinite generosity, Christ perfectly fitted His sacraments to our spirited flesh. Our basic pattern is: we learn of external things through our flesh (sense organs). Then we extract their meaning and value through our spirit (abstrac-

tion). Jesus creates sacraments which are sensory coverings of spiritual gifts. We sense the external symbol of a sacrament that will do the corresponding spiritual act. E.g. visible water of Baptism washes away invisible sin on the invisible soul. John Paul shared his fresh analysis of woman and man as God created them in the *Theology of the Body*, p 166.

Women and Men Are Equal in Dignity, and Complement Each Other

Text “Let us recall Gen 2:23. ‘Then the man said, ‘this time she is flesh from my flesh, and bone from my bone. She will be called woman because from man has she been taken.’” In the light of this text, we understand that **the knowledge of man passes through masculinity and femininity**. These are two ‘incarnations’ of the same metaphysical solitude before God and the world, two reciprocally completing ways of being a body, and at the same time, of being human, as two **complementary dimensions** of self-knowledge and self-determination. At the same time, [they are] human as two **complementary ways of being conscious** of the meaning of the body. As Gen 2:23 shows, femininity in some ways finds itself before masculinity, while masculinity confirms itself through femininity. Precisely the function of sex (i.e. being male and female), which is in some way **constitutive for the person (not merely ‘an attribute of the person’)** shows how deeply man, with his spiritual solitude, with the uniqueness and unrepeatability proper to **the person, is constituted by the body as ‘he’ or ‘she’**. The presence of the feminine element, next to the masculine, and together with it, signifies an enrichment for man in the whole perspective of his history, including the history of salvation. All this teaching on unity has already been originally expressed in Gen. 2:23.” *Theology of the Body (TOB)*, p 166.

Comment Gen 2:23 provides symbols that indicate a unified source for Adam and Eve. “Flesh of my flesh, and bone of my bone” can’t be more explicit. When we look at a woman, we see a human. Equally, when we look at a man, we see a human. This simple expression will do to say that woman and man are two incarnations of the same nature, or metaphysical isolation of one kind of being from another. These two incarnations also interact. They complete each other, so that one contributes what the other lacks, and the other fulfills what the one needs. This reciprocal completing of each other’s visible bodies repeats as spiritual completion mutually perfects each person. A physical example is that a woman holds a baby comfortably on her hip, filling the need the man has for a convenient long-term hold. A man reciprocates by lifting what a woman can’t budge. A spiritual example is that a woman supplies the man’s missing personal-interactions, especially with a baby. A man reciprocates by building appropriate budgets. These are complementary dimensions of understanding and choice (self-awareness and self-determination). There are thousands of them in daily life. Each reciprocal assistance can be the source of delight, as one partner loves the other enough to supply what that person lacks. This mutual-completion project can bind people together blissfully. Even if the persons miss many opportunities for mutual assistance, their successes are often enough to sustain the couple in its progress.

John Paul describes Gen 2:23 as it is written. Eve stands before Adam, passively accepting his admiration, and his acknowledgment of her flesh-and-bone common source. They are complementary dimensions of humanity. They complete each other. Some people reject woman’s passivity and receptivity. Self-proclaimed elite movers and shakers have done their utmost to reverse sex roles, and even to erase gender entirely. John Paul proposes a more beneficial project: enrich each other by reciprocal complementarity. Female receptivity fits male impulsion well. Female nurturing of a developing child is the only way for that baby to survive. Each reciprocal interaction is more satisfying than other activities. The last 50 years of cross-gender competition has proved that women and children suffered the most harm. Successful married couples illustrate the joy of complementarity. John Paul examines complementarity in sexual intercourse.

Text “The unity about which Gen 2:24 speaks (‘and the two will be one flesh’) is without doubt the unity that is expressed and realized in the conjugal act. The biblical formulation, so extremely concise and simple, indicates sex. [This sex] is masculinity and femininity, as that characteristic of man, male and female, that allows them, when they become one flesh, to place their whole humanity, at the same time, under the blessing of fruitfulness.” *TOB*, p 167.

Comment This is a beautiful way to say that persons of different sex give themselves to each other in every respect. All the gifts involved in betrothed love, leading to total commitment in marriage, culminate in bodily unity during intercourse. Each self-gift is open to God’s love surging through the couple. God’s expanding love can result in a microscopic sperm from the male penetrating an ovum from the female. When the sperm DNA unites with the ovum DNA, the outer covering of the now-living cell hardens. This prevents other sperm from penetrating the ovum, to upset the unique unity of the living cell. Father and mother each contribute half (23 chromosomes) of the total DNA (46 chromosomes) to the unique new life. This biological fact illustrates the equality that God created to encourage us to participate ever more entirely in His expanding love. Each self-gift reflects God’s love, and results in God’s creation of a new person. At the biological level, the resulting microscopic cell is a zygote. In Greek *zygon* = life. So this life-bit, or life-cell develops according to the unique unity of half-cells from each parent. Even the biological mechanism reflects the spiritual self-giving of parents who live out: “and the two will be one flesh”. Indeed, mutual self-giving puts the parents’ “whole humanity under the blessing of fruitfulness”.

Out of their mutual unity in love, the complementary couple can do their part to join God in creating a brand-new person. Two independent persons involve each other in love, so that they “will be one flesh”. What happens spiritually sails right past mathematics because $1+1 = 1$. So far, our math ignores the “blessing of fruitfulness”. If the united couple conceive a single child, we can complete our math: $1+1 = 1+1$. But mathematics utterly fails to account for the fact that loving parents unite with their child, and with each other, in deeper, more expansive ways. Love transcends math. But we can play with it to illustrate some of the spiritual relationships that characterize strong marriages. John Paul increases the depth and range of marital-strength when he describes how a child can improve a marriage: *TOB* p 210-211.

Text “We should observe that in Genesis 4:1 **the mystery of femininity manifests and reveals itself in its full depth through motherhood**, as the text says ‘who conceived and gave birth’. The woman stands before the man as mother, subject of the new human life that is conceived and develops in her, and is born from her into the world. **In this way, what also reveals itself is the mystery of the man’s masculinity, that is, the generative and paternal meaning of his body.**”

Comment It is true that pre-intercourse adolescents can imagine themselves to be parents. But John Paul sums up the entirety of betrothed love, the actual intercourse, and now the generative effect of all this self-giving. When a woman discovers that she is pregnant, a new dimension of her femininity occupies her. All hormones associated with reproduction respond differently than before. All related organs change their activity. The woman’s attention focuses upon the change throughout her body that nourishing the baby demands. Her sensitivity to many stimuli increases. Her desires for foods shift. The list of differences is long. The woman is her body in a more thorough way than the man is his, so it’s fair to say that her entire body alerts her to her new condition. She is now a mother. John Paul calls this a manifestation of the mystery of femininity. The unending mystery forever intrigues us. But its revelation in “full depth” startles us into acknowledging the tremendous importance of the “new human life”. She is now the masterful protector of another person.

The husband is much less affected. His body does not surge into higher activity to nourish the child. But he is more or less aware that something mysteriously magnificent has happened. His body means generation and protection of new life. The more self-giving he is, the more this meaning of his body appears to him. He can now expand into more attentive love for the mother he should protect, and for the child he has engendered. His paternal act was received by his wife in reciprocal complementarity. Now, the center of family attention shifts to his wife, whose complementary activity expands exponentially. She is his responsibility, with her precious new life demanding protection and nourishment in new ways for both parents. John Paul rises to vital generalities in “To Promote Women’s Equal Dignity”, 1.1

Text “Women and men are the illustration of a **biological, individual, personal, and spiritual complementarity**. Femininity is the unique and specific characteristic of woman, as masculinity is of man. This difference, by reason of equal dignity, must find in practice juridical recognition in various legal systems. A woman cannot accept the parameters imposed by and through men within her family as well as her professional life. A woman has the right to choose between: having a profession, being simultaneously a mother while carrying on a profession, and being a mother while dedicating all her activity to the home.” Navarro-Valls published John Paul’s ideas for the Beijing UN Women’s Conference.

Comment John Paul clearly saw that most legal systems treated women as if they were incapable of functioning outside the home. He hoped that leaders would do the hard work of learning how women complement men in the four dimensions listed. Biological complementarity is obvious. Individual complementarity means that women are fellow humans, with needs and assistance to contribute to society. This dimension is relatively well known. Personal complementarity is a new notion for most people, because we are not clear what a person is. When we conceive of a person, we seldom notice that the person’s gender is intimately affects all personal acts. This is a new mystery for us to contemplate, thanks to John Paul’s profound analysis of person. Spiritual complementarity is another step into the unknown for most people. Perhaps we become aware of it when a woman finds a way to support a man who has exhausted his spiritual resources. We may not be able to identify just what her spiritual help was. But we are sure that she filled a spiritual gap for us.

From these universal truths, John Paul concludes that women should not be legally or traditionally limited to be homemakers. He chides men for restricting women to only one way of life. Then he lists three viable options for women that should be supported by law and tradition. A woman can be: 1) a professional, working outside the home in any way that she can contribute; 2) a professional and a mother; 3) a mother who dedicates herself to homemaking. Men too often determine for women how they should live. The proper balance accounts for the woman’s right to choose. Yes, it is simple for a man to run everything, make every decision (except about children), and determine every detail that interests him. This arrangement is wide-spread. From the surface, it seems to work very well. John Paul recommends a more difficult process of treating each woman as if she were equal in dignity (not in skill), and deserves her say in all matters. This more complicated process is often too much, even for the woman. But it is a shining ideal on high. Those married couples who approach this ideal support each other more entirely.

His writings show that John Paul respected women, even revered them, and promoted their personal good whenever he could. Jesus inspired him to make this effort. Christ's respect, even for prostitutes, fostered John Paul's investigation of persons, and their ability to complement each other. All this fits quite well with the way Jesus treated His mother, and all women. It is from Christ that John Paul learns mutual submission of husband and wife because God loves them, and wants them to love Him in return, then spread that love among all the neighbors.

This exalted ideal is too often honored in the breach. People sin against this ideal so regularly that comedians make a living mocking marriage. John Paul, as a devoted confessor, is quite aware of these sins. He addresses some of them in *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*. He also recommends improvements we can make, to strive more intensely to achieve the ideal. Nothing short of this ideal of marriage will satisfy us. There is no alternative. We must increase our efforts to live as Jesus commands. When we fail, we appeal to Christ's mercy applied in Confession.

We need to confess our sins because Adam's original sin was precisely disobedience, a revolt against God the Father. He provided the entire universe, in perfect order, and the primal persons Adam and Eve. As John Paul says in *Crossing* p 227-228: "Original sin is not only the violation of a positive command of God, but also, and above all, a violation of the will of God, expressed in that command. **Original sin attempts to abolish fatherhood** destroying its rays which permeate the created world, placing in doubt the truth about God, who is Love, and leaving man only with a sense of the master-slave relationship." Remember that Adam was perfectly sinless before he committed the primal sin. He was much more powerful than anything we can imagine. God put him in charge of the universe. So when Adam revolted against God, repudiating His will, Adam smashed the unity of good that God had created. As Genesis notes, even the ground refused to produce food, Ge 3:19. It is no wonder that family conflict produces too many fathers who strive to dominate their wives and children. These dominating fathers give God a bad name.

We could rightly say that tarring God with human sins is silly. That's right. However, Original Sin disrupts our abilities, clouding our minds, weakening our wills, and unsettling our emotions. We are wrecked inside and out. As the *Catholic Catechism* #400 says: "The harmony in which they (Adam & Eve) found themselves, thanks to original justice, is now destroyed. The control of the soul's spiritual faculties over the body is shattered." "As a result, the whole life of men and women, both individual and social, shows itself to be a struggle, a dramatic one, between good and evil, between light and darkness", CCC, #1707.

Text John Paul examines this split of man from woman in *TOB* p 251-254. "The woman, whose 'desire shall be for her husband', Gen 3:16, and the man, whose response to this desire is to 'dominate her', form, without any doubt, the same human couple, the same marriage, as in Genesis 2:24, even the **same community of persons**. But necessarily they are now something different ... Does not domination 'over' the other, man over woman, essentially change the structure of communion in interpersonal relations? ... At the same time, the man's shame and concupiscence becomes an impulse to 'dominate' the woman. Later, the experience of such domination shows itself more directly in the woman as the insatiable desire for a different union."

Comment After a beautiful description of ideal marriage, John Paul considers the brutal facts of life, after the apple. The people are the same, forming the same community. But the primal sin damages each person so much that the original self-giving dissolves into each self taking what each can grab. With his superior muscle power, Adam knocks Eve around, commanding her to obey for fear of worse damage. What a change from mutual giving! Each domination drives Eve to imagine another husband who would be more gentle. From mutual love, Adam and Eve sink into mutual hate. Imagine the tricks they play on each other to get back for real and imagined hurts. Imagine petty thievery and betrayal replacing mutual love. Or look around at what happens all too often today. The picture is all too familiar; harder for women than for men, as John Paul explains in *Mulieris* # 10.

Text "Therefore, when we read in the biblical description, the words addressed to the woman: 'Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you', Gen 3:16, we discover a break, and a constant threat, precisely to this 'unity of the two', which corresponds to the dignity of the image and likeness of God in both of them. But this threat is **more serious for the woman**, since domination takes the place of 'being a sincere gift', and therefore living 'for the other'. This 'domination' indicates the disturbance, and loss of the stability of that fundamental equality which the man and the woman possess in the 'unity of the two". This **is especially to the disadvantage of the woman**, whereas only the equality resulting from their dignity as persons can give to their mutual relationship the character of an authentic communion of persons."

Comment The two great advantages that John Paul has are his understanding of the tradition, to support his experimental fresh thinking, and his discovery of love's basic drive in all human persons. Combining the two provides us with a rethinking of Genesis, and everything important about the human condition. Between these two advantages, John Paul realizes that each woman is constituted to interact primarily with persons; each man interacts primarily with things. Each person, of course, interacts with both. But woman's preference is for persons, while man's is for things. This prefer-

ence determines how each person spends most of the time available for activities. Therefore, the rupture that Adam and Eve established by revolting against the perfect Persons of God, harms Eve more than Adam. The loss of God's Persons is more lamentable for Eve. Its reflection in the loss of personal love between Eve and Adam is more bitter for Eve as well. She suffers more from Original Sin than Adam. However, the suffering is horrendous for each of them. There is no mitigating this primal suffering until God's Son comes to redeem us. John Paul shows how in *Mulieris*, #11-15,

Text "In Christ, the mutual opposition between man and woman, the inheritance of original sin, is essentially overcome." Scripture is full of human persons healed of disorder by encountering Jesus. "Christ's way of acting, the Gospel of His words and deeds, is a consistent protest against whatever offends the dignity of women. Consequently, women close to Christ discover themselves in the truth which He teaches and does, even when He reveals their sinfulness. They feel liberated by the truth, restored to themselves. They feel loved with eternal love, with a love which finds direct expression in Christ Himself. In Christ's sphere of action, their position is transformed."

Comment In Jesus, and in Him alone, does God's infinite Love return to the scene of the crime. Back on earth, where Eve and Adam rejected God, Christ offers Himself to undo all sins ever committed. His Passion, Death, Resurrection, Ascension, and sending the Holy Spirit, are gifts beyond all comprehension. Enriched by accepting this divine bounty, each person responds uniquely, so that the near-infinity of responses flows into each individual life. None of these responses can be mechanized or categorized. Instead, they reflect the unrepeatably person. God so loves each person that He insists that every other person respect that person in a similar way that God does. His love liberates each beloved who accepts divine Love. By liberation from sin, each beloved transforms into a new person, characterized by Christ's love.

Mutual submission of Women and Men: Text: In *Mulier* #24: "Mutual submission out of love for Christ is the Gospel Innovation. ... [The husband's love for his wife must have] a fundamental **affirmation of the woman as a person**. This affirmation makes it possible for the female personality to develop fully, and be enriched. ... [Why?] One can say that this fully captures the whole style of Christ in dealing with women. Husbands should make their own the elements of this style for their wives. Analogously, all men should do the same for women in every situation. In this way, both men and women bring about the sincere gift of self. ... the author of the Letter to the Ephesians sees no contradiction between an exhortation formulated in this way, and the words: 'Wives, be subject to your husbands, as to the Lord. The husband is the head of the wife, Eph 5:22-23. The author knows that this way of speaking ... is to be **understood and carried out in a new way**: as a mutual subjection out of reverence for Christ, Eph 5:21. ... Forced obedience of wife to husband [was not revelation, but rather] ... a custom, or religious tradition, of the time. [The new way was] a mutual submission (not one-way). However, whereas in the relationship between Christ and the Church, the subjection is only on the part of the Church, in the relationship between husband and wife **the subjection is not one-sided, but mutual.**"

Comment St. Paul compared the love of married persons to Christ's love for His bride: the Church. When we read chapter 5 of Ephesians from the beginning, we find that Paul protects marriage from abuses. In verse 8, Paul reminds the Ephesians that they were darkness (steeped in sin) once, "but now you are light in the Lord.: He continues in verse 9 & 10: "Be like children of light. The effects of the light are seen in complete goodness, and right living, and truth." Then he tells them how "to be filled with the Spirit. Sing the words and tunes of the Psalms and hymns when you are together, and keep singing and chanting to the lord in your hearts, so that always and everywhere you are giving thanks to God in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." Paul tells them to be so busy doing good that they can't do evil. This is how they rise above their sinful past. We see John Paul putting this advice to practice for his people. With his publications, he recommends that we do the same. Following our interest in the female genius, John Paul amplifies Eph 5:21.

"Be subordinate to one another out of reverence for Christ." St. Paul says that we should obey "one another", in the self-gift that John Paul describes so well, and recommends so highly. It is mutual. If each person gives himself to the other, then each person belongs to the other, and should obey the other. We learn this self-gift from Jesus. "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, Eph 5:25-26. Jesus gave His life for us, to cleanse us of sin's darkness. We join Christ in Baptism, to be one with Him as much as we can. So those of us who are married must imitate Jesus as best we can. If we do, then Christ will make us clean "without spot or wrinkle ... holy and blameless", Eph 5:27. Recall that love unites lover and beloved. If we accept the love that Jesus pours upon us, then we can love Him in return. This spiral of mutual love is the mainspring of all love, and the major reason why husband and wife obey each other. How beautiful this love is. How respectful of each person. How liberating it is to love as Christ loves. How grateful we should be to John Paul for sharing this love with us. He expands these sentiments in his *Letter to Women*, p 47-48.

Text "Unfortunately, we are heirs to a history which has conditioned us to a remarkable extent. In every time and place, this conditioning has been an obstacle to the progress of women. Women's dignity has often been unacknowledged, and their prerogatives misrepresented. They have often been relegated to the margins of society, and even reduced to ser-

vitude. This has prevented women from truly being themselves, and it has resulted in a spiritual impoverishment of humanity. Certainly, it is no easy task to assign blame for this, considering the many kinds of cultural conditioning which, down the centuries, have shaped ways of thinking and acting. And if objective blame, especially in particular historical contexts, has belonged to not just a few members of the Church, for this I am truly sorry. May this regret be transformed, on the part of the whole Church, into a renewed commitment of fidelity to the Gospel vision. When it comes to setting women free from every kind of exploitation and domination, the Gospel contains an ever-relevant message that goes back to the **attitude of Jesus Christ himself**. Transcending the established norms of his own culture, Jesus treated women with openness, respect, acceptance, and tenderness. In this way, he honored the dignity which women have always possessed, according to God's plan, and in his love. As we look to Christ at the end of this Second Millennium, it is natural to ask ourselves: how much of his message has been heard and acted upon?"

Comment This message is loaded with important facts, reasons, and conclusions. It is a fact that most people, both men and women, have been taught to put women down, to deny the full range of their abilities. Once started on this slippery slope, denigration of women flourishes, together with oppression. Women usually cannot recognize themselves in the popular description of their weakness and usefulness, except for raising babies. Deprived of proper respect for their actual talents, women suffer loss of self-esteem, self-confidence, and self-expression outside their homemaking tasks. Recent changes have helped women in the job market, but not in their spiritual dimension. Even with higher salaries, and decision-making responsibilities, women are not appreciated for their personal qualities. They, and society, are poorer for this neglect. John Paul recognizes that blame can't be assigned in most cases. But he knows that various Church leaders have denied women their proper value. He is "truly sorry" for this abuse. Moving to positive improvements, he asks to transform this regret into renewed commitment to the Gospel vision, established by Jesus Himself. Watch Christ interact with women, and you find that He is free of His own cultural limitations. He treats women with openness to their genuine value, respect for their person, acceptance of their unique gifts and ways to practice them, and tenderness for their emotional concerns. Thus Jesus honors the dignity that God originally, and continually, gives them. How much of Christ's message have we heard and implemented?

The Female Genius Text: *Letter p 57-58:* "... forthcoming United Nations Conference in Beijing will bring out **the full truth about women**. Necessary emphasis should be placed on the **genius of women**, not only by considering great and famous women of the past or present, but also those ordinary women who reveal the gift of their womanhood by placing themselves at the service of others in their everyday lives. For in giving themselves to others each day, women fulfill their deepest vocation. Perhaps more than men, women acknowledge the person, because they see persons with their hearts. They see them independently of various ideological or political systems. They see others in their greatness and limitations. They try to go out to them and help them."

Comment The core genius of women is to see with their heart instead of their head. Female genius is a view of the world vastly different from the male view. Her view is closer to the primal act of love. When women see with their hearts, they relate directly to the heart of the person in front of them. This heart-to-heart interaction enables females to connect with infants, who are still engaged in the primal act of love, and primal emotions. Males are so satisfied with their intellectual analyses of the world, that they eagerly reject the primal love-act, together with primal emotions. That rejection cuts them off from babies, and from much of the female genius. When a gaggle of gals all talk at once, in great joy, the male can't stand this cacophony, and usually departs for more logical events, like sports. Adult women are not observing the words, or the message that the words convey in their multi-speaking process. They are emoting together. They delight in finally skipping objective male-talk for some satisfying subjective gal-talk.

John Paul skips this core activity, to directly appreciate the natural consequence of direct contact with primal love and emotion. Service follows naturally. Heart-to-heart interaction means serving the needy heart, often with all of the server's heart. Most of this service goes unnoticed. John Paul highlights it, saying that it is the woman's vocation, her calling. By fulfilling her calling, a woman satisfies herself most completely. Satisfactory service goes directly to the person, clearly seen by the feminine heart. While males hang up on theoretical benefits, technological solutions, and strenuous applications, heart-directed women provide personal service, which is much more practical. John Paul ends this quote with another gold nugget. Women "see others in their greatness and limitations". This vision enables them to touch the person directly, and to offer generous help. What a great set of benefits flow from the female genius. What is its source?

Text "The moral and spiritual strength of a woman is joined to her awareness that God entrusts the human being to her in a special (unique) way... A woman is strong because of her awareness of this entrusting, strong because of the fact that God entrusts the human being to her always, and in every way, even in the situations of social discrimination in which she may find herself. [The prime example is Mary. She stands before] the evil one, the father of lies ... the ancient serpent who wishes to devour the child, Rev 12:4." *Mulieris Dignitatem*, #30.

Comment Naturally, God is the ultimate source of the female genius. He constructed woman to nurture life inside her womb from inception to birth. During this time, mother relates to child at the primal love level, with some primal emotional interactions. After birth, primal love between mother and child grows, and emotional interactions multiply. Ideally, the mother realizes that God will strengthen her through the unpredictable difficulties ahead, especially as her babe demands so much of her. Meeting those demands may seem impossible, but, with God's help, can be done. Our Lady is our fundamental example of withstanding even Satan, with God's grace.

Compared to this perfect example, and free acceptance of female genius, we can also have free rejection of her genius. When she realizes that her cooperation requires that she give herself away to other persons, especially to a babe for whom she is totally responsible, some women reject the entire package. They choose alternative life-styles. Fully aware of this rejection, and selection of other goals in life, John Paul appealed to women to choose their natural gift. In *Evangelium Vitae* (Gospel of Life), John Paul pleaded with women to reject alternative objectives, which notoriously fail to satisfy them, in favor of their female genius. Yes, they must work harder at their natural vocation than at alternatives, but their satisfaction in this work is far superior to anything the alternatives can provide. In section 99 of *EV*, he says.

Text "Women first learn, & then teach others, that human relations are authentic if they are open to accepting the other person, a person who is recognized and loved because of the dignity of being a person, and not from other considerations, such as usefulness, strength, intelligence, beauty, or health. This is the fundamental contribution which the Church and humanity expect from women. And it is the indispensable prerequisite for an authentic cultural change."

Comment Two conclusive lines of evidence convince us that John Paul is correct to describe women as he does. The first is that women undergo life-productive biological changes monthly, their ovulation process, from puberty to menopause. They are intensely aware of their fertility, of their entire-body orientation to motherhood, of their disposition to nurture life from inception through birth, and onward. They are so constructed, so they become intrinsically nurturing. The second line of evidence is the obvious performance of women who nurture children, even when the child has his own children. Nurturing never stops. Childless women also care for others. When bad news arrives about someone, women automatically go into the "save them" mode. Since all this evidence is undeniable, we are convinced that the female genius concentrates on the person, and his needs. The other human qualities, which often distract males, are not as important to females as the dignity of person. It is the solid foundation for social change. John Paul encourages women to apply their genius to recognize and enhance persons, to improve society. Person is mysterious. So John Paul describes it even more.

Text *Mulieris* #7: "Man, whether male or female, is the only being among creatures of the visible world, **that God the Creator has willed for its own sake.** That creature is thus a person. Being a person means striving towards self-realization. Being a person means striving towards self-realization (self-discovery), which can only be achieved **through a sincere gift of self.** The model for this interpretation of person, is God himself as Trinity, as communion of persons."

Comment Man is the inclusive term, denoting all humans, whether of the male or female persuasion. Genesis tells us that God created Adam and Eve for Himself. The rest of creation is for His beloved men. See Genesis 1:27; 2:8; 2:15. "God created them in His own image" tells us that God created them as He is; like to Him: persons. The rest of the universe God created to serve the persons he created, as Gen 2 tells us. The original persons fouled up God's plan by revolting against God. They set their image of God against God Himself. They used their God-like powers of knowledge and freedom to revolt against God. They personally rejected the Persons who created them.

This Scriptural account tells us how God willed man for man's own sake. God created man for person-to-person interaction, especially knowledge and love. The entire reason for man to exist is to personally love God, Who Personally loves him. In this knowing/loving sense, man was on a par with God. To show how much of a par, man was able to reject His loving Creator. So powerful was this rejection, that all creation suffered damage. Everything originally so good when it came from God, became defective when Adam disobeyed. Each human person is so powerful that he can accept salvation from Jesus through Baptism. Then each person can improve his self-giving, to love God and neighbor more entirely. This description of person helps us to it better. John Paul develops personal interaction in his *Letter to Women*, p 52.

Text "The creation of woman is thus marked from the outset by the **principle of help.** This help is not one-sided, but **mutual.** Woman complements man, just as man complements woman. Men and women are complementary. Womanhood expresses the human as much as manhood does, but in a different and complementary way. When Genesis speaks of help, it is not referring merely to acting, but also to being. Womanhood and manhood are complementary not only from the physical and psychological points of view, but also from the ontological. It is only through the duality of the masculine and the feminine that the human finds full realization."

Comment Genesis 2:18 describes God making a "helper" for Adam. Comparing various interesting creatures, none of them is a suitable helper until Eve, who is flesh and bone of Adam. It doesn't get more unified than that. Each is equally human. But Eve is definitely the helper. Help is the source (principle) of her being. Genesis 2:24 says that Adam and Eve shall be one flesh. This is a physical union that sets husband and wife apart into mutual help. Earlier in this

presentation, John Paul developed ways that woman and man mutually complement each other to help each other. We will not repeat them but will deepen them by accepting John Paul's gem of understanding that Genesis tells us that Eve and Adam are complementary at their very being (ontological). The complete human is realized in masculine/feminine complementarity. This duality expresses the whole of humanity, and their usual interaction. Does that mean that everyone must marry to be complete? No. John Paul acknowledges the ancient function of celibates, devoted exclusively to God in *Vita Consecrata*, 46 and 31.

Text "The Church is essentially a mystery of communion, a people made one with the unity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The fraternal life seeks to reflect the depth and richness of this mystery, taking shape as a human community in which the Trinity dwells, in order to extend in history the gifts of communion proper to the three divine Persons. The vocations to the lay life, to the ordained ministry, and to the consecrated life, can be considered paradigmatic, in as much as all particular vocations, considered separately, or as a whole, are in one way or another derived from them, or lead back to them, in accordance with the richness of God's gift."

Comment The Church exceeds our comprehension. But we love to enjoy its mystery, because we feel God's love radiating from beyond our understanding. Each mystery resonates with our primal love and our primitive emotions, called our heart. So we use our head to identify a mystery, then we use our loving heart to live in it. This is great preparation for our eternal life in the Ultimate Mystery: God. Jesus said "I came that you may be one, as I and the Father are one", Jn 17:21. This unity reflects the unity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The point of religious life is to reflect this perfect mystery in imperfect ways, striving to do our best to live in a Trinity-like community. So nuns and religious men vow to work together for God's glory: to "extend in history the gifts of communion proper to the three divine Persons". Married people, priests, and vowed religious form basic patterns (paradigms) for all vocations. Every specific vocation is related to these fundamental three ways to serve God and neighbor. God's gifts are too rich to limit, but they center on these three life-commitments. Non-married people can follow God's grace to give themselves to God and neighbor just as well as married people. The usual complaint from married couples is that they are so distracted by their responsibilities, especially to children, that they neglect God. John Paul reminds us that personal gifts of self can be made as well in the ordained and vowed lives. This rounds out a merry review of his rethinking person and female genius. A summary of this lively trip through his fresh contributions may be an excellent conclusion.

Summary

John Paul prepared for this task of describing the female genius by intense study, moral improvement, and mystical union with God. The base of his grand success in many endeavors was his high level of mystical life. Because he put himself absolutely at God's disposal, God used him to achieve magnificent things.

Among them, we concentrated upon his original description of the genius God gives to women. Because the Thomistic tradition is so reliably true, John Paul built from it into fresh ideas that fit the work of Aristotle and Thomas. His new inspiration arose from Max Scheler's phenomenological method. Primal love, echoing God's loving creation, is the first movement of the new being. Fresh from God's Love, the new creature does nothing but love, until it distinguishes other acts, and begins to know and to choose.

Women use their female genius to relate directly to this primal love, to love in the same way as the fresh creature does. No wonder that women can take care of babies. No wonder that women complement men, who do not share this genius. From a primal love, primal emotions surge forth without specific goals. This primitive emotional charge is the heart of human interaction. Females directly interact with the "heart". Again they complement the male genius, which focuses upon practical mechanical tasks.

The person is at the center of primal love and primitive emotions. Women relate person-to-person, whether or not they employ these concepts or terms. So the female genius prompts a set of acts that care for other persons by basic love and emoting together. Obviously, this genius is essential for life. There would be no next generation without female nurturing of totally dependent babies.

The rest of our presentation follows John Paul's investigation of ways to foster the female genius, especially to develop respect, reverence, and genuine love for all persons. The key to all improvements is proper relationships with people. The person is the way to genuine love. Mutual personal giving enables us to grow and develop into the Mystical Body. Jesus, the Head of this Body, calls each of us personally. May we respond with His Own Love.

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Appendix A: Summary of St. John Paul's Life: Emphasizing Women's Influence:

Comprehension: unity of the facts:

John Paul developed his comprehension by personal interaction with women. This concrete personal experience informed his understanding, starting with his mother. After her early death, personal interaction continued with women who took care of him during life-threatening crises. These definitive events provided his fact-formed conclusions. The evidence he gathered provided a synthesis of empirical data, or solid facts, to solidify his world-view of women.

Facts: first-hand experiences to illuminate his conclusions: biographical events:

This list is from *Wojtyla's Women*, p 38-41, augmented by inserts from *Concepts of Women*, Vol 3, p 443-445.

1920, May 18, he was born in Wadowice near Krakow.

1920, June 20, he was baptized in the Wadowice parish church, and named Karol Wojtyla (KW).

1929 his mother dies.

1932 his oldest brother, Edmund, a MD, dies.

1938 he graduates from the Wadowice high school, where he participated in theater groups. He began his lifelong friendship with Halina (Helena) Krolikiewicz (married name Kwiatkowska). Upon graduating, he entered Jagiellonian University in Krakow, studying Polish literature. He applied his aptitude for languages by studying several of them.

1939 Hitler and Stalin occupy Poland. Nazis close Jagiellonian University.

1940-1943 Jan Tyranowski organizes young people into a Living Rosary group, offering intense prayer in God's presence. His holiness and zeal inspires young men to pray intensely. He introduces KW to St. John of the Cross, whose poetry entralls KW, and leads him into Carmelite spirituality, which blossomed into profound mystical life.

1940-1944 his French teacher, Mrs. Jadwiga Lewaj saves him from Nazis by getting him a job at the Solvay chemical factory in Krakow. Several older women teach him various languages. He participates in the underground "Rhapsodic Theater". His dear friend Halina risks her life carrying messages from Wadowice to Krakow.

1940's he learns about Edith Stein from Roman Ingarden, her friend. KW meets daily with RI for a time, and corresponds regularly with him until his death in 1970. ES develops wide and deep understanding of the feminine phenomenon, which profoundly influences KW's further investigation and expression of female persons.

1941 his father dies. His friend Juliusz Kydrynski and his wife welcome him into the family. Juliusz's mother, Alexandra Kydrynska takes care of him.

1942 he enters the clandestine (hidden from authorities) seminary run by Cardinal Adam Stefan Sapieha.

1944, February 25, German truck runs over KW. Mrs. Jozefa Florek finds him unconscious, and stops a German car. The Nazi officer in it helps her deliver KW to a hospital. Mrs. Irena Szkocka and Mrs. Zofia Pozniakowa take care of him during recovery from this near-fatal accident.

1944 he stops working at the Solvay factory. Mrs. Irena Szkocka helps him avoid Nazi patrols, to safely reach the Archbishop's palace, to continue his underground seminary studies.

1945 he continues seminary studies, augmented by underground theology studies at Jagiellonian University.

1946, November 1, Archbishop Sapieha ordains KW to the priesthood.

1946 Archbishop Sapieha sends KW to study in Rome, at the St. Thomas Aquinas University (the Angelicum).

1948 KW returns to Poland to work in several parishes, and as chaplain to university students. He takes young men and women hiking, and discusses love, marriage, and sexual expression of giving oneself entirely to another person.

1952, April, KW takes 5 female university students to Zakopane, a winter ski resort and a summer hiking park.

1953 KW defends his theology dissertation at the Catholic University in Lublin (KUL). He then becomes a professor of moral theology and social ethics. He helps advance the academic careers of several nuns.

1956, December, he meets Dr. Wanda Poltawska, a medical genius, hardened at the Nazi concentration camp of Regensbruck. She becomes his chief advisor on sex & birth control. [She applies her medical/psychiatrist training to coordinate scientific facts with patients' personal experience. This intense concentration of facts from abused women, and her investigation of healthy women, gradually blended, and contributed to his conclusions.] Ten years later, KW's and Dr. Wanda's evidence convinces Pope Paul VI to publish *Humane Vitae*, maintaining the Church ban on contraceptives.

1958 KW sponsors his first doctoral dissertation at KUL, by the nun Sr. Karolina Kasperkiewicz. Due to clerical opposition, the time is not ripe for KW to obtain a faculty position for her. Later that year, he does sponsor Sr. Zofia Zdybicka, the first nun to be a professor at KUL. Later, she became dean of the philosophy faculty. Pope John Paul II later appointed her a member of the Pontifical Academy of St. Thomas Aquinas. P 442

1958, July 4, Pope Pius XII appoints KW auxiliary bishop of Krakow.

1958-1978 Dr. Wanda helps KW promote natural birth control, marriage and sex counseling, and help for single mothers in the Krakow archdiocese. He campaigns against abortion, and promotes large families. He defends religious freedom, human rights, and religious rights against the atheistic Communist regime.

1960's he encourages Mrs. Alina Gryglowska to write about her Soviet labor-camp experiences.

1960 he publishes *Love & Responsibility*, describing Christian love and marriage. Dr. Wanda and university students, male and female, contribute details and consolidated experiences.

1962 he requests Padre Pio of Pietrelcina to intercede for Dr. Wanda, to cure her of cancer. Without medical intervention, she recovers fully.

1962-1964 he participated in Vatican Council II, exercising a leading role in some committees. He was the only speaker who recognized and addressed the women, invited for the first time in Church history to listen, but not speak, to the Council's discussions.

1964, January 13, Pope Paul VI appoints KW archbishop of Krakow.

1967, June 26, Pope Paul VI makes KW cardinal.

1968 KW gives Pope Paul VI evidence coordinated by KW and Dr. Wanda, to influence *Humane Vitae*.

1970's KW works to lift the Vatican condemnation of St. Faustyna Kowalska.

1973 Polish-American philosopher Dr. Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka visits KW in Krakow. Subsequently, she translates *The Acting Person* into English. She worked with KW for four years, producing a controversial version of this book. As a student of Roman Ingarden, she was one of the few people who could think phenomenology at KW's level. She and her husband remain friends of KW until he died in 2005. She reports that his attitude toward women was reverence, warm, non-sexual affection, and total respect. In some ways, he considers women to be superior to men, p 349.

1974 KW starts the "Cardinal Wojtyla SOS", a program to help distressed mothers (unwed, poverty-stricken).

1978, October 16, Conclave Cardinals elect KW pope. He takes the name John Paul II.

1978-2005 Pope John Paul II (JP) makes 104 pastoral visits outside Italy, and 146 inside it.

1979, June, JP, in his only private audience in Poland, thanks Mrs. Helena Szczepanska for helping his mother take care of him when he was a child.

1979, October 7, in JP's first US visit, Sr. Theresa Kane asks him to include women in all Church ministries.

1981, November 22, JP publishes his Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris consortio* on the Christian family today.

1987, June 13, JP praises Stanislaw Leszczynska, a Polish midwife, who defied Nazi orders to kill newborns of women inmates at Auschwitz.

1988, August 15, he publishes an Apostolic Letter *Mulieris dignitatem*, expressing women's dignity and vocation.

1994, May 22, he publishes an Apostolic Letter *Ordinatio sacerdotalis*, confirming that only males can be priests.

1995, he selects Mary Ann Glendon, Harvard law professor, to lead the Holy See delegation to the UN Women's Conference in Beijing. She surprises the US delegation by successfully countering their powerful promotion of abortion.

1995, March 25, he publishes the Encyclical *Evangelium Vitae* (Gospel of Life), proclaiming the super-value of living persons, against the Death Culture expressed in Abortion, Euthanasia, and the Death Penalty. He launches a new view of feminism: "In transforming culture so that it supports life, *women* occupy a place, in thought and action, which is unique and decisive. It depends on them to promote a 'new feminism', which rejects the temptation of imitating models of 'male domination', in order to acknowledge and affirm the true genius of women in every aspect of the life of society, and overcome all discrimination, violence and exploitation."

1995, June 29, he publishes a Letter to Women, apologizing for past discrimination: "And if objective blame, especially in particular historical contexts, has belonged to not just a few members of the Church, for this I am truly sorry."

1997, June 8, he canonizes Queen Jadwiga (Hedwig), a Polish monarch, reigning from 1384 to 1399.

1999, he acknowledges Countess Karolina Lackoronska for telling the world of Nazi Ravensbruck atrocities.

2000, April 30, he canonizes Sr. Faustina Kowalska, a Polish nun of the Order of Our Lady of Mercy. Her visions in the 1930's urged her to spread devotion to God's Mercy.

2003, October 14, he presides over the beatification of Mother Teresa of Calcutta, his dear friend, who drew 5,000 nuns to serve the poorest of the poor.

2005, April 2, he dies. His last words were: "Let me go to the Lord". He spoke them to a Polish woman, Sr. Tobiana, a MD who nursed him in his final days.

Additions from Sr. Prudence Allen, RSM in *Concepts of Women*, Vol 3, p 443-445. The two women who had the greatest influence on John Paul were his life-long friend Helina Kwiatkowska, ne Krolikiewica, and Dr. Wanda Poltawska. Dr. Wanda and KW analyzed the ocean of factual data, drew its conclusions, and founded medical clinics and help centers for women, where they put their conclusions into practice. "By 1978, there were twenty-five family counseling

centers in Krakow, established by this... [dynamic duo]. Eventually there were eighty-two such counseling centers in the archdiocese.”

“To this day, the Krakow archdiocese has the highest church attendance, and the highest birth rate in Poland”, Lipien, p 298.

For Dr. Wanda’s memoirs of concentration camp experiences see her book: *And I am Afraid of My Dreams*.

Appendix B: Influence of Two Philosophers and a Mystic on St. John Paul’s Thought

St. Thomas Aquinas, St. John of the Cross, and Max Scheler heavily influenced John Paul’s thought. From 1944 to 1946, when John Paul studied at the University of St. Thomas Aquinas in Rome, Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange improved John Paul’s mastery of Aquinas, and oversaw his dissertation on Faith in St. John of the Cross. Later on, John Paul studied Max Scheler, and discussed him and Edith Stein’s directly feminine intuitions with Roman Ingarden.

Thomas had the greatest influence, providing the foundation for everything that John Paul thought and did. Genuine philosophy is a thoughtful life, integrating all activity into pursuit of the Pure Act, or God. Thomas united philosophy with theology by noticing that creation is active, and that Aristotle proved that creation must be initiated by Pure Act. Pure Act is philosophy’s God. Revelation is the other major source of man’s knowledge. In Abraham’s lived experience, down through the patriarchs to the kings and prophets, God revealed Himself to be Creator of all act. Scribes recorded this lived experience in the Jewish Testament. Jesus affirmed God as Creator, and revealed Himself as the Creator’s Son, establishing a New Testament by His bloody death. Thomas employed both testaments. Revelation is so rich in meaning and value that we can easily lose ourselves in it. Thomas noticed that everything in philosophy radiated from Pure Act. Everything in revelation radiated from God, Who is Pure Act. The purest of all acts is love, which Christ revealed as the preferred name of God. So the sources of all activity in philosophy and revelation are the same. This profound synthesis impressed John Paul to his very soul. No wonder that he employed the Thomistic Synthesis.

Thomas wrote so much that we cannot provide even an outline of his mighty work. John Paul devoted years to mastering it, crowned by his two years of study at the Angelicum in Rome. There, Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, OP helped him perfect his Thomistic knowledge. This integrated philosophy-theology attains the heights in those fields. Reginald recommended the heights of mystical love that another Thomist, St. John of the Cross, attained. The three Thomists united in mysticism together. Since St. John of the Cross is less renowned than St. Thomas Aquinas, we examine his mysticism through a poem he wrote in the 1500’s.

St. John of the Cross nurtured John Paul’s mystical and poetic soul, to express in poetry the mystical union with God that is too perfect for mere words. Here is the poem.

John Speaks for Himself in Spanish. Pears translated it into English. See Kieran Kavanaugh, p 723.

Although By Night: Song of the soul that delights in knowing God by Faith.

Que bien se' yo la fuente que mana y corre
Aunque es de noche.

How Well I know the spring that brims and flows,
Although by night.

Aquella eterna fonte esta' escondida
Que bien se' yo do' tiene su manida
Aunque es de noche.

This eternal spring is hidden deep,
How well I know the course its waters keep,
Although by night.

Su origen no lo se', pues no lo tiene
Mas se' que todo origen de ella viene,
Aunque es de noche.

Its source I do not know, because it has none
And yet from this, I know, all sources come,
Although by night.

Se' que no puede ser cosa tan bella
Y que cielos y tierra beben de ella
Aunque es de noche.

I know that no created thing could be so fair
And that both earth and heaven drink from there,
Although by night.

Bien se' que suelo en ello no se halla
Y que ninguno puede vadealla,
Aunque es de noche.

I know its depths possess no bed to fathom
And that none may ford across or sound them,
Although by night.

Su claridad nunca es oscurecida,

Its radiance is never clouded, and in this

Y se' que toda luz de ella es venida,
Aunque es de noche.

Se' ser tan caudalosas sus corrientes,
Que infiernos, cielos riegan, y las gentes,
Aunque es de noche.
El corriente que nace de esta fuente,
Bien se' que es tan capaz y omnipotente,
Aunque es de noche.

El corriente que de estas dos procede
Se' que ninguna de ellas le precede,
Aunque es de noche.

Aquesta eterna fonte esta' escondida
En este vivo pan por darnos vida,
Aunque es de noche.

Aqui se esta' llamando a las criaturas,
Y de esta agua se hartan, aunque a oscuras,
Porque es de noche

Aquesta viva fuente, que deseo,
En este pan de vida yo la veo,
Aunque es de noche.

Other translations: Kavanaugh's; Bro. Brian's

That eternal spring is hidden,
For I know well where it has risen
Although it is night.

I do not know its origin, for it hasn't one
But I know that every origin has come from it.
Although it is night.

I know that nothing else is so beautiful,
And that the heavens and the earth drink there
Although it is night.

I know well that it is bottomless
And that no one is able to cross it
Although it is night.

Its clarity is never darkened,
And I know that every light has come from it
Although it is night.

I know that its streams are so brimming
They water the lands of hell, heavens and earth,
Although it is night.

I know well the stream that flows from this spring
Is mighty in compass and power,
Although it is night.

I know that the stream proceeding from these two

I know that all light has its genesis,
Although by night.

I know its currents carry such abundance
They water hell and heaven and all nations
Although by night.
The current welling from this fountain's source
I know to be as mighty in its force,
Although by night.

And from these two proceeds another stream.
I know that neither over this one reigns supreme,
Although by night.

This eternal fountain is concealed from sight
within this living bread to give us life,
Although by night.

And here is calling out to all the creatures,
These waters quench their thirst, although by darkness
Because they lie in night.

I long for this, the living fountain-head,
I see it here within the living bread,
Although by night.

Though this eternal spring is hidden fast,
How well I know its source at last,
Although by night.

I do not know its origin, since it has none
Rather every origin has from it come,
Although by night.

I know no other thing can be so fair,
And that heaven and earth drink there,
Although by night.

How well I know this spring cannot end
Nor can anyone limits round it bend
Although by night.

Nothing shades the rays with which it's lit
And I know that every light shines forth from it
Although by night.

I know its flows are past all limit
Watering hell, heaven, earth and all in it
Although by night.

The current born of this spring
I well know overcomes everything,
Although by night.

The stream flowing from these two sources

Is preceded by neither of them,
Although it is night.

This eternal spring is hidden
In this living bread for our life's sake,
Although it is night.

It is here to call to creatures; and they
Are filled with this water, although in darkness
Because it is night.

This living spring which I long for,
I see in this bread of life,
Although it is night.

Equals them in all their forces
Although by night.

This eternal spring is ever hidden
In living bread where life is given
Although by night.

I know it is here to call us all
And quench our thirst, under a pall,
Because it is night.

This living fountain which I so need,
I see in living bread on which I feed
Although by night.

Poetry is much more effective than prose to convey spiritual truths because it includes extra dimensions for meaning. These include rhyme, rhythm, repetition, rousing emotions, and their intricate interactions. Spirit soars past all limits, so limited language can't express it. But a poem can sneak in unexpected combinations that arouse emotions that emphasize the meaning and value that the poet strives to communicate. After a while, messages work their way from the poem's beauty into our awareness. A poet can blend several factors to provide more than words can say. So we let the poem do its best to alert us to the spirit that moves the poet.

St. John of the Cross contrasts "how well I know" with "although by night". Somehow, spiritual truths are both well-known and elusive. As we puzzle over this comparison, we realize that faith is very much like that. Faith is so secure that we rely upon it entirely. But it is dark as night in many respects. It refreshes like a spring, and flows strong, but it leads us into the unknown. Reflecting upon these hints, we realize that St. John gives a fine description of faith. With this indication of St. John's pattern, we can interpret the other stanzas. They shimmer with several interpretations, but the core is reliably constant. Each way to expand from limited words into unlimited spirit can help us flourish in divine union.

Several of the poem's intricacies are locked into the Spanish language. Most of us will miss them. Even so, the English translations inspire us. No wonder that John Paul learned Spanish to better grasp St. John's poems. By delving deeper into Spanish, John Paul connected more completely with his fellow Thomist from the 1500's. The formal foundation for each of these saints was St. Thomas Aquinas. Thus supported, they could comprehend more of God's creation. This is philosophy. Similarly, Thomas offers a united view of revelation. This is theology. Then St. John's excellent example inspires John Paul to devote himself to mystical union with Jesus. Everything leads us to God.

St. John illustrates Jordan Auman's description: "Real events, lived by real people, really uniting with God, make spirituality an experimental science of the saints", Auman 30. God calls all of us to be saints. He wants us to be holy, as He says in Mt 5:48, Lk 1:17, Jn 17:23. We all come from God, and go back to Him. Therefore St. John of the Cross is completely relevant for today and every day. May our glimpse of his poem launch us into his holy experimental science.

Max Scheler analyzes human events that occurred after St. Thomas. Among them we find: totalitarian government, technological attacks against society, industrial abuses... Problems like these require new concepts and new methods, to draw new conclusions. Under the practical stress of Nazi, then Communist, domination, John Paul adopted phenomenological analysis, incorporating several of Scheler's intuitions and conclusions. Here are a few hints to follow as we appreciate how Scheler contributes to John Paul's understanding of the female genius.

Rethinking the basic act of human beings, Scheler insists that love impels all other acts. Therefore, love is the primal act from which all others derive. This radical reassessment fits John Paul's observations. It resembles our refined view of creation by Love Himself. It is a shift from the standard view of Thomas. He previously emphasized primal knowing. But knowing can indeed follow primal love. If it does, our account of ethical behavior is more coherent, more consistently love-centered. The shift from knowing to loving at man's center alters the value of male and female genius. This shift raises feminine status. John Paul adopted all these changes.

If we accept primal love, we see reasons to change our emotional emphasis. Traditionally, emotions are mere responses to appearances. They are semi-automatic mechanisms. Original Sin disorders them, so that they too often carry us away into sin. But St. Augustine often spoke of the 'heart': a profound center combining emotions, and values. Scheler reasserts this swirl of movements that is much too meaningful to be semi-automatic. Instead, these movements impel us

eventually to God. In his own words: “People no longer understand the whole of emotional life as a meaningful symbolic language. They no longer see that objective connections are unveiled in this language that, in their changing relationships to us, **govern the sense and meaning in our life**. Rather, they take our emotional life to consist in a series of totally blind happenings.” *Ordo Amoris*, p 118.

Scheler’s analysis exposes two types of emotions. The traditional ones, analyzed by Aristotle, and adopted by Thomas, are indeed relatively mechanical responses to appearances. But the central emotions Scheler identifies respond to meaning and value. They even form their own language, with powerful symbols arousing our utmost strength to love. Yes, Original Sin damages both sets of emotions, ripping them from their original unity with God. Before eating apples, Adam and Eve surged toward God with emotions more powerful than any we experience in our disordered condition. After the apples, we children of Eve can re-order both our deep and our superficial emotions. Scheler examines how to restore order in two books: *Resentment; The Nature of sympathy*.

He connects love with emotion in *Nature...* p 153. Here he describes a fresh view of loving. “For love is the **movement of intention**, whereby, from a given value ‘A’ in an object, its higher value is visualized. Moreover, it is just this **vision** of a higher value that is of the essence of love.” This intriguing description leads us into the profound center of love. Recall that “intention” is a way to be, that unifies knower with known. We start with knowledge because it is more familiar to us than love. But “intention” is a way of being that also unifies lover and beloved. Scheler proposes that love moves ever on toward higher values. Love unites with some beloved value, some good that attracts the lover. We agree with this simple description. Scheler adds that this very uniting urges us into higher value and greater good. Love forever expands. The act of love simultaneously satisfies the lover by becoming one with a value, and impels the lover on to higher value. This additional impulsion is probably new to us. That is why it seems strange. But another reason for its strangeness is that males prefer a single-action love: one act that unifies lover and beloved in bliss. Females prefer the double-action love that unifies in bliss, but advances ever-onward into higher bliss.

We cannot pin love down to a static form. Even our disordered experience of love forever expands. So we might as well take Scheler seriously, as John Paul did. Perhaps we will adopt his on-going increase in love. After all, our ultimate destiny is to unite with infinite Love for all eternity. This union will surely be double-action: ever-satisfying, and ever-expanding. That’s why heaven is so enticing, so fascinating, so satisfactory. Not only are we filled with as much love as we can hold, but our capacity for love continues to expand. Scheler’s insights impel John Paul to rethink our troubles afresh. This fresh view enables John Paul to produce a huge set of inspiring writings and activities.

Conclusion These few hints help us consider how these three thinkers influenced John Paul. There is always more to the story, but perhaps this introduction will help us keep track of some of John Paul’s fresh ideas.

Appendix C: St. John Paul’s Letter to Families

This letter is available at www.vatican.va. It is a great gift for every day, though written for the 1994 Family Year.

LETTER TO FAMILIES FROM POPE JOHN PAUL II

Dear Families!

1. The celebration of the Year of the Family gives me a welcome opportunity to knock at the door of your home, eager to greet you with deep affection and to spend time with you. I do so by this Letter, taking as my point of departure the words of the Encyclical *Redemptor Hominis*, published in the first days of my ministry as the Successor of Peter. There I wrote that *man is the way of the Church*.

With these words I wanted first of all to evoke the many paths along which man walks, and at the same time to emphasize how deeply the Church desires to stand at his side as he follows the paths of his earthly life. The Church shares in the joys and hopes, the sorrows and anxieties of people's daily pilgrimage, firmly convinced that it was Christ himself who set her on all these paths. Christ entrusted man to the Church; he entrusted man to her as the "way" of her mission and her ministry.

The family – way of the Church

2. Among these many paths, *the family is the first and the most important*. It is a path common to all, yet one which is particular, unique and unrepeatable, just as every individual is unrepeatable; it is a path from which man cannot withdraw. Indeed, a person normally comes into the world within a family, and can be said to owe to the family the very fact of his existing as an individual. When he has no family, the person coming into the world develops an anguished sense of pain and loss, one which will subsequently burden his whole life. The Church draws near with loving concern to all who expe-

rience situations such as these, for she knows well the fundamental role which the family is called upon to play. Furthermore, she knows that *a person goes forth from the family in order to realize in a new family unit his particular vocation in life*. Even if someone chooses to remain single, the family continues to be, as it were, his existential horizon, that fundamental community in which the whole network of social relations is grounded, from the closest and most immediate to the most distant. Do we not often speak of the "human family" when referring to all the people living in the world?

The family has its origin in that same love with which the Creator embraces the created world, as was already expressed "in the beginning", in the *Book of Genesis* (1:1). In the Gospel, Jesus offers a supreme confirmation: "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son" (*Jn* 3:16). The *only-begotten Son*, of one substance with the Father, "*God from God and Light from Light*", *entered into human history through the family*: "For by his incarnation the Son of God united himself in a certain way with every man. He labored with human hands... and loved with a human heart. Born of Mary the Virgin, he truly became one of us and, except for sin, was like us in every respect". If in fact Christ "fully discloses man to himself", he does so beginning with the family in which he chose to be born and to grow up. We know that the Redeemer spent most of his life in the obscurity of Nazareth, "obedient" (*Lk* 2:51) as the "Son of Man" to Mary his Mother, and to Joseph the carpenter. Is this filial "obedience" of Christ not already the first expression of that obedience to the Father "unto death" (*Phil* 2:8), whereby he redeemed the world?

The divine mystery of the Incarnation of the Word thus has an intimate connection with the human family. Not only with one family, that of Nazareth, but in some way with every family, analogously to what the Second Vatican Council says about the Son of God, who in the Incarnation "united himself in some sense with every man". Following Christ who "came" into the world "to serve" (*Mt* 20:28), the Church considers serving the family to be one of her essential duties. In this sense both man and the family constitute "the way of the Church."

The Year of the Family

3. For these very reasons *the Church joyfully welcomes the decision of the United Nations Organization to declare 1994 the International Year of the Family*. This initiative makes it clear how fundamental the question of the family is for the member States of the United Nations. If the Church wishes to take part in this initiative, it is because she herself has been sent by Christ to "all nations" (*Mt* 28:19). Moreover, this is not the first time the Church has made her own an international initiative of the United Nations. We need but recall, for example, the International Year of Youth in 1985. In this way also the Church makes herself present in the world, fulfilling a desire which was dear to Pope John XXIII, and which inspired the Second Vatican Council's Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*.

On the Feast of the Holy Family in 1993 the whole ecclesial community began the "Year of the Family" as one of the important steps along the path of preparation for the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000, which will mark the end of the second and the beginning of the third Millennium of the Birth of Jesus Christ. This Year ought to direct our thoughts and our hearts towards Nazareth, where it was officially inaugurated this past 26 December at a Solemn Eucharistic Liturgy presided over by the Papal Legate.

Throughout this Year it is important to discover anew the many *signs of the Church's love and concern for the family*, a love and concern expressed from the very beginning of Christianity, when the meaningful term "*domestic church*" was applied to the family. In our own times we have often returned to the phrase "domestic church", which the Council adopted and the sense of which we hope will always remain alive in people's minds. This desire is not lessened by an awareness of the changed conditions of families in today's world. Precisely because of this, there is a continuing relevance to the title chosen by the Council in the Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes* in order to indicate what the Church should be doing in the present situation: "*Promoting the dignity of marriage and the family*". Another important reference point after the Council is the 1981 Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris Consortio*. This text takes into account a vast and complex experience with regard to the family, which among different peoples and countries always and everywhere continues to be the "way of the Church". In a certain sense it becomes all the more so precisely in those places where the family is suffering from internal crises or is exposed to adverse cultural, social and economic influences which threaten its inner unity and strength, and even stand in the way of its very formation.

Prayer

4. In this Letter I wish to speak not to families "in the abstract" but *to every particular family in every part of the world*, wherever it is located and whatever the diversity and complexity of its culture and history. The love with which God "loved the world" (*Jn* 3:16), the love with which Christ loved each and every one "to the end" (*Jn* 13:1), makes it possible to address this message to each family, as a living "cell" of the great and universal "family" of mankind. The Father, Creator of the Universe, and the Word Incarnate, the Redeemer of humanity, are the source of this universal openness to all people as brothers and sisters, and they impel us *to embrace them in the prayer* which begins with the tender words: "*Our Father*".

Prayer makes the Son of God present among us: "For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them" (*Mt 18:20*). This *Letter to Families* wishes in the first place to be a prayer to Christ to remain in every human family; an invitation to him, in and through the small family of parents and children, to dwell in the great family of nations, so that together with him all of us can truly say: "Our Father"! Prayer must become the dominant element of the Year of the Family in the Church: prayer by the family, prayer for the family, and prayer with the family.

It is significant that precisely *in and through prayer, man comes to discover in a very simple and yet profound way his own unique subjectivity*: in prayer the human "I" more easily perceives the depth of what it means to be a person. *This is also true of the family*, which is not only the basic "cell" of society, but also possesses a particular subjectivity of its own. This subjectivity finds its first and fundamental confirmation, and is strengthened, precisely when the members of the family meet in the common invocation: "Our Father". Prayer increases the strength and spiritual unity of the family, helping the family to partake of God's own "strength". In the solemn nuptial blessing during the Rite of Marriage, the celebrant calls upon the Lord in these words: "Pour out upon them the grace of the Holy Spirit so that by your love poured into their hearts they will remain faithful in the marriage covenant". This "visitation" of the Holy Spirit gives rise to the inner strength of families, as well as the power capable of uniting them in love and truth.

Love and concern for all families

5. May the Year of the Family become a harmonious and universal prayer on the part of all "domestic churches" and of the whole People of God! May this prayer also reach families in difficulty or danger, lacking confidence or experiencing division, or in situations which *Familiaris Consortio* describes as "irregular". *May all families be able to feel the loving and caring embrace of their brothers and sisters!*

During the Year of the Family, prayer should first of all be an encouraging witness on the part of those families who live out their human and Christian vocation in the communion of the home. How many of them there are in every nation, diocese and parish! With reason it can be said that these families make up "the norm", even admitting the existence of more than a few "irregular situations". And experience shows what an important role is played by a family living in accordance with the moral norm, so that the individual born and raised in it will be able to set out without hesitation on the road of the good, which *is always written in his heart*. Unfortunately various programs backed by very powerful resources nowadays seem to aim at the breakdown of the family. At times it appears that concerted efforts are being made to present as "normal" and attractive, and even to glamourize, situations which are in fact "irregular". Indeed, they contradict "the truth and love" which should inspire and guide relationships between men and women, thus causing tensions and divisions in families, with grave consequences particularly for children. The moral conscience becomes darkened; what is true, good and beautiful is deformed; and freedom is replaced by what is actually enslavement. In view of all this, how relevant and thought-provoking are the words of the Apostle Paul about the freedom for which Christ has set us free, and the slavery which is caused by sin (cf. *Gal 5:1*)!

It is apparent then how timely and even necessary a Year of the Family is for the Church; how indispensable is *the witness of all families* who live their vocation day by day; how urgent it is *for families to pray* and for that prayer to increase and to spread throughout the world, expressing thanksgiving for love in truth, for "the outpouring of the grace of the Holy Spirit", for the presence among parents and children of Christ the Redeemer and Bridegroom, who "loved us to the end" (cf. *Jn 13:1*). Let us be deeply convinced that this *love is the greatest of all* (cf. *1 Cor 13:13*), and let us believe that it is really capable of triumphing over everything that is not love.

During this year, may the prayer of the Church, the prayer of families as "domestic churches", constantly rise up! May it make itself heard first by God and then also by people everywhere, so that they will not succumb to doubt, and all who are wavering because of human weakness will not yield to the tempting glamour of merely apparent goods, like those held out in every temptation.

At Cana in Galilee, where Jesus was invited to a marriage banquet, his Mother, also present, said to the servants: "Do whatever he tells you" (*Jn 2:5*). Now that we have begun our celebration of the Year of the Family, Mary says the same words to us. What Christ tells us, in this particular moment of history, constitutes a forceful call to a great prayer with families and for families. The Virgin Mother invites us to unite ourselves through this prayer to the sentiments of her Son, who loves each and every family. He expressed this love at the very beginning of his mission as Redeemer, with his sanctifying presence at Cana in Galilee, a presence which still continues.

Let us pray for families throughout the world. Let us pray, through Christ, with him and in him, to the Father "from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named" (*Eph 3:15*).

I THE CIVILIZATION OF LOVE

"Male and female he created them"

6. The universe, immense and diverse as it is, the world of all living beings, *is inscribed in God's fatherhood, which is its source* (cf. *Eph 3:14-16*). This can be said, of course, on the basis of an analogy, thanks to which we can discern, at the

very beginning of the Book of Genesis, the reality of fatherhood and motherhood and consequently of the human family. The interpretative key enabling this discernment is provided by the principle of the "image" and "likeness" of God highlighted by the scriptural text (*Gen 1:26*). God creates by the power of his word: "Let there be...!" (e.g., *Gen 1:3*). Significantly, in the creation of man this word of God is followed by these other words: "*Let us make man* in our image, after our likeness" (*Gen 1:26*). Before creating man, the Creator withdraws as it were into himself, in order to seek the pattern and inspiration in the mystery of his Being, which is already here disclosed as the divine "We". From this mystery the human being comes forth by an act of creation: "*God created man in his own image*, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them" (*Gen 1:27*).

God speaks to these newly-created beings and he blesses them: "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it" (*Gen 1:28*). The Book of Genesis employs the same expressions used earlier for the creation of other living beings: "multiply". But it is clear that these expressions are being used in an analogous sense. Is there not present here the analogy of begetting and of fatherhood and motherhood, which should be understood in the light of the overall context? No living being on earth, except man, was created "in the image and likeness of God". Human fatherhood and motherhood, while remaining *biologically similar* to that of other living beings in nature, contain in an essential and unique way a "*likeness*" to God which is the basis of the family as a community of human life, as a community of persons united in love (*communio personarum*).

In the light of the New Testament, it is possible to discern how *the primordial model of the family is to be sought in God himself*, in the Trinitarian mystery of his life. The divine "We" is the eternal pattern of the human "we", especially of that "we" formed by the man and the woman created in the divine image and likeness. The words of the Book of Genesis contain that truth about man which is confirmed by the very experience of humanity. Man is created "from the very beginning" as male and female: the life of all humanity—whether of small communities or of society as a whole—is marked by this primordial duality. From it there derive the "masculinity" and the "femininity" of individuals, just as from it every community draws its own unique richness in the mutual fulfilment of persons. This is what seems to be meant by the words of the Book of Genesis: "Male and female he created them" (*Gen 1:27*). Here too we find the first statement of the equal dignity of man and woman: both, in equal measure, are persons. Their constitution, with the specific dignity which derives from it, defines "from the beginning" the qualities of the common good of humanity, in every dimension and circumstance of life. To this common good, both man and woman make their specific contribution. Hence one can discover, at the very origins of human society, the qualities of communion and of complementarity.

The marital covenant 7. The family has always been considered as the first and basic expression of man's *social nature*. Even today this way of looking at things remains unchanged. Nowadays, however, emphasis tends to be laid on how much the family, as the smallest and most basic human community, owes to the personal contribution of a man and a woman. The family is in fact a community of persons whose proper way of existing and living together is communion: *communio personarum*. Here too, while always acknowledging the absolute transcendence of the Creator with regard to his creatures, we can see the family's ultimate relationship to the divine "We". *Only persons are capable of living "in communion"*. The family originates in a marital communion described by the Second Vatican Council as a "covenant", *in which man and woman "give themselves to each other and accept each other"*.

The Book of Genesis helps us to see this truth when it states, in reference to the establishment of the family through marriage, that "a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh" (*Gen 2:24*). In the Gospel, Christ, disputing with the Pharisees, quotes these same words and then adds: "So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder" (*Mt 19:6*). In this way, he reveals anew the binding content of a fact which exists "from the beginning" (*Mt 19:8*) and which always preserves this content. If the Master confirms it "now", he does so in order to make clear and unmistakable to all, at the dawn of the New Covenant, the *indissoluble character* of marriage as the *basis of the common good of the family*.

When, in union with the Apostle, we bow our knees before the Father from whom all fatherhood and motherhood is named (cf. *Eph 3:14-15*), we come to realize that parenthood is the event whereby the family, already constituted by the conjugal covenant of marriage, is brought about "in the full and specific sense". *Motherhood necessarily implies fatherhood*, and in turn, *fatherhood necessarily implies motherhood*. This is the result of the duality bestowed by the Creator upon human beings "from the beginning".

I have spoken of two closely related yet not identical concepts: the concept of "communion" and that of "community". "*Communion*" has to do with the personal relationship between the "I" the "thou". "*Community*" on the other hand transcends this framework moves towards a "society", a "we". The family, as a community of persons, is thus the first human "society". It arises whenever there comes into being the conjugal covenant of marriage, which opens the spouses to a lasting communion of love and of life, and it is brought to completion in a full and specific way with the procreation of children: the "communion" of the spouses gives rise to the "community" of the family. The "community" of the family is

completely pervaded by the very essence of "communion". On the human level, can there be any other "*communion*" comparable to that *between a mother and a child* whom she has carried in her womb and then brought to birth?

In the family thus constituted, there appears a new unity, in which the relationship "of communion" between the parents attains complete fulfilment. Experience teaches that this fulfilment represents both a task and a challenge. The task involves the spouses in living out their original covenant. *The children* born to them—and here is the challenge—*should consolidate that covenant*, enriching and deepening the conjugal communion of the father and mother. When this does not occur, we need to ask if the selfishness which lurks even in the love of man and woman, as a result of the human inclination to evil, is not stronger than this love. Married couples need to be well aware of this. From the outset they need to have their hearts and thoughts turned towards the God "from whom every family is named", *so that their fatherhood and motherhood will draw from that source the power to be continually renewed in love*.

Fatherhood and motherhood are themselves a particular proof of love; they make it possible to discover love's extension and original depth. But this does not take place automatically. Rather, it is a task entrusted to both husband and wife. In the life of husband and wife together, fatherhood and motherhood represent such a sublime "novelty" and richness as can only be approached "on one's knees".

Experience teaches that human love, which naturally tends towards fatherhood and motherhood, is sometimes affected by a profound *crisis*, and is thus seriously threatened. In such cases, help can be sought at marriage and family counselling centers, where it is possible, among other things, to obtain the assistance of specifically trained psychologists and psychotherapists. At the same time, however, we cannot forget the perennial validity of the words of the Apostle: "I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named". Marriage, the Sacrament of Matrimony, is a covenant of persons in love. And *love can be deepened and preserved only by Love*, that Love which is "poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us" (*Rom 5:5*). During the Year of the Family should our prayer not concentrate on the crucial and decisive moment of the passage from conjugal love to childbearing, and thus to fatherhood and motherhood? Is that not precisely the moment when there is an indispensable need for the "outpouring of the grace of the Holy Spirit" invoked in the liturgical celebration of the Sacrament of Matrimony?

The Apostle, bowing his knees before the Father, asks that the faithful "be *strengthened* with might *through his Spirit in the inner man*" (*Eph 3:16*). This "inner strength" is necessary in all family life, especially at its critical moments, when the love which was expressed in the liturgical rite of marital consent with the words, "I promise to be faithful to you always... all the days of my life", is put to a difficult test.

The unity of the two 8. Only "persons" are capable of saying those words; only they are able to live "in communion" on the basis of a mutual choice which is, or ought to be, fully conscious and free. The Book of Genesis, in speaking of a man who leaves father and mother in order to cleave to his wife (cf. *Gen 2:24*), highlights the *conscious and free choice* which gives rise to marriage, making the son of a family a husband, and the daughter of a family a wife. How can we adequately understand this mutual choice, unless we take into consideration the full truth about the person, who is a rational and free being? The Second Vatican Council, in speaking of the likeness of God, uses extremely significant terms. It refers not only to the divine image and likeness which every human being as such already possesses, but also and primarily to "a certain similarity between the union of the divine persons and the union of God's children in truth and love".

This rich & meaningful formulation first of all confirms what is central to the identity of every man & woman. This identity consists in the *capacity to live in truth and love*; even more, it consists in the need of truth and love as an essential dimension of the life of the person. Man's need for truth & love opens him both to God & to creatures: it opens him to other people, to life "in communion", & in particular to marriage & to the family. In the words of the Council, the "communion" of persons is drawn in a certain sense from the mystery of the Trinitarian "We", so "conjugal communion" also refers to this mystery. The family, which originates in the love of man & woman, ultimately derives from the mystery of God. This conforms to the innermost being of man and woman, to their innate and authentic dignity as persons.

In marriage man and woman are so firmly united as to become—to use the words of the Book of Genesis—"one flesh" (*Gen 2:24*). Male and female in their physical constitution, the two human subjects, even though physically different, *share equally in the capacity to live "in truth and love"*. This capacity, characteristic of the human being as a person, has at the same time both a spiritual and a bodily dimension. It is also through the body that man and woman are predisposed to form a "communion of persons" in marriage. When they are united by the conjugal covenant in such a way as to become "*one flesh*" (*Gen 2:24*), their *union* ought to take place "*in truth and love*", and thus express the maturity proper to persons created in the image and likeness of God.

The family which results from this union draws its inner solidity from the covenant between the spouses, which Christ raised to a Sacrament. The family draws its proper character as a community, its traits of "communion", from that fundamental communion of the spouses which is prolonged in their children. The celebrant asks during the Rite of Marriage: "*Will you accept children lovingly from God, and bring them up according to the law of Christ and his Church?*"

The answer given by the spouses reflects the most profound truth of the love which unites them. Their unity, however, rather than closing them up in themselves, opens them towards a new life, towards a new person. As parents, they will be capable of giving life to a being like themselves, not only bone of their bones and flesh of their flesh (cf. *Gen 2:23*), but an image and likeness of God—a person.

When the Church asks "Are you willing?", she is reminding the bride and groom that they stand *before the creative power of God*. They are called to become parents, to cooperate with the Creator in giving life. Cooperating with God to call new human beings into existence means contributing to the transmission of that divine image and likeness which everyone "born of a woman" bears.

The genealogy of the person

9. Through the communion of persons which occurs in marriage, a man and a woman begin a family. Bound up with the family is the genealogy of every individual: *the genealogy of the person*. Human fatherhood and motherhood are rooted in biology, yet at the same time transcend it. The Apostle, with knees bowed "before the Father from whom all fatherhood 1 in heaven and on earth is named", in a certain sense asks us to look at the whole world of living creatures, from the spiritual beings in heaven to the corporeal beings on earth. Every act of begetting finds its primordial model in the fatherhood of God. Nonetheless, in the case of man, this "cosmic" dimension of likeness to God is not sufficient to explain adequately the relationship of fatherhood and motherhood. When a new person is born of the conjugal union of the two, he brings with him into the world a particular image and likeness of God himself: *the genealogy of the person is inscribed in the very biology of generation*.

In affirming that the spouses, as parents, cooperate with God the Creator in conceiving and giving birth to a new human being, we are not speaking merely with reference to the laws of biology. Instead, we wish to emphasize that *God himself is present in human fatherhood and motherhood* quite differently than he is present in all other instances of begetting "on earth". Indeed, God alone is the source of that "image and likeness" which is proper to the human being, as it was received at Creation. Begetting is the continuation of Creation.

And so, both in the conception and in the birth of a new child, parents find themselves face to face with a "great mystery" (cf. *Eph 5:32*). Like his parents, the *new human being is also called* to live as a person; he is called *to a life "in truth and love"*. This call is not only open to what exists in time, but in God it is also open to eternity. This is the dimension of the genealogy of the person which has been revealed definitively by Christ, who casts the light of his Gospel on human life and death and thus on the meaning of the human family.

As the Council affirms, man is "the only creature on earth whom God willed for its own sake". Man's coming into being does not conform to the laws of biology alone, but also, and directly, to God's creative will, which is concerned with the genealogy of the sons and daughters of human families. *God "willed" man from the very beginning, and God "wills" him in every act of conception and every human birth*. God "wills" man as a being similar to himself, as a person. This man, every man, is created by God *"for his own sake"*. That is true of all persons, including those born with sicknesses or disabilities. Inscribed in the personal constitution of every human being is the will of God, who wills that man should be, in a certain sense, an end unto himself. God hands man over to himself, entrusting him both to his family and to society as their responsibility. Parents, in contemplating a new human being, are, or ought to be, fully aware of the fact that God "wills" this individual "for his own sake".

This concise expression is profoundly rich in meaning. From the very moment of conception, the new being is meant *to express fully his humanity*, to "find himself" as a person. This is true for absolutely everyone, including the chronically ill and the disabled. "To be human" is his fundamental vocation: "to be human" in accordance with the gift received, in accordance with that "talent" which is humanity itself, and only then in accordance with other talents. In this sense God wills every man "for his own sake". *In God's plan*, however, the vocation of the human person extends beyond the boundaries of time. It encounters the will of the Father revealed in the Incarnate Word: *God's will is to lavish upon man a sharing in his own divine life*. As Christ says: "I came that they may have life and have it abundantly" (*Jn 10:10*).

Does affirming man's ultimate destiny not conflict with the statement that God wills man "for his own sake"? If he has been created for divine life, can man truly exist "for his own sake"? This is a critical question, one of great significance both for the beginning of his earthly life and its end: it is important for the whole span of his life. It might appear that in destining man for divine life God definitively takes away man's existing "for his own sake". What then is the relationship between the life of the person and his sharing in the life of the Trinity? Saint Augustine provides us with the answer in his celebrated phrase: "Our heart is restless until it rests in you". This "restless heart" serves to point out that between the one finality and the other there is in fact no contradiction, but rather a relationship, a complementarity, a unity. By his very genealogy, the person created in the image and likeness of God, *exists "for his own sake"* and reaches fulfillment precisely *by sharing in God's life*. The content of this self-fulfillment is the fullness of life in God, proclaimed by Christ (cf. *Jn 6:37-40*), who redeemed us precisely so that we might come to share it (cf. *Mk 10:45*).

It is for themselves that married couples want children; in children they see the crowning of their own love for each other. They want children for the family, as a *priceless gift*. This is quite understandable. Nonetheless, in conjugal love and in paternal and maternal love we should find inscribed the same truth about man which the Council expressed in a clear and concise way in its statement that God "willed man for his own sake". It is thus necessary that the will of the parents should be in harmony with the will of God. *They must want the new human creature in the same way as the Creator wants him: "for himself"*. Our human will is always and inevitably subject to the law of time and change. The divine will, on the other hand, is eternal. As we read in the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah: "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you" (*Jer 1:5*). The genealogy of the person is thus united with the eternity of God, and only then with human fatherhood and motherhood, which are realized in time. At the moment of conception itself, man is already destined to eternity in God.

The common good of marriage and the family

10. Marital consent defines and consolidates *the good common to marriage and to the family*. "I, N., take you, N., to be my wife/husband. I promise to be true to you in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health. I will love you and honor you all the days of my life". Marriage is a unique communion of persons, and it is on the basis of this communion that the family is called to become a community of persons. This is a commitment which the bride and groom undertake "before God and his Church", as the celebrant reminds them before they exchange their consent. Those who take part in the rite are witnesses of this commitment, for in a certain sense they represent the Church and society, the settings in which the new family will live and grow.

The words of consent define the common good of the *couple and of the family*. First, the common good of the spouses: love, fidelity, honor, the permanence of their union until death—"all the days of my life". The good of both, which is at the same time the good of each, must then become the good of the children. The common good, by its very nature, both unites individual persons and ensures the true good of each. If the Church (and the State for that matter) receives the consent which the spouses express in the words cited above, she does so because that consent is "written in their hearts" (*Rom 2:15*). It is the spouses who give their consent to each other by a solemn promise, that is, by confirming the truth of that consent in the sight of God. As baptized Christians, they are the ministers of the Sacrament of Matrimony in the Church. Saint Paul teaches that this mutual commitment of theirs is a "great mystery" (*Eph 5:32*).

The words of consent, then, express what is essential to the common good of the spouses, and *they indicate what ought to be the common good of the future family*. In order to bring this out, the Church asks the spouses if they are prepared to accept the children God grants them and to raise the children as Christians. This question calls to mind the common good of the future family unit, evoking the genealogy of persons which is part of the constitution of marriage and of the family itself. The question about children and their education is profoundly linked to marital consent, with its solemn promise of love, conjugal respect, and fidelity until death. The acceptance and education of children—two of the primary ends of the family—are conditioned by how that commitment will be fulfilled. Fatherhood and motherhood represent *a responsibility which is not simply physical, but spiritual in nature*; indeed, through these realities there passes the genealogy of the person, which has its eternal beginning in God and which must lead back to him.

The Year of the Family, as a year of special prayer on the part of families, ought to renew and deepen each family's awareness of these truths. What a wealth of biblical reflections could nourish that prayer! Together with the words of Sacred Scripture, these prayerful reflections should always include the *personal memories of the spouses-parents, the children/grandchildren*. Through the genealogy of persons, conjugal communion *becomes a communion of generations*. The sacramental union of the two spouses, sealed in the covenant which they enter into before God, endures, grows stronger as the generations pass. It must become a union in prayer. But for all this to become clearly apparent during the Year of the Family, prayer needs to become a regular habit in the daily life of each family. Prayer is thanksgiving, praise of God, asking for forgiveness, supplication and invocation. In all of these forms *the prayer of the family has much to say to God*. It also has much to say to others, beginning with the mutual communion of persons joined together by family ties.

The Psalmist asks: "What is man that you keep him in mind?" (*Ps 8:4*). Prayer is the place where, in a very simple way, the creative and fatherly remembrance of God is made manifest: not only man's remembrance of God, but also and especially *God's remembrance of man*. In this way, the prayer of the family as a community can become a place of common and mutual remembrance: the family is in fact a community of generations. In prayer everyone should be present: the living and those who have died, and also those yet to come into the world. Families should pray for all of their members, in view of the good which the family is for each individual and which each individual is for the whole family. Prayer strengthens this good, precisely as the common good of the family. Moreover, it creates this good ever anew. In prayer, the family discovers itself as the first "us", in which each member is "I" and "thou"; each member is for the others, either husband or wife, father or mother, son or daughter, brother or sister, grandparent or grandchild.

Are all the families to which this Letter is addressed like this? Certainly a good number are, but the times in which we are living, tend to restrict family units to two generations. Often this is the case because available housing is too limited, especially in large cities. But it is not infrequently due to the belief that having several generations living together interferes with privacy, and makes life too difficult. But is this not where the problem really lies? *Families today have too little "human" life.* There is a shortage of people with whom to create and share the common good; yet that good, by its nature, demands to be created, shared with others: *bonum est diffusivum sui*: "good is diffusive of itself". If the good is *common*, it is *more properly one's own*. It will also be mine – yours – ours. This is the logic behind living according to the good, living in truth and charity. If man is able to accept and follow this logic, his life truly becomes a "sincere gift".

The sincere gift of self

11. After affirming that man is the only creature on earth which God willed for itself, the Council immediately goes on to say that he *cannot "fully find himself except through a sincere gift of self"*. This might appear to be a contradiction, but in fact it is not. Instead it is the magnificent paradox of human existence: an existence called *to serve the truth in love*. Love causes man to find fulfilment through the sincere gift of self. To love means to give and to receive something, which can be neither bought nor sold, but only given freely and mutually.

By its very nature the gift of the person must be lasting and irrevocable. The indissolubility of marriage flows in the first place from the very essence of that gift: *the gift of one person to another person*. This reciprocal giving of self, reveals the *spousal nature of love*. In their marital consent the bride groom call each other by name: "*I... take you... as my wife/husband & I promise to be true to you... for all the days of my life*". A gift such as this involves an obligation much more serious & profound than anything which might be "purchased" in any way, at any price. Kneeling before the Father, from whom all fatherhood/motherhood come, the future parents come to realize that they have been "redeemed". They have been purchased at great cost, *by the price* of the most sincere gift of all, *the blood of Christ* which they partake by the Sacrament. The liturgical crowning of the marriage rite is the Eucharist, the sacrifice of that "Body which has been given up" and that "Blood which has been shed", which in a certain way finds expression in the consent of the spouses.

When a man and woman in marriage mutually give and receive each other in the unity of "one flesh", the logic of the sincere gift of self becomes a part of their life. Without this, marriage would be empty; whereas a communion of persons, built on this logic, becomes a communion of parents. When they transmit *life to the child, a new human "thou" becomes a part of the horizon of the "we" of the spouses*, a person whom they will call by a new name: "our son...; our daughter...". "I have gotten a man with the help of the Lord" (*Gen 4:1*), says Eve, the first woman of history: a human being, first expected for nine months and then "revealed" to parents, brothers and sisters. The process from conception and growth in the mother's womb to birth makes it possible to create a space within which the new creature can be revealed as a "gift": indeed this is what it is from the very beginning. Could this frail and helpless being, totally dependent upon its parents, and completely entrusted to them, be seen in any other way? The newborn child gives itself to its parents by the very fact of its coming into existence. *Its existence is already a gift, the first gift of the Creator to the creature.*

In the newborn child is realized the common good of the family. Just as the common good of spouses is fulfilled in conjugal love, ever ready to give and receive new life, so too the common good of the family is fulfilled through that same spousal love, as embodied in the newborn child. Part of the genealogy of the person is the genealogy of the family, preserved for posterity by the annotations in the Church's baptismal registers, even though these are merely the social consequence of the fact that "a man has been born into the world" (cf. *Jn 16:21*).

But is it really true that the new human being is a gift for his parents? A gift for society? Apparently nothing seems to indicate this. On occasion the birth of a child appears to be a simple statistical fact, registered like so many other data in demographic records. It is true that for the parents the birth of a child means more work, new financial burdens and further inconveniences, all of which can lead to the temptation not to want another birth. In some social and cultural contexts this temptation can become very strong. Does this mean that a child is not a gift? That it comes into the world only to take and not to give? These are some of the disturbing questions which men and women today find hard to escape. *A child comes to take up room, when it seems that there is less and less room in the world.* But is it really true that a child brings nothing to the family and society? Is not every child a "particle" of that common good without which human communities break down and risk extinction? Could this ever really be denied? The child becomes a gift to its brothers, sisters, parents and entire family. *Its life becomes a gift for the very people who were givers of life* and who cannot help but feel its presence, its sharing in their life and its contribution to their common good and to that of the community of the family. This truth is obvious in its simplicity and profundity, whatever the complexity and even the possible pathology of the psychological make-up of certain persons. *The common good of the whole of society dwells in man*; he is, as we recalled, "the way of the Church". Man is first of all the "glory of God": "*Gloria Dei vivens homo*", in the celebrated words of Saint Irenaeus, which might also be translated: "the glory of God is for man to be alive". It could be said that here we encounter the loftiest definition of man: *the glory of God is the common good of all that exists*; the common good of the human race.

Yes! *Man is a common good*: a common good of the family and of humanity, of individual groups and of different communities. But there are significant distinctions of degree and modality in this regard. Man is a common good, for example, of the Nation to which he belongs and of the State of which he is a citizen; but in a much more concrete, unique and unrepeatable way he is a common good of his family. He is such not only as an individual who is part of the multitude of humanity, but rather as "*this individual*". God the Creator calls him into existence "for himself"; and in coming into the world he begins, in the family, his "great adventure", the adventure of human life. "This man" has, in every instance, *the right to fulfil himself on the basis of his human dignity*. It is precisely this dignity which establishes a person's place among others, and above all, in the family. The family is indeed—more than any other human reality—the place where an individual can exist "for himself" through the sincere gift of self. This is why it remains a social institution which neither can nor should be replaced: it is the "sanctuary of life".

The fact that a child is being born, that "a child is born into the world" (*Jn 16:21*) is a *paschal sign*. As we read in the Gospel of John, Jesus himself speaks of this to the disciples before his passion and death, comparing their sadness at his departure with the pains of a woman in labor: "*When a woman is in travail she has sorrow* (that is, she suffers), because *her hour* has come; but when she is delivered of the child, she no longer remembers the anguish, for *joy that a child is born into the world*" (*Jn 16:21*). The "hour" of Christ's death (cf. *Jn 13:1*) is compared here to the "hour" of the woman in birth-pangs; the birth of a new child fully reflects the victory of life over death brought about by the Lord's Resurrection. This comparison can provide us with material for reflection. Just as the Resurrection of Christ is the manifestation of *Life* beyond the threshold of death, so too the birth of an infant is a manifestation of life, which is always destined, through Christ, for that "*fullness of life*" which is in God himself: "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly" (*Jn 10:10*). Here we see revealed the deepest meaning of Saint Irenaeus's expression: "*Gloria Dei vivens homo*".

It is the Gospel truth concerning the gift of self, without which the person cannot "fully find himself", which makes possible an appreciation of how profoundly this "sincere gift" is rooted in the gift of God, Creator and Redeemer, and in the "grace of the Holy Spirit" which the celebrant during the Rite of Marriage prays will be "poured out" on the spouses. Without such an "outpouring", it would be very difficult to understand all this and to carry it out as man's vocation. Yet how many people understand this intuitively! Many men and women make this truth their own, coming to discern that only in this truth do they encounter "the Truth and the Life" (*Jn 14:6*). *Without this truth, the life of the spouses and of the family will not succeed in attaining a fully human meaning*.

This is why the Church never tires of teaching and of bearing witness to this truth. While certainly showing maternal understanding for the many complex crisis situations in which families are involved, as well as for the moral frailty of every human being, the Church is convinced that she must remain absolutely faithful to the truth about human love. Otherwise she would betray herself. To move away from this saving truth would be to close "the eyes of our hearts" (cf. *Eph 1:18*), which instead should always stay open to the light which the Gospel sheds on human affairs (cf. *2 Tim 1:10*). An awareness of that sincere gift of self whereby man "finds himself" must be constantly renewed and safeguarded in the face of the serious opposition which the Church meets from those who advocate a false civilization of progress. The family always expresses a new dimension of good for mankind, and it thus creates a new responsibility. We are speaking of the *responsibility for that particular common good* in which is included the good of the person, of every member of the family community. While certainly a "difficult" good ("*bonum arduum*"), it is also an attractive one.

Responsible fatherhood and motherhood

12. It is now time, in this Letter to Families, to bring up two closely related questions. The first, more general, concerns the *civilization of love*; the other, more specific, deals with *responsible fatherhood and motherhood*.

We have already said that marriage engenders a particular responsibility for the common good, first of the spouses and then of the family. This common good is constituted by man, by the *worth of the person* and by everything which represents the *measure of his dignity*. This reality is part of man in every social, economic and political system. In the area of marriage and the family, this responsibility becomes, for a variety of reasons, even more "demanding". The Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes* rightly speaks of "*promoting the dignity of marriage and the family*". The Council sees this "promotion" as a duty incumbent upon both the Church and the State. Nevertheless, in every culture this duty remains primarily that of the persons who, united in marriage, form a particular family. "Responsible fatherhood and motherhood" express a concrete commitment to carry out this duty, which has taken on new characteristics in the contemporary world.

In particular, responsible fatherhood and motherhood directly concern the moment in which a man and a woman, uniting themselves "in one flesh", can become parents. This is a moment of special value both for their interpersonal relationship and for their service to life: they can become parents—father and mother—by communicating life to a new human being. *The two dimensions of conjugal union*, the unitive and the procreative, *cannot be artificially separated* without damaging the deepest truth of the conjugal act itself.

This is the constant teaching of the Church. The "signs of the times" that we see today provide new reasons for forcefully reaffirming that teaching. Saint Paul, himself so attentive to the pastoral demands of his day, clearly/firmly indicated the need to be "urgent in season & out of season" (2 Tim 4:2), and not to be daunted by the fact that "sound teaching is no longer endured" (cf. 2 Tim 4:3). His words are well known to those who, with deep insight into the events of the present time, expect that the Church will not only not abandon "sound doctrine", but will proclaim it with renewed vigor, seeking in today's "signs of the times" the incentive and insights which can lead to a deeper understanding of her teaching.

Some of these insights can be taken from the very sciences which have evolved from the earlier study of anthropology into *various specialized sciences* such as biology, psychology, sociology and their branches. *In some sense all these sciences revolve around medicine*, which is both a science and an art (*ars medica*), at the service of man's life and health. But the insights in question come first of all from human experience, which, in all its complexity, in some sense both precedes science and follows it.

Through their own experience, spouses come to learn the meaning of responsible fatherhood and motherhood. They learn it also from the experience of other couples in similar situations, as they become more open to the findings of the various sciences. One could say that "experts" learn in a certain sense from "spouses", so that they in turn will then be in a better position to teach married couples the meaning of responsible procreation and the ways to achieve it.

This subject has been extensively treated in the documents of the Second Vatican Council, the Encyclical *Humanae Vitae*, the "Propositiones" of the 1980 Synod of Bishops, the Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris Consortio*, and in other statements, up to the Instruction *Donum Vitae* of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. The Church both teaches the moral truth about responsible fatherhood and motherhood and *protects it from the erroneous views and tendencies which are widespread today*. Why does the Church continue to do this? Is she unaware of the problems raised by those who counsel her to make concessions in this area and who even attempt to persuade her by undue pressures if not even threats? The Church's Magisterium is often chided for being behind the times and closed to the promptings of the spirit of modern times, and for promoting a course of action which is harmful to humanity, and indeed to the Church herself. By obstinately holding to her own positions, it is said, the Church will end up losing popularity, and more and more believers will turn away from her.

But how can it be maintained that *the Church*, especially the College of Bishops in communion with the Pope, is *insensitive to such grave and pressing questions*? It was precisely these extremely important questions which led Pope Paul VI to publish the Encyclical *Humanae Vitae*. The foundations of the Church's doctrine concerning responsible fatherhood and motherhood are exceptionally broad and secure. *The Council demonstrates this above all in its teaching on man*, when it affirms that he is "the only creature on earth which God willed for itself", and that he cannot "fully find himself except through a sincere gift of himself". This is so because he has been created in the image and likeness of God and redeemed by the only-begotten Son of the Father, who became man for us and for our salvation.

The Second Vatican Council, particularly conscious of the problem of man and his calling, states that the conjugal union, the biblical "*una caro*", can be understood and fully explained *only by recourse to the values of the "person" and of "gift"*. Every man & woman fully realizes himself or herself through the sincere gift of self. For spouses, the moment of conjugal union constitutes a very particular expression of this. It is then that a man & woman, in the "truth" of their masculinity & femininity, become mutual gifts to each other. All married life is a gift; but this becomes most evident when the spouses, in giving themselves to each other in love, bring about that encounter which makes them "one flesh" (*Gen 2:24*).

They then experience a moment of special responsibility, which is also the result of the procreative potential linked to the conjugal act. At that moment, the spouses can become father and mother, initiating the process of a new human life, which will then develop in the woman's womb. If the wife is the first to realize that she has become a mother, the husband, to whom she has been united in "one flesh", then learns this when she tells him that he has become a father. Both are responsible for their potential and later actual fatherhood and motherhood. The husband cannot fail to acknowledge and accept the result of a decision which has also been his own. He cannot hide behind expressions such as: "I don't know", "I didn't want it", or "you're the one who wanted it". In every case conjugal union involves *the responsibility of the man and of the woman*, a potential responsibility which becomes actual when the circumstances dictate. This is true especially for the man. Although he too is involved in the beginning of the generative process, he is left biologically distant from it; it is within the woman that the process develops. How can the man fail to assume responsibility? The man and the woman must assume together, before themselves and before others, the responsibility for the new life which they have brought into existence.

This conclusion is shared by the human sciences themselves. There is however a need for more in-depth study, analyzing the meaning of the conjugal act in view of the values of the "person" and of the "gift" mentioned above. This is what the Church has done in her constant teaching, and in a particular way at the Second Vatican Council.

In the conjugal act, husband and wife are called to confirm in a responsible way *the mutual gift* of self which they have made to each other in the marriage covenant. The logic of the *total gift of self to the other* involves a potential openness to procreation: in this way the marriage is called to even greater fulfilment as a family. Certainly the mutual gift of husband and wife does not have the begetting of children as its only end, but is in itself a mutual communion of love and of life. *The intimate truth of this gift* must always be *safeguarded*. "Intimate" is not here synonymous with "subjective". Rather, it means essentially in conformity with the objective truth of the man and woman who give themselves. The person can never be considered a means to an end; above all never a means of "pleasure". The person is and must be nothing other than the end of every act. Only then does the action correspond to the true dignity of the person.

In concluding our reflection on this important and sensitive subject, I wish to offer special encouragement above all to you, dear married couples, and to all who assist you in understanding and putting into practice the Church's teaching on marriage and on responsible motherhood and fatherhood. I am thinking in particular about pastors and the many scholars, theologians, philosophers, writers and journalists who have resisted the powerful trend to cultural conformity and are courageously ready to "swim against the tide". This encouragement also goes to an increasing number of experts, physicians and educators who are authentic lay apostles for whom the promotion of the dignity of marriage and the family has become an important task in their lives. In the name of the Church I express my gratitude to all! What would priests, Bishops and even the Successor of Peter be able to do without you? From the first years of my priesthood I have become increasingly convinced of this, from when I began to sit in the *confessional* to share the concerns, fears and hopes of many married couples. I met difficult cases of rebellion and refusal, but at the same time so many marvelously responsible and generous persons! In writing this Letter I have all those married couples in mind, and I embrace them with my affection and my prayer.

The two civilizations

13. Dear families, the question of responsible fatherhood and motherhood is an integral part of the "civilization of love", which I now wish to discuss with you. From what has already been said it is clear that *the family is fundamental to what Pope Paul VI called the "civilization of love"*, an expression which has entered the teaching of the Church and by now has become familiar. Today it is difficult to imagine a statement by the Church, or about the Church, which does not mention the civilization of love. The phrase *is linked to the tradition of the "domestic church" in early Christianity*, but it has a particular significance for the present time. Etymologically the word "civilization" is derived from "*civis*" – "citizen", and it emphasizes the civic or political dimension of the life of every individual. But the most profound meaning of the term "civilization" is not merely political, but rather pertains to human culture. Civilization belongs to human history because it answers man's spiritual and moral needs. Created in the image and likeness of God, man has received the world from the hands of the Creator, together with the task of shaping it in his own image and likeness. The fulfilment of this task gives rise to civilization, which in the final analysis is nothing else than the "humanization of the world".

In a certain sense civilization means the same thing as "culture". And so one could also speak of the "*culture of love*", even though it is preferable to keep to the now familiar expression. The civilization of love, in its current meaning, is inspired by the words of the conciliar Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*: "*Christ... fully discloses man to himself and unfolds his noble calling*". And so we can say that the civilization of love originates in the revelation of the God who "is love", as John writes (*1 Jn 4:8, 16*); it is effectively described by Paul in the hymn of charity found in his First Letter to the Corinthians (*13:1-13*). This civilization is intimately linked to the love "poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us" (*Rom 5:5*), and it grows as a result of the *constant cultivation* which the Gospel allegory of the vine and the branches describes in such a direct way: "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch of mine that bears no fruit, he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit" (*Jn 15:1-2*).

In the light of these, and other texts of the New Testament, it is possible to understand what is meant by the "civilization of love", and why the *family is organically linked to this civilization*. If the first "way of the Church" is the family, it should also be said that the civilization of love is also the "way of the Church", which journeys through the world and summons families to this way; it summons also other social, national and international institutions, because of families and through families. *The family in fact depends* for several reasons *on the civilization of love*, and finds therein the reasons for its existence as family. And at the same time *the family is the center and the heart of the civilization of love*.

Yet there is no true love without an awareness that God "is Love"—and that man is the only creature on earth which God has called into existence "for its own sake". Created in the image and likeness of God, man cannot fully "find himself" except through the sincere gift of self. Without such a concept of man, of the person and the "communion of persons" in the family, there can be no civilization of love; similarly, without the civilization of love it is impossible to have *such a concept of person and of the communion of persons*. The family constitutes the fundamental "cell" of society. But Christ—the "vine" from which the "branches" draw nourishment—is needed so that this cell will not be exposed to

the threat of a kind of *cultural uprooting* which can come both from within and from without. Indeed, although there is on the one hand the "civilization of love", there continues to exist on the other hand *the possibility of a destructive "anti-civilization"*, as so many present trends and situations confirm.

Who can deny that our age is marked by a great crisis, which appears above all as a profound "*crisis of truth*"? A crisis of truth means, in the first place, a *crisis of concepts*. Do the words "love", "freedom", "sincere gift", and even "person" and "rights of the person", really convey their essential meaning? This is why the Encyclical on the "splendor of truth" (*Veritatis Splendor*) has proved so meaningful and important for the Church and for the world—especially in the West. Only if the truth about freedom and the communion of persons in marriage and in the family can regain its splendor, will the building of the civilization of love truly begin and will it then be possible to speak concretely—as the Council did—about "promoting the dignity of marriage and the family".

Why is the "splendor of truth" so important? First of all, by way of contrast: the development of contemporary civilization is linked to a scientific and technological progress which is often achieved in a one-sided way, and thus appears purely positivistic. Positivism, as we know, results in agnosticism in theory and utilitarianism in practice and in ethics. In our own day, history is in a way repeating itself. *Utilitarianism* is a civilization of production and of use, a civilization of "things" and not of "persons", a civilization in which persons are used in the same way as things are used. In the context of a civilization of use, woman can become an object for man, children a hindrance to parents, the family an institution obstructing the freedom of its members. To be convinced that this is the case, one need only look at *certain sexual education programs* introduced into the schools, often notwithstanding the disagreement and even the protests of many parents; or *pro-abortion tendencies* which vainly try to hide behind the so-called "right to choose" ("*pro-choice*") on the part of both spouses, & in particular for the woman. These are only two examples; many more could be mentioned.

It is evident that, in this sort of cultural situation, the family cannot fail to feel threatened, since it is endangered at its very foundations. Everything *contrary to the civilization of love* is contrary to the whole truth about man, and becomes a threat to him: it does not allow him to find himself and to feel secure, as spouse, parent, or child. So-called "safe sex", which is touted by the "civilization of technology", is actually, in view of the overall requirements of the person, radically *not safe*, indeed it is extremely dangerous. It endangers both the person and the family. And what is this danger? It is *the loss of the truth about one's own self and about the family*, together with the risk of a loss of *freedom* and consequently of a loss of *love* itself. "You will know the truth", Jesus says, "and the truth will make you free" (*Jn* 8:32): the truth, and only the truth, will prepare you for a love which can be called "fairest love" (cf. *Sir* 24:24, Vulg.).

The contemporary family, like families in every age, *is searching for "fairest love"*. A love which is not "fairest", but reduced only to the satisfaction of concupiscence (cf. *1 Jn* 2:16), or to a man's and a woman's mutual "use" of each other, makes persons *slaves to their weaknesses*. Do not certain modern "cultural agendas" lead to this enslavement? There are agendas which "play" on man's weaknesses, and thus make him increasingly weak and defenseless.

The civilization of love evokes joy: joy, among other things, for the fact that a man has come into the world (cf. *Jn* 16:21), and consequently because spouses have become parents. The civilization of love means "rejoicing in the right" (cf. *1 Cor* 13:6). But a civilization inspired by a consumerist, anti-birth mentality is not and cannot ever be a civilization of love. If the family is so important for the civilization of love, it is because of the particular *closeness and intensity of the bonds* which come to be between persons and generations within the family. However, the family remains *vulnerable*, and can easily fall prey to dangers which weaken it, or actually destroy its unity and stability. As a result of these dangers, families cease to be witnesses of the civilization of love and can even become a negation of it, a kind of *counter-sign*. A broken family can, for its part, consolidate a specific form of "anti-civilization", destroying love in its various expressions, with inevitable consequences for the whole of life in society.

Love is demanding

14. The love which the Apostle Paul celebrates in the First Letter to the Corinthians—the love which is "*patient*" and "*kind*", and "*endures all things*" (*1 Cor* 13:4, 7)—is certainly a *demanding love*. But this is precisely the source of its beauty: by the very fact that it is demanding, it builds up the true good of man and allows it to radiate to others. The good, says Saint Thomas, is by its nature "diffusive". Love is true when *it creates the good of persons and of communities*; it creates that good and *gives it* to others. Only the one who is able to be demanding with himself in the name of love can also demand love from others. Love is demanding. It makes demands in all human situations; it is even more demanding in the case of those who are open to the Gospel. Is this not what Christ proclaims in "his" commandment? Nowadays people need to rediscover this demanding love, for it is the truly firm foundation of the family, a foundation able to "endure all things". According to the Apostle, love is not able to "endure all things" if it yields to "jealousies", or if it is "boastful... arrogant or rude" (cf. *1 Cor* 13:5-6). True love, Saint Paul teaches, is different: "Love believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things" (*1 Cor* 13:7). This is the very love which "endures all things". At work within it is the power and

strength of God himself, who "is love" (*1 Jn* 4:8, 16). At work within it is also the power and strength of Christ, the Redeemer of man and Savior of the world.

Meditating on the thirteenth chapter of the First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians, we set out on a path which leads us to understand quickly and clearly the full truth about the civilization of love. No other biblical text expresses this truth so simply and so profoundly as the *hymn to love*.

The dangers faced by love are also dangers for the civilization of love, because they promote everything capable of effectively opposing it. Here one thinks first of all of *selfishness*, not only the selfishness of individuals, but also of couples or, even more broadly, of social selfishness, that for example of a class or nation (nationalism). Selfishness in all its forms is directly and radically opposed to the civilization of love. But is love defined simply as "anti-selfishness"? This would be a very impoverished and ultimately a purely negative definition, even though it is true that different forms of selfishness must be overcome in order to realize love and the civilization of love. It would be more correct to speak of "altruism", which is the opposite of selfishness. But far richer and more complete is the concept of love illustrated by Saint Paul. The hymn to love in the First Letter to the Corinthians remains the *Magna Charta* of the civilization of love. In this concept, what is important is not so much individual actions (whether selfish or altruistic), so much as the radical acceptance of the understanding of man as a person who "finds himself" by making a sincere gift of self. A gift is, obviously, "for others": this is *the most important dimension* of the civilization of love.

We thus come to the very heart of the Gospel truth about *freedom*. The person realizes himself by the exercise of freedom in truth. Freedom cannot be understood as a license to do *absolutely anything*: it means a *gift of self*. Even more: it means *interior discipline of the gift*. Complete gift contains not only the subject's free initiative, but also the aspect of *duty*. All this becomes real in the "communion of persons". We find ourselves again at the very heart of each family.

Continuing this line of thought, we also *find the antithesis between individualism and personalism*. Love, the civilization of love, is bound up with personalism. Why with personalism? And *why does individualism threaten the civilization of love?* We find a key to answering this in the Council's expression, a "sincere gift". Individualism presupposes a use of freedom in which the subject does what he wants, in which he himself is the one to "establish the truth" of whatever he finds pleasing or useful. He does not tolerate the fact that someone else "wants" or demands something from him in the name of an objective truth. He does not want to "give" to another on the basis of truth; he does not want to become a "sincere gift". Individualism thus remains egocentric and selfish. The real antithesis between individualism and personalism emerges not only on the level of theory, but even more *on the level of "ethos"*. The "ethos" of personalism is altruistic: it moves the person to become a gift for others, and to discover joy in giving himself. This is the joy about which Christ speaks (cf. *Jn* 15:11; 16:20, 22).

What is needed then is for human societies, and the families who live within them, often in a context of struggle between the civilization of love and its opposites, to seek their solid foundation in a correct vision of man and of everything which determines the full "realization" of his humanity. *Opposed to the civilization of love* is certainly the phenomenon of so-called "*free love*"; this is particularly dangerous because it is usually suggested as a way of following one's "real" feelings, but it actually destroys love. How many families have been ruined because of "free love"! To follow in every instance a "real" emotional impulse by invoking a love "liberated" from all conditionings, means nothing more than to make the individual a slave to those human instincts which Saint Thomas calls "passions of the soul". "Free love" exploits human weaknesses; it gives them a certain "veneer" of respectability with the help of seduction and the blessing of public opinion. In this way there is an attempt to "soothe" consciences by creating a "moral alibi". But not all of the consequences are taken into consideration, especially when the ones who end up paying are, apart from the other spouse, the children, deprived of a father or mother and condemned to be in fact *orphans of living parents*.

As we know, at the foundation of ethical utilitarianism, there is the continual quest for "maximum" happiness. But this is a "*utilitarian happiness*", seen only as pleasure, as immediate gratification for the exclusive benefit of the individual, apart from or opposed to the objective demands of the true good.

The program of utilitarianism, based on an individualistic understanding of freedom—a *freedom without responsibilities*—is the opposite of love, even as an expression of human civilization considered as a whole. When this concept of freedom is embraced by society, & quickly allies itself with varied forms of human weakness, it soon proves a systematic and permanent threat to the family. In this regard, one could mention many dire consequences, which can be statistically verified, even though a great number of them are hidden in the hearts of men & women like painful, fresh wounds.

The love of spouses/parents has the capacity to cure these wounds, provided the dangers alluded to do not deprive it of its regenerative force, which is so beneficial/wholesome for human communities. This capacity depends on the divine grace of forgiveness and reconciliation, which always ensures the spiritual energy to begin anew. For this very reason family members need to encounter Christ in the Church through the wonderful Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation.

In this context, we can realize how important *prayer* is with families and for families, in particular for those threatened by division. We need to pray that married couples *will love their vocation*, even when the road becomes difficult, or the paths become narrow, uphill, and seemingly insuperable; we need to pray that, even then, they will be faithful to their covenant with God.

"The family is the way of the Church". In this Letter, we wish both to profess and to proclaim *this way*, which leads to the kingdom of heaven (cf. *Mt 7:14*) through conjugal and family life. It is important that the "communion of persons" in the family should become a preparation for the "communion of Saints". This is why the Church both believes and proclaims the love which "endures all things" (*1 Cor 13:7*); with Saint Paul she sees in it "*the greatest*" virtue of all (cf. *1 Cor 13:13*). The Apostle puts no limits on anyone. Everyone is called to love, including spouses and families. In the Church everyone is called equally to perfect holiness (cf. *Mt 5:48*).

The fourth commandment: "Honor your father and your mother"

15. The fourth commandment of the Decalogue deals with the family and its interior unity—its solidarity, we could say. As it's written, the fourth commandment does not explicitly mention the family. In fact, however, this is its real subject matter. In order to bring out the communion between generations, *the divine Legislator could find no more appropriate word than this*: "Honor..." (*Ex 20:12*). Here we meet another way of expressing what the family is. This formulation does not exalt the family in some "artificial" way, but emphasizes its subjectivity and the rights flowing from it. The family is a community of particularly intense interpersonal relationships: between spouses, parents & children, between generations. It is a community which must be safeguarded in a special way. And God cannot find a better safeguard than this: "Honor".

"Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land which the Lord your God gives to you" (*Ex 20:12*). This commandment comes after the three basic precepts relating the individual and the people of Israel with God: "*Shema, Izrael...*", "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord" (*Dt 6:4*). You will have no other gods before me" (*Ex 20:3*). This is the first and greatest commandment, the commandment of love for God "above all else": God is to be loved "with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might" (*Dt 6:5*; cf. *Mt 22:37*). It is significant that the fourth commandment is placed in this particular context. "Honor your father and your mother", because for you they are in some sense representatives of the Lord; they are the ones who gave you life, who introduced you to human existence in a particular family line, nation and culture. After God, they are your first benefactors. While God alone is good, indeed the Good itself, parents participate in this supreme goodness in a unique way. And so, honor your parents! *There is a certain analogy here with the worship owed to God.*

The fourth commandment is closely linked to the *commandment of love*. The bond between "honor" and "love" is deep. Honor, at its very center, is connected with the virtue of justice, which cannot be explained fully without reference to love: the love of God & of neighbor. And who is more a neighbor than one's own family members, parents & children?

Is the system of interpersonal relations indicated by the fourth commandment one-sided? Does it bind us only to honor our parents? Taken literally, it does. But indirectly we can speak of the "*honor*" owed to children by their parents. "To honor" means to acknowledge! We could put it this way: "let yourself be guided by the firm acknowledgment of the person, first of all that of your father and mother, and then that of the other members of the family". Honor is essentially an attitude of unselfishness. It could be said that it is "a sincere gift of person to person". In that sense honor converges with love. If the fourth commandment demands that honor should be shown to our father and mother, it also makes this demand for the good of the family. Precisely for this reason, however, it makes demands of the parents themselves. You parents, the divine precept seems to say, should act in such a way that your life *will merit the honor* (and the love) of your children! Do not let the divine command that you be honored fall into a moral vacuum! Ultimately then we are speaking of *mutual honor*. The commandment "honor your father and your mother" indirectly tells parents: Honor your sons and your daughters. They deserve this because they are alive, because they are who they are, and this is true from the first moment of their conception. The fourth commandment then, by expressing the intimate bonds uniting the family, highlights the basis of its inner unity.

The commandment goes on to say: "*that your days may be long in the land* which the Lord your God gives you". The conjunction "that" might give the impression of an almost "utilitarian" calculation: honor them so that you will have a long life. In any event, this does not lessen the fundamental meaning of the imperative "*honor*", which by its nature suggests an *attitude of unselfishness*. To honor never means: "calculate the benefits". It is difficult, on the other hand, not to acknowledge the fact that an attitude of mutual honor among members of the family community also brings certain advantages. "*Honor*" is certainly something useful, just as every true good is "useful".

In the first place, the family achieves the good of "being together". This is the good par excellence of marriage (hence its indissolubility) and of the family community. It could also be defined as a good of the subject as such. Just as the person is a subject, so too is the family, since it is made up of persons, who, joined together by a profound bond of communion, form a single *communal subject*. Indeed, the family is more a subject than any other social institution: more

so than the nation or the State, more so than society and international organizations. These societies, especially nations, possess a proper subjectivity to the extent that they receive it from persons and their families. Are all these merely "theoretical" observations, formulated for the purpose of "exalting" the family before public opinion? No, but they are another way of expressing what the family is. And this too can be deduced from the fourth commandment.

This truth deserves to be emphasized and more deeply understood: indeed it brings out the importance of the fourth commandment for the modern system of *human rights*. Institutions and legal systems employ juridical language. But God says: "honor". All "human rights" are ultimately fragile and ineffective, if at their root they lack the command to "honor"; in other words, if they lack *an acknowledgment of the individual* simply because he is an individual, "this" individual. *Of themselves, rights are not enough.*

It is not an exaggeration to reaffirm that the life of nations, of states, and of international organizations "passes" through the family, "based" on the fourth commandment of the Decalogue. The age in which we live, notwithstanding the many juridical Declarations which have been drafted, *is still threatened to a great extent by "alienation"*. This is the result of "Enlightenment" premises according to which a man is "more" human if he is "only" human. It is not difficult to notice how alienation from everything belonging in various ways to the full richness of man threatens our times. And this affects the family. Indeed, *the affirmation of the person* is in great measure to be referred back *to the family* and consequently to the fourth commandment. In God's plan the family is in many ways the first school of how to be human. *Be human!* This is the imperative passed on in the family—human as the son or daughter of one's country, a citizen of the State, and, we would say today, a citizen of the world. The God who gave humanity the fourth commandment is "benevolent" towards man (*philanthropos*, as the Greeks said). The Creator of the universe is *the God of love and of life*: he wants man to have life and have it abundantly, as Christ proclaims (cf. *Jn 10:10*); that he may have life, first of all thanks to the family.

At this point it seems clear that the "civilization of love" is strictly bound up with the family. *For many people the civilization of love is still a pure utopia.* Indeed, there are those who think that love cannot be demanded from anyone and that it cannot be imposed: love should be a free choice which people can take or leave.

There is some truth in all this. And yet there is always the fact that Jesus Christ left us the commandment of love, just as God on Mount Sinai ordered: "Honor your father and your mother". Love then is not a utopia: it is given to mankind as a task to be carried out with the help of divine grace. It is entrusted to man and woman, in the Sacrament of Matrimony, as the basic principle of their "duty". It becomes the foundation of their mutual responsibility: first as spouses, then as father and mother. In the celebration of the Sacrament, the spouses give and receive each other, declaring their willingness to welcome children and to educate them. On this hinges human civilization, which cannot be defined except as a "civilization of love". The family is an expression and source of this love. *Through the family passes the primary current of the civilization of love*, which finds therein its "social foundations".

The Fathers of the Church, in the Christian tradition, have spoken of the family as a "domestic church", a "little church". They referred to the civilization of love as a possible system of human life and coexistence: "to be together" as a family, to be for one another, to make room in a community for affirming each person as such, for affirming "this" individual person. At times, "progressive" society would prefer to be free of people with physical or psychological handicaps. Even the family can end up like this kind of society, when it hastily rids itself of people who are aged, disabled or sick. This happens when people lose faith in that *God for whom "all live"* (cf. *Lk 20:38*) and are called to the fullness of Life.

Yes, *the civilization of love is possible; it is not a utopia.* But it is only possible by a constant and ready reference to the "Father from whom all fatherhood on earth is named" (cf. *Eph 3:14-15*), from whom every human family comes.

Education

16. *What is involved in raising children?* In answering this question two fundamental truths should be kept in mind: first, that man is called to live in truth and love; and second, that everyone finds fulfilment through the sincere gift of self. This is true both for the educator and for the one being educated. Education is thus a unique process for which the mutual communion of persons has immense importance. *The educator* is a person who "*begets*" in a spiritual sense. From this point of view, *raising children can be considered a genuine apostolate.* It is a living means of communication, which not only creates a profound relationship between the educator and the one being educated, but also makes them both sharers in truth and love, that final goal to which everyone is called by God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Fatherhood and motherhood presume the coexistence and interaction of autonomous subjects. This is quite evident in the case of the mother when she conceives a new human being. The first months of the child's presence in the mother's womb bring about a particular bond which already possesses an educational significance of its own. The mother, even before giving birth, *does not only give shape to the child's body, but also, in an indirect way, to the child's whole personality.* Even though we are speaking about a process in which the mother primarily affects the child, we should not overlook the unique influence that the unborn child has on its mother. In this *mutual influence* which will be revealed to

the outside world following the birth of the child, the father does not have a direct part to play. But he should be responsibly committed to providing attention and support throughout the pregnancy and, if possible, at the moment of birth.

For the "civilization of love" it is essential that *the husband should recognize that the motherhood of his wife is a gift*: this is enormously important for the entire process of raising children. Much will depend on his willingness to take his own part in this first stage of the gift of humanity, and to become willingly involved as a husband and father in the motherhood of his wife.

Education then is, before all else, *a reciprocal "offering" on the part of both parents*. Together they communicate their own mature humanity to the newborn child, who gives them in turn the newness and freshness of the humanity it has brought into the world. This is the case even when children are born with mental or physical disabilities. Here, the situation of the children can enhance the very special courage needed to raise them.

With good reason, then, the Church asks during the Rite of Marriage: "Will you accept children lovingly from God, and bring them up according to the law of Christ and his Church"? In the raising of children conjugal love is expressed as authentic parental love. The "communion of persons", expressed as conjugal love at the beginning of the family, is thus completed and brought to fulfilment in the raising of children. Every individual born and raised in a family constitutes a potential treasure which must be responsibly accepted, so that it will not be diminished or lost, but will rather come to an ever more mature humanity. This too is a *process of exchange* in which the parents-educators are in turn to a certain degree educated themselves. While they are teachers of humanity for their own children, they learn humanity from them. All this clearly brings out the *organic structure of the family*, and reveals the fundamental meaning of the fourth commandment.

In rearing children, the "*we*" of the parents, of husband and wife, develops into the "*we*" of the family, which is grafted on to earlier generations, and is open to gradual expansion. In this regard both grandparents and grandchildren play their own individual roles.

If it is true that by giving life *parents* share in God's creative work, it is also true that by raising their children they *become sharers in his paternal and at the same time maternal way of teaching*. According to Saint Paul, God's fatherhood is the primordial model of all fatherhood and motherhood in the universe (cf. *Eph 3:14-15*), and of human motherhood and fatherhood in particular. We have been completely instructed in God's own way of teaching by the eternal Word of the Father who, by becoming man, revealed to man the authentic and integral greatness of his humanity, that is, being a child of God. In this way he also revealed the true meaning of human education. *Through Christ* all education, within the family and outside of it, *becomes part of God's own saving pedagogy*, which is addressed to individuals and families and culminates in the Paschal Mystery of the Lord's Death and Resurrection. The "heart" of our redemption is the starting-point of every process of Christian education, which is likewise always an education to a full humanity.

Parents are the first, most important educators of their own children. They possess a *fundamental competence*. They are *educators because they are parents*. They share their educational mission with other individuals or institutions, such as the Church & State. But the mission of education must always be carried out with proper application of the *principle of subsidiarity*. This implies the legitimacy and need of giving assistance to the parents, but finds its intrinsic and absolute limit in their prevailing right and their actual capabilities. The principle of subsidiarity is thus at the service of parental love, meeting the good of the family unit. For parents by themselves are not capable of satisfying every requirement of the whole process of raising children, especially in matters concerning their schooling, & socialization. Subsidiarity thus complements paternal/maternal love. It confirms its fundamental nature, as all other participants in the education process act *in the name of the parents, with their consent* and, to some degree, *with their authorization*.

The process of education ultimately leads to the phase of *self-education*, which occurs when the individual, after attaining an appropriate level of psycho-physical maturity, *begins to "educate himself on his own"*. In time, self-education goes beyond the earlier results achieved by the educational process, in which it continues to be rooted. An adolescent is exposed to new people and new surroundings, particularly teachers and classmates, who exercise an influence over his life which can be either helpful or harmful. At this stage he distances himself somewhat from the education received in the family, assuming at times a critical attitude with regard to his parents. Even so, the process of self-education cannot fail to be marked by the educational influence which the family and school have on children and adolescents. Even when they grow up and set out on their own path, young people remain intimately linked to their *existential roots*.

Against this background, we can see the meaning of the fourth commandment, "*Honor your father and your mother*" (*Ex 20:12*) in a new way. It is closely linked to the whole process of education. Fatherhood and motherhood, this first and basic fact in the *gift of humanity*, open up before both parents and children new and profound perspectives. To give birth according to the flesh means to set in motion a further "birth", one which is gradual and complex and which continues in the whole process of education. The commandment of the Decalogue calls for a child to honor its father and mother. But, as we saw above, that same commandment enjoins upon parents a kind of corresponding or "symmetrical"

duty. Parents are also called to "honor" their children, whether they are young or old. This attitude is needed throughout the process of their education, including the time of their schooling. The "*principle of giving honor*", the recognition and respect due to man precisely because he is a man, is the basic condition for every authentic educational process.

In the sphere of education *the Church* has a specific role to play. In the light of Tradition and the teaching of the Council, it can be said that it is not only a matter of *entrusting the Church* with the person's religious and moral education, but of promoting the entire process of the person's education "*together with*" *the Church*. The family is called to carry out its task of education *in the Church*, thus sharing in her life and mission. The Church wishes to carry out her educational mission above all *through families* who are made capable of undertaking this task by the Sacrament of Matrimony, through the "grace of state" which follows from it and the specific "charism" proper to the entire family community.

Certainly one area in which the family has an irreplaceable role is that of *religious education*, which enables the family to grow as a "domestic church". Religious education and the catechesis of children make the family a true *subject of evangelization and the apostolate* within the Church. We are speaking of a right intrinsically linked to the *principle of religious liberty*. Families, more specifically parents, are free to choose for children a specific kind of religious and moral education consonant with their own convictions. Even when they entrust these responsibilities to ecclesiastical institutions or to schools administered by religious personnel, their educational presence ought to continue to be *constant and active*.

Within the education context, due attention must be paid to the essential question of *choosing a vocation*, and here in particular that of *preparing for marriage*. The Church has made notable efforts to promote marriage preparation, for example by offering courses for engaged couples. All this is worthwhile and necessary. But it must not be forgotten that preparing for future life as a couple is *above all the task of the family*. To be sure, only spiritually mature families can adequately assume that responsibility. Hence we should point out the need for a special *solidarity among families*. This can be expressed in various practical ways, as for example by associations of families for families. The institution of the family is strengthened by such expressions of solidarity, which bring together not only individuals but also communities, with a commitment to pray together and to seek together the answers to life's essential questions. Is this not an invaluable expression of the *apostolate of families* to one another? It is important that families attempt to build bonds of solidarity among themselves. This allows them to assist each other in the educational enterprise: parents are educated by other parents, and children by other children. Thus a particular tradition of education is created, which draws strength from the character of the "domestic church" proper to the family.

The *gospel of love* is the inexhaustible source of all that nourishes the human family as a "communion of persons". In love the whole educational process finds its support & definitive meaning in the mature fruit of the parents' mutual gift. By the efforts, sufferings & disappointments that are part of every person's education, love is constantly put to the test. To pass the test, spiritual strength is necessary. Only the One who "loved to the end" (*Jn 13:1*) gives it. So *education is required for the "civilization of love"*. It depends on the civilization of love while it contributes to its construction.

The Church's constant and trusting prayer during the Year of the Family is *for the education of man*, so that families will persevere in their task of education with courage, trust and hope, in spite of difficulties occasionally so serious as to seem insuperable. The Church prays that the forces of the "civilization of love", which have their source in the love of God, will be triumphant. These are forces which the Church ceaselessly expends for the good of the whole human family.

Family and society

17. The family is a community of persons and the smallest social unit. As such it is an *institution* fundamental to the life of every society. What does the family as an institution expect from society? First of all, it expects *a recognition of its identity* and an acceptance of its *status as a subject in society*. This "social subjectivity" is bound up with the proper identity of marriage and the family. Marriage, which undergirds the institution of the family, is constituted by the covenant whereby "a man & a woman establish between themselves a partnership of their whole life", & which "of its own very nature is ordered to the well-being of the spouses and to the procreation and upbringing of children". Only such a union can be recognized & ratified as "marriage" in society. Other interpersonal unions which do not fulfil the above conditions cannot be recognized, despite certain growing trends which represent a serious threat to the future of family & society.

No human society can run the risk of permissiveness in fundamental issues regarding the nature of marriage and family! Such moral permissiveness cannot fail to damage the authentic requirements of peace and communion among people. It is thus quite understandable why the Church vigorously defends the identity of the family and encourages responsible individuals and institutions, especially political leaders and international organizations, not to yield to the temptation of a superficial and false modernity.

As a community of love and life, the family is a firmly grounded social reality. It is also, in a way, entirely its own, a *sovereign society*, albeit conditioned in some ways. This affirmation of the family's sovereignty, and the recognition of the various ways in which it is conditioned naturally leads to the subject of *family rights*. In this regard, the Holy See published in 1983 the *Charter of the Rights of the Family*; even today this document has lost none of its relevance.

The rights of the family are closely *linked to the rights of the person*: if in fact the family is a communion of persons, its self-realization will depend in large part on the correct application of the rights of its members. Some of these rights concern the family in an immediate way, such as the right of parents to responsible procreation and the education of children. Other rights however touch the family unit only indirectly: among these, the right to property, especially to what is called family property, and the right to work are of special importance.

But the rights of the family *are not simply the sum* of the rights of the person, since the family is *much more* than the sum of its individual members. It is a community of parents and children, and at times a community of several generations. For this reason its "status as a subject", which is grounded in God's plan, gives rise to, and calls for, certain proper and specific rights. *The Charter of the Rights of the Family*, on the basis of the moral principles mentioned above, consolidates the existence of the institution of the family in the social and juridical order of the "greater" society—those of the nation, of the State and of international communities. Each of these "greater" societies is at least indirectly conditioned by the existence of the family. As a result, the definition of the rights and duties of the "greater" society with regard to the family is an extremely important and even essential issue.

In the first place there is the almost organic link existing between *the family and the nation*. Naturally we cannot speak in all cases about a nation in the proper sense. Ethnic groups still exist which, without being able to be considered true nations, do fulfil to some extent the function of a "greater" society. In both cases, the link of the family with the ethnic group or the nation is founded above all on *a participation in its culture*. In one sense, parents also give birth to children for the nation, so that they can be members of it and can share in its historic and cultural heritage. From the very outset, the identity of the family is to some extent shaped by the identity of the nation to which it belongs.

By sharing in the nation's cultural heritage, the family contributes to that *specific sovereignty*, which has its origin in a distinct culture and language. I addressed this subject at the UNESCO Conference meeting in Paris in 1980. Given its unquestionable importance, I have often returned to it. Not only the nations, but every family realizes its *spiritual sovereignty* through culture and language. Were this not true, it would be very difficult to explain many events in the history of peoples, especially in Europe. From these events, ancient and modern, inspiring and painful, glorious and humiliating, it becomes clear how much the family is an organic part of the nation, and the nation of the family.

In regard to the *State*, the link with the family is somewhat similar, and at the same time somewhat dissimilar. The State, in fact, is distinct from the nation. It has a less "family-like" structure, since it is organized in accordance with a political system, and in a more "bureaucratic" fashion. Nonetheless, the apparatus of the State also has, in some sense, a "soul" of its own, to the extent that it lives up to its nature as a "political community", legally ordered towards the common good. Closely linked to this "soul" is the family, which is connected with the State precisely by the *principle of subsidiarity*. Indeed, the family is a social reality which does not have readily available all the means necessary to carry out its proper ends, also in matters regarding schooling, and rearing children. The State is thus called upon to help with subsidiarity. Whenever the family is self-sufficient, it should be left to act on its own. State intrusiveness would prove detrimental, to say nothing of lacking due respect, and would constitute an open violation of the rights of the family. Only in those situations where the family is not really self-sufficient does the State have the authority and duty to intervene.

Beyond child-rearing & schooling at all levels, State assistance, while not excluding private initiatives, can find expression in institutions founded to safeguard life & health of citizens, in particular to provide social benefits for workers. *Unemployment* is one of the most serious threats to family life, a rightful concern to every society. It challenges the political life of individual States, & promotes careful study in the Church. So it is urgently necessary to find solutions beyond the limits one nation, to consider many families for whom lack of employment means living in tragic poverty.

While speaking about family employment, it is appropriate to emphasize how important & burdensome is *the work women do within the family unit: that work should be acknowledged and deeply appreciated*. The "toil" of a woman who, having given birth to a child, nourishes and cares for that child and devotes herself to its upbringing, particularly in the early years, is so great as to be comparable to any professional work. This ought to be clearly stated and upheld, no less than any other labor right. Motherhood, because of all the hard work it entails, should be recognized as giving the right to financial benefits at least equal to those of other works that support the family during this delicate phase of its life.

Every effort should be made to recognize the family as the *primordial*, and, in a certain sense "sovereign" *society!* The "sovereignty" of the family is essential for the good of society. A truly sovereign and spiritually vigorous nation is always made up of strong families who are aware of their vocation and mission in history. *The family is at the heart* of all these problems and tasks. To relegate it to a subordinate or secondary role, excluding it from its rightful position in society, would be to inflict grave harm on the authentic growth of society as a whole.

II THE BRIDEGROOM IS WITH YOU

At Cana in Galilee

18. Engaged in conversation with John's disciples one day, Jesus speaks of a wedding invitation and the presence of the bridegroom among the guests: "the Bridegroom is with them" (*Mt 9:15*). In this way he indicated the fulfilment in his own person of the image of God the Bridegroom, which had already been used in the Old Testament, in order to reveal fully the mystery of God as the mystery of Love.

By describing himself as a "Bridegroom", Jesus reveals the essence of God, and confirms his immense love for mankind. But the choice of this image also throws light indirectly on the profound truth of spousal love. Indeed by using this image in order to speak about God, Jesus shows to what extent the fatherhood and the love of God are reflected in the love of a man and a woman united in marriage. Hence, at the beginning of his mission, we find Jesus at *Cana in Galilee*, taking part in a wedding banquet, together with Mary and with the first disciples (cf. *Jn 2:1-11*). He thus wishes to make clear *to what extent the truth about the family is part of God's Revelation and the history of salvation*. In the Old Testament, and particularly in the Prophets, we find many beautiful expressions about the *love of God*. It is a gentle love like that of a mother for her child, a tender love like that of the bridegroom for his bride, but at the same time an equally and intensely jealous love. It is not, in the first place, a love which chastises, but one which forgives; a love which deigns to meet man just as the father does in the case of the prodigal son; a love which raises him up and gives him a share in divine life. It is an amazing love: something entirely new and previously unknown to the whole pagan world.

At Cana in Galilee Jesus is, as it were, the *herald of the divine truth about marriage*, that truth on which the human family can rely, gaining reassurance amid all the trials of life. Jesus proclaims this truth by his presence at the wedding in Cana and by working his first "sign": water changed into wine.

Jesus proclaims the truth about marriage again when, speaking to the Pharisees, he explains how the love which comes from God, a tender and spousal love, *gives rise to profound and radical demands*. Moses, by allowing a certificate of divorce to be drawn up, had been less demanding. When in their lively argument the Pharisees appealed to Moses, Jesus' answer was categorical: "from the beginning it was not so" (*Mt 19:8*). And he reminds them that the One who created man created him male and female, and ordained that "a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh" (*Gen 2:24*). With logical consistency Jesus concludes: "So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder" (*Mt 19:6*). To the objection of the Pharisees who vaunt the Law of Moses he replies: "For your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so" (*Mt 19:8*).

Jesus appeals to "the beginning", seeing, at the very origins of creation, God's plan, on which the family is based, and, through the family, the entire history of humanity. What marriage is in nature, becomes, by the will of Christ, a true sacrament of the New Covenant, sealed by the blood of Christ the Redeemer. *Spouses and families, remember at what price you have been "bought"!* (cf. *1 Cor 6:20*).

But it is *humanly difficult* to accept and to live this marvelous truth. Should we be surprised that Moses relented before the insistent demands of his fellow Israelites, if the Apostles themselves, upon hearing the words of the Master, reply by saying: "If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is not expedient to marry" (*Mt 19:10*)! Nonetheless, in view of the good of man and woman, of the family and the whole of society, Jesus confirms the demand which God laid down from the beginning. At the same time, however, he takes the opportunity to affirm the value of a decision not to marry for the sake of the Kingdom of God. This choice too enables one to "beget", albeit in a different way. In this choice we find the origin of the consecrated life, of the Religious Orders and Religious Congregations of East and West, and also of the discipline of priestly celibacy, as found in the tradition of the Latin Church. Hence it is untrue that "it is not expedient to marry"; however, love for the kingdom of heaven can lead a person to choose not to marry (cf. *Mt 19:12*).

Marriage however remains *the usual human vocation*, which is embraced by the great majority of the people of God. It is in the family where living stones are formed for that spiritual house spoken of by the Apostle Peter (cf. *1 Pet 2:5*). The bodies of the husband and wife are the dwelling-place of the Holy Spirit (cf. *1 Cor 6:19*). Because the transmission of divine life presumes the transmission of human life, marriage not only brings about the birth of human children, but also, through the power of Baptism, the birth of adopted children of God, who live the new life received from Christ through his Spirit.

Dear brothers and sisters, spouses and parents, this is how the *Bridegroom is with you*. You know that he is the Good Shepherd. You know who he is, and you know his voice. You know where he is leading you, and how he strives to give you pastures where you can find life and find it in abundance. You know how he withstands the marauding wolves, and is ever ready to rescue his sheep: every husband and wife, every son and daughter, every member of your families. You know that he, as the Good Shepherd, is prepared to lay down his own life for his flock (cf. *Jn 10:11*). He leads you by paths which are not the steep and treacherous paths of many of today's ideologies, and he repeats to today's world the fullness of truth, even as he did in his conversation with the Pharisees or when he announced it to the Apostles, who then proclaimed it to all the ends of the earth and to all the people of their day, to Jews and Greeks alike. The disciples were fully

conscious that Christ had made all things new. They knew that man had been made a "new creation": no longer Jew or Greek, no longer slave or free, no longer male or female, but "one" in Christ (cf. *Gal* 3:28) and endowed with the dignity of an adopted child of God. On the day of Pentecost man received the Spirit, the Comforter, the Spirit of truth. This was the beginning of the new People of God, the Church, the foreshadowing of new heavens and a new earth (cf. *Rev* 21:1).

The Apostles, overcoming their initial fears even about marriage and the family, grew in courage. They came to understand that marriage and family are a true vocation which comes from God himself and is an apostolate: the apostolate of the laity. Families are meant to contribute to the transformation of the earth and the renewal of the world, of creation and of all humanity.

Dear families, you too should be fearless, ever ready to give witness to the hope that is in you (cf. *1 Pet* 3:15), since the Good Shepherd has put that hope in your hearts through the Gospel. You should be ready to follow Christ towards the pastures of life, which he himself has prepared through the Paschal Mystery of his Death and Resurrection.

Do not be afraid of the risks! God's strength is always far more powerful than your difficulties! Immeasurably greater than the evil at work in the world is the power of the *Sacrament of Reconciliation*, which the Fathers of the Church rightly called a "second Baptism". Much more influential than the corruption present in the world is the divine power of the Sacrament of *Confirmation*, which brings Baptism to its maturity. And incomparably greater than all is the power of the Eucharist.

The *Eucharist* is truly a wondrous sacrament. In it Christ has given us himself as food and drink, as a source of saving power. He has left himself to us that we might have life and have it in abundance (cf. *Jn* 10:10): the life which is in him, and which he has shared with us by the gift of the Spirit in rising from the dead on the third day. The life that comes from Christ is a life for us. *It is for you, dear husbands and wives, parents and families!* Did Jesus not institute the Eucharist in a family-like setting during the Last Supper? When you meet for meals and are together in harmony, *Christ is close to you*. And he is Emmanuel, God with us, in an even greater way whenever you approach the table of the Eucharist. It can happen, as it did at Emmaus, that he is recognized only in "the breaking of the bread" (cf. *Lk* 24:35). It may well be that he is knocking at the door for a long time, waiting for it to be opened so that he can enter and eat with us (cf. *Rev* 3:20). The Last Supper and the words he spoke there contain all the power and wisdom of the sacrifice of the Cross. No other power and wisdom exist by which we can be saved and through which we can help to save others. There is no other power and no other wisdom by which you, parents, can educate both your children and yourselves. The *educational power of the Eucharist* has been proved down the generations and centuries.

Everywhere the Good Shepherd is with us. Even as he was at Cana in Galilee, *the Bridegroom in the midst of the bride and groom* as they entrusted themselves to each other for their whole life, so the Good Shepherd is also with us today as the reason for our hope, the source of strength for our hearts, the wellspring of ever new enthusiasm, and the sign of the triumph of the "civilization of love". Jesus, the Good Shepherd, continues to say to us: *Do not be afraid. I am with you*. "I am with you always, to the close of the age" (*Mt* 28:20). What is the source of this strength? What is the reason for our certainty that you are with us, even though they put you to death, O Son of God, and you died like any other human being? What is the reason for this certainty? The Evangelist says: "He loved them to the end" (*Jn* 13:1). Thus do you love us, you who are the First and the Last, the Living One; you who died and are alive for evermore (cf. *Rev* 1:17-18).

The Great Mystery

19. Saint Paul uses a concise phrase in referring to family life: it is a "*great mystery*" (*Eph* 5:32). What he writes in the Letter to the Ephesians about that "great mystery", although deeply rooted in the Book of Genesis and in the whole Old Testament tradition, nonetheless represents a new approach which will later find expression in the Church's Magisterium.

The Church professes that Marriage, as the Sacrament of the covenant between husband and wife, is a "great mystery", because it expresses *the spousal love of Christ for his Church*. Saint Paul writes: "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the Church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word" (*Eph* 5:25-26). The Apostle is speaking here about Baptism, which he discusses at length in the Letter to the Romans, where he presents it as a sharing in the death of Christ leading to a sharing in his life (cf. *Rom* 6:3-4). In this Sacrament the believer *is born* as a new man, for Baptism has the power to communicate new life, the very life of God. The mystery of the God-man is in some way recapitulated in the event of Baptism. As Saint Irenaeus would later say, along with many other Fathers of the Church of both East and West: "Christ Jesus, our Lord, the Son of God, became the son of man so that man could become a son of God".

The Bridegroom then is the very same God who became man. In the Old Covenant Yahweh appears as the Bridegroom of Israel, the chosen people—a Bridegroom who is both affectionate and demanding, jealous and faithful. Israel's moments of betrayal, desertion and idolatry, described in such powerful and evocative terms by the Prophets, can never extinguish the love with which *God—the Bridegroom* "loves to the end" (cf. *Jn* 13:1).

The confirmation & fulfilment of the spousal relationship between God & his people are realized in Christ, in the New Covenant. Christ assures us that the Bridegroom is with us (*Mt 9:15*). He is with all of us; he is with the Church. *The Church becomes a Bride*, the Bride of Christ. This Bride, of whom the Letter to the Ephesians speaks, is present in each of the baptized, and is like one who presents herself before her Bridegroom. "Christ loved the Church and gave himself up for her..., that he might present the Church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy, without blemish" (*Eph 5:25-27*). The love with which the Bridegroom "has loved" the Church "to the end" continuously renews her holiness in her saints, even though she remains a Church of sinners. Even sinners, "tax collectors and harlots", are called to holiness, as Christ himself affirms in the Gospel (cf. *Mt 21:31*). All are called to become a glorious Church, holy and without blemish. "Be holy", says the Lord, "for I am holy" (*Lev 11:44*; cf. *1 Pet 1:16*).

This is the deepest significance of the "great mystery", the inner meaning of the *sacramental gift* in the Church, the most profound meaning of Baptism and the Eucharist. They are fruits of the love with which the Bridegroom has loved us to the end, a love which continually expands, lavishing on people an ever greater sharing in the supernatural life.

Saint Paul, after having said: "Husbands, love your wives" (*Eph 5:25*), emphatically adds: "Even so husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no man ever hates his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, as Christ does the Church, because we are members of his body" (*Eph 5:28-30*). And he encourages spouses with the words: "Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ" (*Eph 5:21*).

This is unquestionably a new presentation of the eternal truth about marriage and the family in the light of the New Covenant. Christ has revealed this truth in the Gospel by his presence at Cana in Galilee, by the sacrifice of the Cross and the Sacraments of his Church. Husbands and wives thus discover in Christ *the point of reference for their spousal love*. In speaking of Christ as the Bridegroom of the Church, Saint Paul uses the analogy of spousal love, referring back to the Book of Genesis: "A man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh" (*Gen 2:24*). This is the "great mystery" of that eternal love already present in creation, revealed in Christ and entrusted to the Church. "This mystery is a profound one", the Apostle repeats, "and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the Church" (*Eph 5:32*). The Church cannot therefore be understood as the Mystical Body of Christ, as the sign of man's Covenant with God in Christ, or as the universal sacrament of salvation, unless we keep in mind the "great mystery" involved in the creation of man as male and female and the vocation of both to conjugal love, to fatherhood and to motherhood. The "great mystery", which is the Church and humanity in Christ, does not exist apart from the "great mystery" expressed in the "one flesh" (cf. *Gen 2:24*; *Eph 5:31-32*), that is, in the reality of marriage and the family.

The family itself is the great mystery of God. As the "domestic church", it is the *bride of Christ*. The universal Church, and every particular Church in her, is most immediately revealed as the bride of Christ in the "domestic church" and in its experience of love: conjugal love, paternal and maternal love, fraternal love, the love of a community of persons and of generations. Could we even imagine human love without the Bridegroom and the love with which he first loved to the end? Only if husbands and wives share in that love and in that "great mystery" can they love "to the end". Unless they share in it, they do not know "to the end" what love truly is, and how radical are its demands. And this is undoubtedly very dangerous for them.

The teaching of the Letter to the Ephesians amazes us with its depth and the *authority of its ethical teaching*. Pointing to marriage, and indirectly to the family, as the "great mystery" which refers to Christ and the Church, the Apostle Paul is able to reaffirm what he had earlier said to husbands: "Let each one of you love his wife as himself". He goes on to say: "And let the wife see that she respects her husband" (*Eph 5:33*). Respect, because she loves and knows that she is loved in return. It is because of this love that husband and wife *become a mutual gift*. Love contains the acknowledgment of the personal dignity of the other, and of his or her absolute uniqueness. Indeed, each of the spouses, as a human being, has been willed by God from among all the creatures of the earth for his or her own sake. Each of them, however, by a conscious and responsible act, makes a free gift of self to the other and to the children received from the Lord. It is significant that Saint Paul continues his exhortation by echoing the fourth commandment: "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother" (this is the first commandment with a promise), that it may be well with you and that you may live long on the earth'. Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord" (*Eph 6:1-4*). The Apostle thus sees in the fourth commandment the implicit commitment of mutual respect between husband and wife, between parents and children, and he recognizes in it the *principle of family stability*.

Saint Paul's magnificent synthesis of the "great mystery" appears as the compendium or *summa*, in some sense, of *the teaching about God and man* which was brought to fulfilment by Christ. Unfortunately, Western thought, with the development of *modern rationalism*, has gradually lost this teaching. The philosopher who formulated the principle of "*Cogito, ergo sum*", "I think, therefore I am", also gave the modern concept of man its distinctive dualistic character. It is typical of rationalism to make a radical contrast in man between spirit and body, between body and spirit. But man is a

person in the unity of his body and his spirit. The body can never be reduced to mere matter: it is a *spiritualized body*, just as man's spirit is so closely united to the body that he can be described as *an embodied spirit*. The richest source for knowledge of the body is the Word made flesh. *Christ reveals man to himself*. In a certain sense this statement of the Second Vatican Council is the reply, so long awaited, which the Church has given to modern rationalism.

This reply is of fundamental importance for understanding the family, especially against the background of today's civilization, which, as has been said, seems in so many cases to have given up the attempt to be a "civilization of love". The modern age has made great progress in understanding both the material world and human psychology, but in his deepest, metaphysical dimension, contemporary man remains largely a *being unknown* to himself. Consequently the family remains an *unknown reality*. Such is the result of estrangement from that "great mystery" spoken of by the Apostle.

The separation of spirit and body in man has led to a growing tendency to consider the human body, not in accordance with the categories of its specific likeness to God, but rather on the basis of its similarity to all the other bodies present in the world of nature, bodies which man uses as raw material in his efforts to produce goods for consumption. But everyone can immediately realize what enormous dangers lurk behind the application of such criteria to man. When the human body, considered apart from spirit and thought, comes to be used as *raw material* in the same way that the bodies of animals are used—and this actually occurs for example in experimentation on embryos and fetuses—we will inevitably arrive at a dreadful ethical defeat.

In a similar anthropological perspective, the human family is facing the challenge of a *new Manichaeism*, in which body and spirit are put in radical opposition; the body does not receive life from the spirit, and the spirit does not give life to the body. Man thus *ceases to live as a person and a subject*. Regardless of all intentions and declarations to the contrary, he becomes merely an *object*. This neo-Manichaean culture has led, for example, to human sexuality being regarded more as an area *for manipulation and exploitation* than as the basis of that *primordial wonder* which led Adam on the morning of creation to exclaim before Eve: "This at last is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh" (*Gen 2:23*). This same wonder is echoed in the words of the Song of Solomon: "You have ravished my heart, my sister, my bride, you have ravished my heart with a glance of your eyes" (*Song 4:9*). How far removed are some modern ideas from the profound understanding of masculinity and femininity found in Divine Revelation! Revelation leads us to discover in *human sexuality a treasure proper to the person*, who finds true fulfilment in the family but who can likewise express his profound calling in virginity and in celibacy for the sake of the Kingdom of God.

Modern rationalism *does not tolerate mystery*. It does not accept the mystery of man as male and female, nor is it willing to admit that the full truth about man has been revealed in Jesus Christ. In particular, it does not accept the "great mystery" proclaimed in the Letter to the Ephesians, but radically opposes it. It may well acknowledge, in the context of a vague deism, the possibility, and even the need, for a supreme or divine Being. But it firmly rejects the idea of a God who became man in order to save man. For rationalism, it is unthinkable that God should be the Redeemer, much less *that he should be "the Bridegroom"*, the primordial, unique source of the human love between spouses. Rationalism provides a radically different way of looking at creation and the meaning of human existence. But once man begins to lose sight of a God who loves him, a God who calls man through Christ to live in him & with him; once a family no longer has the possibility of sharing in the "great mystery", what is left except the mere *temporal dimension of life*? Earthly life becomes nothing more than the scenario of a battle for existence, of a desperate search for gain, and financial gain before all else.

The deep-seated roots of the "great mystery", sacrament of love/life beginning with Creation & Redemption, with *Christ the Bridegroom as its ultimate surety*, have been lost in the modern way of looking at things. The "great mystery" is threatened in us and all around us. May the Church's celebration of the Year of the Family be a fruitful opportunity for husbands and wives to rediscover that mystery, and recommit themselves to it with strength, courage and enthusiasm.

Mother of Fairest Love

20. The history of "fairest love" begins at the Annunciation, in those wondrous words which the angel spoke to Mary, called to become the Mother of the Son of God. With Mary's "yes", the One who is "God from God and Light from Light" becomes a son of man. Mary is his Mother, while continuing to be the Virgin who "knows not man" (cf. *Lk 1:34*). As Mother & Virgin, *Mary becomes the Mother of Fairest Love*. This truth is revealed in the words of the Archangel Gabriel, but its full significance will gradually become clearer, more evident, as Mary follows her Son in the pilgrimage of faith.

The "Mother of Fairest Love" was accepted by the one who, according to Israel's tradition, was already her earthly husband: *Joseph, of the house of David*. Joseph would have had the right to consider his promised bride as his wife and the mother of his children. But God takes it upon himself to intervene in this spousal covenant: "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit" (*Mt 1:20*). Joseph is aware, having seen it with his own eyes, that a new life, with which he has had nothing to do, has been conceived in Mary. Being a just man, and observing the Old Law, which in his situation imposed the obligation of divorce, he wishes to dissolve his marriage in a loving way (cf. *Mt 1:19*). The angel of the Lord tells him that this would not be consistent with his vocation;

indeed it would be contrary to the spousal love uniting him to Mary. This mutual spousal love, to be completely "fairest love", requires that he should take Mary and her Son into his own house in Nazareth. Joseph obeys the divine message, and does all that he had been commanded (cf. *Mt* 1:24). And so, thanks also to Joseph, the *mystery of the Incarnation* and, together with it, the mystery of the Holy Family, *come to be profoundly inscribed in the spousal love of husband and wife*, and, in an indirect way, in the genealogy of every human family. What Saint Paul will call the "great mystery" found its most lofty expression in the Holy Family. Thus the *family* truly takes its place *at the very heart of the New Covenant*.

It can also be said that the history of "fairest love" began, in a certain way, with the *first human couple*: Adam and Eve. The temptation to which they yielded and the original sin which resulted did not completely deprive them of the capacity for "fairest love". This becomes clear when we read, for example, in the Book of Tobit, that the spouses Tobias and Sarah, in defining the meaning of their union, appealed to their first parents, Adam and Eve (cf. *Tob* 8:6). In the New Covenant, Saint Paul also bears witness to this, speaking of Christ as a new Adam (cf. *I Cor* 15:45). Christ does not come to condemn the first Adam and the first Eve, but to save them. He comes to renew everything that is God's gift in man, everything in him that is eternally good and beautiful, everything that forms the basis of "fairest love". The *history of "fairest love"* is, in one sense, the *history of man's salvation*.

"Fairest love" always *begins with the self-revelation of the person*. At creation Eve reveals herself to Adam, just as Adam reveals himself to Eve. In the course of history newly-married couples tell each other: "We shall walk the path of life together". The family thus begins as a union of the two and, through the Sacrament, as a new community in Christ. *For love to be truly "fairest", it must be a gift of God*, grafted by the Holy Spirit on to human hearts and continually nourished in them (cf. *Rom* 5:5). Fully conscious of this, the Church in the Sacrament of Marriage asks the Holy Spirit to visit human hearts. If love is truly to be "fairest love", a gift of one person to another, it must come from the One who is himself a gift and the source of every gift.

Such was the case, as the Gospel recounts, with Mary and Joseph who, at the threshold of the New Covenant, renewed the experience of "fairest love" described in the Song of Solomon. Joseph thinks of Mary in the words: "My sister, my bride" (*Song* 4:9). Mary, the Mother of God, conceives by the power of the Holy Spirit, who is the origin of the "fairest love", which the Gospel delicately places in the context of the "great mystery".

When we speak about "fairest love", we are also speaking about *beauty*: the beauty of love and the beauty of the human being who, by the power of the Holy Spirit, is capable of such love. We are speaking of the beauty of man and woman: their beauty as brother or sister, as a couple about to be married, as husband and wife. The Gospel sheds light not only on the mystery of "fairest love", but also on the equally profound mystery of beauty, which, like love, is from God. Man and woman are from God, two persons called to become a mutual gift. From the primordial gift of the Spirit, the "giver of life", there arises the reciprocal gift of being husband or wife, no less than that of being brother or sister.

All this is confirmed by the mystery of the Incarnation, a mystery which has been *the source of a new beauty* in the history of humanity and has inspired countless masterpieces of art. After the strict prohibition against portraying the invisible God by graven images (cf. *Dt* 4:15-20), the Christian era began instead to portray in art the God who became man, Mary his Mother, Saint Joseph, the Saints of the Old and New Covenant and the entire created world redeemed by Christ. In this way it began a new relationship with the world of culture and of art. It can be said that this *new artistic canon*, attentive to the deepest dimension of man and his future, originates in the mystery of Christ's Incarnation and draws inspiration from the mysteries of his life: his birth in Bethlehem, his hidden life in Nazareth, his public ministry, Golgotha, the Resurrection and his final return in glory. The Church is conscious that her presence in the contemporary world, and in particular the contribution and support she offers to the promotion of the dignity of marriage and the family, are intimately linked to the development of culture, and she is rightly concerned for this. This is precisely why the Church is so concerned with the direction taken by the means of social communication, which have the duty of *forming* as well as *informing* their vast audience. Knowing the vast and powerful impact of the media, she never tires of reminding communications workers of the dangers arising from the manipulation of truth. Indeed, what truth can there be in films, shows and radio and television programs dominated by pornography and violence? Do these really serve the *truth about man*? Such questions are unavoidable for those who work in the field of communications and those who have responsibility for creating and marketing media products.

This kind of critical reflection should lead our society, which certainly contains many positive aspects on the material and cultural level, to realize that, from various points of view, it is a *society which is sick* and is creating profound distortions in man. Why is this happening? The reason is that our society has broken away from the full truth about man, from the truth about what man and woman really are as persons. Thus it cannot adequately comprehend the real meaning of the gift of persons in marriage, responsible love at the service of fatherhood and motherhood, and the true grandeur of procreation and education. Is it an exaggeration to say that the *mass media*, if they are not guided by sound ethical principles, fail to serve the truth in its fundamental dimension? This is the real drama: the modern means of social communica-

tion are tempted to manipulate the message, *thereby falsifying the truth about man*. Human beings are not the same thing as the images proposed in advertising and shown by the modern mass media. *They are much more*, in their physical and psychic unity, as composites of soul and body, as persons. They are much more because of their vocation to love, which introduces them as male and female into the realm of the "great mystery".

Mary was the first to enter this realm, and she introduced her husband Joseph into it. Thus they became the *first models* of that "fairest love" which the Church continually implores for young people, husbands and wives and families. Young people, spouses and families themselves should never cease to pray for this. How can we not think about the crowds of pilgrims, old and young, who visit Marian shrines and gaze upon the face of the Mother of God, on the faces of the Holy Family, where they find reflected the full beauty of the love which God has given to mankind?

In the Sermon on the Mount, recalling the sixth commandment, Christ proclaims: "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery'. But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart" (*Mt 5:27-28*). With regard to the Decalogue and its purpose of defending the traditional solidity of marriage and the family, these words represent a great step forward. Jesus goes to the very source of the sin of adultery, which dwells in the innermost heart of man, & is revealed in a way of looking & thinking dominated by *concupiscence*.

Through *concupiscence man tends to treat as his own possession another human being*, one who does not belong to him, but to God. In speaking to his contemporaries, Christ is also speaking to men/women in every age and generation. He is speaking specifically to our own generation, living as it is in a society marked by consumerism & hedonism. Why does Christ speak out in so forceful, demanding, way in the Sermon on the Mount? The reason is quite clear: Christ wants to safeguard *the holiness of marriage & of the family*. He wants to defend the full truth of the human person & his dignity.

Only in the light of this truth can the family be "to the end" the great "revelation", the *first discovery of the other*: the mutual discovery of husband and wife and then of each son and daughter born to them. All that a husband and a wife promise to each other—to be "true in good times and in bad, and to love and honor each other all the days of their life"—is possible only when "fairest love" is present. Man today cannot learn this from what modern mass culture has to say. "Fairest love" is learned above all in prayer. *Prayer*, in fact, always brings with it, to use an expression of Saint Paul, a type of *interior hiddenness with Christ in God*; "*your life is hid with Christ in God*" (*Col 3:3*). Only in this hiddenness do we see the workings of the Holy Spirit, the source of "fairest love". He has poured forth this love not only in the hearts of Mary and Joseph but also in the hearts of all married couples who are open to hearing the word of God and keeping it (cf. *Lk 8:15*). The future of each family unit depends upon this "fairest love": the mutual love of husband and wife, of parents and children, a love embracing all generations. Love is the true *source of the unity and strength of the family*.

Birth and Danger

21. It is significant that the brief account of the infancy of Jesus mentions, practically at the same time, his *birth* and the *danger* which he immediately had to confront. Luke records the prophetic words uttered by the aged Simeon when the Child was presented to the Lord in the Temple forty days after his birth. Simeon speaks of "light" & a "sign of contradiction". He goes on to predict of Mary: "And a sword will pierce through your own soul also" (cf. *Lk 2:32-35*). Matthew, for his part, tells of the plot of Herod against Jesus. Informed by the Magi who came from the East to see the new king who was to be born (cf. *Mt 2:2*), Herod senses a threat to his power, and after their departure he orders the death of all male children aged two years or under in Bethlehem and the surrounding towns. Jesus escapes from the hands of Herod thanks to a special divine intervention and the fatherly care of Joseph, who takes him with his mother into Egypt, where they remain until Herod's death. The Holy Family then returns to Nazareth, their home town, and begins what for many years would be a hidden life, marked by the carrying out of daily tasks with fidelity and generosity (cf. *Mt 2:1-23; Lk 2:39-52*).

The fact that Jesus, from his very birth, had to face threats & dangers has a certain *prophetic eloquence*. Even as a Child, Jesus is a "sign of contradiction". Prophetically eloquent also is the tragedy of the innocent Bethlehem children, slaughtered at Herod's command. In the Church's ancient liturgy, they shared in the birth and saving passion of Christ. By their own "passion", they complete "what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, the Church" (*Col 1:24*).

In the infancy Gospel, *the proclamation of life*, which comes about in a wondrous way in the birth of the Redeemer, is thus put in sharp contrast with the *threat to life*, a life which embraces the mystery of the Incarnation and of the divine-human reality of Christ in its entirety. The Word was made flesh (cf. *Jn 1:14*): God became man. The Fathers of the Church frequently call attention to this sublime mystery: "God became man, so that we might become gods". This truth of faith is likewise the truth about the human being. It clearly indicates the gravity of all attempts on the life of a child in the womb of its mother. Precisely in this situation, we encounter *everything which is diametrically opposed* to "fairest love". If an individual is exclusively concerned with "use", he can reach the point of killing love by killing the fruit of love. For the culture of use, the "blessed fruit of your womb" (*Lk 1:42*) becomes in a certain sense an "accursed fruit".

How can we not recall, in this regard, the aberrations that the so-called *constitutional State* has tolerated in so many countries? The law of God is univocal and categorical with respect to human life. God commands: "You shall not

kill" (Ex 20:13). No human lawgiver can therefore assert: it is permissible for you to kill, you have the right to kill, or you should kill. Tragically, in the history of our century, this has actually occurred when certain political forces have come to power, even by democratic means, and have passed laws contrary to the right to life of every human being, in the name of eugenic, ethnic or other reasons, as unfounded as they are mistaken. A no less serious phenomenon, also because it meets with widespread acquiescence or consensus in public opinion, is that of laws which fail to respect the right to life from the moment of conception. How can one morally accept laws that permit the killing of a human being not yet born, but already alive in the mother's womb? The right to life becomes an exclusive prerogative of adults who even manipulate legislatures in order to carry out their own plans and pursue their own interests.

We are facing an immense threat to life: not only to the life of individuals but also to that of civilization itself. The statement that civilization has become, in some areas, a "civilization of death" is being confirmed in disturbing ways. Was it not a *prophetic event* that the birth of Christ was accompanied by danger to his life? Yes, even the life of the One who is at the same time Son of Man and Son of God was threatened. It was endangered from the very beginning, and only by a miracle did he escape death.

Nevertheless, in the last few decades some consoling signs of a *reawakening of conscience* have appeared: both among intellectuals and in public opinion itself. There is a new and growing sense of respect for life from the first moment of conception, especially among young people. "Pro-life" movements are beginning to spread. This is a leaven of hope for the future of the family and of all humanity.

"You welcomed me"

22. Married couples and families throughout the world: *the Bridegroom is with you!* This is what the Pope wishes to say to you above all else during this Year which the United Nations and the Church have dedicated to the family. "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God sent his Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him" (Jn 3:16-17). "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit... You must be born anew" (Jn 3:6-7). You must be born "of water and the Spirit" (Jn 3:5). You yourselves, dear fathers and mothers, are the *first witnesses and servants* of this *rebirth* in the Holy Spirit. As you beget children on earth, never forget that *you are also begetting them for God*. God wants their birth in the Holy Spirit. He wants them to be adopted children in the Only-begotten Son, who gives us "power to become children of God" (Jn 1:12). The work of salvation continues in the world and is carried out through the Church. All this is the work of the Son of God, the Divine Bridegroom, who has given to us the Kingdom of his Father and who reminds us, his disciples, that "the Kingdom of God is in the midst of you" (Lk 17:21).

Our faith tells us that Jesus Christ, who "is seated at the right hand of the Father", will come to judge the living and the dead. On the other hand, the Gospel of John assures us that Christ was sent "into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him" (Jn 3:17). In what then does judgment consist? Christ himself gives the answer: "And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world ... But he who does what is true comes into the light, that it may be clearly seen that his deeds have been wrought by God" (Jn 3:19, 21). Recently, the Encyclical *Veritatis Splendor* also reminded us of this. Is Christ then a judge? *Your own actions will judge you in the light of the truth which you know*. Fathers and mothers, sons and daughters, will be judged by their actions. Each one of us will be judged according to the Commandments, including those we have discussed in this Letter: the Fourth, Fifth, Sixth and Ninth Commandments. But ultimately everyone will be judged *on love*, which is the deepest meaning and the summing-up of the Commandments. As Saint John of the Cross wrote: "In the evening of life we shall be judged on love". Christ, the Redeemer and Bridegroom of mankind, "was born for this and came into the world for this, to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of truth hears his voice" (cf. Jn 18:37). Christ will be the judge, but in the way that he himself indicated in speaking of the Last Judgment (cf. Mt 25:31-46). His will be a *judgment on love*, a judgment which will definitively confirm the truth that the Bridegroom was with us, without perhaps our having been aware of it.

The judge is the *Bridegroom of the Church and of humanity*. This is why he says, in passing his sentence: "Come, O blessed of my Father... for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me" (Mt 25:34-36). This list could of course be lengthened, and countless other problems relevant to married and family life could be added. There we might very well find statements like: "I was an unborn child, and you welcomed me by letting me be born"; "I was an abandoned child, and you became my family"; "I was an orphan, and you adopted me, and raised me as one of your own children". Or again: "You helped mothers filled with uncertainty and exposed to wrongful pressure, to welcome their unborn child and let it be born". "You helped large families, and families in difficulty, to look after, and educate the children God gave them". We could continue with a long and detailed list, including all those kinds of true moral and human good in which love is expressed. This is *the great harvest* which the Redeemer of the world, to whom the Father has entrusted judgment, will come to reap. It is

the *harvest of grace and of good works*, ripened by the breath of the Bridegroom in the Holy Spirit, who is ever at work in the world and in the Church. For all of this, let us give thanks to the Giver of every good gift.

However, we also know that, according to the Gospel of Matthew, the Final Judgment will contain another list, solemn and terrifying: "Depart from me... for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me" (*Mt 25:41-43*). To this list also we could add other ways of acting, in which Jesus is present in each case as the *one who has been rejected*. In this way he would identify with the abandoned wife or husband, or with the child conceived and then rejected: "You did not welcome me"! This judgment is also to be found throughout the history of our families; it is to be found throughout the history of our nations and all humanity. Christ's words, "You did not welcome me", also touch social institutions, governments and international organizations.

Pascal wrote that "Jesus will be in agony until the end of the world". The agony of Gethsemane and the agony of Golgotha are *the summit of the revelation of love*. Both scenes reveal the Bridegroom who is with us, who loves us ever anew, and "loves us to the end" (cf. *Jn 13:1*). The love which is in Christ, and which from him flows beyond the limits of individual or family histories, flows beyond the limits of all human history.

At the end of these reflections, dear Brothers and Sisters, in view of what will be proclaimed from various platforms during the Year of the Family, I would like to renew with you the profession of faith which Peter addressed to Christ: "You have the words of eternal life" (*Jn 6:68*). Together let us say: "Your words, O Lord, will not pass away"! (cf. *Mk 13:31*). What then is the Pope's wish for you at the end of this lengthy *meditation on the Year of the Family*? It is his prayer that all of you will be in agreement with these words, which are "spirit and life" (*Jn 6:63*).

"Strengthened in the inner man"

023. I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every fatherhood and motherhood is named, "that he may grant you to be strengthened with might through his Spirit in the inner man" (*Eph 3:16*). I willingly return to these words of the Apostle, which I mentioned in the first part of this Letter. In a certain sense they are pivotal words. *The family, fatherhood and motherhood all go together*. The family is the first human setting in which is formed that "inner man" of which the Apostle speaks. The growth of the inner man in strength and vigor is a gift of the Father and the Son in the Holy Spirit.

The Year of the Family sets before us in the Church an immense task, no different from the task which families face every year and every day. In the context of this Year, however, that task takes on particular meaning and importance. We began the Year of the Family in Nazareth on the *Solemnity of the Holy Family*. Throughout this Year we wish to make our pilgrim way towards that place of grace which has become the *Shrine of the Holy Family* in the history of humanity. We want to make this pilgrimage in order to become aware once again of that heritage of truth about the family which from the beginning has been *a treasure for the Church*. It is a treasure which grows out of the rich tradition of the Old Covenant, is completed in the New and finds its fullest symbolic expression in the mystery of the Holy Family in which the divine Bridegroom brings about the redemption of all families. From there Jesus proclaims the *"gospel of the family"*. All generations of Christ's disciples have drawn upon this treasure of truth, beginning with the Apostles, on whose teaching we have so frequently drawn in this Letter.

In our own times this treasure has been examined in depth in the documents of the Second Vatican Council. Perceptive analyses were developed in the many addresses given by Pope Pius XII to newlyweds, in the Encyclical *Humanae Vitae* of Pope Paul VI, in the speeches delivered at the Synod of Bishops on the Family (1980) and in the Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris Consortio*. I have already spoken of these statements of the Magisterium. If I return to them now, it is in order to emphasize how vast and rich is the *treasure of Christian truth about the family*. *Written testimonies* alone, however, will not suffice. Much more important are *living testimonies*. As Pope Paul VI observed, "contemporary man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he listens to teachers it is because they are witnesses". In the Church, the treasure of the family has been entrusted first and foremost to witnesses: to those fathers and mothers, sons and daughters who through the family have discovered the path of their human and Christian vocation, the dimension of the "inner man" (*Eph 3:16*) of which the Apostle speaks, and thus have attained holiness. *The Holy Family is the beginning of countless other holy families*. The Council recalled that holiness is the vocation of all the baptized. In our age, as in the past, there is no lack of witnesses to the "gospel of the family", even if they are not well known or have not been proclaimed saints by the Church. The Year of the Family is the appropriate occasion to bring about an increased awareness of their existence and their great number.

The history of mankind, the history of salvation, passes by way of the family. In these pages I have tried to show how the family is placed at the center of the great struggle between good and evil, between life and death, between love and all that is opposed to love. To the family is entrusted the task of striving, first and foremost, *to unleash the forces of good*, the source of which is found in Christ the Redeemer of man. *Every family unit needs to make these forces their own, so that, to use a phrase spoken on the occasion of the Millennium of Christianity in Poland, the family will be "strong with*

the strength of God". This is why the present Letter has sought to draw inspiration from the apostolic exhortations found in the writings of Paul (cf. *1 Cor* 7:1-40; *Eph* 5:21-6:9; *Col* 3:25) and the Letters of Peter and John (cf. *1 Pet* 3:1-7; *1 Jn* 2:12-17). Despite the differences in their historical and cultural contexts, how similar are the experiences of Christians and families then and now!

What I offer, then, is *an invitation*: an invitation addressed especially to you, dearly beloved husbands and wives, fathers and mothers, sons and daughters. It is an invitation to all the particular Churches to remain united in the teaching of the apostolic truth. It is addressed to my Brothers in the Episcopate, and to priests, religious families and consecrated persons, to movements and associations of the lay faithful; to our brothers and sisters united by common faith in Jesus Christ, even while not yet sharing the full communion willed by the Savior; to all who by sharing in the faith of Abraham belong, like us, to the great community of believers in the one God; to those who are the heirs of other spiritual and religious traditions; and to all men and women of good will.

May Christ, who is the same "yesterday, today, forever" (*Heb* 13:8), be with us as we bow the knee before the Father, from whom all fatherhood, motherhood, & human family is named (*Eph* 3:14-15). As in the prayer to the Father which Christ himself taught us, may he again offer testimony of that love with which he loved us "to the end"! (*Jn* 13:1).

I speak with the power of his truth to all people of our day, so that they will come to appreciate the grand goods of marriage, family and life; so that they will come to appreciate the great danger which follows when these realities are not respected, or when the supreme values which lie at the foundation of the family and of human dignity are disregarded.

May the Lord Jesus repeat these truths to us *with the power and the wisdom of the Cross*, so that humanity will not yield to the temptation of the "father of lies" (*Jn* 8:44), who constantly seeks to draw people to broad and easy ways, ways apparently smooth and pleasant, but in reality full of snares and dangers. May we always be enabled to follow the One who is "the way, and the truth, and the life" (*Jn* 14:6).

Dear Brothers and Sisters: Let all of this be the task of Christian families, and the object of the Church's missionary concern throughout this Year, so rich in singular divine graces. May the Holy Family, icon and model of every human family, help each individual to walk in the spirit of Nazareth. May it help each family unit to grow in understanding of its particular mission in society and the Church by hearing the Word of God, by prayer and by a fraternal sharing of life. May Mary, Mother of "Fairest Love", and Joseph, Guardian of the Redeemer, accompany us all with their constant protection. With these sentiments I bless every family in the name of the Most Holy Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Given in Rome, at Saint Peter's, on 2 February, the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord, in the year 1994, the sixteenth of my Pontificate.

JOHN PAUL II

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