

INSTRUCTIONS

BEFORE

MARRIAGE

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Let the pastor not fail to explain to those about to marry, the holiness of Christian wedlock, the mutual duties of the spouses, and the obligation of parents toward their offspring, accommodating his instructions to the needs and mental level of the individuals; and let him strongly urge them to make a careful confession of their sins, and to receive with piety the most holy Eucharist (Canon 1033).

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I. THE MARRIAGE CONTRACT

"Wherefore a man shall leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they shall be two in one flesh" (Genesis 2:24).

1. What is marriage?

Marriage is the lawful and permanent contract entered into by one man and one woman who mutually and freely agree to give to each other the exclusive lifelong right over their bodies for actions apt and proper for the procreation of children.

2. Who is the author of marriage?

Our Lord, quoting the book of Genesis, said: "Have you not read that He who created them from the beginning made them male and female, declaring: 'For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and cleave to his wife, and they shall be two in one flesh.' Therefore they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man put asunder" (Matthew 19:3-9).

The author of marriage, therefore, is God who made the sexes and gave man and woman so strong an attraction for each other that they seek one another for the propagation of the human race. "And God blessed them saying: "Increase and multiply, and fill the earth" (Genesis 1 :28).

It was God who decreed that only one man and one woman were to be helpmates for each other in an intimate and permanent marital union.

3. Is marriage a holy and sacred institution?

Yes, because the Creator of the human race instituted it for a sacred purpose. God made marriage the means by which husband and wife cooperate with Him in bringing a new human being into the world. By their cooperation the parents produce the body, and God by His almighty creative act produces the immortal soul of the new creature. In this way, new human beings are brought to life so that they may know, love and serve God, and finally enjoy Him forever in heaven.

Moreover, in God's plan, marriage is a state, of life. It is a real vocation in which husband and wife help each other to gain eternal salvation by fulfilling the duties and obligations of the marital state.

4. What are the essential purposes of marriage?

The primary purpose of marriage is the procreation and raising of children. The secondary purpose consists in the lawful satisfaction of the sexual desires of the married couple and in the help and assistance they give to each other in their life together.

5. Must the matrimonial contract be free and voluntary?

Yes. The consent to marry must not only be expressed externally, but must also come from

the heart. Men and women must enter marriage freely. A person forced into marriage by serious fear or threats, contracts an invalid marriage.

6. What premarital agreements render the marriage contract invalid?

A premarital agreement to exclude permanently the right of having children, or to limit the marriage right itself exclusively to sterile periods, or to sever the marital bond if the marriage does not prove successful, renders the marriage contract invalid. The first two agreements are contrary to the prime purpose of marriage and the third is against the permanency of marriage. In any of these cases, a true marriage would not be contracted.

The vow of perpetual virginity, mutually agreed upon for a supernatural motive, does not invalidate a matrimonial contract so long as the right to sexual intercourse is not excluded. Spouses may mutually agree not to use the right of marriage, but they may not agree to exclude the right.

7. Is the matrimonial contract permanent?

Yes. The death of husband or wife automatically ends their marriage. Our Lord forbade remarriage during the lifetime of one's spouse when He said:

"What God has joined together let no man put asunder" (Matthew 19:9).

And it is only reasonable. Marriage must be a permanent contract. To have and raise children demands that the married couple stay together for life. By the time the children have grown up, the parents more than ever need each other's help and comfort. Their mutual love, moreover, could not be complete if they feared or planned a future divorce.

Therefore, polygamy-that is, a man having more than one living wife at the same time or successively-is forbidden. Forbidden also is polyandry, the "marriage" of one woman to more than one living husband at the same time or successively. "Male and female God created them ... they shall be two in one flesh."

8. Is impotency an obstacle to a valid marriage?

Impotency means the inability to perform the marriage act naturally. A person who is permanently impotent before marriage cannot contract a valid marriage. A person who is temporarily impotent because of physiological or psychological causes may validly marry. The temporarily impotent person should consult a physician.

Unless people have serious reason to suspect impotency they need not be concerned about this matter before marriage.

9. Does sterility invalidate marriage?

Persons who are sterile are unable to have children. This may happen because of an operation, advanced age or other physical or psychological causes. Though the husband or wife is sterile the marriage act can be performed naturally and properly, thus making possible the secondary purposes of marriage. The sterile person should see a doctor, because his sterility maybe curable.

10. Does the Catholic Church recognize all marriages?

The Church recognizes all marriages of non-Catholics, whether baptized or not, as valid marriages so long as the law of God was not violated when the marriage was contracted. The remarriage of divorced persons is considered null and void by the Church because it is contrary to God's law. For Catholics, whether they marry Catholics or non-Catholics, the Church recognizes those marriages as valid which are contracted according to her laws.

II. THE SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY

11. Is marriage a sacrament?

Yes, the marriage between two validly baptized Christians whether Catholic or not, is a sacrament. Christ elevated the valid natural contract of marriage to the dignity of a sacrament. Christians receive the sacrament as soon as they properly manifest their consent to take each other as man and wife. The sacrament and the consent are simultaneous as well as inseparable.

12. Explain St. Paul's statement about marriage being a great mystery.

When St. Paul in his letter to the Ephesians (5 :32) calls matrimony "a great mystery in reference to Christ and to the Church," he means that it is an image or sign symbolizing the union of Christ with His bride, the Church. It is not, however, merely a sign or a symbol signifying grace, but it is also the channel through which God dispenses His special marital graces to the bride and bridegroom. For just as the union of Christ with His Church is effected through sanctifying grace, so also is the union of man and wife completed and perfected through grace. Husband and wife, therefore, should consider the union of Christ and His -Church as a model of their own marital union.

13. How is the union of Christ with His Church the model for Christian marriage?

"Husbands, love your wives just as Christ also loved the Church and delivered himself up for her that he might sanctify her ... Even thus ought husbands also to love their wives as their own bodies ... But just as the Church is subject to Christ, so also let wives be to their husbands in all things" (Ephesians 5:24-32).

Christ is united only to one Church; so also Christians should be united only to one spouse and always remain faithful to one another.

Christ promised to be with His Church "even to the consummation of the world." Christians, too, should remain wedded to one another until death separates the bond.

Christ delivered Himself up for the Church by dying on the cross; spouses should likewise love each other and make sacrifices for one another.

Christ sanctifies His Church; so also spouses should lead each other to a holier life by word and example.

14. Does the sacrament of matrimony give an increase of sanctifying grace?

Yes, since marriage is a sacrament of the living, it confers an increase of sanctifying grace. It

presupposes the spouses to be in the state of grace. Hence, it is recommended that the Catholic bridegroom and bride go to confession before their marriage, be married at Mass and receive Holy Communion. In a mixed marriage, the Catholic party is urged to attend Mass and receive Holy Communion earlier on the wedding day. Non-Catholics are exhorted to make an act of sorrow for their sins, as well as an act of faith and confidence in God, in preparation for their marriage.

All spouses should invoke God's special blessings upon their union. They should invite Christ to preside at their wedding as He did when He graced the marriage feast at Cana. They should also recall the words of Tobias who said : "We are children of . saints, and we must not be joined together as heathens, who know not God" (Tobias 8:5).

15. Does the sacrament also confer special actual graces?

Matrimony is a very serious institution imposing many duties and obligations. There are sacrifices to make, difficulties to overcome which arise from leading a common life, bringing children into the world and raising them properly. Sometimes the suffering occasioned by sickness, death, loss of work, misunderstandings and other misfortunes must be endured. Christ, however, provides the help, the strength, and the courage to fulfill marital and parental duties and obligations, to bear burdens and to overcome the obstacles. These helps and aids are the sacramental graces which Christ bestows when they are needed.

On their wedding day, the spouses receive the right to call upon God constantly for these sacramental graces. Husband and wife should pray daily, and especially in time of stress and difficulty, that God may grant them these graces.

It is not enough to receive the graces. The husband and wife must cooperate with them. The best way to do this is to lead a good life by prayer, reception of the sacraments, attendance at Mass, and by observing the laws of God and His Church.

"Unless the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it" (Psalm 126:1).

16. What practices help create a spirit of cooperation with the sacramental graces God is ready to bestow upon the Christian family?

In order to draw upon themselves a greater abundance of sacramental graces of matrimony, the Christian spouses as a family unit should endeavor:

- a. To receive the sacraments, attend Mass and other devotions together.
- b. To say meal prayers together and to set a time in the day for family prayer, especially the recitation of the rosary and prayer to the Holy Family.
- c. To request various blessings of the Church especially established for the family, such as: the blessing of the home; blessing of the mother before and after childbirth; blessing of a sick member of the family; consecration of the family to the Most Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary.
- d. To read Catholic periodicals, particularly the diocesan weekly, a monthly magazine, Catholic books and pamphlets. To display images of the Sacred Heart, the Blessed Virgin or the Holy Family in the home.
- e) To place a crucifix in a prominent place in the home as a reminder to bear sufferings. and sacrifices with greater resignation and patience. "Bear one another's burdens and so you will fulfill the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2).

17. What is meant by the canonical form of marriage?

It means that the marriage of Catholics must take place before a duly authorized priest and two witnesses. The priest is merely the official witness of the Church. He does not confer the sacrament but only presides over the ceremony. He asks and accepts the consent of the bridegroom and bride as a representative of the Church and in her name imparts God's blessing upon the newlyweds.

The two witnesses should be Catholic and should have the use of reason so they can also testify to the consent of the spouses.

18. Who are ministers of the sacrament of matrimony?

The Christian spouses are the ministers of the sacrament. They must, therefore, have the intention to marry each other. This intention is expressed by the words of the consent and even though the spouses are not attentive to it at the time the words are pronounced, it suffices so long as it influences the act of marriage. Actual attentiveness to the words of consent is more desirable.

Christ is the principal minister of the sacrament, for it is He who bestows His graces and blessings upon the spouses. The bridegroom and the bride, however, administer the sacrament to each other. This is done by their mutual consent, whereby they confer and accept the marital rights over each other. The consent is the external ceremony and sacrament at the same time. It both symbolizes and channels the graces of the sacrament upon the spouses. Thus the marriage contract is sealed and the sacrament is received as soon as the spouses pronounce their consent to marry each other.

19. What is to be said of the other ceremonies that follow the words of consent?

All the ceremonies which follow the marriage contract, as such, are prayers and blessings for the newlyweds. The Nuptial Mass is replete with prayers for the spouses. It contains also a special blessing for the bride which is called the Nuptial Blessing. The Mass, the unbloody sacrifice of Calvary, gives a still further meaning, a meaning of love and unselfishness to the marital union.

Catholics should strive to be married during the times when the Nuptial Mass is permitted.

20. How should the spouses regard the authority of the Church over marriage?

There are very many sinful practices and erroneous opinions and attitudes about marriage in the world today which may influence unwary and weak Christians. To remain staunch and loyal to the true concept of matrimony, spouses should conscientiously and faithfully obey the teachings of God and His Church. The Catholic Church received the mission from Christ to preach and teach His doctrine. In doing so, she is preserved from error. Therefore, the spouses should always be obedient to the Church's teachings and in all things submit their minds and hearts to her doctrine. In obeying and heeding the Church, the spouses are obeying and heeding Christ who said of His Church: "He who hears you, hears me; and he who rejects you, rejects me; and he who rejects me, rejects Him who sent me" (Luke 10:16).

21. Has the state power over the sacrament of marriage?

Our Lord gave to His Church power over the sacraments. Only the Church, therefore, has any real authority over their administration. The marriage contract between Christians and the sacrament of matrimony are one and inseparable. Hence once a Christian marriage has been contracted according to the laws of the Church, it is a valid marriage despite state legislation to the contrary.

The state, therefore, possesses no right to legislate concerning the validity of Christian marriages. In practice, however, the state does legislate for the marriages of all its citizens regardless of religious beliefs. Whenever the state laws are not contrary to the laws of God, but concerned only with the civil or temporal effects of the marital bond, Catholics should obey them. Thus, for example, legislation pertaining to marriage licenses, blood tests when required, the recording of the marriage, and the protections of the property rights of the spouses and the children, and the like.

Civil courts have no power whatsoever to dissolve the permanent bond of matrimony of Catholics or of non-Catholics. Anyone remarrying while his or her spouse is still living, even after having received a civil divorce, transgresses the divine law.

22. What are the obstacles to a valid marriage?

There are certain obstacles which by divine law or the Church's legislation either prohibit marriage or make it invalid. If any of these are present, the spouses should inform the priest who will then instruct them further on what is to be done. The Church is able to dispense with some of the obstacles when there is sufficient reason. She cannot dispense with those arising from divine law. The obstacles called impediments are:

Prohibiting impediments (making marriage unlawful but valid) :

1. A vow not to marry.
2. Marriage with a baptized non-Catholic, without a dispensation.

Invalidating impediments:

1. Age: boys under 16; girls under 14.
2. Impotency as explained previously in question 8.
3. Previous marital bond if the spouse is still living.
4. Marriage with non-baptized persons, without a dispensation.
5. Marriage with one in sacred orders.
6. Marriage with a person still having the obligation of solemn vows.
7. Abduction for the purpose of marriage.
8. Crime: explained in question 79.
9. Close blood relationship between spouses: all degrees in the direct line, to the third degree in the branch line, i.e., to and including second cousins.
10. Affinity, meaning close relationship between a widower and his in-laws and between a widow and her in-laws: all degrees in the direct line, to the second degree in the branch line, i.e., to and including first cousins.
11. Spiritual relationships between godparents and godchild.

12. Public honesty, which is based on closeness of relationship arising from an invalid marriage: only in the first and second degree of the direct line.
13. Legal adoption when it is declared an invalidating impediment by civil law.

III. DUTIES REGARDING CHILDREN

23. Does God command husband and wife to have children?

When God created our first parents, He blessed them and said: "Increase and multiply and fill the earth" (Genesis 1 :28). Thus He gave mankind in general the obligation to propagate the human race in the state of matrimony. This obligation, then, binds all married people who are able to have children as long as no serious reason excuses them, such as danger to the health or life of the wife, abject poverty, moral or social irresponsibility of husband or wife, and the like.

24. May a couple marry who cannot have children?

Yes, as long as they are able to have intercourse properly. They are still capable of fulfilling the secondary purpose of marriage, namely, the lawful satisfaction of their mutual love and sexual inclinations.

They who are permanently impotent, however, cannot contract marriage since they are incapable of properly fulfilling both purposes of matrimony.

25. When a couple is capable of parenthood, how many children must they have?

Married people who are able to raise offspring have the obligation of bringing into the world that quota of children which is necessary to maintain the current level of population.¹ Parents who beget three children surely fulfill this obligation. Married people, however, should be generous with God. They should have as many children as their health and financial circumstances allow. Just as they enjoy each other's company and companionship, so too, they should provide the same happiness here on earth and divine happiness in heaven for future sons and daughters. Placing their trust and confidence in God, parents should consider children not a burden, but rather a blessing from heaven.

26. Do parents fulfill their obligation toward their children by merely bringing them into the world?

Parents have the duty to love their children, care for them and educate them. This applies also to unwanted or defective children. "See that you despise not one of these little ones," warns Our Savior, "for I say to you that their angels in heaven always see the face of My Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 18:10).

Parents should never forget that their child needs a great deal of love, affection, and security. Parents who deny their child these basic needs do a great injustice. Lacking such affectionate attention, the child may develop psychic disorders which will be carried into adult life.

¹ This is merely a statistic and is not a true reference for parents to determine the number of children they should have.

27. What in particular are the duties of parents toward their children?

They must care for their bodily, mental and spiritual welfare.

Bodily Care

Bodily care must begin even before childbirth. The mother should refrain from violent exercises and heavy work as far as possible. The expectant mother should obtain further instructions in these matters during her prenatal visits to the doctor. The husband should be willing to forego his marriage rights at certain times during his wife's pregnancy. After the child is born, he has the right to adequate nourishment, clothing and shelter. The parents have the duty to supply these needs until the child becomes self-supporting, or is married.

Mental Training

Parents must also provide for the child's mental training and schooling, according to their economic means, so that when the child grows up, he will be sufficiently educated to attain at least the same degree of material success which the parents achieved. Children naturally incapable of achieving such success need only be educated according to their native abilities.

Spiritual Care

Above all, parents must look after the spiritual welfare of their child. As soon as possible after the child's birth, they should make arrangements with their pastor for baptism. They should choose two practicing Catholics to act as sponsors and select a Christian name for the child.

In case of necessity, anyone can validly baptize by pouring water over the head of the child while saying the words: "I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." After such a private baptism, the parents should notify their parish priest who will supply the other ceremonies connected with baptism.

When a miscarriage takes place, the embryo or fetus should be baptized immediately. This is done by tearing open the clot or the three membranes enveloping the embryo or fetus, then placing it in tepid water and saying the words of baptism: "I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." One may presume that the embryo or fetus is still alive until decomposition or putrefaction sets in. When there is doubt as to the life of the embryo or fetus, while immersing it, one should say: "If you are capable of baptism, I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." After the embryo or fetus is dead, it should be buried and not burned. A dead fetus, if it had been baptized, is to be buried in blessed ground, preferably in a blessed cemetery.

Religious Instructions

The mother should begin instructing her child at home as soon as it is capable of understanding the very simple and elementary truths of religion. She should gradually teach the child about God, Jesus Christ, the Blessed Virgin, the Guardian Angel, the manner of blessing himself and reciting some very simple forms of prayer. Literature on pre-school religious instructions may be obtained from sources indicated in the appendix.

Catholics have the grave duty binding in conscience to send their children to a Catholic school. Local regulations in the diocese will explain this obligation in further detail, and also the

situations which permit them to substitute "Sunday School" for daily attendance at the parish school.

Religious Training

Catholic parents should cooperate with church and school in the matter of religious training. They must see to it that their children, when they come of age, attend Mass on days of obligation, and receive the sacraments frequently. They should exercise watchfulness as to the companions with whom their children associate, the shows they attend, and the literature they read. They should not hesitate to correct and punish them when necessary. They must take care to set a good example, both in their conversation and conduct, mindful of that terrible warning of the Savior: "But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it were better for him to have a great millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea" (Matthew 18:6). Parents likewise have the obligation of implanting in their children the practice of the basic virtues of the love for God; love for their neighbor through forgiveness, helpfulness, peaceful association, kindness and courtesy; of obedience for all lawful authority; of honesty and respect for others' property; of modesty and purity; of truthfulness; of loyalty to country; of sacrifice and moderation, and of industriousness.

Sex Education

Pope Pius XII very definitely stated that the responsibility to impart sex education to children rests with their parents (Allocution, October 26, 1941). In 1950 the Bishops of the United States issued this statement: "Fathers and mothers have a natural competence to instruct their children with regard to sex. False modesty should not deter them from doing their duty in this regard. Sex is one of God's endowments. It should not be ignored or treated as something bad. If sex instruction is properly carried on in the home, a deep reverence will be developed in the child and he will be spared the shameful inferences which he often makes when he is left to himself to find out about sex."

Much literature is available to help perform the duty of instructing their children about sex. Many parents have found useful the literature recommended in the appendix under "Aids to Parents for Sex Education of Children." Married couples do well to obtain such Catholic literature early in their marriage so that it will be on hand when it is needed.

28. What sin do they commit who stifle the life of an unborn child in the mother's womb?

The killing of a fetus at any stage from the moment of conception to birth through direct abortion is a most serious sin because it is the pre-meditated murder of a human being. No reason nor excuse can ever justify such an action, not even to safeguard an unmarried mother's reputation or to save the life of an innocent mother, because evil may never be done, no matter what good may come of it.

Persons guilty of direct abortion of a fetus, including all positive accomplices to such a direct abortion successfully completed, incur excommunication from the Church.

On the other hand, a surgeon may remove a diseased womb of a pregnant woman having an immature fetus if it is the only means by which he can save her life. In this case there is no direct attack on the fetus as there is in direct abortion or killing. The surgeon performs a good act

directly, namely the removal of the diseased womb. This act has a good effect-it saves the mother's life-and this is the act that is intended. Even though the death of the fetus is foreseen, it is not directly intended. The mother's life is saved not by means of the indirect abortion, but by the removal of the womb. Here the good effect follows from a good act and not from an evil act. Contrarily, by direct abortion, any possible good would come from an evil act, i.e. the direct killing of a fetus.

Married people should consult a priest for advice before permitting such operations, or any surgery upon the reproductive organs.

Where the death of a fetus is foreseen, provision should be made for its baptism. (See Question 27)

IV. DUTIES REGARDING MUTUAL HELPFULNESS

"And the Lord God said: It is not good for man to be alone: let us make him a help like unto himself" (Genesis 2:18) .

"He that has found a good wife, has found a good thing, and shall receive a pleasure from the Lord" (Proverbs 18 :22).

"Let each one of you also love his wife just as he loves himself; and let the wife respect her husband" (Ephesians 5 :33).

29. How are spouses to be helpmates to each other?

By mutually loving and assisting one another in raising a family and by living a peaceful life together.

30. What is conjugal love?

Conjugal love consists in a tender, personal and devoted attachment between man and wife who are mentally, sexually and emotionally attracted to each other by qualities of body, mind and heart. The spouses have a conviction of their suitability and a desire to lead a successful and intimate life together. They find happiness in one another's company and long for each other when separated. They wish one another well, and they strive to promote each other's welfare through constant and unselfish helpfulness. They are devoted to one another despite their weaknesses and faults, and find joy in loving and being loved. They know and willingly accept their marital duties and responsibilities and try to lighten one another's burdens.

Conjugal love is supernaturalized when spouses consider themselves children of God and strive by good example and council to assist each other in advancing in virtue and in the love of God. They will always refrain from anything which may injure their spouse spiritually, such as cooperation in sin.

31. Is infatuation necessary for conjugal love?

Infatuation, sometimes called romantic or sentimental love, usually is present in the early stages of marriage together with the more permanent and more necessary elements of love, which are wishing well, and doing good for the one loved despite any hardships involved. Infatuation, which is based on feelings which come and go, is not sufficient for conjugal love. But to promote and foster emotional love together with true conjugal love is something

wholesome and praiseworthy. As true conjugal love becomes more prominent the sentimental emotion tends to diminish. This, however, should not be cause for alarm.

32. Who possesses greater authority in the home?

St. Paul remarks: "Let wives be subject to their husbands as to the Lord: because the husband is the head of the wife, just as Christ is head of the Church But just as the Church is subject to Christ, so also let wives be to their husbands in all things" (Ephesians 5 :22).

Every society, including domestic society-the family-needs a head to function properly and orderly. When there is genuine Christian marital love, there is seldom need for the husband to assert his authority. The husband and wife, as two companions devoted to each other, should discuss and agree upon all matters pertaining to the home. When the husband needs to exercise his authority, he should do it in a loving and benevolent manner. He should not flaunt it to seek self-advantage, domination or intimidation. Rather his authority should always be used to promote happiness, peace and orderliness in the home.

Pope Pius XI in "Chaste Wedlock" warns husbands not to consider their wives as personal slaves, but rather to look upon them as equals in personal dignity and to treat them with that honor due the mother of a family. The Holy Father stated that although the husband and father is the head of the family, the wife and mother is its heart. Moreover, the father must remember that the mother shares in the parental authority necessary for the raising and training of children.

A wife may not, however, obey her husband when he would command an action contrary to the law of God.

The head of any organization should be, above all, a good leader. The head of the family should exert his leadership especially by giving a good example. He has a great responsibility before God to look after the salvation of those entrusted to his care. Never should he ask or command his wife or children to do anything morally wrong.

33. How do women differ from men?

The two sexes differ not only physiologically, but also mentally, emotionally and socially. Unless husband and wife realize these differences, they may have many unhappy, if not disastrous, misunderstandings.

Almighty God made men and women remarkably alike and strikingly different. Their character traits are not exclusively male or female, although there are qualities and characteristics which are predominantly masculine or feminine.

In creating human beings in two sexes, God planned that they should be helpmates. Hence, masculine traits are a help or complement to feminine traits; female characteristics are a help or complement to male characteristics, so that man and woman may mutually fulfill their role of parenthood in marriage. Married people should know their differences and deal with each other accordingly. If they understand well the meaning of fatherhood and motherhood, they will more easily understand each other, since all the marked differences between man and woman flow from their respective roles in parenthood. The following list may serve as a partial outline contrasting the sexes:

Physical Condition

Men: stronger build; more muscular; capable of heavy work and heavier lifting; more stamina; more

athletic; need greater amount of more nutritious food.

Women: more graceful and more delicate bodily structure; higher developed nervous system; have a larger reservoir of tears; endure pain, heat and cold more readily; become ill more often; have greater recuperative powers of health; live longer.

Sexual Differentiation

Men: apt for fatherhood; much greater sexual drive; need satisfaction of this drive more often; aggressive; pleasure from the marital act more physical, but also associated with love.

Women: apt for motherhood; more modest and coy; more affectionate; more charming and enticing; more receptive from desire to please husband and to become a mother; marital act desirable and pleasurable more from the accompanying manifestations of love on the part of the husband.

Mental Outlook

Men: inclined to be realistic; rely more on reasoning powers, especially of analysis; tend to be more abstract and objective in thought; more concerned about essentials of a problem; pursue same trend of thought longer; more frank and open in speech; interested more in their own occupation, in politics, business, economics, science, physical facts, inventions and sports; tend to be more materialistic and worldly.

Women: inclined to be idealistic; just as intellectual as men, but rely more on intuition; moved more by feelings and emotions; more concerned about details; more readily adaptable to changes; more attentive and critical; greater facility of speech and expression; interested more in domestic problems and occupations, in the home, in the husband and children, other people, places and circumstances; more refined, religious and moral; more sociable and proficient in solving social and domestic problems.

Emotional Attitude

Men: more reserved; self-reliant and independent; self-assured; take their wife's love for granted and feel secure in it.

Women: more effusive and expressive; insecure, especially in love; keenly sensitive; more sympathetic, gentle, kind and ready to help others.

Woman's noblest and most prominent glory can be found only in spiritual or physical motherhood. She could not achieve any greater success than this nor could she produce a more important accomplishment. God has blessed her with the most outstanding mission of bearing, raising, training and developing human creatures for their earthly and heavenly destiny. In order to perform this glorious task well, she, by nature, needs the care, love, affection, attention, companionship and security that no one else on earth could supply better than her husband. The man, in order to fulfill well his role of helpmate and fatherhood, in turn needs the sympathy, understanding and encouragement of his wife. Husband and wife working harmoniously together, will not fail in the vocation God entrusted to them.

34. Is love blind to faults?

Infatuation or sentimental love often blinds a young couple to each other's faults or else it makes faults look insignificant. When these romantic feelings gradually wear off, life in common brings out more clearly the faults and failings each spouse has. This need not be cause for alarm. Husband and wife have taken each other for better or for worse, so they must adhere to this agreement and make the best of it. If people like their friends despite their faults, how much more so should it be with the couple who love one another, even if later they discover that the partner possesses defects unknown before marriage.

No two people are exactly alike. Every man and woman has personal traits, good as well as bad qualities. Since the perfect husband and the perfect wife unfortunately do not exist, both

have to put up with one another's faults. Marriage is a give and take proposition. Only unhappiness results when husband and wife try to place all the blame on each other for their marital difficulties. To make their marriage successful, both husband and wife should strive to overcome their own faults, especially the ones which are proving to be an obstacle to a happy marriage.

35. What suggestions would help to reduce marital quarrels?

1. Firmly to resolve to control one's temper at all times.
2. Patiently to accept unpleasantness as a part of life since it often causes irritable moods.
3. To be on guard against losing one's temper, when in an irritable mood.
4. Always to be aware of the fact that quarrels can lessen mutual love and create bitterness.
5. To learn to appreciate one another's viewpoints on matters coming up for discussion and strive to be one of one mind and one heart.
6. To give a mild and soothing answer to an angry husband or wife. This tends to turn away wrath, while angry responses only add fuel to the fire.
7. Never to bring up past mistakes or faults, nor drag out skeletons from the closets of in-laws.
8. To make use of some such practices as: saying a "Hail Mary" or counting ten before speaking an angry word; attempting to soothe an angry partner by affectionate words or embraces; keeping quiet or departing to another room and letting the other cool off; kidding the other out of a bad humor; writing out a grievance (when written, it will usually look trivial and will be thrown into a waste-paper basket, or if given to one's spouse it may clear up matters).
9. Always to make up before retiring. Scripture warns us not to let the sun go down on our anger. The offending spouse should ask pardon; or if he is too stubborn, the offended partner should swallow his pride and make peace. Some spouses take turns in making up after a quarrel no matter which one was guilty.
10. To be ready at all times to forgive and forget. Harmony in the home is more precious than riches.

Parents should never quarrel in front of their children, since such disagreements lessen authority and often have a disturbing effect on the development of the children.

36. How should a married couple handle controversial problems?

Controversial problems can become open wounds that never heal if left without attention. By all means the spouses should strive to solve such problems before they become festering sores. They should discuss them only in a calm and reasonable frame of mind, never in anger or bitterness. If they cannot reach a mutual agreement, the husband's decision should be final in matters not contrary to God's law. If even his decision is not acceptable, the spouses should seek a competent counselor.

37. What stumbling blocks should married people avoid?

Uncharitable criticism should be avoided at all times. Parents should never criticise one

another in front of their children, much less in the presence of outsiders. Criticism provokes anger and reprisals, or produces humiliation and heartaches. Compliments, cheerful and consoling remarks, expressions of love and respect go a great deal further in correcting faults and improving mutual relations than do any criticism or corrections. If corrections are necessary, they are more acceptable if they are administered between two compliments.

Husbands should control their tempers and pause lest they say anything to their wives which they would later regret. It is far better to say pleasant things than those which give pain. When the wife cooks a good meal, has the house clean and tidy, has just gotten a new permanent, she will appreciate her husband's comments on her work and her appearance.

Wives should never nag their husbands or tell them they are not earning enough. Husbands are sensitive about this and will resent it keenly. Wives should remember, too, that men are generally frank and open in their speech; therefore, they should not torture themselves by seeking hidden meanings in their husband's speech and actions.

A husband, however, should read between the lines of his wife's statements and interpret her wishes since she often veils her meaning. The wife usually feels less secure in marital love, and needs and looks for the assurances from the husband.

A husband should try to remember his wife's birthday and their wedding anniversary by some gift. If the husband forgets, his wife should be indulgent with him. He rests content in being married to a sweet wife ; he tends to forget those dates that are so significant to his wife.

A husband ought not to prefer the newspaper to a quiet and sociable chat with his wife each day. The wife is lonely for her husband's companionship. Married people will be happier by recounting to each other the happenings of the day. Both should concern themselves in each other's work and common interests.

38. Are adjustments and adaptability necessary in married life?

Very much so. There are a number of transitional periods and changing circumstances which make it necessary that husband and wife adjust and adapt themselves to them by making more sacrifices, by denying themselves, by forming new attitudes and new ways of living to meet the occurring changes.

There is, first of all, the transition period from the single state to a life in common. In this period both lose a certain amount of freedom. Now the couple must regard the feelings, the likes, the interests, occupation, the health and general welfare of each other. The expectant mother undergoes the physiological changes of pregnancy to which she must adjust herself. The husband must become more considerate of his wife's condition; he must forego his marital rights at certain periods; he should try to be more helpful around the home. After the baby is born, husband and wife have the new duties of parenthood, of care of the child even at the sacrifice of their own ease and enjoyment. There are problems of adjustment during sickness, unemployment, etc. Married people, therefore, must be helpmates to each other by comforting, encouraging, counseling, helping one another and by making sacrifices for each other. The difficulties of life will draw them closer together only if they strive to live a truly common life.

Married people must also adapt themselves to each other's moods, emotions, temperament and general character. They should strive for union of minds and hearts so as to make their common life a source of happiness to themselves and their children. This will take effort and much goodwill. They must foster their love daily through signs of affection and appreciation. Love like any other virtue must continually be cultivated and nourished by repeated acts,

otherwise it fades away.

39. What principle factors will insure a happier married life?

Happiness is the calm possession of peace and contentment of mind and heart. It is produced from the knowledge and satisfaction of having performed one's duties well. This involves a number of factors:

1. The faithful observance of religion and obedience to God's laws. "Seek first the kingdom of God and his justice and all these things shall be given you besides" (Matthew 6 :33).
2. A strong and firm determination from the start to make marriage a success.
3. Planning and living their lives together as two persons united in one mind and one heart.
4. Mutual understanding, tender consideration, and loving appreciation of each other.
5. Patient discussion of problems, difficulties, likes and dislikes, and misunderstandings. A judge of a certain domestic relations court once stated that 75 per cent of marriage troubles result from the failure of married couples to talk things over with each other without quarreling.

40. How should married people foster home life?

No matter how poor and humble a house may be, if it is a true home for the family, it will be a place of happiness, security and a haven of peace. If at all possible, newlyweds should begin their married life in a home of their own, independently of parental control.

A home should be a place where proper values are given to things. Religious and spiritual values should come first in family life. Then, too, truly wise is the married couple that prefers a baby to a new car or other luxuries. Babies, though they require much attention, are a blessing to a home. A mother finds her greatest happiness in her children. Her heart is made for them, and she will never be fully satisfied until she experiences their love. Children, too, act as a safeguard against divorce. Statistics show that chances for divorce lessen a great deal in proportion to the higher number of children in the family.

Parents should not vie for their children's love. Each spouse should strive to instill in the children a love for both parents since children need the love of both for their personal development. Fathers should realize without being resentful that their children may be drawn more closely to the mother because of her loveable qualities and loving care. She is the heart of the family.

Just as personal cleanliness and neat appearance foster better relations between the spouses, cleanliness and neatness of the home and proper preparation of the food will cement more closely the bond of family ties.

Both parents should decide on the manner of raising their children and both should uphold each other's authority. Raising children is not only the mother's duty, but also the responsibility of the father. He, too, should give love and attention to his children.

41. Does family economy enter into marital stability?

Financial problems occupy a high place in the list of causes disrupting marital peace and harmony. Married people should therefore be on their guard to avoid such financial pitfalls. Let them plan the family economy together. By all means, the wife should know the exact financial status of the family. Highly commendable is the family budget plan.

Married people should make sacrifices to lay aside a certain sum of money for a rainy day. To

live beyond their means in order to keep up with their neighbors is to court financial hardships or even bankruptcy. Ordinarily the wife is more competent to take care of domestic expenses. There is usually something psychologically wrong with the husband who, having enough money, does not give his wife a sufficient amount to provide for the current family needs, or else forces her to beg this money from him. It is a help if each has a little spending money to use as he pleases.

A husband should never devote so much time to his work or business that he neglects to spend time with his wife and children. A wife, on the other hand, should not look upon her husband merely as a provider. If her husband does not earn a large salary, the wife should strive to be content with what his salary can afford, and not feel that she is being cheated of the luxuries of life. The husband should try to obtain a job which is suited to his ability and will best provide for his family. He should never overload himself by taking on too much work, or by working at a job too strenuous for him.

Both man and wife should be satisfied with their lot in life and not pretend to be what they are not. Let the husband be a good provider and the wife encourage him and build her happiness around him and her children. Happiness and peace are worth more than all the money in the world.

42. What is to be said about working wives and mothers?

Religious and welfare leaders consider married women working for a livelihood as another factor which brings about family problems. They agree that when it is not necessary for wives to work for hire, it should not be done. When there is a justifying reason, such as economic difficulties, it is permissible if the husband consents. Even then it should be only temporary employment, say until advanced pregnancy, and never as an excuse to avoid children, or to have more money for luxuries. It is a man's moral, legal and social duty to provide adequately for family needs.

Only for very serious reasons, such as extreme poverty or lack of other support, should mothers take a job away from home. The proper raising of children is a full-time occupation. When mothers work away from home, very unhappy consequences follow, such as the neglect of their children, the avoidance of bearing more children, an unhealthy relationship with their husband, nervous strain, failure to keep the home neat and clean, and many others.

43. When is jealousy sinful?

Jealousy stems from a passion which, if well-regulated, can be a factor for good in family life. It is well-regulated when it preserves reasonable mutual possessiveness of the spouses and excludes a third party from their marital affections. It becomes sinful and irritated by unfounded suspicions of illicit or amorous relations of which the other is not guilty. Such jealousy springs from immaturity, pride and excessive possessiveness. Unreasonably jealous people should consult their confessor or some spiritual counselor.

Married people ought to trust each other and have the utmost confidence in each other's love. They should jointly choose their friends and refrain from doing or giving the other even the slightest motive for suspicion. On the other hand, neither should be jealous of former normal and healthy friendships made before marriage. Man and wife should allow each other a certain reasonable amount of personal independence to pursue their hobbies and individual likes. Both should abstain from anything which might in any way lessen their mutual respect and trust.

44. Is immaturity detrimental to conjugal love?

Yes, marriage counselors say immature persons should not get married until they grow up, otherwise it is better that they stay single. A person is immature if he is seriously selfish, excessively proud and given to pouting; if he quickly takes offenses over trivial things and refuses to talk or make up for long periods; if he falls down on the job, continually changes jobs or is unable to hold a job any length of time; if he frequently nags his married partner or runs to his parents with every little grievance. The state of matrimony is a serious undertaking, a way of life filled with responsibilities, a state which demands that a husband and wife act like grown-ups, not like children. An excessively immature person needs the advice of a competent counselor before marriage, and also after marriage if he does not overcome this defect.

Anyone entering marriage from a purely selfish motive is really heading for trouble later on. These would be selfish motives for the woman: to marry chiefly for maternal security; to escape from parental control; to get away from a dull routine job; to avoid being branded an old maid. For the man: to marry in order to evade military service; to have a woman to cook meals and keep house for him; to look upon marriage only as a means of satisfying his sexual desires without any intention of exercising self-control.

A good rule to follow is to see how much each spouse can contribute to the other's happiness and not how much selfish pleasure each can enjoy at the other's expense.

45. What attitude is to be taken toward in-laws?

It is well known that the "in-law problem" can be the source of the greatest trouble in marriage. Married people must respect their in-laws and avoid criticizing each other's relatives since it is contrary to charity and usually only provokes quarrels. From the beginning of their marriage, husband and wife should not permit their in-laws, no matter how good the motive, to meddle in their marriage. Newlyweds should make their own plans for a successful life together and remain as independent as possible.

46. Do married people live happily ever after?

Conjugal life can be beautiful; it can be a source of much joy and happiness. But it may also be mixed with unhappiness, troubles and sorrows. Life has to be accepted and lived as it is. Humility, patience, resignation and courage in the face of the adversities of life will make life more pleasant. By the blessing of God, by the grace of the sacrament, married people can enjoy a beautiful life in common and find joy in their trials as well as in their triumphs.

V. THE INDISSOLUBILITY OF MARRIAGE

47. Does God forbid divorce?

Christ declared that marriage makes the wedded couple "two in one flesh" ; that "what God has joined together, let no man put asunder"; moreover, that "whoever puts away his wife except

for immorality, and marries another, commits adultery" (cf. Matthew 19:3-9). St. Paul states, "The Lord commands that a wife is not to depart from her husband and if she departs, that she is to remain unmarried ... let not a husband put away his wife" (1 Corinthians 7:10-11); and again, "The married woman is bound by the law while her husband is alive; but if her husband die, she is set free from the law of the husband" .. (Romans 7:2).

The scriptural passages just quoted quite emphatically show that marriage is dissolved only by death, and that it is unlawful to divorce one's spouse and remarry.

48. Does not Christ in St. Matthew make an exception for divorce, namely the sin of infidelity of one's spouse?

When Christ said: "Whoever puts away his wife except for immorality and marries another, commits adultery" (Matthew 19:9), he meant that it was permissible to put away one's wife, that is, to separate from her if she committed adultery. He did not, however, give permission for divorce and remarriage in this case, since without any exception He adds: "He who marries a woman who has been put away commits adultery," whether she was put away because of her infidelity or for any other reason. This would not be true if adultery was a reason for granting divorce and permitting remarriage. This truth becomes still more evident in other passages: "Whoever puts away his wife and marries another, commits adultery against her; and if the wife puts away her husband and marries another, she commits adultery" (Mark 10:11). "Everyone who puts away his wife and marries another commits adultery" (Luke 16:18). St. Paul, quoted in Question 47, clearly indicates that marriage is dissolved by death. Moreover, the Church always understands Christ's words, "except for immorality" to refer only to separation and not to divorce with permission to remarry.

49. Are Catholics allowed to separate?

Temporary separation is permissible to married people by mutual consent for good reasons, such as short visits to relatives, husband's work requiring travel, a brief vacation, etc. Permanent separation requires the bishop's permission (normally obtained through the pastor) for reasons such as adultery, non-support, bodily abuse, etc. Where adultery is notorious, as also in other cases where delay would involve great spiritual or physical harm, the innocent spouse could leave without immediate episcopal permission and apply for it later.

But to sue for civil divorce means more than separation and here the bishop's permission is always needed. It will not be granted except for very serious reasons and when granted, it does not confer permission for remarriage. In such a divorce only the civil effects of the marriage are dissolved, not the marital bond itself. Should either spouse attempt remarriage after receiving a civil divorce, he or she would be excommunicated.

50. What should married people do to avoid permanent separation?

The best cure to avoid this estrangement is to foster true conjugal love, loyally and faithfully to the end.

When relations between the wedded couples become strained, they should calmly and reasonably search for the causes and find their own solution. If they cannot solve their problem, they should seek the advice of a priest or some prudent counselor. Prayer for guidance and

humble admission of a mistake will avert many a marital breakdown.

Even after all sincere efforts fail, in most cases an unhappy marriage is a lesser evil than a separation or a civil divorce. Many sad consequences follow upon separation, some far worse than the acceptance of an unhappy marriage. Such consequences are: loneliness, a sense of failure, hatred, remorse, economical difficulties, temptations, possible remarriage and excommunication, sometimes even loss of faith. Misfortunes also come to the children: privation of complete family life, lack of parental love and control, and many become future misfits for society; in fact, one estimate claims 75 per cent of teen-age delinquents come from broken homes.

Married people should pray daily, and try their best to make their marriage successful and happy. They should trust and hope in God and serve Him faithfully. He will not fail to bless them. Marriage is not a one-sided affair; it takes two mature and responsible persons to make it a success, and when religion also plays an important role in family life, the marriage will be doubly successful.

VI. THE LAWFUL USE OF MARRIAGE

"Let marriage be held in honor with all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the immoral" (Hebrews 13 :4).

51. What rights does marriage confer on the spouses?

Marriage was instituted by God primarily for the purpose of begetting and raising children; secondarily, for the mutual help of the spouses and for the lawful satisfaction of their sexual impulses. Married people, therefore, acquire a mutual, exclusive and perpetual right to sexual intercourse. Sexual intercourse is the intimate act by which a child can be conceived. Sexual intercourse is also called the marriage right, the marital act, conjugal union, the use of marriage, and the like.

52. Does the use of the marriage right have corresponding obligations?

Yes. The procreation of children through sexual intercourse is the fulfillment of God's command to "increase and multiply." This does not mean that every time husband and wife make use of their marriage right a child must be conceived. Conception without interference depends upon biological causes over which spouses have no control. The marital act, however, must remain the intimate act by which a child can be conceived, and must be performed properly according to God's laws. The act is performed properly when the seminal fluid of the husband is deposited into the reproductive tract of the wife by means of the intimate union of their procreative organs.

Pope Pius XII warned married people who are able to have children, against the habitual practice of sensual self-gratification with the exclusion of offspring. Marriage, he said, grants rights to spouses to satisfy natural inclinations but also imposes the function of providing for the conservation of the human race (Address to Italian midwives, October 29, 1951). Hence, young people who are unwilling to procreate children ought not to marry.

Spouses, therefore, should not consider sexual intercourse itself as the prime purpose of marriage. It has the importance of a means to an end, the procreation of children. It completes or

consummates the marriage contract. It is but one expression of that deep and abiding conjugal love which binds the hearts of husband and wife, enables them to share their joys and sorrows, strengthens them to fulfill the duties of parenthood.

It is very important that before a man and woman marry, they should know the law of God and the teaching of the Catholic Church concerning virtuous married life.

53. Is intercourse something bad or sinful?

Not at all. Properly performed by a married couple, intercourse is not something vulgar or sinful but a virtuous action. Almighty God, Who in His wisdom and sanctity gave man and woman sexual organs which are naturally destined for the procreation of children, could not be the author of something bad or sinful.

After the sin of disobedience, Adam and Eve lost their original innocence for themselves and for their descendants. This included the loss of proper control over the sexual impulses. By practicing the virtue of modesty, the spouses are to keep the rebellious sexual impulses under control.

In their effort to teach their children modesty, parents sometimes unintentionally create in the minds of their children the impression that everything to do with sex is naughty. This will eventually result in a mistaken attitude toward marriage. A girl thus improperly trained from childhood, may form the impression that even for married people sexual relations are bad or sinful. Such an erroneous attitude can cause much unhappiness in marriage.

54. Is intercourse something shameful?

Certainly not. Sexual intercourse does not lower a man. Man is not driven to copulate by the instinctive urge that a beast has. In man, sexual intercourse is the expression of love between man and wife, an act which springs from the human soul. The fruit of this conjugal union is a child which has a body fashioned by both parents and a soul created by Almighty God. The child is a new human being which marvelously resembles its parents and is an expression of their love. The child is created in the image and likeness of God and is an expression of His love. Can there be, then, anything shameful in the act of sexual intercourse by which a human being can be conceived?

VII. BIRTH CONTROL

"(Onan) spilled his seed upon the ground, lest children should be born in his brother's name, and therefore the Lord slew him, because he did a detestable thing" (Genesis 38:9).

55. What is birth control?

Birth control is a misnomer. Birth control prevents conception, not birth. The practice of birth control betrays a "lack" of control. What people usually mean when they talk about birth control is contraception.

56. What is contraception?

Contraception is anything done before, during or after intercourse to prevent a woman from becoming pregnant, no matter what form this birth prevention may take.

57. Is contraception sinful?

Yes. It is seriously sinful to resort to the use of onanistic withdrawal, or to employ diaphragms, stoppers, rubbers, jellies, creams, medicine or pills to impede conception. God so created man, male and female, that by their conjugal union they might produce a human being. To prevent the result God intended is to obstruct His plan for human nature. Birth control or contraception is, therefore, against nature. If husband and wife have intercourse but use a contraceptive to prevent the wife from becoming pregnant, they commit a mortal sin. Not every time the wife has intercourse with her husband does she conceive; nevertheless each time she and her husband agree to use contraceptives they are guilty of a grave sin. The evil intention will be the source of the sin even when the means used might not always be sufficient or able to prevent conception. Both the spouse who takes the initiative and the one who actively cooperates in contraceptive practices, commit a grave sin. Pope Pius XI says, “. . .any use whatsoever of matrimony exercised in such a way that the act is deliberately frustrated of its natural power to generate life is an offense against the law of God and of nature, and those who indulge in such are branded with the guilt of grave sin" (Encyclical, Chaste Wedlock).

58. May a wife use a douche after the marital act?

If a wife uses the douche with the intention of frustrating nature, of preventing conception, she commits the grave sin of contraception. But if she waits at least one hour after she had marital relations, she may use the douche, because by this time nature will have taken its course and there will no longer be danger of preventing conception.

59. If one spouse insists on contraceptive intercourse, what must the other do?

The innocent spouse should refuse to grant the marital right.

The innocent party should neither ask for nor grant intercourse until the other spouse is willing to do it the right way. If the offending spouse will not give up contraceptive intercourse, the innocent spouse, for peace of conscience, should consult the priest in confession.

Sometimes before the wedding the man or the woman may express the intention of practicing birth control after they are married. They should make this known to the priest who is giving them instructions, so that he can teach them the right behavior for married people, and dispel any false reasons which they might think justify the use of contraceptives.

60. Is there such a thing as Catholic birth control?

If birth control means contraception, then there is absolutely no Catholic birth control. If by calling birth control Catholic, people mean to ask whether there is a kind of birth control that Catholics may practice, then the answer is: Yes. There is, first of all, voluntary self-control by mutual agreement. Husband and wife have the power to beget children but they are free to decide to use it. They can control the number of children they will have by mutually abstaining from using their powers of procreation.

61. What is the practice of “Natural Family Planning (NFP)”? Is it wrong?

In the use of marriage, NFP makes use of the natural biological rhythm according to which a woman has a certain period of fertility in her monthly cycle during which she is most likely to conceive, and another period during which she is least likely to conceive. She has to go to a doctor to find out when her period of fertility occurs, and when her so-called safe-period occurs. A married couple who restrict their sexual intercourse to the safe period of the wife are practicing NFP.

Married people may, without doing anything wrong, use this method of spacing their children under certain conditions: (1) both husband and wife must consent to this limited use of their marriage; (2) there must be no danger of incontinence for either spouse; (3) there must be good and justifying reasons.

Married persons may practice NFP either for short or longer periods of time accordingly as their reasons are proportionally justifiable and serious. When the reasons cease to exist, it is no longer permissible for them to resort to this practice. The following justifying reasons may be cited as examples: danger to the health or life of the mother; serious difficulty anticipated in future pregnancy or childbirth; well-founded expectancy of gravely deficient offspring; current financial difficulties; abject poverty; housing problems; the husband's moral or social irresponsibility, and the like. If parents have questions about the practice of NFP they should consult a priest for advice.

Parents who find themselves in circumstances which force them to practice abstinence from intercourse for some time should pray fervently to God and strive to rely on His graces. He will not suffer anyone to be tempted beyond his strength, but will bestow grace and courage on anyone who seeks His aid.

VIII. RIGHTS AND DUTIES OF THE MARRIED

"Let the husband render to the wife her due, and likewise the wife to the husband" (I Corinthians 7:3).

62. Are married people obliged to have intercourse?

Although the sex urge is so powerful that married people gladly indulge in the pleasure of intercourse, it may happen that for the husband or wife, at times, the desire for this pleasure does not impel them to seek the marital act. A wife may feel she doesn't want to have sexual relations with her husband. What is her duty based on the contract she made with her husband on their wedding day?

Husband and wife have a grave obligation to cooperate in the marriage act when reasonably requested. It is not left entirely to the whim of one or the other. To the right the husband has over his wife's body regarding marital relations corresponds her duty to yield her body; and to her right over her husband's body, corresponds his duty to grant her request.

The fear of pregnancy does not justify the wife in thinking that her husband's request for intercourse is unreasonable. The wife's passive response to her husband's sexual drive, her frigidity, or her distaste for the conjugal union may discourage his attentions. The reluctance of a spouse to grant the marital right may lead to serious violations of the law of God, such as incontinency, alcoholism, or adultery. A wife or a husband who unreasonably refuses the other

spouse's right to intercourse is guilty of a grave sin.

63. Which one may ask for marital relations?

Married people come to know each other so well that they recognize each other's needs without asking. Either one may make the first move. Men have a stronger sexual drive than women do; consequently, the husband is usually the first to express the desire for the marital act. In order to respond to his advances, the wife needs to be stimulated by her husband's love-making. It is only natural that their love-making will lead to the mutual surrender of sexual intercourse. If the husband or wife does not request marital relations with the former frequency, they should realize that this temporary lack of desire is no reason to suspect infidelity or the cooling of love and affection.

64. Specifically, when may a married person refuse to perform the marriage act?

The wife is not obliged to intercourse:

1. If her husband is overly demanding. It is difficult to say when a husband would be overly demanding. Young married couples naturally need to satisfy their sexual desires much more frequently than older married people do. Individuals differ in their physiological needs. Then, too, the condition of the wife may make the husband's request overly demanding. Marriage is the life of two in one flesh: let neither spouse be selfish or inconsiderate. If there would be any offense in this matter, it would be against charity or justice, but not against chastity.
2. When she is considerably ill (more than merely a mild headache).
3. When her husband is intoxicated.
4. If he is venereally infected, and until he is cured.
5. If he has certainly committed adultery, and until she pardons him.
6. As long as he insists on contraceptive intercourse.
7. If in the judgment of a conscientious and reliable doctor, a pregnancy would cause her death. The husband's right to refuse intercourse is identical with that of his wife, when the above-mentioned situations are applicable for him.

65. Are marital relations permitted during menstruation, pregnancy, and lactation?

It should be clearly understood that the use of the marriage act during these times does not violate chastity. Generally speaking, it is permissible during the times stated unless there would be harm or danger to the wife or the unborn child.

The wife may suffer distress during menstruation. It would then be uncharitable of the husband to demand intercourse when it would be disturbing or painful to his wife.

During the first three months of pregnancy, the expectant mother, doctors say, should not have intercourse on the days when she ordinarily would have menstruated if she experiences some discomfort such as cramping. Intercourse during the last six weeks of pregnancy may occasion a premature birth. In these instances, the health of the mother and the well-being of the unborn child may make abstinence from intercourse advisable if not obligatory. It is advisable to consult a doctor on these matters.

The nursing mother is not prohibited from having intercourse with her husband. Contrary to

opinion, the mother may again become pregnant during the period of lactation, although this is less likely in the first three months. Often doctors recommend spacing children two years apart. There is no moral obligation to follow this recommendation, if the wife is strong enough and the spouses desire to make use of the marital act in the meantime. On the other hand, a married couple may space their children in this manner, either by abstinence or the use of the sterile periods in order to allow the wife to regain her strength, or for other justifiable reasons as explained in Question 61.

Although the reply to most of this question is based on medical knowledge, there is the obligation of charity toward the mother and the unborn child which points out what is right or wrong. Likewise the health or strength of the wife is usually the only moral consideration involved in the question of how soon after childbirth (or miscarriage) it is permissible to have intercourse. Mutual conjugal love will decide the matter. In case of doubt, married people should consult their doctor or a priest.

66. Are there sacred times when married people may not use their marriage right?

None. Marriage is permanent. Married people may use their marriage right at any time. They are not obliged to refrain from intercourse because on the next day they are going to receive Holy Communion. They may, however, by mutual agreement and in a spirit of self-denial, practice continence by abstaining from intercourse for a time.

67. Does a previous miscarriage or stillbirth prohibit intercourse?

No. This happens usually beyond the control of and contrary to the intentions of the mother. In the hope of having a full-term child, husband and wife may continue to have intercourse despite the wife's previous miscarriage. While they are sad at losing a child, if it was baptized they may rejoice that it has gone to heaven. If because of circumstances the child died before baptism, it will enjoy natural happiness in limbo, according to the opinion of many good theologians.

68. What position is morally right for marital intercourse?

As long as husband and wife have their sexual relations properly-that is in a way that conception is possible-there is nothing morally wrong in the position or manner chosen.

69. What actions are morally lawful to wedded spouses in preparation for the marital act?

In general it may be said that any actions are allowed before, during and after sexual intercourse which help married people to prepare for and complete the marital act properly. Included in this general preparation are thoughts, desires for one's spouse, looks, kisses, embraces, touches or the like. Love-making and petting are both proper and necessary in these circumstances. They are proper because they form a part of the complete marital act which is morally good. They are necessary because they make the sexual union of man and wife more satisfactory.

Prior to marriage the engaged couple had to observe a certain reserve in the manifestation of their affections. After marriage these restrictions no longer exist. They are now free to satisfy their sexual and emotional needs within the total sphere of the marital act properly rendered. The

wedded spouses, however, should take into consideration one another's likes and dislikes and respect each other's sensibilities in this matter. It is not shameful or sinful for them to discuss between themselves topics pertaining to their mutual sexual relations.

The husband is not guilty of sin if while intending to use the marital act in the proper manner, he accidentally and unintentionally spills the seminal fluid before he is able to perform the marital act.

In rendering the marriage debt, the wife has as much right to complete sexual satisfaction as does the husband. If because of circumstances, she can not or does not obtain it in the act itself, she herself may procure it or her husband may procure it for her, immediately before or after the act.

70. What actions are morally permissible outside of the marital act?

Married people are allowed to indulge in kisses and embraces and other acts which, although sexually stimulating, are performed to express and promote mutual love and affection. There must, however, be no danger of procuring complete satisfaction for either of them by means of such actions.

It would be seriously sinful for the husband and wife to enter into very passionate love-making outside of the marital act if there is usually danger of incontinence for either of them through such actions, unless they are in circumstances where they can resort to intercourse and have at least an implicit intention of doing so, should such danger arise.

Wedded couples do not commit sin when they entertain licit desires for their partner or think about their mutual sex relations which have been properly performed. It is permissible for them to desire or think about that which is or was lawful for them. They must, however, desist from such thoughts or desires if they would lead them to solitary incontinence.

71. What sins would be serious against conjugal chastity?

1. Intentionally to procure complete sexual satisfaction singly or mutually outside of marital intercourse.
2. Sodomistic intercourse: use of the wrong receptacle for the deposit of the seminal fluid.
3. Thoughts and desires which would bring on incontinence outside of marital intercourse.
4. Adultery: having intercourse with a person not one's spouse; love-making with, desires for, or transferal of amorous affections to a third party.
5. Contraceptive birth control, as already explained.
6. Non-therapeutic sterilization, though not a sin against chastity, but against the Fifth Commandment and marital justice, is grievously wrong. It takes place when husband or wife have their procreative organs rendered unfruitful so that the wife can not become pregnant.
7. Artificial insemination is always seriously sinful when the life-giving seed of a man other than the wife's husband is used. In this case it involves sins: of adultery by admitting a third party for procreation; of marital injustice since this means is opposed to the natural act of conjugal copulation destined for conception. It may also involve the sin of masturbation by the donor. When the seed of the wife's own husband is used, it would be sinful only when the methods employed are prohibited by the law of God—for example, masturbation on the part of the husband; or insemination apart from the marital act. Present

methods which are morally permissible are usually considered medically ineffective. A barren -married couple should seek advice of a priest before ever allowing artificial insemination for the purpose of having their own children since the methods employed are usually sinful.

72. Where does God forbid extra-marital relations?

The sixth commandment states: "Thou shalt not commit adultery," and the ninth commandment reads, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife." Our Lord forbade even the desire to be unfaithful when He said, "Whosoever shall look on a woman to lust after her, has already committed adultery with her in his heart" (Matthew 5 :28). These commands bind both sexes alike.

73. What usually leads to this grave sin of adultery?

The wife may become unfaithful to her husband because he does not give her the love and affection she craves. He may be selfish; he may fail to understand her; he may deprive her of his company, leaving her to look to another to escape her loneliness. In his sexual relations with his wife, the husband may neglect to make love to her in keeping with her physical and emotional needs. The wife then will be tempted to gratify her desires elsewhere.

A husband, on the other hand, may become unfaithful to his wife because she may alienate his affections by excessive nagging or by gross selfishness. If she refuses him the marriage right often or habitually without sufficient reason, or shows herself reluctant for the marriage act, the husband, too, may be tempted to obtain satisfaction elsewhere-by solitary sins of impurity, or even by adultery. Some cases of excessive drinking trace their origin to such refusal.

None of the reasons just mentioned, nor any other can ever justify such sinful conduct; but, sad to say, they often are causes of temptation to which the weak may succumb.

74. Is alcoholism also a cause of much marital unhappiness?

Yes, alcoholism not only degrades its victim, but reaches out its ugly fangs into all phases of home life. It is often the cause of financial difficulties for the family; of impotency for the alcoholic, making marital relations impossible or unsatisfactory; of quarrels disrupting the peace of the home; of divorce or infidelity and of shame and heartaches for all concerned.

Alcoholism never solves any problems, but merely creates new ones. It should, therefore, be shunned as a sin, a great menace to family life and as a source of much unhappiness for the alcoholic. Married people who cannot drink moderately, should stop altogether before they inflict much harm on themselves and their family.

IX. THINGS TO CONSIDER BEFORE MARRIAGE

75. Should an engaged couple discuss having children?

Yes. This is the purpose of marriage. They should strive to become well acquainted with the duties of parenthood. If they have the opportunity, they should take pre-marital courses, attend

Cana conferences. It is well for them to get some pre-marital counsel from a Catholic doctor.

76. Must engaged couples obtain medical certificates?

Yes, if the state laws require them. Even though the law does not demand a physical examination before a wedding license will be issued, by seeing the doctor the young couple can obtain sound, expert advice about marriage.

77. What should engaged couples reveal to each other?

The engaged couple should make known to each other any physical condition which would have a bearing on their fitness for marriage. Each one is bound to reveal to his prospective spouse the existence of sterility, especially if it is post-operative and irremediable. An acquired venereal disease transmittable to the children, as well as all other truly hereditary diseases, even if apparently cured, should be divulged. Serious heart, kidney, and other diseases that would limit the use of marriage should be made known. To be honest in such matters before the wedding is to avoid the shock and hurt of discovery after it.

78. Should the engaged reveal past moral lapses ?

Only to the confessor, unless the past would affect the imminent marriage; for example, if either one has an illegitimate child in custody or has contracted a venereal disease.

79. What is the impediment to marriage called "marital crime"?

If two persons, one or both married, (a) commit adultery; and (b) promise to marry each other when the present spouse or spouses die, they incur the impediment called marital crime. If the unwanted spouse or spouses should die, the adulterers cannot marry each other. According to the law of the Catholic Church, they have set up an impediment that makes their marriage contract null and void. If such a situation is known to exist, it must be revealed at least to the confessor before the marriage takes place. He will keep the names secret and submit the case to the bishop, who will decide whether to permit the marriage by granting a dispensation from the impediment.

X. THINGS TO REMEMBER AFTER THE WEDDING

"Let every man remain in the same calling, in which he was called" (I Corinthians 7:20).

80. Is it advisable to see the doctor again after the wedding?

If the couple get off to a good start, are well adjusted to each other, there is no need for medical advice about their marriage at that time. But if they are having difficulties in their marital relations which they do not succeed in overcoming, they should see the doctor. It is unwise to let a bad situation become worse when it might, in the beginning, be easily cured. If the married couple after due time have no children, if they suspect that sterility is preventing them from having offspring, they should get medical advice. Once a wife becomes pregnant she should place herself under the doctor's care.

The physical and psychological difficulties married people encounter in their marital relations may need the advice of a physician before the difficulties can be removed. It is wrong for married people to neglect to remove these difficulties and thus endanger the happiness and success of their marriage.

Whenever they are in doubt about whether they are doing right or wrong in their sexual relations, husband and wife should ask the advice of the priest in the confessional.

Marriage requires mutual, patient understanding. Especially In the beginning of their marriage, when husband and wife are learning to adjust themselves to all the phases of their life together, they must prove their mutual love by a willingness to make sacrifices for each other. By prayer, by frequent reception of Holy Communion, by cooperation with the grace of matrimony, they can achieve a happy and successful marriage.