

VOCATION IN FAMILY CATECHESIS

by

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Précis

God calls everyone to faith and holiness; he calls some in particular to priesthood or religious life. These, however, are not the only sorts of vocation, for there are genuine callings to states of life other than priesthood and religious life. But, more than that, God calls everyone (including those called to the priesthood and religious life) with his or her own personal vocation: a unique share in the Church's mission, a personal way of following Jesus.¹

In most respects, young children cannot clearly discern their personal vocations and should not be pressed to make premature commitments, even of the most tentative sort. But preadolescent children can begin thinking and praying about their vocations. If they fail to do this, during adolescence they are likely to begin to form a different sort of plan of life, based on the quest for possessions, pleasures, individualistic freedom, and social status. Thus, personal vocation should be the major theme in the catechesis of children.

Christian spouses should regard marriage as a vocation. To fulfill their responsibilities, they should undertake married life as a deliberate response to God's call, give their marital consent as a yes to God's will that they become and remain one, always regard each other as God's gift, anticipate any children they might have as God's children entrusted to their care, and subordinate to this vocational perspective their particular desires and specific goals.

One Should Live One's Life in Response to God's Vocation

People who lack faith in divine revelation cannot have a concept of vocation. Thus, most pagans of both ancient and contemporary times assume that the pattern of every individual's life is settled by nature, nurture, and blind fate. But God's people of the old covenant knew better. The Lord foresees the needs of his people and prepares men and women to meet these needs. He forms those he chooses even before their birth for what he wants them to do. Still, God always respects the intelligence and freedom of created persons. Therefore, he does not make them play their roles like puppets. Rather, he calls them—Abraham, Moses, the prophets.

The New Testament maintains and deepens the conception of the covenant community, grounded in divine revelation and built up by vocation and faith. All men and women are called to enter the new covenant and to share by the Spirit's gift in the divine life and holiness of Jesus. All Christians are to be priests, spokespersons for God, and administrators of some portion of his kingdom. As St. Paul explains, each member of the Church, which is Jesus' body, has a particular role of service to fulfill for the benefit of the whole (see Rom 12.3-8, 1 Cor 12.7-11; cf. LG 12, UR 2).

John Paul II teaches that Jesus himself had a personal vocation: the unique mission he received from his heavenly Father and carried out in the totality of his life, from childhood, through his baptism in the Jordan, and ending with his death on the cross.² Mary also had her own personal vocation: announced to her by Gabriel's message, accepted by her "Let it be done to me," and carried out through all the rest of her life.³

Similarly, each and every Christian is called to a personal share in the Church's mission and given the special grace needed for that particular apostolic life, so that by living a life of witness, a prophetic life, he or she can cooperate with the Spirit in building up Jesus' body.⁴ John Paul II points out that "before the Second Vatican Council the concept of 'vocation' was applied *first of all* to the priesthood and religious life, as if Christ had addressed to the young person his evangelical 'Follow me' only for these cases. *The Council has broad-*

ened this way of looking at things.... every human-life vocation, as a Christian vocation, corresponds to the evangelical call. Christ's '*Follow me*' makes itself heard on the different paths taken by the disciples and confessors of the divine Redeemer.⁵

Since vocation is God's calling, its source is God's providential plan. Thus, one may not decide arbitrarily about any element of one's vocation. Rather, as John Paul II teaches: "Man must discover it—and discover it exactly."⁶ He summarizes the process:

To be able to discover the actual will of the Lord in our lives always involves the following: a receptive listening to the Word of God and the Church; fervent and constant prayer; recourse to a wise and loving spiritual guide; and a faithful discernment of the gifts and talents given by God, as well as of the diverse social and historic situations in which we live.⁷

One must not expect to hear God calling in some extraordinary manner. Rather, with the light of faith, personal vocation can be discovered in the sufficient signs by which God ordinarily makes his will known (see PO 11). Thus, as John Paul II explains, what God calls one to can be discerned precisely in the facts of one's life and situation. " 'What is my vocation' means 'in what direction should my personality develop, considering what I have in me, what I have to offer, and what others—other people and God—expect of me?' "⁸

Personal vocation includes every sphere of activity. It integrates various roles of service in the family, at work, in the civic community, and so on—so that all the responsibilities a person assumes will be met.

Certainly, the great commitments which settle one's state in life—as cleric, religious, or married or single lay person—are important elements of personal vocation. But one's work—whether it be in homemaking, day labor, farm, factory, office, trade, profession, government, education, or whatever—also is a large part of life and offers its own opportunities for giving Christian witness, serving one's neighbor, and recapturing some part of the fallen world for Jesus' kingdom. Hence, although choice of work and commitment to an employer and a group of fellow workers are not so permanent and

unconditional as to constitute a state of life, they are an important component of one's vocation.⁹

Similarly, in choosing where to live, a person undertakes the responsibilities of a citizen in that neighborhood, local community, and nation, and these civic duties must be fulfilled in a way which contributes to one's Christian apostolate. Even hobbies, forms of recreation, ways of vacationing, and so forth should be viewed as elements of vocation and carried on in accord with relevant norms.

Furthermore, personal vocation includes more than the life plan which a young person forms.¹⁰ The small child who decides to obey parents and teachers in order to be more like the obedient Jesus makes a basic commitment of personal vocation. Though this commitment will develop and be further specified, it need not be replaced. Similarly, people who retire from their jobs have new opportunities for witness and service; they should continue to fulfill themselves and serve others by putting their gifts and resources to use, not simply filling their days with pastimes.

Conditions beyond one's control also can pertain to one's vocation. After speaking of the more obvious elements of vocation, such as work and state of life, John Paul II adds: "And I am thinking also of other situations: for example, of the husband who is left a widower, of the spouse who is abandoned, of the orphan. I am thinking of the condition of the sick; the old, infirm and lonely; and of the poor."¹¹

The preceding exposition shows that John Paul II, in greatly developing Vatican II's teaching on personal vocation, treats it as an essential element in every Catholic's spirituality. But if vocation, understood in this way, is essential, why has the Church begun to stress it only recently? The answer is twofold.

On the one hand, while the inclusive concept of personal vocation has emerged only recently, what is grasped by that concept is entirely traditional. For the core of the inclusive understanding of personal vocation is simply this: at every juncture, one should ask, "What is God's will for me?" and, having discerned his will, one should accept it and strive to fulfill it faithfully. But from the beginning, Christians have been exhorted to shape their entire lives by faith.

On the other hand, contemporary culture challenges Christians in a unique way. As the faith spread during Christianity's first

millennium, it influenced culture, so that eventually most Christians' roles in the family, the economy, and civil society more or less belonged to their lives of faith. Moreover, throughout most of Christianity's first two millennia, few people had much choice about where they would live, what work they would do, or with whom they would associate. States of life involving virginity or celibacy for the kingdom's sake were considered personal vocations for those having the special gifts they require. But for others it was hardly necessary to discern a personal vocation; it was sufficient that they accept as God's will the responsibilities which were theirs willy-nilly.

The contemporary world, however, presents Christians with a new situation. The secularization of culture in modern times gradually affected roles, first in the economy and civil society, but more recently even in the family, opening the gap, which Vatican II deplotes, between faith and daily life (see GS 43). Furthermore, many factors—such as scientific and technological progress, growing wealth, more complex social structures, and the liberal-democratic form of government—greatly increased the options available to people, especially those in the middle and upper classes in affluent societies. Such people no longer can live good Christian lives by passively accepting roles and responsibilities which are thrust upon them; they must reflect critically on culturally defined roles, examine their gifts and opportunities in the light of faith, discern what God asks of them, and commit themselves to doing it. Therefore, it has become necessary to stress personal vocation as the organizing principle of a good Christian life.

Vocation in the Catechesis of Children

Catechetical instruction following first Confession and Communion should begin at once to raise the question of personal vocation. God has given us so much; Jesus has done so much for us. We must ask what we can give in return. By the Eucharist we are one with Jesus and so in communion with all other Christians. Jesus wishes to bring everyone into that communion, to save everyone. How can we help him complete his work? This work is the apostolate

of the Church. What will be our share in it?

Where Confirmation is administered at age twelve or fourteen, a main aim of catechesis from first Communion to Confirmation should be preparation for the latter sacrament. Now, Confirmation is the sacrament which strengthens one to bear witness, that is, to carry out one's personal vocation as apostolate (see CMP, 31.C). Therefore, catechesis after first Communion during the grade school years should raise the question of personal vocation and guide children's efforts at discernment. Where Confirmation is administered to infants or younger children, the same sort of catechesis is needed so that the sacrament will bear its fruit as the children grow up.

Parents have an extremely important role to play in fostering awareness of personal vocation in their children. As early as possible, the mother and the father should begin to tell children of their duty to help Jesus with his work of bringing the good news to all people and building up his kingdom, and to point out that each child will have his or her own unique opportunities and ways of doing this. As children grow, this elementary concept of personal vocation should be developed. John XXIII teaches:

Please carry on with your mission tirelessly and especially try to instill in youngsters from their earliest years—this is an area in which your apostolate can be particularly effective—a deep conviction that life is not just a lark, not just some kind of aimless wandering, not a search for some passing success and even less for easy money; instead, it means daily dedication of oneself; it means serving one's neighbor; it means a spirit of sacrifice applied to the hard work of a conquest that is always going on. This is the right way: and not the one that is sometimes suggested and urged by a mentality that deforms consciences and offers them a distorted view of reality.

You must also teach them that a person will enjoy true joy and peace of mind only if he lives up to his obligations generously and develops to their fullest the talents that God has hidden away in the mind and heart of each and every individual; you must make them realize that looking upon life as a vocation

and living it in the light of that awareness is the one thing that will bring them the greatest satisfaction as well as being the secret of interior peace and of edification of neighbor. ¹²

Children should be helped to understand not only their gifts and limitations but also the needs and opportunities of the Church and the world. Parents also should explain Jesus' counsels about poverty, chastity, and obedience, pointing out that, for those with the necessary gifts, life according to the counsels or in priestly celibacy for the kingdom's sake is preferable to marriage.

Children and young people need powerful motivation to do the work required to use the opportunities of formal education to develop their gifts fully. Parents and teachers cannot give a child the necessary motivation. Rather, they must appeal to and encourage each child's innate potentiality and inclination to develop and excel.

Human beings naturally desire to develop their capacities, to set goals and succeed in reaching them, to fulfill themselves and win others' respect. This natural desire motivates every serious effort to study, learn, and practice skills. While the pursuit of self-fulfillment can be selfish, it need not be. Paul VI explains:

In God's plan, every man is born to seek self-fulfillment, for every human life is called to some task by God. At birth a human being possesses certain aptitudes and abilities in germinal form, and these qualities are to be cultivated so that they may bear fruit. By developing these traits through formal education of personal effort, the individual works his way toward the goal set for him by the Creator.

Self-development, however, is not left up to man's option. Just as the whole of creation is ordered toward its Creator, so too the rational creature should of his own accord direct his life to God, the first truth and the highest good. Thus human self-fulfillment may be said to sum up our obligations. ¹³

Consequently, children should be taught to undertake and carry out their efforts at self-development through education as part of their

vocation. They should be helped to appreciate their aptitudes and abilities as God's gifts, and to consider the work of study and learning as a responsibility to him.

The points I have been making about vocation in the catechesis of children are solidly grounded in the Church's teaching and may even seem obvious. Nevertheless, their implementation would constitute a very significant departure from current practices in the Church.

A few years ago I looked at the moral teaching in the three sets of textbooks—those published by Benziger, Silver-Burdett, and Sadlier—which are most widely used in catechizing children during the grade-schools years in Catholic schools and CCD programs. I discovered that praiseworthy efforts have been made to replace legalism's alienating stress on reward and punishment with love, joy, and a sense of communion; and that the excessive, almost semi-Pelagian emphasis on good works and merit common in earlier catechesis has given way to an emphasis on God's loving-kindness and faithfulness.

However, I also discovered that in general moral teaching in these catechisms is sparse and that, what there is of it remains unintegrated with the teaching about doctrine and liturgy. The authors also seem to have overlooked the Catholic principle that God's grace includes our works and merits.

Then too, insofar as the catechisms do touch on moral questions, they almost always try to meet children where they are and to promote the Christian life appropriate to their age and situation. So children are instructed about their current responsibilities and encouraged to carry out charitable projects as part of their school work. Again, all to the good. But children naturally look forward to adult life, and they must be instructed to prepare for it and helped to be ready to make vocational commitments. On these matters, in my judgment, the catechisms I looked at were very deficient.

Moreover, to implement recent magisterial teaching regarding personal vocation in the catechesis of children, it also would be necessary to deal more effectively with the widespread theological and pastoral dissent from the Church's most firm and constant moral teaching regarding sexual activity, marriage, and innocent life.¹⁴ That dissent supports permissiveness on the part of parents and teachers

with respect to children's sinful sexual activities—masturbation, interpersonal sex play, immodest entertainment, and impure thoughts. Permissiveness on these matters both directly and indirectly blocks children's discernment and acceptance of their vocations.

Obviously, children habituated to unchaste behavior will not think they have the gift for celibacy or virginity for the kingdom's sake and so, if they are passably honest, will regard themselves as excluded from those vocations. Less obviously, but equally directly, habitual unchastity nips in the bud vocations to marriage, since people who are not trying to subordinate sexual desire to marital love will hardly look forward to marriage as a vocation, that is, as a divine calling, part of which is to subordinate sexual activity to authentic conjugal and parental love.

Indirectly, sexual permissiveness fosters consumerism, individualistic self-assertion, and status seeking. Theological and pastoral dissenters, as well as the catechists and parents they influence, may think it coherent to insist on the Church's teaching on social justice and self-giving in interpersonal relationships, but children who are taught to form their so-called consciences against Church teaching in one area are likely to do so in others, and children who use their own bodies for pointless self-gratification are not likely to treat material goods and other people any better. The choice between flesh and spirit is all or none (see Gal 5.16-24). If lust need not be resisted, why must one resist covetousness and pride?

It also seems to me that faithful pastors, catechists, and others who wish to foster vocations to the priesthood and religious life often act in self-defeating ways because they themselves are confused about personal vocation. Some still project a repulsive, elitist image of priestly and religious life, promising an elect few membership in a superior caste rather than challenging all God's people to serve his kingdom. Some try to apply contemporary marketing techniques, implying that Christians may choose their vocations as arbitrarily as they choose their detergents. And even when well-intentioned and sound in substance, vocation offices, vocation days, and intercessions for vocations need to be rethought, transformed, and reformulated to eliminate the false suggestion that vocation is a special divine election reserved to a small minority of Christians.¹⁵

Faithful pastors and catechists may fear that, if children were taught that every one of them has a personal vocation, even fewer than now would consider applying for admission to seminaries and novitiates. That fear is not well-grounded. The diverse roles of service to which Christians are called are not like various employers competing for a small group of competent people. Rather, each Christian's vocation is a given—an objective state of affairs—to be discerned; if more children were listening for God's call, more would hear it. There is no lack of vocations to priesthood and the religious life, for every vocation is God's gift, and surely he calls as many as appropriate to those states of life.

Vocation in Catechesis for Marriage

In affluent contemporary societies, the view is widespread that marriage is only an arrangement for attaining specific goals. Perhaps, agreeing to exclude children, a couple "marry" to provide the woman with financial support and the man with sexual satisfaction—an arrangement similar to prostitution. Or perhaps they plan to work together for the things each desires: a sexual partner, certain emotional satisfactions, a home and other possessions, a certain social status, and even a child or children (considered as desired objects to be possessed and enjoyed). Such an arrangement, which falls short of authentic marital communion, is only a means for satisfying individuals' desires by carrying out their agendas and achieving specific objectives. To think of marriage as an arrangement of this sort is radically at odds with seeing it as part of one's Christian vocation.

Authentic consent to marriage and a sincere commitment to fulfill the responsibilities flowing from it determine a very large part of a married person's life. Since the whole of Christian life should be lived according to faith, couples should undertake and live their married life as a very important part of their Christian vocation. Because marriage is a sacrament, it is all the more clear and important that it be undertaken and lived as a central, common element of the vocations of the spouses.

Thus, catechesis for marriage should focus on vocation and use it

as the organizing principle. What follows articulates only a few of the more important elements of such a catechesis.

First, children having a vocation to marriage should be helped to discern it. Vatican II teaches: "Especially in the heart of their own families, young people should be aptly and seasonably instructed about the dignity, vocation, and exercise of married love" (GS 49, translation amended). Many young people are called to marry. How can they discern this vocation?

Sexual capacity is an important gift which Christians can use in different ways to contribute to the kingdom. On becoming fully aware of this capacity at puberty, each should begin to consider how he or she will integrate it into a good and holy life. The starting point should be the fact that for some Christians it is better not to marry, since the unmarried who have the gift of complete continence can more easily grow in holiness and serve the kingdom in special ways (see Mt 19.11-12; 1 Cor 7.8, 38; cf. CMP, 27.H). Still, many Christians will discern signs that they do not have the gift to use their sexual capacity in a dedicated single life in the world, or in a committed life of celibacy or virginity for the kingdom's sake. For some, the sign will be the one St. Paul indicates: "It is better to marry than to be aflame with passion" (1 Cor 7.9). If they are to live good Christian lives, they will conclude, sexual desire must be integrated with conjugal love and so subordinated to the good of marriage. Many of these people, and others too, will discern another sign: a felt need for a spouse and, if possible, children, a need experienced as a profound sense of personal incompleteness which they cannot accept peacefully.¹⁶

Second, elitist spiritualities of priesthood and religious life, which unfortunately still seem widespread among faithful pastors and catechists, should be set aside, and the excellence of Christian marriage should be taught firmly. Vatican II makes it clear that marriage, as a vocation, is not inherently inferior to priesthood and the religious life in moral virtue and holiness. For the Council teaches: "It is obvious to everyone that all Christ's faithful are called to the fullness of Christian life and the perfection of charity" (LG 40). Again, speaking of marriage the Council teaches: "The steady fulfillment of the duties of this Christian vocation demands notable virtue" (GS 49, translation amended; cf. LG 35; GS 48, 52).

PART V: CATECHESIS AND THE CATHOLIC FAMILY

This brings us to a third point. Not only is marriage a central element of vocation for each of the spouses as an individual, but insofar as they are, as it were, one person, they share a common vocation in their common life of faith. John Paul II teaches:

God, who called the couple to marriage, continues to call them in marriage [note omitted]. In and through the events, problems, difficulties and circumstances of everyday life, God comes to them, revealing and presenting the concrete 'demands' of their sharing in the love of Christ for his Church in the particular family, social and ecclesial situation in which they find themselves. ¹⁷

For this reason, engaged and married couples should be instructed that the marital sacrament endures throughout marriage. The sign in which the sacrament consists is the conjugal bond itself, that is, the Christian marital communion of the two persons. Once constituted, this one-flesh union lasts until one of the spouses dies, and so the sacrament of marriage, which begins on the wedding day, continues throughout the couple's life. Concerning this, Pius XI approvingly quotes St. Robert Bellarmine:

The sacrament of matrimony can be regarded in two ways: first, in the making, and then in its permanent state. For it is a sacrament like to that of the Eucharist, which not only when it is being conferred, but also whilst it remains, is a sacrament; for as long as the married parties are alive, so long is their union a sacrament of Christ and the Church. ¹⁸

Fourth, engaged and married couples must learn that the initiation of new life is not a good extrinsic to marriage, but rather is the intrinsic perfection of the marital communion itself. As John Paul II teaches:

In its most profound reality, love is essentially a gift; and conjugal love, while leading the spouses to the reciprocal "knowledge" which makes them "one flesh" (cf. Gn 2.24),

does not end with the couple, because it makes them capable of the greatest possible gift, the gift by which they become cooperators with God for giving life to a new human person. Thus the couple, while giving themselves to one another, give not just themselves but also the reality of children, who are a living reflection of their love, a permanent sign of conjugal unity and a living and inseparable synthesis of their being a father and a mother. ¹⁹

Since the good of children is intrinsic to the good of marriage, the vocation of marriage includes the vocation to parenthood. Thus, Vatican II teaches that the *particular* mission of spouses is to transmit human life and raise children (see GS 50; cf. GS 47, 48, 49, 51); following the Council, Paul VI teaches that the transmission of human life is a most serious *office* of spouses, in which they offer a free and conscious service to God; and John Paul II explicitly teaches: "With the vocation to love, in fact, there is inseparably connected the vocation to the gift of life [emphasis added]." ²⁰

Fifth, engaged and married couples should be instructed about the absolute indissolubility of marriage. Once a priest is ordained, he remains a priest forever, but he can be released from his promises of obedience and celibacy, so that he need not fulfill the responsibilities of priestly life. Similarly, though many religious make so-called permanent vows, these can be dispensed. But marriage is more sacred and more demanding than priestly orders and religious vows, in the sense that the responsibility of fidelity flowing from the one-flesh union of the spouses can never be set aside or dispensed; even if a marriage ends, humanly speaking, the spouses are called to be faithful to each other and to remain a sacrament of the new and everlasting covenant, the unity of Jesus and his Church.

Couples should be aware that the will to be married to each other is central to marital love. Someone whose expectations in making a choice are disappointed usually does nothing wrong in wishing he or she had not made it. But the choices a couple make in consenting to marriage are different, because, once they have consummated their union, its reality no longer depends on their wills and acts. Since only death can part them, the couple should conform their wills to the

reality of their union, and love each other unwaveringly. Although conjugal love has other aspects, it is primarily the couple's intention in marrying to share together in the good of marriage. The first responsibility of both spouses, therefore, is to maintain their will to be married to each other. Directly contrary to that will is any wish not to be married or not to be married to this person. Even though such wishes come spontaneously to mind when marital disappointments and difficulties occur, spouses should be taught to recognize them as the primary temptation against conjugal love, and reject them as bad thoughts.

They also should be instructed that intentionally to entertain such thoughts is a grave matter. For, although classical moralists failed to identify this kind of sin, it is clear that any married person's wish not to be married or not to be married to his or her spouse seriously damages marital love. In fact, it is likely to lead to adultery and is certainly the first step in any attempt to dissolve a marriage by divorce. Like any other sin, of course, this one will not be mortal unless, aware of a grave obligation not to entertain such wishes, a person nevertheless chooses to do so; but even if the sin is only venial, it paves the way for infidelity and divorce.

Finally, Catholic married couples should be taught that insofar as they are called together by God and their children are his gift, each family forms a little Christian community and should function as a little Church within the parish.

From the beginning, the Church welcomed and incorporated not only individuals but entire families and households (see Acts 11.13-14; 16.15, 31; 18.8; 1 Cor 1.16, 16.15). Indeed, we know from the New Testament that early Christian congregations sometimes were based on households, and this seems to have been the norm during the first three centuries. Later, when persecutions or other adversities made parish life impossible, the Church often survived in Christian households.

Today, too, just as the parish is a local church within the diocese, so the Christian family is a little church within the parish. For, as the Greek word for church, *ekklesia*, suggests, a church is a community called together by God,²¹ and a Christian family should be such a community, inasmuch as Christians should marry and have children

according to God's plan and in response to his vocation. Joined to Christ by Baptism and consecrated by the sacrament of Matrimony, the two or three (or more) family members are gathered in Jesus' name, and he lives in their midst (see Mt 18.20). For this reason, Vatican II refers to the family as the "domestic Church" (LG 11; cf. AA 11).²² John Paul II explains:

The meaning of this traditional Christian idea is that the home is the Church in miniature. The Church is the sacrament of God's love. She is a communion of faith and life. She is a mother and teacher. She is at the service of the whole human family as it goes forward towards its ultimate destiny. In the same way the family is a community of life and love. It educates and leads its members to their full human maturity and it serves the good of all along the road of life.²³

Hence, the couple and their whole household not only should work together to build up the wider society (see AA 11) but, as Christians, should "work for the upbuilding of the people of God through their marriage and their family."²⁴

NOTES

1. This paragraph and many others in this paper are excerpted from my forthcoming book, *Way of The Lord Jesus*, vol. 2, *Living a Christian Life*, throughout which personal vocation is an important theme.
2. See John Paul II, Homily in Miraflores Park (Cuenca, Ecuador), 7, *Insegnamenti* 8.1 (1985) 309, *L'Osservatore Romano*, Eng. ed. (hereafter abbreviated OR), 11 Mar. 1985, 5. Also see Germain Grisez, *Way of the Lord Jesus*, vol. 1, *Christian Moral Principles* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1983), chap. 22, question C (subsequent references to this book will appear in the text: CMP, with the chapter and question separated by a period.
3. John Paul II, Homily at Mass for Students of the Pontifical Minor Roman Seminary, 2, *Insegnamenti* 4.2 (1981) 1171, OR, 25 Jan. 1982, 5: "That was the moment of Mary's vocation. And the very possibility of Christmas depended on that moment. Without Mary's 'Yes', Jesus would not have been born."
4. See John Paul II, Homily at Mass at Bellahouston Park (Glasgow), 6, *Insegnamenti* 5.2 (1982) 2066-67, OR, 7 June 1982, 16, who uses Eph 4.7, 11-12 to illustrate this point; cf. John Paul II, *Christifideles laici*, 58, AAS 81 (1989) 507-9, OR, 6 Feb. 1989, 19.
5. John Paul II, *Apostolic Letter on the Occasion of the International Youth Year*, 9, AAS 77 (1985) 602, OR, 1 Apr. 1985, 5.
6. John Paul II, Homily in Miraflores Park (Cuenca, Ecuador) 9, *Insegnamenti* 8.1 (1985) 311, OR, 11 Mar. 1985, 6.
7. John Paul II, *Christifideles laici*, 58, AAS 81 (1989) 508, OR, 6 Feb. 1989, 19.
8. Karol Wojtyla, *Love and Responsibility*, trans. H. T. Willetts (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1981), 257.
9. See John Paul II, Homily at Mass at St. Joseph Cafasso Parish, 4, *Insegnamenti* 4.1 (1981) 215-16, OR, 16 Feb. 1981, 6.
10. See John Paul II, *Christifideles laici*, 45-48, AAS 81 (1989) 481-86, OR,

6 Feb. 1989, 15-16.

11. John Paul II, Homily at Mass at St. Joseph Cafasso Parish, 4, *Insegnamenti* 4.1 (1981) 215-16, OR, 16 Feb. 1981, 6.
12. John XXIII, Address to the Second National Congress of the Children's Association of Catholic Action (14 July 1961), *Discorsi, messaggi, colloqui del Santo Padre Giovanni XXIII*, vol. 3 (Vatican City: Tipografia Poliglotta Vaticana, 1962), 361; *The Pope Speaks* 7 (1961-62): 267-68.
13. Paul VI, *Populorum progressio*, 15-16, AAS 59 (1967) 265, *The Papal Encyclicals*, ed. Claudia Carlen, I.H.M., 5 vols. (1981; reprint, Ann Arbor, Mich.: Pierian Press, 1990), 275.15-16. The cited collection of encyclicals will be abbreviated hereafter *PE*.
14. See Germain Grisez, "How to Deal with Theological Dissent," *Homiletic and Pastoral Review* 87 (Nov. 1986): 19-29, (Dec. 1986): 49-61.
15. Even after Vatican II and despite the clear teaching of John Paul II, this suggestion still appears in the published works of respectable theologians. For example, Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Christian State of Life*, trans. Mary Frances McCarthy (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1983), 421, denies that marriage can be a vocation: "No sound and balanced Christian will ever say of himself that he chose marriage by virtue of a divine election, an election comparable to the election and vocation experienced or even only perceived by those called to the priesthood or to the personal following of Christ in religious life. "
16. Even mature and holy people committed to a dedicated single life in the world or to virginity or celibacy for the kingdom's sake sometimes experience sexual desire and, perhaps even more strongly, as some testify, a sense of personal incompleteness. But they plainly have the gift for the life they live, and so such experiences indicate the lack of that gift only if accompanied by a feeling of inability ever to accept *peacefully* the renunciation involved in forgoing marriage and parenthood. While some Christians—for example, most people who have an unalterable homosexual tendency or who have been abandoned by their spouses—are called to forgo all sexual satisfaction and some or all the satisfactions of family life *whether or not they can do so peacefully*, Christians who enjoy the gift for the evangelical renunciation can accept it peacefully, so that

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they need not live with constant tensions, which would impede their apostolate and detract from their value as witnesses to the kingdom.

17. John Paul II, *Familiaris consortio*, 51, AAS 74 (1982) 143-44, OR, 21-28 Dec. 1981, 10.
18. Pius XI, *Casti connubii*, AAS 22 (1930) 583, PE, 208.110. See Leonard F. Gerke, *Christian Marriage: A Permanent Sacrament* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1965), for a full exposition of this point and a defense against contrary theological opinions. Gerke also argues (119-28, 138-54, 155, 157) that the actions of married life, and especially conjugal intercourse, are the permanent, visible, sacramental sign, and that these sacramentalized acts, rightly done by those in grace, give grace.
19. John Paul II, *Familiaris consortio*, 14, AAS 74 (1982) 96, OR, 21-28 Dec. 1981, 3.
20. Paul VI, *Humanae vitae*, 1, MS 60 (1968) 481, PE, 277.1; John Paul II, Address to Participants in Congresses on the Family (7 Dec. 1981), 2, *Insegnamenti* 4.2 (1981) 857, OR, 18 Jan. 1982, 5. Paul VI uses the word *munus*, which means an office or gift, a vocation, a mission. On this word's rich significance, see Janet E. Smith, "The *Munus* of Transmitting Human Life: A New Approach to *Humanae Vitae*," *Thomist* 54 (1990): 385-427.
21. See John Paul II, General Audience (20 July 1991); *L'Osservatore Romano*, It. ed., 21 July 1991, 4; OR, 22 July 1991, 11.
22. Helpful theological studies: Domenico Sartore, C.S.I., "La famiglia, chiesa domestica," *Lateranum* 45 (1979): 282-303; Jean Beyer, S.J., "Ecclesia domestica," *Periodica de re morali, canonica, liturgica* 79 (1990): 293-326; Vigen Guroian, "Family and Christian Virtue in a Post-Christendom World: Reflections on the Ecclesial Vision of John Chrysostom," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 35 (1991): 327-50.
23. John Paul II, Homily at Mass in Belmont Racecourse (Perth), 3, *Insegnamenti* 9.2 (1986) 1782, OR, 9 Dec. 1986, 21.
24. *Codex iuris canonici*, canon 226, §1.