



Made For Each Other

A CATECHETICAL AND EDUCATIONAL AID ON
SEXUAL DIFFERENCE AND COMPLEMENTARITY



MARRIAGE
Unique for a Reason



ABOUT THE ART

Saints Joachim and Anne are the father and mother of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Mary is the fruit of their marriage. By a singular grace of God in view of the merits of Jesus, she was preserved from all stain of Original Sin from the moment of her conception. Thus it is in the context of married life and conjugal love that Mary is prepared to receive the Divine Logos, the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ our Lord. Jesus is the Logos, the "Reason" at the heart of all reason and truth, including the truth of marriage. The marriage between Joachim and Anne is a significant witness to why marriage is "unique for a reason."

The Ad Hoc Committee for the Defense of Marriage is grateful to the artist Rev. Marko Rupnik for the use of this image.

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Viewer's Guide

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MARRIAGE
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MARRIAGE: UNIQUE FOR A REASON

The *Made for Each Other* Viewer's Guide was developed as a resource by the Ad Hoc Committee for the Defense of Marriage of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). It was reviewed by the committee chairman, Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz, and has been authorized for publication by the undersigned.

Msgr. David J. Malloy, STD
General Secretary, USCCB

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This material is intended as a catechetical and educational aid to be used as a resource by a priest, deacon, catechist, or teacher. The video, viewer's guide, and resource booklet form an integrated whole, and as such, complete the proper context of this tool.



General Introduction

*But God did not create man a solitary being.
From the beginning “male and female he created them” (Gn 1:27).*

*This partnership of man and woman constitutes the first
form of communion between persons.*

– Second Vatican Council, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes* (1965), no. 12¹

From generation to generation, the institution of marriage has been the cornerstone of family life and societal well-being. For two millennia the teaching of the Catholic Church on the meaning of marriage has positively influenced both culture and society. In a particular way, the teaching on marriage and the family from the Venerable Servant of God Pope John Paul II (+2005) has ignited a sustained excitement on the importance of this fruitful institution. His Wednesday catecheses known as the *Theology of the Body* (TOB), his Apostolic Exhortation on the Role of the Christian Family in the Modern World (*Familiaris Consortio*), and his *Letter to Families* form the nucleus of his teaching on marriage and the family. Our Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI has continued this rich teaching. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) has sought to make the authentic teaching of the Church on marriage and the family more available

and to implement it in many ways. Through the USCCB's National Pastoral Initiative on Marriage, the bishops have issued a pastoral letter entitled *Marriage: Love and Life in the Divine Plan* (2009) and continue to offer resources for building strong, healthy, and holy marriages — see *For Your Marriage* (foryourmarriage.org) and *Por Tu Matrimonio* (www.portu-matrimonio.org).

As they seek to promote the teaching on marriage, the bishops also seek to protect the institution of marriage. In this present initiative, entitled *Marriage: Unique for a Reason*, the bishops' Ad Hoc Committee for the Defense of Marriage, through the generous support of the Knights of Columbus, endeavors to answer the call of Pope John Paul II for a serious commitment to the urgent task of “rediscovering the value of the family and marriage” in the face of questions current in society today.² In particular, Pope John Paul II noted the challenges posed by ethical relativism and civil legislation toward the very concept of the “community founded on marriage between a man and a woman.”³ The protection of marriage has reached new intensity in view of the contemporary proposals to redefine marriage to include persons of the same sex. Given the contemporary challenges and modern day questions, *Marriage: Unique for a Reason* is a resource to assist Catholics and all people of good will to understand the basic elements of marriage as a fundamental institution authored by God and “written in the very nature of man and woman.”⁴ For more information on why marriage is unique for a reason, see www.marriageuniqueforareason.org.

VIEWER'S GUIDE

What is marriage?

This is the great question of our time. And there is an answer accessible to every human heart: marriage is the lifelong, exclusive union of one man and one woman.⁵ Some voices today claim this time-tested answer is outdated. We have seen the pain of broken marriages, divorce, and the rise of cohabitation. We have also seen most recently another troubling phenomenon: the current attempts to alter the definition of marriage from the union of a man and a woman to the union of two persons of the same sex. These attempts would seem to say that the time-honored answer that marriage is the union of one man and one woman has now become old-fashioned and obsolete. But does marriage really have nothing essentially to do with the relation between man and woman?

This Viewer's Guide accompanies the video entitled "Made for Each Other," the first video in the *Marriage: Unique for a Reason* series. In this video, Josh and Carrie talk about two simple yet deep concepts: the importance of sexual difference, and the complementarity between man and woman. In this Viewer's Guide, we will explore how sexual difference *is* essential to marriage. The ancient answer to the question of marriage is just as true and applicable and life-giving as ever: marriage can only be between one man and one woman. Everything else falls short. Efforts to redefine marriage misunderstand marriage or sex differences or sex itself.

Today there is frequent discussion about rights, equality, and the avoidance of discrimination. The principles of the common good are important and vital for any society concerned about justice. The Church herself is situated at the forefront of working for social justice. She stands for basic human rights, for respecting human equality, and for avoiding all unjust discrimination, all on the basis that every human person has equal and inviolable dignity, including persons with a homosexual inclination. The dignity of the human person is non-negotiable.

Is there a dichotomy between preserving the truth of marriage on the one hand and supporting the inviolable dignity of every human person on the other? Much of our current popular discourse seems to assert that there is a dichotomy. Those who stand for the truth

of marriage between one man and one woman are often accused of bigotry or of denying equality and civil rights. However, this is a language game not based in reality. Further videos in this series will examine this and other topics in more depth and will explain how these claims overlook both the meaning of marriage and the preservation of marriage as a fundamental social justice issue.

But to fully answer the false claim of discrimination, we have to start at the beginning (see Mt 19:4-6; Mk 10:6-8), at the proper starting point. Otherwise, we might jump into the middle of a topic without a true grasp of the essentials. It would be like trying to learn algebra before learning addition and subtraction, or calculus before algebra. In order to understand the meaning of marriage, we need to begin with sexual difference.

We might think that sexual difference is a commonplace notion. Why elaborate on it further? The reality is that sexual difference and complementarity are all too regularly presumed or dismissed from an honest consideration about marriage. Sometimes sexual difference and complementarity are seen as superficial or irrelevant. However, while sexual difference doesn't say everything there is to say about marriage, it's indispensable for understanding marriage's meaning.

Therefore, in this guide we approach the issue of same-sex "unions" through proclaiming the beauty of the two-in-one-flesh communion of persons between husband and wife as God intended. The numbered headings in bold below correspond to different sound bites from Josh and Carrie. The questions provided can be used for personal reflection or for group discussion.

For more information and further resources, go to www.marriageuniqueforareason.org.⁶

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In the beginning... [00:56] The video begins with the scene of a potter working with water and clay, forming a new piece of pottery. This scene is repeated throughout the video. God is the potter, who creates us out of love and in his image.⁷ "God created man in his image; / in the divine image he created him; / male and female he created them" (Gn 1:27). God created marriage in the very same moment that he created the human person.⁸ The meaning of marriage is inscribed in the very nature of the human person as man and woman. The two distinct elements of water and the dust of clay come together with God's help to

form a unique piece of artwork (see Gn 2:6-7), just as a man and woman can come together in a unique way to form something new, marriage. These latter two “elements” are needed for marriage to exist.

Discussion questions:

- a. What additional meanings might the image of the potter molding the clay as well as the completed piece of pottery have in reference to marriage?*

- b. What is the significance of the close tie between life and marriage from the moment of creation? What does it mean to say that God created marriage in the very same moment that he created the human person?*

Notes:

1. "We were made for each other, as a man and a woman."

[02:43]

Key topics: THE BASIC MEANING OF MARRIAGE;
THE ROLE OF REASON AND FAITH

Carrie states something that is very basic. Man and woman are made for each other in a way that is absolutely unique. We see this through their sexual difference, even if we just look to the human body as male or female. God's plan for men and women is a great one.

Marriage is the lifelong, exclusive union of one man and one woman. It is more than a legal category. Marriage is a communion of persons, a communion of love between husband and wife meant to be the source of the family and society. God's vision and plan for marriage is not idealistic. That's why Jesus referred his interlocutors back to the beginning (see Mt 19:4-6; Mk 10:6-8).⁹

We are meant for union and communion, to be in relation with others.¹⁰ In Genesis, the first book of the Bible, God says, "It is not good for the man to be alone" (Gn 2:18). God's solution to man's isolation is not to create another identical man. God's creation of the animals does not satisfy the longing Adam feels for communion. God creates woman from the body of the man and gives man and woman to each other. Then God says, "For this reason, a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh" (Mt 19:5; cf. Gn 2:24). This is the first marriage.

Even our friends and neighbors who do not accept the truth of the Bible can see the point here. The two becoming one flesh refers to the physical act of sexual intercourse, as well as to the spiritual communion between the man and the woman. People from every religion, or no religion at all, can confirm the power and uniqueness of a man and a woman "becoming one flesh" with each other in marriage.

In other words, the truth of marriage between one man and one woman can be known by human reason through the natural moral law (the law according to the *nature of the person*, not just biological or physical laws), always with the help of God's grace. The truth of marriage is not only a concern of the Church or religion — it's truth for everyone. As

Catholics, we also understand that faith sheds light on marriage. Christ raised marriage between the baptized to be a sacramental image of his love for the Church. Faith and reason don't conflict here. In fact, they never do.¹¹

Discussion questions:

- a. We might hear the argument today that marriage as the union of a man and a woman is solely a religious reality and that the state should be allowed to define and treat marriage in whatever way it chooses. Based on the above, why is this view incorrect?*

- b. How do reason and faith not conflict when it comes to marriage? In other words, how does the sacrament of marriage, which is between a baptized man and a baptized woman, build upon, and not detract from, the basic and reasonable truths at the heart of every marriage?*

Notes:

2. “That connection . . . to be authentic, it has to be the whole person . . . Men and women are made for each other emotionally, sexually, psychologically!”

[03:35]

.....
Key topics: SEXUAL DIFFERENCE AND COMPLEMENTARITY

Carrie is talking about the “connection” or communion that is marriage. Marriage necessarily involves the whole person. That’s what the vows are about — a free and total promise of fidelity, permanence, and openness to life made to the other, in good times and bad, through thick and thin. Such vows can only be exchanged between a man and a woman. In other words, sexual difference is essential to marriage.

Sexual difference concerns the whole person, as Carrie points out. Only through this difference can a man and a woman give themselves fully and love each other as spouses. Only a man and a woman can commit to the other in such a way as to be married, to be husband and wife. This isn’t unjust discrimination; it’s distinction, a matter of simply respecting reality. The promise of marriage speaks a language. Part of the essential grammar of this language is sexual difference. Without it, marriage can’t be spoken of.¹²

Carrie later remarks, “Our sexual difference doesn’t compete; it complements.” Men and women are equal but they are also different. Difference here is not bad; it is a great and necessary good. “It’s constructive,” as Josh says. It’s the avenue for life-giving love, a fundamental reference point for all human relationships. Sexual difference is what enables a man and a woman to form a unique bond for life. A husband gives to his wife what only a husband can give. Likewise, a wife gives to her husband what only a wife can give.

Discussion questions:

- a. *Do you think sexual difference, man to woman and woman to man, is understood and appreciated today? Why or why not?*

- b. *How can we help others reflect on the importance of sexual difference and complementarity?*

Notes:

A large, empty, light beige rectangular area intended for taking notes, occupying most of the page below the header and above the footer.

3. "Making love and having children . . . that depends on our difference."

[04:43]

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Key topics: SEXUAL DIFFERENCE AS THE AVENUE TOWARDS TRUE UNION
AND LIFE; MARRIAGE IS A UNIQUE COMMITMENT

This is a key line. Let's pause to take in what Josh is saying . . . Life-giving love — the two-in-one-flesh communion of persons — depends on sexual difference. In simple terms, sex and babies depend on the difference between man and woman. The ability to "make love"¹³ assumes that the right context is already in place, that the vows have been exchanged, bringing about husband and wife. "Making love" is about self-giving. The husband gives his "body-person" (his whole self) to his wife; the wife gives her "body-person" to her husband. The spouses give themselves and receive each other *in and through their difference*.

As Josh says, "every natural process of the body" can be done naturally by oneself — "everything but making love and having children," which depends upon a *different body-person*. Sexual difference is the avenue towards real, "body-personal" union, a union that is also open to life.

Love and commitment are important in marriage, as they are important in many relationships among family and friends. But marriage involves a unique love and commitment. As counter-cultural as this may sound, marriage depends on the capacity to form a true union of persons through the body, that is, through sex. Such a true union is by its nature ordered toward life and is meant to remain always open to life. Why is this counter-cultural? Sex has so frequently been emptied of its real meaning and significance. It has become de-personalized, accepted as a casual or recreational occurrence. Sex's personal meaning and responsibilities are many times ignored, but this disregard bears harmful and tragic consequences, whether manifest in contraception, unhealthy attachment and broken relationships, STDs, the tragedy of abortion, depression . . . and the list could go on. This is not God's plan for sex. Sex has been made for marriage, and only a woman and a man are able to form through marriage an intimate union of love and life, a union that deservingly holds unique status and responsibilities in society.

Discussion questions:

a. What makes marriage distinctive compared to other relationships? Why are love and commitment in marriage unique?

b. How can recovering the personal significance of the body help in recovering the personal meaning of sex as a conjugal act, i.e., an act of married love?

Notes:

4. "That's why it's unique to a man and a woman."

[05:03]

Key topics: THE ESSENTIAL DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MARRIAGE
AND SAME-SEX UNIONS; HELPFUL ANALOGIES

Josh here states a simple yet central fact of human life and history. Marriage is unique to a man and a woman. This is not arbitrary or fabricated. There's a *reason* for it: "That's why . . ." In fact, there are many reasons. But they rest first on sexual difference. *The difference is the difference.* Without sexual difference, one can't speak of marriage or anything analogous to marriage.

This clearly relates to the question of same-sex "marriage" and the various types of same-sex "unions." The Church recognizes that this can be an emotional and difficult issue. It's important always to consider the human person. Every human person is made in the image and likeness of God, with a dignity that can never be erased.¹⁴ Every person deserves love and respect, as well as truth. "As I have loved you, so you also should love one another" (Jn 13:34). When the Church teaches difficult truths, she witnesses to Christ who "loved to the end" (cf. Jn 13:1).

The Church intends no disrespect for our brothers and sisters who experience same-sex attraction. The Church reminds us that we are all called to the Lord's grace and mercy. Christ died for each and every one of us. The Church reaches out to persons who experience same-sex attraction.¹⁵ She calls all people to a life of holy fulfillment, that is, to a deeper and fuller union with Jesus Christ. As support along the way in a life of chastity and virtue, the Church speaks to the importance and great good of healthy and holy friendships, family and community support, prayer and sacramental grace. Any lack of respect, lack of compassion, or lack of sensitivity towards persons with a homosexual inclination is unacceptable. The protection and promotion of marriage as the union of one man and one woman is and must always be found within this context of love and respect for all persons.

Fundamentally, what's missing in the assumption that two persons of the same sex can marry is sexual difference. Two persons of the same sex are too similar to form a complementary

union of persons. Bodily, two men or two women are “the same,” not different or distinct. Healthy and holy friendship is possible, but not conjugal union. A conjugal or marital union comes about only through sexual difference. Sexual acts between persons of the same sex are neither unitive nor procreative in kind.¹⁶ Such acts can never form a true union of bodies and persons and are contrary not only to the Church’s teaching but also to the truth of the very persons who engage in them, as witnessed to by the language of the body.¹⁷ On the other hand, spouses give themselves to each other in a sexually and personally distinctive way. Only a husband and a wife have the space or capacity to receive truly each other’s distinctive sexual gift, and only a husband and a wife can make a gift of their selves to the other in that way.

Take Josh’s analogy. Marriage is like water. The distinct elements of oxygen and hydrogen combine to make water, something totally new and unique. Without the different elements, water cannot exist. Likewise, without the difference of man and woman, marriage cannot exist.

Carrie’s analogy also helps. A woman and a man are like a violinist and cellist, respectively, who play the same piece of music (i.e., their humanity) in different but harmonious ways (i.e., as woman and as man). A man and a woman complement each other in a totally unique way. Without this complementarity grounded in sexual difference, marriage simply cannot be.

There’s nothing mean-spirited in recognizing and protecting the unique truth of marriage. It’s the truth of love and the truth of the person, and living in accord with the truth will always be what’s best for us. Even when difficult, the truth sets us free.

Discussion questions:

- a. How is the truth of marriage between man and woman grounded in the truth of the human person?*

- b. How can the consideration above assist in helping others understand that preserving the truth of marriage between one man and one woman is not an issue of unjust discrimination?*

- c. What other analogies or explanations might help people understand the uniqueness of marriage?*

Notes:

5. "It's not just about biology . . ."

[06:06]

Key topics: SEXUAL DIFFERENCE IS MORE THAN ANATOMY;
SPOUSAL MEANING OF THE BODY; ROLE OF SCIENCE

Returning to sexual difference, Josh makes an important point. The difference between a man and a woman is not just an insignificant biological fact.¹⁸ "We're wired differently," as Josh says. Biology is important, but the body and the person are not reducible to biology. Sexual difference involves the whole person, body and soul.

Furthermore, as Pope John Paul II taught, the body has a "spousal meaning."¹⁹ The body, in its masculinity or femininity, reveals that we are persons who are made to be a gift to others and to be received as a gift by others. This spousal meaning of the body speaks an essential truth relevant to all people, not only those called to marriage. It also indicates what was said above, that the body is more than just a biological reality. The body reveals the person. We're not souls trapped in bodies. We're "body-persons." We don't just *have* a body. We *are* our bodies in a real sense. Our bodies are fundamental to who we are. The body of a man and the body of a woman are distinct, *personal* realities.

A husband and a wife have unique and personal gifts that they offer to each other. Not only do they give each other their physical bodies, but they give their distinct persons to each other, as man and woman, *in and through their bodies*, in and through their sexual difference. Their bodies speak a unique language of love, reserved specifically for marriage. Neither biology nor culture alone can explain this. It has to do with the nature of the human person as a unity of body and soul, created as man and woman.²⁰

That being said, it is a curious phenomenon of our time that, while the natural sciences have advanced in so many areas, including in the study of the human person, an appreciation and application of these sciences in relation to sexual difference and human sexuality in general are often lacking in our contemporary society. Why is this? It's a worthy question to consider. For example, when it comes to food and diet these days, we do not hear things like "eat whatever and however much you want because there won't be any consequences"

or “we’ll handle the consequences as they come.” Medically and scientifically speaking, no one buys that.

But what about the body and sex? Our culture’s prevailing philosophy seems to deny that there are powerful consequences to sex. Even when faced with the facts of such consequences, the dominant philosophy continues to say “do whatever you want with your body — in fact, we’ll do whatever it takes to let you do anything to your body, regardless of the consequences . . .” Sounds like a disconnect here and a lack of medical and scientific rigor. And what about sexual difference? While some play down the reality of sexual difference or limit it to the difference between female and male anatomy, sciences such as neurobiology, gynecology, evolutionary psychology, endocrinology, and reproductive physiology — to name a few — point to the intricate, unique, and complementary physiologies of women and men.

Sexual difference is more than a surface difference in human anatomy. Contemporary attempts to explain sexual difference as a socially constructed reality fall short of simple science. The body/person dualism of today (i.e., which holds that the body is separable from the person and that we can therefore do whatever we want to with our bodies) is neither realistic nor scientific. All of this is to say that while sexual difference is more than a biological fact, biology and the related sciences can be of great help in appreciating the unique gifts of men and women.

Discussion questions:

a. How is the human body more than just biology? What does it mean to say that “the body reveals the person”? Do we see ourselves as gifts?

b. In light of our culture’s growing awareness of the importance of bodily health and medically up-to-date information (e.g., dieting, exercise, addressing obesity), do you think the same awareness is operative when it comes to treating the topic of sex and sexual difference? Why or why not?

Notes:

A large, solid light-brown rectangular area intended for taking notes, occupying most of the page below the 'Notes:' label.

6. "We share a common humanity, but our sexual differences are essential to who we are."

[06:27]

Key topics: EQUALITY OF MAN AND WOMAN;
SEXUAL DIFFERENCE IS RELEVANT NOT ONLY TO MARRIAGE

Carrie's line says something significant about men and women. Every woman and man share the same humanity and the same dignity as human persons made in the image of God. Each is a complete human person. They're equal in their humanity and dignity, but they're not simply the same. Their sexual difference, as a man or a woman, remains important at every level. This is why talk about sexual difference not only concerns marriage. Our sexual identity as a man or a woman is meant to be acknowledged and accepted.²¹ It has significance for all the various ways we relate to others, whether we're married or not, whether we're a mother or father or not.

For example, the significance of male and female differentiation goes beyond reproduction or procreation. Various branches of science, such as those mentioned above, can show that men and women differ in a whole variety of dimensions. We may have conversations differently; take risks differently; form and process relationships differently; respond to threats differently. These differences do not imply that one sex is superior to the other. Men and women are different, validly different. Admitting this does not diminish either sex but serves to enhance their unity.

Of course, men and women differ among themselves, as well as differing from each other. Sex differences in each and every trait need not be present in each and every individual woman or man. But the structural differences between male and female bodies allow a husband and a wife to join together in the one-flesh union and bring forth new life together.

Our maleness or femaleness is essential to our identity as persons. Our gender is not something that is pasted onto us as an after-thought, or that is an incidental part of who we are. Male and female are two different ways of being a human person, body and soul. When we deny our identity as sexually differentiated beings, we diminish our humanity.

Discussion questions:

a. *In the video, Carrie presented a positive experience of a daughter's relationship with her father, though unfortunately this is not always the case. How is sexual difference important when it comes to the roles and responsibilities of parenting, that is, mothering and fathering?*

b. *How do equality and difference go together when speaking of man and woman? How does complementarity depend upon difference?*

Notes:

**7. "Every time we make love . . . we're making life . . . giving life . . .
It's not just sex . . . I come alive, and there's a sense of forever in that."**

[09:00]

.....

Key topics: MARRIED LOVE IS UNITIVE AND PROCREATIVE;
THE DEEPER MEANING OF SEX; THE GOOD OF FRIENDSHIP

While not every husband may put into words what Josh expressed, Josh is speaking about more than just personal experience. He's getting at the deeper meaning of sex, of conjugal love, the love between husband and wife. The unique bond of spousal love *is itself* life-giving. This is what the Church means by the inseparability of the unitive and procreative aspects of the conjugal act.²²

The Church's teaching on marriage and sexual difference is deeply connected with her teaching on sex itself. According to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (no. 2360), "Sexuality is ordered to the conjugal love of man and woman. In marriage the physical intimacy of the spouses becomes a sign and a pledge of spiritual communion." Human sexuality is an organic, holistic reality, and the sole proper context for sexual activity in marriage. Sex is both procreative and unitive, meaning that sex can lead to new life and unite the spouses.²³

How about we go deeper: Within the context of marriage, these three elements, sexual difference, spousal love, and natural procreation (fruitfulness), work together.²⁴ A husband and wife's love for each other directs their sexual energies exclusively toward their spouse. Spouses' sexual activity brings them closer together, and may result in a child whom they both love. The child is equally the child of both husband and wife, now father and mother. And when these elements are together and respected, the child is welcomed as a gift. Also, as expressed by Josh and Carrie in their openness to life, married love is still called to be fruitful even without the blessing of a child.²⁵

The modern alternative to the Church's teaching is that sex is a private recreational activity, that it may be deliberately made sterile and has no moral or social significance. In this view, it is "perfectly proper" to disconnect sex from marriage, from procreation, and even from love. Sexual difference becomes reduced to a superficial and arbitrary social

construct. The modern world teaches that we can have sex without babies, have babies without sex, and have either without any connection with one's husband or wife. The modern world considers these legitimate expressions of our independence and freedom.

This downgrading of the sexual act to immediate pleasure, rather than the true and complete union of two persons, man and woman, has gone hand in hand with the increasing isolation between men and women. Sex in the context of marriage creates a deep and meaningful connection between the sexes. But in modern society, sex is often focused on the self and on personal pleasure, rather than on mutual self-giving. In this environment, where sex is detached from marriage, sex ceases to be a union of anything, but rather simply and exclusively an occasion for mutual stimulation. Sex in such circumstances does not create a union of persons but deters such a union. Instead of being a couple who give to each other, objectively the people are a pair of individuals who take from each other.

In this context as well, authentic and holy friendship, a good for all people, has suffered and has been devalued. The heroic recovery of the inseparable connection between chastity and true, virtuous friendship is needed today.

Discussion questions:

- a. Have you heard it said that the Church's teaching on sex and marriage is only concerned about procreation? The commonplace view about sex seems to reject procreation as important, but in the process it also reduces the unitive significance of sex. What areas of the Church's teaching are being missed or misunderstood? How can the wisdom of the Church on the inseparability of the unitive and procreative aspects of conjugal love be fostered today?*
- b. The public proposal to "redefine" marriage to include persons of the same sex is fairly recent. How is it connected to a larger confusion around the meaning of the person and sex?*
- c. How can a recovery of the true meaning of chastity and friendship assist in a rediscovery of the authentic meaning of the human person?*

Notes:

8. "The gift for life . . . the gift of life."

[09:57]

Key topics: MARRIAGE AS GIFT; INDISPENSABLE MODEL FOR THE WORLD

Josh sums everything up in these concise words. Marriage is the gift for life and the gift of life. It's unique and irreplaceable — the fundamental institution for life. There is nothing else like it.

The Church affirms that the love of husband and wife is a great good in and of itself, even if, for non-deliberate reasons, they do not receive the gift of a child. Marriage uniquely bridges sexual difference without emptying the difference of man and woman of its meaning and value.

The Church also teaches that human marriage is a foreshadowing of the marriage between Christ and his Church and that sacramental marriage actually participates in and shows forth the love between Christ and his Church (see Eph 5:28-33).

Marriage lived in truth is an indispensable model of communion for the world and is always an affirmation of life. The love of husband and wife reminds the couple and the rest of the world that no one is a completely isolated individual, that we need one another at the most fundamental level. This love is meant to be the context for welcoming, forming, and educating new life. This is why marriage, as a personal relationship, has always been recognized to have great public significance. The love of spouses, the responsibilities of mothers and fathers, and the rights of children — all are tied to the unique truth of marriage and its protection and promotion.

The Church will never waver in her teaching that marriage is the union of a woman and a man. Marriage is the union of two distinct persons: man and woman, who, in the sacrament, signify Christ and his Church and embody the very love between them. From the beginning, man and woman are made for each other. To abandon sexual difference in marriage would be to abandon the quest for unity between men and women.

Discussion questions:

a. *How is marriage the “gift for life” and the “gift of life”?*

b. *How is this meaning inseparable from the truth of marriage as the union of one man and one woman?*

Notes:

TRUTH MATTERS

Truth matters. This is why the Church teaches that marriage is the union of one man and one woman. This truth is absolutely essential for respecting the dignity of every person.²⁶ It's a truth grounded in our identity as human persons, as man and woman. But even more: The total body and soul sharing of life between husband and wife, which includes their sexual union, reflects and mirrors in some way the divine communion of persons. The Church invites all people to promote, strengthen, and protect the truth and beauty of marriage. Marriage is unique for a reason.²⁷

.....

*For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and
be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.*

(Mt 19:5)



MARRIAGE
Unique for a Reason

NOTES

1. See Austin Flannery, ed., *Vatican Council II: Volume 1: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, new rev. ed. (Northport, NY: Costello Publishing, 1996).

2. See Pope John Paul II, General Audience (December 1, 1999), www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/audiences/1999/documents/hf_jp-ii_aud_01121999_en.html.

3. Ibid.

4. *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC), 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: Libreria Editrice Vaticana–United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2000), no. 1603.

5. See CCC, nos. 1601-1605.

6. In addition, for those interested in further references, a Resource Booklet for priests, deacons, catechists, and teachers also accompanies this Viewer's Guide.

7. See Gn 2:6-7; Is 45:9, 12; Jer 18:6; and Rom 9:20-21.

8. Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris Consortio* (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops [USCCB], 1982), no. 3. See also CCC, nos. 1602-1605.

9. See Pope John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body* (TOB), trans. Michael Waldstein (Boston: Pauline Books & Media, 2006), 1-4 (audience numbers); Pope John Paul II, Encyclical *Veritatis Splendor* (Washington, DC: USCCB, 1993), nos. 22 and 53.

10. See CCC, nos. 45, 371-372, 1603-1604, and 1877-1879.

11. See CCC, no. 159.

12. This is also why sex outside of marriage doesn't make any sense. Sex itself speaks a language of total commitment and gift — faithful and indissoluble love. That's the language of marriage. Sex outside of marriage always says something that is untrue. It's pretending. Real love depends on truth, and truth depends on love (see Pope Benedict XVI, Encyclical *Caritas in Veritate* [Washington, DC: USCCB, 2009], nos. 1-9).

13. "Making love" is a colloquial phrase used to capture in simple language the uniqueness of the marital embrace or the conjugal act. Of course, since God is love (see 1 Jn 4:8, 16), all love is a gift from God. The love between husband and wife is only possible because God has "first loved us" (1 Jn 4:19).

14. See Gn 1:26-27; 5:1-2, 9:6b-7; Wis 17:1; and Second Vatican Council, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes* (1965), no. 12.

15. See CCC, nos. 2357-2359. See also USCCB, *Ministry to Persons with a Homosexual Inclination: Guidelines for Pastoral Care* (Washington, DC: USCCB, 2006).

16. “Procreative in kind,” meaning, “with the capacity to make life,” or “ordered to life.” Even spouses who are infertile or sterile (for non-deliberate reasons) or beyond child-bearing years still express their love in sexual acts that are “procreative in kind,” open to life, open to the other.

17. See TOB, 103:4-6; 104:1, 4, 7-9; 105:1-6; 106:1-4; and others throughout the text.

18. See Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF), *Letter on the Collaboration of Men and Women in the Church and in the World* (2004), no. 8, www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20040731_collaboration_en.html.

19. See TOB, 13:1-16:2. See also Pope John Paul II’s *Familiaris Consortio*, no. 37, and *Veritatis Splendor*, no. 15.

20. See CCC, nos. 362-372. See also Pope John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor*, nos. 48-50.

21. See CCC, nos. 2332-2333.

22. See Pope Paul VI, Encyclical Letter *Humanae Vitae* (1968), no. 12, www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_25071968_humanae-vitae_en.html; CDF, *Instruction Donum Vitae* (1987), part 2, no. 4, www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_19870222_respect-for-human-life_en.html; and CDF, *Instruction Dignitas Personae* (Washington, DC: USCCB, 2008).

23. For more information on married love and the Church’s teaching on the difference between Natural Family Planning and contraception, see USCCB, *Married Love and the Gift of Life* (Washington, DC: USCCB, 2006).

24. See Angelo Cardinal Scola, *The Nuptial Mystery*, trans. Michelle K. Borrás (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005), 82-109 and 362-367.

25. Even when a child does not come forth (for non-deliberate reasons), authentic married love is still fruitful. On the different ways married love can be fruitful in service to life, see Pope John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio*, no. 41.

26. A subsequent video in this series will treat the importance of marriage in its service to human dignity and to the common good.

27. For catechists and teachers who may be using this Viewer’s Guide for a class or study group, further notes and references, as well as teaching helps, may be found in the *Made for Each Other* Resource Booklet for Priests, Deacons, Catechists, and Teachers.

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Made For Each Other

A CATECHETICAL AND EDUCATIONAL AID ON
SEXUAL DIFFERENCE AND COMPLEMENTARITY

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This Viewer's Guide accompanies the DVD entitled *Made for Each Other*, the first in a series of materials available through the initiative of the USCCB Ad Hoc Committee for the Defense of Marriage entitled *Marriage: Unique for a Reason*. *Made for Each Other* addresses two areas essential for a proper understanding of the true meaning of marriage: sexual difference and the complementarity between man and woman. The Viewer's Guide includes questions for personal reflection or group discussion.

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Made For Life

A CATECHETICAL AND EDUCATIONAL AID ON
THE GIFT OF CHILDREN AND THE INDISPENSABLE PLACE
OF FATHERS AND MOTHERS IN MARRIAGE AND SOCIETY



MARRIAGE
Unique for a Reason



ABOUT THE ART

Saints Joachim and Anne are the father and mother of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Mary is the fruit of their marriage. By a singular grace of God in view of the merits of Jesus, she was preserved from all stain of Original Sin from the moment of her conception. Thus it is in the context of married life and conjugal love that Mary is prepared to receive the Divine Logos, the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ our Lord. Jesus is the Logos, the “Reason” at the heart of all reason and truth, including the truth of marriage. The marriage between Joachim and Anne is a significant witness to why marriage is “unique for a reason.”

The Ad Hoc Committee for the Defense of Marriage is grateful to the artist Rev. Marko Rupnik for the use of this image.

Made For Life

.....
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THE GIFT OF CHILDREN AND THE INDISPENSABLE PLACE
OF FATHERS AND MOTHERS IN MARRIAGE AND SOCIETY

Viewer's Guide



MARRIAGE
Unique for a Reason



MARRIAGE: UNIQUE FOR A REASON

The *Made for Life* Viewer's Guide was developed as a resource by the Ad Hoc Committee for the Defense of Marriage of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). It was reviewed by the committee chairman, Bishop Salvatore J. Cordileone, and has been authorized for publication by the undersigned.

Msgr. David J. Malloy, STD
General Secretary, USCCB

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This material is intended as a catechetical and educational aid to be used as a resource by a priest, deacon, catechist, or teacher. The video, viewer's guide, and resource booklet form an integrated whole, and as such, complete the proper context of this tool.



Introduction

Fecundity is a gift, an end of marriage, for conjugal love naturally tends to be fruitful. A child does not come from outside as something added on to the mutual love of the spouses, but springs from the very heart of that mutual giving, as its fruit and fulfillment.

– (Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 2366)¹

The vocation of marriage is a unique call to an *adventure of love and life*, where love is life-giving in a matchless way. Marriage, in its inmost essence as the union of husband and wife, is open to the child. The love between husband and wife – what we call authentic spousal love – is never self-enclosed but remains open to life.² Married love is different than any other kind of love or bond between two persons. In an utterly unique way, the bond between a man and a woman as husband and wife is *made for life*, made for fruitful love, especially for the possibility of receiving the gift of life and becoming stewards of it.

What does this mean? In simple terms, it means that the core meaning of marriage cannot be separated from a consideration of the child and the roles of a mother and a father. Marriage is the fundamental and irreplace-

able pro-child social institution. Just as sexual difference is essential to marriage, so too are the good of the child and the place of motherhood and fatherhood. To leave these out of the equation is to misunderstand the heart and adventure of what marriage is all about.

Openness to children, then, has a major impact on how we view proposals to “redefine” the meaning of marriage. Let’s explain. “Redefining” marriage to include two persons of the same sex in effect proposes to deconstruct and ultimately empty marriage of its most basic elements – man and woman, father and mother, and the child. All these would become simply arbitrary or extrinsic to marriage’s meaning. But the question remains: Is marriage simply about the desire and consent of any two adults or any two people?

This Viewer’s Guide accompanies the video *Made for Life*, the second video in the *Marriage: Unique for a Reason* series. The first video, *Made for Each Other*, examined the meaning of sexual difference and complementarity between men and women and explained why male-female sexual difference is essential to marriage. The second video, *Made for Life*, explores another essential aspect of marriage: openness to the gift of a child, as well as the indispensable place of motherhood and fatherhood. Sexual difference between husband and wife is again crucial here. Men and women – fathers and mothers – matter not only for the beginning of a child’s life, but also for his or her fullest development. In *Made for Life*, married couples discuss the gift of children and the importance of fathers and mothers, and thus give further witness to why marriage is unique for a reason.

In this guide, we proclaim the beauty of marriage as fundamentally *pro-child*, protecting the gift of the child and preserving the vital roles of mothers and fathers. This proclamation, in turn, contributes a vital piece to the local and national discussions about the meaning of marriage. The numbered headings in bold below correspond to particular statements from the married couples in the video. These quotes illuminate three important themes in the video: (1) children are a gift, (2) fathers and mothers matter, and (3) sexual difference matters. The questions provided can be used for personal reflection or for group discussion.

For more information and further resources, including access to other videos in the series, go to www.marriageuniqueforareason.org.

MARRIAGE: UNIQUE FOR A REASON

**"Male and female he created them.
God blessed them, saying: 'Be fertile and multiply.'" (Gn 1:27-28)**

[00:15]

The video begins with an image of little seedlings growing in a healthy bed of soil. These seedlings rely not only on the rich soil and its nutrients, but also on a proper amount of sunlight and water. The seedlings can be seen as an analogy for children. Just as plants need the proper elements not only to begin to grow but also to flourish, children need the proper elements as well. It takes a man and a woman, with God's help, to bring a child into existence.³ It makes sense that if sexual difference is essential for the beginning of life, it is also vital for the caring of that life. Moms and dads matter for the duration of a child's life. Marriage is the institution meant to ensure that a child is welcomed as a gift to be nurtured and raised by the uniquely different love that only a mother and a father can give. Just as a seedling needs the presence of soil, sunlight, and water to grow and flourish, so too a child needs the natural foundation of life and love uniquely provided in the loving marriage of a man and a woman open to the gift of a child.

Discussion questions:

a. In the Genesis passage cited above, God blesses man and woman at their creation and calls them (even commands them) to fruitfulness. What is one reason from the video that this blessing and call to fruitfulness is unique to a man and a woman?

b. Before moving on, discuss the following question: What are two or three reasons you can think of that a child needs a mother and a father?

Children Are a Gift

1. "Being open to children is so foundational. When you're open to children, you're not just opening yourself to the possibility of the gift of life, but you're [also] opening yourself up to your spouse."

[00:23]

Key topics: OPENNESS TO LIFE; LOVE AND LIFE ARE INSEPARABLE

Marriage is made for life. It is a singular institution that brings a man and a woman together as husband and wife, who vow themselves into a union directed not only toward themselves but simultaneously to the gift of new life. As Katie relates, this openness to life is part and parcel of married love, and it is deeply *personal*, that is, it accords with the nature of the human person. Openness to life also accords with the nature of love itself. As the bishops of the United States taught in their pastoral letter on marriage, "It is the nature of love to overflow, to be life-giving."⁴

Marriage is the natural human context wherein a child is properly conceived and welcomed into life as the "supreme gift of marriage."⁵ And in this stance of openness and welcoming, meant to mark every aspect of married love, a husband and a wife grow closer to each other. They share themselves fully with each other, inviting deeper trust and the freedom that comes from each spouse making a gift of himself or herself to the other. Being open to one's spouse and being open to children is one and the same choice and act. As Pope John Paul II taught, "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."⁶

In other words, in marriage, *love and life are inseparable*. This is what the Church means when she teaches that the unitive and procreative meanings of married love are insepara-

ble.⁷ In embracing each other, husband and wife embrace their capacity to conceive a child and are called to do nothing deliberate to close part of themselves to the gift of the other. This does not mean that a child will be—or should be—conceived from every act of sexual intimacy. Marriage is not a mechanical factory for the mass production of children. The Church teaches couples in their openness to life to practice responsible parenthood by discerning whether or not they have serious reasons, in keeping with God’s plan for marriage, to postpone becoming a father and a mother here and now.⁸

The inseparable connection of love and life means that husband and wife are called to give everything to each other in their acts of intimacy—including their capacity for fruitfulness. Otherwise, their gift of self would not be total. Being open to each other, open to receiving the gift of the other, and *therefore* being open to life, is not something optional for marriage. Instead, it is at the core of marriage, and only a man and a woman can make the radical promise that marriage entails: “A man and woman united in marriage as husband and wife serve as a symbol of both life and love in a way that no other relationship of human persons can.”⁹ This is why marriage can only be between a man and a woman. Persons of the same sex lack the sexual difference that is the necessary foundation for a husband and wife’s ability to live both “gifts”—the total gift of self exchanged between them in marriage, which includes their openness to the gift of a child.¹⁰

Discussion questions:

- a. *What factors do you think make it difficult today for people to understand that authentic married love involves openness to life?*

- b. *What does it mean to say that “being open to children” at the same time “opens yourself up to your spouse”? How does this help shed light on the inseparability of the unitive and procreative meanings of married love?*

- c. *How are openness to life and sexual difference related? Why is this important for understanding the meaning of marriage?*

2. “You give yourself, then, totally and completely . . . saying ‘I love you so much, I’m going to give myself to you as a gift, and I am open to whatever that brings and whatever God wants.’”

[00:36]

Key topics: THE UNIQUE GIFT OF SELF IN MARRIAGE; GIFT OF SELF OPENS TO THE GIFT OF LIFE

Katie is speaking here about the very foundation of what makes marriage “made for life”: the total gift of self between a man and a woman as husband and wife. We have already mentioned this gift of self in marriage, but it deserves some more attention. Indeed, every person is called to a generous and sincere gift of self.¹¹ But marriage is a unique instance of self-gift. In marriage, husband and wife give not just part of themselves to each other, but give *all*—their whole person, body and soul. This gift of self in marriage is not something temporary like a loan; it is meant to last for a lifetime.¹² It is a total, lifelong gift of husband to wife and wife to husband.¹³

A husband and a wife’s total gift of self in marriage, with its lifelong permanence, makes their bond absolutely unique and different from any other relationship between two people. Although two persons of the same sex can have an authentic and holy friendship, only a man and a woman can pledge themselves to each other in marriage. Through their sexual difference, only a husband and a wife can speak the “language” of married love—total, faithful, and fruitful self-gift¹⁴—not only with their words, but also *with their bodies*.¹⁵

The couples in *Made for Life* all bear witness to the fact that the gift of self in marriage, which begins with the spouses, does not end with them. As Pope Paul VI taught, married love is *fruitful* because “it is not confined wholly to the communion of husband and wife; it also aims to go beyond this to bring new life into being.”¹⁶ Precisely because husband and wife are “made for each other,” their bond is “made for life,” made for fruitful love and for the adventure of fatherhood and motherhood by being open to the gift of a child.

Discussion questions:

- a. *What makes marriage a unique kind of self-gift? How is sexual difference important and, in fact, necessary for this kind of self-gift?*
- b. *Is the idea of marriage as a total gift of self appreciated today? Why or why not?*
- c. *What does it mean to say that there is an essential link between the gift of self in marriage and openness to life?*

3. "Children are a gift and a blessing!"

[01:13]

Key topics: CHILDREN AS SUPREME GIFT;
MARRIAGE AS RESPONSIBLE STEWARDSHIP OF THAT GIFT;
PROCREATION AS PARTICIPATION IN GOD'S CREATIVE ACTION

While marriage includes many blessings, the gift of a child is incomparable. Children indeed are the "supreme gift" of marriage.¹⁷ This is witnessed to both by spouses who rejoice at the birth of a son or a daughter, as Tyrone's words above demonstrate, and by those couples who bear the sadness and pain of infertility or miscarriage. Every child is a gift because every child is a unique, irreplaceable human life. The human person "is the only creature on earth that God has wanted for its own sake."¹⁸ In conceiving and giving birth to a child, husband and wife have the awesome responsibility of welcoming a new human life into the world: in fact, a person for whom the world was created, a person for whom God became man, a person called to live with God for all eternity.¹⁹

Because every child is an unrepeatable gift, no one can claim a "right" to have a child. "A child is not something *owed* to one, but is a *gift*. The 'supreme gift of marriage' is a human person. A child may not be considered a piece of property, an idea to which an alleged 'right to a child' may lead."²⁰ The proper attitude of parents toward a child is *joyful receptivity* and awe that the Creator would entrust this new life to a mother and father.²¹

Because the child is always a gift, it would make sense that any consideration of marriage's meaning would take children seriously into account. Unfortunately, this is not the case. Children today are often seen as a "product" to be manufactured or obtained at whatever cost, or discarded at will.²² Pop culture icons show off their children as if they were "trophies." In all of these instances, the child is *used* as an object, not respected as a gift. The proposal to redefine marriage to include two persons of the same sex is a radical instance of "forgetting" the gift of the child. This proposal in effect subverts the most fun-

damental pro-child institution into a self-serving relationship defined in reference to the whims and desires of adults, not the needs of a child, the most vulnerable among us.

Marriage protects the gift that every child is. As the union of husband and wife, marriage is the natural and proper context wherein every child ought to be welcomed as a gift. Children deserve to be conceived in love and received into an environment grounded in the unity between a mother and a father. In this way, marriage is uniquely made for stewardship over life, stewardship of the gift of children. Human experience across every human society attests to the singular role of marriage in keeping together a mother and a father in their shared task of parenting, of being stewards of the gift of new life.²³

The truth that every child is a gift also reminds us that husband and wife are not the ultimate source of life. Instead, every child traces his or her origin directly back to God and can truly call him “my Father.” In the video, Cora and Ernie share the meaning of their son Matthew’s name, “gift of God”; truly every child is a gift of God. “*God ‘willed’ man from the very beginning, and God ‘wills’ him in every act of conception and every human birth.*”²⁴ Every human soul is “created immediately by God—it is not ‘produced’ by the parents.”²⁵ In conceiving and giving birth to new life, a husband and a wife *participate* in God’s creative action.²⁶

This capacity to participate in bringing forth new human life—the capacity to *procreate*—is inscribed within the personal, bodily reality of the human person, created male and female. Only a man and a woman, as husband and wife, have the capacity to welcome the gift of the child as a unique human life who springs “from the very heart” of their marital self-giving.²⁷ As the bishops have explained, “Participating in the creative work of God means participating in the self-emptying or self-giving love of God, the rendering of one’s whole being into a gift.”²⁸

Discussion questions:

- a. What does it mean to say that a child is always a gift, and indeed the “supreme gift” of marriage?*
- b. What are ways in which our society treats children as “products” rather than gifts? What can we do to help recover public awareness that every child deserves to be treated as a gift?*
- c. How does the proposal to redefine marriage to include two persons of the same sex neglect both a proper recognition of the gift of a child and the stewardship entailed by that gift?*

4. "Since having children, it's been the best reflection of God's love that I could ever define or try to describe. / The idea that we were adding on to our family brought great joy."

[01:44]

Key topics: THE CALL TO WELCOME A CHILD; THE CALL TO BE A CHILD;
HOPE AND JOY FOR THE WORLD

To welcome a child is to welcome hope. Lashawntra and Kevin both attest to the love, joy, and hope experienced when a husband and wife welcome a child. The child stands as a sign at odds with the doomsdayers, those who turn life into constant worry and fretfulness, and counter to the overly self-assured, those who presume upon their own capacities without trusting and hoping in God. The child points to the higher way of hope, beyond despair and presumption, because the child reminds us, by his or her very existence, that life and love are stronger than death,²⁹ and that life is worth living.

How does this relate to marriage? Recall the scene in the video where the wife joyfully announces to her husband that a new little baby is on the way. Marriage, as the union of husband and wife, is the only relationship that, by its very nature, is made to welcome the hope that comes with each new human life, and to connect a child with his or her biological father and mother. The call—the vocation—to welcome a child is uniquely built within the essence of marriage. Husbands and wives who stand ready to welcome children are a decisive witness to joyful hope, despite whatever hardships and sufferings come in this life.

Jesus regularly pointed to the child.³⁰ He knew that the child reveals to us our deepest identity and calling. This may seem ironic, since a little child is helpless, defenseless, and “non-productive” by worldly standards. Even the disciples had a difficult time understanding this at first. The great temptation over the centuries has been to overlook and dismiss the child. And yet remember Jesus’ words: “Amen, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever humbles himself like

this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven” (Mt 18:3-4). All the successes and riches of the world don’t add up to the gift of being a child of God, the fundamental calling that unlocks the meaning of life. We are all called to become children of God (see 1 Jn 3:1), sons and daughters in Jesus, the Son of God (see Gal 4:4-7).

In the presence of an infant, we are reminded that we do not create ourselves, but are given by God, through the help of both our mother and father. The child unlocks for us the beauty of life as a sheer, undeserved, abundant *gift* from our heavenly Father. Life is meant to be lived in hope and in joy. Marriage, as the total, faithful, and life-giving union of a man and a woman, has the distinctive mission to share this hope and joy with the world.

Discussion questions:

- a. *Why do you think Jesus places so much importance on becoming like children?*
- b. *Why is the birth of a new child a sign of hope?*
- c. *How is marriage, through the generous welcoming of a child, meant to show that love, and not fear, is at the basis of our existence?*

5. “We were open to life, whether through . . . giving birth or through the adoption process.”

[02:00]

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Key topics: INFERTILE COUPLES; COURAGEOUS WITNESS OF ADOPTION;
OPENNESS TO LIFE ESSENTIAL FOR ALL MARRIAGES

As Kevin and Brenda witness in the video, openness to life has a meaning more profound than popularly recognized today. In the midst of recent attempts to “redefine” marriage, the objection is sometimes raised that there are many husbands and wives who are unable to have children. What makes them different from a relationship between two persons of the same sex, who also can’t have children of their own?

The truth is, there is an unbridgeable difference between a spousal union (a male-female couple united as husband and wife) and a relationship between two men or two women. This difference is sexual difference. First, conceiving a child requires the joint action of both a man and a woman. This intimate participation in conceiving a child is simply impossible for two persons of the same sex. Two men or two women cannot—ever—have a child *together*.³¹

Second, sexual union between a husband and wife is the kind of union *apt for generation*. That is, male-female intimacy is the natural route through which a child comes into the world. There are times when a husband and wife may be unable to conceive a child due to infertility or sterility (for reasons beyond their control) or advanced age. Still, their sexual union remains the *kind of union* that expresses total self-gift and openness to the gift of the child.³² The situation is very different for two persons of the same sex. Even if both are young and perfectly healthy, any sexual behavior between them can never form a true union and will never be able to welcome a new child into the world.

The painful cross of infertility does not mean that a couple’s marriage is not fruitful. As Pope John Paul II taught, “Physical sterility . . . can be for spouses the occasion for other

important services to the life of the human person, for example, adoption, various forms of educational work, and assistance to other families and to poor or handicapped children.”³³ In particular, the Church praises adoption as an expression of “true parental love,” which “is ready to go beyond the bonds of flesh and blood in order to accept children from other families.”³⁴

Adoption, as a response to a tragedy or loss, is never meant to be held up as an “alternative” to the natural family of father, mother, and their children. Instead, adoption “takes its form” from the natural family. There is a difference between generously responding to an abandoned child’s need for a mother and a father, on the one hand, and deliberately depriving a child of a mother and a father by placing him or her in the care of two men or two women.

In sum, openness to life is essential to every marriage. Husbands and wives who are not blessed with children of their own still exemplify the fruitful communion of persons in a way two persons of the same sex never can. This communion, built on the sexual difference between husband and wife, opens the door to adoption and to other generous forms of service while still respecting the beauty of sexual difference, the needs of children, and the indispensable place of mothers and fathers.

Discussion questions:

- a. *How would you explain to someone the difference between a husband and a wife who can't have children, and two men or two women?*

- b. *What does it mean that sexual union between a man and a woman is the kind of union “apt for generation”?*

- c. *Can you think of any married couples who have witnessed to life, without having any children of their own? How so?*

Fathers and Mothers Matter

6. "I believe a mother and father are the building blocks of the family,"

[02:33]

Key topics: MOMS AND DADS MATTER; NATURAL FAMILY BASED ON MARRIAGE;
SOCIETY JUSTLY PROMOTES THE NATURAL FAMILY

Steve affirms a basic fact of human existence. Moms and dads are crucially important. *They matter.* Common sense gets this, and the social sciences demonstrate it as well. But there are some today who claim that moms and dads really *don't* matter. The proposal to “redefine” marriage to include persons of the same sex essentially “redefines out” of marriage the mother-father unit, making it irrelevant. This should raise more than an eyebrow.

As the union of husband and wife, a union open from its “very heart” to children,³⁵ marriage has long been recognized as the “foundation of the family.”³⁶ The family, in turn, is the “primary cell of human society.”³⁷ In saying “yes” to a child, spouses say “yes” to the great ongoing adventure of human civilization. As Pope John Paul II has expressed, with the birth of children, “the ‘communion’ of the spouses gives rise to the ‘community’ of the family.”³⁸

Marriage is therefore a *pro-child* institution, as mentioned above. It is not just about the satisfaction of adult desires. Marriage is not something private—it’s a public institution just as much as it is a personal relationship between husband and wife. The love between husband and wife naturally opens to the child, the family, and the greater society. This openness to life, to the family, and to society is simply not possible for persons of the same sex, who cannot form a spousal union open to the gift of life.³⁹ For this reason, society has, and has always had, a legitimate interest and just obligation toward protecting and promoting the natural family, based on marriage between a man and a woman. The family is the place where the youngest and most vulnerable members of our society are born and

raised. As the “sanctuary of life,” the family deserves to be valued and aided by society.⁴⁰ In fact, a grave injustice is committed when society ignores the meaning and essential place of marriage and the family. Society’s well-being and very existence are bound up with marriage and the family.

Discussion questions:

- a. Does our society treat the family founded on marriage as its “primary cell”? Why or why not?*

- b. What are the rational reasons that a society can give for privileging the natural family based on marriage between a man and a woman?*

7. "I want [my daughter] to feel secure in her home life, with me as a mom. But I also want her to know that it is so important for her to marry a wonderful Christian man who can guide her family, her future family, and be a wonderful father."

[03:14]

Key topics: HEROIC WITNESS OF SINGLE PARENTS; CHURCH'S PASTORAL CONCERN; DIFFERENT FROM DELIBERATELY DEPRIVING A CHILD OF A MOM AND A DAD

Emphasizing the deep need every child has to be raised by a father and a mother does not mean that the Church looks down on single parents. Many, many people in our society have experienced the absence of a father or a mother, or the loss of a spouse due to abandonment, separation, or death. The Church reaches out to single parents and their families with pastoral care and acknowledges the heroic efforts they make in providing a stable, loving home for their children.

But it is important to remember that the situation of children being raised by a single parent (due to circumstances as mentioned above) is very different from deliberately depriving a child of a mom and a dad, which unfortunately occurs when children are raised by two men or two women. As touchingly expressed by Elizabeth, single parents *recognize the absence* of a father—or a mother—in the lives of their children. Like Elizabeth, many single parents sincerely hope that their children's future families will have the stable foundation of a husband and wife, a father and a mother. In other words, single parents can honor the importance of sexual difference by acknowledging the unique difficulties their families face without a father or mother. When the needs of children are considered, single parenthood is never held up as an ideal.

On the other hand, persons of the same sex who raise a child are unable to witness to the importance and beauty of sexual difference. Two men or two women who claim to replace a mother and a father sadly neglect and reject the vital role that gender plays in the full development of a child, especially the child's sexual identity as a boy or a girl, and later

as a man or a woman. Homes headed by two men or two women are not a valid “alternative” to families headed by a father and a mother. Two men and two women do not substitute for a mother and a father.

Discussion questions:

- a. How would you explain to someone the difference between a single parent and two men or two women who are raising a child?*

- b. What does it mean that single parents can still “honor” the importance of sexual difference in the lives of their children?*

- c. How can the Church and society best support single parents, while holding up the natural family as the ideal?*

8. “Children need a mother and a father for the balance in their lives . . . and the mirror-image. / All the development that needs to happen from an emotional, mental, physical component . . . only a mother and father can give.”

[04:55]

Key topics: NEED FOR A FATHER AND MOTHER; RIGHT TO A MOTHER AND A FATHER;
UNFAIR TO DELIBERATELY DEPRIVE

The most curious fact about fathers and mothers is that *every child has them*. In other words, it takes a man and a woman—a father and a mother—to bring a new human being into the world. Two men or two women simply cannot do this. So if sexual difference is important—necessary, in fact—for conceiving a child, then it makes sense that sexual difference would also be important for raising a child. In other words, the importance of sexual difference does not end with the conception or birth of a child. Instead, fathers and mothers matter for the full development and flourishing of their children, as Lashawnta observes. Kevin and Brenda also make a significant point. A mother and a father bring balance and ensure that children always have before them someone *similar to* and *different from* themselves. The mother-father unit is the vital context for personal formation. Children need and deserve a mother and a father.

The fact that every child *has* and *needs* a father and a mother is what justifies the assertion that every child has a *right* to be raised by his or her father and mother. In fact, the Church’s social teaching emphasizes that a child’s “first right” is to “be born in a real family,” that is, a family consisting of his or her own father and mother, bonded in marriage.⁴¹ Protecting this right is a basic matter of social justice. As Pope Benedict XVI has taught, “Children from their conception have the right to be able to count on their father and mother to take care of them and to accompany their growth.”⁴²

Fairness, justice, and equality are principles greatly touted but much misused in the marriage debate today.⁴³ One striking example is the “dismissal” of the child. *What’s fair to the child?* This is a question largely missing from the picture, but it should be its centerpiece,

along with what's fair and just to husbands and wives and fathers and mothers. As the bishops have taught, "To promote and protect marriage as the union of one man and one woman is itself a matter of justice. In fact, it would be a grave injustice if the state ignored the unique and proper place of husbands and wives, the place of mothers and fathers, and especially the rights of children, who deserve from society clear guidance as they grow to sexual maturity."⁴⁴ It is a severe injustice to deliberately deprive a child of his or her mother and/or father. Of course, there are sad instances when children are separated from their biological parents: instances of abuse, neglect, or a parent's incapacity to properly care for his or her child. But these examples are exceptions that should make us wince rather than cause us to abandon the norm and ideal: children being nurtured and cared for by the same man and woman who brought them into the world.

It is sometimes claimed that what *really* matters for a child is the presence of *any* two loving, committed adults, regardless of their gender. But there are major problems with this assertion. First, two men or two women are physically incapable of having a child *together*, that is, of becoming father and mother *through each other*. Instead, two people of the same sex must either attempt to adopt a child or contract with a "third party" egg or sperm donor who contributes one-half of the child's genetic material.⁴⁵ This means that placing a child in the care of two men or two women deliberately separates that child from his or her father or mother *in every single case*. Second, such children are denied the benefit of witnessing the relationship between a father and mother. Although the tragedy of the death of a father or mother painfully cuts short the child's experience of the relationship between mother and father, this is completely different from deliberately closing the child off from a mother-father relationship.

The push to legally "redefine" marriage inevitably results in redefining the concept of "parent" from "father and mother" to "any two—or more—adults that care for this child." Children, the youngest and most vulnerable members of our society, are the ones who will suffer most from this disregard for the true meaning of marriage. Children deserve better.

Discussion questions:

- a. *Why does every child have a right to a father and a mother?*

- b. *Why are attempts to redefine marriage to include two persons of the same sex unjust to children?*

9. “We each have our individual roles. . . / It’s not that I don’t play with them, but [my husband] plays in a way that I don’t. He’ll play football with them and tackle them hard, and I’ll play football with them and tickle them!”

[05:49]

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Key topics: MOTHERS AND FATHERS BRING UNIQUE GIFTS; THE DIFFERENCE CONSISTS NOT OF STATIC “ROLES” BUT IN THE WAY A FUNCTION OR ROLE IS CARRIED OUT

Both Jeff and Katie are referring to a simple fact: mothers and fathers are *not* interchangeable. They each bring distinct and unique gifts to the common task of parenting, gifts that help their son or daughter develop into a mature man or woman.

For example, mothers share a unique relationship with their children because only a mother carries the child within her womb. As Pope John Paul II taught, “Motherhood involves a special communion with the mystery of life, as it develops in the woman’s womb.”⁴⁶ The mother’s task of carrying a child in her womb is a privileged expression of her gift of self and shapes her personality to be uniquely attentive to all human life.⁴⁷ In general, mothers have special gifts of communicating with their children and responding to their needs, even those expressed nonverbally. A mother models to her daughter how to carry herself as a woman and shows her son how to treat a woman with respect and dignity.

Every child needs and deserves a father. As the Second Vatican Council taught, “The active presence of the father is very important for [the] training [of the children].”⁴⁸ In general, fathers provide a firm, stabilizing presence that influences their children’s choices. For example, boys raised by their own fathers are much less likely to act out on sexual and aggressive drives, while girls raised by their fathers are able to have their femininity affirmed in a nonsexualized way. Studies have shown that boys in fatherless families are more likely to be imprisoned, and girls raised apart from their fathers are more likely to become unwed mothers.⁴⁹

Beyond the distinctive talents and gifts of fathers and mothers, there remains a core difference between them. Only a woman can *mother*; only a man can *father*. Mothers teach femininity in a distinctive and vital way; fathers teach masculinity in a distinctive and vital way. This is not stereotyping. It is acknowledging and celebrating the unique gifts of women and men.

It is crucial to emphasize here that the differences between fathers and mothers are not mere rigid “functions” that each perform, as if “only the father disciplines” and “only the mother nurtures.” Instead, *both* father and mother participate in *all* the tasks of raising children: disciplining, nurturing, teaching, playing, and so on. But they do so *as a man and as a woman*, that is, in irreducibly different ways. The way a mother nurtures her children is different from the way a father nurtures them, and so on. This can be as obvious as the mother’s capacity to breast-feed her children, or it can be more subtle, as expressed by Katie’s quote: both she and her husband play with their sons, but while he tackles, she tickles. *Mothers and fathers are not interchangeable.*

Discussion questions:

- a. *What are some ways that your father or your mother contributed in a unique way to your upbringing? If you experienced a broken family environment, how did that affect you?*

- b. *What are particular gifts that fathers and mothers bring to their children? Recall the scene in the video that portrays the unique way the father and mother work together to address the behavior of their son, frustrated after losing a soccer game. What gifts are conveyed here?*

- c. *Why is the difference between mothers and fathers more than a matter of “rigid functions” that each of them has in the family? How is this important in relation to the promotion and protection of the unique meaning of marriage?*

10. "Studies show so clearly that children raised by a mother and a father do better in school, they're less likely to get involved in drugs or gangs, they thrive in many other areas of life. The state is in the business of supporting that which makes society stronger . . . the family unit."

[06:13]

Key topics: THE ROLE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES; THE ROLE OF THE STATE;
THE IMMEASURABLE IMPACT OF A FATHER AND A MOTHER

The social sciences have done much good in affirming the radical importance of mothers, fathers, and healthy marriages. Multiple studies affirm the benefits for children of being raised by their own father and mother, and they come to the same commonsense conclusion that has been shared by humanity for ages. *Family structure greatly affects children's formation and well-being.* Children are consistently found to grow up happier and healthier in a loving family with their own mother and father.⁵⁰ For example, children raised by their own married mother and father are less likely to experience child abuse, poverty, lack of education, depression, unwed childbearing, and so on.⁵¹ As Pete said so clearly, the state should support families founded on marriage, because the state "is in the business of supporting that which makes society stronger." The evidence of various studies affirms and shows the rational basis of the state's duty to protect the true meaning of marriage.

Still, in an era when the words "studies show" carry often unquestioned authority, we must be careful in our use of the social sciences. Although a well-designed study can shed light on an aspect of human nature and civilization, no study can grasp the whole of reality. Furthermore, some studies can be driven by agendas that greatly influence the data collection, interpretation, and conclusions.

For example, we have already discussed the flaws in the claim that what *really* matters for a child is the presence of *any* two loving, committed adults, regardless of their gender (see number 8, above). Still, this is a popular argument today. As if on cue, some recent studies have claimed that children do fine in households headed by two men or two

women, instead of by their own or an adoptive mother and father. The difficulty with such studies might be manifest in various ways, whether from statistical, sociological, philosophical, and/or theological reasons. It is important to be aware that, at times, some studies may only focus on material and functional values without considering human and spiritual values.

Perhaps an analogy might help here. It is telling that, in the 1970s, experts claimed that “no-fault” divorce would not adversely affect children, a claim both lacking evidence and going against common sense and the nature of the human person. However, social science has since demonstrated the drastic effect that broken and fatherless households have had on children since the time “no-fault” divorce was introduced.⁵² Now again, we hear claims that children will be fine or even better if marriage itself is “redefined.” Since the well-being of children is at stake, it is hoped that scientific studies will not jump to premature or unfounded conclusions, as seems to be the case with some recent studies.⁵³

In the end, the impact of a father and a mother is immeasurable. A father and a mother provide more than just material needs, care, and affection. Not even the best of the social sciences can capture the full breadth of what a man and a woman bring to their children as a father and a mother united in marriage.

Discussion questions:

- a. *What does the analogy of “no-fault” divorce and its effects on children teach us about claims that children are merely “adaptable” and flourish in any environment?*

- b. *What do you think it means to say that the impact of a father and a mother is “immeasurable”?*

Sexual Difference Matters

11. **"The necessity of the difference doesn't end at conception; it carries on through the whole life of the child."**

[08:32]

Key topics: SEXUAL DIFFERENCE IS ESSENTIAL TO MARRIAGE;
THE DIFFERENCE IS THE DIFFERENCE

At the end of *Made for Life*, we come back to the very beginning, back to the foundation of it all. *Sexual difference matters*. And because of this, men and women matter for marriage. Fathers and mothers matter for their children. Families founded on marriage matter for the world.⁵⁴ The contemporary proposal of "redefining" marriage to include two persons of the same sex threatens all of this, and strikes at the heart of what it means to be a human person, a man or a woman.

Let's reflect on Pete's profound words: "It's kind of a beautiful miracle, that from our difference comes a brand-new life." Indeed, childbearing, a deeply personal act meant for marriage, requires sexual difference—that male come together with female to bring about a "brand-new life." Men and women matter—they are essential—to the great adventure of having children.

Only by artificially splitting the human experience of conception, birth, and parenting into separate pieces can we make the claim that mothers and fathers matter only to the conception of a child and not to his or her continuing development. Of course, there are instances when a child is raised apart from his or her biological parents. But this never comes without a cost. Even in the best of adoptive situations, children will still tend to wonder, "What is/was my mom or dad like?" Childbearing and child rearing find their vital coordinates in the sexual difference between husband and wife who open themselves to fathering and mothering.

The difference is the difference. Only a man and a woman can embrace the incredible adventure of marriage, the call to give themselves completely to each other, in a way that is open to the gift of a child. As Pope John Paul II taught, “The logic of the *total gift of self to the other* involves a potential openness to procreation: in this way the marriage is called to even greater fulfillment as a family. . . . *The intimate truth of this gift* must always be *safe-guarded.*”⁵⁵ Jesus came “so that they might have life and have it more abundantly” (Jn 10:10). The Church, following the way of Jesus, invites all people to rediscover and protect the unique mission and witness of marriage in service of life.

Discussion questions:

- a. How would you put in your own words the main point(s) of Made for Life?
- b. What does sexual difference have to do with marriage and parenting?
- c. How would “redefining” marriage to include two persons of the same sex radically alter a proper understanding of marriage, children, and the human person?



NOTES

1. *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC), 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: Libreria Editrice Vaticana–United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2000).

2. See Pope John Paul II, *Letter to Families* (1994), no. 8, www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/letters/documents/hf_jp-ii LET_02021994_families_en.html: The union of spouses, “rather than closing them up in themselves, opens them towards a new life.” See also Pope John Paul II, *On the Family (Familiaris Consortio)* (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops [USCCB], 1982), no. 14.

3. See CCC, nos. 2367 and 2398; also see *Familiaris Consortio*, no. 28: God calls husband and wife “to a special sharing in His love and in His power as Creator and Father through their free and responsible cooperation in transmitting the gift of human life.”

4. USCCB, *Marriage: Love and Life in the Divine Plan* (Washington, DC: USCCB, 2009), 13.

5. Second Vatican Council, *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 50, in *Vatican Council II: Volume 1: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, ed. Austin Flannery (Northport, NY: Costello Publishing, 1996). All subsequent citations of Vatican II documents refer to this edition.

6. *Familiaris Consortio*, no. 14.

7. For more on the Church’s teaching about the inseparability of the unitive and procreative meanings of the sexual act, see CCC, no. 2366; *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 51; Pope Paul VI, *On the Regulation of Birth (Humanae Vitae)* (Washington, DC: USCCB, 1968), no. 12; *Letter to Families*, no. 12; *Familiaris Consortio*, nos. 29 and 32; and *Marriage: Love and Life in the Divine Plan*, 11–21. Also see Pope John Paul II’s commentary on *Humanae Vitae* in *Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body* (TOB), trans. Michael Waldstein (Boston: Pauline Books & Media, 2006), nos. 118:1–132:6 (audience and section numbers), especially nos. 118:2–6.

8. At the heart of “responsible parenthood” is the prayerful discernment by husband and wife whether or not to postpone pregnancy for “just reasons” (See CCC, nos. 2368–2370; see also *Humanae Vitae*, no. 10). The Second Vatican Council taught that responsible parenthood “involves a consideration of [the spouses’] own good and the good of the children already born or yet to come” as well as consideration of the spouses’ “situation on the material and spiritual level, and, finally, an estimation of the good of the family, of society, and of the Church” (*Gaudium et Spes*, no. 50). Responsible parenthood *responds* to the objective moral order established by God and written into the procreative capacity of husband and wife (see CCC, no. 2368). In this way, responsible parenthood preserves “the total meaning of mutual self-giving” and can mean not only postponing a birth, but also increasing one’s family (CCC, no. 2368, quoting *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 51). For more about responsible parenthood, see Pope Benedict XVI, *Charity in Truth (Caritas in Veritate)* (Washington, DC: USCCB, 2009), no. 44; *Letter to Families*, no. 12; TOB, nos. 121:1–6; and Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (Washington, DC: Libreria Editrice Vaticana–USCCB, 2004), nos. 232–234.

9. *Marriage: Love and Life in the Divine Plan*, 11

10. *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* explains that homosexual acts “close the sexual act to the gift of life. They do not proceed from a genuine affective and sexual complementarity” (no. 2357).
11. See *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 24: “Man is the only creature on earth that God has wanted for its own sake . . . [and] can fully discover his true self only in a sincere giving of himself.”
12. See *Letter to Families*, no. 11: “The indissolubility of marriage flows in the first place from the very essence of the gift: *the gift of one person to another person*” (emphasis in original).
13. See *Letter to Families*, no. 11: “When a man and woman in marriage mutually give and receive each other in the unity of ‘one flesh,’ the logic of the sincere gift of self becomes a part of their life.”
14. In *Humanae Vitae*, Pope Paul VI lists “the characteristic features” of conjugal [married] love as fully human, total, faithful and exclusive until death, and fecund [fruitful] (no. 9). Pope John Paul II expands upon Paul VI’s description of love by reflecting on how a husband and wife “speak” the message of married love through the “language of the body.” He writes, “The human body speaks a ‘language’ of which it is not the author. *Its author is man*, as male and female, as bridegroom or bride: man with his perennial vocation to the communion of persons” (TOB, no. 1047 [emphasis in original]). This means that the language of love is *given* to men and women, who are then called to “speak” this language truthfully to each other. The body—as male or female—is essential to “speak” the language of love. Pope John Paul II continues, “[The human person] is constituted in such a way from the ‘beginning’ that the deepest words of the spirit – words of love, gift, and faithfulness – call for an appropriate ‘language of the body.’ And without this language, they cannot be fully expressed” (TOB, no. 1047).
15. As we saw in the first video, *Made for Each Other*, the sexual difference between men and women is not just a flat “biological” reality or an anatomical detail. Instead, it includes the whole person, body and soul, at every level of his or her existence. As Pope John Paul II explained, the body *reveals* the person. Encountering a living human body is encountering a human person—male or female—who is inseparable from his or her body. See TOB, no. 94.
16. *Humanae Vitae*, no. 9 (translation modified). See also *Marriage: Love and Life in the Divine Plan*, 16: “The transmission of life is a sublime, concrete realization of this radical self-gift between a man and a woman . . . As mutual self-gift, it is at the same time creative self-gift.”
17. *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 50.
18. *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 24.
19. See CCC, no. 2378. See also Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF), *Dignitas Personae* (Washington, DC: USCCB, 2008), no. 5.
20. CCC, no. 2378, quoting CDF, *Domum Vitae* (Washington, DC: USCCB, 1987), II, no. 8 (emphasis in original).
21. One of the reasons modern techniques of reproductive technology, such as in vitro fertilization (IVF), are problematic is because they treat the child not as a gift, but as a product. When the coming-to-be of a child is separated from an act of loving sexual union between the child’s parents, the child’s generation becomes a *technique* to be

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mastered, instead of *gift* to be welcomed as an intrinsic part of self-giving love. As our society's use of reproductive technology continues, we see more and more instances of treating children like products: disposal of "defective" embryos; "spare" embryos frozen for years, even decades; "selective reduction" of "excess" implanted embryos; and so on. A proper and coherent respect for the child as a gift rejects all reproductive technology that separates sexual love from the gift of life, since by doing so the child is reduced to a product, a result of advanced technology.

22. Pope John Paul II, in his encyclical *The Gospel of Life (Evangelium Vitae)*, highlighted the larger backdrop behind the disvaluing of human life: "When the sense of God is lost, the sense of man is also threatened and poisoned. . . . Life itself becomes a mere 'thing,' which man claims as his exclusive property, completely subject to his control and manipulation. . . . Birth and death, instead of being primary experiences demanding to be 'lived,' become things to be merely 'possessed' or 'rejected'" (Washington, DC: USCCB, 1995), no. 22. Abortion and euthanasia are tragic examples here.

23. Various thinkers over the centuries have acknowledged the particular role of the institution of marriage for the sake of children. For examples, see references cited in Brief of *Amici Curiae* U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, et al., *Commonwealth of Massachusetts v. United States Department of Health and Human Services* (January 27, 2011), 17f., www.usccb.org/ogc/Commonwealth-of-Massachusetts-v-%20US-Department-of-Health-and-Human-Services.pdf (accessed February 1, 2011). See also Don S. Browning, *Marriage and Modernization: How Globalization Threatens Marriage and What to Do About It* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2003).

24. *Letter to Families*, no. 9 (emphasis in original).

25. CCC, no. 366.

26. See Karol Wojtyła (Pope John Paul II), *Love and Responsibility*, trans. H. T. Willetts (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1993), 227.

27. CCC, no. 2366.

28. *Marriage: Love and Life in the Divine Plan*, 16.

29. See *Letter to Families*, no. 11: Every new birth is a "*paschal sign*," a sign of the new life of Easter, and reflects "the victory of life over death brought about by the Lord's Resurrection."

30. See Mt 18:1-5, 19:13-15; Mk 9:33-37, 10:13-16; and Lk 9:46-48, 18:15-17.

31. Language is powerful and affects our thinking. We must be cautious, therefore, of accepting the culture's description of two men or two women as "parents." "Parenting" is not gender neutral but means "mothering and fathering." Also, two men or two women cannot really be "parents" of the same child.

32. See *Marriage: Love and Life in the Divine Plan*, 14: "The marital union of a man and a woman is a distinctive communion of persons. An infertile couple continues to manifest this attribute."

33. *Familiaris Consortio*, no. 14.

34. *Evangelium Vitae*, no. 93.

35. See CCC, no. 2366.

36. *Marriage: Love and Life in the Divine Plan*, 8. See also CCC, no. 2202.

37. Pope John XXIII, *Peace on Earth (Pacem in Terris)*, rev. ed. (Washington, DC: USCCB, 2003), no. 16. See also CCC, no. 2207.

38. *Letter to Families*, no. 7.

39. See CCC, no. 2357.

40. Pope John Paul II, *On the Hundredth Anniversary of Rerum Novarum (Centesimus Annus)* (Washington, DC: USCCB, 1991), no. 39.

41. *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 244.

42. Pope Benedict XVI, Address to Participants at the *Woman and Man: The Humanum in its Entirety* Congress (February 9, 2008), www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2008/february/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20080209_donna-uomo_en.html.

43. The topic of marriage in relation to human dignity and the common good will be examined in a subsequent video. The Church reaches out with pastoral care to all persons with homosexual inclinations and acknowledges the great suffering they can experience. She condemns all unjust discrimination against persons who experience same-sex attraction. Unfortunately, in our culture today, marriage has been artificially spun into an “equality” and “rights” issue, which overlooks the unique meaning of marriage. Those who stand for marriage are sometimes labeled as “bigots,” a label as unjust as it is uninformed. The Church has always been at the forefront of social justice concerns, and she continues to stand for the basic human rights of all people. Indeed there are many ways to protect the basic rights of all people, but “redefining” marriage is not one of them and in fact would take away an essential foundation for the protection of all authentic human rights.

44. *Marriage: Love and Life in the Divine Plan*, 22. The needs and rights of the child should be of fundamental concern for every society and community, as is acknowledged in “the principle, recognized also in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, that the best interests of the child, as the weaker and more vulnerable party, are to be the paramount consideration in every case.” CDF, *Considerations Regarding Proposals to Give Legal Recognition to Unions Between Homosexual Persons* (2003), no. 7, www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20030731_homosexual-unions_en.html.

45. For more information about the Church’s teaching on illicit reproductive technologies, see CCC, nos. 2376-2377; *Dignitas Personae*; *Donum Vitae*; and *Considerations Regarding Proposals to Give Legal Recognition to Unions Between Homosexual Persons*, no. 7. For a recent study of the effects of sperm donation on children’s experience of their fathers, see Elizabeth Marquardt, Norval D. Glenn, and Karen Clark, *My Daddy’s Name is Donor* (New York: Institute for American Values, 2010).

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46. Pope John Paul II, *On the Dignity and Vocation of Woman (Mulieris Dignitatem)* (Washington, DC: USCCB, 1988), no. 18.

47. *Mulieris Dignitatem*, no. 18.

48. *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 52.

49. As a poignant example of the impact that a father (or lack thereof) has on a daughter, consider that when girls reside with an *unrelated* male (a stepfather, or mother's boyfriend), they can begin puberty earlier than girls who reside with their biological father. The presumed reason is that exposure to an unrelated male's pheromones (hormones that can stimulate sexual attraction) accelerates a girl's sexual development. For additional explanation and sources, see The Commission on Children at Risk, *Hardwired to Connect: The New Scientific Case for Authoritative Communities* (New York: Institute for American Values, 2003), 142.

50. For links and references to various studies (some of which are also cited in the note below), see the USCCB's Web site For Your Marriage, "Why Married Parents are Important for Children," foryourmarriage.org/married-parents-are-important-for-children/ (accessed February 1, 2011).

51. Numerous studies can be found that attest to the unique benefit of a healthy mother-father unit for children. For more information and references from different authors and experts in the field (the authors/experts are not necessarily representative of the Church's full teaching on marriage, but they illustrate the breadth of consensus on the importance of mothers and fathers for children), see Kristin Anderson Moore, Susan M. Jekielek, and Carol Emig, *Marriage from a Child's Perspective: How Does Family Structure Affect Children, and What Can We Do about It?* (Washington, DC: Child Trends, 2002); The Witherspoon Institute, *Marriage and the Public Good: Ten Principles* (Princeton, NJ: Witherspoon Institute, 2008); Elizabeth Marquardt, *The Revolution in Parenthood: The Emerging Global Clash Between Adult Rights and Children's Needs* (New York: Institute for American Values, 2006); Robert P. George and Jean Bethke Elshtain, eds., *The Meaning of Marriage: Family, State, Market, and Morals* (Dallas: Spence Publishing, 2006); W. Bradford Wilcox, et al., *Why Marriage Matters: Twenty-Six Conclusions from the Social Sciences* (New York: Institute for American Values, 2005); and Linda J. Waite and Maggie Gallagher, *The Case for Marriage* (New York: Broadway Books, 2000).

52. For example, see Elizabeth Marquardt, *Between Two Worlds: The Inner Lives of Children of Divorce* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 2005).

53. A similar caution is voiced in the nonpartisan study directed by E. Marquardt, *The Revolution in Parenthood*, www.americavalues.org/pdfs/parenthood.pdf (accessed February 1, 2011).

54. See *Familiaris Consortio*, no. 75: "The future of the world and of the Church passes through the family."

55. *Letter to Families*, no. 12 (emphasis in original).

NOTES:

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NOTES:



Made For Life

A CATECHETICAL AND EDUCATIONAL AID ON
THE GIFT OF CHILDREN AND THE INDISPENSABLE PLACE
OF MOTHERS AND FATHERS IN MARRIAGE AND SOCIETY

Made for Life / Viewer's Guide

This Viewer's Guide accompanies the DVD entitled *Made for Life*, the second in a series of materials available through the initiative of the USCCB Ad Hoc Committee for the Defense of Marriage entitled *Marriage: Unique for a Reason*. *Made for Life* builds on the first video, *Made for Each Other*, and addresses two more topics essential for a proper understanding of the true meaning of marriage: the supreme gift of children and the unique and irreplaceable place of fathers and mothers in the lives of their children. The Viewer's Guide includes questions for personal reflection or group discussion.

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Study Guide



Made For Freedom

A CATECHETICAL AND EDUCATIONAL AID
ON MARRIAGE AND RELIGIOUS FREEDOM



MARRIAGE
Unique for a Reason



ABOUT THE ART

Saints Joachim and Anne are the father and mother of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Mary is the fruit of their marriage. By a singular grace of God in view of the merits of Jesus, she was preserved from all stain of Original Sin from the moment of her conception. Thus it is in the context of married life and conjugal love that Mary is prepared to receive the Divine Logos, the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ our Lord. Jesus is the Logos, the “Reason” at the heart of all reason and truth, including the truth of marriage. The marriage between Joachim and Anne is a significant witness to why marriage is “unique for a reason.”

The Subcommittee for the Promotion and Defense of Marriage is grateful to the artist Rev. Marko Rupnik for the use of this image.

Made For Freedom

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Study Guide

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MARRIAGE

Unique for a Reason



United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

MARRIAGE: UNIQUE FOR A REASON

The *Made for Freedom* Study Guide was developed as a resource and approved by Archbishop Salvatore J. Cordileone, Chairman of the Subcommittee for the Promotion and Defense of Marriage of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). It was authorized for publication by the undersigned.

Msgr. J. Brian Bransfield
General Secretary, USCCB

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Introduction

*“If our obligations and duties to God are impeded,
or even worse, contradicted by the government,
then we can no longer claim to be a land of the free,
and a beacon of hope for the world.”*

- Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz,
President of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops¹

The new religious freedom conflict in America is over the institution of marriage. The Supreme Court decision in *Obergefell v. Hodges* means that the American legal system no longer recognizes the natural reality of marriage, and this has opened the door to a variety of challenges to religious freedom.

Human beings did not create either marriage or religious freedom; they both belong to the nature of man as he was created by God at the beginning. Society, at its best, recognizes and honors them; at its worst, it rejects them or pretends that society itself is their origin. The United States of America has been, in many ways, a model of a society built in part on the principle of religious freedom. As Pope Francis noted in his speech at Independence Hall

in Philadelphia, “The Declaration of Independence stated that all men and women are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, and that governments exist to protect and defend those rights.”² If the origin of inalienable rights is the Creator, then it follows that these rights must be in line with his will.

This study guide accompanies the video entitled *Made for Freedom*, the third video in the *Marriage: Unique for a Reason* series. The first video, *Made for Each Other*, examined the meaning of sexual difference between man and woman, and why this difference is essential to marriage. The second video, *Made for Life*, explored another essential aspect of marriage: openness to the gift of a child. This aspect rests on the sexual difference, and also presumes the indispensable place of mothers and fathers for children. In *Made for Freedom*, the integral relationship between marriage and religious freedom is explored, particularly in light of the legal redefinition of marriage which occurred on the national scale on June 26, 2015 with the U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Obergefell v. Hodges*.

In this guide, we will look at some of the questions brought up in *Made for Freedom*, and other related questions, such as: What does religious freedom mean in the context of Catholicism and America? What does the legal redefinition of marriage mean for the religious freedom of the Church as an institution? What does it mean for individual believers? What does redefining marriage mean for children? What does it mean for the workplace? This study guide is intended to assist and facilitate discussion of the concepts introduced in *Made for Freedom*.

For more information and further resources, including access to other videos in the series, go to www.marriageuniqueforareason.org.

STUDY GUIDE

Marriage is a Natural and Supernatural Reality

The previous two videos in the *Marriage: Unique for a Reason* series, *Made for Each Other* and *Made for Life*, focused on two natural goods of marriage (unity and the procreation and education of children). This video focuses on the connection between marriage and religious freedom. In order to understand this connection, it is important first to reiterate the importance of marriage itself.

Everyone comes from the union of a mother and father, even when conception occurs through technological means. This is a fundamental truth about the human person. As we grow up, we watch, observe, and internalize this reality: that there are two different kinds of persons in the world, and that one of each was involved in making us. We look to them as models. This is not a human construct or invention, rather a natural reality.

Marriage is natural; it arises from who man and woman are, and how children come to be. One need not believe in God to see the importance of marriage and how it has served to stabilize relationships and pass down history and traditions. An honest and unbiased look at the environment in which children thrive shows that a mother and father matter.³ The reality that every child comes from a mother and a father precedes (and ideally helps form) any state “institution” of marriage.

Through Scripture, we know that marriage is both a created natural reality and a supernatural one. It was ordained by God in creation, to give Adam a true partner in love and for the couple to “be fruitful and multiply” (Gn 1:28). In the New Testament, Christ raises marriage to be a sacrament, a living sign of the bond between Christ and his Church. Marriage is made holy, a source of grace, and becomes a participation in the mystery of Christ and the Church. “This is a great mystery,” St. Paul tells us (Eph 5:32). Marriage has an enduring value for all.

Discussion Questions:

1. *Why is marriage important?*
2. *Is having children an essential part of marriage? Why or why not? Can you explain why a married couple who experiences infertility is different, in an essential way, from a same-sex couple?*
3. *What qualities of marriage are based on what a child needs? Why is fidelity, for example, expected or required?*

What is Freedom?

Everyone wants to be free! No one likes to be constrained or held back from making decisions or choosing his (or her) own path in life. Freedom has the connotation, at least in America, of being able to “do whatever you want,” but when we give that a little thought, we know that it is never that simple. Most often, in fact, we accept limits precisely in order to enjoy our freedom. For example: a girl on the soccer field is truly free when she plays the game as it is meant to be played. She’s not free to pick up the ball and dribble it in her hands like a basketball, but neither does she want to, because that is not how the game is played. It would ruin the game, and her own enjoyment of it, if she decided to play soccer like basketball. Similarly, there are “rules” to the “game” of life, and freedom has the purpose of helping us lead a full and meaningful one.

The Dominican moral theologian, Servais Pinckaers (1925-2008), identified two concepts of freedom that are in contrast to one another: freedom of indifference and freedom for excellence.

“Freedom of indifference” means seeing freedom as open and neutral toward all the available options. Every choice, in so far as it is a choice, is equally free. It is the freedom to *not be forced* to do anything (“freedom from coercion”). If freedom is really unconnected to any other aspect of the person or objective truth, then choosing to murder another person is just as “free” a decision as choosing to buy a meal for a homeless person. Of course, anyone would say that the person helping out another person is “using” their freedom better than the murderer, but is that saying enough? Is it just a question of using our freedom well or badly? Freedom of indifference says yes, those two people are equally free to choose good or evil.

In contrast, if you understand freedom as the “freedom for excellence”, you would say that the murderer is actually *less free* than the charitable giver. In doing something that is *wrong*, in acting against the true, objective order of

things, the person choosing evil is actually diminishing or losing his (or her) freedom. It is in fact an abuse of freedom.⁴ It will not bring him (or her) happiness. Therefore, it is not a truly free choice. The freedom for excellence is the freedom to do good: the freedom to become who you are meant to be.

Here is another example. A pianist practices many hours a day in order to become skilled. After this difficult and painstaking work, excellence for him becomes almost effortless, at which point he is truly free. The same concept applies in the moral realm; practicing virtue precedes the effortless choice of the good.

In contrast, think of someone who is addicted to something, be it drugs, pornography, or even just caffeine. That person is technically free to choose to use his drug of choice or not, and yet once addicted, the addict will often admit that he is not free to say no; he has become enslaved.

Scripture confirms that sin is the opposite of true freedom. In the Gospel of John, we read, “Jesus answered them, ‘Amen, amen, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is a slave of sin. A slave does not remain in a household forever, but a son always remains. So if a son frees you, then you will truly be free’” (Jn 8:34-36). St. Paul says, “Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom” (2 Cor 3:17) and, “For freedom Christ set us free; so stand firm and do not submit again to the yoke of slavery” (Gal 5:1). We are truly free, then, when we live as children of God. We are free to love as God loves; that is the purpose of freedom.

True freedom then is the capacity to love in truth and to choose the good. This echoes the words of the *Catechism*: “The more one does what is good, the freer one becomes,” and “true freedom” comes “in the service of what is good and just.”⁵

All of these reflections have a bearing on how we think about religious freedom in our current situation. Pope Benedict XVI reflected on it this way: “Religious freedom should be understood, then, not merely as immunity from coercion, but even more fundamentally as an ability to order one’s own

choices in accordance with truth.”⁶ Pope Francis reiterated this idea: “The more men and women are at the service of others, the greater their freedom!”⁷ Such freedom corresponds to what a person is called to be: a gift for others.

Discussion Questions:

1. *What is the difference between freedom of indifference and freedom for excellence?*
2. *How does freedom for excellence correspond better to a Christian vision of the human person than freedom of indifference?*
3. *Can you think of other examples from Sacred Scripture where it becomes clear that sin does not make a person free but rather a slave?*

Our First Freedom

There is a rich history of religious freedom in the United States. Even before being enshrined in the First Amendment to the Constitution, religious freedom played a part in the founding of the United States. The Declaration of Independence called upon rights endowed by the *Creator* as justification for the rejection of British rule: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”⁸ Many of the first pilgrims arrived on these shores to escape religious persecution. When the ships the *Ark* and the *Dove* arrived in Maryland, the settlers disembarked on a Marian feast day and celebrated Mass in order to give thanks for a safe journey.⁹

The right of every person to live according to the dictates of his own conscience has been considered fundamental from the beginning of our country. The right of religious freedom has been considered broadly here, encompassing not only the right to worship in a set-apart church space, but also the right to speak and act publicly in accordance with religious beliefs. In this environment of tolerance, the Catholic Church has been able to establish schools, hospitals, and countless other charitable organizations.

“Building a future of freedom requires love of the common good and cooperation in a spirit of subsidiarity and solidarity,”¹⁰ Pope Francis said to Congress on his trip to the United States. If America wants to be a “land of the free,” then it must uphold religious freedom as fundamental for all other freedoms. The fruits of genuine religious freedom are peace and justice. Therefore, we are called to defend it. At his address at Independence Hall in Philadelphia, Pope Francis encouraged Americans to do so, saying, “[May] you defend these rights, especially your religious freedom, for it has been given to you by God himself.”¹¹ While the Founding Fathers highly valued religious freedom and established it as foundational to the United States, its

origin is not the state. It is a natural right, given by God to every human being, and must be respected.

Discussion Questions:

1. *Why do you think that freedom of religion was included in the First Amendment? What are the other freedoms listed there? How are they related to each other?*
2. *What are the “values” that are being placed in opposition to religious faith in the public sphere?*
3. *What is a just way of discerning when a religious belief should give way to a public good? What is not?*

Religious Freedom in the Catholic Tradition

The Catholic Church reflected on religious freedom during the Second Vatican Council. The document that emerged, *Dignitatis Humanae*, focuses on religious freedom in the context of human dignity and the right and duty of the human person to seek truth.

Dignitatis Humanae declares that, “The right to religious freedom has its foundation in the very dignity of the human person.”¹² In light of who man is – made in the image and likeness of God and called to communion with him – religious freedom is a necessity. The *Catechism* reads, quoting *Dignitatis Humanae*, “Nobody may be forced to act against his convictions, nor is anyone to be restrained from acting in accordance with his conscience in religious matters in private or in public, alone or in association with others, within due limits.”¹³ God does not force his creatures to love or serve him. The love that is due in justice to God is not demanded or coerced. How much less, then, does any state have the right to dictate to a person’s conscience or demand his obedience to man-made laws over the law of God as the person understands it?

Pope Benedict XVI, in a World Day of Peace message, reiterated that religious freedom is an aspect of the dignity of the human person. He said, “Religious freedom expresses what is unique about the human person, for it allows us to direct our personal and social life to God, in whose light the identity, meaning and purpose of the person are fully understood.”¹⁴ We are made to know God and to love him: this distinguishes us from all the rest of creation. We cannot do this if we are not free to seek the meaning of our existence.

The Church upholds the right of religious freedom for all people and urges that it be honored by all civil governments. Turning to *Dignitatis Humanae* again, the Church notes, “Government is also to help create conditions favorable to the fostering of religious life, in order that the people

may be truly enabled to exercise their religious rights and to fulfill their religious duties, and also in order that society itself may profit by the moral qualities of justice and peace which have their origin in men's faithfulness to God and to His holy will." ¹⁵ In a religious freedom case at the Supreme Court regarding a Muslim inmate's right to grow a beard in accordance with his faith, the USCCB filed an *amicus curiae* brief stating, "Of course, religious liberty for prisoners is more than just good public policy, it is a fundamental right. The freedom to practice and profess one's religious beliefs is a basic human right that the framers sought to protect." ¹⁶

For Christians, today's challenges to religious freedom in America center largely around the Church's teachings on sexual morality. But it is important to recognize that religious freedom, broadly speaking, is an international concern. Christians are being exiled, persecuted, and killed for their faith even today. ¹⁷ While the challenges to religious liberty in America are subtle, and certainly less violent than those experienced by the faithful around the world, those persecuted Christians are witnesses to us that religious freedom must be defended. We must protect religious freedom at home in order to be a beacon of hope and a model of tolerance in the world.

Discussion Questions:

1. *What is the connection between religious freedom and human dignity?*
2. *How can a government "create conditions favorable to the fostering of religious life"?*
3. *Do you think there was a time and/or a place where respect for religious freedom was exemplified? When and/or where? What are some ways you can defend religious freedom?*

Freedom to Live Our Faith Every Day

Religious freedom is both the highest and most basic freedom that belongs to the human person. It is the highest freedom because it has to do with man's ultimate eternal destiny. It is the most basic because a society is not properly called "free" without it. Pope Benedict XVI said, "Religious freedom is the pinnacle of all other freedoms. It is a sacred and inalienable right. It includes on the individual and collective levels the freedom to follow one's conscience in religious matters and, at the same time, freedom of worship."¹⁸

The freedom of worship is extremely important and perhaps taken for granted in America. It is wonderful that people can attend a church, synagogue, mosque, or a simple auditorium to worship God as they see fit, without fear of violence or destruction.¹⁹ Consider how particularly disturbing acts of violence are when they are directed at places of worship. But as Pope Benedict XVI noted above, religious freedom *includes* the freedom of worship, but it cannot be *confined* to it.

Religious freedom in America ought to continue to be robust: the freedom to live out our faith in everyday activities, from work and school to community organizations and charitable works. When he visited Independence Hall in Philadelphia, Pope Francis said, "Religious freedom certainly means the right to worship God, individually and in community, as our consciences dictate. But religious liberty, by its nature, transcends places of worship and the private sphere of individuals and families. Because religion itself, the religious dimension, is not a subculture; it is part of the culture of every people and every nation."²⁰ Every human person is created by God and meant to live forever; there is no people or nation that is unaffected by the "religious dimension" of life. The strength of a culture can be found in whether its people recognize that they have an eternal destiny and whether they respect each other's search for it.

This mystery of our eternal destiny is operative at all times, not just on Sunday mornings. “So whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God” (1 Cor 10:31). For example, a family making the Sign of the Cross and saying grace together at a restaurant is a powerful witness. A group praying the Rosary at the March for Life or in front of an abortion clinic speaks more eloquently than many political actions. The refusal of an organization to pay for abortifacients (abortion-causing drugs or devices) for their employees, or the refusal of a wedding vendor to take part in a same-sex ceremony, is a witness that a person’s relationship with God may be part of all of his decisions. Respect for a person’s conscience should outweigh many other considerations.

“Religious freedom is not only that of private thought or worship. It is the liberty to live, both privately and publicly, according to the ethical principles resulting from found truth.”²¹ Pope Francis reiterated with these words the broader conception of religious freedom that the Church is defending today.

Discussion Questions:

1. *How is the freedom of religion more than just freedom to worship?*
2. *How important do you think religious freedom is?*
3. *We often fail to appreciate rights that we do not exercise. Have you exercised the right to religious freedom in a robust sense in the last year? How? How might you be called to do so in the future?*

Freedom to Serve

Religious organizations have served the poor and needy in this country since its beginnings. Religious women in particular stand out for their heroic witnesses of charity in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. St. Frances Xavier Cabrini, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, and St. Katharine Drexel are examples of women who gave witness to Christ in America through service.

Pope St. John Paul II wrote in his first encyclical: “Christ teaches us that the best use of freedom is charity, which takes concrete form in self-giving and in service.”²² As discussed previously, true freedom is not without aim or purpose; rather, it is meant for love and service. Charity through service is the height of freedom, and it is out of the desire to serve that the Church is concerned for her religious freedom in America today.

In some states today, if a woman desires to go through the adoption process for her child, she cannot go to a Catholic or Christian agency committed to placing that child in the home of a married husband and wife. This is because the government has essentially driven those agencies to close, rather than allow them to place the child in a home according to where the agency believes the child is most likely to flourish. The government also seeks to force religious institutions, such as the Little Sisters of the Poor, to provide health insurance coverage for contraception, including abortifacients. If they want to continue to provide care to the poor elderly who live in their homes, the Little Sisters must violate their consciences and facilitate provision of these drugs to their employees. A powerful segment of our society appears to value sexual expression above all else, seeking to exclude people of faith from participating in the public square unless they conform. They accuse anyone who follows Christian moral teaching of being judgmental; in other words, they judge Christians because they believe that they are being judged by them. This is not tolerance. As Pope Benedict XVI put it, “In the name of tolerance, tolerance is being abolished.”²³

The Church is not asking for any special privileges when she upholds religious freedom. In fact, the Church is seeking to be allowed to continue to serve all people. For example, the Catholic bishops in the United States support legislation called the Child Welfare Provider Inclusion Act, which would uphold the right of adoption agencies to place children in homes that accord with their convictions about the nature of marriage.²⁴ The Church hopes by this that she will not be prevented from providing an important service to children and families in our country. Our faith calls us to serve the marginalized; we cannot do so unless the government respects our convictions.

At a homily during the *Fortnight for Freedom* closing Mass in 2015, Archbishop Joseph Kurtz noted, “There are a number of threats to religious freedom in our nation deserving our attentionWe are obliged by our faith to protect the precious gift of marriage as the permanent, faithful, fruitful union of one man and one womanWe are also obliged by our faith to reach out to welcome, respect, and serve immigrant children and families in our nation. And so again, we must remain free to serve these most vulnerable of our sisters and brothers, without risk of government sanction. Both are examples in which we have risen, and will continue to rise, to preserve religious freedom.”²⁵ The bishops invite all Catholics to join together to support the Church’s right to serve.

Discussion Questions:

1. *How is the freedom to serve a key component of the idea of “freedom for excellence,” which was referenced earlier?*
2. *Can you give a good argument for why adoption agencies should have the right to place children in homes according to their convictions about marriage?*
3. *What are practical ways that you can support the right to serve?*

The Redefinition of Marriage Poses Threats to Religious Freedom

Changing the definition of marriage in the law changed not one law but hundreds of laws at once. The Supreme Court’s decision in *Obergefell* cut short the debate over what the truth about marriage is and paved the way to cast those who disagree with its redefinition as bigots. The advocates of the redefinition of marriage in the law appear not to be content until everyone in society celebrates it. To this end, a number of people have filed lawsuits against individuals or groups who refuse to be part of that celebration, whether by contributing their artistic gifts or gathering spaces to a reception, or by issuing a same-sex marriage license. There is a broad range of negative social and legal consequences for those who disagree with the Supreme Court’s affirmation of same-sex sexual relationships, such as informal silencing at work, losing one’s job or business,²⁶ losing the ability to receive government grants or licenses, and being forced out of a public service.²⁷

There is a false narrative that objecting to same-sex “marriage” is tantamount to objecting to interracial marriage. But one redefines marriage, while the other does not. The state bans on interracial marriage acknowledged that a marriage could exist between a man and a woman of different races but objected to it based on irrational prejudice. In fact, it was precisely the fact that a man and a woman can procreate that offended the sensibilities of racists. In terms of the *essential* elements of marriage,²⁸ there is absolutely no reason that two persons of different races cannot marry.

Marriage redefinition is completely different. A definition of legal marriage as a relationship between any two adults who desire it, regardless of sex, lacks two of the essentials of marriage as it has perennially been understood: sexual difference and procreation. When marriage is redefined in this way, it is no longer the natural environment for the birth and growth of children, eliminating the principal reason why the law has required sexual

fidelity in marriage. Other practical consequences of natural marriage, long enshrined in law, are similarly rendered incoherent by eliminating the defining element of gender. As of this writing, for example, same-sex “spouses” are demanding that both of their names be placed on a child’s birth certificate, despite the reality that conception requires a man and a woman. Marriage redefinition means confusion over what children deserve in terms of parenting, particularly if their family of origin breaks down and they are in the care of the state. It also means an increased demand for third-party reproduction.

Religious freedom gives citizens the space to tell the truth about marriage in respectful ways. The *Obergefell* decision must not end public discourse on marriage. People should always retain the freedom to speak out. A state that punishes this would be radically overstepping its bounds. Pope Francis wrote, “A healthy pluralism, one which genuinely respects differences and values them as such, does not entail privatizing religions in an attempt to reduce them to the quiet obscurity of the individual’s conscience or to relegate them to the enclosed precincts of churches, synagogues or mosques. This would represent, in effect, a new form of discrimination and authoritarianism.”²⁹ Keeping religious people out of the public square is not a demonstration of fairness or equality, but rather the opposite. When the only virtue is tolerance, and this virtue is misunderstood, anyone who is perceived as intolerant is shut out from the conversation.³⁰

Discussion Questions:

1. *Have you ever been confronted with the comparison of interracial marriage to “gay marriage”? How did you respond?*
2. *How do you think that people who are committed to authentic marriage can unite in a way similar to the pro-life movement?*
3. *What is true pluralism, according to Pope Francis? What does it look like?*

What is Discrimination?

The word “discrimination” is most often used to speak of the *unjust treatment* of persons based on race, sex, age, or disability. Indeed, that has become the first definition of the word today, according to the *Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary* (and others). We are taught from a young age that it is wrong to discriminate and that we should always seek to be inclusive and aware of our biases or prejudices. While unjust discrimination is still a serious problem in the United States, the question of redefining marriage is unrelated to it.

Like most words, discrimination has multiple meanings. Marriage law always contains a certain type of discrimination, in the more limited sense that it makes certain distinctions. On this second meaning, discrimination is defined as “the ability to understand that one thing is different from another thing.”³¹ This kind of “discrimination” is not a bad thing at all, and it is what we do when we distinguish between marriage and any other type of sexual relationship. There is a real and practical difference between these relationships, and so it is just for everyone, including the government, to recognize that difference. Acknowledging it is not “discriminatory” in the more common sense of the term.

It is not “discriminatory” if a person who cannot swim is rejected for a position as a lifeguard or swim instructor. It is not “discriminatory” when a man who cannot lift twenty-five pounds is not hired as a piano mover. And it is not “discriminatory” when a man is not permitted to play in a women’s tennis tournament. In the same way, noting that two men or two women cannot be the *procreative, complementary union* that marriage is, is not “discriminatory.”

Only a man and a woman are capable of sexual activity that may yield children. The government has a strong interest in protecting the right of those children to a mother and a father and in reducing the likelihood that

those children will become wards of the state. The civil law of marriage (until recently) served both these interests by legally bonding adult couples to any children they may create, and to each other. The question is: does society need an institution that connects husbands and wives to each other and to any children who come from their union, or not? If so, then that institution is marriage (i.e., between a man and a woman). There is no other institution that does that.³²

On the other hand, the sexual activity of two persons of the same sex never yields children, so the government does not have that same, compelling interest in getting involved. The government does not care who your best friend is; you don't need a license for friendship or cohabitation. It would be eminently reasonable, and in no way unjust, for law to distinguish between same-sex and opposite-sex relationships. Treating different things differently is not discriminatory.

Likewise, it is reasonable that a professional serving a customer can distinguish between activities that express approval for same-sex sexual behavior and those that do not. The cases discussed in the next section deal with people who happily served each of their customers, with no thought to the customers' "private" lives, until they were asked to do something directly celebrating their sexual relationships. These people simply declined to celebrate what they consider to be immoral behavior.

Discussion Questions:

1. *Can you explain the two definitions of discrimination?*
2. *How is discrimination related to the redefinition of marriage?*
3. *How would you explain to someone that the definition of marriage as a relationship between one man and one woman is not discrimination?*

Stories of Religious Freedom Violations

Due to the Supreme Court’s decision in *Obergefell*, the laws of America are now officially “blind” to the sex of the two persons who create a marriage contract. Everyone is expected — and often required by law — to treat same-sex relationships as equivalent to marriage and, in turn, celebrated as equally good for society. People of faith who work in the wedding industry are particularly vulnerable to accusations of discrimination if they decline to participate in a celebration of conduct they believe to be immoral. The argument has been that the “right” of those in same-sex relationships to a cake, flowers, photographs, or reception site for their ceremony should trump the right of vendors to decline serving at a particular event that goes against their religious beliefs or moral convictions about sexual relationships.

The courts have (as of this writing) largely favored same-sex couple petitioners over religious freedom claims: in Washington State, Barronelle Stutzman, a florist, was ordered to pay a number of penalties and attorneys’ fees and commit to not “discriminating” in the future.³³ In Oregon, a judge ordered a local bakery (Sweetcakes by Melissa) to pay \$135,000 in damages to two women who demanded a wedding cake for their ceremony and were declined.³⁴ In Colorado, another bakery (Masterpiece Cakeshop, Inc.) was targeted as “discriminatory” for not baking a wedding cake for two men, and the baker was ordered to undergo training and to file quarterly compliance reports.³⁵ In that case, the appellate court likened the action to refusing service because of race. Other controversies have surrounded venues and even ministers.³⁶

American law is also increasingly and correspondingly “blind” to the sex of two persons who plan to adopt or “make” (via third-party reproduction) children. Just as marriage licenses had to change from “husband and wife” to “spouse one and spouse two,” there is a movement to change birth

certificates to assume the “parentage” of a person’s same-sex “spouse” when a child is brought into the relationship.³⁷ Regarding adoption, the Catholic Church believes that when it is not possible for the child to stay with her biological parents, she should be given that which she is missing: a mother and a father, together, whenever possible. Catholic social service agencies should have the freedom to continue operating according to this eminently reasonable conviction. Catholic Charities has been driven out of providing adoption services for children in need in Boston (2006), San Francisco (2006), the District of Columbia (2010), and Illinois (2011), because of its faith-based commitments. Is the government promoting authentic diversity when it effectively shuts down service agencies that do not align with the particular views of certain government leaders?

Pope Benedict XVI responded to this trend in 2008, saying to the United Nations: “It is inconceivable that believers should have to suppress a part of themselves—their faith—in order to be active citizens. It should never be necessary to deny God in order to enjoy one’s rights.”³⁸

Discussion Questions:

1. *What do you think about the stories about people being sued for not being willing to participate in celebrations of same-sex relationships?*
2. *What is an alternative to forcing wedding professionals to participate in same-sex “weddings” in the future?*
3. *How can third-party reproduction be seen as both a “cause” and an “effect” of marriage redefinition?*
4. *Have you ever felt that you had to suppress your beliefs in the workplace? Give an example.*

NOTES

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5. CCC, no. 1733.
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9. The settlers on the *Ark* and the *Dove* disembarked on the Feast of the Annunciation, March 25, 1634. See “A Brief Relation of the Voyage unto Maryland” by Father Andrew White, 1634.
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13. CCC, no. 2106.
14. Pope Benedict XVI, “Message for the World Day of Peace 2011.”
15. Pope Paul VI, *Dignitatis Humanae*, no. 5.
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24. See USCCB Backgrounder on the Child Welfare Provider Inclusion Act, <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/marriage-and-family/marriage/promotion-and-defense-of-marriage/upload/Backgrounder-Inclusion-Act-2015.pdf> (accessed January 27, 2016).
25. Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz, “2014 Fortnight for Freedom Closing Homily,” *United States Conference of Catholic Bishops*, July 4, 2014, <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/religious-liberty/fortnight-for-freedom/2014-fortnight-for-freedom-closing-homily-archbishop-joseph-kurtz.cfm> (accessed January 20, 2016).
26. As just one of many examples, Brendon Eich was forced out of the company he co-founded (Mozilla) when it was discovered that he had made a modest donation to the Proposition 8 campaign in California, which was a ballot measure to establish an amendment in the California constitution reaffirming the definition of marriage as between one man and one woman.
27. Catholic Charities in the District of Columbia, for example, was told by the District government that it was no longer an eligible foster care and adoption partner because of the agency’s convictions about marriage.

MARRIAGE: UNIQUE FOR A REASON

28. Please see the previous two videos and viewer's guides in the Marriage: Unique for a Reason series, "Made for Each Other" and "Made for Life," for elaboration on the essential elements of marriage.
29. Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, Vatican, November 24, 2013, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html (accessed January 20, 2016), no. 255.
30. The virtue of tolerance is the virtue that is operative when we must "put up with" one another. It is a true virtue, if not the highest (which is charity). Pope Benedict XVI pointed out in the book *Light of the World* (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 2010) that "in the name of tolerance, tolerance is being abolished," because "certain forms of behavior and thinking are being presented as the only reasonable ones and, therefore, as the only appropriately human ones" (53). In many cases, it is the Christian ethos that is not being tolerated.
31. "Discrimination." *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*. <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/discrimination> (accessed February 3, 2016).
32. For elaboration on this point, see William B. May, *Getting the Marriage Conversation Right: A Guide for Effective Dialogue* (Steubenville, OH: Emmaus Road Publishing, 2012).
33. See *State of Washington v. Arlene's Flowers*, <http://www.adfmedia.org/News/PRDetail/8608>.
34. See *In re Klein*, <http://www.oregon.gov/boli/SiteAssets/pages/press/Sweet%20Cakes%20FO.pdf>.
35. See *Masterpiece Cakeshop v. Craig*, <http://www.adfmedia.org/News/PRDetail/8700>.
36. Catholic owners of a bed and breakfast in Vermont were forced to pay heavy penalties and had to stop hosting wedding receptions because they would not host one for a same-sex couple. See <http://www.adfmedia.org/News/PRDetail/7601>. In the City of Coeur D'Alene, Idaho, Christian ministers Donald and Evelyn Knapp were threatened with arrest or fines in 2014 if they did not perform same-sex "weddings" at a wedding chapel they own. See *Knapp v. City of Coeur D'Alene*, <http://www.adfmedia.org/News/PRDetail/9366>. For a regularly updated list of religious freedom concerns with regard to marriage, visit <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/religious-liberty/religious-freedom-and-marriage.cfm>.
37. Camilla Taylor and Kyle Palazzolo. "It's not marriage equality until same-sex parents both appear on birth certificates," *The Guardian* (October 26, 2015).
38. Pope Benedict XVI, "Address to the General Assembly of the United Nations," Vatican, April 18, 2008, http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2008/april/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20080418_un-visit.html (accessed January 20, 2016).

Made For Freedom

A CATECHETICAL AND EDUCATIONAL AID
ON MARRIAGE AND RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Made for Freedom / Study Guide

This study guide accompanies the DVD *Made for Freedom* which examines the intersection of marriage and religious freedom in light of the redefinition of marriage in law. The film is an introduction to themes of freedom and truth in society, looking at new challenges to religious freedom that result from a false vision of the human person being imbedded into law. This guide touches on marriage as a natural and supernatural reality before examining what freedom is, both in Catholic thought and American culture, and how preserving the freedom to live out our faith in everyday life is an essential task. The DVD and study guide are part of the *Marriage: Unique for a Reason* series, an initiative of the USCCB Subcommittee for the Promotion and Defense of Marriage. The initiative seeks to assist Catholics and all people of good will to understand the unique gift of marriage as the union of one man and one woman. This guide includes questions for personal reflection and group discussion and can serve as a resource for clergy, catechists, teachers, and other leaders.

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Study Guide



Made For The Common Good

A CATECHETICAL AND EDUCATIONAL AID ON
MARRIAGE AND THE COMMON GOOD



MARRIAGE
Unique for a Reason



ABOUT THE ART

Saints Joachim and Anne are the father and mother of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Mary is the fruit of their marriage. By a singular grace of God in view of the merits of Jesus, she was preserved from all stain of Original Sin from the moment of her conception. Thus it is in the context of married life and conjugal love that Mary is prepared to receive the Divine Logos, the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ our Lord. Jesus is the Logos, the "Reason" at the heart of all reason and truth, including the truth of marriage. The marriage between Joachim and Anne is a significant witness to why marriage is "unique for a reason."

The Subcommittee for the Promotion and Defense of Marriage is grateful to the artist Rev. Marko Rupnik for the use of this image.

Made For the Common Good

A CATECHETICAL AND EDUCATIONAL AID ON
MARRIAGE AND THE COMMON GOOD

Study Guide

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MARRIAGE

Unique for a Reason



United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

MARRIAGE: UNIQUE FOR A REASON

The *Made for the Common Good* Study Guide was developed as a resource and approved by Bishop James D. Conley, Chairman of the Subcommittee for the Promotion and Defense of Marriage of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). It was authorized for publication by the undersigned.

Msgr. J. Brian Bransfield
General Secretary, USCCB

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Introduction: What is the Common Good?

“The family founded on marriage is an irreplaceable natural institution and a fundamental element of the common good of every society.”

- St. John Paul II¹

Marriage, family, and the common good are bound together. They are all fundamental parts of the human experience: love between a man and a woman; the procreation of children; and the community that both forms and is formed by families. Today, when these basic realities are questioned and even redefined, it is vital to rediscover their meaning and work toward their fulfillment.

The common good is “the good of ‘all of us,’ made up of individuals, families, and intermediate groups who together constitute society.”² Every one of us contributes to the functioning of society as a whole, so we all bear some responsibility for the common good and should work together for it. Like the old saying that two hands are better than one, people who come together in community are able to accomplish much more for each person than any individual would on his or her own. We need one another to become fully who we are

called to be. Marriage as the union of husband and wife is the first “community.”³ It is foundational not only to the family but to the larger community made up of many families and to society as a whole.

Marriage serves the common good in many ways, but it is probably best understood when viewed from the perspective of children. A child is formed from the relationship of a man and a woman and in most cases is raised within this relationship. Here, in the context of this family, a child learns what it means to live, love, and forgive. While no family is perfect, a family built upon the solid foundation of lifelong marriage provides something for a child that no other relationship or institution can: a mom and a dad united in the covenant of marriage. In order to understand the essential contribution that marriage makes to the common good, it is vital to recognize that marriage is the only institution that unites a man and a woman together and to any children that come from their union.

Children deserve to know where they come from, and in ordinary circumstances, to be cared for by the mother and father who brought them into existence.⁴ This is a fairly common sense view and leads to the conclusion that we should be working together to support and strengthen natural marriage. Since the importance of natural marriage can no longer be taken as a given, we must relearn it and invite others to do so as well.

This study guide accompanies the video entitled [*Made for the Common Good*](#), the fourth and final video in the [*Marriage: Unique for a Reason*](#) series. The first video, [*Made for Each Other*](#), centered on the nature of sexual difference and how it is essential to the unique relationship of marriage. The second video, [*Made for Life*](#), examined how openness to the gift of a child is also an essential element of marriage. Marriage is not closed in upon itself but rather opens the

man and woman to each other and to the possibility of becoming father and mother together. In the third video, *Made for Freedom*, the integral relationship between marriage and religious freedom was examined in view of the redefinition of marriage in the law and the growing challenges to people of faith. This final video, *Made for the Common Good*, completes the series on the unique gift of marriage by exploring how strong marriages (or the lack thereof) deeply affect the entire community and the capacity of individuals to achieve true happiness and fulfillment.

This guide is intended to assist and facilitate discussion of the concepts raised in the video *Made for the Common Good*, such as: How is marriage a matter of social justice? Does marriage between a man and a woman really make a difference to children? How does family affect society and what is the role of the state in ensuring healthy marriages and families?

For more information and further resources, including access to other videos in the series, go to www.marriageuniqueforareason.org.

Marriage Is a Matter of Social Justice

As Pope Francis has said, “We must reaffirm the right of children to grow up in a family with a father and a mother.”⁵ Justice is giving a person what they are rightly due. When we say that someone has a right, we are recognizing that someone deserves something. Understanding a child’s rights, then, comes from understanding who a child is and what he or she deserves.

Every child is a gift with the inviolable dignity of a human person. A child is meant to come from a loving bond between a man and a woman. It is a fact that every child has a mom and a dad. It therefore is reasonable to argue that a child has a right to know, love, and be raised by the two people who brought him or her into existence. This may not be possible or in the best interests of the child in some cases,⁶ but for the most part, society recognizes that knowing who your parents are and being raised by them is important. In fact, it is a basic, natural right. Marriage, then, is the one and only institution that serves this natural right of the child, striving to keep the mom and dad united as they care for any children they may be blessed with.

When a child does not have a connection to where he or she came from, he or she may experience a deprivation. Something the child needs, and thus has a right to, is missing. That “something” is rather a “someone”—a mother or a father. This is an injustice when it is done on purpose, and being fatherless or motherless can be described as a great poverty. A child may experience this poverty for a variety of reasons, through a tragedy, such as death or incapacitation, or it may occur because of adults’ choices, such as through divorce, abandonment, abuse, or other reasons. The practice of adoption is, in many ways, how society seeks to respond to this kind of loss for a child.

Catholic adoption agencies, for example, normally seek to place children in homes where they will have a married father and mother. Deliberately depriving a child of the love of a father or a mother is an injustice.

Marriage is not often understood as a matter of social justice. But as a public institution that seeks not only to ensure the best possible environment for children but also to respect the basic rights of children, it is a social justice issue. That is, it is an issue that affects everyone in society and concerns the basic rights of the most vulnerable among us.⁷

Discussion Questions:

1. *Pope Francis has said, “We must reaffirm the right of children to grow up in a family with a father and a mother.”⁸ Why is that?*
2. *Have you, or has anyone you know, experienced fatherlessness or motherlessness? How has it affected you or them?*
3. *Why is marriage a social justice issue and not a simply a religious issue?*

Sexual Difference Matters

Human beings at birth are not simply smaller versions of adults. A human baby cannot survive alone but relies completely on the care of at least one other human being to make it past infancy. Babies who are not affectionately touched enough will actually stop growing.⁹ While mothers offer distinctive affection and nurturing, including nourishment even from their own bodies, fathers likewise offer care and protection that is irreplaceable.¹⁰ Sexual difference is not only essential for conceiving a child but is also of great consequence for raising a child. And this is a key reason why natural marriage is so important for the common good: it keeps moms and dads together for the shared task of parenting.

Pope Francis has spoken of the importance of mothers, fathers, and their relationship. He has thanked mothers for their examples of “tenderness, dedication, and moral strength.”¹¹ He has exhorted fathers to teach by word and example, and to show their children how to live well and forgive.¹² The Holy Father has also highlighted the importance of sexual difference in marriage.¹³ As he has noted, parenthood is grounded in being created male and female: “This is the ‘first’ and most fundamental difference, constitutive of the human being.”¹⁴ “It is not a healthy attitude which would seek ‘to cancel out sexual difference.’”¹⁵

What if this positive experience of sexual difference is missing for the child? While it may be tempting to say that any two-person household will do, a number of adults who were raised in households with two adults of the same sex have come forward to speak of their experience of loss. Below is the testimony of one of them:

While I did love my mother’s partner and friends, I would have

traded every one of them to have my mom and my dad loving me under the same roof. This should come as no surprise to anyone who is willing to remove the politically correct lens that we all seem to have over our eyes.

Kids want their mother and father to love them, and to love each other. I have no bitterness toward either of my parents. On the contrary, I am grateful for a close relationship with them both and for the role they play in my children's lives. But loving my parents and looking critically at the impact of family breakdown are not mutually exclusive.

Now that I am a parent, I see clearly the beautiful differences my husband and I bring to our family. I see the wholeness and health that my children receive because they have both of their parents living with and loving them. I see how important the role of their father is and how irreplaceable I am as their mother. We play complementary roles in their lives, and neither of us is disposable. In fact, we are both critical. It's almost as if Mother Nature got this whole reproduction thing exactly right.¹⁶

The experience of an adult who was raised in a same-sex household as a child should certainly bear important weight. This experience is supported by social science data that continues to highlight the consistently better outcomes for children raised by their own married parents when compared to every other alternative arrangement. While still only emerging, such data questions a narrative that claims sexual difference and family structure are irrelevant.¹⁷ If society is truly concerned for the well-being of children, then it should listen carefully to these adults who courageously share their experiences of being deprived of a mother or father.¹⁸

Discussion Questions:

1. *If you have children, can you give a few examples of the different ways that you relate to your children versus the way that your spouse does? Or think back to the differences in the ways your mother and father related to you.*
2. *How does the stable, lifelong relationship of their parents benefit children? What is your reaction to hearing about the experience of those who were raised by two persons of the same sex?*

Family Structure Affects Society

Family structure matters, and healthy, intact marriages and families yield a number of positive outcomes. Data continues to bear this out in various ways.

Marriage benefits the men and women who enter into it. For married men, they tend to have higher incomes and better health than unmarried men.¹⁹ Married men have a lower incidence of cancer and a lower risk of dying from cancer.²⁰ Marriage tends to improve and foster men’s relationships with their children.²¹ Men who are married fathers have lower levels of testosterone, which is correlated with less risky behavior or aggression.²² For women, marriage provides significant psychological benefits.²³ It decreases a woman’s risk of domestic violence or abuse.²⁴ In general, married people tend to have longer life expectancies²⁵ and higher incomes²⁶ than their unmarried peers.

Studies also continue to show numerous positive outcomes for children of healthy, intact marriages.²⁷ A married mom and dad still offer “the best context for child well-being and development.”²⁸ For example, children’s physical and emotional health consistently fares better in intact married families.²⁹ Physical, sexual, and emotional abuse is much lower for children being raised by their own married parents, and children generally experience less behavioral and emotional difficulties when raised by their own married parents.³⁰

All of this has ramifications for society at large. For example, research confirms time and time again that a healthy marriage culture is one of the best anti-poverty measures in existence. In fact, “the strongest predictor for child poverty in America is whether the child’s parents are married.”³¹ States in which there are more marriages are wealthier states—marriages seem to encourage economic

mobility and lead to less child poverty.³² The connection between marriage and economic stability appears to be strongest for young men.³³ A serious challenge today is that while college-educated people are still getting married and raising fairly stable families, people in working-class and less-educated environments have much lower rates of marriage and higher rates of divorce.³⁴ Family fragmentation costs taxpayers over \$112 billion annually.³⁵

Marriage also combats violence in the community. Violent crime decreases in areas with a high percentage of married households, even when social scientists control for other socio-demographic factors.³⁶ And even in areas where violence is more common, children in married households with a mother and a father are less likely to be victims.³⁷

Healthy marriages model so many virtues and good habits that are vital for social life.³⁸ In other words, the joyful and sacrificial love between a man and a woman in marriage serves as an example to their children of what it means to love other people in general. Marriage advances a “genuine human ecology,” which includes a respect for and proper understanding of the human body and sexuality.³⁹ And at a fundamental and basic level, an intact marriage between husband and wife remains the “most fertile source” and well-integrated environment for new members of society.⁴⁰ If the concept of social justice is to be embodied better in American communities, society must work to support the natural family based on marriage as the union of one man and one woman.

Discussion Questions:

1. *What are the three ways marriage is good for the entire society as outlined here?*
2. *Can you explain how a child who is in a single-parent household may still benefit from intact marriages in his or her community?*

The State's Role in Promoting the Common Good

The common good is everyone's responsibility. It "involves all members of society" and "no one is exempt from cooperating, according to each one's possibilities, in attaining it and developing it."⁴¹ The efforts we make on a daily basis to be attentive to the needs of others are a contribution to the common good. This is called our "positive duty to contribute to the common good and to act in solidarity with those in need."⁴² On the other hand, if we routinely ignore the needs of someone near us, we are doing injury not just to that person but also to the common good.

Every person's actions count; but the state as a whole has a major responsibility for the common good, "since the common good is the reason that the political authority exists."⁴³ In fact, according to St. John XXIII, "the whole reason for the existence of civil authorities is the realization of the common good . . . For this reason, every civil authority must take pains to promote the common good of all, without preference for any single citizen or civic group."⁴⁴ The authorities of the state should be concerned for the welfare of all, and the structures and legislation that civil groups set up should reflect this concern. As the US bishops have said, "How we organize our society—in economics and politics, in law and policy—directly affects the common good and the capacity of individuals to develop their full potential."⁴⁵

St. John XXIII described the connection between the common good and public authority as "intrinsic"—they are not simply related on the outside, for some external purpose, but rather from within, from what they are.⁴⁶ It is a noble calling to serve the people of your area or nation. Pope Francis wrote, "Politics, though often denigrated, remains a lofty vocation and one of the highest forms of charity,

inasmuch as it seeks the common good . . . I beg the Lord to grant us more politicians who are genuinely disturbed by the state of society, the people, the lives of the poor!”⁴⁷ The pope’s words apply especially to politicians who are Catholic. “Having been entrusted with special responsibility for the common good, Catholic leaders must commit themselves to the pursuit of the virtues, especially courage, justice, temperance, and prudence.”⁴⁸ A Catholic involved in the public square must have a spirit of service.

Public authority does not exist except to accomplish the good of all, and the good of all cannot be effectively accomplished without the aid of public authority. It is a reciprocal relationship. In the United States, we entrust the common good into the hands of our elected officials.

The video *Made for the Common Good* may prompt you to evaluate how well public officials are promoting and defending what is truly best for all. Because marriage is so intimately bound with the common good, the state has a vested interest in promoting and defending marriage and in seeing that marriages thrive. How well has it done so, and how can we encourage a renewed dialogue in support of building a healthy and vibrant marriage culture?

Discussion Questions:

1. *Name some of the structures in society, necessary for the common good, that require more support than any one private citizen could provide?*
2. *If you were a politician striving for the common good, what are examples of programs or policies that you would enact?*
3. *The state is involved in solemnizing marriages; why do you think that is?*

Conclusion

Marriage is an integral part of the common good that civil society is called to uphold. Everyone has a responsibility to support a healthy marriage culture, and everyone has something to lose when marriage fails or is in decline. Recent debates and conversations have focused on questions of equality and fairness—values that are vital to any society. But what these debates have often missed—all the way up to the Supreme Court of the United States—is the fundamental question: *what is marriage?* Before you can talk about equality or fairness in access to an institution, you must define what the institution is. And further, it's imperative to ask, *why has the state been—and why should it be—interested and involved in recognizing and supporting marriage?*

The answer to the latter question depends upon the answer to the first about the meaning of marriage. If marriage is fundamentally about the romantic relationship of two adults, what justifies the state's involvement? In this case, various relationships and friendships would seem open to state recognition, but the rationale for such recognition would have to be demonstrated. The state has not been in the business of ratifying friendships or any other type of relationship on the basis of the degree of affection or level of commitment. In fact, most of us would probably think that was an overreach and intrusion by the government in our private lives. However, the Supreme Court of the United States' decision in *Obergefell* can only be based on this superficial understanding of marriage—an emotional and sexual bond between two people.

Historically, however, the state has been invested in supporting marriage because of what marriage uniquely is and its unique

contribution to the common good. Marriage as the union of a man and a woman is the only *naturally procreative* institution that encourages mothers and fathers to stay together for the shared task of parenting. Marriage as the union of a man and a woman is ordered to two inseparable ends or goods: the good of the spouses and to the procreation and education of children. Marriage has never been simply a matter of catering to adult desires. As a social and legal institution, it has always been intrinsically child-centered (even though not every marriage results in a child ⁴⁹). No other relationship is what marriage is or does what marriage does in uniting a man and a woman to each other and to any child born of their union.

This is why understanding marriage's relationship with the common good is so important. The current civil law has redefined marriage, but the law cannot redefine nature. Current civil law does not correspond to the reality of nature, and so it tells society a lie about what marriage is. This aspect of civil law, therefore, is unjust and does not serve the common good. Advancing a healthy marriage culture requires a renewed conversation and a renewed witness of marriages and families themselves—in a word, it will require all of us to stand up for marriage. Pope Francis's challenge to young people is a challenge for all: "Today, there are those who say that marriage is out of fashion . . . They say that it is not worth making a life-long commitment, making a definitive decision, 'forever,' because we do not know what tomorrow will bring. I ask you, instead, to be revolutionaries . . . yes, I am asking you to rebel against this culture that sees everything as temporary and that ultimately believes you are incapable of responsibility, that believes you are incapable of true love. I have confidence in you and I pray for you." ⁵⁰ In truth and love, may we all have the courage to witness to and stand for the unique and irreplaceable gift of marriage. Marriage is unique for a reason.

NOTES

1. Pope John Paul II, [Address to the participants in the plenary assembly of the Pontifical Council of the Family](http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/2002/october/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_20021018_pc-family.html), November 20, 2004, *Vatican*, http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/2002/october/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_20021018_pc-family.html (accessed January 25, 2017).
2. Pope Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter *Caritas in Veritate*, June 29, 2009, *Vatican*, http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20090629_caritas-in-veritate.html (accessed January 25, 2017), no. 7. The more formal and traditional definition of the common good is: “the sum total of social conditions which allow people, either as groups or as individuals, to reach their fulfillment more fully and more easily” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* [CCC], 2nd ed. [Washington, DC: Libreria Editrice Vaticana—United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2000], no. 1906).
3. Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris Consortio*, November 22, 1981, *Vatican*, http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_19811122_familiaris-consortio.html (accessed January 25, 2017), no. 17.
4. There are few exceptions to this rule, as in particular adoption situations.
5. Pope Francis, [Address to the International Catholic Child Bureau](https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2014/april/documents/papa-francesco_20140411_ufficio-cattolico-infanzia.html), April 11, 2014, *Vatican*, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2014/april/documents/papa-francesco_20140411_ufficio-cattolico-infanzia.html (accessed January 25, 2017).
6. For example, in situations of abandonment, or in abusive situations or when one or both parents are unable to provide the child with basic needs or safety.
7. “The family, founded upon marriage freely contracted, one and indissoluble, must be regarded as the natural, primary cell of human society. The interests of the family, therefore, must be taken very specially into consideration in social and economic affairs, as well as in the spheres of faith and morals. For all of these have to do with strengthening the family and assisting it in the fulfilment of its mission” (Pope John XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Pacem in Terris*, April 11, 1963, *Vatican*, http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-xxiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_j-xxiii_enc_11041963_pacem.html [accessed January 25, 2017], no. 16).
8. Pope Francis, [Address to the International Catholic Child Bureau](#) (2014).
9. Maia Szalavitz, “[Touching Empathy](#),” *Psychology Today* (March 1, 2010).
10. In every human society, fathers have played a role in childcare. See Paul Raeburn, *Do Fathers Matter? What Science Is Telling Us about the Parent We’ve Overlooked* (New York: Scientific American/Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2014), p. 19.
11. Pope Francis, “[The Family—the Mother](#)” General Audience, January 7, 2015, *Vatican*, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2015/documents/papa-francesco_20150107_udi-enza-generale.html (accessed January 25, 2017).
12. Pope Francis, “[The Family—the Father \(first part\)](#)” General Audience, January 28, 2015, *Vatican*, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2015/documents/papa-francesco_20150128_udienza-generale.html (accessed January 25, 2017) and “[The Family—the Father](#)

- (second part)” General Audience, February 4, 2015, *Vatican*, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2015/documents/papa-francesco_20150204_udienza-generale.html (accessed January 25, 2017).
13. Pope Francis, “[The Family—Male and Female \(1\)](https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2015/documents/papa-francesco_20150415_udienza-generale.html)” General Audience, April 15, 2015, *Vatican*, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2015/documents/papa-francesco_20150415_udienza-generale.html (accessed January 25, 2017) and “[The Family—Male and Female \(2\)](https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2015/documents/papa-francesco_20150422_udienza-generale.html)” General Audience, April 22, 2015, *Vatican*, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2015/documents/papa-francesco_20150422_udienza-generale.html (accessed January 25, 2017).
 14. Pope Francis, [Address to Participants in Rome’s Diocesan Conference](https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/june/documents/papa-francesco_20150614_convegno-diocesi-roma.html), June 14, 2015, *Vatican*, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/june/documents/papa-francesco_20150614_convegno-diocesi-roma.html (accessed January 25, 2017).
 15. Pope Francis, Encyclical *Laudato Si’*, May 24, 2015, *Vatican*, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html (accessed January 25, 2017), no. 155.
 16. Katy Faust, “[Dear Justice Kennedy: An Open Letter from the Child of a Loving Gay Parent.](#)” *Public Discourse* (February 2, 2015). See also Heather Barwick, “[Dear Gay Community: Your Kids Are Hurting.](#)” *The Federalist* (March 17, 2015) and Brandi Walton, “[The Kids Are Not Alright: A Lesbian’s Daughter Speaks Out.](#)” *The Federalist* (April 21, 2015).
 17. See, for example, D. Paul Sullins, “[Invisible Victims: Delayed Onset Depression among Adults with Same-Sex Parents.](#)” *Depression Research and Treatment*. Vol. 2016 (2016); D. Paul Sullins, “[Emotional Problems among Children with Same-Sex Parents: Difference by Definition.](#)” *British Journal of Education, Society and Behavioural Science*. Vol. 7, No. 2: pp. 99-120, 2015. Mark Regnerus, “[How different are the adult children of parents who have same-sex relationships? Findings from the New Family Structures Study.](#)” *Social Science Research*. Vol. 41, No. 4, July 2012, pp. 752-770.
 18. These stories have tended to be ignored, dismissed, or even silenced by those who have an interest in ensuring that nothing negative is said about same-sex sexual relationships. For example, see Robert Oscar Lopez, “[Growing Up With Two Moms: The Untold Children’s View.](#)” *Public Discourse* (August 6, 2012). While some argue that children do “just fine” in a same-sex household and that children are glad when those two men or two women who raised them are able to be “married,” the evidence for this is not readily available. When searching for information or writing from *adults* who were raised in same-sex households, very little is available, and most of it is of the character shared here.
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26. See "[Married Couple Families Have Higher Incomes](#)," The Heritage Foundation. 2011.
27. See: W. Bradford Wilcox, "[Even for Rich Kids, Marriage Matters](#)," Family Studies, December 19, 2013; "[Why Marriage Matters, Third Edition: 30 Conclusions from the Social Sciences](#)," Institute for American Values, 2011.
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David Ribar, "[Why Marriage Matters for Child Wellbeing](#)," *The Future of Children*. Vol. 25, No. 2, Fall 2015.
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D. Paul Sullins, "[Invisible Victims: Delayed Onset Depression among Adults with Same-Sex Parents](#)," *Depression Research and Treatment*. Vol. 2016 (2016); D. Paul Sullins, "[Emotional Problems among Children with Same-Sex Parents: Difference by Definition](#)," *British Journal of Education, Society and Behavioural Science*. Vol. 7, No. 2: pp. 99-120, 2015.
Mark Regnerus, "[How different are the adult children of parents who have same-sex relationships? Findings from the New Family Structures Study](#)," *Social Science Research*. Vol. 41, No. 4, July 2012, pp. 752-770.
28. Pierpaolo Donati and Paul Sullins, *The Conjugal Family: An Irreplaceable Resource for Society*, 37-137 (Rome: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2015): 73. "The proposition that the natural family comprising joint married biological parents offers the best context for child well-being and development is among the most strongly attested assertions in all of the social sciences. National health surveillance surveys have repeatedly found that children in alternate family arrangements are subject to a wide range of emotional and behavioral problems at higher rates than are children in conjugal families" (*ibid.*, 73).
29. Paul Sullins, "The Conjugal Family in America," 73-76.

30. See Sullins, “The Conjugal Family in America,” 76-77.
31. Paul Sullins, “The Conjugal Family in America,” 38.
32. Jim Tankersley, “[Why States with More Marriages are Richer States.](#)” *The Washington Post*. (October 20, 2015).
33. W. Bradford Wilcox, Robert I. Lerman, Joseph Price, “[Strong Families, Prosperous States: Do Healthy Families Affect the Wealth of States?](#)” *American Enterprise Institute and the Institute for Family Studies*. (October 19, 2015).
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35. Lynne Marie Kohm and Rachel K. Toberty. “[A Fifty-State Survey of the Cost of Family Fragmentation.](#)” *Regent University Law Review*. Vol. 25:25. 2012.
36. W. Bradford Wilcox, Robert I. Lerman, Joseph Price, “[Strong Families, Prosperous States: Do Healthy Families Affect the Wealth of States?](#)” *American Enterprise Institute and the Institute for Family Studies*. (October 19, 2015).
37. Nicholas Zill, “[Even in Unsafe Neighborhoods, Kids Are Safer in Married Families.](#)” *Family Studies*. (February 23, 2015).
38. “The family is the first and fundamental school of social living: as a community of love, it finds in self-giving the law that guides it and makes it grow. The self-giving that inspires the love of husband and wife for each other is the model and norm for the self-giving that must be practiced in the relationships between brothers and sisters and the different generations living together in the family. And the communion and sharing that are part of everyday life in the home at times of joy and at times of difficulty are the most concrete and effective pedagogy for the active, responsible and fruitful inclusion of the children in the wider horizon of society” (Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris Consortio*, no. 37). See also *Familiaris Consortio*, nos. 21 and 36.
39. See Pope Francis, Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'*, no. 155.
40. Paul Sullins, “The Conjugal Family in America,” 70-73.
41. *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 167.
42. USCCB, [Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship](#) (Washington, DC: USCCB, 2015), no. 24.
43. *Ibid*, no. 168.
44. Pope John XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Pacem in Terris* (April 11, 1963), nos. 54 and 56.
45. USCCB, [Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship](#), no. 47.
46. *Ibid*, no. 136.
47. Pope Francis. Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 205.
48. USCCB, [Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship](#), no. 39.

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49. Please see the video and study guide in this series, "[Made for Life](#)," which expounds on this point.
50. Pope Francis. [Meeting with the Volunteers of the XXVIII World Youth Day](#), Brazil (July 28, 2013).

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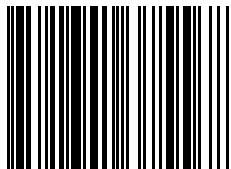
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El Matrimonio

HECHO PARA EL AMOR Y LA VIDA

GUÍA DE ESTUDIO
EDICIÓN BILINGUE

.....
STUDY GUIDE
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EL MATRIMONIO

Único y con Razón



SOBRE EL ARTE

Los Santos Joaquín y Ana son los padres de la Santísima Virgen María. María es el fruto de su matrimonio. Por una gracia singular de Dios por los méritos de Jesús, ella fue preservada de toda mancha del Pecado Original desde el momento de su concepción. Por tanto, es en el contexto de la vida matrimonial y el amor conyugal que María es preparada para recibir el Logos Divino, la palabra hecha carne, la “Razón” en el corazón de toda la verdad y razón, incluyendo la verdad del matrimonio. El matrimonio entre Joaquín y Ana es un testimonio significativo de por qué el matrimonio es “único y con razón.”

El Subcomité para la Promoción y Defensa del Matrimonio agradece al artista, Rev. Marko Rupnik, por autorizar el uso de esta imagen.

ABOUT THE ART

Saints Joachim and Anne are the father and mother of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Mary is the fruit of their marriage. By a singular grace of God in view of the merits of Jesus, she was preserved from all stain of Original Sin from the moment of her conception. Thus it is in the context of married life and conjugal love that Mary is prepared to receive the Divine Logos, the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ our Lord. Jesus is the Logos, the “Reason” at the heart of all reason and truth, including the truth of marriage. The marriage between Joachim and Anne is a significant witness to why marriage is “unique for a reason.”

The Subcommittee for the Promotion and Defense of Marriage is grateful to the artist Rev. Marko Rupnik for the use of this image.

El Matrimonio

Hecho para el amor y la vida

Guía de estudio



EL MATRIMONIO

Único y con Razón



La guía de estudio de *El matrimonio: hecho para el amor y la vida* fue desarrollada como un recurso por el Subcomité para la Promoción y Defensa del Matrimonio de la Conferencia de Obispos Católicos de los Estados Unidos (USCCB). Fue revisada por el Arzobispo Salvatore J. Cordileone, Presidente del Comité, y fue autorizada para su publicación por el que suscribe.

Mons. Ronny Jenkins
Secretario General, USCCB

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Cómo usar esta guía de estudio

Esta guía de estudio acompaña al video “*El matrimonio: hecho para el amor y la vida*” que cuenta la historia de dos jóvenes: Miguel y su novia María, y el impacto que en su idea sobre el matrimonio ejercen los abuelos de él, Héctor y Rosa, quienes están celebrando su 50 aniversario de boda. El video es una introducción artística al tema del matrimonio. Esta guía lleva al lector a profundizar en el tema principal a través de una serie de reflexiones en cinco temas principales:

1. Diferencia sexual y complementariedad—los dos se hacen una sola carne
2. Los hijos son un regalo y merecen una madre y un padre unidos en matrimonio
3. Matrimonio y el bien común—el fundamento de la sociedad
4. Matrimonio y libertad religiosa—cuando las enseñanzas de la Iglesia antagonizan la ley
5. Personas que sienten atracción por el mismo sexo

Cada tema incluye **preguntas de discusión** que pueden ser usadas por el lector solo o en grupo. Los primeros cuatro temas tienen una sección llamada “**profundizando**” que lleva más allá la discusión del matrimonio bien sea ofreciendo un análisis adicional o respondiendo a las preguntas más frecuentes.

Esta guía puede ser usada por una persona o en grupo bajo la dirección de un líder o facilitador. La guía complementa al video y está hecha para todos los espectadores que esten interesados en profundizar mas sobre las ideas presentadas en el video, especialmente para líderes (sacerdotes, diáconos, catequistas, profesores, y para todo aquel que sirve en cualquier tipo de ministerio) que quieran ayudar a otros a entender qué es el matrimonio y por qué es importante. La guía no pretende ser pedagógica o suplir el papel crítico del catequista pero sí busca asistir en el entendimiento más profundo de los temas claves tratados en el video. Los líderes están invitados a visitar el sitio web www.elmatrimoniounicoyconrazon.org para obtener más recursos incluyendo preguntas más frecuentes sobre el matrimonio, manuales y sugerencias de cómo presentar el material en varios formatos de programa.

Introducción:

El legado del amor conyugal fiel

El 50 aniversario de boda es un tiempo de gozo y de acción de gracias. Es también un testimonio de amor, sacrificio y fidelidad después de muchos años. Hay historias en los 50 aniversarios de esposos y esposas quienes se han amado y sacrificado por cada uno y por sus familias, celebrando alegrías y superando conflictos a través de la prueba del tiempo. ¿Qué los unió? ¿Qué mantuvo su compromiso? ¿Qué dificultades encontraron y cómo hicieron para superarlas? Si fueron bendecidos con niños, ¿qué sacrificios hicieron el papá y la mamá en función de la familia? ¿Qué sabios consejos tienen para compartir sobre cómo amar y educar a los hijos?

Los matrimonios que permanecen dejan un legado y nos invitan a participar en ese legado. Ellos dejan una huella irremplazable en los hijos, nietos y bisnietos, miembros de la familia extendida, vecinos, compañeros de trabajo, comunidades y sociedades. Hay una razón por la cual celebramos esta única forma de fidelidad humana, en la cual un hombre y una mujer se unen exclusivamente de por vida y se comprometen a criar en amor todo hijo concebido en esa unión. El matrimonio es un regalo. Ninguna otra institución une a un hombre y a una mujer de por vida y los enlaza a todo niño concebido y nacido en esa unión. Ninguna otra institución sirve el propósito de mantener padres y madres juntos para criar a sus hijos.

En nuestro tiempo, muchos de nosotros y nuestras propias familias, amigos y vecinos hemos experimentado el dolor y la herida de un matrimonio roto. Los jóvenes son particularmente afectados. Muchos están escogiendo retrasar o evitar el matrimonio por varias razones. La cohabitación va en aumento mientras que el matrimonio va disminuyendo. Más aun, las leyes y las políticas públicas continúan haciéndose para no reconocer la singularidad del matrimonio e incluso buscan redefinirlo de manera que el matrimonio no sea ya más la unión de un hombre y una mujer sino la de dos personas cualesquiera.

Ha surgido un debate en varios países sobre el sentido fundamental del significado del matrimonio. Desafortunadamente, la pregunta más importante:—¿Qué es el matrimonio? —se diluye. Verdades acerca del matrimonio y la persona humana que solían ser bien evidentes para todos ya no son reconocidas. Este es el resultado de varias décadas durante las cuales el matrimonio y la familia no han sido fortalecidos ni

promovidos como han debido serlo en nuestros hogares, vecindarios, comunidades y la sociedad. En el medio de esto, debemos preguntarnos: ¿Qué hace al matrimonio especial y único? ¿Por qué deberíamos promover y fortalecer el matrimonio? ¿Y por qué esto es importante, no solamente para nosotros sino para nuestras familias, hijos, y la sociedad inclusive?

El matrimonio: hecho para el amor y la vida

El video “*El matrimonio: hecho para el amor y la vida*” nos invita a entrar en una historia acerca de un matrimonio fiel y una pareja joven luchando con la idea del matrimonio. Como la historia se desenvuelve, surge la pregunta acerca del sentido exclusivo del matrimonio como la unión de un hombre y una mujer. La pareja casada ha sido testigo de este significado por cincuenta años, y entonces se les pide compartir una respuesta a través de una palabra que continúa siendo vivida como ejemplo.

El video y la guía de estudio son parte de una gran iniciativa catequética y educativa llamada *El matrimonio: único y con razón*. Esta iniciativa del Subcomité para la Promoción y Defensa del Matrimonio de la Conferencia de Obispos Católicos de los Estados Unidos, con el apoyo generoso de los Caballeros de Colón, trabaja para responder al llamado del Beato Juan Pablo II a un compromiso serio con la tarea urgente del “redescubrimiento del valor de la familia y del matrimonio” de cara a los cuestionamientos en la sociedad de hoy.¹ Los cuatro primeros temas tratados en esta guía cubren los cuatro temas básicos de la iniciativa *El matrimonio: único y con razón*—diferencia sexual, el regalo de los hijos, el bien común y la libertad religiosa—todos los cuales aparecen en el video en diferentes momentos. El quinto tema sobre personas que experimentan una atracción sexual por individuos del mismo sexo representa un área importante de atención pastoral que está relacionada con los temas arriba mencionados y es también parte de la historia en el video.

Al final, todos nosotros estemos o no llamados a la vocación del matrimonio estamos llamados a ser líderes del matrimonio y la familia—testigos de palabra y ejemplo de la belleza y verdad del matrimonio y de su lugar fundamental en la sociedad. A medida que el matrimonio y las familias avanzan, nuestra sociedad y nuestra cultura avanzan. ¡Que busquemos todos construir una cultura de matrimonio y familia! San Joaquín y Santa Ana, rueguen por nosotros.

PUNTOS CLAVES DE CONVERSACIÓN:

- *El matrimonio es la unión permanente y exclusiva de un hombre y una mujer, para el bien de los esposos y para la procreación y educación de los hijos.*
- *La diferencia es la diferencia. La diferencia sexual es esencial para el matrimonio. Hombre y mujer importan.*
- *La unión de los dos en una sola carne y el amor fructífero del matrimonio son sólo posibles a través de la diferencia sexual y complementariedad del esposo y la esposa, hombre y mujer.*
- *Ser fructíferos—la apertura a los hijos—está en el corazón del matrimonio. Solamente un hombre y una mujer juntos pueden estar abiertos al regalo de la vida.*
- *Ser padres es específico para cada género y no es de género neutral. Es decir, paternidad y maternidad. Solamente un hombre puede ser papá y solamente una mujer puede ser mamá. Padre y madre son importantes.*
- *Los niños tienen el derecho básico de nacer y ser criados dentro de una unión matrimonial de amor de padre y madre.*
- *La familia, fundada en el matrimonio, es la base fundamental de la sociedad. Promover y proteger el matrimonio es un asunto de justicia, especialmente para los hijos.*
- *El redefinir el matrimonio haría que las enseñanzas de la Iglesia sobre el matrimonio y que la propia ley moral natural estuvieran en contra de la ley, causando múltiples conflictos entre el Estado y las instituciones religiosas y los individuos.*
- *Toda persona humana tiene una dignidad inviolable y merece amor y respeto. Hay muchas maneras de proteger los derechos humanos básicos de todos, pero redefinir y erosionar el matrimonio no es una de ellas.*
- *El tratar cosas diferentes de manera distinta no es una discriminación injusta. Realmente hay una diferencia entre matrimonio y cualquier otro tipo de relación interpersonal.*

TEMA 1:

Diferencia sexual y complementariedad: los dos se hacen una sola carne.

“Hombre y mujer, fuimos hechos el uno para el otro.”

—Héctor [19:52]

.....

Puntos claves: PERSONA HUMANA, CREACIÓN, SIGNIFICADO DE LA DIFERENCIA SEXUAL,
VOCACIÓN AL AMOR, MATRIMONIO

¿Tienes alguien como Héctor o como Rosa en tu vida? Parejas casadas como Héctor y Rosa, quienes han estado casados por décadas, que terminan la frase de cada quien y que se tratan con paciencia, ternura y amor, hacen realidad lo que Héctor les dice a Miguel y a María: **“Hombre y mujer, fuimos hechos el uno para el otro.”** Ciertamente, hay una cierta atmósfera alrededor de las parejas felizmente casadas que es difícil explicar con palabras. Es una integración, un hacerse uno. Difícilmente se puede imaginar al esposo sin la esposa y viceversa. Hay un entendimiento profundo entre ellos, alimentado por los muchos años de conversación y silencios compartidos. Años de disfrutar y compartir dificultades. Estos esposos y esposas fieles nos recuerdan la descripción de Jesús sobre las parejas casadas: **“De manera que ya no son dos, sino una sola carne”** (Mt 19,6).² Así como Héctor y Rosa lo hacen por Miguel y María, las parejas casadas por largo tiempo pueden dar ejemplo a los jóvenes de cuan bello y permanente puede ser el matrimonio.

Con Héctor y Rosa en mente, considera qué significa que los hombres y las mujeres son “hechos el uno para el otro.” Posiblemente pensemos aquí en “almas gemelas” pero es algo más profundo. Tiene que ver con el significado de ser persona humana y lo que realmente nos hace felices y realizados. El significado de persona humana está enraizado en la **verdad de la creación**. El matrimonio también está enraizado en la creación, de hecho, el sentido de persona humana y de matrimonio son inseparables. Para descubrir el sentido de ambos, tenemos que ir “de regreso al principio” así como Jesús nos invita (ver Mt 19)—regresar a la verdad de la creación que encontramos en el libro del Génesis.

Desde el principio...

Como se lee en el libro de Génesis (1,1-2,25) hombre y mujer son creados a **imagen de Dios**: “Y creó Dios creó al hombre a su imagen: a *imagen suya lo creó a imagen de Dios; hombre y mujer*” (Gn 1, 27). Del libro de Génesis aprendemos que:

- Hombre y mujer son **iguales pero diferentes**: igual en dignidad, pero aun diferentes y complementarios como hombre y mujer.³
- ¡Esto es **realmente bueno!** La diferencia sexual, que incluye el cuerpo humano, no es un error sino parte del perfecto plan de Dios. Ser mujer u hombre es algo que debe ser apreciado como “**una realidad buena y querida por Dios.**”⁴
- Todo ser humano, hombre o mujer, es **llamado a amar**,⁵ para vivir el regalo de sí mismo, ya que él o ella está creado a la imagen de Dios que es Amor.⁶ Bien sea que somos llamados específicamente para el matrimonio o llamados a abrazar el celibato o la virginidad en función del Reino de los Cielos, estamos invitados a amar como Jesús amó.⁷ Todo ser humano es **unidad de cuerpo y alma**.⁸ Somos algo más que simplemente materia: un conjunto de células bien organizadas, músculos y piel sin alma. Nuestros cuerpos son también algo más que un cascarón. El cuerpo humano tiene un significado profundo. Cuando Adán se encuentra con Eva por primera vez, grita de gozo, “¡Esta sí es hueso de mis huesos y carne de mi carne” (Gn 2,23). Debido al cuerpo de ella, Adán reconoce a Eva, no solo como una criatura humana como él, sacada de su costado como su igual, pero también como una compañera idónea. Ella es como él pero también diferente: ella lo complementa. El cuerpo humano no es opcional ni insignificante. Por el contrario, el cuerpo está lleno de significado, pues revela y comunica a la persona humana.⁹

El Matrimonio: la comunión de dos en un solo cuerpo

Cuando Héctor dice que el hombre y la mujer fueron “hechos el uno para el otro,” él está poniendo en términos simples una verdad que es básica sobre el ser humano, hombre o mujer: los cuerpos de un hombre y una mujer hablan un lenguaje particular que debemos escuchar—un lenguaje que no lo inventamos nosotros mismos sino que más bien lo recibimos. Este lenguaje está escrito en nuestros cuerpos. Es primero un lenguaje de ser hijo o hija que son amados (creados para ser amados).¹⁰ Es también un lenguaje de *amor y apertura* al otro, particularmente al sexo opuesto, y por tanto un

lenguaje de *comuni3n*, el llamado a ser un regalo para otra persona. En resumen, el lenguaje del cuerpo es ese *regalo*: el hombre es “para” la mujer y la mujer es “para” el hombre.¹¹

A trav3s de sus cuerpos, y de su diferencia sexual, el hombre y la mujer son capaces exclusivamente de formar **una comuni3n de personas que reflejan la propia vida de Dios de manera 3nica, una comuni3n llamada *matrimonio***. Rosa lo dice bien: “solo un hombre y una mujer, con sus cuerpos y con todo su ser, pueden hablar el lenguaje del amor conyugal.” **La comuni3n de dos en una sola carne, de esposo y esposa, es buena en s3 misma**, y tiene un gran significado para la sociedad como explicaremos m3s adelante. La Escritura testifica que esta comuni3n, *el matrimonio*, refleja el amor de Cristo por su Iglesia.¹² El amor de Jes3s nos muestra la perfecci3n del amor conyugal: dado gratuitamente, fiel hasta la muerte (y una muerte de cruz), y fruct3fero al traer la salvaci3n al mundo.

¿Es esto un “cuento de hadas”?

¿Es esta descripci3n del matrimonio simplemente idealista y una cosa del pasado, o como dijo Mar3a: un “cuento de hadas”? ¿Qui3n de entre nosotros no ha sido afectado o herido de una manera u otra por la pruebas y desacuerdos de matrimonios problem3ticos o rotos? Es por esto que la invitaci3n de Jes3s a considerar el “principio” es tan importante y necesita ser entendida de manera correcta. Jes3s no estaba pintando algo imposible. 3l estaba invitando y lo sigue haciendo a una verdad que puede ser vivida ahora. Como dijo Rosa, un matrimonio fuerte es posible “si un hombre y una mujer confian en Dios y trabajan juntos para lograrlo.”

Pero debemos enfrentar la realidad que el matrimonio no ha sido vivido adecuadamente en los 3ltimos cincuenta a3os, y como instituci3n no ha sido bien tratada en algunos pa3ses, donde en vez de fortalecerlo y promover que los hombres y mujeres vivan matrimonios s3lidos, la cultura y las leyes han sido torcidas para debilitarlo. Debido al amplio uso de anticonceptivos, esterilizaciones y la aprobaci3n de leyes de divorcios sin causa demostrable, la fidelidad y el ser fruct3feros han sido redefinidos fuera del matrimonio. Lo 3nico que queda son los dos elementos fundamentales: hombre y mujer, y aun estos est3n ahora bajo el ataque de la ley y de la cultura. Defender la importancia de la diferencia sexual en el matrimonio es crucial. Pero es a3n m3s crucial presentarle de nuevo a una sociedad hastiada y herida las verdades completas del matrimonio: un hombre y una mujer, abiertos a la vida, comprometidos hasta la muerte.

Es por esto que el testimonio de un hombre y una mujer viviendo sus votos matrimoniales en amor es tan importante y poderoso. Cuando encontramos parejas como Héctor y Rosa, vemos—en la carne—lo que significa que un hombre y una mujer fueron “creados el uno para el otro.” Vemos así los pequeños detalles que un hombre y una mujer viven dentro de su comunión matrimonial y cómo expresan su unidad. Podemos ver la forma como la masculinidad y la feminidad se complementan: podemos ver como el esposo y la esposa se ayudan entre sí para ser el mejor hombre y la mejor mujer posible, como son modelos de amor conyugal para otros, y si son bendecidos con los hijos, como ayudarse mutuamente a ser el mejor padre y la mejor madre para sus hijos. **El hombre y la mujer son “hechos el uno para el otro” porque sólo ellos son capaces de vivir la comunión fructífera del matrimonio.**

>> **PREGUNTAS DE DISCUSIÓN:**

1. *¿Cómo dirías en tus propias palabras lo que Héctor dijo sobre el hombre y la mujer: “hechos el uno para el otro”?*
2. *Da un ejemplo en tu vida de unos “Héctor y Rosa” y describe cómo han vivido su vocación al amor en el matrimonio.*

Profundizando: El significado esponsal del cuerpo y el amor conyugal

Significado esponsal del cuerpo

El Beato Juan Pablo II en sus enseñanzas sobre la teología del cuerpo dijo que el cuerpo humano tiene un “significado esponsal.” El cuerpo, en su masculinidad y su feminidad, habla un lenguaje de amor y de apertura hacia el otro, particularmente al sexo opuesto. El cuerpo es “esponsal” porque la vocación al amor está escrita en sí mismo. Como dijo el Papa Juan Pablo II, el “significado esponsal” del cuerpo es “la capacidad de expresar el amor: ese amor en el que precisamente el hombre-persona se convierte en don, y mediante este don realiza el sentido mismo de su ser y existir.”

¹³ En este sentido, el cuerpo de cada persona tiene un significado esponsal, bien sea masculino o femenino, soltero o casado. Todos estamos llamados a tomar el significado de nuestro cuerpo y vivirlo en la verdad.

El matrimonio: un amor único

Dentro del matrimonio, la vocación universal al amor toma unas características que son únicas. Cada persona está llamada al amor, pero **el matrimonio llama a un tipo de amor y compromiso que es único**. Héctor lo dijo muy bien: el matrimonio significa darse completamente a su esposo o esposa. Héctor le dice a Miguel que el matrimonio es más que sólo compartir la renta. El matrimonio hace una invitación al esposo y a la esposa a comprometerse el uno al otro hasta la muerte y a confiarse el uno al otro totalmente, en cuerpo y alma. No existe ninguna otra relación como esta en la tierra. No hay otro lazo entre dos personas que es “todo incluido” como el matrimonio. Es por esto que la diferencia sexual es esencial. Como dijo Rosa, sin la diferencia sexual, sin un hombre y una mujer, el lenguaje del amor conyugal no puede ser hablado de ninguna manera. **La diferencia sexual es el fundamento básico para el amor conyugal.**

Amor conyugal: unitivo y procreativo

En otras palabras, **la diferencia sexual entre el esposo y la esposa es lo que identifica su amor para que sea conyugal, es decir *unitivo y procreativo***. Cuando el esposo y la esposa se unen sexualmente y cuando se ofrecen mutuamente el regalo de su ser entero en y a través de sus cuerpos, ellos forman una unión increíblemente íntima que es procreativa en sí misma. Es decir, que de este tipo de unión, emana nueva vida.¹⁴ Podemos decir que las palabras “dichas” por el esposo y la esposa en el acto marital (sexual) son: “Yo te amo y me entrego a ti total y completamente” y “estoy dispuesto a ser padre (o madre) contigo.” **El mismo acto que une a un hombre y a una mujer en el nexo más cercano de intimidad también los dispone a recibir el regalo de los hijos.** Hoy por hoy, podemos estar tentados a creer que el acto sexual es lo que queremos que sea, una mera actividad recreacional, e incluso que carece totalmente de significado. Pero nuestros cuerpos nos enseñan otra cosa.¹⁵

>> PREGUNTAS DE DISCUSIÓN:

1. *¿Qué hace que el amor conyugal sea único comparado con otros tipos de amor?
¿Por qué el amor conyugal necesita de un hombre y de una mujer?*
2. *¿Cuáles son algunos ejemplos de cómo nuestra cultura le quita al sexo su sentido? ¿Crees que esto ayuda a la gente o la hiera?*

TEMA 2:

Los hijos son un regalo y merecen una madre y un padre unidos en matrimonio

“El matrimonio es un regalo. Esposo y esposa, padre y madre juntos. Pero algunas personas deciden no verlo así. Es entonces que la gente sale herida, especialmente los niños. Los niños necesitan un papá y una mamá.”

—Rosa [25:56]

Puntos claves: EL SER FRUCTÍFERO DEL AMOR CONYUGAL, LA DIFERENCIA SEXUAL ES NECESARIA PARA SER FRUCTÍFERO, HIJOS COMO DONES, LA IMPORTANCIA DEL PADRE Y DE LA MADRE, PADRES SOLTEROS, INFERTILIDAD, ADOPCIÓN.

¿Ha estado usted en una casa que tiene una galería en la pared, como la que se encuentra en la habitación de huéspedes de Héctor y Rosa? Quizás en su propio hogar hay una colección de fotos de su familia—padres, hijos, abuelos, tíos, etc. María fue atraída como un imán a las fotos familiares de Rosa y por supuesto a las fotos de Miguel cuando era un bebé! Estas fotos muestran—literalmente—la verdad de que ser fructíferos—estar abiertos a los hijos—está en el corazón y centro del matrimonio.

El matrimonio es hecho para la vida

Está por el hecho que hombres y mujeres están “hechos el uno para el otro” que el matrimonio esta “hecho para la vida.” En darse a sí mismos el uno al otro en amor, el esposo y la esposa se dan la posibilidad de ser padre y madre juntos.

De hecho, **ser fructífero está en el corazón del amor mismo.** En la carta Pastoral de 2009 sobre el matrimonio los Obispos de los Estados Unidos de Norte América escribieron, “Es la naturaleza del amor desbordarse, ser vivificante.”¹⁶ En ninguna parte esto es más claramente visto como cuando un esposo y una esposa reciben un hijo en su familia.

La procreación es participar en el trabajo creativo de Dios. Dios es el único Autor de la vida. Pero con gran humildad, Él invita a hombres y mujeres a participar en la tarea de traer nueva vida al mundo. De hecho, **el padre y la madre son necesarios**

para la procreación. La capacidad de procrear, de traer al mundo nueva vida humana está insertada en los cuerpos de los hombres y de las mujeres, en su diferencia sexual. Sin la diferencia sexual, la concepción sería imposible.¹⁷ Como Rosa le dice a Miguel y a María: “solo un hombre y una mujer juntos...pueden estar abiertos al don de la vida.”

El regalo de los hijos

El sentido de asombro que tienen los padres al momento de concebir y del nacimiento de un hijo nos recuerda que **cada niño es un regalo.** De hecho, la Iglesia enseña que los hijos son el “don más excelente” del matrimonio.¹⁸ Cada hijo concebido y nacido en el mundo es un ser humano único e irrepetible, al cual “Dios ha amado por sí mismo.”¹⁹ Un hijo no es una propiedad o algo que es “adecuado” para alguien. **Nadie tiene el “derecho a un hijo.”** En vez de esto, cuando se trata de procreación, **solamente el hijo posee derechos genuinos:** el derecho a ser concebido en un acto de amor entre su madre y su padre casados, y el derecho a ser respetado y protegido desde el momento de su concepción.²⁰ A veces olvidamos un hecho básico: cada hijo tiene un padre y una madre. Cuando reflexionamos en esta realidad, podemos ver más claramente que una sociedad justa debe buscar, tanto como sea posible, asegurar que los niños sean bien recibidos y criados en un hogar lleno del amor de su madre y de su padre unidos en matrimonio.

Padres y madres unidos en matrimonio son importantes

Es claro que la vida de María ha estado fuertemente afectada por el abandono de su padre. Cuando ella se abre con Rosa acerca de la triste situación en su vida, su dolor es palpable. Desafortunadamente, María no es la única persona que ha sufrido el abandono del padre. Muchos niños crecen sin uno de los padres o sin ninguno en el hogar, más frecuentemente es el padre quien falta. Hombres y mujeres que como María están heridos por este tipo de ausencias pueden preguntarse si el matrimonio para toda la vida es siquiera posible. La ruptura de su familia de origen les puede generar dudas sobre la confianza, el compromiso, el amor y el matrimonio que permanecen en lo profundo del corazón y necesitan mucho amor y tiempo para sanar y aun para ser reconocidas.

La experiencia de María es un testimonio de la importancia del padre y la madre para los hijos. Hay algo en la mamá y en el papá que es irremplazable. Su presencia es importante para los hijos. Su diferencia sexual es importante. Y especialmente, el

matrimonio entre ellos tiene una enorme importancia para los hijos.

Cada padre y madre que están casados proporciona diferentes elementos en la tarea de criar a los hijos. Primero que todo, ellos traen su alianza de amor para conducir sus relaciones dentro y fuera del hogar. Los niños aprenden a amar, a confiar, a respetar por igual la dignidad de todo hombre y de toda mujer a través del amor y del ejemplo de su papá y de su mamá.

Segundo, el esposo y la esposa aportan la individualidad única de sí mismos a la tarea de ser padres. **Solamente una mujer puede ser mamá y solamente un hombre puede ser papá** en todo el sentido de la palabra. No se trata meramente de “oficios” o “roles” en el hogar más bien se trata de la presencia masculina y femenina que ellos dan a los hijos. El padre y la madre participan por igual en todas las tareas de criar a los hijos, pero lo hacen como hombre y como mujer. **Padres y madres no se pueden intercambiar.**

Entonces, ¿qué pasa con las Marías del mundo?

Al reconocer la gran importancia de los padres y de las madres juntos no se está desestimando el heroísmo que frecuentemente viven las madres o padres solteros. Por el contrario, los reafirma pero también proporciona una visión realista: ser padre soltero o madre soltera requiere un gran sacrificio, y nunca ha sido, ni será tomado como una situación ideal o norma. Mucha gente en nuestra sociedad ha experimentado la ausencia de uno de los padres, o del esposo o esposa, por muerte, separación, abandono. Las familias inmigrantes también deben soportar largos períodos de separación de familiares cercanos. **La Iglesia se ocupa de los padres solteros y de las familias en dificultades dando ayuda pastoral**, reconociendo su esfuerzo heroico para cuidar de sus hijos en circunstancias difíciles. Como Rosa le dijo a María, “Debes estar muy orgullosa de tu mamá.”

La redefinición de matrimonio es injusta para los niños

Al mismo tiempo, reconocer la difícil situación de los padres solteros es completamente diferente a *deliberadamente privar* a un hijo de tener un papá y una mamá casados o contradecir el significado único y natural del matrimonio. Los hijos son algo más que un estilo de vida escogido por los adultos. Avocarse a ser padres fuera del matrimonio, bien sea por personas solteras o parejas que conviven sin estar casadas, ignora la verdad plasmada en el ser íntimo del niño que es tener una mamá y un papá,

y que ha sido hecho para ser bienvenido por una madre y un padre casados. De la misma manera, **redefinir el matrimonio para incluir dos personas del mismo sexo dice a los niños que su deseo de tener un padre y una madre juntos no es importante.** Esto dice que tener un padre y una madre es opcional—que uno u otro no hace falta. Por tanto redefinir el matrimonio elimina la única institución cuyo propósito fundamental incluye asegurar que los hijos reciban la mejor oportunidad de ser criados por su propio papá y mamá juntos en un hogar estable y lleno de amor. Mientras que los padres solteros pueden aun honrar la importancia de la diferencia sexual al reconocer la falta provocada por la ausencia de un padre o una madre, dos hombres o dos mujeres que crían a un niño están tristemente incapacitados para mostrar la importancia de los padres y las madres.

Rosa está en lo cierto: Los hijos necesitan una madre y un padre. Las Marías del mundo necesitan y merecen una madre y un padre. De hecho es su derecho natural. Redefinir el matrimonio afecta a las personas más vulnerables entre nosotros, los hijos.

>> **PREGUNTAS DE DISCUSIÓN:**

1. *¿Por qué nadie tiene un “derecho” a tener un hijo, a pesar de realmente querer tener uno?*
2. *Hablando desde la experiencia, ¿cómo tu madre y tu padre mostraron su amor por ti de diferentes maneras? O si uno de ellos no está presente en tu vida, ¿qué es lo que extrañabas más?*
3. *¿Por qué el proteger y el promover el matrimonio como la unión de un hombre y una mujer es un asunto de justicia para los hijos?*

Profundizando: ¿Qué pasa con las parejas infértiles?

Rosa insinuó que su mamá y su papá cargaron la pesada cruz de la infertilidad después de que ella nació: “Yo también vengo de una familia pequeña,” le dice a María. “Después de mí, mi mamá ya no pudo tener más hijos,” No toda pareja casada es bendecida con hijos, y la incapacidad de concebir o de tener un bebé a término puede ser una gran fuente de dolor para el esposo y la esposa. La Iglesia se acerca con ternura a las parejas

infértiles. Ella les recuerda que su matrimonio todavía retiene su gran valor, aun cuando ellos nunca sean bendecidos con sus propios hijos.²¹

Aun cuando un esposo y una esposa no son bendecidos con el don de un hijo, su unión sigue siendo buena y fructífera. Ellos siguen formando una unión que es *procreativa en sí misma*, es decir, la comunión en una sola carne que expresa una entrega total de sí y apertura a los hijos. Este no es el caso entre dos hombres o dos mujeres. Porque carecen de diferencia sexual, dos personas del mismo sexo nunca pueden formar una unión en una sola carne que es *procreativa en sí misma*. Planteado de otra manera, los actos sexuales entre dos hombres o dos mujeres no son el tipo de actos que alguna vez puedan traer un hijo al mundo. Por esta razón, es falso decir que un esposo y una esposa infértiles comparados con dos personas del mismo sexo son “idénticos” porque ninguno puede tener hijos.

Adicionalmente, un esposo y una esposa infértiles están en una posición única de recibir un hijo en su hogar a través de la adopción o del cuidado de crianza porque ellos le pueden ofrecer a ese niño el gran regalo de un papá y de una mamá.²² Es importante recordar que una adopción compensa una *pérdida*. Un niño dado en adopción ha sufrido ya la triste separación de su madre y padre, por diferentes razones. La adopción es un acto generoso hacia un niño o niña en necesidad y es diferente a deliberadamente privarlo de una mamá o un papá. La adopción toma su forma—su estructura básica—de la relación conyugal y generativa de un esposo y una esposa, de un padre y una madre. Esto siempre debe respetar y no contradecir el punto de referencia natural del matrimonio. Es por esto que la adopción de un niño o niña por dos hombres o dos mujeres en una relación sexual y de cohabitación nunca es moralmente permisible.²³ No es una cuestión de competencia parental o del deseo de amar y proveer cuidado. Es un asunto de justicia social y de capacidad para proveer amor y cuidado como papá y mamá—de una manera tal que el significado del matrimonio, la diferencia sexual y la maternidad-paternidad sean sostenidos y no redefinidos.

>> PREGUNTAS DE DISCUSIÓN:

1. *Si tú o alguien que tú conozcas ha experimentado la infertilidad y/o pérdidas de embarazos, ¿qué te ha enseñado sobre lo fructífero del amor matrimonial?*
2. *¿En qué se diferencian un esposo y una esposa infértiles de dos hombres o dos mujeres, aun cuando ambos quieren un hijo y no son capaces de tenerlo?*

TEMA 3:

Matrimonio y el bien común

“Miguel, tu sabes que yo trabajé toda mi vida con piedras y ladrillos. Esta casa la construí yo y estas paredes son fuertes porque sus bases son fuertes. Así también son fuertes las familias.”

—Hector [21:57]

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Puntos claves: CONTRIBUCIÓN DEL MATRIMONIO AL BIEN COMÚN,
EL MATRIMONIO COMO ASUNTO DE JUSTICIA

Los padres de Miguel están preocupados por él. “Sabíamos que estaban juntos”, comienza Teresa. “Y luego nos dimos cuenta que estaban viviendo juntos,” añade Roberto. ¿Por qué están tan preocupados los padres de Miguel que esté viviendo con su novia? ¿Por qué planean una “operación encubierta” en la que el abuelo pueda hablar con su nieto y hacerlo razonar?

Pudiera haber muchas razones para estar preocupados. Pero unas de ellas es que están preocupados porque Miguel y María están arrancando con mal pie, porque Miguel no está tratando a María como un hombre debería tratar a una mujer antes del matrimonio y porque los dos están malinterpretando que el matrimonio es solo un asunto privado o una decisión entre dos personas. Pero como Héctor lo presenta, “El matrimonio no es sólo algo personal. Es también algo público.” Muchos como Miguel y María no se dan cuenta de cómo sus decisiones y acciones personales afectan a todo el mundo comenzando por ellos mismos y su familia inmediata, extendiéndose a la sociedad como un todo. Cuando un hombre y una mujer *deliberadamente* escogen cohabitar en vez de casarse, actúan como si estuvieran casados, pero sin el reconocimiento público ni de las responsabilidades que vienen con el matrimonio. No hay intercambio de votos. No hay testigos. No hay una celebración del compromiso por parte de la comunidad.

El matrimonio es la base de la sociedad

¿Por qué esto es importante? Porque como Héctor dice, el matrimonio es “la base

de la sociedad.” El matrimonio es importante para el bien común—“el bien de ese ‘todos nosotros’”—viviendo juntos en la sociedad.²⁴ Utilizando la analogía de Héctor, así como las casas necesitan bases sólidas y seguras para superar la prueba del tiempo, así la sociedad necesita unas bases sólidas y seguras para perdurar. **Las familias, fundadas en el matrimonio,²⁵ son esas bases.** Al unir las manos en público durante la ceremonia del matrimonio, un hombre y una mujer juntan sus dos familias en una sola familia, promoviendo grandes conexiones entre la gente. El nexo de un esposo y una esposa tiene un sentido público que es único. Y al estar abiertos al don de nueva vida y generosamente dar la bienvenida y criar a los hijos, la nueva generación, los esposos y esposas prolongan la existencia de la sociedad y dan testimonio del precioso regalo de la vida humana alrededor, motivándonos a todos a construir una cultura de vida y esperanza.

El matrimonio enseña a la sociedad lo que significa el ser humano

Cuando vemos el significado unitivo y procreativo del amor conyugal dentro del propio marco social y público, podemos darnos cuenta que abarca más que un significado “privado.” **La familia, fundada en el matrimonio,²⁵ juega un rol educativo clave en la sociedad.** La doctrina social de la Iglesia Católica llama a la familia “el lugar primario de la ‘humanización’ de la persona y de la sociedad.”²⁶ Esto significa que **la familia enseña a sus miembros lo que significa el ser humano.**

Esto lo hace, primero, dando a los miembros de la familia y de la sociedad un *modelo de relación* en la que cada persona no solamente está relacionada con todos los miembros de la familia sino también es importante como miembro irremplazable de la familia: esposo, esposa, padre, madre, hija, hijo, hermana, hermano y así sucesivamente. Cada una de estas palabras describe una *relación* entre la gente y además una *identidad* que nadie más puede llenar de la misma manera. Comparen esto con un lugar de trabajo en una industria donde los obreros son intercambiables, o con una burocracia en la cual las personas son números, y se darán cuenta qué maravillosamente única la familia es. Nacidos y criados dentro de una familia, los hijos y las hijas aprenden que ellos son “seres familiares” fundamentalmente conectados con otras personas, y no seres humanos aislados.

La familia también enseña a todos lo que significa el ser humano cuando les muestra lo que significa amar y ser amado. En el corazón de la familia está el “dinamismo del amor” que existe entre el esposo y la esposa.²⁷ El amor es una decisión, no solamente

un sentimiento. El amor es probado en la fidelidad día a día en cada área de la vida. Héctor y Rosa, por ejemplo, se dieron un “sí” total y completo hasta la muerte el día de su boda. Este “sí” radical de aceptación—un “sí” a la persona que nunca podrá ser removido—irradia al resto de su familia y la sociedad. El “sí” radical del matrimonio le enseña al mundo que los seres humanos son amados por lo que son y no por lo que pueden dar o hacer.

Las dimensiones unitivas y procreativas del matrimonio son por lo tanto realidades sociales, de hecho, fundamentales para la Doctrina Social de la Iglesia Católica.²⁸ El matrimonio no se trata del interés privado de los esposos, ni está limitado a concebir y dar a luz a los regalos que son los hijos. El matrimonio es el fundamento de la familia. Incluye no solo la crianza, educación, y formación de los hijos, sino también la formación consecuente y el amor del esposo y la esposa y transmitir esa formación y esa comunión a todos los que interactúen con esa familia y a toda la sociedad.

El matrimonio es un asunto de justicia

Debido al aporte esencial que el matrimonio ofrece a la sociedad, los Obispos de los Estados Unidos están en lo cierto cuando dicen, “Promover y proteger el matrimonio como la unión de un hombre y una mujer es en sí mismo una cuestión de justicia.”²⁹ Particularmente, como se dijo en una sección anterior, **promoviendo y protegiendo la familia fundada en el matrimonio como la unión de un hombre y una mujer es un asunto de justicia para los hijos**. Todos los niños tienen una mamá y un papá, y ellos merecen la mejor oportunidad de conocer y ser criados por su papá y mamá casados y juntos. El promover y defender el matrimonio da a los hijos la mejor oportunidad de crecer en un hogar con ambos padres porque el matrimonio permanentemente une a un hombre y a una mujer entre sí y entre los hijos que nazcan de esa unión. El matrimonio es la única institución que hace esto. Erosionar la definición o redefinir el matrimonio de cualquier manera para incluir la unión de dos hombres o dos mujeres, representa un acto de injusticia para los hijos y para la sociedad. Hombres y mujeres, esposos y esposas, padres y madres—son importantes. Importa que cada hijo tenga un padre y una madre. La verdad del matrimonio es importante. Por esto Héctor y Rosa, y Roberto y Teresa quieren que Miguel y María vean la película completa y la verdad de las cosas.

Esperemos que las palabras amorosas del abuelo hayan ayudado a Miguel y a María a entender que el matrimonio no es solo un asunto privado. **Familias fuertes, fundadas**

en matrimonios fuertes, son las bases de una sociedad fuerte. Cuando el matrimonio y la familia son débiles, entonces la sociedad es débil. Para construir una sociedad fuerte con familias fuertes, el matrimonio necesita ser reforzado y promovido, no redefinido.

>> **PREGUNTAS DE DISCUSIÓN:**

1. *Héctor dice que la familia es la base de la sociedad. ¿Cuáles son algunos ejemplos de cómo la sociedad se debilita cuando carece de matrimonios y familias fuertes?*
2. *En tus propias palabras, ¿cómo proteger al matrimonio es un asunto de justicia, particularmente para los hijos?*

Profundizando: Beneficios concretos de matrimonios y familias fuertes

El matrimonio y la familia son la base de la sociedad. No es sorprendente entonces, que ellos benefician a los esposos, esposas, e hijos. Por otro lado, hombres, mujeres y especialmente los niños sufren consecuencias negativas cuando se carece de matrimonios. Mientras que ningún estudio puede detallar de forma exhaustiva los beneficios que un esposo y una esposa traen a la sociedad o que las madres y los padres dan a sus hijos, los estudios pueden ayudarnos a ver las formas muy concretas en las cuales el matrimonio y la familia benefician a la sociedad.³⁰

Por ejemplo: los hombres y mujeres casados tienen una mejor salud, experimentan menos depresiones, tienen relaciones sexuales con más sentido, y tienen una mayor estabilidad económica que las personas no casadas.³¹ Las mujeres casadas tienen menos riesgo de ser víctimas de violencia doméstica,³² y son menos propensas a abortar un hijo en el caso de un embarazo no esperado.³³ Los hombres casados son menos propensos a cometer un crimen o a beber en exceso,³⁴ y los padres casados tienden a tener mejor relación con los hijos.³⁵ Los hijos se benefician grandemente al ser criados por una mamá y un papá casados. Tienen una tendencia menor a crecer en pobreza³⁶ o de ser víctimas de abuso o de un crimen violento,³⁷ y más probablemente se gradúan de la escuela superior³⁸ y entran a la Universidad.³⁹ Las niñas criadas por un padre y una

madre casados son menos propensas a tener embarazos en la adolescencia.⁴⁰ Los muchachos criados por una madre y un padre casados tienen menos probabilidades de tener problemas de conducta.⁴¹

>> **PREGUNTAS DE DISCUSIÓN:**

1. *Entre los ejemplos listados de cómo el matrimonio beneficia a la sociedad, ¿cuál te sorprendió más? O ¿con cuál te identificas más?*

TEMA 4:

El matrimonio y la libertad religiosa

“Si la definición del matrimonio cambiara legalmente, esto haría que las enseñanzas de la Iglesia estuvieran en contra de la ley.”

–Rosa [25:30]

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Puntos claves: LA REDEFINICIÓN DEL MATRIMONIO Y CONFLICTOS SOBRE LA LIBERTAD RELIGIOSA, TIPOS Y EJEMPLOS, EXENCIONES RELIGIOSAS

¿Le sorprendería descubrir que Rosa y Héctor son católicos? Probablemente no. Desde el primer momento en que aparecen en el video, elementos de su catolicismo están consistentemente presentes: desde su oración juntos en la iglesia y el arte religioso que se encuentra en su hogar, hasta el orgullo y gozo de conocer y compartir su fe con Miguel y María. La importancia que tiene para ellos su fe se ve claramente. Esta permea sus vidas y es su base fundamental.

Para personas de una fe profunda, como Héctor y Rosa, se convierte en un problema adicional cuando el asunto se trata de la ley sobre el matrimonio y la propuesta de redefinirlo para incluir a dos hombres o dos mujeres. Como Rosa puntualiza, redefinir legalmente el matrimonio pondría las enseñanzas de la Iglesia en conflicto con la ley. En efecto, **esta redefinición pondría las enseñanzas de la Iglesia sobre el matrimonio, literalmente, en contra de la ley.** Esto crearía conflictos con la libertad religiosa. De hecho, ya lo ha hecho.

Libertad religiosa: el derecho a vivir su propia fe

La libertad religiosa es “la primera y más preciada de nuestras libertades.”⁴² El Beato Papa Juan Pablo II describió la libertad religiosa como “[el] derecho a vivir en la verdad de la propia fe y en conformidad con la dignidad trascendente de la propia persona.”⁴³ La libertad religiosa tiene que ver con la dignidad humana, con la habilidad, y responsabilidad, de los hombres y las mujeres a buscar la verdad. Por tanto, la libertad religiosa no es un “privilegio” dado por el gobierno generosamente (o de mala gana). Por el contrario, es algo que se le debe a cada persona.

La libertad religiosa es más que solo “libertad de culto”

La libertad religiosa incluye la posibilidad de cada quien de vivir su vida como creyente de forma pública. Y aplica tanto a creyentes individualmente como a grupos de creyentes, tales como iglesias y organizaciones religiosas. La libertad religiosa significa que nadie puede ser forzado a actuar en contra de sus convicciones, o restringido de actuar de acuerdo a su conciencia.⁴⁴

Redefinir el matrimonio amenaza la libertad religiosa

Cambiar la ley sobre el matrimonio para que incluya dos personas del mismo sexo tendría un efecto directo en la libertad religiosa. La definición legal del matrimonio afecta muchos tipos de leyes: la ley de herencia, la ley de seguros de salud, la ley de impuestos, entre otras. **La redefinición del matrimonio en la ley no sólo cambia una ley, sino cientos, si no miles de leyes al mismo tiempo.** Ya que la Iglesia y el Estado estarían en desacuerdo en lo que es el matrimonio, surgirían una gran gama de conflictos—de hecho ya han surgido—entre la ley y las instituciones religiosas, las familias y los individuos.

A veces las preocupaciones sobre las consecuencias para la libertad religiosa de redefinir el matrimonio no son tomadas muy en serio por aquellos responsables del bien común, o simplemente están fuera de la consideración de la mayoría. Sin embargo, las personas que están en ambos lados del tema de la redefinición del matrimonio están de acuerdo en que hay consecuencias significativas para la libertad religiosa.⁴⁵ Para comprender estas consecuencias, es importante reconocer primero **que la amenaza más inmediata no es que los ministros sean obligados a officiar o celebrar “bodas” entre dos hombres o dos mujeres.** Esto es poco probable que suceda (a pesar del hecho de que este asunto pudiera terminar en la Corte, costándole a la Iglesia grandes cantidades de tiempo y dinero). Desafortunadamente, esta alegación surge frecuentemente y algunas veces es usada por aquellos que desean desviar la atención de las preocupaciones reales sobre la libertad religiosa. Consecuencias más probables y urgentes a la libertad religiosa incluyen, pero no están limitadas a los siguientes ejemplos:

- Las instituciones religiosas, tales como escuelas, son forzadas a emplear como líderes o maestros a aquellos que han obtenido un “matrimonio” de personas del mismo sexo, o que han abogado por la redefinición del matrimonio en una contradicción abierta a los valores fundamentales de esa escuela.

- Los negocios cuyos propietarios son religiosos, tales como agencias de festejos o banquetes, son forzados en contra de su conciencia a proveer servicios en una recepción de boda de personas del mismo sexo.
- Las instituciones religiosas, como hospitales, son forzados a proveer beneficios de cónyuges, tales como seguros de salud, al “esposo u esposa” del mismo sexo de un empleado o empleada.
- El apoyo al matrimonio como la unión de un hombre y una mujer es tratado como discurso o expresión de odio que son castigados con multas o despido.
- Licencias son denegadas a personas que estén en desacuerdo con la redefinición del matrimonio, por ejemplo los funcionarios de corte o agencias de gobierno.
- El financiamiento gubernamental y becas son denegados a grupos que creen que el matrimonio es entre un hombre y una mujer, tales como agencias de adopciones.

Desafortunadamente, la lista pudiera continuar. Esto muestra cuán importante es el matrimonio como una institución natural y pública, y cuán arraigada está en la ley. Sería difícil, si no imposible, anticipar todas las posibles consecuencias de la redefinición del matrimonio en la ley. Las palabras de Rosa pueden ser inquietantes, pero merecen mucha atención: ultimadamente, **cambiar la ley sobre el matrimonio hará que las enseñanzas de la Iglesia, así como las convicciones morales de cualquier persona que apoye la protección al matrimonio, estén fuera de la ley.** Y eso es algo muy peligroso.

¿Hay protecciones para la libertad religiosa?

Las exenciones religiosas, que están frecuentemente asociadas a las propuestas de ley para la redefinición del matrimonio para dar la apariencia de que las entidades religiosas recibirán protección, han probado ser inadecuadas. Frecuentemente son muy limitadas, por ejemplo proteger solamente al clero de ser forzado a officiar una ceremonia de personas del mismo sexo (que, como vimos anteriormente, no es una preocupación urgente). Pero aún más importante, el matrimonio como la unión de un hombre y de una mujer es en sí un gran bien y nunca puede ser sacrificado por el interés de proteger la libertad religiosa.⁴⁶ Esto significa que aun las protecciones que aparentan ser mejores para la libertad religiosa, no justifican permitir que el matrimonio

sea redefinido. La injusticia es simplemente eso—injusticia—y nada puede justificar permitirla o promoverla. Al final, tanto el matrimonio y la libertad religiosa son grandes bienes que se sostendrán o caerán juntos.

>> **PREGUNTAS DE DISCUSIÓN:**

1. *¿Cuál es su reacción a la afirmación de Rosa de que cambiar la ley sobre el matrimonio haría que las enseñanzas de la Iglesia estuvieran “contra la ley”?*
2. *¿Qué otros escenarios ve usted que puedan suceder si se redefine la ley sobre el matrimonio?*

Profundizando: La ley enseña

La ley civil tiene un propósito limitado pero importante. Como explicaron Héctor y Rosa, las leyes no tratan solo de prevenir que las personas se lastimen unas a otras. “Las leyes deben proteger lo que es verdadero,” dijo Héctor. “Y hermoso,” añadió Rosa. En otras palabras, las leyes tienen un rol educativo. Las leyes enseñan. Ellas tienen una influencia formativa en la sociedad y también son afectadas por la sociedad, para bien (si son justas) o para mal (si son injustas).

El estándar fundamental de cualquier ley debe ser: ¿es esta verdadera y justa? Es decir, ¿está en acorde con la verdad del mundo, con la ley moral natural y la dignidad intrínseca de la persona humana? Cuando se trata de la ley del matrimonio, tenemos que preguntar si la definición del matrimonio propuesta por la ley es verdadera. Si no lo es, es una ley injusta.

Como hemos visto, la diferencia sexual—la relación unitiva y fructífera entre un hombre y una mujer—está en el corazón del matrimonio. La naturaleza del matrimonio precede a la religión, al gobierno y a la ley civil. Cualquier ley que pretende su redefinición, sacar la diferencia sexual de la realidad del matrimonio, pretende redefinir algo que no puede ser redefinido. Tal ley ya no es una ley justa. Por el contrario, es un intento de parte de los legisladores de codificar en la ley—y hacer cumplir con sanciones—una falsedad y, por lo tanto, una injusticia.

Una ley que redefine el matrimonio enseñaría muchas lecciones falsas

Enseñaría que el matrimonio no es un don total y completo del uno al otro entre un

hombre y una mujer. Enseñaría que los hombres y las mujeres no importan para el matrimonio, y que los padres y las madres no importan para los hijos. También enseñaría que el matrimonio se trata más de validar las relaciones románticas entre adultos, que de reconocer el bien inherente de la unión hombre-mujer para su familia y para la sociedad.

Teniendo en mente el propósito de la ley, nos puede ayudar a entender por qué es importante que el matrimonio—la unión de un hombre y una mujer—sea promovido y protegido por la ley. Los cristianos deben preocuparse por la ley civil, por amor a nuestros semejantes y especialmente por los niños, los cuales serían afectados negativamente por una ley injusta y tendrán que navegar las consecuencias por muchas generaciones.

>> **PREGUNTAS DE DISCUSIÓN:**

1. *Discuta algunas de las “falsas lecciones” que la ley enseñaría si el matrimonio es redefinido.*
2. *¿Qué nos pasa a nosotros y a la sociedad cuando ignoramos o rechazamos la ley natural moral (la ley escrita en nuestros corazones)?*

TEMA 5:

Personas que experimentan atracción por el mismo sexo

“Miguelito, todos queremos que Tati sea feliz. Pero la verdadera felicidad y la verdadera libertad provienen de vivir de acuerdo a la verdad de quien somos—hombre y mujer, ya que así nos hizo Dios.”

—Rosa [22:36]

.....

Puntos claves: VERDADERO SIGNIFICADO DE LA SEXUALIDAD, CASTIDAD, DIGNIDAD DE LAS PERSONAS QUE SIENTEN ATRACCIÓN POR EL MISMO SEXO, POR QUÉ DEFENDER EL MATRIMONIO NO ES DISCRIMINATORIO

Aunque Tati, la prima de Miguel nunca aparece en el video, ella tiene un papel crucial. Tati, una mujer viviendo una relación romántica con otra mujer, es cercana a la conciencia y al corazón de todos a medida que la conversación se orienta a la definición del matrimonio. Cuando Miguel dice: “¿Cómo afecta a alguien que Tati y su compañera se casen?” y luego: “Tati es como una hermana para mí. Nosotros sólo queremos que ella sea feliz.”

La respuesta de Rosa nos da un modelo de cómo manejar una conversación tan difícil y emotiva. De corazón, Rosa está completamente de acuerdo con Miguel: “Todos queremos que Tati sea feliz.” Pero luego ella profundiza más y pregunta en esencia: ¿Qué es la felicidad? Aunque puede ser fácil pensar que la felicidad es hacer todo lo que creamos nos hará felices, esa no es toda la verdad. Todos hemos vivido experiencias en las que hemos creído que algo nos haría felices—dígase por ejemplo quedarnos levantados toda la noche viendo películas y comiendo comida chatarra—y lo que nos ha dado es cansancio extremo y dolor de estómago.

Rosa les recuerda gentilmente a Miguel y a María que la verdadera felicidad y la verdadera libertad están siempre ligadas con la verdad. **Solamente cuando actuamos de acuerdo con la verdad de quienes somos seremos felices.** Y, Rosa añade, el

significado de lo que somos como hombre o como mujer. Nuestra naturaleza corporal no se escapa del hecho de nuestra existencia. El ser humanos no es solamente “tener” un cuerpo; el ser humano es ser una persona incorporada, ya que nuestra identidad está íntimamente conectada con nuestra naturaleza corporal. Y como vimos anteriormente, un hecho fundamental del cuerpo es que tiene género: somos creados hombre y mujer. Y como dijo Héctor, hombres y mujeres somos creados “el uno para el otro.”

La vocación a la castidad

Puede ser una verdad difícil de aceptar, y ciertamente no muy popular hoy en día, pero **nuestros cuerpos tienen un lenguaje que puede o no ser hablado verdaderamente**. La virtud de la castidad es lo que nos permite hablar el lenguaje del cuerpo verdaderamente y al hacerlo amamos verdaderamente a los demás. Cada persona está llamada a la tarea de cultivar la castidad durante toda la vida.⁴⁷

Cuando se trata de sexo, solamente en el matrimonio un hombre y una mujer pueden verdaderamente “hablar” todo lo que su cuerpo quiere decir: “Te amo total y completamente, y estoy dispuesto a ser padre o madre contigo.”⁴⁸

Este lenguaje está escrito en el cuerpo, como lo vimos anteriormente. Por otro lado, la intimidad sexual fuera del matrimonio (fornicación o adulterio), el uso de anticonceptivos dentro del matrimonio y la masturbación son todas ofensas contra la castidad porque mienten sobre la sexualidad y el amor conyugal: total, fiel y fructífero.⁴⁹

De un modo similar, **el acto sexual entre dos personas del mismo sexo nunca puede expresar la verdad de la cual nuestra sexualidad habla**. No pueden mostrar la unión corporal y nunca pueden estar abiertos a la vida. Es por estas razones que la Iglesia enseña que los actos homosexuales nunca pueden ser aprobados.⁵⁰ Estas son enseñanzas muy difíciles para algunos, **pero es una invitación a la verdadera felicidad y la verdadera libertad** que proviene de vivir en armonía con la verdad de nuestros cuerpos como hombres y mujeres.

La Iglesia dice claramente que **las personas con atracción por el mismo sexo deben ser tratadas con dignidad, respeto y amor**. “Se evitará, respecto a ellos, todo signo de discriminación injusta.”⁵¹ Así como Rosa y otros miembros de la familia insisten, Tati es y siempre será un miembro amado de la familia. Pero, como todo padre sabe, afirmar y aceptar a Tati como una hija bien amada no significa aprobar todas sus decisiones o acciones. Hay una verdadera diferencia entre el matrimonio y cualquier otra relación. Afirmar y promover la verdadera definición del matrimonio de ninguna manera denigra

a aquellos que experimentan atracción por el mismo sexo. Por el contrario, afirma su necesidad también de un padre y una madre, y de una sociedad fuerte basada en el matrimonio. **Diferenciar entre el matrimonio y cualquier otro tipo de relación no es discriminatorio**; es simplemente ser honesto acerca de lo que realmente es el matrimonio: la comunión en una sola carne abierta al don de la vida.⁵²

>> **PREGUNTAS DE DISCUSIÓN:**

1. *¿Por qué solamente puede un hombre y una mujer casados “hablar” entre sí el lenguaje del amor sexual con honestidad?*
2. *¿Cuáles son algunas maneras de mostrar amor y ser soporte a los amigos y miembros de la familia con atracción por el mismo sexo sin apoyar el promover esa atracción o la elección de vivir bajo ese estilo de vida?*

Conclusión: Dejar un legado

La promesa de Héctor y Rosa de permanencia, fidelidad y amor fructífero fue alimentada y fortalecida por su fe. Ellos serían los primeros en admitir que Dios los ha mantenido juntos y no el esfuerzo de ellos solamente. Como Héctor reconoce antes que la cena de aniversario comience, el matrimonio es un “regalo de Dios.”

El matrimonio y la familia son innegablemente grandes regalos. No hay matrimonios ni familias perfectas, pero es por ello que la gracia, el perdón, y el esfuerzo por vivir una vida de entrega en amor son tan importantes. La familia es una escuela de amor. Cuando hay malos entendidos o confusiones entre miembros de la familia, ella misma es el lugar ideal donde las dificultades, las penas, y las confusiones pueden ser resueltas por medio del amor, del perdón y la paciencia que han vencido la prueba del tiempo.

La conversación de Héctor y Rosa con Miguel y María muestra un testimonio de amor. Su amor por Tati y su familia entera son también un testimonio. Las palabras de Héctor y Rosa provienen no sólo de un conocimiento adquirido por el estudio sino también por la sabiduría obtenida de la experiencia. Incluso si Miguel y María siguen luchando el aceptar todo lo que el abuelo y la abuela les están ofreciendo sobre la verdad del matrimonio, ellos saben que Héctor y Rosa están viviendo esta verdad y están

dejando un legado de amor y verdad para sus hijos, nietos y, Dios mediante, para sus bisnietos.

Bien sea que estemos llamados o no al matrimonio, sí estamos llamados a dejar un legado de amor y a dar testimonio de la belleza del matrimonio y la familia. ¿Qué podemos aprender de Héctor y Rosa? Por un lado podemos aprender a no tener miedo a amar, buscar, y testimoniar la verdad en amor aun cuando sea difícil. Ultimadamente, el testimonio de esposos y esposas amorosos y de sus familias, y nuestro propio testimonio fiel sobre el Plan de Dios para el matrimonio, y las palabras amorosas que digamos y conversaciones que busquemos tener con otros acerca del Plan de Dios, ayudarán a construir una cultura renovada de la familia.

El esfuerzo de proclamar la verdad acerca del matrimonio y la familia vale la pena. Debemos seguir a Jesús y ayudarle en su labor de abrir los corazones a la verdad: *No han leído que desde el principio el Creador “los hizo hombre y mujer”...* (Mt 19,4). El matrimonio es único y con razón.

PARA MÁS INFORMACIÓN:

Antecedentes bíblicos sobre el matrimonio: Mateo 19 y Génesis 1-2 forman un fundamento clave para la verdadera naturaleza del matrimonio como la unión permanente y exclusiva de un hombre y una mujer. Estos pasajes dan testimonio de la verdad, lo bueno, y la belleza única de la diferencia sexual y la complementariedad entre hombre y mujer que sirve de entrada a la comunión en un solo cuerpo que solo se puede realizar entre un hombre y una mujer en el matrimonio. Las Escrituras también manifiestan el hecho de que, a la luz del pecado, una apreciación propia y completa de lo que es el matrimonio y la sexualidad humana no ha sido siempre aparente en la historia humana. Por ejemplo, hay pasajes en las Escrituras que indican lo dañino y lo pecaminoso de la actividad sexual fuera del matrimonio, y particularmente entre personas del mismo sexo.⁵³ Estos pasajes reflejan verdades muchas veces rechazadas o confundidas a través de la historia y hasta hoy. En particular, el significado del matrimonio se hizo especialmente visible en el desarrollo del entendimiento de la alianza de Dios con su pueblo en términos esponsales, que prefiguró la relación entre Cristo y su Novia, la Iglesia.⁵⁴ La Biblia confirma que el matrimonio es una relación construida sobre una base de diferencia sexual. Instancias de poligamia y conducta abusiva en el Antiguo Testamento demuestran la conciencia limitada y las prácticas sociales de aquel tiempo. Aun cuando estos actos eran cometidos por aquellos escogidos por el Señor, estos actos siempre

son presentados como que nacen de la dureza del corazón y que necesitaban corrección. Las enseñanzas subsecuentes de los profetas y de la literatura de Sabiduría reconstruyen la conciencia del pueblo sobre la verdadera naturaleza y dignidad del matrimonio. En Mateo 19, Jesús confirma su enseñanza en el libro del Génesis que desde el principio el ser humano fue creado “hombre y mujer” (cf. Gn 1,26-27) y por esta razón “los dos llegan a ser una sola carne” (cf. Gn 2,24).

Enseñanzas recientes de la Iglesia sobre el matrimonio y la familia y otros recursos: Más notablemente, el Papa Juan Pablo II enseñó sobre la “teología del cuerpo” y el “significado nupcial o esponsal” del cuerpo humano.⁵⁵ Al servicio de los dones de la Revelación Divina y la razón humana, el Magisterio ha enseñado sobre la naturaleza del matrimonio, la familia, la dignidad de la persona humana, y la sexualidad humana en varias instancias.⁵⁶

NOTAS

1. Véase B. Papa Juan Pablo II, Audiencia (1 de diciembre, 1999), http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/audiences/1999/documents/hf_jp-ii_aud_01121999_sp.html.
2. *Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica* [CIC], no. 1605, citando Mateo 19,6, http://www.vatican.va/archive/catechism_sp/index_sp.html.
3. Véase CIC, no. 369.
4. CIC, no. 369.
5. Véase B. Juan Pablo II, Exhortación Apostólica *Familiaris Consortio* sobre la misión de la familia cristiana en el mundo actual (1981), no. 11, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_19811122_familiaris-consortio_sp.html y CIC, no. 1604: “Dios que ha creado al hombre por amor, lo ha llamado también al amor, vocación fundamental e innata de todo ser humano.”
6. Véase 1 Juan 4,7-16 y CIC, no. 221: “[Dios] mismo es una eterna comunicación de amor: Padre, Hijo y Espíritu Santo, y nos ha destinado a participar en Él.”
7. El Concilio Vaticano II enseña que por la semejanza de la persona humana a Dios, la persona humana “no puede encontrar su propia plenitud si no es en la entrega sincera de sí mismo a los demás” (Constitución Pastoral *Gaudium et Spes* sobre la Iglesia en el mundo actual [1965], no. 24, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_sp.html).
8. Véase CIC, no. 362.
9. Véase B. Papa Juan Pablo II, Audiencia (14 de noviembre, 1979), http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/audiences/1979/documents/hf_jp-ii_aud_19791114_sp.html, por ejemplo: “El cuerpo revela al hombre.”
10. El cuerpo da testimonio de la “filiación” del hombre, la identidad de cada persona como hijo o hija. Nadie es el autor de su propia existencia, más bien cada persona recibe su existencia de otro—de su madre y su padre, quienes median la acción creadora de Dios a través de su propio acto de amor conyugal. Aun en las tristes situaciones cuando la relación paterno-filial es tensa o aparenta estar rota, la identidad filial permanece. El Beato Juan Pablo II enseñó que cada persona puede rastrear su propio origen a Dios Padre: “En la paternidad y maternidad humanas Dios mismo está presente...Dios ‘ha amado’ al hombre desde el principio y lo sigue ‘amando’ en cada concepción y nacimiento humano” (*Carta a Las Familias* [1994], no. 9, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/letters/1994/documents/hf_jp-ii_let_02021994_familias_sp.html). Aun cuando la paternidad humana y la maternidad están tensas, cada persona es aún un hijo o una hija de Dios y lo puede llamar “Padre.”
11. Véase B. Papa Juan Pablo II, Audiencia (9 de enero, 1980), http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/audiences/1980/documents/hf_jp-ii_aud_19800109_sp.html.
12. Véase Efesios, 5,21-33 y CIC, no. 1604.
13. B. Papa Juan Pablo II, Audiencia (16 de enero, 1980), http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/audiences/1980/documents/hf_jp-ii_aud_19800116_sp.html; véase también *Gaudium et Spes*, nos. 22 y 24.
14. Como veremos en secciones subsiguientes, aun cuando el esposo y la esposa no son bendecidos con hijos, su unión matrimonial es aun así *procreativa en sí misma*.
15. Aun a nivel hormonal, es claro que el sexo se trata de “hijos y vínculos.” Por ejemplo, una poderosa hormona llamada oxitocina que es segregada durante el sexo promueve sentimientos de apego, particularmente en la mujer. Y se ha comprobado que las hormonas segregadas durante el tiempo fértil del ciclo de la mujer aumentan el deseo sexual tanto en hombres como mujeres.
16. La Conferencia de Obispos Católicos de los Estados Unidos (USCCB, por sus siglas en inglés), Carta Pastoral *El Matrimonio: El amor y la vida en el plan divino* (Washington, DC: USCCB, 2009), p. 13, <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/marriage-and-family/>

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[marriage/love-and-life/upload/pastoral-letter-marriage-love-and-life-in-the-divine-plan-espanol.pdf](#).

17. Aun las tecnologías reproductivas ilícitas, las cuales separan la concepción—u origen del ser—de un niño o niña del acto sexual, dependen de la diferencia sexual. La contribución del hombre y la contribución de la mujer continúan siendo esenciales para dar nueva vida, aun cuando las “contribuciones” son inmoralmente separadas de la persona femenina y la persona masculina.
18. *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 50.
19. Véase *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 24: “El hombre [es la] única criatura terrestre a la que Dios ha amado por sí mismo” y *Carta a las Familias*, no. 9.
20. Véase CIC, no. 2378 y Congregación para la Doctrina de la Fe [CDF], Instrucción *Donum Vitae* sobre el respeto de la vida humana naciente y la dignidad de la procreación (1987), II, 8, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_19870222_respect-for-human-life_sp.html. Esto significa, entre otras cosas, que las tecnologías reproductivas que reemplazan el acto conyugal, tales como la fertilización *in vitro*, son inmorales porque niegan el derecho fundamental del niño o niña a ser concebido mediante un acto sexual entre su padre y madre y no a ser producido por tecnologías que envuelven a terceras partes. Por el contrario, la medicina reproductiva que ayuda al acto conyugal a alcanzar su propósito procreativo es moral y debe ser motivada, por ejemplo, las intervenciones quirúrgicas y medicinas que corrigen anomalías reproductivas o mejoran las funciones reproductivas. Es importante también afirmar que los niños y niñas que son concebidos por medios inmorales también poseen su completa dignidad humana.
21. Véase *Familiaris Consortio*, no. 14: “Cuando la procreación no es posible, no por esto pierde su valor la vida conyugal” y *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 50: “Aunque la descendencia, tan deseada muchas veces, falte, sigue en pie el matrimonio como intimidad y comunión total de la vida y conserva su valor e indisolubilidad.”
22. Véase CIC, no. 2379: “Los esposos que...sufren por la esterilidad...pueden manifestar su generosidad adoptando niños abandonados o realizando servicios abnegados en beneficio del prójimo.”
23. Véase CDF, *Consideraciones acerca de los proyectos de reconocimiento legal de las uniones entre personas homosexuales* (2003), no. 7, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20030731_homosexual-unions_sp.html.
24. Papa Benedicto XVI, Carta Encíclica *Caritas in Veritate* sobre el desarrollo humano integral en la caridad y en la verdad (2009), no. 7, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20090629_caritas-in-veritate_sp.html.
25. Un esposo y esposa casados son ya una familia, aun antes de que sean bendecidos con hijos, y aun cuando nunca se conviertan en padres o madres. Véase Pontificio Consejo “Justicia y Paz,” *Compendio de la Doctrina Social de la Iglesia* [CDSI], no. 211, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/justpeace/documents/rc_pc_justpeace_doc_20060526_compendio-dott-soc_sp.html: “La familia, ciertamente, nacida de la íntima comunión de vida y de amor conyugal fundada sobre el matrimonio entre un hombre y una mujer” y no. 215: “La familia tiene su fundamento en la libre voluntad de los cónyuges de unirse en matrimonio.”
26. CDSI, no. 209, citando B. Papa Juan Pablo II, Exhortación Apostólica *Christifideles Laici*, no. 40, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_30121988_christifideles-laici_sp.html.
27. CDSI, no. 221.
28. Véase en particular CDSI, c. 5: “La Familia, Célula Vital de la Sociedad” (nos. 209-254).
29. USCCB, *El Matrimonio*, p. 23.
30. Para ver un repaso de los estudios que se han hecho sobre el matrimonio y la familia, véase Theresa Notare, PhD, y H. Richard McCord, EdD, *Marriage and the Family in the United States: Resources for Society* (2012). Nótese que las siguientes son referencias a fuentes escritas solamente en inglés. (Nos. 29-40)
31. Notare y McCord, *Marriage and the Family*.

32. Notare y McCord, *Marriage and the Family*.
33. Lawrence B. Finer y Mia R. Zolna, "Unintended pregnancy in the United States: incidence and disparities, 2006," *Contraception* 84,5 (noviembre 2011): 478-485.
34. Notare y McCord, *Marriage and the Family*.
35. Notare y McCord, *Marriage and the Family*.
36. Henry Potrykus, Ph.D., y Patrick Fagan, Ph.D., *U.S. Social Policy: Dependence on the Family* (enero 2013) y Zakia Redd et. al., *Child Trends Research Brief, Two Generations in Poverty: Status and Trends among Parents and Children in the United States, 2000-2010* (noviembre 2011).
37. Nicole White, Ph.D., y Janet Lauritsen, Ph.D., *Violent Crime Against Youth, 1994-2010* (diciembre 2012) y Notare y McCord, *Marriage and the Family*.
38. Potrykus y Fagan, *U.S. Social Policy: Dependence on the Family*.
39. Notare y McCord, *Marriage and the Family*.
40. Potrykus y Fagan, *U.S. Social Policy: Dependence on the Family*.
41. Kristin A. Moore, Ph.D., et. al., *Child Trends Research Brief, Parental Relationship Quality and Child Outcomes Across Subgroups* (abril 2011); Deborah A. Cobb-Clerk y Erdal Tekin, *Melbourne Institute Working Paper Series, Working Paper No. 23/11, "Fathers and Youth's Delinquent Behavior"* (octubre 2011); Marianne Bertrand y Jessica Pan, "The Trouble with Boys: Social Influences and Gender Gap in Disruptive Behavior" (octubre 2011); y Notare y McCord, *Marriage and the Family*.
42. Comunicado del USCCB Comité Ad Hoc de Libertad Religiosa (2012), <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/religious-liberty/upload/La-Primera-y-mas-preciosa-de-nuestras-libertades.pdf>.
43. B. Papa Juan Pablo II, Carta Encíclica, *Centesimus Annus* (1991), no. 47, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_01051991_centesimus-annus_sp.html.
44. Véase CIC, no. 2106 y Concilio Vaticano II, Declaración *Dignitatis Humanae* (1965), no. 2, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651207_dignitatis-humanae_sp.html.
45. Véase *Same-Sex Marriage and Religious Liberty: Emerging Conflicts*, ed. Douglas Layock, Anthony R. Picarello, Jr., y Robin Fretwell Wilson (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008).
46. Véase CDF, "Algunas consideraciones concernientes a la Respuesta a propuestas de ley sobre la no discriminación de las personas homosexuales (1992), no. 16, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_com_cfaith_doc_19920724_homosexual-persons_sp.html: "La Iglesia tiene la responsabilidad de promover la vida de la familia y la moralidad pública de la entera sociedad civil basándose en los valores morales fundamentales, y no sólo para protegerse a sí misma de la aplicación de leyes perniciosas."
47. Véase CIC, nos. 2337-2350.
48. Véase *Familiaris Consortio*, no. 11.
49. Vea estas secciones del Catecismo para más información en estos tópicos: fornicación, no. 2353; adulterio, nos. 2380-2381; contracepción, nos. 2366-2372; y masturbación, no. 2352.
50. Véase CIC, nos. 2357-2359. Es importante enfatizar que la palabra "desordenada" en estos pasajes del *Catecismo* se refieren a los *actos* homosexuales, y no a las *personas* con atracción al mismo sexo. Las personas que experimentan atracción por el mismo sexo tienen su completa dignidad humana y, como todas las personas, son llamadas a cultivar la castidad y el auto-control.

51. CIC, no. 2358.
52. Véase USCCB, *El Matrimonio*, p. 22: “No es injusto oponerse al reconocimiento legal de las uniones del mismo sexo, porque el matrimonio y las uniones del mismo sexo son realidades esencialmente diferentes.”
53. Prohibiciones en contra de los actos homosexuales están incluidas en el Código de Santidad del Levítico (Lev 18,22; 20,13), el libro del Deuteronomio (Dt 23,17), y las Cartas de San Pablo (Rom 1,26-27; 1 Cor 6,9-10; 1 Tim 1,9-10).
54. Véase Oseas 1-3; Jeremías 2,2; Ezequiel 16; Isaías 54,1-8; Cantar de los cantares; Salmo 45; Marcos 2,19-20 (cf. Mateo 9,14-15 y Lucas 5,33-35); Mateo 25,1-13 (cf. Lucas 12,35-38); Mateo 22,1-14 (cf. Lucas 13,29, 14,7-24); Juan 3,28-30; 2 Corintios 11,2; Efesios 5,21-33; y Apocalipsis 19,6-9, 21.1-2, 9-11.
55. Véase *Familiaris Consortio*, no. 37; B. Papa Juan Pablo II, Audiencias (2 de enero, 9 de enero, y 16 de enero, 1980) y referencias subsecuentes; B. Papa Juan Pablo II, Carta Encíclica *Veritatis splendor*, no. 15, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_06081993_veritatis-splendor_sp.html. La serie de Audiencias Generales de los miércoles del Beato Juan Pablo II sobre el amor humano y el plan divino, popularmente conocidas como “Teología del Cuerpo,” permanece como una fuente de reflexión continua y renovación para la Iglesia y su misión para una Nueva Evangelización y una catequesis renovada del matrimonio y la persona humana a la luz del misterio de Cristo y su llamado a regresar al “principio,” a la creación misma. También, obras como: Angelo Cardinal Scola, *The Nuptial Mystery*, trans. Michelle K. Borrás (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005); Marc Cardinal Ouellet, *Divine Likeness: Toward a Trinitarian Anthropology of the Family*, trans. Philip Milligan y Linda M. Cicone (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006); y Carl Anderson y José Granados, *Called to Love: Approaching John Paul II's Theology of the Body* (New York: Doubleday, 2009); pueden servir como fuentes para ayudarnos a entender y pasar la enseñanza de la Iglesia.
56. Por ejemplo, véase CIC, nos. 355, 369-373, 1601-1666, 1702, 2201-2213, y 2331-2400. Véase también *Gaudium et Spes*, nos. 12 y 47-52; Papa Pablo VI, Carta Encíclica *Humanae Vitae* sobre la regulación de la natalidad (1968), http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_25071968_humanae-vitae_sp.html; CDF, Declaración *Persona Humana* acerca de ciertas cuestiones de ética sexual (1975), http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_19751229_persona-humana_sp.html; CDF, Carta sobre la atención pastoral a las personas homosexuales (1 de octubre, 1986), http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_19861001_homosexual-persons_sp.html; CDF, *Donum Vitae*; B. Papa Juan Pablo II, Carta Apostólica *Mulieris Dignitatem* sobre la dignidad y la vocación de la mujer (1988), http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_letters/1988/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_19880815_mulieris-dignitatem_sp.html; CDF, *Algunas consideraciones concernientes a la Respuesta a propuestas de ley sobre la no discriminación de las personas homosexuales*; B. Papa Juan Pablo II, Carta a las Familias; B. Papa Juan Pablo II, Carta Encíclica *Evangelium Vitae* sobre el Valor y el Caracter Inviolable de la Vida Humana (1995), no. 2, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_25031995_evangelium-vitae_sp.html; B. Papa Juan Pablo II, Carta a las Mujeres (1995), http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/letters/1995/documents/hf_jp-ii_let_29061995_women_sp.html; CDF, *Consideraciones acerca de los proyectos de reconocimiento legal de las uniones entre personas homosexuales* (2003); CDF, Carta sobre la colaboración del hombre y la mujer en la Iglesia y el mundo (2004), http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20040731_collaboration_sp.html; CSDC, nos. 144-148 y 209-254; CDF, Instrucción *Dignitas Personae* sobre algunas cuestiones de bioética (2008), http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20081208_dignitas-personae_sp.html; y *Caritas in Veritate*, nos. 15, 44, y 51. Para una compilación de reflexiones del Papa Benedicto XVI sobre el matrimonio y la familia véase Papa Benedicto XVI, *Family* (Washington, DC: USCCB, 2009). Véase también USCCB, *El Matrimonio*.

Marriage

Made for Love and Life

Study Guide



MARRIAGE
Unique for a Reason



United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

The Marriage: Made for Love and Life Study Guide was developed as a resource by the Subcommittee for the Promotion and Defense of Marriage of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). It was reviewed by the Subcommittee chairman, Archbishop Salvatore J. Cordileone, and has been authorized for publication by the undersigned.

Msgr. Ronny Jenkins
General Secretary, USCCB

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How to use this study guide

This study guide accompanies the film *El matrimonio: hecho para el amor y la vida*, which tells the story of a young man, Miguel, his girlfriend, Maria, and the impact on their ideas about marriage by his grandparents, Hector and Rosa, who are celebrating their fiftieth wedding anniversary. The film is an artistic introduction to the subject of marriage. This guide takes the viewer deeper into the subject matter through a series of reflections on five main themes:

1. Sexual difference and complementarity—the two become one flesh
2. Children are a gift and deserve a married father and mother
3. Marriage and the common good—the foundation of society
4. Marriage and religious liberty—when Church teaching is against the law
5. Persons who experience same-sex attraction

Each theme includes **discussion questions** that can be used by a viewer alone or in a group setting. And the first four themes have **going deeper** sections that extend the discussion of marriage by supplying additional analysis or answering commonly asked questions.

This study guide may be used by an individual or in a group setting under the direction of a leader or facilitator. The guide supplements the film and is intended for all interested viewers who want to think more deeply about the ideas raised in the film, and especially for leaders (priests, deacons, catechists, teachers, and all who serve in some form of ministry) who want to help others understand what marriage is and why it matters. The guide does not presume to offer a pedagogy or replace the critical role of the catechist, but it seeks to assist further understanding of key themes treated in the film. Leaders are invited to visit the website www.elmatrimoniounicoyconrazon.org for more resources, including frequently asked questions about marriage, handouts, and suggestions for how to present the material in various program formats.

Introduction:

The legacy of faithful married love

A fiftieth wedding anniversary is a time of joy and great thanksgiving. It is also a testimony of love, sacrifice, and faithfulness after many years. There's a story in fiftieth anniversaries—in husbands and wives who have steadfastly loved and sacrificed for each other and for their families, celebrating joys and enduring hardships through the test of time. What brought them together? What sustained their commitment? What difficulties did they encounter and how did they work through them? If blessed with children, what sacrifices did the father and mother make in service to the family? What wisdom do they have to share about loving and raising their children?

Marriages that endure leave a legacy, and they invite us into their legacy. They leave an irreplaceable imprint on children, grandchildren, great grandchildren, extended family members, neighbors, co-workers, communities, and society at large. There's a reason we celebrate this unique form of human faithfulness, where a man and a woman join themselves to each other exclusively for life and commit themselves to raising in love any children conceived from their union. Marriage is a gift. No other institution brings a man and a woman together for life and connects them to any child conceived and born from their union. No other institution serves the purpose of keeping fathers and mothers together in raising their children.

In our time, many of us and our own families, friends, and neighbors have experienced the pain and hurt of broken marriages. Young people are particularly affected. Many are choosing to delay or even forego marriage, for various reasons. Cohabitation is rising while marriage is declining. Further, public policies and laws continue to be made that do not recognize the uniqueness of marriage and even seek to redefine it so that marriage is no longer the union of a man and woman but of any two persons.

A debate has emerged in various countries about the fundamental meaning of marriage. Unfortunately, the most important question—*what is marriage?*—is sometimes lost from view. Truths about marriage and the human person that used to seem self-evident to all are no longer being recognized. This is the result of several decades where marriage and the family have not been strengthened and promoted as they should have been, in our homes, neighborhoods, communities, and society. In the midst of this, we must ask: What makes marriage special and unique? Why should we

promote and strengthen marriage? And why does this matter, not only for ourselves but for our families, children, and society as well?

El matrimonio: hecho para el amor y la vida

The film *El matrimonio: hecho para el amor y la vida* (*Marriage: Made for Love and Life*) invites us into a story about a faithful marriage and a young couple struggling with the idea of marriage. As the story unfolds, the question arises about the unique meaning of marriage as the union of one man and one woman. The married couple has witnessed to this meaning for fifty years, and they are then asked to share an answer through a word that continues to be lived out by example.

The film and study guide are part of a larger catechetical and educational initiative entitled *Marriage: Unique for a Reason*. This initiative of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' Subcommittee for the Promotion and Defense of Marriage, through the generous support of the Knights of Columbus, endeavors to answer the call of Blessed Pope John Paul II for a serious commitment to the urgent task of “rediscovering the value of the family and marriage” in the face of questions current in society today.¹ The first four themes treated in this guide cover the four basic themes of the *Marriage: Unique for a Reason* initiative—sexual difference, the gift of children, the common good, and religious liberty—all of which appear in the film at various points. The fifth theme on persons who experience same-sex attraction represents an important area for pastoral attention that is related to the above themes and is also part of the film's storyline.

In the end, all of us, whether or not we are called to the vocation of marriage, are called to be leaders for marriage and the family—witnesses by word and example to the beauty and truth of marriage and to its fundamental place in society. As marriage and the family goes, so goes our society and culture. May we all seek to build a culture of marriage and the family! *St. Joachim and St. Anne, pray for us!*

KEY TALKING POINTS

- Marriage is the permanent and exclusive union of one man and one woman, for the good of the spouses and for the procreation and education of children.
- The difference is the difference. Sexual difference is essential to marriage. Men and women matter.
- The two-in-one-flesh union and the fruitful love of marriage are only possible

through the sexual difference and complementarity of husband and wife, man and woman.

- Fruitfulness—openness to the child—is at the heart of marriage. Only a man and a woman together can be open to the gift of life.
- Parenting is gender-specific, not gender-neutral. It is fathering and mothering. Only a man can be a father; only a woman can be a mother. Moms and dads matter.
- A child has a basic right to come from and be raised in the loving marital union of his or her father and mother.
- The family, founded on marriage, is the foundation of society. Promoting and protecting marriage is a matter of justice, especially for children.
- Redefining marriage would make the Church’s teaching on marriage, and the natural moral law itself, against the law and cause multiple conflicts between the state and religious institutions and individuals.
- Every human person has inviolable dignity and deserves love and respect. There are many ways to protect the basic human rights of all; redefining or eroding marriage in any way is not one of them.
- Treating different things differently is not unjust discrimination. There really is a difference between marriage and every other kind of relationship.

THEME 1:

Sexual difference and complementarity:
the two become one flesh

“Men and women, we were made for each other.”

—Hector [19:52]

Key Topics: HUMAN PERSON, CREATION, MEANING OF
SEXUAL DIFFERENCE, VOCATION TO LOVE, MARRIAGE

Do you have anyone like Hector and Rosa in your life? Married couples like Hector and Rosa, who have been married for decades, who finish each other’s sentences, and who treat each other with patience, tenderness, and love, bring to life what Hector tells Miguel and Maria: **“Men and women, we were made for each other.”** Indeed, there’s a certain atmosphere around happily married couples that’s hard to put into words. It’s a together-ness, a one-ness. You can barely picture the husband without the wife, and vice versa. There’s a deep understanding between them, nurtured by many years of conversation, and of shared silence. Years of joy, and of shared difficulties. These faithful husbands and wives remind us of Jesus’ description of married couples: **“So they are no longer two, but one flesh.”** (Mt 19:6). Like Hector and Rosa do for Miguel and Maria, these long-married couples can give young people an example of how beautiful and life-giving marriage can be.

With Hector and Rosa in mind, consider what it means that men and women are “made for each other.” We might think of “soul-mates” here, but it’s something much deeper. It has to do with what it means to be a human person and what truly makes us happy and fulfilled. The meaning of the human person is rooted in the truth of creation. Marriage too is rooted in creation. In fact, the meaning of the human person and the meaning of marriage are inseparable. To discover the meaning of both, we need to go “back to the beginning” as Jesus himself invites us (see Mt 19)—back to the truth of creation which we find in the book of Genesis.

From the beginning...

As we read in Genesis (1:1-2:25), men and women are created in the image of God:

“God created man in his image; in the divine image he created him; male and female he created them” (Gn 1:27). From Genesis we learn that:

- Men and women are **equal but different**: equal in dignity, and yet different and complementary as male and female.²
- This is a **great good!** Sexual difference, which includes the human body, is not a mistake but part of God’s perfect plan. To be male or female is something to be cherished as **“a reality which is good and willed by God.”**³
- Every human person, male and female, is **called to love**,⁴ to live the gift of self, since he or she is made in the image of God who is Love.⁵ Whether we’re called specifically to marriage or called to embrace celibacy or virginity for the sake of the Kingdom, we are all called to love as Jesus loved.⁶ Every human person is a **unity of body and soul**.⁷ We’re more than just material stuff: a soulless, albeit well-organized collection of cells, muscles and tissue. Our bodies too are more than just shells. The human body has profound meaning. When Adam encounters Eve for the first time, he cries with joy, “This one, at last, is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh” (Gn 2:23). *Because of her body* Adam recognizes Eve not only as a fellow human creature taken from his side as an equal but also as a suitable partner. She is like him and yet different: she complements him. The human body is neither optional nor insignificant. Instead, the body is filled with meaning for it **reveals and communicates the person**.⁸

Marriage: two-in-one-flesh communion

When he says that man and woman are “made for each other,” Hector is putting in simple terms a truth that is basic to being a human person, male or female: the bodies of a man and a woman speak a particular language that we must listen to—a language that we do not create ourselves but rather receive. This language is written into our very bodies. It is first a language of being a son or a daughter, being beloved (made to be loved).⁹ It’s also a language of *love* and *openness* to the other, particularly to the other sex, and thus a language of *communion*, the calling to become a gift to another person. In short, the language of the body is that of *gift*: man is “for” woman and woman is “for” man.¹⁰

Through their bodies, through their sexual difference, man and woman are uniquely capable of forming a **special communion of persons that uniquely reflects God's own life, a communion called marriage**. Rosa puts it well: "Only a man and a woman, through their bodies, with their whole selves, can speak the language of married love." **The two-in-one-flesh communion of husband and wife is a great good in itself**, and it has great significance for all of society as we will explore below. Scripture attests that this communion, *marriage*, images Christ's love for His Church.¹¹ Jesus' love shows us the perfection of married love: freely given, faithful until death (even death on a cross), and fruitful in bringing salvation to all the world.

Is this just a "fairy tale"?

Is this description of marriage simply idealistic and a thing of the past, or as Maria said, a "fairy tale"? Who among us has not been affected or hurt in some way by the trials and disappointments of troubled or broken marriages? This is why Jesus' invitation to consider the "beginning" is so important and needs to be understood rightly. Jesus was not painting an impossible picture. He was and still is inviting us to a truth that can be lived now. As Rosa said, a strong marriage is possible "if a husband and wife rely on God's help and both work for it together."

But we must face up to the reality that marriage has not been lived well for more than fifty years, and thus as an institution it has not fared well in various countries. Instead of strengthening marriage and encouraging men and women to live strong marriages, cultural trends and laws have seemed bent at every turn toward weakening marriage. Due to the widespread use of contraception, sterilization, and the approval of no-fault divorce laws, faithfulness and fruitfulness have largely been redefined out of marriage. What's left are the two essential elements: man and woman, and those are now under attack by law and culture. Defending the importance of sexual difference in marriage is crucial. But even more crucial is presenting again to a jaded, hurt society the *full* truth of marriage: one man and one woman, open to life, committed until death.

This is why the witness of men and women living their marital vows in love is so important and powerful. When we encounter married couples like Hector and Rosa, we see—in the flesh—what it means that men and women are "made for each other." We see all the little ways and gestures that help a husband and wife live out their marital communion and express their one-ness. We see the ways that their masculinity and femininity complement each other: how husband and wife help each other be the best

man and woman they can be, how they model spousal love to others, and, if so blessed, how they help each other be the best father and mother for their children. **Man and woman are “made for each other” because they are uniquely capable of living out the fruitful communion of marriage.**

>> **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. *How would you put in your own words what Hector said, that men and women are “made for each other”?*
2. *Give an example of a “Hector and Rosa” in your life, and how they have lived out their vocation to love in marriage.*

Going deeper: The spousal meaning of the body & married love

Spousal meaning of the body

In his teaching on the theology of the body, Bl. Pope John Paul II said that the human body has a “spousal meaning.” The body, in its masculinity and femininity, speaks a language of *love* and of *openness* to the other, particularly to the other sex. The body is “spousal” because the vocation to love is written in the body. As John Paul said, the body’s “spousal meaning” is “the power to express love: precisely that love in which the human person becomes a gift and—through this gift—fulfills the very meaning of his being and existence.”¹² In this sense, every person’s body has a spousal meaning, whether male or female, single or married. Everyone is called to “take up” the meaning of their body and live it in truth.

Marriage: a unique kind of love

Within marriage, the universal vocation to love takes on unique characteristics. Every person is called to love, but **marriage calls for a very unique kind of love and commitment.** Hector said it well: marriage means giving yourself *completely* to your spouse. He tells Miguel that marriage is more than just splitting the rent! Marriage calls husband and wife to commit to each other *until death* and to entrust themselves to each other *totally*, body and soul. No other relationship on earth is like this. No other bond between two persons is as all-encompassing as marriage. This is why sexual difference

is absolutely essential here. As Rosa said, without sexual difference, without a man *and* a woman, the language of married love cannot be spoken *at all*. **Sexual difference is the underlying foundation of married love.**

Married love: unitive and procreative

In other words, **the sexual difference of husband and wife is what enables their love to be truly marital, that is, both unitive and procreative.** When husband and wife come together sexually, when they offer each other the gift of their entire self in and through their bodies, they form an incredibly intimate *union* that is *procreative in kind*. This means that it is the *kind of union* from which new life comes.¹³ We could say that the words “spoken” by husband and wife in the marital (sexual) act are: “I love you and give myself totally and completely to you” and “I am willing to become a father (or a mother) with you.” **The same act that unites a man and a woman in the closest bond of intimacy also opens them to receive the gift of a child.** Today, we might be tempted to believe that the sexual act means only what we want it to mean, a merely recreational activity, or even that it is altogether *meaningless*. But our bodies teach us otherwise.¹⁴

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. *What makes the married love unique from every other kind of love? Why does married love require both a man and a woman?*
2. *What are some examples of how our culture treats sex as meaningless? Do you think this helps people or hurts them?*

THEME 2:

Children are a gift and deserve a married father and mother

“Marriage is a gift. Husband and wife, father and mother together. But some people don’t choose to see it that way. When they don’t, people get hurt, especially children. Children need a mother and a father.”

—Hector [25:56]

Key Topics: FRUITFULNESS OF MARRIED LOVE, SEXUAL DIFFERENCE NECESSARY FOR FRUITFULNESS, CHILDREN AS GIFT, IMPORTANCE OF FATHERS AND MOTHERS, SINGLE PARENTS, INFERTILITY, ADOPTION

Have you ever been to a house that has a “wall gallery” like the one in Hector and Rosa’s guest room? Maybe in your own home there’s a collection of family photos—parents, children, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and so on. Maria was drawn like a magnet to Rosa’s family pictures and of course Miguel’s baby photos! These pictures illustrate—literally—the truth that fruitfulness—openness to the child—is at the heart of marriage.

Marriage is made for life

It is *because* men and women are “made for each other” that marriage is “made for life.” In giving themselves to each other in love, husband and wife also give each other the possibility of becoming father and mother together.

In fact, **fruitfulness is at the heart of love itself**. In their 2009 pastoral letter on marriage, the bishops of the United States wrote, “It is the nature of love to overflow, to be life-giving.”¹⁵ Nowhere is this seen more clearly than when a husband and wife welcome a child into their family.

Procreation is participation in the creative work of God. God is the sole Author of Life. But in breathtaking humility, He invites men and women to participate in the momentous task of bringing new life into the world. In fact, **father and mother are**

necessary for procreation. The capacity to procreate, to bring forth new human life, is inscribed in the very bodies of men and women, in their sexual difference. Without sexual difference, conception would be impossible.¹⁶ As Rosa tells Miguel and Maria, “only a man and a woman together...can be open to God’s gift of life.”

The gift of children

The sense of wonder parents have at the conception and birth of a child reminds us that **every child is a gift.** Indeed, the Church teaches that children are the “supreme” or highest gift of marriage.¹⁷ Each and every child conceived and born into the world is a unique and unrepeatable human person, willed by God for his or her own sake.¹⁸ A child is not a piece of property or something that is “owed” to someone. **No one has a “right to a child.”** Instead, when it comes to procreation, **only the child possesses genuine rights:** the right to be conceived in a loving act between his or her married mother and father, and the right to be respected and protected from the moment of his or her conception.¹⁹ We sometimes forget a basic fact: *every child has a mother and a father.* When we reflect on this fact, we can see more clearly that a just society would seek, as much as possible, to ensure that children are welcomed and raised in the loving home of their married mother and father.

Married mothers and fathers matter

It’s clear that Maria’s life has been strongly affected by her father’s abandonment of their family. When she opens up to Rosa about this sad situation in her life, her pain is palpable.

Unfortunately, Maria is far from alone. Many children grow up without one or both of their parents in the home, more often their father. Men and women like Maria who are hurting from this absence may wonder whether lifelong marriage is even possible. The brokenness of their own family of origin can generate uncertainties about trust, commitment, love and marriage that remain deep within the heart and need love and time to heal or even to acknowledge.

Maria’s experience witnesses to the importance of mothers and fathers for children. There’s something irreplaceable about a mom and a dad. Their presence to their children matters. Their sexual difference matters. And especially, their marriage to each other has enormous importance for their children.

Married fathers and mothers each bring different gifts to the shared task of raising

children. First of all, they bring their covenant of love to bear on all their relationships both inside and outside the home. Children learn how to love, how to trust, and how to respect the equal dignity of all men and women through their mom and dad’s love and example.

Second, a husband and a wife bring their own unique selves to the task of parenting. **Only a woman can *mother* and only a man can *father*** in the truest sense of the words. This is not about mere “functions” or “roles” in the home but rather about the masculine or feminine presence they give to their children. Both father and mother participate in all the tasks of child-rearing, but they do so as a *man* or as a *woman*. **Mothers and fathers are not interchangeable.**

So what about the Marias of the world?

Acknowledging the great importance of fathers and mothers together does not overlook the heroism often lived by single mothers or fathers. Rather, it affirms them but also provides a realistic assessment: single parenting takes great sacrifice, and it neither is, nor should it be treated as, an ideal or norm. Many people in our society have experienced the loss of their father or mother, or their spouse, through death, separation, or abandonment. Immigrant families, too, sometimes bear long periods of separation from close family members. **The Church reaches out to single parents and struggling families with pastoral care**, acknowledging their often heroic efforts to care for their children in difficult circumstances. As Rosa said to Maria, “You must be very proud of your mother.”

Redefining marriage is unjust to children

At the same time, recognizing the difficult situation of single parents is very different from *deliberately depriving* a child of a married father or mother or contradicting the natural and unique meaning of marriage. Children are more than just lifestyle choices of adults. Advocating for parenthood outside of marriage, whether by singles or by non-married cohabiting couples, ignores the truth inscribed into the child’s very being that he or she has a mother and a father and has been made to be welcomed by a married mom and dad. Similarly, **redefining marriage to include two persons of the same sex says to children that their desire for a father and a mother together does not matter.** It says that moms and dads are optional—that one or the other is dispensable. Redefining marriage therefore eliminates the only institution whose fundamental

purpose includes ensuring that children are given the best chance of being raised by their own father and mother together in a stable, loving home. While single parents can still honor the importance of sexual difference by recognizing the *lack* caused by the absence of a father or a mother, two men or two women who raise a child are sadly unable to witness to the importance of fathers and mothers.

Rosa is right: children need a mother and a father. The Marias of the world need and deserve a mother and a father. In fact, it is their birthright. Redefining marriage affects the most vulnerable persons among us, children.

>> **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. *Why doesn't anyone have a "right" to a child, even if they really want one?*
2. *Speaking from experience, how did your mother and father show their love for you in different ways? Or, if one of them is not present in your life, what did you miss most?*
3. *Why is protecting and promoting marriage as the union of one man and one woman a matter of justice for children?*

Going deeper: What about infertile couples?

Rosa hinted that her mother and father carried the heavy cross of infertility after her birth: "I come from a small family too," she tells Maria. "My mother couldn't have children after me." Not every married couple is blessed with children, and the inability to conceive or to bring a baby to full term can be a great source of sorrow for a husband and wife. The Church reaches out with tenderness to infertile couples. She reminds them that their marriage still retains its great value, even if they are never blessed with children of their own.²⁰

Even when a husband and wife are not blessed with the gift of a child, their union is still good and fruitful. They still form a union that is *procreative in kind*, that is, a one-flesh communion that expresses total self-gift and openness to children. This is not the case with two men or two women. Because they lack sexual difference, two persons of the same sex can never form a one-flesh union that is *procreative in kind*. Put another way, sexual acts between two men or two women are not the kind of acts that would ever bring a child into the world. For this reason, it is false to claim that an

infertile husband and wife and two persons of the same sex are “identical” because both cannot have children.

In addition, an infertile husband and wife are uniquely poised to welcome a child into their home through adoption or foster care because they can offer that child the great gift of a father and a mother.²¹ It is important to remember that adoption compensates for a *loss*. A child being placed for adoption has already suffered the sad separation from his or her mother and father, for a variety of reasons. Adoption is a generous act toward a child in need, and it is different from deliberately depriving a child of a mother or father. Adoption takes its form—its basic structure—from the conjugal and generative relationship of husband and wife, father and mother. It always should respect and not contradict the natural reference point of marriage. This is why adoption of a child by two men or two women in a sexual/cohabiting relationship is never morally permissible.²² It’s not a question of parenting competency or the desire to love and provide care. It’s a question of social justice and the ability to provide love and care as a mother *and* a father—in such a way that the meanings of marriage, sexual difference, and mothering-fathering are upheld and not redefined.

>> **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. *If you or anyone you know has experienced infertility and/or miscarriage, what did it teach you about the fruitfulness of married love?*
2. *How are an infertile husband and wife different from two men or two women, even if both want a child and are unable to have one?*

THEME 3:

Marriage and the common good

“Miguel, you know I worked my entire life with bricks and stones, building things. I built this house. These walls are strong because the foundation is strong. Strong families are like that.”

—Hector [21:57]

Key Topics: MARRIAGE'S CONTRIBUTION TO
THE COMMON GOOD, MARRIAGE AS A JUSTICE ISSUE

Miguel's parents are concerned about him. “We knew they were together,” begins Teresa. “And then we find out they're *living* together,” adds Roberto. Why are Miguel's parents so concerned that he's living with his girlfriend? Why do they plan a “covert operation” in the hopes that Abuelo can talk some sense into his grandson?

There could be many reasons for their concern. But a few likely reasons are that they're concerned that Miguel and Maria are starting off on the wrong foot, that Miguel is not treating Maria like a man should before marriage, and that both are mistaking marriage to be just a private affair or decision between two people. But as Hector puts it, “**Marriage isn't just personal—it's public too.**” Many like Miguel and Maria don't often realize how much their personal decisions and actions affect everyone starting with themselves and their immediate family and extending out to society as a whole. When a man and woman deliberately choose to cohabitate instead of getting married, they're *acting* like they're married, but without the public recognition and responsibilities that come with marriage. No vows are exchanged. No witnesses are present. No commitment is celebrated by the community.

Marriage is the foundation of society

Why does this matter? Because, as Hector goes on to say, marriage is “the basis of society.” Marriage matters to the common good—“the good of ‘all of us’” living together in society.²³ Using Hector's analogy, just as houses need strong, secure foundations to endure the test of time, so society needs a strong, secure foundation that will last.

The family, founded on marriage, is that foundation. By publicly joining hands in marriage, a man and a woman join their two families into one family, promoting greater connections between people. The very bond of a husband and a wife has unique, public meaning! And by being open to the gift of new life and generously welcoming and raising children, the next generation, husbands and wives further the very existence of society and uniquely witness to the precious gift of human life to those around them, encouraging all of us to build a culture of life and hope.

Marriage teaches society what it means to be human

When we view the unitive and procreative meanings of married love within their proper public and social framework, we can see that they embrace much more than a “private” significance. **The family, founded on marriage,²⁴ plays a key educational role in society.** Catholic social teaching calls the family “the primary place of ‘humanization’ for the person and society.”²⁵ This means that **the family teaches its members what it means to be human.**

It does this, first, by giving family members and society a *model of relationship* where each person is both *connected* with everyone else but also *uniquely important* as an irreplaceable family member: husband, wife, father, mother, daughter, son, sister, brother, and so forth. Each of these words describes both a *relationship* between people and also an *identity* that no one else can fill in exactly the same way. Contrast this to an industrial workplace where workers are interchangeable, or to a bureaucracy where people are numbers, and you will see how wonderfully unique the family is. Being born into and raised within a family, sons and daughters learn that they are “familial beings” fundamentally connected to other people, and not just isolated individuals.

The family also teaches everyone what it means to be human by teaching them what it means to love and be loved. At the heart of the family is the “dynamism of love” that exists between husband and wife.²⁶ Love is a decision, not just a feeling. Love is proven by day to day faithfulness in every area of life. Hector and Rosa, for example, said a total and complete “yes” to each other until death at their wedding. This “yes” of radical acceptance—a “yes” to the person that can never be revoked—radiates out to the rest of their family and to society. The radical “yes” of marriage teaches the world that human beings are loved for their own sake and not for what they can do or contribute.

The unitive and procreative dimensions of marriage are therefore social realities, foundational in fact to Catholic social teaching.²⁷ Marriage is not just about the private

interests of the spouses, nor is it limited to conceiving and giving birth to the gift of children. Marriage is the fount of the family. It includes not only the raising, education, and formation of children, but also the ongoing formation and love of husband and wife, and the witness to and passing on of that formation and communion to all who encounter that family, and to all of society.

Marriage is a matter of justice

Because of the essential contribution marriage makes to society, the U.S. bishops are right in saying, “To promote and protect marriage as the union of one man and one woman is itself a matter of justice.”²⁸ In particular, as stated in a previous section, **promoting and protecting the family founded on marriage as the union of a man and a woman is a matter of justice for children.** All kids have a mom and a dad, and they deserve the best chance at knowing and being raised by their married mom and dad together. Promoting and defending marriage gives kids the best chance of growing up in a home with both their father and mother because marriage permanently unites a man and woman with each other and with any children that come from their union. Marriage is the only institution that does this. To erode or redefine it in any way, such as redefining marriage to include two men or two women, does an injustice to children and to society. Men and women, husbands and wives, fathers and mothers—they matter. It matters that every child has a mother and a father. The truth of marriage matters. This is why Hector and Rosa, and Roberto and Teresa, want Miguel and Maria to see the bigger picture and the truth of things.

Hopefully, Abuelo’s loving words helped Miguel and Maria to understand that marriage is not just a private affair. **Strong families, founded on strong marriages, are the foundation of a strong society.** When marriage and family is weak, then society is weak. To build a stronger society with stronger families, marriage needs to be strengthened and promoted, not redefined.

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. *Hector says that the family is the foundation of society. What are some examples of how society is weakened when it lacks strong marriages and families?*
2. *In your own words, how is protecting marriage a matter of justice, particularly for children?*

Going deeper: Concrete benefits of strong marriages and families

Marriage and the family are the foundation of society. It is no surprise, then, that they provide concrete benefits to husbands, wives, and children. In contrast, men, women, and especially children suffer negative consequences when marriage is lacking. While no study could ever exhaustively detail *all* of the contributions that a husband and wife bring to society, or that mothers and fathers give to their children, studies can help us see the very concrete ways in which marriage and the family benefit society.²⁹

For example: married men and women have better health, experience less depression, have more meaningful sexual relationships, and have greater economic stability than unmarried persons.³⁰ Married women have a decreased risk of being a victim of domestic violence,³¹ and are much less likely to abort a child in the case of an unexpected pregnancy.³² Married men are less likely to commit a crime or drink to excess,³³ and married fathers tend to have better relationships with their children.³⁴ Children benefit immensely from being raised by a married mother and father. They are less likely to grow up in poverty³⁵ or be a victim of abuse or a violent crime,³⁶ and more likely to graduate from high school³⁷ and go to college.³⁸ Girls raised by a married mother and father are less likely to become pregnant as a teenager.³⁹ Boys raised by a married mother and father are less likely to have behavioral problems.⁴⁰

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. *Out of the examples listed of how marriage benefits society, which surprised you? Or which could you relate to?*

THEME 4:

Marriage and religious liberty

“If the definition of marriage is changed—legally—it would make the Church’s teachings against the law.”

—Rosa [25:30]

Key Topics: MARRIAGE REDEFINITION AND RELIGIOUS LIBERTY CONFLICTS, TYPES AND EXAMPLES, RELIGIOUS EXEMPTIONS

Would you be surprised to find out that Rosa and Hector are Catholics? Probably not. From the first time they’re seen in the film, elements of their Catholic faith are consistently present: from praying together in church, to the religious artwork in their home, to their pride and joy in knowing and sharing their faith with Miguel and Maria. The importance of their faith to them is crystal clear. It permeates their lives and is their solid foundation.

For people of strong faith, like Hector and Rosa, there is another issue when it comes to marriage law and the proposal to redefine it to include two men or two women. As Rosa points out, redefining marriage in the law would place the Church’s teaching in conflict with the law. In effect, **it would make the Church’s teaching on marriage, literally, against the law.** This would cause conflicts with religious liberty. In fact, it already has.

Religious liberty: the right to live by one’s faith

Religious liberty (also called religious freedom) is “our first, most cherished liberty.”⁴¹ Bl. Pope John Paul II described religious liberty as “the right to live in the truth of one’s faith and in conformity with one’s transcendent dignity as a person.”⁴² Religious liberty has to do with *human dignity*, with the ability, and responsibility, of men and women to seek the truth. Therefore, religious liberty is not a “privilege” generously (or grudgingly) bestowed by the government. Instead, it is something owed to every human person.

Religious liberty is more than just “freedom to worship.” It also includes the ability to live one’s life as a believer *in public*. And it applies to both individual believers *and*

groups of believers, such as a church or religious organization. Religious liberty means that no one can be forced to act against their convictions, or restrained from acting in accordance with their conscience.⁴³

Redefining marriage threatens religious liberty

Changing marriage law to include two persons of the same sex would have a direct effect on religious liberty. The legal definition of marriage affects many types of law: estate law, health insurance law, tax law, and so forth. **Redefining marriage in the law changes not just one law, but *hundreds if not thousands* of laws at once.** Since the Church and the State would disagree on what marriage is, a large range of conflicts would—and has already—emerge between the law and religious institutions, families, and individuals.

Sometimes, concerns about the religious liberty consequences of marriage redefinition are not taken too seriously by those responsible for the common good or are simply not on the radar for most people. However, people on both sides of the marriage redefinition issue agree that there are significant consequences for religious liberty.⁴⁴ To understand these consequences, it's important first to recognize **that the most immediate threat is *not* that ministers would be forced to officiate at “weddings” of two men or two women.** This is just unlikely to happen (despite the fact that the question could end up in court, costing the Church massive amounts of time and money). Unfortunately, this claim appears often and is sometimes used by those who want to dismiss attention to real religious liberty concerns. More likely and pressing consequences to religious liberty include but are not limited to the following examples:

- Religious institutions, like a school, are forced to keep as employed leaders or teachers those who have obtained a same-sex “marriage” or who have advocated for marriage redefinition in open contradiction to the school’s fundamental values.
- Religiously-owned wedding businesses, like a caterer, are forced against their conscience to provide services for a same-sex “wedding” ceremony.
- Religious institutions, like hospitals, are forced to provide spousal benefits, like health insurance, to an employee’s same-sex “spouse.”

- Support for marriage as the union of one man and one woman is treated like hate speech and punished with fines or firing.
- Licenses are denied to persons who disagree with marriage redefinition, for example town clerks.
- Government funding and grants are denied to groups who believe that marriage is between one man and one woman, for example adoption agencies.

Unfortunately, the list could go on. This shows how important marriage is as a natural and public institution and how embedded it is in the law. It would be difficult if not impossible to anticipate all the various potential consequences of redefining marriage in the law. Rosa's words may be unsettling but they deserve close attention: ultimately, **changing marriage law will make the Church's teaching, as well as the moral convictions of anyone who supports marriage protection, against the law.** And that's a perilous place to be in.

Are there religious liberty protections?

Religious exemptions, which are often attached to marriage redefinition bills to give the appearance that religious entities will receive protections, have proven to be inadequate. They often are very limited, for example only protecting clergy from being forced to officiate at a same-sex ceremony (which, as we saw above, is not a pressing concern). But even more importantly, marriage as the union of one man and one woman is a great good in itself and can never be sacrificed for the sake of religious protections.⁴⁵ This means that even the seemingly best religious liberty protections do not justify allowing marriage to be redefined. Injustice is simply that—injustice—and nothing can justify allowing for or advancing it. In the end, marriage and religious liberty are both great goods which will stand or fall together.

>> **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. *What is your reaction to Rosa's statement that changing marriage law would make the Church's teaching on marriage "against the law"?*
2. *What other scenarios can you see happening if marriage law is redefined?*

Going deeper: Law teaches

Civil law has a limited but important purpose. As Hector and Rosa explained, laws are not just about preventing people from hurting each other. “Laws should protect what’s true,” said Hector. “And beautiful,” added Rosa. In other words, laws have an educational role. Laws teach. They have a formative influence on society and are also affected by society, for good (if just) or for ill (if unjust).

The fundamental standard of any law should be: is it true and just? That is, is it in accord with the truth of the world, with the natural moral law and the intrinsic dignity of the human person? When it comes to marriage law, we have to ask whether the definition of marriage proposed by a law is true. If not, it is an unjust law.

As we have seen, sexual difference—the unitive and fruitful relationship of man and woman—is at the heart of marriage. The nature of marriage precedes religion, government, and civil law. Any law that attempts to redefine sexual difference out of marriage is attempting to redefine something that in essence cannot be redefined. Such a law is no longer a just law. Instead, it is an attempt on the part of lawmakers to codify in law—and enforce through sanctions—an untruth and, therefore, an injustice.

A law that redefines marriage would teach many false lessons. It would teach that marriage is not a total, complete gift of one man and one woman to each other. It would teach that men and women don’t matter for marriage, and that fathers and mothers don’t matter for children. It would teach that marriage is more about validating adult romantic relationships than about recognizing the inherent goodness of the male-female union for their own family and for all of society.

Keeping in mind the purpose of law can help us see why it matters that marriage—the union of one man and one woman—should be promoted and protected by law. Christians should care about civil law out of love for our neighbors and especially our children, who will be negatively affected by an unjust law and will have to navigate the consequences for generations to come.

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. *Discuss some of the “false lessons” the law would teach if marriage were redefined.*
2. *What happens to us and to society when we ignore or reject the natural moral law (the law written on our hearts)?*

THEME 5:

Persons who experience same-sex attraction

“Miguelito. We all want Tati to be happy. But true happiness and freedom can only come from living according to the truth of who we are as man and woman, since this is how God made us.”

—Rosa [22:36]

Key Topics: AUTHENTIC MEANING OF SEXUALITY, CHASTITY,
DIGNITY OF PERSONS WITH SAME-SEX ATTRACTION,
WHY UPHOLDING MARRIAGE IS NOT DISCRIMINATION

Although Miguel’s cousin Tati never appears in the film, she plays a key role. Tati, a woman in a romantic relationship with another woman, is close to everyone’s minds and hearts as the discussion turns to the definition of marriage. As Miguel says, “How does Tati marrying her partner hurt anyone?” And later, “Tati is like a sister to me. We just want her to be happy.”

Rosa’s response models how to navigate such a difficult, and often emotional, conversation. She agrees wholeheartedly with Miguel: “We all want Tati to be happy.” But then she goes deeper and asks in essence: What is happiness? While it can be easy to think that happiness is getting to do whatever we think will make us happy, that can’t be the whole story. We’ve all had experiences when something we thought would make us happy—say, staying up all night watching movies and eating junk food—made us exhausted and gave us a stomachache!

Rosa gently reminds Miguel and Maria that true happiness, and true freedom, are always connected with truth. **Only when we act in accord with the truth of who we are will we be happy.** And, Rosa adds, that means who we are *as a woman* or *as a man*. Our bodily nature is an inescapable fact of our existence. To be human is to not only “have” a body; to be human is to *be* an embodied person, since our identity is so intimately connected with our bodily nature. And as we saw earlier, a fundamental fact of the body is that it is *gendered*: we are created male and female. And as Hector said, men and women are created “for each other.”

The vocation to chastity

It can be a difficult truth to accept, and is certainly not very popular today, but **our bodies have a language that can be spoken truthfully...or not.** The virtue of chastity is what allows us to speak the language of our bodies truthfully and, in doing so, to authentically love others. *Every* person is called to the lifelong task of cultivating chastity.⁴⁶

When it comes to sex, only in marriage can a man and a woman truly “speak” everything their bodies are meant to say: “I love you totally and completely, and I’m willing to be father or mother with you.”⁴⁷ This language is written in the body, as we saw earlier. In contrast, sexual intimacy outside of marriage (fornication or adultery), the use of contraception within marriage, and masturbation are all offenses against chastity because they fail to speak the full truth of sexuality and married love: total, faithful, and fruitful.⁴⁸

In a similar way, **sexual acts between two persons of the same sex can never speak the truth our sexuality is meant to speak.** They can never bring about bodily union, and they can never be open to life. It is for this reason that the Church teaches that homosexual acts can never be approved.⁴⁹ This is a hard teaching for many, **but it is an invitation to the true happiness and true freedom** that comes from living in harmony with the truth of our bodies, as men and women.

The Church says clearly that persons with same-sex attraction must be treated with dignity, respect and love: “Every sign of unjust discrimination in their regard should be avoided.”⁵⁰ As Rosa and other family members insist, Tati is and will always be a beloved member of the family. But, as every parent knows, affirming and accepting Tati as a beloved daughter does not mean approving all of her choices or actions. There really is a difference between marriage and every other kind of relationship. Affirming and promoting marriage’s authentic definition in no way denigrates those with same-sex attraction. In contrast, it affirms their need, too, for a father and a mother, and for a strong society based on marriage. **Distinguishing between marriage and other relationships is not discrimination;** it’s simply being honest about what marriage is: a one-flesh communion open to the gift of life.⁵¹

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. *Why can only a married man and woman “speak” the language of sexual love honestly to each other?*

2. *What are some ways to show love and support to friends and family members with same-sex attraction without supporting the choice to act on that attraction or embrace that lifestyle?*

Conclusion: Leave a legacy

Hector and Rosa's promise to each other of permanent, faithful, and fruitful love was nourished and strengthened by their faith. They would be the first ones to admit that it is God who has kept them together, not their own efforts alone. As Hector acknowledges before the anniversary meal begins, marriage is a "gift from God."

Marriage and the family are indeed great gifts. No marriage and no family are perfect, but that is why grace, forgiveness, and striving to live a life of self-giving love are so important. The family is a school of love. When there is misunderstanding or confusion among family members, the family is the ideal place where difficulties, sorrows, and confusions can be addressed through a witness of love, forgiveness, and patience that has borne the test of time.

Hector and Rosa's conversation with Miguel and Maria demonstrates this witness of love. Their love of Tati and their entire family also demonstrates this witness. Hector and Rosa's words come not only from a knowledge gained through study but from a wisdom gained through experience. Even if Miguel and Maria still struggle to accept everything that Abuelo and Abuela offer about the truth of marriage, they know that Hector and Rosa are living this truth and leaving a legacy of love and truth for their children, grandchildren, and God willing, great-grandchildren.

Whether or not we are called to marriage, we are all called to leave a legacy of love and to witness to the beauty of marriage and the family. What can we learn from Hector and Rosa? For one thing, we can learn to be not afraid to love, reach out, and witness to the truth in love even when it's difficult. Ultimately, the witness of loving husbands and wives and their families, our own faithful witness to God's plan for marriage, and the loving words and conversations we seek to have with others about God's plan, will help build a renewed culture of the family.

Proclaiming the truth about marriage and the family is worth every effort. May we follow Jesus and assist him in his work of opening hearts to the truth: *Have you not read that from the beginning the Creator "made them male and female"...* (Mt 19:4). Marriage is unique for a reason.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Scriptural background on marriage: Matthew 19 and Genesis 1-2 form a key Scriptural foundation for the true nature of marriage as the permanent and exclusive union of one man and one woman. These passages witness to the unique truth, goodness, and beauty of sexual difference and complementarity between man and woman, which serve as the doorway to the one-flesh communion of persons only realizable between a man and a woman in marriage.

Scripture also manifests the fact that, in light of sin, a proper and full appreciation of marriage and human sexuality has not always been apparent in human history. For example, there are passages in Scripture which indicate the harm and sinfulness of sexual activity outside of marriage and in particular between persons of the same sex.⁵² These passages reflect truths often rejected or confused throughout history up to our present day. In particular, the significance of marriage became especially visible in the developing understanding of God’s covenant with his people in spousal terms, which foreshadowed the relationship between Christ and his Bride, the Church.⁵³ The Bible confirms that marriage is a relationship constructed on the basis of heterosexual difference. Instances of polygamy and abusive conduct in the Old Testament demonstrate the limited consciousness and societal practices of the time. Even when committed by those whom God called, such acts are always presented as born of hardness of heart and in need of right ordering. The subsequent teaching of the prophets and of the Wisdom literature rebuilt the consciousness of the people about the true nature and dignity of marriage. In Matthew 19 Jesus confirms the teaching of the book of Genesis that from the beginning man was created “male and female” (cf. Gn 1:26-27) and that for this reason “the two shall become one flesh” (cf. Gn 2:24).

Recent Church teaching on marriage and the family and other resources: Most notably, Pope John Paul II taught about the “theology of the body” and the “nuptial or spousal meaning” of the human body.⁵⁴ In service to the gifts of Divine Revelation and human reason, the Magisterium has taught about the nature of marriage, the family, the dignity of the human person, and human sexuality in various instances.⁵⁵

ENDNOTES

1. See Bl. John Paul II, Audience (Dec. 1, 1999), http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/audiences/1999/documents/hf_jp-ii_aud_01121999_en.html.
2. See *Catechism of the Catholic Church* [CCC], no. 369, http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/_INDEX.HTM.
3. CCC, no. 369.
4. See Bl. John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris Consortio* on the role of the Christian family in the modern world (1981), no. 11, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_19811122_familiaris-consortio_en.html and CCC, no. 1604: “God who created man out of love also calls him to love—the fundamental and innate vocation of every human being.”
5. See 1 John 4:7-16 and CCC, no. 221: “God himself is an eternal exchange of love, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and he has destined us to share in that exchange.”
6. The Second Vatican Council taught that because of the human person’s likeness to God, the human person “cannot fully find himself except through a sincere gift of self” (Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes* on the Church in the modern world [1965], no. 24, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_cons_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html).
7. See CCC, no. 362.
8. See Bl. John Paul II, Audience (November 14, 1979), http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/audiences/catechesis_genesis/documents/hf_jp-ii_aud_19791114_en.html, for example: “The body reveals man.”
9. The body witnesses to man’s “filiality,” each person’s identity as a son or a daughter. No one is the author of their own existence, but rather each person receives his or her existence *from another*—from his or her mother and father, who mediate God’s creative action through their own act of conjugal love. Even in sad situations where the parent-child relationship is strained or seems to be broken, the filial identity remains. Bl. John Paul II taught that each person traces his or her origin back to God the Father: “God himself is present in human fatherhood and motherhood...God ‘willed’ man from the very beginning, and God ‘wills’ him in every act of conception and every human birth” (*Letter to Families* [1994], no. 9, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/letters/documents/hf_jp-ii_let_02021994_families_en.html). Even when human fatherhood and motherhood are strained, every person is still a child of God and can call him “Father.”
10. See Bl. John Paul II, Audience (January 9, 1980), http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/audiences/catechesis_genesis/documents/hf_jp-ii_aud_19800109_en.html. Note that while the original Italian includes the word “for” twice, the English translation on the Vatican site omits “for.”
11. See Ephesians, 5:21-33 and CCC, no. 1604.
12. Bl. John Paul II, Audience (January 16, 1980), http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/audiences/catechesis_genesis/documents/hf_jp-ii_aud_19800116_en.html; see also *Gaudium et Spes*, nos. 22 and 24.
13. As we will see in later sections, even when husband and wife are not blessed with a child, their marital union is still *procreative in kind*.
14. Even on the hormonal level, it is clear that sex is about “babies and bonding.” For example, a powerful hormone called oxytocin is released during sex that promotes feelings of attachment, particularly in the woman. And hormones released during a woman’s fertile time of the cycle have been shown to increase sexual desire in both men and women.
15. USCCB, Pastoral letter *Marriage: Love and Life in the Divine Plan* (Washington, DC: USCCB, 2009), p. 13, <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/marriage-and-family/marriage/love-and-life/>.
16. Even illicit reproductive technologies, which separate the coming-to-be of a child from the sexual act, rely on sexual difference. A male contribution and a female contribution remain essential for new life, even when those “contributions” are immorally separated from the male and female persons.
17. *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 50.

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18. See *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 24: “Man...is the only creature on earth which God willed for itself” and *Letter to Familias*, no. 9.
19. See CCC 2378 and Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith [CDF], Instruction *Donum Vitae* on respect for human life in its origin and on the dignity of procreation (1987), II, 8, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_19870222_respect-for-human-life_en.html. This means, among other things, that reproductive technologies that *replace* the conjugal act, such as *in vitro* fertilization, are immoral because they deny the child’s fundamental right to be conceived by a sexual act between his/her parents and not to be produced by a technological act involving third parties. In contrast, reproductive medicine that assists the conjugal act to achieve its intended end of procreation is moral and encouraged, for example appropriate surgical interventions and medicines that correct reproductive anomalies or improve reproductive functions. It is also important to affirm that children who are conceived through immoral means still have full human dignity.
20. See *Familiaris Consortio*, no. 14: “Even when procreation is not possible, conjugal life does not for this reason lose its value” and *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 50: “Marriage persists as a whole manner and communion of life, and maintains its value and indissolubility, even when despite the often intense desire of the couple, offspring are lacking.”
21. See CCC, no. 2379: “Spouses who...suffer from infertility...can give expression to their generosity by adopting abandoned children or performing demanding services for others.”
22. See CDF, *Considerations Regarding Proposals To Give Legal Recognition To Unions Between Homosexual Persons* (2003), no. 7, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20030731_homosexual-unions_en.html.
23. Pope Benedict XVI, Encyclical *Caritas in Veritate* on integral human development in charity and truth (2009), no. 7, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20090629_caritas-in-veritate_en.html.
24. A married husband and wife are already a family, even before they are blessed with a child, and even if they never become father and mother. See Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* [CSDC], no. 211, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/justpeace/documents/rc_pc_justpeace_doc_20060526_compendio-dott-soc_en.html: “The family, in fact, is born of the intimate communion of life and love founded on the marriage between one man and one woman” and no. 215: “The family has its foundation in the free choice of the spouses to unite themselves in marriage.”
25. CSDC, no. 209, quoting Bl. John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation *Christifideles Laici*, no. 40, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_30121988_christifideles-laici_en.html.
26. CSDC, no. 221.
27. See in particular CSDC, ch. 5: “The Family, the Vital Cell of Society” (nos. 209-254).
28. USCCB, *Marriage*, p. 23.
29. For a helpful overview of the many studies done on marriage and the family, see Theresa Notare, PhD, and H. Richard McCord, EdD, *Marriage and the Family in the United States: Resources for Society* (2012).
30. Notare and McCord, *Marriage and the Family*.
31. Notare and McCord, *Marriage and the Family*.
32. Lawrence B. Finer and Mia R. Zolna, “Unintended pregnancy in the United States: incidence and disparities, 2006,” *Contraception* 84.5 (Nov 2011): 478-485.
33. Notare and McCord, *Marriage and the Family*.
34. Notare and McCord, *Marriage and the Family*.
35. Henry Potrykus, Ph.D., and Patrick Fagan, Ph.D., *U.S. Social Policy: Dependence on the Family* (January 2013) and Zakia Redd et. al., Child Trends Research Brief, *Two Generations in Poverty: Status and Trends among Parents and Children in the United States, 2000-2010* (November 2011).
36. Nicole White, Ph.D., and Janet Lauritsen, Ph.D., *Violent Crime Against Youth, 1994-2010* (December 2012) and Notare and McCord, *Marriage and the Family*.

37. Potrykus and Pagan, U.S. Social Policy: Dependence on the Family.
38. Notare and McCord, *Marriage and the Family*.
39. Potrykus and Pagan, U.S. Social Policy: Dependence on the Family.
40. Kristin A. Moore, Ph.D., et. al., Child Trends Research Brief, *Parental Relationship Quality and Child Outcomes Across Subgroups* (April 2011); Deborah A. Cobb-Clerk and Erdal Tekin, Melbourne Institute Working Paper Series, Working Paper No. 23/11, “Fathers and Youth’s Delinquent Behavior” (Oct 2011); Marianne Bertrand and Jessica Pan, “The Trouble with Boys: Social Influences and Gender Gap in Disruptive Behavior” (Oct 2011); and Notare and McCord, *Marriage and the Family*.
41. Statement of USCCB Ad Hoc Committee for Religious Liberty, “Our First, Most Cherished Liberty” (2012), <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/religious-liberty/our-first-most-cherished-liberty.cfm>.
42. Bl. John Paul II, Encyclical, *Centesimus Annus* (1991), no. 47, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_01051991_centesimus-annus_en.html.
43. See CCC, no. 2106 and Second Vatican Council, Declaration *Dignitatis Humanae* (1965), no. 2, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651207_dignitatis-humanae_en.html.
44. See *Same-Sex Marriage and Religious Liberty: Emerging Conflicts*, ed. Douglas Layock, Anthony R. Picarello, Jr., and Robin Fretwell Wilson (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008).
45. See CDF, “Some considerations concerning the response to legislative proposals on the non-discrimination of homosexual persons” (1992), no. 16, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_19920724_homosexual-persons_en.html: “The Church has the responsibility to promote family life and the public morality of the entire civil society on the basis of fundamental moral values, not simply to protect herself from the application of harmful laws.”
46. See CCC, nos. 2337-2350.
47. See *Familiaris Consortio*, no. 11.
48. See these sections of the *Catechism* for more on these topics: fornication, no. 2353; adultery, nos. 2380-2381; contraception, nos. 2366-2372; and masturbation, no. 2352.
49. See CCC, nos. 2357-2359. It is important to emphasize that the word “disordered” in these passages of the *Catechism* refers to homosexual acts, not to persons with same-sex attraction. Persons who experience same-sex attraction have full human dignity and, like all persons, are called to cultivate chastity and self-mastery.
50. CCC, no. 2358.
51. See USCCB, *Marriage*, p. 22: “It is not unjust to oppose legal recognition of same-sex unions, because marriage and same-sex unions are essentially different realities.”
52. Injunctions against homosexual acts are included in the Holiness Code of Leviticus (Lv 18:22; 20:13), the book of Deuteronomy (Dt 23:17), and St. Paul’s Letters (Rom 1:26-27; 1 Cor 6:9-10; 1 Tim 1:9-10).
53. See Hosea 1-3; Jeremiah 2:2; Ezekiel 16; Isaiah 54:1-8; Song of Songs; Psalm 45; Mark 2:19-20 (cf. Mt 9:14-15 and Lk 5:33-35); Matthew 25:1-13 (cf. Lk 12:35-38); Matthew 22:1-14 (cf. Lk 13:29, 14:7-24); John 3:28-30; 2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:21-33; and Revelation 19:6-9, 21:1-2, 9-11.
54. See *Familiaris Consortio*, no. 37; Bl. John Paul II, Audiences (January 2, 9, and 16, 1980) and subsequent references; Bl. John Paul II, Encyclical *Veritatis splendor*, no. 15, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_06081993_veritatis-splendor_en.html. Bl. Pope John Paul II’s series of Wednesday General Audiences on human love in the divine plan, more popularly known as the “Theology of the Body,” remains a source of continual reflection and renewal for the Church in her mission of a New Evangelization and a renewed catechesis on marriage and the human person in light of the mystery of Christ and his call to go back to the “beginning,” to creation itself. Also, works such as: Angelo Cardinal Scola, *The Nuptial Mystery*, trans. Michelle K. Borras (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005); Marc Cardinal Ouellet, *Divine Likeness: Toward a Trinitarian Anthropology of the Family*,

trans. Philip Milligan and Linda M. Cicone (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006); and Carl Anderson and José Granados, *Called to Love: Approaching John Paul II's Theology of the Body* (New York: Doubleday, 2009); can serve as sources for helping understand and hand on the Church's teaching.

55. For example, see CCC, nos. 355, 369-373, 1601-1666, 1702, 2201-2213, and 2331-2400. See also *Gaudium et Spes*, nos. 12 and 47-52; Pope Paul VI, Encyclical *Humanae Vitae* on the regulation of birth (1968), http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_25071968_humanae-vitae_en.html; CDF, Declaration *Persona Humana* on certain questions concerning sexual ethics (1975), http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_19751229_persona-humana_en.html; CDF, Letter on the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons (October 1, 1986), http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_19861001_homosexual-persons_en.html; CDF, *Donum Vitae*; Bl. John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Mulieris Dignitatem* on the dignity and vocation of women (1988), http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_letters/1988/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_19880815_mulieris-dignitatem_en.html; CDF, *Some considerations concerning the response to legislative proposals on the non-discrimination of homosexual persons* (1992); Bl. John Paul II, *Letter to Families*; Bl. John Paul II, Encyclical *Evangelium Vitae* on the Value and Inviolability of Human Life (1995), no. 2, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_25031995_evangelium-vitae_en.html; Bl. John Paul II, *Letter to Women* (1995), http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/letters/1995/documents/hf_jp-ii_Let_29061995_women_en.html; CDF, *Considerations regarding proposals to give legal recognition to unions between homosexual persons* (2003); CDF, *Letter on the collaboration of men and women in the Church and in the world* (2004), http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20040731_collaboration_en.html; CSDC, nos. 144-148 and 209-254; CDF, Instruction *Dignitas Personae* on Certain Bioethical Questions (2008), http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20081208_dignitas-personae_en.html; and *Caritas in Veritate*, nos. 15, 44, and 51. For a compilation of Pope Benedict XVI's reflections on marriage and the family, see Pope Benedict XVI, *Family* (Washington, DC: USCCB, 2009). See also USCCB, *Marriage: Love and Life in the Divine Plan*.

NOTAS / NOTES

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El Matrimonio

HECHO PARA EL AMOR Y LA VIDA

Esta Guía de Estudio bilingüe acompaña el DVD *El matrimonio: hecho para el amor y la vida*, que cuenta la historia de un matrimonio fiel de 50 años de casados y una pareja joven escéptica sobre el matrimonio. El video es una introducción artística sobre el tema del matrimonio. Esta guía ayuda al espectador a entender el significado único del matrimonio a través de la reflexión sobre cinco temas: la diferencia sexual y la complementariedad, el bien común, la libertad religiosa, y las personas que experimentan atracción por el mismo sexo. El DVD y la Guía de Estudio forman parte de *El matrimonio: único y con razón*, una iniciativa del Subcomité para la Promoción y Defensa del Matrimonio de la Conferencia de Obispos Católicos de los Estados Unidos (USCCB, por sus siglas en inglés). El propósito de esta iniciativa es asistir a los católicos y a todas las personas de buena voluntad a entender el significado único del matrimonio como la unión de un hombre y una mujer. Esta guía incluye preguntas de reflexión personal y discusión en grupo y puede ser utilizado como un recurso para el clero, catequistas, maestros, y otros líderes.

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