



UP TO THE SOURCE

Adoratio with St. John Paul II

FOR COUPLES

True Love

From the “Letter to Families” 12–14, by Pope John Paul II, Feb. 2, 1994

There is no true love without an awareness that God “is Love”—and that man is the only creature on earth which God has called into existence “for its own sake.” Created in the image and likeness of God, man cannot fully “find himself” except through the sincere gift of self. Without such a concept of man, of the person and the “communion of persons” in the family, there can be no civilization of love.

Who can deny that our age is one marked by a great crisis, which appears above all as a profound “*crisis of truth*”? A crisis of truth means, in the first place, a *crisis of concepts*. Do the words “love,” “freedom,” “sincere gift,” and even “person” and “rights of the person,” really convey their essential meaning?

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

The contemporary family, like families in every age, is searching for “*fairest love*,” *beautiful love*. A love which is not “*fairest*,” but reduced only to the satisfaction of concupiscence (cf. 1 Jn. 2:16), or to a man’s and a woman’s mutual

“use” of each other, makes persons *slaves to their weaknesses*. Do not certain modern “cultural agendas” lead to this enslavement? There are agendas which “play” on man’s weaknesses, and thus make him increasingly weak and defenseless.

Love is Demanding

Opposed to the civilization of love is certainly the phenomenon of so-called “free love;” this is particularly dangerous because it is usually suggested as a way of following one’s “real” feelings, but it is in fact destructive of love. How many families have been ruined because of “free love”! “Free love” exploits human weaknesses; it gives them a certain “veneer” of respectability with the help of seduction and the blessing of public opinion.

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

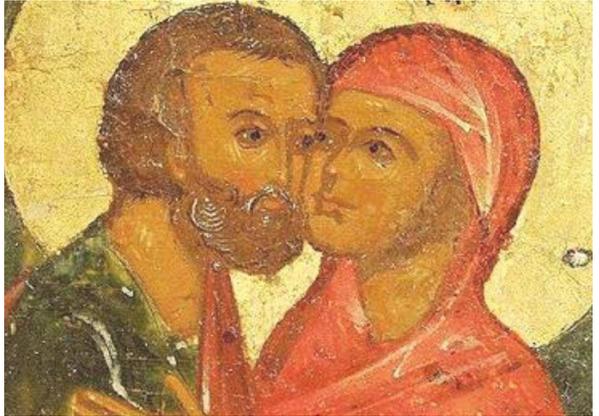
The program of utilitarianism, based on an individualistic understanding of freedom—a freedom without responsibilities—is the opposite of love, even as an expression of human civilization considered as a whole.

The love of spouses and parents has the capacity to cure these kinds of wounds. This capacity depends on the divine grace of forgiveness and reconciliation, which always ensures the spiritual energy to begin anew. For this very reason family members need to encounter Christ in the Church through the wonderful Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation.

In this context, we can realize how important prayer is with families and for families,

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

“The family is the way of the Church.” In this Letter we wish both to profess and to proclaim *this way*, which leads to the kingdom of heaven (cf. Mt. 7:14) through conjugal and family life. It is important that the “communion of persons” in the family should become a preparation for the “communion of Saints.”



Litany of Married Saints

Holy Mary Mother of God, and Saint Joseph of Nazareth, Spouses,	<i>Pray for us</i>
Saint Joachim and Saint Anne, Parents of the Virgin Mary,	<i>Pray for us</i>
Saints Aquila and Priscilla, Missionary Couple,	<i>Pray for us</i>
Saints Anastasios and Theopista, Martyred Spouses,	<i>Pray for us</i>
Saints Henry II and Cunegunda, Spouses and Emperors,	<i>Pray for us</i>
Saint Stephen and Blessed Gisella, Spouses and Monarchs,	<i>Pray for us</i>
Saint Isadore the Farmer and Saint Mary of the Head, Married Laborers,	<i>Pray for us</i>
Blessed John and Thecla Hashimoto, Married Martyrs and Parents of Martyrs,	<i>Pray for us</i>
Blessed John Yu Jung and Lutgarda Yi Sun-I, Spouses and Martyrs,	<i>Pray for us</i>
Saints Louis Martin and Zélie Guérin, Spouses and Parents of Saints,	<i>Pray for us</i>
Blessed Victoria Rasoamanarivo, Faithful Wife,	<i>Pray for us</i>
Saint Franz Jägerstätter, Husband and Martyr,	<i>Pray for us</i>
Saints Luigi and Marie Beltrame-Quattrocchi, Spouses,	<i>Pray for us</i>



A Prayer for Couples by St. John Paul II

God, from whom all fatherhood in heaven and on earth comes,
Father, you are love and life,
make every human family on earth become,
through your Son, Jesus Christ, "born of woman,"
and through the Holy Spirit, source of divine charity,
a true sanctuary of life and love
for generations that always renew themselves.

Let your grace guide the minds and deeds of the spouses
towards the good of their families
and all the families in the world.

Let the younger generation find strong support in the family,
for their humanity and their growth in truth and love.

Let love, strengthened by the grace of the sacrament of marriage,
prove stronger than any weakness or crisis,
through which our families sometimes pass.

Finally, we ask you through the intercession of the Holy Family of Nazareth,
that the Church in the midst of all the nations of the earth
can fruitfully fulfill its mission
in and through the family.

You, who are life, truth and love,
in the unity of the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

"The good God gave me a father and a mother worthier of heaven than of earth" (S. Thérèse of Lisieux, Letter 261).

