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# Renewing a Catholic Theology of Marriage through a Common Way of Life: Consonance with Vowed Religious Life-in-Community

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RENEWING A CATHOLIC THEOLOGY OF MARRIAGE THROUGH A COMMON
WAY OF LIFE: CONSONANCE WITH VOWED RELIGIOUS LIFE-IN-
COMMUNITY

by

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ABSTRACT
RENEWING A CATHOLIC THEOLOGY OF MARRIAGE THROUGH
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Beginning with Vatican II's call for constant renewal, in light of the council's universal call to holiness, I analyze and critique modern theologies of Christian marriage, especially those identifying marriage as a relationship or as practice. Herein, need emerges for a new, ecclesial, trinitarian, and christological paradigm to identify purposes, ends, and goods of Christian marriage. The dissertation's body develops the foundation and framework of this new paradigm: a Common Way in Christ. I find this paradigm by putting marriage in dialogue with an ecclesial practice already the subject of rich trinitarian, christological, ecclesial theological development: consecrated religious life.

Chapter one outlines two paradigms for marriage (relationship and practice), noting their strengths and weaknesses, particularly their need for ecclesial, trinitarian, and Christological grounding. Chapter two treats contemporary scholarship relating consecrated and conjugal life, finding therein an adversarial narrative and dichotomization of the two states. Chapter three counteracts and complicates the adversarial narrative by recovering an Augustinian approach to shared ecclesio-nuptial goods of virginal and matrimonial life. Chapter four encompasses scriptural consideration of Christian life as domestic, as householding with God; it studies principles of Christian householding in a variety of Christian householding forms. Chapter five develops the theological loci missing from the principles of Christian householding, namely the evangelical counsels, the Trinity, and Christology. The final chapter constructs a framework for the paradigm of marriage as Common Way in Christ by integrating previous chapters' insights that present marriage along with consecrated life as a practice, as ecclesial, as Christian householding, as trinitarian, and as lived according to a *regula* in Christ's own virtues of poverty, chastity, and obedience. The chapter provides examples for practicing these virtues and suggests a heuristic for marriage-preparation as novitiate.

Major interlocutors are Augustine, Vatican II, John Paul II, Margaret Hogan, Bernard Lonergan, Lisa Sowle Cahill, Michael Lawler, Julie Hanlon Rubio, Alasdair MacIntyre, David Matzko McCarthy, Jana M. Bennett, Thomas Breidenthal, Francis Moloney, Sandra Schneiders, Hans urs von Balthasar, and Marc Cardinal Oullet. Future directions would develop the paradigm with focus on "domestic church" and "parenthood as a church" in light of emerging householding forms.

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This dissertation has been unique in that it has for its object of research my very life. Upon entering theological studies, my wife and I decided that I would study what we do—in the interest of doing it better. What we do is hold house together as spouses in Christ. Therefore Caitlin and our children (Aquinas John Paul, Hope Julian, Innocence Francis, Gabriel Benedict, Magdalena Grace, and the one on the way) deserve first acknowledgement and thanks for making this dissertation possible. We daily form each other in the virtues (and sometimes the vices) of the Common Way in Christ; may God grant that we be ever more conformed to the life, death, and resurrection of Christ the poor, chaste, and obedient. Second acknowledgement must go to our Christian households of origin (Joseph and Robin Lasnoski, and Donna and David Lukens), as well as to our friends and relatives working with us toward practices and principles of marriage as a Common Way in Christ.

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Christ summons the Church to continual reformation as she sojourns here on earth.
—Vatican Council II[1]


INTRODUCTION: CONTEXT, PROBLEM, METHOD, AND ARGUMENT


**PROBLEM AND ITS CONTEXT**


The Second Vatican Council issued a resounding call to continual renewal and reform of theology and practice in the Catholic Church.[2] In particular, moral and systematic theology have undergone tremendous efforts at renewal. Scripture and "the mystery of Christ" have taken up a more central place in Catholic theology, and theologians have turned to the data of "experience," the importance of the conscience, and the human person as subject as additional theological sources.[3]

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[1] The Decree on Ecumenism, *Unitatis redintegratio*, 6. Unless otherwise noted, all papal and conciliar documents are cited from the Vatican website, www.vatican.va. See also, *Optatum totius*, 16, where the Council asks that "other theological disciplines be renewed through a more living contact with the mystery of Christ and the history of salvation. Special care must be given to the perfecting of moral theology. Its scientific exposition, nourished more on the teaching of the Bible, should shed light on the loftiness of the calling of the faithful in Christ and the obligation that is theirs of bearing fruit in charity for the life of the world."

[2] Throughout, I will use "Church" to refer to the Roman Catholic Church; whereas I will use "church" to refer to the entire people of God, the entire Church of Christ which *subsistit in* the Catholic Church (*Lumen Gentium*, 8 [hereafter, LG]).

[3] Analyses of the trends in moral theology since Vatican II abound. Some have been more critical of the distance put between objective moral order and human actions. See Germain Grisez, *The Way of the Lord Jesus*, Vol. 1, Christian Moral Principles (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1983), 12–18; Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 3rd ed. (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 2007), 1–23 and 36–51; and Servais Pinckaers, *The Sources of Christian Ethics*, trans. Sr. Mary Thomas Noble, O.P., 3rd ed. (Washington: Catholic University of America, 1995). Others provide a narrative more critical of a magisterial intransigence and a trend among some theologians toward a seeming unwillingness to leave behind "classical" approaches to natural law and intrinsic evil. See Richard Gula, *Reason Informed by Faith: Foundations of Catholic Morality* (New York: Paulist, 1989); Lisa Sowle Cahill, *Sex, Gender, and Christian Ethics* (New York: Cambridge University, 1996); and Charles Curran, *Catholic Moral Theology in the United States* (Washington: Georgetown University, 2008).

One major focus of attention in this reform and renewal process has been marriage and the family.[4] From the 1930s until the Second Vatican Council, theologians and magisterial documents moved away from contractual, institutional language in their reflections on marriage, slowly turning toward and eventually favoring covenantal, relational, affective language (e.g. conjugal love) to describe marriage and the family.[5] Theologies of marriage shifted focus more generally as well: from investigating the nature and ends of marriage (ontological interests—linked with Thomism), to describing the meanings of marriage and conjugal love (existential, phenomenological interests linked with personalist philosophy). Since the Council, which was seen as supporting these theological shifts, scholars have sought to build on these developments and address continuing problems in the theology of marriage and family in the spirit of authentic reform and renewal that is faithful to Christ in Scripture, tradition, and the lived experience of the faithful. This dissertation contributes to that renewal through analysis of current theological paradigms for understanding marriage and a constructive proposal for a new paradigm based in the patristic tradition, Christology, and the Trinity. I will

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[4] Definitions of "family" abound. I find Donald A. Miller's "descriptive definition" of "family" culled from magisterial documents and with attention to the experience of the faithful to be a comprehensive representative of those offered. "The family is that secular community of interacting persons united by marriage, blood, or adoption which: (1) arises from the social nature of humankind; (2) finds its root in the marital covenant (natural or sacramental); (3) relates with society (civil or ecclesial) through a direct and reciprocal relationship; (4) forms civil society as its fundamental and foundational unit (and the ecclesial community as the domestic church) through the education and socialization of its members; and (5) images God's internal relations as Trinity through the internal relations of its members, and God's external relation to creation through its external relations to others in terms of civil service (and ecclesial ministry)" (*Concepts of Family Life in Modern Catholic Theology: From Vatican II to "Christifideles Laici"* [San Francisco: Catholic Scholars Press, 1996], 176). Nonetheless, this definition is not entirely adequate for my purposes. Even Miller's definition presents problems. Miller's definition seems too easily to distinguish secular, natural characteristics of "family" from ecclesial and Christian characteristics of "family." I will not be relying on the "family" throughout the dissertation. I will instead be referring to terms such as "domestic" and "household." These better capture the kind of common life studied and proposed. A household can include family but is not limited to family. I am moving beyond what Christian family life is like and into questions of how marriage can be lived as a practice of Christian householding.

[5] E.g., Pius XI, *Casti connubii*, 23–26, 37, 38; Herbert. Doms, *The Meaning of Marriage* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1939); and Dietrich von Hildebrand, *Marriage* (London: Longmans, 1942).

identify this paradigm as a Common Way in Christ essential to the life of the entire Church but shared uniquely by the married and consecrated religious states of life. This common way will be an ecclesial, christomorphic practice lived according to principles of Christian householding, among them the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience integrated by a *regula vitae*.

In this introduction, I will set the context for this dissertation's investigations by providing, first, an overview of certain sociological dynamics of marriage since the Second Vatican Council and, second, a presentation of narratives for the marriage crisis and its attendant solution. A summary and critique of these narratives will follow with a sketch of the dissertation's argument as it will proceed through six chapters.

## Sex, Love, and Marriage in the U.S.: 1965–2010

Since the Second Vatican Council's end, the world has seen radical changes in the practice and theory of sexuality and divorce at the cultural, religious, and political levels. These shifts have had as many unforeseen as foreseen effects on persons and institutions.[6] Marriage itself, as an institution to be entered, is on the decline in the United States.[7]

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[6]Judith Wallerstein, *The Unexpected Legacy of Divorce: A 25 Year Landmark Study* (New York: Hyperion, 2000).

[7] See Bradford Wilcox, ed., *The State of Our Unions, Marriage in America 2010: When Marriage Disappears: The New Middle America*, The National Marriage Project (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia, 2010), 62–68, accessed on January 13, 2011, www.stateofourunions.org. The number of marriages per 1000 women (ages 15 and older) dropped from 73.5 in 1960 to 36 in 2009. The recent economic depression (indicated by rise in unemployment) has decreased divorce, since couples can less afford to split their assets, and has also contributed to a relative increase in the declining marriage rate. Another explanation for recent trends could be that couples are now more likely to see their marriages as economic rather than merely affective partnerships. Interestingly, the link between business cycle and marriage rate has decreased since 1865, due in large part to the shift from economic, production-based marriages to companionate, consumption-based marriages of two economically independent individuals (see Alex Roberts, "Marriage and the Great Recession," *The State of Our Unions 2009: Money and*

Unmarried cohabitation and childrearing have dramatically increased over the last 50

years. According to the authors of the 2010 study out of the National Marriage Project:

> Between 1960 and 2009…the number of cohabitating couples in the United States
> increased more than fifteenfold. About one quarter of unmarried woman age 25 to
> 39 are currently living with a partner, and an additional quarter have lived with a
> partner at some time in the past. More than 60 percent of first marriages are now
> preceded by living together, compared to virtually none 50 years ago. For many,
> cohabitation is a prelude to marriage. For others, it is simply better than living
> alone. For a small but growing number, it is considered an alternative to
> marriage.[8]

As evidence suggesting that cohabitation is being increasingly considered an alternative

to marriage, we see that in 2009, 39 percent of cohabiting-couple households contained

children.[9] Not only are fewer adults marrying, but children's' exposure to marriage has

dropped as well. In the United States (2009) only 66.7 percent of children lived with two

married parents,[10] and despite recent decline in divorce rate, approximately one out of

two couples who do marry will divorce.[11] Scholarly and popular opinions across the

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*Marriage*, The National Marriage Project [Piscataway, N.J.: Rutgers University, 2009], 31–48, available at www.stateofourunions.org, accessed January 13, 2011).

[8] Wilcox, et al., *State of Our Unions 2010*, 75–76; Wilcox, "When Marriage Disappears: The Retreat from Marriage in Middle America," in *The State of Our Unions 2010*, 13–61; and Wilcox et al., *The State of Our Unions* 2009, 83–85.

[9] *State of Our Unions 2010*, 75, 92. This percentage is just down from 2008, when it was over 40% (*State of Our Unions 2009*, 83–85).

[10]*State of Our Unions 2010*, 90.

[11] The percentages of marriage ending in divorce is a contested statistic. There are multiple ways to calculate the divorce rate. One method compares the number of divorces per annum to the number of marriages per annum. The weakness of this method is principally that the marriages ended are not the ones begun. In a sense the comparison is between apples and oranges. A second method looks at the total number of people who have been married as a group and counts the number who have divorced. The strength of this method is that it allows for comparisons among years. For example, in the year 2001 people between the age of 50 and 59 had the highest probability of being divorced (41 % of men and 39 % of women).Another strength of this method is that it allows for meaningful comparisons over years. For example, people marrying after 1975 had a better chance of reaching their $10^{th}$ and $15^{th}$ anniversary than people marrying before that year. Finally, this method allows for distinctions between groups based on education, ethnicity, and age entering marriage. For example, since the 1980s, the percentage of college graduates reporting a divorce has declined (16% of these ended in divorce before 10 years); whereas divorce percentage for those without college has remained steady (36% of these marriages end in divorce before 10 years). Given that 60% of divorces happen with in the first ten years of marriage, this would mean that, among the population marrying between 1990 and 1994, 60% of marriages among those without undergraduate degrees end in divorce, and only 25% of marriages among those with undergraduate degrees will eventually end in divorce. See Steven Martin, "Women's Changing Attitudes Toward Divorce, 1974–

political and theological spectrum generally agree that these demographic changes are harmful to persons and society in general; it is generally agreed that marriage needs reform and renewal.[12]

Within this context, social institutions of all kinds have made an effort to renew and support the theory and practice of marriage and family.[13] Among those working from explicitly religious institutions, theologies of marriage have seen many and varied attempts at authentic reform in theory and practice: from Rome's Pontifical Council for the Family, to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' National Pastoral Initiative on Marriage,[14] to secular institutes and associations of lay faithful (Schoenstaat,

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2002: Evidence for an Educational Crossover," *Journal of Marriage and Family* 68.1 (2006): 29–40; and Dan Hurley, "Divorce Rate: It's Not as High as You Think," *New York Times*, April 19, 2005, available at http://www.divorcereform.org/nyt05.html, accessed on November 17, 2009.

[12] See, for example, Lawrence Stone, "The Family Crisis Today," in Christopher Wolfe, ed., *The Family, Civil Society, and the State* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998), 17–21; Allan Carlson, "The State's Assault on the Family," in Wolfe, *The Family, Civil Society, and the State*, 39–51; David Popenoe, *Life Without Father: Compelling New Evidence that Fatherhood and Marriage are Indispensable for the Good of Children and Society* (New York: Martin Kessler, 1996); and National Commission on Children, *Beyond Rhetoric: A New American Agenda for Children and Families* (Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1991). There are "classic" texts on the crisis of family in the United States, e.g., Christopher Lasch, *Haven in a Heartless World: The Family Besieged* (New York: Basic Books, 1977); and Carnegie Council, ed. Kenneth Keniston, *All Our Children: American Families Under Pressure* (New York: Harcourt, 1977).

[13] There are numerous non-religious efforts to defend and save marriage. The United States Department of Health and Human Services, through its Administration for Children and Families has its own "Healthy Marriage Initiative," accessed on January 13, 2011, http://www.acf.hhs.gov/healthymarriage/index.html. Its mission is "To help couples, who have chosen marriage for themselves, gain greater access to marriage education services, on a voluntary basis, where they can acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to form and sustain a healthy marriage." With their $150 million budget, they fund programs such as the "National Healthy Marriage Resource Center" (www.healthymarriageinfo.org). Some type of marital education, preparation, and restoration program is available in nearly every state. A program named "Think Marriage" (www.thinkmarriage.org) has a list of websites of local efforts to renew marriage in almost every state. The typical language used by explicitly non-religious effort to talk about their mission is the term "healthy relationships." These non-religious programs are goal-oriented: reduce divorce, reduce non-married cohabitation (for non-religious reasons), increase the wellbeing of children and married persons, and give dating people techniques for finding a good mate. They also typically provide facts about marriage and resources for counselors (e.g., how to put together a good marketing strategy to educate couples of different cultural backgrounds). These deserve their own study, but I can only give them brief mention here as I focus on those efforts coming explicitly from a religious, Christian context.

[14] The USCCB, for example, has created a number of pastoral initiatives not only for marriage preparation (e.g., use of the FOCCUS and mandatory marriage-prep classes) but also for marital formation (e.g., the "For Your Marriage" website [www.foryourmarriage.com]). In the 1992, the USCCB put out a family-centered catechesis campaign called "Children and Families First," which attempted to introduce families

Opus Dei, Community of the Beatitudes, etc.), to diocesan centers for marriage and family (e.g. Milwaukee's John Paul II Center), to the programs of each local parish, to marriage and family centers at various Catholic universities, and finally to the efforts of individual theologians.[15]

Though each of these efforts merits its own study, in my analysis, I will focus chiefly on the efforts of contemporary theologians, who have identified developments in Catholic theology of marriage as well as problems preventing reform and renewal in magisterial, Catholic theologies of marriage.

**Beginning with a Narrative**

Stanley Hauerwas states that there can be no single story of how family has changed over the past century and that perhaps "nothing is more problematic than claims about how the family has changed."[16] In part, this attempt presents such a challenge

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to the notion of "domestic church" and help families in the task of being the first religious educators of their children.

[15] I cannot list here all the attempts at theologies of marriage since the Second Vatican Council, but I can distinguish among kinds of work by Catholics on marriage since the council: feminist (e.g., Susan Ross, Christina Traina, and Rosemary Radford Ruether); personalist (John Paul II, Angelo Cardinal Scola, and Vincent J. Genovesi); neo-Augustinian (Jana M. Bennett and John Cavadini); neo-thomist (Germain Grisez, Robert P. George, and Janet Smith), covenant-based (John F. Kippley, Walter Kasper), virtue-based (Patrick G. Riley, Elizabeth Anscombe), social-ethics based (Lisa Sowle Cahill and Julie Hanlon Rubio), trinitarian (Marc Cardinal Oullet), pastoral (from the bishops' national conferences); and magisterial (papal writings from Paul VI, John Paul II, and Benedict XVI). Some of the effective lay ministry efforts at preparing, forming, and renewing Catholic marriage through the twentieth century have been the Cana Conference, the Worldwide Marriage Encounter program, Retrouvaille, Alexander House, the Christian Family Movement, and more. For a substantial list, see the National Association of Catholic Family Life Ministers website, accessed on January 13, 2011, http://www.nacflm.org/displaycommon.cfm?an=1&subarticlenbr=27.

[16] Stanley Hauerwas, *A Community of Character: Toward a Constructive Christian Social Ethic* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 1981), chap. 8, at 158. For Hauerwas' other work on marriage, which is largely reiterative, see "Family Grace: The Christian Family and the Difference It Can Make for the American Family," in *Grace upon Grace: Essays in Honor of Thomas A. Langford*, ed. Robert K. Johnston, L. Gregory Jones, Jonathan R. Wilson (Nashville: Abingdon, 1999); "Sex in Public: How Adventurous Christians are Doing it (1978)," in *The Hauerwas Reader*, ed. John Berkman and Michael

because the world has always contained a plurality of family forms. Nonetheless, multiple narratives of how the family has changed have been put forward, usually in conjunction with various analyses of what marriage is and what we are doing in marriage.

Here, I analyze narratives of marriage offered by Stanley Hauerwas, Lisa Sowle Cahill, David Matzko McCarthy, Julie Hanlon Rubio, and Jana M. Bennett. These follow chronologically as well as logically from one another. All owe a debt to Hauerwas, who began the conversation with its particular focus in Christian social ethics and its ecclesio-centrism. The rest of the authors carry forward, add a distinctively Catholic attitude toward, or diverge from his insights. Hauerwas opened the floodgates by sounding the alarm that we are building a society of "individuals" for which marital breakdown is a natural corollary, the kind of society that radically voluntarizes all interpersonal relationships along the lines of contractual logic. Cahill has drawn attention to the contribution of poverty and feminism to the challenges of marital life. McCarthy speaks in terms of married life as reproductive, that is, it reproduces not only persons with certain virtues and vices but also an economy, a way of ordering and transacting ourselves and our resources publicly. Rubio's narrative highlights the philosophical shifts that have accompanied changes in marital practices. Finally, Bennett tells the story of a social, political, and theological march toward ever-rising expectations for marriage and the family to save society. In ways commensurate to their narrative of the marriage crisis, each author will suggest a refocus on the relationship between the church and the family.

In 1981, Hauerwas bemoaned the standard, "boring" account of the "crisis" of marriage and family: Marriage and the family are seen as per se good, something without

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Cartwright (Durham: Duke University, 2001); and "The Radical Hope in the Annunciation: Why Both Single and Married Christians Welcome Children (1998)," in *The Hauerwas Reader*.

which the human person cannot become a socialized moral being, but then statistics on

divorce, child delinquency, domestic violence, the demands of women's liberation, rising

sexual immorality, and hedonistic flight from responsibility are supposed to demonstrate

that family is in a crisis. Finally, the story continues, a solution is offered: the state should

support and encourage a return to so-called traditional family values.[17] Parents need

"experts" to fill the gaps of their own relational and educational inadequacies. They

cannot manage their marriages or educate their children without professional

intervention.[18] Rejecting this narrative, Hauerwas claims that "we lack the moral and

linguistic skills to express adequately what has happened to us and what we do in

families."[19] For Hauerwas, the problem is that we are telling ourselves the wrong story.

In light of what were then new studies by Christopher Lasch and Kenneth

Keniston,[20] Hauerwas offers a now common socio-political narrative of changes in the

family: (1) the large, extended patriarchal family has been replaced by the small, nuclear

family; (2) the small democratic family has lost three of the family's former social

functions—economic, protective, and educational; (3) the family has taken on what is

claimed to be the new, "more profound and rewarding purpose" of specializing in

emotions; and (4) this relatively new nuclear family is the natural correlative to the

industrial revolution—it is "not characterized by how many people live under the same

roof, but by the privileged emotional climate that must be protected from outside

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[17] Hauerwas, *Community of Character*, 155.
[18] Ibid., 162–65.
[19] Ibid., 156.
[20] Christopher Lasch, *Haven in a Heartless World*. Another important study that was new when Hauerwas wrote was the Carnegie Mellon and Kenneth Keniston, *All Our Children: American Families Under Pressure* (New York: Harcourt, 1977).

intrusion."[21] This last point is where Hauerwas's insight breaks through. We tell

ourselves that marriage and family are disappearing, that they need to be saved so that

they can save society, yet our very approach to marriage as a society (as a place of

voluntary, emotional commitments intended (ironically) to prepare persons for an

eventual disconnection and autonomy from those commitments) is the problem. The

problem of marital breakdown is not rooted in moral turpitude. Rather, marital

breakdown flows necessarily from the very moral convictions linked to modern history—

autonomy and atomism (even within marriage) and the desire to create dichotomies

between family and individual, work and leisure, public and private life in the interest of

true equity and justice.[22] The narrative of changes in marriage has been, for Hauerwas, a

flight from non-voluntary relationships, from the fact of biological relatedness.[23] In our

zeal to create a family founded in the name of intimacy, we have become the kind of

people incapable of the commitment and intimacy an enduring marriage and family

require.[24] With Robert Nisbet, Hauerwas states that politically, family membership has

become superfluous, since the unit relating to the state is the individual and not the family.

In quotidian and cultural roles the family has also lost its central role. According

to Hauerwas's story, the family is a practical, economical hindrance to the individual's

success and is merely an accidental quality of the worker as far as the employer is

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[21] Hauerwas, *Community of* Character, 159. Hauerwas relies on Robert Nisbet, *Tradition and Revolt* (New York: Vintage Books, 1970); and Nisbet, *Twilight of Authority* (New York: Oxford University, 1975); and Edward Shorter, *The Making of the Modern Family* (New York: Basic Books, 1977).

[22] In Planned Parenthood vs. Danforth, Paul Ramsey made the comment, "in spite of our country's alleged interest in the bond of marriage, that bond is now understood simply as a contract between individuals who remain as atomistic as before marriage," cited in Hauerwas, *Community of Character*, chap. 8. Hauerwas is here reacting against John Rawls' *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap, 1971).

[23] Hauerwas, *Community of Character*, 158–61. As he puts it, "the most inescapable fact about families, regardless of their different forms and customs, is that we do not choose to be a part of them," (ibid., 165). Unfortunately, a predominant narrative of family change sees the changes in family practice and structure as principally a positive development, a march toward greater freedom and individuality.

[24] Ibid., 168–71.

concerned. This fact will be significant for my consideration of poverty as a virtue and state necessary for Christian householding in marriage. In terms of tradition, the family is no longer its bearer, since parents delusionally think they are making their children free by allowing them to "choose their own" beliefs and traditions.[25] The irony of this historical trend is that despite the bombast from the pulpit and senate about the indispensability of the family, it has actually been rendered socially dispensable on purpose—so that it might be a center of emotionalism, companionship, and affect. The social roles and importance of the family have not been slain by radical immorality and hedonism, but they have been sacrificed on the altar of an individualistic economic and political order.[26]

Hauerwas's solution is simple yet complex: the state cannot save marriage and the family, nor will a mythical return to morality. Marriage and the family need not be "saved." They must be held accountable. Hauerwas suggests replacing the political rhetoric of "support" with the challenge of "accountability" and demands that families understand their primary realm of belonging to be not the state or civil society but the church. For Catholic Christians, then, the Church has the task of standing over against what Hauerwas calls the "demonic" tendencies of family in modern society, calling spouses to recognize the non-voluntary relationships and realities of their life and to live married life as a radical Christian practice, a practice of welcoming the stranger and loving the enemy—especially when that stranger is the child given by God, and the enemy is the person with whom one shares a bed.[27] For the rest of his career, Hauerwas's

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[25] Ibid., 169.
[26] Ibid., 170.
[27] Ibid., 168.

work on marriage and family has echoed and continued this theme.[28] He has persistently

called for a renewed understanding of why we get married and have children at all: as an

act of eschatological hope, an acknowledgement of the fact that, although the world is not

safe for children, we receive them anyway, as a stranger, as Christ among us. As a key to

Christian social ethics, and the ethics of marriage and family, Hauerwas continually

emphasizes the uniquely Christian virtue of hospitality. A true Christian "'separateness',"

he writes, "may involve nothing more nor less than the Christian community's

willingness to provide hospitality for the stranger—particularly when that stranger so

often comes in the form of our own children."[29] Hauerwas, thus, warns us that the more

we focus on making safe for children *the world*, that is, the more we attempt to ensure the

material and public conditions conducive to children's material wellbeing, the less effort

we tend to expend preparing social conditions conducive to children's personal wellbeing,

that is, the less we tend to become the *kinds of persons* who welcome children as an act

of Christian hope and hospitality.

Since Hauerwas's intervention, and with it the beginning of theological

approaches to marriage and family from a renewed perspective of the common good,

Christian social ethics, and virtue, ever more narratives have been offered to fill the gap

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[28] Ibid., 2; Hauerwas, "Radical Hope in the Annunciation: Why Both Single and Married Christians Welcome Children (1998)" in *The Hauerwas Reader*. Here Hauerwas notes that "Christians can do few things more important than being the kind of people capable of welcoming children" (ibid.).

[29] Hauerwas, *Community of Character*, 2. You may anticipate the direction I will take Hauerwas's insight. The practice of radical Christian hospitality has been the tradition of the monastic, vowed-religious way of life for centuries. As we will see, married life might learn from this practice, as it essentially shares in it by virtue of the baptismal vocation to Christian perfection. This notion is also present in the work of David Matzko McCarthy, *Sex and Love in the Home*, 2nd ed. (London: SCM, 2004), 231, "The more we work to make our world a hospitable place for children, the more inhospitable to children we become." It is important to note McCarthy's definition of "hospitable" here is chiefly focused on material, economic conditions that meet market-economy-driven expectations of what kinds of products and lifestyle a child ought to be able to consume. The reason that efforts toward preparing high-consumption contexts for children makes us inhospitable to them is two-fold. First, if we have higher consumption expectations for children, then we can afford fewer of them. Second, if we have higher consumption expectations for our children, we are ecologically making the world less able to support our population.

in our linguistic inability to make sense of what is happening to the family and what we are doing in marriage and the family. Lisa Sowle Cahill, for her part, has written two works touching the subject: the first, *Sex, Gender, and Christian Ethics*, was a product of the Religion, Culture, and Family Project run by Don Browning out of the University of Chicago; and the second, *Family: A Christian Social Perspective*, is a result of the commission set up by Cahill (then president of the CTSA) in 1993 at the request of Cardinal Bernardin, who was at that time the head of the USCCB's committee on marriage and family. I will focus here on the narrative provided by the second of the two works.[30]

For Cahill, the story of the "family in crisis" is really two stories. Both follow upon Hauerwas's account of the family's move away from non-voluntary relationships and toward a strict voluntarization of marital and family life. On the one hand, rising consumerism, individualism, and moral permissiveness have led to a breakdown in the durability of the marital institution. This is true on two levels. First, for the middle and upper class, marriage is increasingly weak due to the pressures of having and buying more and more. This fact, along with the ideal that marriage will be a place of exclusive emotional closeness and personal fulfillment, leads people to leave the institution when it no longer serves them. Second, for the working class and the poor, on the other hand, marriage in many cases appears to be a non-option, as many of the poor are practically locked into life situations inimicable to good marriage—marriage, for example, may simply not be viable given the crushing hours of work required just to get by at a menial salary, accompanied by the relative absence of marriageable (i.e., employed) men among

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[30] Lisa Sowle Cahill, *Family: A Christian Social Perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000). Cahill presents these narratives in her introduction and first chapter.

the impoverished.[31] In other words, the typical story of the "conservative" "family values" ideal of marriage and family is only possible for the middle class, is actually destructive to the middle class, and propagates further disruption of marriage and family among the poor and working class. In a phrase that sounds eerily Hauerwasian, Cahill states that "family belonging is potentially idolatrous, a socially acceptable form of arrogance and greed."[32] This notion could well be compared to what Hauerwas called the "demonic tendencies" of the marriage and the modern nuclear family.

At the same time, Cahill notes a second narrative. Marriage has been challenged by the liberating force of feminism, which has diversified gender roles within the family and wider society. Unfortunately, while the force of feminism has broken down oppressive structures, it has yet to offer better "ideals of kin-derived spousal and parental relationships or of how families serve the common good of society and are served by

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[31] Cahill, *Family*, 117. Cahill gets the second of these insights from the work of William J. Wilson. See Wilson, *When Work Disappears: The World of the New Urban Poor* (New York: Random House, 1996), 105, xiii–xiv, 20, and 87. Wilson writes, "From the point of view of day-to-day survival, single parenthood reduces the emotional burden and shields from the type of exploitation that often accompanies the sharing of both living arrangements and limited resources" (ibid., 105).

[32] Cahill, *Family*, 6. Interestingly, here Cahill is pulling from her background in Niebuhr, who warns against "collective egotism." See Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man*, vol. 2 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1964), 212. Bernard Lonergan's explanation of group bias is preferable, since it acknowledges that a society is not just a conglomeration of I's, but a group of I's that develops a certain order. The group's bias is on behalf of this order, not necessarily on the behalf of each "I" within that order. See Bernard Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan 3, ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1988 [1957]); *Method in Theology*, second ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979). Lonergan on the kinds of bias, including group bias, *Insight*, 244–57; and Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 53, 284, 231. Bias is a block to the proper function of human cognition. These blocks, or *scotoma*, or blind-spots exist at personal and social levels. Biases that are blocks to intellectual development inhibit the ability to move from experience to understanding to judgment. Biases develop through misconstruals at the level of common sense. Biases blocking charity inhibit these same levels of human cognition, but most specifically inhibit the move from judgment to decision, because decision concerns the good. Decision is a commitment to what is valuable rather than what is merely for one's own immediate satisfaction. Families can suffer from group bias, which is the formation of a blind spots affecting human experience, understanding, judgment, and decision due to "loyalty to one's own group matched by hostility to other groups," *Method in Theology*, 53. "Just as the individual egoist puts further questions up to a point, but desists before reaching conclusions incompatible with his egoism, so also the group is prone to have a blind spot for the insights that reveal its well-being to be excessive or its usefulness at an end," *Insight*, 248.

it."[33] Thus, what is left is the tendency to accept any family structure on account of the values of compassion, love, and inclusion. For Cahill, the feminist freedom from oppressive structures and into voluntary choice of family form runs the risk of forgetting the importance of "body," of "kinship," the non-voluntary nature of marriage and family. For Cahill, marriage incorporates some of these non-voluntary elements, for it is "a consensual and contractual manner of uniting kin groups, especially for the purposes of reproduction, and for the perpetuation of the kinship structures through which social and economic resources are managed."[34]

In light of her definition of marriage above, Cahill proposes a solution to the destruction of marriage and family that includes an end and a method. First, she calls for a reimagination of marriage as the formation of a community that is fundamentally concerned with the common good rather than its own, private good. Second, the means for reordering marriage toward the common good is to reduce the gap between the family and the church. As she argues, "identification of the Christian family with the church is one way of transforming an important formative institution of civil society—family—to represent better and to educate for Christian values and practices."[35] Cahill is nonetheless careful to note that, although the family may be truly a symbol of God's reign and may be conformed to the shape of his church, there always remains the threat that patriarchal structures and power struggles will be re-imported from the Church's hierarchy into the family, or from the family's structure back into the Church.[36] "The Christian family," she

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[33] Cahill, *Family*, x.

[34] Ibid., xi.

[35] Ibid., 4.

[36] For this reason, Cahill is less ambitious with the term "domestic Church." In the years following this book, Cahill worked with Florence Caffrey Bourg, who wrote a book dealing with the domestic Church, *Where Two or Three Are Gathered: Christian Families as Domestic Churches* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 2004). With that in mind, one might assume that she supports Bourg's enfleshment of the

reminds readers, "is not the nuclear family focused inward on the welfare of its own members but the socially transformative family that seeks to make the Christian moral ideal of love of neighbor part of the common good."[37] Cahill sees the family as an institution of civil society, working alongside the Church, "which must realize its social importance and is to embody discipleship in all the concrete ways and in all the particular relationships that make up their daily existence, with all its complicated ties to others near and far."[38]

The distinctions here between Hauerwas's solution and Cahill's solution are both pronounced and subtle. In the dialogue between church and family there is always the question of who has the controlling interest in the shared task of Christian life. The differences between Hauerwas and Cahill deal with this question. While Hauerwas sees that marriage is only intelligible *within* the church, Cahill finds marriage and family best understood *alongside* the church, or even *as* church. Hauerwas calls the church to hold marriage and the family accountable while Cahill calls families to do the work of the church and hold the church accountable to the gospel of Jesus. Second, between Cahill and Hauerwas there is a distinction of emphasis. For Cahill, the direction of effect is primarily from the authentic Christian family to the Church—that is, Christian marriage forms a social institution that must enliven and do the authentic work of the Church. Hauerwas emphasizes the opposite directionality. For Hauerwas, each person is first

notion of domestic Church as a means to image and participate in God's reign. In ecclesial usage, "domestic church" finds origins in debates during the Second Vatican Council, wherein bishop Fiorelli's suggestion (with John Chrysostom) of the term "ecclesia miniscula," "small church" or "church in miniature," became "domestica ecclesia" in *Lumen gentium*, 11. For a description of the term "domestic church" at the Second Vatican Council see Michael Fahey, "The Christian Family as Domestic Church at Vatican II," in *The Family*, ed. Lisa Sowle Cahill and Dietmar Mieth (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1995).

[37] Cahill, *Family*, xii. Cahill continues, "if the socially radical meaning of Christianity is taken seriously, Christian families can become vehicles of social justice, even as they strengthen and build upon their bonds of kinship, affection, and faithfulness."

[38] Cahill, *Family*, 17.

Christian and second married. The church gives marriage its shape and asks the spouses in their conjugal life to *be* church by participating in the story of the church. The church has the dominant place in the dialogue between church and family. The church issues an invitation to Christians to live as Christians in a particular, spousal way. For Cahill, on the other hand, the family is "an institution of civil society," just as the church is "one of the more local forms" of civil society.[39] The family analogically becomes church whenever it does the work of the church. For Hauerwas, this would not be the case. The church is not placed alongside marriage and family as just another institution of civil society mediating between the individual and the state. The ecclesial community is the human person's primary location of belonging, and the family's primary location is within the church. Neither exists in some middle ground between the individual and the state. Rather the church exists in a certain sense as community competing with the state for primary social context in which each person will participate making and living a given narrative of life.

McCarthy enters this discussion with a narrative that uses a different kind of grammar, although he also describes the shift in the shape of the family along the trajectory of the flight from non-voluntary (kinship, local community) to strictly voluntary (contractual-individualist) relationships, even within the home. McCarthy offers a *reproductive* narrative; he calls his own work "an attempt to renarrate the home and the domestication of love and sex as the venture of a rich social life."[40] His suggests that marriage and family, as reproductive institutions, naturally reproduce not only

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[39] Cahill, *Family*, 7.

[40] McCarthy, *Sex and Love in the Home* (London: SCM, 2001), 243–47. Audible in the background of McCarthy is Hauerwas, who has "tried to suggest that marriage and singleness for Christians should represent just such an adventure, and if it does not, no amount of ethics or rules will be sufficient to correct the situation," *Community of Character*, 195.

human persons with certain virtues, vices, and desires, but an economy, that is, a way of ordering and transacting ourselves and our resources. The story of marriage and family in crisis, is (as it was with Hauerwas) not a question of whether "the family" would disappear, but a question of what kind of family, church, and civil society we want to have. McCarthy argues that a dominant cause of the problem with marriage is economic, but not in the sense that Cahill points out. Cahill attends to the economic impact of poverty while McCarthy emphasizes the economic impact of middle-class life. The Western world, he argues, operates on a market economy of *desire* wherein the principal participant is the autonomous individual and the central form of relationship is the contract—despite the glut of market and political rhetoric stating that the family is the source of society. Ever since this form of economy has emerged, marriage as an institution has struck a deal of sorts with the state: (1) the state imposes a financial bond between the wage-earning parents and their dependents and supports the family with tax benefits; (2) the state provides aid and training in productive civic life through public education; (3) the state alleviates the burdens of childrearing through public education so that both parents can be more involved with the market economy; (4) and in return, the family cooperates in the reproduction of the current contractual, individual-based social order. As he concludes, "the family is steward to the state, and it will perform its function well if familial relations serve the dominant market economy. Children enter the public sphere primarily as consumers who dispose of their parents' income."[41] The current social order requires that marriage and family remain the central "emotional unit" but not a productive unit. Being spouses and being family must be more an endeavor of what we consume together in the pursuit of making emotional connection in leisure than what we

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[41] McCarthy, *Sex and Love in the Home*, 69.

produce together in the pursuit of making substantive connections[42] in shared pursuit of a common good.

Therein lies McCarthy's proposed solution—right within the problem. The problem is that marriage and family are reproducing the wrong kind of economic, social order. They are acting as the stewards for the wrong institution. They are looking to reproduce the basic unit of the wrong kind of society. For McCarthy, to end the crisis of marriage and family, we must "set ourselves to cultivating a social landscape that reproduces love and passion of a different kind."[43] The church bears the story of God from generation to generation, in mission, worship, and pedagogy, reproducing Christ's presence in the world again and again. The family, which traditions first the qualities and characteristics of human flourishing to the next generation, shares in the way of the church. To love with the love of God, we are called to live as community, as an embodied interpretation, through time, within a different *oikos*—of the world as the household of God. McCarthy proposes replacing the contractual individualism and market economy of desire with reciprocal interdependence and a household economy of common endeavor. In opposition to the "closed," nuclear family turned in upon itself, McCarthy proposes an "open" household that is essentially turned outward to participate in the common good of the immediate community. In this regard, his solution sounds similar to Cahill's. In reality, though, the solutions are distinct. For Cahill, the family must be turned outward because only then can it fully realize the potential that lies within it—that is, to

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[42] "Substantive connections" are those that dispose persons to act for each other's good apart from one's own immediate satisfaction. Substantive connections are formed by the goods that persons share, that is, common goods. Persons will be connected substantially inasmuch as they have worked for the achievement of the good together. A substantive connection might be a virtue, a child, a home, etc.

[43] Ibid., 64. McCarthy's link to Hauerwas, though not explicitly stated, is clear. McCarthy proposes that marriage be ecclesially reproductive: the steward of Christ in the church rather than the steward of the state in civil society. Marriage must participate primarily in the economy of salvation, living out the story of Christ's own life, death, and resurrection.

participate in the life of the church by radically taking up Christ's concern for the poor and the neighbor. For McCarthy, the family must turn outward because it requires substantial aid beyond what can be found in the I-thou spousal relationship.[44] The kind of external support accepted will determine the kind of society that is reproduced.

At this point McCarthy develops his strong sacramental theology of marriage. Marriage, as a sacrament of the Church, "has a basic structure that precedes them [the spouses] and they accept that they will have to bend to it." Their marriage as a sacrament is "framed in the church by its place as a sign of God's grace and the journey of discipleship."[45] Marriage, if it is to reproduce an economy of reciprocal interdependence, and self-giving relationships of love, must be located within the church. As a sacrament, marriage is "a set of practices not in isolation but open to transformation by God's gracious communion as routinized in the social body of the church."[46] Sex and the other practices of marriage will fail if they are seen as wrapped in a private realm of the family home. The life of marriage and "sex in the church is public, but not in the sense that it is openly visible, but in the sense that it is sustained institutionally by practices supporting goods not particular to marriage."[47]

Behind the kinds of narratives told by Hauerwas, Cahill, and McCarthy lies a complex web of philosophical assumptions. Julie Hanlon Rubio, in her book *A Christian Theology of Marriage and Family*, attempts to tell the story of the marital crisis in terms of those philosophical assumptions. The challenge to marriage and the family, for Rubio,

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[44] Ibid., 237, "Marriage, in fact, needs the support of parallel loves and commitments of reciprocity; conjugal union flourishes when opened outward to a wider order of love."
[45] Ibid., *Sex and Love in the Home*, 208–09.
[46] Ibid., 247.
[47] Ibid., 216–17.

has arrived along with and related to the philosophical shift from modernism to postmodernism.[48]

On the cultural level she describes the shift in the normative force from "family" to "families."[49] According to Rubio, the modernist way of thinking, linked with the scientific revolution, empirical realism, and an epistemological trust in human ability to know objective reality, attempts to discover a definition of "the family."[50] In this "modernist" camp, Rubio places the Catholic Magisterium, along with political and Christian "conservatives," who she claims imagine a traditional family structure, the return to which will save marriage and family in crisis. The thought is that there is one normative definition of "the family," which can direct couples in their lives. According to Rubio, the Magisterium works on a respectable, though too rigid idealism for "the family," which ultimately blinds it to and makes it irrelevant to the existential realities of actual families.[51] According to political conservatives, liberal social policies have worn away public support for "the family"[52] as foundation of civil society, and according to religious

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[48] See Michael Welker, "Modernity," *Encyclopedia of Science and Religion*, ed. J. Wentzel Vrede van Huyssteen, vol. 2 (New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 2003), 579–82; David Ingram, "Postmodernism," *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Donald Borchert, vol. 7, second ed. (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2006), 729–31.

[49] Julie Hanlon Rubio, *A Christian Theology of Marriage and Family* (New York: Paulist Press, 2003), 3–18.

[50] For a similar approach based on philosophical shifts, see Edward C. Vacek, "The Meaning of Marriage: Of Two Minds," *Perspectives on Marriage: A Reader*, ed. Kieran Scott and Michael Warren, third edition (New York: Oxford University, 2007), 134–46.

[51] Rubio, *Christian Theology of Marriage*, 18–22. This position is not unique to Rubio, but is the typical critique of John Paul II's theology of marriage and sexuality. See, for example, Susan Ross in "The Bridegroom and the Bride," 39–59, e.g., at 41; Cristina Traina, "Papal Ideals, Marital Realities," in ibid., 269–288. See also, Jon Nilson, "The Church and Homosexuality: A Lonerganian Approach," in *Sexual Diversity and Catholicism*, 60–76, at 69–72. Nilson's is a similar approach. He marshals Lonerganian language to accuse the Catholic magisterium of operating with a blind spot, a scotosis that has become kind of bias.

[52] Rubio, *Christian Theology*, 9. For Rubio, these political "conservatives" see "the family" in terms of heterosexual union, lifelong fidelity, certain authority of parents over children, and gendered division of labor in the home. The political "liberals," on the other hand, see the state as necessary for a family to properly raise children and reject the idea of one, traditional family.

"conservatives," moral turpitude and impiety have led people away from "the family" as revealed in Scripture.

Rubio places herself, along with Michael Lawler, in the postmodern camp, among those who believe that the crisis of marriage and the family is actually just an honest recognition that, "because of our diverse experiences of family life, we have begun to visualize different family models. No single model seems adequate."[53] For Rubio, the story is not that family structure has been radically destabilized by a growing moral permissiveness and the rise of feminism, rather, the story has been one of a coming to know that there never has been any single "family" with normative power in civil society. Interestingly, Rubio comes to this insight through a methodological irony: her coming-to-know takes place in a postmodern turn toward epistemological skepticism, a doubting about our very ability to know at all.[54]

The key to understanding Rubio's narrative for marriage and family is twofold: (1) attention to experience over against abstract ideals; and (2) the contribution of sociology, which has found that there has always been "families" and the notion of "the family" has

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[53] See Rubio, *Christian Theology of Marriage*, 3.

[54] Rubio is not alone in postulating a philosophical connection to changes in the shape of and definition of "family." There are those who trace the shift from "family" to "families" all the way back to medieval nominalism. Such is the proposal of Stratford M. Caldecott in his presentation at the Twenty-Second Annual Convention of the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars. "For if, as the nominalists taught, only individual things exist, not universals, then what the ancient and medieval world understood as *metaphysics* is dead in the water. Philosophy moves rapidly through dualism to positivism, until it finally dissolves into the language games played by the analytic school on one side of the English Channel and the postmodernists on the other…At the social level, to those living in the long shadows of nominalism, the word 'society' itself can mean little more than an aggregate of individuals, bonding through self-interest and joined together by contract…Stripped down to this atomic level, even the 'nuclear family of children and parents is quickly split into its elemental particles, and we are told that most marriages begun in the late twentieth century will end in divorce" ("The Drama of the Home: Marriage, the Common Good, and Public Policy," in *Marriage and the Common Good*, ed. Kenneth D. Whitehead [South Bend, IN: St. Augustine's Press, 2001], 1–26, at 18–19).

always been mythical.[55] For Rubio the very plurality of families negates the possibility of

any single version of marriage and family that is normative. Our criteria for judging what

marriage and family does can now only be function not form. The link between the two,

on Rubio's account, is severed.

Rubio's solution is to say that regardless of a family's form, Christian families

should focus on their function. In other words, Christian spouses and parents should

rediscover their dual vocation: as a communion of disciples in the private life of the home,

and as public witnesses to Christ and workers in the sanctification of the world in the

public life of work.[56] Furthermore, the family must focus on its Christian calling as

domestic church to participate in service to the poor. Rubio provides examples of sitting

on one's front porch, having a family meal, using preferential option for the poor in

making buying decisions, and working in a job that explicitly contributes to the common

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[55] Rubio writes, "Liberals (postmodernists) and conservatives (modernists) approach family issues in very different ways. Liberals are concerned with showing that families have been and continue to be diverse. The ethical imperative for them is valuing, supporting, and uplifting families as they are. Conservatives, on the other hand, are concerned with showing that family structure has been fairly consistently lived out by people across time and culture and affirmed in religious traditions," *Christian Theology of Marriage*, 18. Rubio relies on Michael Lawler, whose book *Family: American and Christian* (Chicago: Loyola University, 1998) puts forth this claim. See also, Stephanie Coontz, *The Way We Never Were: American Families and the Nostalgia Trap* (New York: Basic Books, 1992); and Coontz, *Marriage, A History: From Obedience to Intimacy, or how Love Conquered Marriage* (New York: Basic Books, 2005). Coontz shows that plurality of family forms is not novel. The plurality of family forms has been and continues to be a complex mix of necessity and choice, of cultural formation and economic situation. At the descriptive level, then, "family" requires a pluralistic definition. Even at the normative level, there is a plurality to family forms, as each authoritative, formative social body has its own set of acceptable family forms. This dissertation concerns itself explicitly with those who situate themselves within the authoritative, formative social body of the Church. In other words, at the descriptive and normative level, the Church has a plurality of family forms, but a very limited plurality. The criteria for determining the normative family forms will be explicitly Catholic for those families formed in the Church. This dissertation, though, is less concerned with "family" understood as a group of persons bonded by legal kinship or biological relation, and more concerned with households, or persons engaged in stable domestic practices together. In particular the dissertation looks at Christian households, that is, those groups of persons (some married, some not) engaged in stable domestic life according to explicitly Christian principles. This dissertation studies and argues for the normative principles (e.g., poverty, chastity, and obedience) that ground the descriptive plurality Christian householding forms (e.g., conjugal living and consecrated religious life).

[56] Rubio, *Christian Theology of Marriage*, 189, 199; Rubio, "The Dual Vocation of Christian Parents," *Theological Studies* 63 (2002): 786–812.

good.[57] As for the role of the Church in the solution, Rubio finds the Church at its best when it finds ways to affirm, by attention to the experience of families in all their forms, and call those families to share in the sanctification of the home and the world beyond its walls. She gives examples of these affirmations from the writings of the U.S. bishops as contrasts to the papal writings on marriage and "the family."[58]

While Rubio's narrative identifies a shift from modern to postmodern philosophical tendencies, McCarthy lays blame on a movement toward the "romantic ideal" of marriage begun in 19th century and propagated by personalist philosophy and its corresponding theologies of marriage and sexuality. Within Catholicism, his critique falls on what he calls a "transcendental sexuality," which tries to out-romantic the "romantic ideal" of marriage as complete, passionate union of persons that is disconnected from productive, economic concerns. These theologies—among them the work of Andrew Greeley, Mary Greeley Durkin, and John Paul II—find in marriage a relationship in which each spouse is turned toward the other, locked in an I-thou stare wherein they find themselves, by giving themselves completely to and for the other. McCarthy is wary of such an approach, for "the unique face-to-face love brings us outside ourselves, but it has no clear connection to the side-by-side nature of quotidian endeavors."[59] The threat of this kind of theology is that it takes the joy out of everyday activities, always pushing the true identity of marriage into somewhere beyond, some liminal moment of total abandon.[60] This kind of theology, says McCarthy, asks too much of the spousal

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[57] Ibid., 186, 189, 192, 194.
[58] Ibid., 20. Specifically, she refers to the 1994 document *Follow the Way of Love*, available at http://www.usccb.org/laity/follow.shtml, accessed on February 11, 2011.
[59] McCarthy, *Sex and Love in the Home*, 64.
[60] At the extreme, this tendency to focus on the I-Thou relational aspect of marriage can lead to what Anthony Giddens has called the "pure relationship," that operates on what Nick Luhmnan calls "love as passion" (quoted in McCarthy, *Sex and Love in the Home*, 209). When combined, these principles result in

relationship in marriage and asks too much of the spouses, and hopes too much for the completeness of their conjugal relationship.

It is this insight that Jana M. Bennett picks up, names, and develops in her 2008 monograph, *Water is Thicker than Blood: An Augustinian Spirituality of Marriage and Singleness*. Bennett tells the story of a social, political, and theological march toward ever rising expectation for marriage and the family.[61] Sharing much with those we have heard before, her narrative sees the expectations for marriage and family rise as the emotive, "relational" aspects of marriage have taken controlling interest in the discussion and practice of marriage and family. Bennett's story ends in what she calls a false eschatology of the family. She begins by rejecting the narrative emerging from Don Browning's Religion, Culture, and Family project. "The path the Religion, Culture, and Family Project sets is a falsely eschatological one," she argues. "Browning, among others, has made these [largely feminist] concerns ultimate precisely by suggesting that the savior of the world, or at least of our broken American society, must be a good, functioning family."[62] Ironically, this project starts with the family as "problem," and ends with more "family" as the solution.[63] The Religion, Culture, and Family project

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"a situation where a social relation is entered into for its own sake, for what can be derived by each person from a sustained association with another; and which is continued only insofar as it is thought by both parties to deliver enough satisfactions for each individual party to stay with it" (Anthony Giddens, *The Transformation of Intimacy: Sexuality, Love, and Eroticism in Modern Societies* [Stanford: Stanford University, 1992], 58). This situation occurs because the contractual market logic has invaded and taken over the workings of even the "romantic ideal" of marriage. Adrian Thatcher has also pointed out the dangers of the "pure relationship" in his book *Marriage after Modernity: Christian Marriage in Postmodern Times*, Studies in Theology and Sexuality 3 (Sheffield, U.K.: Sheffield Academic, 1999), 47–52.

[61] Jana M. Bennett, *Water Is Thicker than Blood: An Augustinian Spirituality of Marriage and Singleness* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2008).

[62] Ibid., 8, 155.

[63] Ibid., 15. For example of the Browning's work see *Marriage and Modernization: How Globalization Threatens Marriage and What to Do about It*, ed. Don Browning and David Clairmont (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003). See also Browning's website for the Religion, Culture, and Family Project. For Bennett, marriage and family requires a rich participation in the sacramental, eschatological mystery of Christ. If not,

wants to offer religious resources to the social and cultural attempts to fix the family. The

rise of mobile, individualist culture in a consumption-first market economy has created

marriages that produce the kind of people ever more disconnected from and alien to

family, neighbor, and church. According to this narrative, the savior of society will be

better, stronger marriages and families, but the construction of functioning families

requires informational input from the "religious resources" of theology and the church.[64]

> If the good functioning of society rests on having good marriage and families, as
> several of the theologians discussed in chapter 1 seem to argue, it is not because
> good marriages and families necessarily lead to the best of the well-ordered,
> happy society. This way of thinking leads toward falsely eschatological ideals.
> Rather, good marriage and families, but even more so, good *households,* in the
> thicker sense of the word and in the sense of being directed toward Christ, are
> sacramental and direct all of humanity toward its ultimate end in God. This *is*
> political and this is development of good citizenship, but not the citizenship we
> might first have imagined.[65]

According to the narrative Bennett here resists, marriage is an institution of civil society,

existing primarily alongside other institutions, such as the Church, and the claim is made

that the church has particular ways of thinking and living an ethic of love that can help

marriage and the family flourish as perhaps greatest of all institutions of civil society.

Bennett rejects this narrative on the grounds that it is ecclesiologically wrong-

headed. Marriage and family are not first civil institutions standing alongside the church.

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they "merely become institutions that are part of the world, while baptized Christians that make up these
institutions become the sole locus of the members making up Christ's body. That is, all the baptized, and
especially the laity, have the task of remedying 'the customs  and conditions of the world, if they are an
inducement to sin, so that they all may be conformed to the norms of justice and may favor the practice of
virtue rather than hinder it.' Marriage and family merely become one of those secular institutions needing
such remedies; they become a matter of natural law that has no need of the name 'church'," *Water is
Thicker than Blood*, 15.

[64] From the Religion, Culture, and Family Project's website explaining the project's purpose, this claim is
made explicit: "The Religion, Culture, and Family Project claims that religious traditions have valuable
theological, ethical, and institutional resources to help revitalize North American family culture and
families. It brings together over a hundred leading Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, and other religious scholars
of both liberal and conservative convictions to produce a major series of books on religion and the family
together with conferences, articles, and media projects," "Project Overview: Rationale of Project,"
http://marty-center.uchicago.edu/research/rcfp/projrationale.htm (accessed January 22, 2010).

[65] Bennett, *Water is Thicker than Blood*, 155.

Instead, they are institutional realities given identity, shape, and accountability primarily

by the church, and secondarily in civil society and the state. Bennett writes:

> My contention is that the church is named the Household of God inseparably from
> the various households in which Christians find themselves because of the ways
> that worship and politics (and, hence, ethics) tie the two together…current
> theologies of marriage…have too often been made to connect to state politics and
> vague social programs while all but ignoring the Christological and
> ecclesiological concerns that are present for Christians.[66]

Furthermore, rejecting the "false eschatology" that sees the salvation of human society in

the human family based on biological kinship, Bennett argues that human society needs

bonds thicker than blood, namely, the bonds created by the waters of baptism.[67] The

problem, then, is not a lack of concern for the family. On the contrary, we have spent

entirely too much thought, energy, and hopes on the family as primary locus of human

belonging and capital hope for the creation of a better world.[68]

Bennett is skeptical, therefore, of theologies of the family. She finds, too often,

that marriage is seen as the church for and in the world, whereas the chaste life is more

eschatological in character. If this is the case, that is, if marriage is primarily (or only) for

this world and has no eschatological character, then the term domestic *church* can hardly

be appropriately given to the family.[69] In fact, such use of "church" to describe family

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[66] Ibid., 141.

[67] Ibid., 31.

[68] Ironically, Bennett finds that John Paul II's "theology of the body" does not give marriage enough eschatological importance. Interpreting him primarily through the work of Angelo Cardinal Scola, *The Nuptial Mystery*, trans. Michelle K. Borras (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005), Bennett finds that John Paul II's approach to marriage locates it on the mundane pole of the continuum between the world now and the eschaton. While marriage is for the here and now, celibacy is on the eschatological end of the continuum—it is an image of and already an anticipatory participation in the eschatological wedding feast of the lamb. Bennett finds in this theology an unfortunate dichotomy rather than a complementarity (*Water is Thicker than Blood*, 16–19).

[69] Ibid., 14–15. Here Bennett faults *Familiaris consortio* (hereafter, FC), though without citing it, for setting up a dichotomy between marriage and singleness, where marriage is for the world alone, and singleness is an eschatological foretaste and participation in heaven. Perhaps Bennett is critical of the kind of language John Paul II uses here: "It is for this reason that the Church, throughout her history, has always

would denude "church" of its full meaning. After all, the church is both for and in the world (church militant) and for and in the eschaton (church victorious).[70] Furthermore, "domestic church" is so focused on the family as a private, affective, interpersonal, and non-political reality that it leaves out important political and civil, public notions of what it means to be church.[71] Finally, Bennett finds notions of domestic Church offered by Cathleen McGinnis (Parenting for Peace and Justice Network) and Lisa Sowle Cahill to risk losing what is distinctively Christian. Current proposals for domestic church are heavily sociological, often lacking a liturgical, theological richness:

> It is not the case that Christian tradition becomes ritualized within the household; such would make the household exactly the 'domestic church' that contemporary theologians have posited…Instead, the household becomes ritualized within the church so that the church may be ritualized in the household.[72]

In Bennett's thinking, some of the domestic church activities that Cahill and McGinnis advocate lack a strong, essential connection to or location within ecclesial life as Bennett understands it. It is not enough to work for peace and justice, the Christian household must do so liturgically and sacramentally:

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defended the superiority of this charism to that of marriage, by reason of the wholly singular link which it has with the kingdom of God" *Familiaris consortio*, 16.

[70] As Bennett has it, "the name 'church' is cheapened if, in fact, marriages and families do not also bear eschatological weight. There is no need to name marriages and families as somehow 'domestic church' if there is a limited relationship present," *Water is Thicker than Blood*, 15. For a development of this ecclesiology see Henri de Lubac *Catholicism: Christ and the Common Destiny of Man* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1988).

[71] Bennett makes reference to the well-known debate during the Second Vatican Council, wherein bishop Fiorelli's suggestion (with John Chrysostom) of the term "ecclesia miniscula," "small church" or "church in miniature," became "domestica ecclesia" in *Lumen gentium*, 11. For a description of the term "domestic church" at the Second Vatican Council see Michael Fahey, "The Christian Family as Domestic Church at Vatican II," in *The Family*, ed. Lisa Sowle Cahill and Dietmar Mieth (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1995).

[72] Bennett, *Water is Thicker than Blood*, 146. She goes on to fill out the claim with an exposition of Augustine's *City of God* (ibid., 146–53). Bennett considers Cahill's and McGinnis' thoughts on domestic church to be focused on this-worldly justice and peace at the expense of eschatological beatitude, justice, and peace. Without the eschatological pole, which is essential to the church's identity, it would be inappropriate to call the family "domestic church." If the family is a this-worldly institution that is relevant to justice now but not beatitutde forever, then it cannot be called "domestic church." Bennett thinks families (and even more so households) have both the worldly and eschatological character of the church.

> The sacramental image of households, as well as the eschatological image of households, is a vision of Christians united in a completely reconfigured and unified household in Christ. This vision of Christian household operates partly now, because we see glimpses of this reconfigured household, but it is also a future vision of the Parousia, when God will be all-in-all. The Household of God and its constituent, small households are concerned with the entirety of that reality; there is no part of the old life, theologically speaking, that can remain if the new life is to take hold.[73]

For Bennett, marriage is a participation in the mystery of Christ and the church rather than the other way around. In place of a theology of marriage and family, Bennett offers a theology of *households*.[74] The household of God holds primacy of place in the life of the Christian, and the household of spouses ought to be worked out as part of this larger household. The power of Bennett's proposal is that by using the term household, she can better integrate married, single non-vowed, and consecrated religious life as complementary ways of being "household," each of which participates in one ecclesial reality seeking the goal of holiness, namely, life in the household of God.

**Summary and Critique**

Neither sociology, nor history, nor theology can offer a single definitive narrative of how and why marriage and family have found themselves in crisis. In this first section I have analyzed the narratives offered by Stanley Hauerwas, Lisa Sowle Cahill, Julie Hanlon Rubio, David Matzko McCarthy, and Jana M. Bennett. Each of the narrated problems and solutions offered is distinct, yet together they accomplish a certain

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[73] Ibid., 135.

[74] Ibid., introduction and chap. 1. Bennett relies on Thomas Breidenthal's definition of "household:" "Broadly speaking, a household is two or more people sharing the daily round of life to a significant degree and over a significant period of time whether the sharing is freely chosen or not," Thomas Breidenthal, *Christian Households: The Sanctification of Nearness* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2004), 2.

consensus. First, marriage and family are in crisis—even it if is unclear whether the problem is too little or too much attention to the family. Second, the "nuclear-family" model of man and woman and children seeking their own private goods is seen as destructive to human society, personal wellbeing, and the common good. Third, there has been a move from marriage and family as a web involving a great many long-term, non-voluntary relationships and duties, to marriage and family as a web involving a great many voluntary relationships that are easily severed—even if opinions vary on the benefits and costs of this change. In other words, marriage as fulfilling, elective relationship has taken a controlling stake in the discussion of marriage and family. Fourth, the church has a role in healthy function of marriage and the family—even if there is disagreement about whether the family is best understood within the church or alongside the church. Finally, Christian marriage and family must have a robust social, and distinctly Christian role; it must tell with its very way of life the story of Jesus' and the church's love for God and neighbor as expressed in radical hospitality and an active participation in the seeking of justice in the world.

In spite of these points of consensus, the narratives offered by the five authors studied also demonstrate significant divergences and problematic dichotomies. Let us first examine two unhelpful and often intertwined dichotomies that continue to be presumed by some of the authors. These dichotomies are between (1) public (outside the home) / private (domestic) and (2) secular / religious. First, the divide between public (outside the home) and private (domestic) can be overdrawn.[75] Rubio suggests that "the

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[75] Bennett devotes an entire chapter (chapter 6) of her book *Water is Thicker Than Blood* to this false dichotomy between public and private, though her critique of this dichotomy comes from a slightly different direction. She is more concerned with the false notion that church and religion are private, non-

self-sacrificial paradigm that privileges openness to children and parental sacrifice for

children over the *public* vocations of men and women must be brought into question."[76]

Further, she makes the strong claim that "one cannot, I would argue, fully realize the

demands of discipleship to Jesus of Nazareth unless one also has a public vocation."[77] By

public Rubio means not domestic. Thus, raising, caring for the basic needs of, and

educating children do not qualify. Why? Because much of the task occurs physically *in*

the home, because the parent is not directly paid monetarily, and because the

relationships involved are not primarily contractual.

    This way of speaking artificially dichotomizes the public from the private, as if

the domestic life were not essentially a public endeavor, one ordained to the common

good (and here I mean a sense of shared good that includes one supernatural destiny).[78]

Rubio's way of speaking about the divide between "public" and "private" falls prey to

John Milbank's critique of Greek notions of virtue. According to Milbank, the Greeks

separated the *polis* from the *oikos*. Those inhabiting the *oikos*, children and women, had

no access to true virtue, which could only be performed in the *polis*.[79]

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political matters. I agree with Bennett when she states that "John Howard Yoder and Stanley Hauerwas
have taken to task the false assumption that the church is a private affair, unengaged in the public political
lives of people who consider themselves to be, first and foremost *citizens* of a nation-state, as secondarily
as Christians," 138–39. Bennett also marshals evidence from William Cavanaugh (*Theopolitical
Imagination*), John Milbank (*Theology and Social Theory*) and Pope Leo XIII (*Rerum novarum*) to argue
for the political, public nature of the Church.

[76] Rubio, *A Christian Theology of Marriage*, 98.

[77] Ibid., 98–99.

[78] See Henri de Lubac, *Catholicism: Christ and the Common Destiny of Man*, trans. Lancelot C. Sheppard
and Sister Elizabeth Englund, O.C.D. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1988 [Paris: Cerf, 1947]). De Lubac's
*ressourcement* here toward a renewed understanding of the unity of all Christians in the one body of Christ,
who came to redeem all of humanity for one shared salvation in Christ himself. Whether or not given
persons meet on this earth, because they are one in Christ, they contribute to or detract from the
accomplishment of our one common salvation.

[79] Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason* (Oxford, U.K.: Blackwell, 1990), 364–
69.

Of course, if this dichotomy is taken as a fact, a given, then the center of the gospel ought to be the overturning of this situation. This is not the case, though. The *oikos* is already the *polis*. The "public" is not some space outside the home that is affected by a uniquely "public" vocation such as car repairman. The "public" is the orientation of the "private" family. The Christian family cannot be raised in isolation. The "domestic" vocation of all members of the family is a call to create a community of love that overflows biological-kinship into the surrounding community, especially toward perceived aliens or enemies. In other words, the "domestic" vocation of the family is to nurture relationships and develop habits (virtues) that are public in orientation, that is, they are extroverted and reach out beyond themselves to the common good.[80] Realization of this vocation requires public prayer, public presence in a community—especially the community of the sacraments—public witness to the love in one's own relationships, accountability to a community, and public action on behalf of the poor.

At the same time, this dichotomy between "public" and "private" unjustifiably prioritizes "public vocation" over against "domestic" vocation. Rubio states that "public" vocation is requisite for complete discipleship, implying that "domestic" vocation is neither requisite nor sufficient. In Rubio's thought, neither single non-consecrated or as

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[80] See Patrick Riley, *Civilizing Sex: Chastity and the Common Good* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2000). Riley argues that first among these domestically developed and publicly ordered virtues is chastity. As Riley explains it, chastity was historically a politically important virtue, that is, a virtue central for the good of order within society in general. This virtue was traditioned through families, and grounded in a particular way by the Decalogue. Whereas virtue had been a keyword in the political lexicon, in modern democracy virtue has been replaced with "liberty." Chastity, argues Riley, is a central virtue because it is subject to civil discipline (e.g., in marriage law) as well as divine discipline (e.g., the Decalogue and the Sermon on the Mount). Furthermore, it is at once necessary for domestic life (to ensure stability among domestic partners) and political life (to ensure wider social stability). As Riley puts it, "from the very foundation of Israel, itself the foundational nation of Western society, honest genital behavior was perceived as vital to national survival," (ibid., 7). For the Christian society, the church, chastity contributes to the common good of order within the church as a people whose desires are rightly ordered proportionately to the appropriate objects, ultimately tending toward the person's ultimate end in union with God in the beatific vision (ibid., 23).

consecrated Christians have access to the "domestic" vocation. Thus the "domestic" is of secondary moment to the "public." At the same time, however, "public" is constrained to a particular social space—the space of secular society. The following question arises with respect to the religious contemplative: Is the contemplative refusing complete discipleship? The answer will be yes, unless "public" is conceived as an orientation toward the common good (shared common destiny) rather than as a space of economic and political relations with people outside one's blood- or marriage-kin. The cloistered monk or nun's vocation is, after all, every bit as "public" as the coal miner's. The religious' prayer is as public as anyone's, and their goals are as oriented to the common good (our shared destiny) as anyone's.

In prioritizing the "public" vocation over the "private," or "domestic" life, Rubio also makes the mistaken assumption that all "public" work somehow contributes to the common good and satisfies the spouses' needs to have an identity other than "mother" or "father."[81] First, Rubio would be hard-pressed to agree that all "public" work is as beneficial to the common good as "domestic" work. Second, not all "public" work satisfies the workers need for an identity. For many, "public" work is an isolating, even psychologically degrading experience. Alone in a cubicle writing code, trapped in an office reading books, deep in a mine operating a machine, standing on an assembly line cutting chicken carcasses, or walking the halls of a university library as a custodian who works among yet is strangely alien to the patrons and research staff, the worker is not always fulfilled by a "public" vocation. Unfortunately, feminist authors like Rubio often imagine only upper middle-class jobs when they speak of "public" "meaningful" work,

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[81] See Rubio, *Christian Theology of Marriage*, 121–23. She is depending here on Bonnie Miller-McLemore, *Also a Mother: Work and Family as Theological Dilemma*.

and thus have romanticized "public" work in much the same way some "traditionalists" romanticize "domestic" work of the mother, nurturing and educating her children in the ways of personal piety, self-sacrifice, and liberal arts in the home. The romantic, early feminist notion of being "free" or "liberated" to work in the "public" sphere is at best ambivalent. The middle-class and the poor are ironically the ones finding themselves "liberated" from patriarchal family structures.[82] "Liberation" here is an ambivalent term, since the situation of poverty creates a kind of slavery that necessarily "liberates" the poor from the shackles of the nuclear family and its model of one domestic worker and another "public" worker. Unfortunately, for many working-poor and lower-middle class families, Rubio's "public vocation" is, in the face of grinding poverty, more a damnable necessity than a fulfilling endeavor. Ironically, a patriarchal, nuclear family structure has become a luxury for the upper-middle class and the rich.

A second dichotomy that creeps into the discussion is the thick line drawn between the "secular" and the "religious" aspects of marriage. For Rubio the history of marriage is the story of an institution's slow transition from occupying a strictly secular location, to an ecclesiastical one. As Rubio states, "marriage as a secular reality only gradually, and with difficulty, came to be seen as a sacred part of Christian life."[83] This history is problematic, as it assumes a time when marriage and weddings were strictly secular, and it does not account for the changes in marriage theology and practice that

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[82] See Judith Stacey, *Brave New Families: Stories of Domestic Upheaval in Late-twentieth-century America*, rev. ed. (Berkeley: University of California, 1998), 3–40; and Rubio, *Christian Theology of Marriage*, 10–12.

[83] Rubio, *Christian Theology of Marriage*, 73–75, at 73. See Edward Schillebeeckx, *Marriage: Human Reality, Saving Mystery*, trans. N. D. Smith (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1966). Schillebeeckx's monograph was influential in creating the narrative that sees marriage as a secular, civil institution that slowly (and in his mind for the worse) became ever more tightly regulated by the church. He makes a case that it is important from an Old Testament and New Testament perspective that Christians maintain the civil, secular character of marriage.

accompanied and arose from the Reformation.[84] In particular, Cahill and Witte point out the Lutheran theological push of marriage out of the ecclesial realm and into the realm of the "secular authority."[85] Milbank has argued, I think convincingly, that "once, there was no secular."[86] For those who narrate the history as a march of marriage from the secular contract to sacred covenant, the "secular" is seen as a social fact, a given space where a certain type of thinking or world-vision operates free from religious influence. The existence of this social "fact" is taken for granted rather than taken as a recent human, even religiously motivated, creation.[87] For Rubio, the institution becomes religious once another religious institution (the Church) holds regulatory power over its form and practice.[88]

Other authors further the dichotomy by overdrawing the distinction between religious and secular marriage. Lawler (*Family: American and Christian*) analyzes civil aspects of marriage, the Christian aspects of marriage, and the way those two have occupied the same social spaces in American history.[89] Elsewhere, Lawler argues for the Church to recognize civil marriage as a legitimate union among Christians, which can be solemnized on a later date through a rite wherein the union becomes actualized as a sacrament. This proposal would largely contribute to solving the problem of annulments, argues Lawler, because it would recognize that the marriage between baptized non-

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[84] See John Witte Jr., *From Sacrament to Contract: Marriage, Religion, and Law in the Western Tradition* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997). Witte's narrative of development in thought on marriage begins with the religious and moves toward the secular, the reverse of Rubio's, Lawler's, and Cahill's narrative, which begins with the secular and moves toward the religious.

[85] Cahill, *Family: A Christian Social Perspective*, 63.

[86] Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory*, 9. These words begin the first chapter. He makes the case that relatively recently we have attempted to create a secular space from a religious motivation.

[87] Ibid., 110.

[88] Rubio, *Christian Theology of Marriage*, 75, "So at Trent, the church defined marriage as a sacrament, claimed the right to regulate it, declared that the presence of a priest and two witnesses was necessary for a valid marriage, and claimed that a validly contracted marriage could not be dissolved for any reason."

[89] Michael G. Lawler, *Family: American and Christian* (Chicago: Loyola Press, 1998).

believers is a civil, non-sacramental reality rather than an indissoluble sacrament.

Lawler's argument hinges on his claim that the 1917 Code of Canon Law inappropriately

settled an open theological question: whether there is an identity between the marital

contract and the marital sacrament.[90] Since 1917, the Code of Canon Law has described

an identity between the two. Popes at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the

twentieth century were at pains to maintain the unity of marriage as necessarily both a

contract and sacrament, that is, a reality of the world that signifies and makes present the

supernatural reality it represents.[91] The current Code states as much: "A valid

matrimonial contract cannot exist between the baptized without it being by that fact a

sacrament."[92] When Christians are involved, we can speak of marriage as contract and

marriage as covenant, but we can never disconnect the one from the other.

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[90] Michael Lawler, *Marriage in the Catholic Church: Disputed Questions* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2002), 43–65. Susan K. Wood, S.C.L. writes in support of the opposing position in "The Marriage of Baptized Non-believers: Faith, Contract, and Sacrament," *Theological Studies* 48 (1987): 279–301.

[91] See Leo XIII, *Arcanum divinae sapientiae* 17, 18, 23 (1880); and Pius XI, *Casti Connubii*, 31 (1930) (hereafter, CC). Leo XIII writes: Let no one, then, be deceived by the distinction which some civil jurists have so strongly insisted upon—the distinction, namely, by virtue of which they sever the matrimonial contract from the sacrament, with intent to hand over the contract to the power and will of the rulers of the State, while reserving questions concerning the sacrament of the Church. A distinction, or rather severance, of this kind cannot be approved; for certain it is that in Christian marriage the contract is inseparable from the sacrament, and that, for this reason, the contract cannot be true and legitimate without being a sacrament as well. For Christ our Lord added to marriage the dignity of a sacrament; but marriage is the contract itself, whenever that contract is lawfully concluded" (*Arcanum divinae sapientiae*, 23).

[92] *Codex Iuris Canonici* 1983, 1055.2 (hereafter, CIC). This position (that the valid marriage contract of two baptized Christians is also a sacrament) has developed over time. From Scripture, Mark's and Matthew's gospel accounts of Jesus' teaching on marriage, the Pauline Ephesians 5:21–32 and 1 Cor 7 have been central, as well as Old Testament sources relying on marriage to understand the term "covenant" are primary sources. Within the tradition, Augustine's *De bono coniugali* is the source for the three goods of marriage as articulated until they were no longer used at the Second Vatican Council. Key arguments for the current teaching were developed in the scholastic period in the thought of Peter Lombard and Thomas Aquinas. Aquinas gives special attention to whether baptized non-believers receive the sacrament. See *Summa theologiae*, supplementum, q. 80, a. 3, and *In 4 Sent.*, d. 39, q.1, a.1, ad 5; and ibid., d. 6, q. 1, a. 3, sol. 1; and ibid., d. 3, q. 68, a. 8. The Decree for the Armenians from the Council of Florence, as well as the profession of faith prescribed to the Waldensians include matrimony among the seven sacraments. The Council of Trent, Session 24, worked toward the unity of sacrament and contract by placing an impediment of form upon clandestine marriages between baptized persons. If their marriage contract was to be valid, it would also be a sacrament.

Among the costs of speaking about Christian marriage in a way that disassociates the marital contract from the marital sacrament is the fact that it can erroneously suggest that there is a distinction between what couples do as married and what couples do as Christian. This is an ecclesiological implication. "Christian" becomes something added to marriage. The implication is that Christians could have a non-Christian marriage. The sacrament becomes a Christian rite added to a secular reality assumed to be disconnected from supernatural ends in itself. Rather than being the central context for all marriages between baptized persons, the Church comes into view as an institution that can contribute to good marriages between Christians, if those Christians desire such help. Married couples will not be aided if the Church only offers extra "programs" to supplement what spouses are really doing as secular communities of individuals. I am suggesting that Christian couples will need to redefine their practice of marriage as principally an ecclesial one: one that is pushes the hearths onto front porches and reconfigures living rooms into chapels.

**TOWARD AUTHENTIC RENEWAL: METHOD AND ARGUMENT**

The narratives offered above have been instructive to set the context for the crisis of marriage, but in order to move from this context toward a renewal of Catholic marriage theology, I must identify and assess the central paradigms for discourse on the nature and ends of marriage that emerge from within these narratives. Such is the task of the first chapter. I will find two paradigms at work in attempts to renew Catholic theology of marriage since the Second Vatican Council: marriage as relationship, and marriage as

practice. Both of these ways of speaking about marriage make positive contributions to

Christian marriage, but both are inadequate. However, I also argue that both are open to a

possible direction for development. Both can be further pushed in the direction of making

the primary context of belonging for the Christian marriage, especially as domestic

church, as ecclesial.[93] The relational approach pays attention to the personal aspect of

marriage but lacks a strong ecclesiology and influence from Christology.  The marriage-

as-practice approach, on the other hand, centrally locates marriage within the Church but

lacks solid theological grounding in Christ and the Trinity. A third approach, therefore,

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[93] The Second Vatican Council's statement from *Apostolicam Actuositatem* 11, which was echoed throughout the Church, (e.g., *Familiaris consortio*, 42), is frequently quoted or referenced in the following way: The family "is the first and vital cell of society" (AA, 11). Authors use the phrase to mean that the first context of the family is civil society, that realm of social belonging including voluntary associations and other institutions mediating between the individual and the state. Among the voluntary associations, in many tellings, is the Church, in which the members of the family might participate or belong. See (See Stratford Caldecott, "The Drama of the Home: Marriage, the Common Good, and Public Policy," in Kenneth D. Whitehead, ed., *Marriage and the Common Good: Proceedings from the Twenty-Second Annual Convention of the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars, September 24–26, 1999* (South Bend, IN: St. Augustine's Press, 2001), 1–26; Jean Bethke Elshtain, "Families and Civic Goods," *Marriage and the Common Good*, 105–118; and Riley, *Civilizing Sex*). This conclusion, though, is only possible by removing the phrase in AA 11 from its context, and by an oversight of other related documents on the social context of marriage (e.g., the 1995 document, *Preparation for the Sacrament of Marriage,* by the Pontifical Council for the Family, accessed on January 13, 2011, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/family/documents/rc_pc_family_doc_ 13051996_preparation-for-marriage_en.html). Read in context, the passage suggests that the Church is the first home of Christian marriage, and that its role in civil society is an apostolate, a mission given by God. The primary role of the family in society, moreover, is to demonstrate the family's ecclesial, sacramental nature. I will allow the Council to speak for itself: "It has always been the duty of Christians married partners but today it is the greatest part of their apostolate to manifest and prove by their own way of life the indissolubility and sacredness of the marriage bond, strenuously to affirm the right and duty of parents and guardians to educate children in a Christian manner, and to defend the dignity and lawful autonomy of the family…This mission—to be the first and vital cell of society—the family has received from God. It will fulfill this mission if it appears as the domestic sanctuary of the Church by reason of the mutual affection of its members and the prayer that they offer to God in common, if the whole family makes itself a part of the liturgical worship of the church, and if it provides active hospitality and promotes justice and other good works for the service of all the brethren in need" (*Apostolicam actuositatem*, 11). *Christifideles laici*, 40 says family is the basic cell of society but does not prioritize this fact. Family has a duty to society, but because of its supernatural, ecclesial character. In *Evangelii nuntiandi* 41, Paul VI says that the Christian home is a veritable cell of the Church. In his *Letter to Families*, John Paul II speaks of the family as the "fundamental 'cell' of society." This cell, though, is not on its own and is not part of society without a prior and primary context. "But Christ—the 'vine' from which the 'branches' draw nourishment—is needed so that this cell will not be exposed to the threat of a kind of *cultural uprooting* which can come both from within and from without" (*Gravissimam sane*, 13). In his thought, the family is the primary cell of society conceived of as a civilization of love, a civilization not possible apart from ecclesial belonging, that is, belonging in Christ the vine.

must be offered, an approach to marriage that attends to persons, sees marriage as a part of a wider, ecclesial practice, and is grounded in Christ and the Trinity. What is required is a language to speak about the identity and practice of marriage and the family that comes from within the life of the Church.[94] This third paradigm is to see marriage as a Common Way in Christ, a way Christ offers to all those (whether married or religious) who participate in the common practice of being church, that is "householding with God," a way of imaging and witnessing to the Trinity's love, and a way that fulfills the universal call to Christian perfection through a "regular" life ordained to Christoformity by growth in the evangelical virtues of poverty, chastity, and obedience.

A major contribution from contemporary theologies of marriage has been to open up an avenue for speaking of marriage in terms of a Common Way in Christ's evangelical virtues. This avenue has opened with the introduction of three ideas for development: [95] (1) both married and vowed religious life participate in the common practice of being church, that is, as examples of "householding with God," by their ecclesial, baptismal ligation;[96] (2) married life and vowed religious life have each been reflected upon as images of and witnesses to the Trinity and its love; and (3) both married and vowed religious life answer Vatican II's universal call to Christian perfection through

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[94] See Dolores Leckey, *The Ordinary Way: A Family Spirituality* (New York: Crossroad, 1989), who starts her monograph with the same claim: "People looking for a lay spirituality need some kind of structure, one that is strong and yet elastic. Such a structure is part of the Catholic Christian tradition," the monastic tradition (*Ordinary Way*, 6).

[95] John Paul II in *Vita consecrata* (hereafter, VC) explores the way that vowed religious life is trinitarian, and Marc Cardinal Oullet, in *Divine Likeness: Toward a trinitarian Anthropology of the Family*, trans. Philip Milligan and Linda M. Cicone (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006) argues for just what the title says. Jana M. Bennett, in her *Water is Thicker than Blood*, has proposed that the consecrated and married lives are part of the same larger project of living a baptismal life in the household of God. None of these authors, however, has proposed to take these thoughts to the next step, which is to apply the language and models of vowed religious life in community to the development of a theology of marriage.

[96] While both are examples of "householding with God," marriage uniquely becomes truly a church in miniature, or (in the language of the Second Vatican Council) a "domestic church" (LG, 11) through the sacrament of matrimony.

a "common" or "regular" life ordained to Christoformity through growth in evangelical virtue.[97] Vowed religious life-in-community refers us to a vocabulary that helps us develop existing theologies of marriage as relationship and practice. This vocabulary, which theologies of consecrated life center around, does not concern some sole possession of the religious life, but rather it concerns a common way Christ invites all Christians to live, a way of living in the household of God according to his own virtues of poverty, chastity, and obedience. As Orthodox theologian Paul Evdokimov has written, "the best, and perhaps the only, method to fathom the value proper to matrimony is by comprehending the greatness of the meaning of monasticism."[98]

In order to advance this paradigm, a deep theological consonance between conjugal and consecrated life will need to be established and developed.[99] This paradigm can be constructed from sources in Scripture and the Catholic tradition. At the level of ecclesial practice, both states in life can be construed as sharing in the one household of God and all the domestic activity therein. At a theological level, both states of life disclose and share in the same basic anthropological, Christological, and trinitarian bases. Through both states in life, God teaches us who we are, who we are invited to be, and into whose life and narrative we are taken up. This theological connection between the

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[97] LG, 32: "Therefore, the chosen People of God is one: 'one Lord, one faith, one baptism'; sharing a common dignity as members from their regeneration in Christ, having the same filial grace and the same vocation to perfection; possessing in common one salvation, one hope and one undivided charity." Some authors have treated the evangelical counsels as "evangelical imperatives." See Francis Moloney, S.D.B. (*A Life of Promise: Poverty, Chastity, Obedience* [Wilmington, DE: Glazier, 1984]).

[98] Paul Evdokimov, *The Sacrament of Love: The Nuptial Mystery in the Light of the Orthodox Tradition*, trans. Anthony P. Gythiel and Victoria Steadman (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary, 1985), 73.

[99] For the purpose of this dissertation, I will synonymously use "consecrated life" and "vowed religious life." All of these terms will refer to the same reality, namely, the communion and practice of life among persons having professed vows of religion and been incorporated thereby into membership in a religious institute in the Roman Catholic Church according to canon law. According to CIC, 607.2, "A religious institute is a society in which members, according to proper law, pronounce public vows, either perpetual or temporary which are to be renewed, however, when the period of time has elapsed, and lead a life of brothers or sisters in common."

states of life sets the stage for dissertation's constructive proposal regarding three sets of

practices in the life of married Christians (poverty, chastity, and obedience).[100]

    The central task of this dissertation, then, is to rediscover the profound

relationship between marriage and religious life throughout the tradition.[101] Some

theologians have produced studies of the relationship between marriage and monasticism.

Indeed a relationship exists, but unfortunately, the most common narrative characterizes

this relationship through history as principally antagonistic and only recently replaced by

an egalitarian perspective (chapter 2). I reject this narrative and seek to replace it with

one that sees a much more complicated relationship between conjugal and consecrated

life in the tradition. In Chapter 3 I begin with Augustine and the early desert fathers, for

whom the distinction in holiness between any particular married person or virgin was

muddy. In fact they saw the two states of life in cooperation and dialogue, as two aspects

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[100] This consonance works both ways. Conjugal life's participation in a common way can inform consecrated life as well. This dissertation focuses on the ways this consonance helps us think more theologically about marriage, but of course this paradigm also promises to help us rethinking consecrated life. Developing the latter is beyond the scope of this dissertation, but hopefully I outline a framework here for taking a next step in the research.

[101] An apparent dissonance immediately comes to mind when proposing a consonance between consecrated religious life and conjugal life; marriage is one of the seven sacraments of the Church whereas consecrated religious life is not. This distinction, though is not problematic. The goal of the dissertation is not to find surface-level similarities between the two states in life, but a deep theological share in common ecclesial goods and virtues that could potentially play out in common practices of Christian householding. Were both sacraments of the Church, that fact would indicate a certain kind of theological relationship, but as it happens this is not the kind of relationship conjugal and consecrated life have. That they are not both among the seven sacraments does not hinder their possessing a theological consonance of any kind. Furthermore, while both are not among the seven sacraments, part of my argument is that both do share in the church's identity as primordial sacrament of Christ. Baptismally integrated into Christ's body, consecrated religious and married Christians each participate in the sacrament of being church. Marriage has a unique participation in this primordial sacrament as domestic church or "church in miniature," but consecrated religious life is also church "domestically." Not in the way marriage creates an instantiation of church, but inasmuch as the religious community's (or any Christian household's) domestic activities (quotidian aspects of life together) must be part of their task of being church, the sacrament of Christ. Finally, maintaining distinctions between the two states is crucial for the entire project, otherwise the claim for consonance would be a claim for tonal identity, a tautology. The dissertation does not focus on these distinctions, though, because the project is to find a common ground underlying these states that can enrich both. Much has been done to distinguish the two states, to the detriment of both, and to the frustrated attempts at "authentic lay spiritualities." Less has been done to see what the two states authentically share and how they can cooperate in being the one household of God, the one sacrament of Christ.

of being church. This historical precedent is further developed (chapter 4) by the

Johannine ecclesiology of "householding with God," which allows us to see a

consonance between the married and religious states inasmuch as both are inherently

domestic practices developing the virtues of life in the household of God. In chapter 5, I

present a theological grounding behind the historical developments that have come in

previous chapters. The consonance between conjugal and consecrated states of life comes

most deeply from the share both have in the life of the Trinity and the life of Christ's

evangelical virtues. Both states of life reveal the anthropological principle of complete

self-donation, whether this is understood principally nuptial terms (and thus a matter of

celibacy or exclusive sexuality) or whether this is understood principally in obediential

terms (and thus most centrally a matter of the will).[102] Furthermore, both states of life are

present in the one life, death, and resurrection of Christ, a life that becomes our own in

baptism and is modeled in the evangelical virtues. Finally, both states of life are disclosed

by and image the Trinity inasmuch as both share a trinitarian genealogy as *communiones*

*personarum*. Found throughout the tradition, all of these points of contact amount to a

profound consonance between these states of life (while respecting the canonical,

theological, and practical distinctions between the two). This consonance makes way for

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[102] "Nuptial" cannot be understood univocally throughout the dissertation. When the term "nuptial" appears in the context of consecrated celibacy and the context of the marriage between a man and a woman, it will operate at different levels of discourse. It always means "of or having to do with marriage," but whether literally, allegorically, anagogically, or metaphorically will not always be the same. This is important because the church does not have conjugal relations with Christ understood as an act of genital intimacy. Nor does the consecrated religious person experience conjugal relation with any other person in the community or with Christ in any kind of genital way. Consecrated religious do give their bodies over to Christ and to the community just as spouses give their bodies over to each other. The difference is in the appropriate and symbolic use of those bodies within the relationship. Marriage ought not be reduced to a genital union, though. Therefore similarities between the Church's marriage to Christ, spouses's marriage to each other, and a consecrated religious person's marriage to Christ is more than strictly metaphorical or allegorical. The married life as "a partnership of life and love" is in a real way experienced by all those incorporated into the Church, Christ's bride. Where confusion would arise I will clarify the level of discourse at which nuptial words and images are used.

my final, constructive proposal for practices of poverty, chastity, and obedience according to a couple's own *regula matrimonii* (chapter 6).

The hope of this work is not to bolster or "fix" marriage per se, but to contribute to the building up of the body of Christ, the bride of Christ, God's holy people, the household of God (Eph 2:19). The goal is to develop a language to help scholars, pastoral ministers, and spouses themselves understand the matrimonial sacrament as a Common Way in Christ, a particular way of living in the one household of God according to Christ's own evangelical virtues.[103]

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[103] This Common Way in Christ is domestic, but not in the sense that it follows the shape and concerns of the nuclear family. Christian conjugal life as a Common Way in Christ is domestic inasmuch as the spouses manifest a particular way of living in the one household of God, a household that includes married and single people who both share domestic concerns and activities, who might even share a home, living a common way of missionary and liturgical life, seeking one common good as members of one holy, catholic, and apostolic church. Understanding how the family participates as domestic church in the mystery of Christ in the church requires both analogy (understanding divine reality from the bottom up) as well as a katalogical method (understanding the reality of the family from the top down, e.g., by means of understanding the life of the Trinity). See Oullett, *Divine Likeness*, 14–16; and Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Theologik II: Wahrheit Gottes* (Einsiedeln: Johannes, 1985), 159–200.

CHAPTER 1: POST VATICAN II THEOLOGIES OF MARRIAGE—
TWO PARADIGMS

As the introduction showed, narratives offer signposts and markers to help locate authors in a complex theological landscape. A second, equally helpful way to create a landscape of the Catholic scholarship on marriage and family is to study the very definitions or accounts of marriage that emerge from the more general narratives. A study of Catholic authors writing in the last twenty years finds two paradigmatic frameworks: (1) marriage as a *relationship*; and (2) marriage as a *practice*. This chapter analyzes the strengths and weaknesses of the paradigms and suggests a third paradigm, which will fill gaps in these other paradigms at three theological loci: ecclesiology, Christology, and Trinity. In order to illustrate the contours of these paradigms, I will examine the thought of two sets of authors: Margaret Monahan Hogan, Lisa Cahill, and Michael Lawler (marriage as relationship), and David Matzko McCarthy, Jana Bennett, and Alasdair MacIntyre (marriage as practice).

**MARRIAGE AS RELATIONSHIP**

I begin with the work of Margaret Monahan Hogan, whose book *Marriage as Relationship: Real and Rational* (2002) was published as a second edition of her *Finality and Marriage* (1993). Hogan approaches "marriage" historically and systematically. Her goal is to revisit the twentieth century's doctrinal development in the area of sexuality and marriage (from *Casti connubii* through *Donum vitae*) to find therein a movement

from a "traditional position" toward an "emerging position" on (1) "the essential nature of marriage, (2) the several finalities to be accomplished within marriage, (3) the role of conjugal intercourse, and (4) the governance of the reproductive finality within marriage."[1] The result of her study is the following definition of marriage: "a special kind of human relationship. It is an intimate personal union which is to supply the matrix of conditions for the perfection of the marriage, for procreation, and for the perfection of the partners."[2] For Hogan this definition amounts to a "higher viewpoint," an "*Aufhebung*, under which opposing viewpoints may be seen as partial viewpoints and within which meaningful conversation may begin among the well intentioned and scholarly people on all sides of the issue."[3] To trace this movement, I will begin with Hogan's account of the traditional position, followed by an account of the emerging tradition of marriage as "relationship" in the thought of Hogan and Michael Lawler.

**The Traditional Position**

Hogan explicitly positions her constructive account "not as a disagreement with the tradition but rather a development of the tradition."[4] But it is clear that she disagrees with what she sees as intransigence in the Catholic magisterium. This intransigence she

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[1] Hogan, *Marriage as Relationship: Real and Rational* (Milwaukee: Marquette University, 2002), 9, 15, and 16.

[2] Ibid. 9–10. She goes on here to say that "marriage has three ends: (1) personal union — intrinsic necessary end; (2) procreation — intrinsic contingent end; and (3) personalist — intrinsic contingent end. These ends press for actualization on three distinct interrelated levels: horizontal, vertical, and transcendental. Governance of the reproductive finality is directed from within the marital matrix," ibid., 10.

[3] Ibid. Throughout, Hogan shows her dependence on the philosophy of Bernard Lonergan, S.J. In this particular instance, her use of the term "higher viewpoint" refers to the term as Lonergan would use it in *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, 37–43, 258–59. A series of insights leads to the emergence of a higher viewpoint, from which series of data seeming to be only accidentally connected are systematically intelligible. Reaching a higher viewpoint is a manifestation of the term "vertical finality," which will become important later in the analysis of Hogan's use of Lonergan.

[4] Ibid., 19.

identifies as a willingness to understand the ends and nature of marriage and sexuality in relational terms, yet an unwillingness to allow those relational terms primacy of place in the moral evaluation of the proper use of intercourse, contraception, and artificial insemination and fertilization within marriage.[5]

For Hogan, the "traditional position" sees marriage as primarily a procreative institution, the structure and practice of which is determined by God in revelation and natural law, and the controlling factor of behavior in marriage is the biological aspect of sexuality. At the same time, however, Hogan sees in the "traditional position" a robust theory of the secondary purposes of marriage: the mutual aid of the spouses and their Christian perfection.[6] Drawing from *Casti connubii*, Hogan defines "essential nature" of marriage in the "traditional position" as follows: (1) marriage is a divine institution given ends, laws, and blessings from God. The nature of this institution is divinely, not humanly, made. Men and women enter this institution rather than make it; (2) marriage is a sacrament, that is, marriage is a natural institution that the Lord has raised to a higher dignity as a sign and instrument of grace—the effect of which is indissolubility and sanctification; and (3) marriage is an intimate union, a union of persons not merely

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[5] Hogan repeats this critique multiple times. See, for example, ibid., 99 (against *Evangelium vitae*), and 123 (against modern Catholic scholars defending the magisterial position). For her description of the proper regulation of the fertility finality, see ibid., 139.

[6] The documents expounding the "traditional position," according to Hogan, are Pius XI's *Casti Connubii*, and the earlier of Pius XII's papal allocutions. Ibid., 23, 28. Here she notes Pius XI's hypothesis in *Casti connubii*, 24, that "This mutual interior formation of husband and wife, this determined effort to perfect each other, can in a very real sense, and the Roman Catechism teaches, be said to be the primary cause and reason of matrimony, provided matrimony be considered not in the restricted sense as the institution designed for the procreation and education of the child, but in the wider sense as a complete and intimate life partnership and association." The Roman Catechism referred to here is the Catechism of the Council of Trent.

bodies.[7] In this third aspect of marriage's nature Hogan finds the seed of what would become the keystone for understanding marriage's nature as "relationship."

As for the "several finalities to be accomplished by marriage," Hogan identifies two in the "traditional position." First and primary is procreation and education of children. The second is the mutual aid of the partners in their earthly life and pursuit of holiness, as well as the remediation of concupiscence. For Hogan's purposes, what is important about these ends for the "traditional position," is the way Pius XII develops them in his papal allocutions to medical professionals. They are both "objective ends," both *finis operis* (not merely ends of the agents) and that they are arranged hierarchically. Procreation and education are considered primary because they determine the nature and essence of marriage. "Marriage is one and indivisible, a unique institution of nature distinct from every other human association."[8] Therefore, "marriage must have a *finis operis* that is one and indivisible. Where there are several ends, one must be prime, by reason of its formal cause, in which the other ends are contained or to which the other ends are added to help achieve the primary. In matrimony the *finis operis* primary is procreation and education."[9] It follows, then, that "we might go on to say that there are other ends of marriage that are primary as in most important or excellent. We can say that the other ends are subordinate in a certain way, that is, they depend on this one for their actualization." Furthermore, the ends are not "of equal value or independent of" the

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[7] Hogan, *Marriage as Relationship,* 25. Here she is referring to Pius XI, *Casti connubii*, 1, and 9. An essential component of marriage's nature and what makes fidelity of chastity possible. Marriage not dissoluble, even for sterility or absence of "compatibility of temperament" *Casti connubii*, 70.

[8] Hogan, *Marriage as Relationship*, 38–39.

[9] Pope Pius XII, *Sentence of the Holy Roman Rota*, Acta Apostolicae Sedis (Vaticanis: Typis Polyglottis, 1944), 179–200, at 185. See Hogan, *Marriage as a Relationship*, 38–39.

primary end.[10] Even in the "traditional position," then, the secondary ends of mutual aid

in sanctification and daily life, and remediation of concupiscence are, in Thomistic

fashion,[11] less essential, yet more excellent than the primary end of the procreation and

education of children. The good of mutual aid and sanctification is more excellent than

the good of procreation and education because the first is a supernatural good while the

second is proper to man's own nature.

In the third area of her analyses (the role of conjugal intercourse in marriage), the

"traditional position's" potential orientation toward the notion of "marriage as

relationship" is again visible. In "the traditional position," specifically as expressed by

Pope Pius XI in *Casti connubii*, the role of intercourse in marriage is constituted by the

following: (1) the consummation, in canonical terms, of the marital sacrament (1917

Code of Canon Law, 1013); (2) the reproduction of children; (3) the remediation of

concupiscence; and (4) a contribution to the love of the spouses.[12] With this last

statement, writes Hogan, Pius XI goes beyond Aquinas', and certainly Augustine's,

position on the role of conjugal intercourse.[13] Finally, Pius XI considers that, in the union

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[10] Pius XII, *Address to the Midwives*, Acta Apostolicae Sedis (Vaticanis: Typis Polyglottis, 1951), 835–54, at 845. See Hogan, *Marriage as Relationship*, 39.

[11] See Hogan, *Marriage as Relationship*, 35-36, where she connects the approach of Pius XI and Pius XII to Aquinas' natural law theory in *Summa theologiae* I–II, q. 91, a. 2; q. 94, a.2; and Aquinas's own application of the goods of marriage in the *Supplementum* q. 49, a. 3; and q. 65, a.1).

[12] CC, 90.

[13] I would argue that Pius XI is not adding as much to Aquinas as Hogan claims. Hogan could have mentioned here Aquinas's position on "adultery" within marriage. In *Summa theologiae* II-II, q. 154, a. 8, reply 2 (hereafter ST) Aquinas states that one might be called too ardent a lover of his own wife, and therefore commit a break in the marriage fidelity even though he has not done so with another woman. The husband "may in a sense be called an adulterer." One may conclude that for Aquinas, the role of conjugal intercourse in marriage was related to love, a properly ordered love. Therefore when the spouse is motivated by too ardent a love or when making use of marriage indecently, conjugal intercourse acts against the proper ordering of spousal love. Additionally, I reject Hogan's claim regarding the ability of conjugal intercourse to express love in the thought of Augustine. Augustine stated that conjugal intercourse could express love, especially when one knowingly pays the marriage debt intending to aid the spouse's sanctification (*Sermon 51*, 30–36; *Sermon 162C*, *Sermon 354A*, 323–31; and *Sermon 392 to Married Couples*, 422–24). Unless otherwise noted, all English citations of Augustine will give the title of the work and page number from the *The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century*, ed. John E.

of spouses, the souls of the spouses are knit and joined more intimately and directly than their bodies.[14] In this respect, one ought not to overstate the role of conjugal intercourse in supporting the union and love of the couple in the mind of Pius XI. Hogan is right to find here only a seed of what was to come. Pius XI does not speak as if conjugal intercourse creates the love and union of the spouses; instead he sees the union of the spouses and their growth in holiness together where spouses come together in free, firm, deliberate acts of the will, where there is growth in virtue— the excellence accomplished through the practice of appropriately similar acts throughout a lifetime.[15]

On the fourth aspect of Hogan's analysis, the governance of the reproductive finality, the move toward a "relational" understanding of marriage gathers still more steam, yet ironically comes to a dead stop as far as she is concerned. Moral analysis shifts from what is in her opinion strictly biologistic natural law to include a wider notion of human involvement in natural law and a notion of the good of the human person as a whole, but the controlling factor remains the notion of marriage as procreative institution and the body as physical unity. The "marriage itself," as the subject of moral thought, does not yet enter the discussion. There are two aspects to consider in the governance of the reproductive finality: (1) the avoidance of conception, and (2) the accomplishment of conception. Interestingly, it was Pope Pius XII's interventions on the debate over artificial insemination (rather than contraception) that provided the milieu for his development of this relational approach.[16] In allocutions between 1951 and 1954, Pius

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Rotelle, O.S.A, et al. (online, Augustinian Heritage Institute 1991–) and print (Hyde Park, N.Y.: New City Press, 1991–).

[14] CC, 7.

[15] CC, 10.

[16] In a 1951 allocution (*Address to the Midwives*, 846), Pius XII affirmed the use of the infertile time as a means to avoid conception. He encouraged scientists to further develop the means to make this method workable for married couples. Such use of periodic continence might even be necessary "throughout the

XII rejects artificial insemination on the grounds that it is "a violation of the personalist, relational, unitive, giving aspects of marriage."[17] Furthermore:

> The Church has likewise rejected the opposite attitude which would pretend to separate, in generation, the biological activity in the personal relation of the married couple. The child is the fruit of the conjugal union when that union finds full expression by bringing into play the organic functions, the associated sensible emotions, and the spirited and disinterested love which animates the union. It is in the unity of the human act that we should consider the biological conditions of generation. Never is it permitted to separate these various aspects to the positive exclusion either of the procreative intention or of the conjugal relationship.[18]

Pius XII has provided a way of speaking that regulates conjugal intercourse by locating it within the marriage as a whole, as a relationship over time.[19] Because conception must take place within marriage, there can be no artificial insemination and/or fertilization with gametes from a person outside the marriage. Because conception must take place as a direct result of the natural shape of the conjugal act (namely, that which brings two persons together physically and emotionally and ends with internal insemination), there can be no artificial insemination and/or fertilization with gametes of the spouses. To do

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entire course of the marriage." Because of statements like this one, Hogan concludes, with Pius XII, that "procreation begins to be viewed within the context of the marriage rather than within the context of each and every conjugal act," *Marriage as Relationship*, 41.

[17] Hogan, *Marriage as Relationship*, 41.

[18] Pius XII, *Address to the Second World Congress on Fertility and Sterility*, Acta Apostolicae Sedis 48 (Vatican: Typis Polyglottis, 1956), 467–74, at 470). The pope continues: "The relationship which unites the father and the mother to their child finds its root in the organic fact and still more in the deliberate conduct of the spouses who give themselves to each other and whose will to give themselves blossoms forth and finds its true attainment in the being which they bring into the world."

[19] Nonetheless, she faults Pius XII, and later Paul VI for not allowing their position on contraception to be directed according to the same notion of the marriage as a whole, realized over time. She laments that even though a shift toward understanding marriage as "relationship" took place, the determining factor in the regulation of sexuality (on the contraception front) remained a strict biologistic natural law principle (Pius XI and Pius XII) followed by Paul VI's claim that it necessarily follows that there is an indissoluble link between the unitive and procreative aspect of any given act of conjugal intercourse.

so would be to attempt the procreative aspect of conjugal sexuality without the unitive

aspect (unitive in physical and emotional terms).[20]

As Hogan lays it out, the "traditional position" on marriage, finding its expression

in the thought of Pope Pius XI and Pius XII can be summarized in this way: (1) marriage

is a procreative institution created by God as a natural institution and a sacrament of the

new law instituted by Christ; (2) it has two central goods (procreation and education of

children, and the mutual aid and remediation of concupiscence), but its essence is

determined by the good unique to it as an institution, namely the primary good of

procreation and education of children. The secondary good is acknowledged to be more

excellent, though not determinative of the essence of marriage. (3) The role of conjugal

intercourse is the consummation, in canonical terms, of the marital sacrament (1917 Code

of Canon Law, 1013), the reproduction of children, the remediation of concupiscence,

and a contribution to the love of the spouses. (4) The governance of the reproductive

finality in marriage remains primarily influenced by the understanding of marriage as

procreative union, that is, despite Pius XI and Pius XII's development of the unitive,

personalist aspects of conjugal intercourse, they do not allow these aspects controlling

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[20] Hogan, *Marriage as Relationship*, 42–49. In terms of the avoidance of conception, Hogan finds in the "traditional position" a refusal to assess the morality of acts based on the relational language that had been developed in the thinking about the achievement of conception. For example, despite having made the claim for the importance of *both* the unitive and procreative qualities of the conjugal act, and despite his moral analysis of artificial insemination in terms of the marriage as a whole rather than only in terms of the act, Pius XII declares that any form of contraception is intrinsically evil based an older, Thomistic moral analysis of object of the act (i.e. its species), the intention of the agent, circumstances of the act. On these grounds, Pius XII declares that any act that frustrates the natural end of conjugal intercourse is per se evil. Thus, despite good intention and even good circumstance, it remains evil. Sterilization, in turn, is ruled out, as the principle of totality cannot be applied to this kind of mutilation for the sake of avoiding pregnancy. The avoidance of pregnancy relates to marriage as moral unity rather than the body as physical unity. Questions of totality in a moral unity refer to the actions performed by the members constituting the unity while, in a physical unity, questions of totality apply to the physical constituents of the unity. This line of thinking is developed by Pius XII in his allocutions from 1951 through 1954, and further by Gerald Kelly, S.J., in "Pope Pius XII and the Principle of Totality," *Theological Studies* 16 (1955): 373–96.

influence beyond the biologistic notions of natural law and thomistic moral analysis of object, intention, and circumstance.

**The Emerging Position**

Authors identifying an "emerging tradition" of marriage as relationship typically recognize the Second Vatican council and its Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (*Gaudium et spes*) as a touchstone. Two authors who have seen *Gaudium et spes* as such are Michael Lawler and Margaret Hogan. In his 2002 monograph *Marriage and the Catholic Church: Disputed Questions*, Michael Lawler identifies two "Catholic models of marriage" and argues for the Church's model of "marriage as interpersonal union" that developed out of the Second Vatican Council and the work that led immediately up to it.[21] Susan Ross also finds "relationship" at the center of the Church's emerging position since the Second Vatican Council, but Hogan's thicker theological account of "relationship" will receive more attention. Ross identifies the way John Paul II has used "relationship" to establish roles within marriages and the Church.[22]

In *Gaudium et spes*, the Council calls marriage a divine institution, an intimate union, and a sacrament. The notion of divine institution is carried over from the thought of Pius XI's *Casti connubii*. As intimate union, marriage is a particular kind of

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[21] Lawler, *Marriage and the Catholic Church*, 33–39. He notes the importance of Herbert Doms and Dietrich von Hildebrand, whose initially silenced work eventually became influential in official Catholic teaching.

[22] Susan A. Ross, "The Bridegroom and the Bride: The Theological Anthropology of John Paul II and Its Relation to the Bible and Homosexuality." In *Sexual Diversity and Catholicism: Toward the Development of Moral Theology*. Ed. Patricia Beattie Jung, with Joseph Andrew Coray (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 2001). Ross's concern is that relationship language is easily employed to reify gender roles in marriage according to the sex of the spouse. Ross disapproves of relationship language when it is used to refer only to genital complementarity and attendant roles in marriage.

relationship: an "intimate partnership of married life and love."[23] In it, the "spouses

mutually bestow and accept each other" in a relationship that is so close as to be

characterized by a *vinculum sacrum*.[24] The union is seen with greater emphasis on the

love that resides at its center. It develops as "a man and a woman, by their compact *of*

*conjugal love* 'are no longer two, but one flesh' (Matt 19:6)."[25] The focus on canonical

consummation is also backgrounded, as "the actualization of the unity, the relationship

itself…is accomplished only in time."[26] Further, the ends of marriage take a place beside

one another, no longer hierarchically arranged.

The essence of marriage is a relationship of a particular kind rather than primarily

an institution defined by an essential end. As Hogan puts it, "because the marital union

supplies the matrix of conditions both for the nurturing of already existing children and

for the possibility of additional children, the continuation of the union itself is

essential."[27] This union is, moreover, a union of equals. Lisa Cahill, for her part, applauds

what she sees as attempts by John Paul II since Vatican II to promote equal dignity within

marriage (though not without concern).[28] John Paul II has continually attempted to raise

the dignity of the marriage relationship itself, arguing that marriage forms a "communion

of persons." In fact, he identified the first task of families as precisely this: forming a

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[23] CC, 24, 37; GS, 48.
[24] Ibid.
[25] GS, 48. Hogan, *Marriage as Relationship*, 52.
[26] Ibid., 53.
[27] Ibid., 53.
[28] Cahill, *Family*, 90–92. She question's John Paul II's conclusion that the Church's institutional practices are in line with equality and make sense in terms of complementarity, especially those whereby women "are not allowed access to contraception, abortion, or divorce under any circumstances; they are not to be ordained priests" (ibid., 92). She goes on to say, "his notion that women are by nature maternal; that, even when not literally mother, their 'special genius' consists in nurturing, maternal behavior in all other relationships; and that the 'special' feminine vocation to love provides a rationale for exclusion from the church's most respected leadership roles, are simply incredible" (ibid.). Her concern is that these views undermine what seems to be John Paul II's sincerity about gender equality in family and society.

communion of persons.[29] These unions, or communions, therefore, are to be sought as the

primary, essential, necessary good, a good contributing to the perfection of the spouses,

and existing as the matrix for the nurturing and procreation of children. As a sacrament,

the marriage confers the grace necessary to perform the duties of marriage and has an

indissoluble character. What is interesting here, though, is that the relationship has taken

primacy of place over procreation in regard to one of the effects of the sacrament.

Whereas for Pius XI and XII, the indissolubility conferred in the sacrament is required

for the good of the offspring and the ability to educate and nurture them, for the Second

Vatican Council indissolubility is required for the purposes of the intimate union in

which the perfection of the partners will be realized.[30]

The role of conjugal intercourse in the life of the marriage is treated explicitly by

the Council: "Where the intimacy of marriage life is broken off, its faithfulness can

sometimes be imperiled and its quality of fruitfulness ruined, for then the upbringing of

the children and the courage to accept new ones are both endangered."[31] For Hogan this

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[29] FC, 15, 17.

[30] Hogan (*Marriage as a Relationship*, 60) writes, "Fidelity and indissolubility appear as requirements and characteristics of marriage considered as an intimate union in which the perfection of the partners is to be realized, rather than as a requirement of marriage as a procreative union. Understood in this latter sense, marriage would seem to require only a relative indissolubility, lasting as long as the children remain children, that is, are dependent." I reject Hogan's conclusion that only relative indissolubility is required if that indissolubility is related to procreation. Her conclusion is incorrect because it is grounded in a false assumption—parenthood ends when children reach legal adulthood according to the state, that is, when they become "independent." On the contrary, the task of parenting endures for the whole of the child's and the parent's life, as does the child's dependence on the parent. Only if parenting is conceived of as creating an autonomous, individual who will primarily operate and belong in a world of contractual relationship outside the home and in alienation from other previous generations does Hogan's conclusion about relative indissolubility follow. If the task of parenthood is conceived of as raising members of a common household of God, wherein they will reside both now and eschatologically, then an absolute indissolubility seems more reasonable. The relation of parent and child is indissoluble just as the relation of spousalhood is indissoluble.

[31] GS, 51. In the previous sentence, the Council states that during times when the size of a family should not be increased, "the faithful exercise of love and the full intimacy of their lives is hard to maintain." The Vatican website translates "intimacy" for "consuetudo." "Consuetudo" could also be translated as "practice," or "habit." Intimacy captures the central concern of the passage, but that concern would not be lost by translating with the wider term of "practice." In fact, the term "practice" would here capture the

is a clear development on the "traditional position," since it recognizes the direct link between, and even necessity of conjugal intercourse for the maintenance of the marital relationship. Further, the role of conjugal intercourse is wrapped up in the Council's description of fully human marital love:

> It is directed from one person to another through an affection of the will; it involves the good of the whole person, and therefore can enrich the expression of the body and the mind with a unique dignity, ennobling these deepest expressions as special ingredients and signs of the friendship distinctive of marriage.[32]

Hogan and Lawler emphasize the Council's introduction of the terms "reasonable" and "responsible" into the discussion of the regulation of the procreative finality. As she sees it, the Council does *not* make determinative the natural law foundation for regulating marriage's reproductive finality, but rather focuses on the essence or nature of the person, a rational being, as the determinant. The marriage partners must balance the essential directedness of their married love toward procreation and education of children with the necessity to accomplish that procreation and education as rational, responsible beings in such a way that the marital relationship will be sustained as the matrix for continued growth in holiness and further procreation and education. As Lawler puts it, "the difference the interpersonal union model of marriage makes is that it places the procreation of the relationship of the spouses, their marital life and love, on an equal footing with the procreation of children."[33]

Lawler and Hogan find that the role of conjugal intercourse in this prudential balancing of the good of procreation and the good of sustaining the marriage as "relationship" has not been given reign to develop as a controlling criterion for the

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fuller picture of the difficulties couples encounter in times where couples feel compelled to avoid another pregnancy.

[32] Ibid., 49.

[33] Lawler, *Marriage in the Catholic Church*, 38.

governance of the procreative finality in marriage. In the midst of the Council, Paul VI

reserved the particular question of appropriate means for regulating births to a special

study group of lay and religious, married and single contributors.[34] Ultimately, the

Council adverts to "objective criteria" and cite the work of Pius XI and XII, which follow

a Thomistic moral analysis wherein any act of contraception is intrinsically evil, as it is

always defective on one of the three criteria of judgment (in this case object) for a moral

act.[35] Hogan follows this line of thought through Paul VI's *Humanae vitae* and John Paul

II's *Donum vitae*, finding the same deficiencies therein, and adding one more: the so-

called indissoluble link between the procreative and unitive character of the conjugal act.

In sum, Hogan finds the emerging position in Catholic teaching on marriage to

have been a development on the following movements: (1) from procreative institution to

procreative union; (2) from primary and secondary ends to two co-equal ends; (3) from

the body as criteria of judgment to the person "integrally and adequately considered" as

the criteria of judgment; and (4) from an emphasis on "procreation and education" to the

term "responsible parenthood."[36] On the other hand, she criticizes the following aspects

of the emerging position: (l) despite the rhetorical shift from procreative institution, and

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[34] See William Henry Shannon, *The Lively Debate: Response to Humanae vitae* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1970); Robert McClory, *Turning Point: The Inside Story of the Papal Birth Control Commission, and how Humanae vitae Changed the Life of Patty Crowley and the Future of the Church* (New York: Crossroad, 1995) Robert E. Obach, *The Catholic Church on Marital Intercourse: From St. Paul to Pope John Paul II* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2009), 175–88.

[35] Thomas Aquinas, in ST I-II, q. 18, develops the notion of how an act is specified as good or evil. GS, 51, seems to follow this manner of analysis on the subject of contraception, namely, the notion that *bonum ex integra causa et malum ex quocumque defectu*. An act is good only if it is good in terms of intention, circumstance, and object. On the other hand, an act can be considered evil by defect in any one of those categories. The Council writes, "When there is a question of harmonizing conjugal love with the responsible transmission of life, the moral aspects of any procedure does not depend solely on sincere intentions or on an evaluation of motives, but must be determined by objective standards. These, based on the nature of the human person and his acts, preserve the full sense of mutual self-giving and human procreation in the context of true love. Such a goal cannot be achieved unless the virtue of conjugal chastity is sincerely practiced" (GS, 51).

[36] Hogan, *Marriage as Relationship*, 105.

from the body as criteria, those categories seem to remain the determining factors in questions regarding the regulation of the reproductive finality in marriage; (2) despite embracing the unitive quality of conjugal intercourse along with its procreative quality, she considers the argument for an indissoluble link between the two in each act of conjugal intercourse flawed on a philosophical basis. After all, "inasmuch as conception is distant in time and place from the unitive reality of marital intercourse, interventions, whether to avoid or to accomplish conception, which are distant in time and place, are appropriate."[37] "The tradition's understanding of the essential nature of marriage is incomplete, but the heuristic structures are in place to guide to a more complete understanding of marriage's nature and from there the role of conjugal intercourse in it and the way to go about ordering the ends of marriage."[38]

As a way of completing this notion of marriage emerging from the tradition, Hogan proposes a vision of marriage as relationship that offers a postmodern attention to data of experience, yet does not drown in a sea of epistemological uncertainty and vagueness. At the same time she maintains the objective reality of marriage's "nature." Hogan begins by asserting that her position is not a departure from but a development of the Catholic natural law tradition. Hogan affirms that the idea of marriage as a "relationship" has foundation in Scripture,[39] Aristotle,[40] and Aquinas,[41] and is further

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[37] Hogan, *Marriage as Relationship*, 105.

[38] Ibid., 107.

[39] From Scripture, Hogan cites Genesis 2:18, 22–24; Mt 19:5–6; Eph 5:31–32; and 1 Cor 6:16. Hogan emphasizes the Old Testament theme of "two becoming one flesh" that is reinforced by the New Testament.

[40] From Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Politics*, Hogan pulls the definition of marriage as a *physei syndyastikon* (Aristotle, 1941a, 1162a 16), a "joining of two into oneness." She pulls from Aristotle the notions that marriage and the household are prior to the *polis*. Furthermore, "the natural biological relationship under the command of the rational may be conducive to the generation of a moral relationship, that is, the kind of friendship based on virtue," (Hogan, *Marriage as Relationship*, 115).

[41] Hogan sees Aquinas defending Peter Lombard's position that the marital relationship is a natural relationship, "a tie between the man and a definite woman," and furthermore, a "union of man and woman

explicated by twentieth-century theologians before and after Vatican II.[42] She asserts,

with Aquinas, that "there is order in the created world; (2) the order in the created world

derives from eternal law; (3) the order in the created world is accessible to human reason;

hence (4) there is an objective moral order accessible to human reason."[43] Explicating

Bernard Lonergan, Hogan affirms:

> The explication of any nature in the created world is accomplished, albeit never completely, in an empirical process directed by 'the immanent and recurrently operative structure' of human intelligence and results in the progressively cumulative set of judgments of concrete fact.[44]

A nature, then, is an abstraction from concrete observations. It is a recurring set of

tendencies and inclinations concretely manifested.[45]

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involving their living together in individual partnership." Seeing him go beyond Lombard, she identifies in Aquinas further characteristics of this union—a unity of purpose and a unity of being. It is the greatest of all joinings, since it is of the soul and the body, wherefore, it is called a conjugal union. She explains his refusal to make "union" the controlling aspect of marriage's moral concerns on two accounts: (1) residual effects of Stoicism and Augustinian Manichaeism endure in Aquinas; and (2) Aquinas still harbors discomfort over the marital act because its pleasure is powerful enough to impair reason. See Hogan, *Marriage as Relationship*, 117. Unfortunately, Hogan has mischaracterized Aquinas' thought on the marital act here. Aquinas places the argument about the overpowering pleasure of the marital act in an objection that he refutes. See *Summa theologiae*, *suppl.*, q. 41, a. 3, obj. 6, and reply to. obj. 6.

[42] Hogan notes pre-Vatican II theologians Anton Koch, Fidelis Schwendinger, Dietrich von Hildebrand, and Herbert Doms. These authors anticipated the shift in *Gaudium et spes* toward a leveling of the goods of marriage and a transition from talking of marital goods to the "meaning" of marriage. Among the post-Vatican II authors, Hogan finds two groups, being more critical of the first than the second: (1) Ronald Lawler, Joseph M. Boyle, Jr., and William E. May, all of whom she criticizes for giving some explanatory power to the personal union account of marriage, yet retaining the controlling status of the notion "procreative union;" and (2) Karl Rahner, Thomas A. Shannon, John Paul II, Theodore Mackin, and Lisa Sowle Cahill, who "focus on marriage as an interpersonal relationship of persons in love" (*Marriage as Relationship*, 124).

[43] Ibid., 108.

[44] Ibid., 109. "The nature in question is examined in its concrete manifestations. The concrete manifestations are the inclinations and tendencies which press for actualization as perfections of the nature. From the experience and observations, an understanding of the nature is reached. In the presence of sufficient evidence the understanding is judged to be correct. In addition to the activity of reason which studies the nature, there is the activity of reason which seeks good. Practical reason in seeking goodness, as well as truth, recognizes the proper manner of the actualization of those tendencies and inclinations, and practical reason commands their realization…Natural law precepts arise, not from a direct revelation from God, but in the grasp by human reason of the goods of human flourishing."

[45] Bernard Lonergan, *Insight*, 60–62. Hogan does not use the term, but she is describing the process of observation of patterns intelligible only in abstraction from the empirical residue of place and time that make the concrete manifestations of a nature "different" despite their essential equivalence.

What, then, is the nature of marriage for Hogan? For Hogan, "marriage has an essential nature as a particular type of human relationship…It is an intimate community of marital life and love." Further, "marriage is, in its essential nature, an intimate union of persons."[46] Just as human nature is physical, appetitive, rational, and spiritual, so too is the human, marital relationship physical, appetitive, rational, and spiritual.[47] Marriage is a "covenanted, lifelong, heterosexual, sacramental union begun by a consent (intention and antecedent capacity) to bring to reality this union."[48] "The union is promised, that is, it is ratified in an act of consent. The Consent is signified, that is, initially and physically consummated…in a particular type of act, the marriage act. The intimate relationship, as a singularity in being, a singularity in consciousness, and a singularity in conscience, is brought to completion, that is, more fully consummated, over a lifetime."[49]

Hogan must render the term "relationship" with precision, though, if it is to have explanatory power. Following canon law, Hogan calls the relationship that is marriage "a being in itself," a "juridical person." At the moment of consent, the "becoming of marriage" exists (*matrimonium in fieri*). From that point on, the "union itself" (*matrimonium in facto esse*) "begins to emerge as a *new being*."[50] From a more Thomistic, Aristotelian vantage, Hogan claims that "as a reality in the objective order, marriage is an entity constituted in the real relation of subject to subject. The relationship, a union, is established as a nexus or connection between two persons who are, in their nature, mutually ordered to each other. The spouses, as the principles of the relationship, are

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[46] Hogan, *Marriage as Relationship*, 109.
[47] Ibid., 110
[48] Ibid., 111.
[49] Ibid., 108–09. Here Hogan is relying on Bernard Lonergan's definition of community, which involves the creation of a common consciousness and common conscience over time by a sharing of common or complementary experiences, insights (understanding), judgments, and decisions. These constitute the "substance of community." See Lonergan, *Method*, 50.
[50] Hogan, *Marriage as Relationship*, 111–12.

those whose 'to be' precisely as spouses is to be ordered to each other."[51] According to

this definition, the relationship is real, rather than logical. It is a relation linked

intrinsically to the nature of the principle constituents of the relationship. Therefore, it is

a real relation existing in each spouse.[52] In other words, to be "spouse" is to be ordered,

or related *to* another person in a particular, spousal way. In becoming a spouse a person

forever possesses a real relation of "spousalhood" with respect to their husband or wife.[53]

Hogan's next move is to determine marriage's specific difference from all other

human relationships. In one sense, this is just another definition of marriage. Marriage

has three distinctions from any other human relationship. "(1) This relationship is the

actual personal union[54] of the partners, each of whom represents a partial manifestation of

humanity to form a new being, the marriage; (2) within this union, the procreation and

education of children are to be accomplished; and (3) within this union, the flourishing of

the individual partners, as individuals, is to be accomplished as each helps and satisfies

the other."[55] This distinction carries a heavy workload for Hogan: (1) it describes the

nature of marriage; (2) it defines the ends of marriage (the union itself, the children, and

the flourishing of the individual partners); (3) it identifies the marriage itself as an

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[51] Ibid., 110. Here she relies on Aquinas' ST, 1, 1. 28, a. 1.

[52] The definition of real and logical relations is itself debated. For example, see Catherine M. Lacugna, *God-For-Us: The Trinity and Christian Life* (San Francisco: Harper, 1991); Earl Muller, S.J., "Real Relations and the Divine: Issues in Thomas's Understanding of God's Relation to the World," *Theological Studies* 56 (1995): 673–95; and Martin, J. De Nys, "God, Creatures, and Relations: Revisiting Classical Theism," *Journal of Religion* 81 (2001): 595–614. Hogan, *Marriage as Relationship*, 117, cites Aquinas's *Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard*, bk. 4, d. 27, q. 44, a. 3; q.1, 2, and 3 for a definition of marriage as a real relationship.

[53] For the sake of contrast, one might say that the relation "left" is a logical relation if it is applied to either of the edges of this very piece of paper. The relation is not real, but logical, since the "left" side of this paper is not an essential quality or a subsistent accident of the paper, qua paper. If I flip the paper over, the "left" side changes. Therefore the relationship "leftness" does not exist in the paper, so it is a logical, or rational, relationship.

[54] From *CIC*, 1055, Hogan further defines the union as covenanted, life-long, heterosexual, sacramental, and a giving and receiving.

[55] Hogan, *Marriage as Relationship*, 125–26.

objective reality and moral subject; and (4) it differentiates discrete identities for the subjects constituting the marriage (each person has three identities relevant to each of the three ends of marriage—spouse, parent, and individual). Thus, in marriage Hogan finds three kinds of ends and three corresponding identities, according to which those ends are actualized: (1) unitive—spouses; (2) procreative—parents; and (3) personalist—individuals. Herein lies her attempt at a language, or grammar, for discussing what we are doing in marriage.

As a response to her critique of the tradition, Hogan gives controlling status to the unitive end and the spousal identity of marriage over the procreative end and identity. Her reason is three-fold: (1) she understands the tradition to be moving in this direction but finds that it remains somehow unwilling to take the final step; (2) she proposes a kind of Liguorian understanding of intrinsic-essential ends and intrinsic-accidental ends in marriage that allows for a separation of the procreative ends from the unitive ends; and (2) she attempts to apply Bernard Lonergan's theory of finality and his theology of marriage. First, as the section above on the traditional position and the emerging position has shown, Hogan consistently finds theologians and magisterial documents relying increasingly on relational terminology, yet seemingly allowing biologistic concerns to take controlling status in moral determinations within marriage. Second, reading John Noonan's *Contraception*,[56] Hogan finds an analysis of St. Alphonsus Liguori's thought sympathetic to her own position on the separability of marriage's ends. Hogan identifies the union itself as the "intrinsic-necessary" end of marriage. On the other hand, she calls

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[56] John Noonan, *Contraception: A History of Its Treatment by the Catholic Theologians and Canonists*, rev. ed. (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1986), 328.

the procreative and personalist "intrinsic-contingent" ends.[57] In other words, the marriage

relationship is first concerned with its own endurance. This position results in a sort of

tautological statement: in order for the marriage to be a marriage, the marriage must

endure. On the other hand, the marriage remains a marriage even if the partners, as

"individuals," do not flourish and even if the partners never procreate and educate

children. The personalist and procreative ends belong to marriage by nature, but need not

be actualized for the marriage to remain extant. The intrinsic-contingent ends, then, serve

the preservation of the union, the marriage itself. The "relationship" takes on a sort of life

of its own as a unity created by the consent of the spouses. The union of marriage

"supplies the matrix of conditions for children" and personal flourishing, whether or not

those ends ever occur.[58]

Finally, Hogan applies Lonergan's notion of finality to her discussion of the

marital relationship. As Hogan reads Lonergan, "finality, or final causality, is the

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[57] Unfortunately, Hogan's reliance on Noonan is problematic. Her "development" of Liguori's insight is not faithful to Liguori himself. See Alphonsus Liguori, *Theologia Moralis*, *Editio Nova cum antiquis editionibus diligenter collata in singulis auctorum allegationibus recognita notisque critics et commentariis illustrata*, 4 vols. Cura et studio P. Leonardi Gaudé (Rome: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1912), vol. 4, 61–62. In actuality, Liguori states the following: "Tres fines in matrimonio considerari possunt: fines intrinseci essentiales, intrinseci accidentales, et fines accidentales extrinseci. Fines intrinseci essentiales sunt duo: traditio mutua cum obligatione reddendi debitum, et vinculum indissolubile. Fines intrinseci accidentales pariter sunt duo: procreation prolis, et remedium concupiscentiae. Fines autem accidentales extrinseci plurimi esse possunt, ut pax concilianda, voluptas captanda, etc." I would hesitate to say that "vinculum," in Liguori's mind, is taken to mean "relationship," in the fully developed sense Hogan has put forth. That would be going beyond Liguori himself. Further, the "traditio mutua cum obligatione reddendi debitum" is also an intrinsic essential end. For Liguori, though, it does not carry the kind of robust relational weight Hogan would like to give it. Whereas Hogan calls the intrinsic-necessary end of marriage the union in the sense of the fully human relationship of spousalhood, Liguori calls the intrinsic-essential ends of marriage the mutual handing over with the obligation to render the debt, and the indissoluble bond. Now, this bond is only indissoluble between baptized Christians, for whom the bond is always a grace, a gift of the sacrament. Therefore, I would argue that Liguori is primarily bringing a sacramental, ecclesial context into view with this intrinsic essential end. Liguori would not argue that people marry for the sake of the marriage relationship itself. This may be the intrinsic essential end of the sacrament but is not the primary end sought by the couple over the course of their marriage. For a more complete analysis of Liguori's theology of marriage see Kent Lasnoski, "Alphonsus Liguori's Moral Theology of Marriage: Refreshing Realism, Continued Relevance," *Nova et Vetera*, in press.
[58] Hogan, *Marriage as a Relationship*, 127.

operation of causation as directed to an end as good, that is, perfective of the being."[59]

Hogan identifies three ends of marriage in Lonergan's thought: essential goods, excellent

goods, and absolute goods. She then associates these goods with the corresponding

finality found in Lonergan's article on marriage, "Finality, Love, Marriage": (1)

horizontal, (2) vertical, and (3) absolute.[60] Her application of finality in marriage follows:

there are three kinds of ends (or goods) in marriage—unitive, procreative, and personalist;

each of those species of good has an essential good, a more excellent good, and an

absolute good; the essential good is a result of marriage's horizontal finality; the more

excellent good results from marriage's vertical finality; and the absolute good is the result

of marriage's absolute finality. Take, for example, the unitive end of marriage. First,

marriage has a unitive end. The unitive end has a horizontal finality in an essential good,

that is, by nature marriage is ordered to continue itself as an organistic union. By

appetition males and females are attracted to each other and respond to one another.

Second, marriage's unitive end has a vertical finality in a more excellent good, that is, to

be a union of friendship—a unity of body, consciousness, and conscience. Human reason

integrates and orders animal appetition and passion and "forms the set of conditions

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[59] Ibid., 130. Here she is explicating Bernard Lonergan, "Finality, Love, Marriage," *Theological Studies* 4 (1943): 477–510. Unfortunately, Hogan does not give as much attention to the way Lonergan speaks of "finality" in *Insight*. She has just touched the surface of what Lonergan means by finality and, unfortunately, her limitation to "Finality, Love, Marriage" causes her to associate "finality" too closely with final causality, an Aristotelian notion of *telos*, or a pull up toward something that is above. Lonergan argues against these notions of finality in *Insight*. First, finality is not "the expedient of a lazy intellect trying to make amends for deficiencies in its account of efficient causality," 473. Second, Finality is not the parallel of Aristotelian "telos" (476), for Aristotle "did not conceive finality as heading beyond every generically and specifically determinate achievement" (507). Much less is finality a "pull exerted by the future on the present" (472). A "telos" is determinate goal "out there" that is awaiting achievement. Finality is not extrinsic, that is, it is not efficient or final causality (476). Finally, in *Insight* (472–76, 557–58) Lonergan also spells out positively what finality *is*. Finality is: (1) the dynamic aspect of the real; (2) a directed dynamism; (3) resistant to deductivism; (4) indeterminate; (5) an effectively probable realization of possibilities; (6) realistic; (7) universal; (8) nuanced; and (9) flexible.
[60] See Bernard Lonergan, "Finality, Love, Marriage," *Theological Studies* 3 (1943): 477–510.

which incline toward the emergence of unity of consciousness and unity of conscience."[61]
Finally, as Hogan describes it, the unitive end of marriage has an absolute finality in an
absolute good, that is, union with God.[62] The triple unity of body, consciousness, and
conscience supplies the matrix wherein the spouses fulfill their role as parents, and
wherein the marital union is receptive to the transforming power of grace, whereby they
are brought to the possibility of attaining the absolute good of union with God. Hogan
continues with this same kind of analysis on the other two specific ends of marriage: the
procreative and the personalist ends.

**Critique**

This description of marriage as relationship, especially Hogan's account of the
nature of marriage, the role of sexual intercourse, and the manner of regulating the
actualization of the various finalities in marriage obviously contains theological richness,
an engagement with the tradition, and a creative development. Her developments are
helpful for addressing some of the problems confronting theologies of marriage. As an
answer for Hauerwas's concern about our linguistic inability to talk about what we are
doing in marriage, Hogan provides a language to speak intelligibly and thoroughly about
what partners are doing in marriage by organizing the three identities, the three ends, and
the goods within those ends. Second, as an answer to Rubio's philosophical problematic
of modernism and postmodernism, (ideal family over-against the "real" families) Hogan
provides a way to bring the ideals for marriage proposed by the magisterial writings of

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[61] Hogan, *Marriage as a Relationship*, 133.
[62] Ibid., 130–139.

the Church into discussion with spousal experience. As an answer to those who find

inadequate the notion of marriage as procreative union, her development is to complete

the trend she identifies within the Catholic tradition of the last century toward a focus on

the marriage itself, the relationship itself, as the primary end or object of the acts that take

place in the married life and also the primary moral subject of those acts. The other goods

of marriage serve the marriage, the relationship itself.

Another advantage the "marriage as relationship" paradigm presents for the 21st-

century theological debate is that it seems to attract a variety of scholars. As part of the

theological debate on marriage in the twenty-first century, Hogan's hypothesis has much

to recommend it: (1) its focus on the "nature and ends" of marriage attracts perhaps more

traditionalist scholars;[63] (2) its integration of marriage as a relationship that provides the

matrix for the actualization of certain ends attracts those theologians of a more revisionist

stance. These latter scholars have a more ostensible postmodern epistemological

skepticism about marriage, especially with respect to its status as indissoluble, as

sacrament, and the regulation of sexuality therein.[64] Bringing these two kinds of

theologians into charitable dialogue presents a challenge, one to which Hogan has made

strides. Rather than seeing marriage as already an indissoluble communion of persons

serving life, transforming society, and participating in the mystery of Christ in the church,

Hogan's vision is a marital relationship that sets up the conditions for those tasks to be

accomplished over time to a greater or lesser extent.[65] From a feminist perspective,

Hogan's rich notion of the marital friendship and the personalist end of marriage strongly

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[63] For example, Patrick Lee and Robert P. George, "What Male-Female Complementarity Makes Possible: Marriage as a Two-in-one-flesh union," *Theological Studies* 69 (2008): 641–62.

[64] See, for example, Lisa Sowle Cahill, *Sex, Gender, and Christian Ethics* (New York: Cambridge University, 1996).

[65] These are four tasks assigned to the family by John Paul II in FC, 17.

rejects patriarchal marital forms. From an ecumenical standpoint, as well as from the

position of dialogue with civil society and the state, her vision of marriage as human

relationship is accessible. It does not depend on sacramental language, and her

development from natural, to reasonable, to transcendental or absolute levels of

relationship is intelligible to policy-makers, because the transcendental or absolute level

of the relationship can be prescinded from. Finally, Hogan's robust characterization of

the marriage's objective reality as a moral agent allows her to argue for a less restrictive

method of conception regulation (both achievement and avoidance) than is currently

approved by the Church.[66]

This characterization of marriage as relationship is not, however, without cost.

Two problems are evident at the general level. First, Hogan's account is so focused on

natural law and philosophy that it lacks relationship to Christology, and makes no

mention of the Trinity. The model of Christ's spousal love for the Church is all but

entirely absent from this account. Second, Hogan's account of marriage as relationship

does not place the relationship of marriage deep enough in the life of the Church. The

connection between marriage as natural, human relationship and as Christian sacrament

was overly voluntarized. For Christians, the ecclesial character of matrimony is not added

on top of the natural character, but the natural character is altered because the couple

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[66] In fact, this is the ultimate reason for her development of marriage as a relationship. The upshot for her is that it allows for a re-understanding of the regulation of the reproductive finality within marriage that embraces both artificial contraception and artificial insemination and in vitro fertilization and embryo transfer. Hogan writes, "Reasonable means may be utilized, for a determinate or an indeterminate time, to prevent procreation w/in particular acts of conjugal intercourse w/in the vocation of marriage. These means include rhythm, contraception, and sterilization. The choice of means should be a function of the seriousness of the reasons for the avoidance of procreation" (*Marriage as Relationship*, 140). Artificial insemination and in vitro fertilization and embryo transfer are allowed by saying that just as in conjugal intercourse fertilization (procreation) is distant in time and space from the act of conjugal intercourse, so too in IVF and AI fertilization and procreation are distant in time and space from conjugal intercourse (ibid.).

marries in the church as part of Christ's body. Hogan's account does not do enough to capture this inherently sacramental aspect of the Christian marriage relationship. The christological and trinitarian, and the ecclesial characteristics of marriage are theological loci addressed by the paradigm I will be developing (marriage as Common Way in Christ) throughout the dissertation, especially in light of another state of life that has better developed these theological loci: vowed religious life in community.

At a more nuanced level, Hogan's account of marriage as relationship has other costs. First, her distinction of the marital relationship from all other human relationships is overdrawn. Uniqueness belongs to marriage among all human relations because "within this union, the flourishing of the individual partners, as individuals, is to be accomplished as each helps and satisfies the other."[67] I find this claim unsupportable. Marriage is not the only union within which "the flourishing of the individual partners, as individuals, is to be accomplished as each helps and satisfies the other." The distinctiveness of marriage is not the desire for fully human (and thus supernatural) flourishing, nor the help with daily tasks, nor even the satisfaction of one another. Human flourishing is sought in all partnerships, e.g., vowed religious life-in-community. Doubtless, any persons abiding in intentional Christian community, whether vowed religious, non-vowed lay single life, or married life, seek each other's flourishing and help each other while satisfying each other. The goal of church as the people of God, as the household of God, is to be the kind of community that seeks full flourishing for all the members of Christ's own body. The Church, and each institution within it, whether lay apostolic movements, marriage, or vowed religious life-in-community, is the community wherein help is found for remedy of concupiscence through prayer and the sacraments,

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[67] Hogan, *Marriage as a Relationship*, 126.

especially penance and Eucharist. Married people as constituents of a household, help each other avoid sin and flourish inasmuch as they are "church," that is, inasmuch as they share in the mystery of Christ—not inasmuch as they are "family" in the modern western sense. Finally, not even "satisfaction of one another" distinguishes marriage, generally speaking. Satisfaction can only be the distinguishing factor for the marital relationship if more precision is given that term. If the term is reduced to sexual satisfaction, or expanded by the addition of sexual satisfaction to other kinds of satisfaction, then it distinguishes the conjugal relationship from any other human relationship. Regardless of how the term is defined, Hogan seems to be asking too much of marriage on this front.[68]

Second, Hogan's notion of marriage as a relationship suffers from what David Matzko McCarthy calls a transcendental romanticism that characterizes such approaches to marriage as Vincent Genovesi's, Mary Greeley Durkin, and John Paul II's.[69] In her discussion of the relationship between the unitive and procreative ends of marriage, Hogan states that "marriage is always a union. The conjugal act is always unitive."[70] Because she does not merely mean physically, this characterization seems reductive of and inattentive to experience. As Matzko McCarthy has put it, according to this kind of transcendental sexuality, "sex 'just because,' which is one of the great opportunities of

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[68] Hogan leans in the direction of the kind of distinction Jana M. Bennett resists in her book *Water is Thicker than Blood*, 8, 155. The thought that marriage is a relationship wherein the greatest personal flourishing, help against sin and in daily tasks, and finally satisfaction will take place contributes to what Bennett calls a false eschatology of the family. It forgets the spouses' prior and greater commitment to the household of God, to their baptismal, ecclesial belonging.

[69] McCarthy, *Sex and Love in the Home*, 62–64: "Romantic marriage corresponds precisely to the 'transcendent sexuality' of the predominant theological personalism (discussed in Chapter 2). The standard personalist account proposes that sex connects the 'whole person.' Parallel to their theology of sex, personalists attempt to out-romance romantic love on its own terms." The central problem with the personalist or transcendental sexuality is that it too displaces sex from the household, leaving it placeless and timeless. Its meaning and fullness is only present as a moment, the moment of complete rapture, complete loss of self to the other, ibid., 45–47. McCarthy applies this critique to Catholic, personalist approaches to sexuality such as Vincent Genovesi, *In Pursuit of Love: Catholic Morality and Human Sexuality*, 2nd ed. (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical, 1996).

[70] Hogan, *Marriage as a Relationship*, 127.

marriage, will never measure up."[71] Certainly the conjugal act is always physically unitive, but can be doubtless more or less an authentic witness to its nature as psychologically, affectively, and spiritually unitive.

Third, Hogan misreads Lonergan's understanding of vertical and absolute finality and their role in human, married life. Her mistake results in the creation of and separation between "natural" (secular) and "supernatural" (religious, graced) spaces in married life and human life in general. This consequence will become clear once I have laid out her reading of Lonergan in more detail. Hogan sees in Lonergan's thought on marriage three finalities: horizontal, vertical, and transcendental. Each of these has its own distinct general end and specific end. In reference to the unitive end of marriage and the spousal identity of the partners these three finalities play out thus: On the level of horizontal finality (the tendency of a thing toward the end commensurate of its nature), the marriage as relationship tends toward the organistic union of a man and a woman. On the level of vertical finality (the potency of a concrete plurality of events to form more complex schemes of recurrence, or the potency of a concrete plurality of things to reach a good more excellent than is commensurate to their nature) the marriage as relationship is the matrix wherein the organistic union of *more than one person* may be integrated by reason into a union of friendship based in virtue. At the level of absolute, transcendental finality (the potency of a thing for its absolute good) the marriage as relationship is the set of conditions "receptive to the transforming power of grace." In other words, when it comes to marriage as relationship, as unitive, that is as spousal, the horizontal finality is at the

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[71] McCarthy, *Sex and Love in the Home*, 47.

animal level of passion; the vertical finality is at the rational level of friendship; and only

the absolute or "transcendental" finality is at the level of "total love" or union with God.[72]

At first this explication of Lonergan sounds attractive. It describes what appears

to be an integrative understanding of biological (animal), personal (human, rational), and

graced aspects of life in marriage, while avoiding a pelagian notion that humans might by

themselves work their way up from passion to friendship to total love and union with

each other and God. So where is the mistake?

The mistake is to think that "absolute" or what Hogan calls "transcendental"

finality operates chronologically or developmentally as a sort of third step in human

flourishing that takes place after horizontal and vertical finality have reach their limit. For

Lonergan, absolute finality is not happening on top of horizontal and vertical finality.

Rather, it is behind and in a sense prior to horizontal and vertical finality.[73] Absolute

finality sits within both horizontal and vertical finality: (1) horizontal finality is any

being's particular mode of appetition for its absolute good. A being's essence limits its

modes of appetition and the terms of its various processes, but these modes of appetition

and terms of processes are proportionate participations in the absolute good of the being.

Therefore, it is on account of any existent's ordination to the absolute good that it has any

commensurate terms and processes associated with its essence at all. For example, at the

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[72] Hogan, *Marriage as a Relationship*, 132–33.

[73] "Now in our hierarchic universe God is at once absolute motive and absolute term...On the other hand, the mode in which the different grades of being respond to God as motive or attain Him as term is always limited…Further, the ground of such limitation is essence…the essence, say, of sensitive appetite, of rational appetite, of infused charity; for it is essence that limits…accordingly one has to think of the universe as a series of horizontal strata; on each level reality responds to God as absolute motive and tends to Him as absolute term; but on each level it does so differently" ("Finality, Love, Marriage," 480). "One finality is affirmed, besides the absolute reference of all things to God and the horizontal reference of each thing to its commensurate motives and ends, a vertical up-thrust from lower levels of appetition and process; thus are provided the empty categories for the ultimate solution, since horizontal ends are shown to be more essential and vertical more excellent," (Lonergan, "Finality, Love, Marriage," 478).

level of horizontal finality, infused virtue (sanctifying grace) has a horizontal finality in the sanctification of the person. Again, at the level of horizontal finality, a human person has modes of appetition and terms of processes that contribute to that person's continued existence as person—hunger is a mode of appetition that leads to the identification of edible resources through sensory input and habits of thought, the consumption of food, the maintenance of the human body, and through that scheme of recurrence the continued existence of the human person. (2) The notion of vertical finality also presupposes and requires a notion of absolute finality. Vertical finality is an immanent dynamism toward greater being, a higher viewpoint, a more complex scheme of recurrence. It is the reference of a thing to higher levels of appetition and process than are commensurate to it by nature. In that sense, it requires a plurality of beings, events, or insights from which emerges the higher form of being, the more complex scheme of recurrence, or the higher viewpoint.[74] It would be impossible to call these new realities "higher" unless there were stipulated a highest or absolute being, scheme of recurrence, or viewpoint in which they proportionately participate. Absolute finality is not a level of finality happening extrinsic to the vertical, but rather it makes the vertical possible.

Therefore, Hogan's equation of the term "absolute finality" with "transcendental finality" represents a misreading of Lonergan on finality. Vertical finality is already transcendental, and absolute finality does not exist to prevent a pelagian turn. Vertical finality is the potency of pluralities of beings or events that are non-systematic, that is, without statistically recurring regularity, to become systematic as a new scheme of

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[74] Lonergan, "Finality, Love, Marriage," 480. Lonergan notes four kinds of vertical finality here: instrumental, dispositive, material, and obediential. The first two grounded in a plurality of events (what Lonergan will call, in *Insight* [72, 75, 110, 143–48, 233–37], schemes of recurrence) while the second two are grounded in plurality of things.

recurrence or a new kind of being.[75] Vertical finality is the immanent, dynamic upthrust,

a potency of any being or scheme of events to reach an end beyond those commensurate

to it.[76] It is the dynamism by which a plurality of atoms collides *per accidens* until the

product of those collisions exists in a form stable enough to have its own systematically

intelligible way of existing (*per se*) in the world—that is, until the atoms become a

molecule. Thus, the notion of vertical finality already contains transcendence.[77] To call

only absolute finality "transcendental" is to conflate absolute and vertical finality, or to

be mistaken about what vertical finality is.

Instead of renaming Lonergan's absolute finality with the term "transcendental

finality," a sort of supernatural operator on the world, raising it to holiness, Hogan ought

to have recovered more richly Lonergan's notion of vertical finality as "obediential

potency." A concrete plurality of rational beings has the obediential potency to receive

communication of God. This obediential manifestation of finality is found, for example,

three ways: (1) the mystical body of Christ with its head, (2) with the indwelling of the

Spirit in the person by grace, (3) or the union of the body and soul in the beatific vision.[78]

Like all other manifestations of vertical finality, the obediential finality is plural.[79] Unlike

any other manifestation of finality, the obediential finality is *social*. It involves conscious

plurality of persons seeking the good together. The "term" of obediential potency is

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[75] The key notion of finality as "universal," (*Insight*, 474) and as *not* final causality is important here, and missed because Hogan does not rely enough on *Insight*. Vertical finality is as open to development as it is to decline. In fact usually one accompanies the other.

[76] Lonergan, *Insight*, 471–76.

[77] For Lonergan, the human person is *per se* transcendent, that is, within her is an unquenchable desire to know. The person begins with questions for intelligence (what is it?), which become the material for questions of judgment (is it so?), which become the material for questions for decision (is it valuable, good?).

[78] Lonergan, "Finality, Love, Marriage," 480. Lonergan uses Thomistic language here to describe the union of body and soul in beatific vision in terms of obediential potency. See *In IV Sent.* d. 49, q. 2, a. 1; *Summa contra gentiles* 3.51.

[79] Vertical finality as obediential potency strictly opposes pelagian notions of salvation. As we see above, it requires a plurality: e.g. the plurality of the human person and the Spirit abiding within by the gift of grace.

God's self, and the manner of termination is by rational, interpersonal relationships among people infused by grace. Human persons have a capacity to receive God's self, but socially, as part of Christ's own body. The marriage of baptized Christians is one such conscious plurality of persons. Inasmuch as they participate in Christ's mystical body, and inasmuch as they have been infused by baptismal grace, spouses exist in a relationship of obediential potency for growth in holiness according to a conjugal way of life in the church. Therefore, marriage, in as much as it is ecclesial, that is, wherever it participates in the mystery of Christ and his church, manifests vertical finality (as obediential potency).

While Hogan attempts a synthesis of the human as animal, rational, and supernatural, she unwittingly ends up with a version of finality that leads to a vision of marriage that would have to primarily occupy the supposed free space of civil society.[80] From there, marriage, the state or some institution of civil society (such as the Church) bolster and support marriage. Religion, then, can offer counsel, direction, and means of grace if the couple is interested in pursuing a life of holiness, but the ecclesial institution is not necessarily the central institution. Marriage becomes an extra-ecclesial affair to which the Church can contribute its blessing, and even a sacrament, but the sacrament is merely icing on the wedding cake, the transcendental, absolute finality of the marriage that is proceeding according to the order of reason, or its vertical finality.

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[80] See William Cavanaugh, *Theopolitical Imagination*, 53–95 (chap. 2). Cavanaugh argues that there is no free, secular space where we can make non-theological discourse that will be intelligible and acceptable to all.

**MARRIAGE AS PRACTICE**

Readings of the tradition always vary, and theologians are ever attempting to understand the tradition authentically in their own context. Differences of emphasis, then, will always occur, even when theologians read the same text. For example, I begin this discussion of marriage as practice by comparing two alternate readings of *Gaudium et spes* on the question of marriage as relationship or practice:

> Marriage to be sure is not intended solely for procreation; rather, its very nature as an unbreakable compact between persons, and the welfare of children, both demand that mutual love of the spouses be embodied in a rightly ordered manner [recto ordine], that it grow and ripen. Therefore marriage persists as a whole manner and communion of life [ut totius vitae consuetudo et communio], and maintains its value and indissolubility, even when, despite the often intense desire of the couple, offspring are lacking.[81]

This passage can serve to demonstrate the central place for the ontological reality of the marital relationship among the nature and ends of marriage. The other goods are at the relationship's service because the relationship is the matrix of conditions in which the other goods (procreative and personalist) may develop.[82] The role of marital intercourse is first to serve the relationship, which is why retrievals of "relationship" as gravitational center of marriage, as the very definition of marriage, is good as far as it goes, but unfortunately, they do not take us as far as we need.

On the other hand, this same passage from *Gaudium et spes* could be read from a different vantage: the vantage of "practice." I believe such an approach to marriage can work with the relational paradigm to create constructive possibilities for how to renew and re-imagine marriage in the Church. In fact, Hogan's own reading of this passage begs

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[81] GS, 50.
[82] Hogan, *Marriage as a Relationship*, 53.

for completion by a "practice" approach to the theology of marriage: "The actualization of the complete unity, the relationship itself, that 'intimate unity of persons and actions' [GS 48] is accomplished only in time."[83] Marriage is a relationship, yes, a matrix of conditions, but in that sense it is a potency that must be fulfilled in act, by order, practices, and habits.

Reading the same passage wherein we saw the centrality of the relationship, let me briefly point out the degree to which the language of practice enters the thought of the Council. Marriage is identified in the passage quoted above from *Gaudium et spes* 50 as a "totius vitae consuetudo et communio" a practice or habitual manner and communion of *the whole of life*.[84] Now this practice of the whole of life, on account of the "unbreakable compact" and the "welfare of the children," must be a habitual manner of a particular kind. What kind? *Gaudium et spes* 50 suggests one in which the "spouses' mutual love be made present in right ordering [recto ordine]." Marriage does have an ontological unity through the gift of the sacrament, but at the same time it has a unity of order, as it is constituted by the right ordering of spousal love.[85] By what criteria is this "right ordering"

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[83] Hogan, *Marriage as a Relationship*, 53.

[84] Note that my translation of this phrase differs from that given by the version given at the Vatican website. I believe the translation, which Hogan uses as well, to be slightly misleading. The translation provided by the Vatican reads "whole manner and communion of life," but a better translation would be "manner and communion of the whole of life." *Totius* is a singular genitive adjective (of the whole), so it does not modify "*communio*" or "*consuetudo*." Instead it takes on substantive quality and is translated with the other genitive word "*vitae*" (of life). German and French translations provided by the Vatican follow the pattern I have adopted.

[85] See Riley, *Civilizing Sex*, 17. Riley defines society as "a group of men brought together in a relation of order established for a common purpose" (ibid., 17). Elsewhere he states that society is "a union of love, for self, others, and the good of self and others. What is loved by all is the good of all, the common good, in which people must feel a common stake" (ibid., 18–23). With Aquinas, Riley posits human society, and marriage as an example of human societies and households, are a unity of order rather than an ontological unity. In other words, we are not one as a body is one, we are one because we agree to order our lives together in a particular way for a specific common goal. Since the household and civil society are not orders of substance, they continue by intent to maintain the order set out, and thus they are perishable (ibid.); here he is relying on *In 1 Librum ethicorum ad Nichomachum*, 1.5; and *Summa contra gentiles* 4.35.7). Considered as a sacrament, though, marriage is a unity of supernatural order that is indissoluble. For this key distinction, Riley relies on Aquinas' *In IV Librum Sententiarum*, bk. 4, d. 31, q. 2–3 on the

determined, though? Notice that the two goods demanding this particular way of life, and thus owning a controlling stake in its shape, are chiefly theological and ecclesial: (1) the "unbreakable compact" is made as a Christian in virtue of baptism and guaranteed by the gift of grace. It is only possible ecclesially, that is, from within the Church. A marriage between a Christian and the unbaptized is not a sacrament, not an unbreakable compact. (2) The welfare of the children too is finally theological; they belong in the household of God, the Church. Marriage, then, must be a particular, ecclesial, sacramental way of ordering a practice, manner, and communion of the whole of life—a life that is both temporal and eschatological. It is the Church, the household of God, the body of Christ that will offer to Christians the shape and character of this practice of the entirety of life. Marriage, as a communion and practice of the entirety of life, is necessarily a communion and practice for the kingdom of God, which is after all the consummation of the entirety of life. The life of the Church, then, from the richness of its liturgical, transformational, and communal character and tradition offers the resources for reimagining the way we enter marriage and what we are doing as married Christians.

The following section will take steps to just that end. I will examine the work of three scholars (Alasdair MacIntyre, David Matzko McCarthy, and Jana M. Bennett) whose work contributes to the development of an approach to marriage as practice, specifically a practice within the Church. Because MacIntyre's studies on "virtue" and "practice" precede and prepare for McCarthy's and Bennett's work, I will begin by

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three goods of marriage. Here Aquinas considers the sacrament to be both most essential and most worthy. This is the case because there is no marriage without indissolubility (the fruit of the sacrament), but there may be marriage without the actualization of the potency for faithfulness or procreation and education of children. Such a conclusion would complicate Lonergan's attempt to argue in favor of the primary and secondary language as applied to the goods of marriage, or that procreation is the most essential and the sacrament the most excellent good of marriage. See Lonergan, "Finality, Love, Marriage," 477–510.

exploring how Alasdair MacIntyre's definition of "practice" can be applied to marriage as a practice of the Church. Analyses of McCarthy's and Bennett's work will follow as a further theological development of calling marriage a practice. McCarthy's efforts will focus on the virtue of reciprocity in reproducing a different kind of domestic economy. Bennett's exploration hopes to shift focus from the practices of "family" and onto practices shared by the household of God. A critique and description of the way forward will end the chapter.

**Alasdair MacIntyre**

A first inroad to the paradigm of marriage as practice comes from the work of Alasdair MacIntyre, whose definition of "practice" can be well applied to Christian marriage. MacIntyre defines "practice" in the following way:

> Any coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are realized in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and partially definitive of, that form of activity, with the result that human powers to achieve excellence, and human conceptions of the ends and goods involved, are systematically extended.[86]

MacIntyre himself thinks "the range of practices is wide: arts, sciences, games, politics in the Aristotelian sense, the making and sustaining of family life, all fall under the

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[86] Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue*. Internal goods are those goods that cannot be achieved except through the practice itself. For example, fame and fortune are external goods of the practice of portrait painting. There are two kinds of internal goods: the excellent product or act of producing, and the good of a certain kind of life. For example, the excellent painting is a good internal to painting, and living out one's life *as a painter* is the second kind of good internal to painting (ibid., 189–90). External goods, moreover, are limited, and scarce. Internal goods, though are diffusive of a practice. The more excellent the practice and the more widely practiced it is, the more these goods abound. The achievement of internal goods benefits the whole community who participate in the practice (ibid., 190–91).

concept."[87] To establish the thesis beyond MacIntyre's assertion, though, I will treat the relevant criteria MacIntyre sets forth.

First, a practice must be a "coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity." Does Christian marriage fit this bill? Descriptively, perhaps not. One might make the case that while marriage is complex it is increasingly *in*coherent. As Rubio and others rightly point out, marriage has always produced a plurality of family forms. In the twenty-first century that plurality exists to a greater degree and in different kind. Take, for example, the case of new family situations formed by remarriages. When marriages were more likely to end because of early death, a plurality of mixed family forms abounded. Since marriages now are more likely to end because of divorce than they were in pre-industrial times, the plurality of new family forms issuing from remarriages is more complex, because for each marriage ended, it is possible for two new marriages to happen. While remarriage on account of death results in one step-parent, remarriage because of divorce potentially yields two step-parents if both former spouses remarry. Furthermore, no-fault marriage laws contribute to the incoherence of marriage at the descriptive level. The marriage contract is one of the few contracts that can be terminated without any wrongdoing, negligence, or malfeasance of the other contracting party. As a society, we have set up marriage as an incoherent, complex, socially established human activity.

MacIntyre, though, seems to have more normative considerations of "coherent," in mind when he defines "practice." For example:

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[87] Ibid., 188. Furthermore, "In the ancient and medieval worlds the creation and sustaining of human communities—of households, cities, nations—is generally taken to be a practice in the sense in which I have defined it" (ibid.).

> A practice involves standards of excellence and obedience to rules as well as the achievement of goods. To enter into a practice is to accept the authority of those standards and the inadequacy of my own performance as judged by them. It is to subject my own attitudes, choices, preferences, and tastes to the standards which currently and partially define the practice.[88]

MacIntyre's proposal fits well with McCarthy's stress on the non-voluntary aspects of marital practice. McCarthy reminds us that couples entering marriage are not choosing to make something new, as much as they are consenting to enter a set of roles and expectations that precede them. It is these standards of excellence and rules that must be coherent for a practice to exist. The fact of family plurality (descriptive incoherence), though, does not hinder the argument that marriage is a practice with standards. Christian marriage does not demand a monolithic family form; in fact, if the conclusions I will make about the domestic character of all the Church's life are correct, then there are many ways married persons and their children might choose to organize living arrangements, with single non-vowed persons, with elders, with vowed religious, etc. The common domestic project of the entire church suggests as much (as chapters 3 and 4 will describe in more detail).

Christian marriage does, however, require certain moral forms (e.g., chaste fidelity, responsible procreation and education without contraception, mutual love, and just distribution of work inside and outside the home). If the Christian standards of marital excellence are not met, the practitioner merely does the practice poorly. As a result the spouses will achieve fewer of the goods internal to the practice and acquire fewer of the virtues that make the excellent performance easier. For Christians, the social institution of the Church invites those wishing to marry into coherent, complex standards

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[88] Ibid., 190. Furthermore, "In the realm of practices the authority of both goods and standards operates in such a way as to rule out all subjectivist and emotivist analyses of judgments. De gustibus *est* disputandum" (ibid.).

of excellence for their cooperative activity in conjugal life begun in and with ecclesial witness. For example, the Church initiates couples into the complex, coherent demands of the marital vows: to freely give oneself unconditionally to another, to receive, love, and honor the other as spouse for better, for worse, forever, and to receive and educate children lovingly from God and for God according to the law of Christ.[89] One of the most central socially established standards is indissolubility, though this standard has reached a point of scandal in the Church with the number of annulments so high.[90] This standard is set by the social reality that is the union between Christ and the Church, a union that is indissoluble—for Christ will never revoke his love that caused him to be bound to the Church like a bridegroom to his bride. Another standard of excellence is chaste married sexuality and responsible parenthood, which the Church proposes should be expressed in forms of natural family planning. This standard too faces the specter of scandal, as a vast majority of spouses practice artificial birth control with the tacit approval of the rest of the ecclesial community.

While marriage fits MacIntyre's demand for normative skills (e.g., communication, fidelity, natural means of responsible parenthood, and Christian education of children) a practice "is never just a set of technical skills, even when directed towards some unified purpose and even if the exercise of those skills can on

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[89] *The Rites of the Catholic Church: As Revised by Decree of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council and Published by Authority of Pope Paul VI*, trans. International Commission on English in the Liturgy (New York: Pueblo Publishing, 1978), 450–51.

[90] Robert H. Vasoli, *What God Has Joined Together: The Annulment Crisis in American Catholicism* (New York: Oxford University, 1998); Pierre Hegy and Joseph Martos, *Catholic Divorce: The Deception of Annulments* (New York: Continuum, 2000); Richard J. Jenks, *Divorce, Annulments, and the Catholic Church: Healing or Hurtful?* (New York: Haworth Press, 2002); Timothy Buckley, *What Binds Marriage? Roman Catholic Theology in Practice* (London: Continuum, 2002); and Edward N. Peters, *Annulments and the Catholic Church: Straight Answers to Tough Questions* (West Chester, PA: Ascension Press, 2004).

occasion be valued or enjoyed for their own sake."[91] For marriage to count as a practice,

it must be also an activity "through which goods internal to that form of activity are

realized in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence which are

appropriate to, and partially definitive of, that form of activity." First, goods internal to a

practice are those which can only be specified in terms of the practice or by means of

examples from some other similar practice. Second, internal goods can only be identified

and recognized by the experience of participation in the practice in question."[92] Finally,

internal goods are of two kinds: first, the excellent product and the excellent performance

of the practice; and second the entire form of life generated by the practice. For example,

goods internal to the practice of painting are at least these: painting well, the excellent

portrait, and living *as a painter*.[93]

In what follows, I will illustrate examples wherein marriage contains internal

goods of the kinds specified by MacIntyre. First, Christian marriage achieves the internal

good of interpersonal communion, a unique kind of communion unattained in any other

partnership. Any two persons can achieve interpersonal communion, even a deep

friendship and sharing of life, but spouses achieve a communion of the whole persons

and the whole of their life. Marriage achieves a *consortium vitae et amoris coniugalis* (a

communion of life and love, an interpersonal relationship that is specifically conjugal).

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[91] Ibid., 193. "What is distinctive in a practice is in part the way in which conceptions of the relevant goods and ends which the technical skills serve—and every practice does require the exercise of technical skills—are transformed and enriched by these extensions of human powers and by that regard for its own internal goods which are partially definitive of each particular practice or type of practice." Furthermore, "Practices never have a goal or goals fixed for all time—painting has no such goal nor has physics—but the goals themselves are transmuted by the history of the activity." Practices have a history, a history which is not just the progress in technical skills.

[92] Ibid., 189.

[93] Ibid., 189–90.

"Matrimonial consent is directed primarily and radically towards this relationship."[94] The *conjugal* aspect of this common life is what specifies it unique to marriage. No other communion of persons has as its object the unity of whole persons expressed in domestic intimacy and sexual intimacy.

This good of the *consortium vitae* is at once the excellent product, the excellent performance, and the form of life. As the *excellent product*, it is that union initiated by the validly spoken vows and authentically consummated in the conjugal act, and developed in the well-ordered, prayerful domestic life. It is a product that requires grace for its completion. As a sacrament, couples trust that in this practice, God works his grace in and with them to create their *consortium vitae*. As the *excellent performance* it is that generous sharing of life and love consented to in the wedding vows and lived out on a quotidian basis with cohabitation, co-ownership, co-parenting, common prayer, and co-responsibility for domestic and personal affairs. Again, as a sacrament, couples trust that this excellent performance is inspired and ennobled by grace, despite their failings. Finally, this communion comes more into being as a *form of life* inasmuch as couples share ever more of their lives together with common property, shared education and care of children, shared work toward domestic maintenance and development, shared relaxation, shared sufferings, and shared joys.[95] The form of life and communion is initiated by the verbally spoken wedding vows and regular bodily consummation and restatement of those vows in the conjugal act. The good resulting from their marriage becomes their very living *as married people*.

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[94] Adolfo N. Dacanáy, *Canon Law on Marriage: Introductory Notes and Comments* (Loyola Heights, Manila: Loyola School of Theology, 2003 [2000]), 114–15. Dacanáy relies here on the decision of judge Joseph Serrano Ruiz in the rotal case of April 5, 1973 (*Monitor Ecclesiasticus* 101 (1984): 107–27.

[95] I will propose in chapter 6, that the practice of marriage more achieves the good of a "form of life" when lived according to a *regula matrimonii* that couples might create with spiritual direction.

A second internal good of Christian marriage is the child, or the good of the child. This suggestion may give pause, since it would seem the child is not a good available only from the marital practice. Strictly speaking, the child would seem to be an external good relative to marriage. The child can be conceived, born, and raised outside the marital communion. This is true, of course, but the important fact is that the activities and skills required in achieving the good of the child are subject to the standards of excellence set by the ecclesial community; for Christians these actions and goods do not have meaning outside of that ecclesial context. According to the authoritative community in question (the ecclesia), the actions that bring about a child (e.g., sexual intercourse and maintenance of a pregnancy, and parental education) are regulated and belong within the context of the marital practice. Apart from that context they are less intelligible. For example, in chess, a player achieves the internal good of checkmate by trapping and knocking down the opponent's king. Outside the game of chess, taking a white chess piece, knocking over the black king, and declaring "checkmate" is meaningless. The good of "checkmate" has not really been achieved. Yes, the king is defeated, but only by ill performance of an activity that belongs properly to the practice of chess and is subject to the rules and standards of excellence socially established for that practice. In the same way, any two non-married Christian men and women could conceive a child without their being married, but they cannot do so without engaging in activities properly belonging to the practice of Christian marriage and subject to the rules and standards of excellence ecclesially established for that practice. Yes, a child can be born outside of marriage, but only by poor performance of what is properly a Christian marital practice, that is,

activities socially situated within the practice of Christian marriage as determined by the primary authoritative community for this practice—the Church.

The final aspect of MacIntyre's definition that must apply to Christian marriage is related to the manner by which the goods of the practice and the capacity to achieve those goods are extended. A practice has "the result that human powers to achieve excellence, and human conceptions of the ends and goods involved, are systematically extended." In other words, practices generate and extend virtues, and virtues generate and extend the goods internal to a practice. Without virtues, writes MacIntyre, "the goods internal to practices are barred to us, but not just barred to us generally, barred in a very particular way."[96] Furthermore, "the possession of virtues—and not only of their semblance and simulacra—is necessary to achieve the latter [internal goods]; yet the possession of the virtues may perfectly well hinder us in achieving external goods."[97] Finally, "every practice requires a certain kind of relationship between those who participate in it. Now the virtues are those goods by reference to which, whether we like it or not, we define our relationships to those other people with whom we share the kind of purposes and standards which inform practices."[98]

Marriage demonstrates well this relationship between virtue and the extension of internal goods, as well as the relationship between virtue and the kind of relationship required between the practitioners. Here I will briefly consider the virtues of poverty, chastity, and obedience. Chapter 5 argues that these virtues are at the center of both conjugal and consecrated religious life, as they are at the center of Christ's life. In

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[96] Ibid., 191.

[97] Ibid., 196. Furthermore, "We should therefore expect that, if in a particular society the pursuit of external goods were to become dominant, the concept of the virtues might suffer first attrition and then perhaps something near total effacement, although simulacra might abound" (ibid., 196).

[98] Ibid., 191.

marriage, the internal good of *totius vitae consuetudo et communio* demands two habitually actualized potencies: the ability to share all that one has as if it were not one's own, and the ability to put oneself in a position of real, vulnerable reliance on another for something necessary to life. In other words, sharing the whole of life demands the virtue of poverty, and bids us to place ourselves in a state of poverty with respect to the spouse and even perhaps our neighbors. To lack this virtue is to reserve some area of life for and to oneself, or to maintain a certain independence or safety net in case the relationship were to fall apart. This kind of reservation explicitly excludes the central, excellent product of the marriage practice, namely, the interpersonal relationship as a *totius vitae consuetudo et communio*.

Second, chastity, the virtue of sexual self-possession and integration, goes hand-in-hand with another internal good of marriage: the child. This good is not only the responsible openness to children but also the child's education and formation, and the child herself. Unchastity can lead to the irresponsible increase in family size; a couple might decide to continue being open to children because they do not want to or cannot abstain during a fertile period of the woman's cycle, for example. This lack of virtue does not bar them from the good that *is* the child, but bars them from the fuller sense of *the good of the child*, which would include provision for their adequate material needs, their education, and their formation in the life of Christian discipleship. Furthermore, unchastity so unchecked that it leads to an extramarital affair hardly needs mention here. Such actions threaten to destroy the entire practice by breaking the trust of the practitioners in community. Finally, chastity is a capital virtue for living the internal good of married life's form, which involves sexual intercourse as an expression of conjugal

love. Unless each partner fully possesses himself or herself, he or she will struggle to make conjugal intercourse a gift of self to the other in the fullest sense.

Obedience as a virtue represents the couple's realized capacity to give themselves over to the standards, common goods, and activities that constitute the practice of marriage as situated with the Church. By this virtue, a couple puts themselves in just relationship to the practicing community to learn from the community and contribute to the further development of the standards of excellence and goods of the practice. "Standards are not themselves immune from criticism, but nonetheless we cannot be initiated into a practice without accepting the authority of the best standards realized so far."[99] "For not to accept these" standards of excellence and virtues of a practice, says MacIntyre, "so far bars us from achieving the standards of excellence or the goods internal to the practice that it renders the practice pointless except as a device for achieving external goods."[100] For example, one of the standards for the practice of marriage in the Church is that the conception of a child must result from the conjugal act. In obedience to this standard, certain infertile couples may never achieve this good, namely the child itself. By disobedience to this standard, a couple can achieve this good, but they would do so by stepping out of the practice. To do so would be to break faith and honesty with the other practitioners. In terms of the game of chess, for example, it would be like cheating, where the good of winning is now external to the practice because it is reached by disallowed moves. The good of "the child" would be external to their practice of marriage, a break with the practice and a rupture with the community of practitioners. In a certain sense, the achievement of the good this way also presents a rupture in the

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[99] Ibid., 190.
[100] Ibid., 191.

relationship between the couple and the child, who has been conceived by activities external to the marriage practice. So, while a good is achieved, the achievement of this good by means excluded from the practice puts the rest of the internal goods of the practice in peril and alters the relationship between this couple and the rest of the practicing community for the worse. Conception apart from conjugal intercourse, for example, jeopardizes the foundational character of the internal good of the interpersonal union. The good of the child is separated from this interpersonal union, not originating from it directly as it would if the child were conceived naturally.

On all the levels of MacIntyre's definition, then, marriage is aptly understood as a practice. First, it is a complex, coherent (normatively) set of cooperative human activity that is socially established. Second, it has certain internal goods (interpersonal union, the good of the child) and standards of excellence and virtue (poverty, chastity, and obedience) partially definitive of the practice. Finally, the virtues required for the practice extend the internal goods and the standards of excellence.


**David Matzko McCarthy**


In his book, *Sex and Love in the Home*, David Matzko McCarthy offers a definition of marriage as practice located primarily in the Church. He attempts "to make sense of marriage as a sacrament, that is, marriage as a set of practices that do not stand in isolation, but are open to be transformed by God's gracious communion *as it is*

*routinized in the social body of the church.*"[101] McCarthy makes "a decisive break" with

the contemporary theology that makes "relationship" the center of gravity:

> Marriage is not the foundation of family or the household…I do not suggest that conjugal union establishes and sustains a communion. On the contrary, I propose that marriage does not set a couple apart in order to begin a family, but puts a husband and wife in the middle of a larger network of preferential loves. In the household (in contrast to the market), sexual practices have a grammar of belonging.[102]

Rooted in ecclesial identity, marriage must be understood in terms of the task shared by

all Christians. For McCarthy, "the common task of all Christians is to accept God's

invitation to share Christ's body in the Eucharist, which means to have our bodies be

formed by our call to discipleship and by our place in the one body of the church. God's

invitation is our call to live out God's hospitality as members of the body of Christ."[103] In

direct opposition to "relational paradigm's conclusion that the unity chiefly sought in

marriage is the conjugal union itself, McCarthy asserts that "indifference to private

unions is not possible in the church, for the *unity of Christ's* body is always the *central*

concern…Marriage and family conform to wider institutional practices and are called

upon to support goods that *are not particular to marriage* or private family life."[104]

McCarthy continues, relativizing the uniqueness and centrality of the marital relationship.

The conjugal relationship is sacramentally set within the context of Christ's relationship

to the church. Furthermore, the relationship characterizes and contains a call "to live out

practices of love and care that are definable apart from marriage (like fraternal correction

and forgiveness). Marriage is only a particular instantiation of common practices of the

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[101] McCarthy, *Sex and Love in the Home*, 247.
[102] Ibid., 246–47.
[103] Ibid., 221.
[104] Ibid., 216 (emphasis mine).

Christian life."[105] Also countermanding the relationship paradigm, McCarthy argues "that that standard conception of interpersonal union offers an inadequate context for sexual practices."[106]

As mentioned in the introduction, McCarthy offers a reproductive narrative, so his concern is with what kind of social reproduction results from marital practices. Marriage can reproduce the current market economy of unlimited growth and desire with its corollary individual, autonomous politics that relegates the Church among the ranks of other voluntary institutions of civil society, or it can reproduce an order of love sought and found in shared endeavor for our common good, our shared life in Christ as members of the Church, the household of God.

What kind of common practices does McCarthy refer to, and how do these practices avoid a dangerous turn toward self-sufficiency in Christian life?[107] For McCarthy, at stake are chiefly the virtues of reciprocity, self-control, obedience, hospitality, and faithfulness.[108] These virtues are cultivated in familial roles that "precede

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[105] Ibid., 216–17.

[106] Ibid., 239. McCarthy considers this interpersonal union model to be too focused on the spouses themselves, so that it results in their becoming lost in an I-Thou stare, and eventually disenchanted when their relationship is not as fulfilling as it was hoped. Here McCarthy refers back to chapter 2, where he discusses the economy of desire and how it has made sex and love homeless, trapping them in a transcendent moment. Hogan, too, attempts to locate sexual practices in marriage as having variable meaning and are actualized over time, but she diverges from McCarthy, who would resist Hogan's concession to contraception on the grounds that it leads to the reproduction of an economy of desire and the romantic overstatement of sexual love. While Hogan praises Natural Family Planning (156–57) as an aid to growth in virtue, she does not consider it normative and does not deem contraception destructive of virtue.

[107] I avoid the term "pelagian" here because of its imprecision. Typically the term is used not to mean "those things taught and believed by Pelagius, Julian of Eclanum, or their close followers."

[108] McCarthy sees self-control as over-against the economy of desire that dominates marital and economic relationships. Particularly, Catholic sexual practices foreground themselves here, for sexuality is seen as intrinsically productive rather than consumptive, and the practice of natural family planning regulates desire, which, in our economy of desire, is seen as impossible, un-American, and unallowable (220, 230–32). Obedience is at stake in context of what McCarthy calls the "open home," which embraces non-voluntary, neighborhood, and ecclesial roles and expectations based on situations of need and asymmetrical reciprocity while moving beyond a contractual economic relationships (chap. 5 "Two Households," and chap. 8 "The Happy Home," 153–60). Faithfulness takes on a new character as well, seen in terms of becoming irreplaceable as parents and sexual partners. "Through marriage, our bodies become

us. They are passed on to us, and like apprentices to a craft, we are trained in the skills of their performance."[109] Family members are apprenticed in sexual, economic, and parenting practices given shape in an order of love as they contribute to a common good that is, as emphasized above, beyond the closed, nuclear family.[110] These practices are rooted in the virtue of reciprocity, which McCarthy sees as chief among the virtues of the household. Reciprocity "is a disposition to do the good in terms of what and how we receive," especially the ability to receive the unrequested gift or a gift given as to one in a position of need.[111] The theological grounding for virtue in the family, then, becomes clear here in its relationship to non-voluntary gift-giving and receiving. The connection to the non-voluntary aspects of life constitutes, for McCarthy, a defense against the thought that "practice" itself makes a Christian marriage or makes a person a Christian.

We did not *choose* our savior. We *needed* one who would choose to save the sorry lot that we are. Ultimately, there is nothing a person can give to God that does not already belong to God. Our relationship to God is necessarily one that begins and ends in receipt. The gift of life in Christ, the grace of rebirth in baptism "is what it means to be poor and why it is vitally important in the Christian life to *receive* the poor as the *agents* of Christ."

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irreplaceable in relation to one another…isolated sexual acts have variable significance…a critical problem with romantic views is that sex is expected to carry meaning that transcends its particular place and time. In contrast…as sex takes on the course of time, a husband and wife communicate the ebb of [sic] flow of their common life and 'live into' a complexity of bodily presence…this enduring bodily presence brings involvement in an intricate social network" (237). As parents, our "agency of bodily care [diapering, washing, feeding, etc.] has set us within a network of relationships (mother–son, brother–sister) that exceeds voluntary association" (238).

[109] McCarthy, *Sex and Love in the Home*, 148–49.

[110] Virtues and practices are distinct. Practices are complex sets of cooperative human activity for the sake of internal, common goods while virtues are dispositions to think, feel, and act in a particular way toward certain goods. Practices require distinct virtues, and virtues determine a person's ability to achieve the internal goods of a practice.

[111] Ibid.¸135. It is the virtue of being able to receive as the poor receive, vulnerably and in need. It is related to the biblical virtue of "self-lessness" that is required for gift giving. "So-called selflessness, as in the Gospels and the letters of Paul for example, is a matter of losing oneself and being made new by the grace of God," (ibid., 135).

"In receiving grace," he continues, "we do not return something to God that God needs…Rather, the very meaning of grace is God's giving to us the capacity to respond to God and to share in divine life. In friendship with God, we will the good that God is, be it the good of our neighbor, our spouse, or enemy."[112] "The meaning of the family," then, "is larger than us, particularly as it plays a part in the life of the church."[113] After all, "we have not chosen our parents, our siblings, our neighbors, our co-workers, and our fellow Christians; yet, whether we like them or not, we do not hesitate to call them our own."[114] There is even much we do not know, and thus could not have chosen, about our own spouse.[115] Reciprocity, the virtue of community, is grounded, at the deepest level of reality, the life of the Trinity, which pours out in God's gracious gift of his own life to the world through his Son Jesus in the Holy Spirit.[116]

McCarthy's vision stands in stark contrast to that of marriage as "relationship." He offers a vision of marriage grounded in the virtue of reciprocity, a disposition to receive and give generously and asymmetrically,[117] a disposition rooted in the Christian experience of receiving grace liturgically, sacramentally, and in the household setting. In the household, gift-receiving and giving takes shape when persons find love and

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[112] Ibid., 135. This line of thought stems from Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, II–II, q. 23.

[113] McCarthy, *Sex and Love in the Home*, 159.

[114] Ibid., 134.

[115] This insight is important as a counterpoint to Michael Lawler's theology of Christian marriage, which emphasizes the will in the choice by the spouses making vows. The spouses, for example, do not participate in the sacrament of marriage unless they explicitly possess Christian faith and will to so participate. The sacrament of marriage is not possible for those lacking an "active faith." Lawler, *Marriage in the Church: Disputed Questions* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2002), chap. 3, at p. 59.

[116] McCarthy, *Sex and Love in the Home,* 133: "God's trinitarian love is communion, and even when we love our neighbor without return, we love him or her with the love we receive from and share with God. Love may be sacrificial, but selfless love is a contradiction in terms." McCarthy's own theology of "reciprocity" relies on Lawrence C. Becker, *Reciprocity* (New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986).

[117] Asymmetrical economy of reciprocity refers to the notion that we give back in different kind from what we receive. If I am good at painting and help my neighbor paint, then he (being good at plumbing) might give me a hand fixing a leak on a later date. For example, see McCarthy, *Sex and Love in the Home*, 93–101.

friendship most richly in productivity and common endeavors rather than in escape and idle pleasures.[118] It is not somehow being lost in one-another ecstatically, romantically, that spouses encounter themselves and form their deepest connections. Rather, for McCarthy:

> If I understand goods of life in terms only of the market economy and contractual individualism, my feelings will have no practical home. My love is limited to ephemeral moments of romance, and my feelings will always be impractical and unsuited to what I conceive of as work. If, on the other hand, I locate my identity in the productive goods of the household and in the vocation of family, I will see the attractiveness of qualities that suit the roles of mother and father, brother and sister, neighbor and friend.[119]

Seeing marriage as a practice allows McCarthy to reorder the way a person chooses the kind of partner they desire for entering this kind of life and the way they vivify their marital life together.

**Jana M. Bennett**

McCarthy is not alone in his practice-oriented approach to marriage.[120] Following this trajectory, Jana M. Bennett develops her own notion of marriage as practice, which I will address here. Bennett explicitly works with MacIntyre's definition of "practice." After citing MacIntyre's definition of "practice," she attempts to give the term additional,

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[118] Ibid., 163, "There is an irony here. When romance is the linchpin of a relationship or a marriage, then the couple, after the first wave of passion is gone, will have to work a great deal in order to conjure up passion and spontaneity. The romance is likely to die because one or both partners will become tired of working to restore what is supposed to be spontaneous passion. When marriage and life in the household are not dependent upon romance the couple is free to be spontaneous and passionate."

[119] Ibid.

[120] For another example, see Eugene Rogers, *Sexuality and the Christian Body: Their Way into the Triune God* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), 72–73. His *Sexuality and the Christian Body: Their Way into the Triune God*, reasons Christian marriage is "best understood as an ascetic *practice* of and for the community by which God takes sexuality up into God's own triune life, graciously transforming it so as to allow the couple partially to model the love between Christ and the Church."

theological depth. She nests the practice of marriage within (what is common Hauerwasian parlance) the practice of "being church."[121] "The body of Christ, the church becomes the important referent for all Christian households because it is both virgin and married; as the household of God, in which the sacraments are celebrated, the church becomes a stage for moral activity in its ritual practice  and even in daily household rituals."[122] Thus for Bennett, the practices determinative of the married Christian's life are those determinative for any Christian's life, namely, liturgy.[123] Marriage as practice begins with the practice of worshipping together as one household of God.

Out of our shared, baptismal belonging in this one household, married and single (vowed and non-vowed alike) both participate in the nuptial and virginal meaning of the church. As Augustine has it, "The Church is the mother of Christ's members spiritually, *as she is also the virgin of Christ spiritually*"[124] Bennett recovers a particularly Augustinian, salvation-history approach to the question of Christian householding.

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[121] Bennett, *Water is Thicker than Blood*, 159–60. Bennett has concern about the "humanness" of MacIntyre's definition of "practice" as (in part) a "socially established human project." Bennett reads this human project as "church" in the MacIntyre's mind, so she is quick to point out that this would be problematic, as the church is, for Bennett, the "project of the Holy Spirit. God gives humanity the church and gives the church the means of witnessing to new life in Christ" (159). I would nuance Bennett's use of MacIntyre here. Instead of emphasizing the "human" in the "socially established human project," I would emphasize the "socially established" aspect. The church, the body of Christ, the household of God establishes the practice of marriage as a human (and therefore both mundane and eschatologically important) project. This way of reading MacIntyre avoids Bennett's problematic while allowing her continued embrace of Hauerwas's statement, "the first social task of the church—the people capable of remembering and telling the story of God we find in Jesus—is to be the church and thus help the world understand itself as world" (Stanley Hauerwas, *The Peaceable kingdom: A Primer in Christian Ethics*, 2nd ed. [London: SCM, 2003,] 100).

[122] Bennett, *Water is Thicker than Blood*, 112.

[123] "All of the variants of households mentioned in this chapter are only intelligible in the context of the church, as told in its liturgy. The church is the place where all creation experiences disrupted fellowship with others, and interrupted family ties, in favor of a primary relationship with Jesus Christ. Thus, human relationships expand to become part of Christ's body…Christian marriage matters because of the relationships that it restores, when viewed as part of the salvation story," (ibid., 189).

[124] *De sancta virginitate 7*; Walsh, *On Holy Virginity*, 73. Bennett, in her study of Augustine's thought about the spiritual and physical character of virginity and fecundity in both married and consecrated persons in the Church, writes, "All baptized Christians living a virtuous life have the *spiritual* states of both marriage and virginity," and both married and single are Christ's parent spiritually. (*Water is Thicker than Blood*, 105, 70–72).  The Christian becomes like Mary, who is at once married and a virgin.

Bennett cues in on Augustine's situating marital and virginal goods ecclesially, as training and belonging in a different kind of community, the city of God rather than the city of man. Bennett suggests that in the ecclesial city married Christians and non-married Christians not only should work together, but need each other. Furthermore, Bennett turns an eschatological focus on Christian marriage, saying that it too points us toward the end times. Both participate in the practice of being church, of Christian householding, a practice that will continue eternally though in different ways. Thus, in a heuristic way, Bennett suggests the Benedictine, monastic practice of hospitality and formation in liturgical life as a relevant model for Christian marriage. Her hope is to spur discussion of "married monks" and a new, ecclesial understanding of "single parents," that is, single Christians seeing themselves as spiritual Christian parents in the church.[125] Further, she suggests that the liturgical practices of the Church and even vowed religious life in community might, given their alternative view of what it means to live as a household, spill over into the daily life and practice of married Christians and single non-vowed Christians so that they might aid in the development of virtue therein. Finally, again in a heuristic way, Bennett suggests the theological development of practices to help people prepare for Christian marriages given shape and rooted first in the church as household of God. To this end, Bennett suggests, "perhaps it is time, as some scholars have suggested, to resurrect a sustained, church-guided period of engagement, or perhaps betrothal ceremonies."[126] This hypothesis is taken up in chapter six, where I offer ways forward for the possibility of a marriage novitiate.

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[125] Ibid., chap. 7.

[126] Ibid., 173. Bennett here is referring to Michael Lawler, who has suggested a period of betrothal. She disagrees with Lawler, though, when he argues for sexual intercourse during this time, and the celebration of marriage only upon the birth or conception of the first child. Bennett does not mention another author

**Critique**

Of course, the notion of marriage as practice carries its own costs. First, its resistance to the notion of marriage as "relationship" would seem to open the way for an assault on the indissolubility of marriage. If marriage is a practice, then it would seem that if the practice fails, then the marriage itself disappears. The marriage-as-relationship paradigm answers this problem by postulating an ontological and indestructible bond between the spouses created as their sacramental marriage begins. A potential answer to such a critique from the perspective of practice would be to say that marriage is a cruciform practice of being placed on the cross by one's own spouse.[127] Were there no crosses to bear, no sin begging for forgiveness, there would be nothing Christian about the marriage. Marriage is a particular practice of telling the story of Christ's life, death, and resurrection. As such, it is a practice of requiring resources external to the spousal pair, especially the supernatural help of grace found explicitly in the sacraments of Eucharist and reconciliation. In other words, if spouses stop living with each other and begin cohabiting with other people, their marriage is not gone; they are merely being unfaithful to its practice. In the absence of their doing the practice, the practice still exists,

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making a similar proposal, Adrian Thatcher. This Anglican theologian makes the case for a betrothal period much like Lawler's, including sexual intercourse and cohabitation in *Marriage after Modernity*. Thatcher, though, differs from the vocal proponent of betrothal, the Anglican bishop William Spohn, whose notion of betrothal allows couples to be more experimental rather than intentional and developmental with their outlook to the period of engagement.

[127] In Lonergan's terms one could say that marriage witnesses to the way that the Cross ultimately makes an intelligible response to evil; the only intelligible response to evil is to ceaselessly return good upon it, to convert the evil into the supreme good. In Lonergan's words: "This is why the Son of God became man, suffered, died, and was raised again: because divine wisdom has ordained and divine goodness has willed, not to do away with the evils of the human race through power, but to convert those evils into a supreme good according to the just and mysterious Law of the Cross" (*De Verbo Incarnato* [Rome: Gregorian University, 1964], Thesis 17, p. 552). The translation is by Charles Hefling. For an excellent exploration of the Law of the Cross in Lonergan and Girard, who are two parts of one picture of redemption, see Robert Doran, S.J., "The Nonviolent Cross: Lonergan and Girard on Redemption," *Theological Studies* 71 (2010): 46–61.

because they do not define it themselves. The practice pre-dates the couple and is situated socially, ecclesially. The practice endures even if the couple breaks faith with the virtues, activities, and goods internal to the practice.

Second, in suggesting a comparison between the practices of marriage and the practices of other ways to be church (e.g., monastic life), this paradigm risks confusing Christian states of life or collapsing the various states of life into one another. Chapter 2 explores this critique in detail. The tradition of the Church has been to assert a unique character to a life modeled on the vows of the evangelical counsels, but viewing this way of life as of a kind with married and non-vowed single life may further deteriorate the already waning interest in and honor for a life dedicated to Christ through the evangelical counsels.

In other words, in Bennett's vision of shared ecclesial practice in Christian householding, and McCarthy's emphasis on marriage's pursuit of ends particular to the Church rather than the nuclear family, the possibility exists for the distinction between the consecrated and the conjugal life to be lost in the shuffle. If these ways of life are so similar—as domestic, ecclesial practices—then how do they differ? If both of these states in life are eschatologically meaningful, what is different about their symbolic, prophetic character? A responsible account of the consonance between the consecrated and conjugal states will necessarily retain the distinction between the two.

Finally, one might argue that all this practice language lacks a theological foundation in the Church, Christ, and the Trinity. We can say that marriage is a practice of the Church, but how do we justify using ecclesial language? To begin, MacIntyre's definition of "practice" lacks any explicit connection to theology at all, let alone the

Church, Christ, and the Trinity. McCarthy's account of marital practice was rooted in the theological principle of God's gratuitous love in creation and redemption, but he does not flesh out the full Christological implications of this principle, and the inner communion of the Trinity only briefly factors into his account of the order of love. For her part, Bennett's account of marriage as a practice has a stronger connection to the church. She prioritizes baptismal ligation between Christians over kinship and conjugal bonds. She even begins to look in the life of the Church for examples of Christian householding, suggesting that married and single people can participate in the same ecclesial goods. However, she does not go far enough in providing a rich theological account of these goods and how the lives of all who are in Christ can share in the one practice of Christian householding. The marriage-as-practice paradigm has not done enough to identify exactly what it is that the lives of the married and the consecrated religious share as their common practice. There has been work on principles of these two states of life as forms of Christian householding, but these practices remain ungrounded in Christology and the Trinity.

**CONCLUSION**

This chapter has sought to provide a landscape on which to locate authors in the vast field of theology of marriage and family. To accomplish the task I have taken two steps: (1) to offer two paradigms ("relationship" and "practice") into which most moral and systematic theologies of marriage can be fit; and (2) to critique each paradigm. As a preparation for what follows, I have shown authors who assert that the life of the Church

is the primary location and the liturgy the architectural model of married Christian life; therefore, resources for talking about how we understand and live marriage must be mined from the riches thereof.

The rest of this dissertation, therefore, will be taking steps in answering the critiques of marriage-as-practice. To do so I will continue the project of the marriage-as-practice paradigm but develop it toward a third paradigm: marriage as Common Way in Christ. I will be bringing the marriage-as-practice paradigm deeper into the life of the Church by rooting it in the life of Christ, son of man and Second Person of the Trinity. To do this, I will look to the tradition at another form of life in Christ that has been theologically developed and christologically grounded throughout the tradition: the vowed religious state. What I find is that both the vowed religious state and the married states share a common way of life in Christ. This common way of life is a practice of Christian householding according to the evangelical virtues of poverty, chastity, and obedience lived according to one's state.

In chapter two I will explore modern attempts to put vowed religious life directly in dialogue with married life. As we will see, these have suffered from unfortunate narrative of the historical relationship between the two, as well as incomplete attempts to go beyond antagonistic construals of the relationship between consecrated and conjugal life. Understanding these construals prepares the way for our reconsideration of patristic tradition on this relationship in chapter 3.

CHAPTER 2: POST-VATICAN II ATTEMPTS AT DIALOGUE
BETWEEN MARRIAGE AND CONSECRATED LIFE

## UNIVERSAL VOCATION AS HEURISTIC

Chapter 1 investigated two common paradigms for understanding the nature, ends, meaning, and task of marriage and the family, the result of which was to conclude that the existing paradigms are fruitful but insufficient and require a new way of proceeding that brings to bear on the discussion a language specifically from within the life of the Church. Christian marriage requires an ecclesial grammar because Christian marriage belongs first in and to the Church. Christian marriage needs this ecclesial grammar not because there is a prior natural reality of marriage necessitating the Church's spiritual, supernatural resources to make itself, society, and the state better.[1] The conjugal,

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[1] I reject the premise that the family exists for the sake of the state and that the key reason to promote good family life is because we want to save or fix the state, or civil society in general. I take this position particularly when the term "society" is meant to refer to a public, secular space of belonging and interaction that is supposedly limited to material existence and is ordered and governed in isolation from theological language, or reason informed by faith. I also reject the notion that the family is a natural reality that requires the secular intervention of the state and the supernatural intervention of the Church. I affirm that the family is a natural reality, but only when the term "natural" is properly understood as a term with theological content. "Nature" is the entire cosmos as created and ordered by God; as fallen from God's ordering; as redeemed in Christ and called to return to God's right ordering in loving, filial obedience; and finally as eschatologically restored and renewed to right order under Christ for all eternity. With John Milbank and William Cavanaugh, I reject the need for and possibility of a "secular" space that is entirely disconnected from religious claims. In the Catholic tradition, there has been a distinction between marriage as an institution of nature and marriage as a sacrament. This distinction may be understood as in complete agreement with what I have said above. Marriage is an "institution of nature" that is nonetheless a divine institution whose order and character are divinely given and make sense only in the context of salvation history: (1) initially existing as a participation in God's ordering; (2) suffering a fall into sin; (3) enjoying though embattled in the current age of redemption and the return to God in obedience; and (4) awaiting the final consummation of the world subject to Christ in all things. Many statements in Catholic tradition noting a distinction between "natural" and Christian marriage exist, as well as many statements that seem to suggest that good marriages are important because they are good for society and the state. Such statements can be true only if "society" is understood first in a theological sense, as the communion of saints, the city of God, or the church. According to St. Augustine, in *De bono coniugali* 1.1 (*Marriage and Virginity: The Excellence of Marriage, Holy Virginity, The Excellence of Widowhood, Adulterous Marriages, Continence*, trans. Ray Kearney, ed., David G. Hunter, The Works of St. Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century, vol. 1/9, electronic edition, 3rd Release [Hyde Park, NY: New City, 1991–]), 33: "Human nature is a social entity, and has naturally the great benefit and power of friendship. For this reason God wished to produce

biological kinship relationships of the family formed by the grace of the marital

sacrament are subject to and directed by the prior and overarching spiritual kinship

relationships created by the grace of baptism. It is in the life of the Church, then, that we

must find resources to enliven and understand Christian marriage. From among the many

aspects of the Church's life, I have proposed to investigate vowed religious life-in-

community.

But why choose vowed religious life-in-community? Is there a rich theological

connection between the consecrated religious life and the sacramental married life?

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all persons out of one, so that they would be held together in their social relationships not only by similarity of race, but also by the bond of kinship. The first natural bond of human society, therefore, is that of husband and wife. God did not create them as separate individuals and bring them together as persons of a different race, but he created one from the other, making the side, from which the woman was taken and formed, a sign of the strength of their union. For those who walk together, and look ahead together to where they are walking, do so at each other's side. The result is the bonding of society in its children." In what became the first of the Catholic social encyclicals, Pope Leo XIII's *Rerum novarum* speaks of man's "natural and original right of marriage…Hence we have the family, the 'society' of a man's house – a society very small, one must admit, but none the less a true society, and one older than any State. Consequently, it has rights and duties peculiar to itself which are quite independent of the State" (RN, 12). In 1930, Pius XI wrote *Casti Connubii*, which speaks in the words of his predecessor Pius VI of "natural marriage": "'Hence it is clear that marriage even in the state of nature, and certainly long before it was raised to the dignity of a sacrament was divinely instituted in such a way that it should carry with it a perpetual and indissoluble bond which cannot therefore be dissolved by any civil law. Therefore although the sacramental element may be absent from a marriage…inasmuch as it is a true marriage there must remain and indeed there does remain that perpetual bond which by divine right is so bound up with matrimony from its first institution that it is not subject to any civil power," (CC, 34). Pius XI continues, stating, "Where this order of things [the indissoluble marriage] obtains, the happiness and wellbeing of the nation is safely guarded; what the families and individuals are, so also is the State, for the body is determined by its parts" (CC, 37). At the Second Vatican Council, the authors continue the Augustinian tradition: "'Since the Creator of all things has established conjugal society as the beginning and basis of human society and, by His grace, has made it a great mystery in Christ and the Church (cf. Eph. 5:32), the apostolate of married persons and families is of unique importance for the Church and civil society" (*Apostolicam actuositatem*, 10). More recently, Pope Paul VI in *Humanae vitae* wrote to legislators: "The family is the primary unity in the state; do not tolerate any legislation which would introduce into the family those practices which are opposed to the natural law of God" (*Humanae vitae*, 23). John Paul II, in *Familiaris consortio*, filled out the relationship between the family and "society." He called the family "the first and vital cell of society" (FC, 42). By this he does not mean that the family is a private unit that prepares children for a life "out there" in society. Rather, the family already is the basic unit of society. Participation in society does not require leaving the family. Thus the theological character of the family as first school in faith, and as domestic church, cannot be isolated from how the family participates in society in general. "The very experience of communion and sharing that should characterize the family's daily life represents its first and fundamental contribution to society" (FC, 43). In other words, the family's contribution to society is not chiefly this or that ministry, but rather to become what it is, (FC, 17) a "communion of persons" (FC, 18). In a document from 2009 (*Love and Life in the Divine Plan*), the USCCB organized the entire content around the distinction between marriage as "natural institution" in "the Order of Creation" (part 1) and marriage as "sacrament" in "the order of the new creation" (part 2).

Perhaps the most obvious connection is the common destiny and vocation of all the baptized to a life of Christian perfection[2] or holiness as expressed in the documents of the Second Vatican Council.[3] In *Lumen gentium* the Council states, "The chosen People of God is one: 'one Lord, one faith, one baptism' [Eph 4:5]; sharing a common dignity as members from their regeneration in Christ, having the same filial grace and the same vocation to perfection; possessing in common one salvation, one hope, and one undivided charity."[4] Beginning chapter five, on the Universal Call to Holiness, the Council affirms that each Christian, "whether belonging to the hierarchy, or being cared for by it, is called to holiness."[5] Christ, they continue:

> the divine Teacher and Model of all *perfection*, preached holiness of life to each and every one of His disciples of every condition. He Himself stands as the author and consummator of this holiness of life: "Be you therefore *perfect*, even as your heavenly Father is *perfect* [Mt 5:48]." By the power of baptism, the faithful "truly become sons of God and sharers in the divine nature…Then too, by God's gift, they must hold on to and *complete* in their lives this holiness they have received.

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[2] "Perfection" is a term that always requires an object. In other words, "perfection" never stands alone. There must always be something being perfected. Perfection is the complete fulfillment of a capacity; it is the complete enactment of a potency. Therefore, even if the term "perfection" appears alone, it should be read as "perfection of ____." Therefore, the Council often pairs "perfection" with some other word. For example, the Council speaks of the "perfection of holiness" (LG, 11) the "perfection of charity" (LG, 39, 40). "Perfection" must be continually tied to what is being perfected lest the term take on a life and meaning of its own. Unmoored from a specific object, "perfection" is a dangerous term to employ this side of the eschaton. Thus, even when we see the religious life referred to in the tradition as the life of "perfection," we should bear in mind what one is setting out to perfect—namely Christ's own virtues of poverty, chastity, and obedience.

[3] While the Second Vatican Council explicitly stated the universal call to Christian perfection or holiness, this teaching was not entirely new. In 1954, Pius XII stated, in the encyclical *Sacra virginitas* that virginity is not necessary for Christian perfection. "Holiness of life can really be attained, even without a chastity that is consecrated to God. Witness to this are the many holy men and women, who are publicly honored by the Church, and who were faithful spouses and stood out as an example of excellent fathers and mothers; indeed it is not rare to find married people who are very earnest in their efforts for Christian perfection" (SV, 46). Dolores Leckey, in her popular monograph *The Ordinary Way: A Family Spirituality* (New York: Crossroad, 1989), 1–2, also begins her work looking for practical insights for married people in monastic life with the call of the Second Vatican Council. She also invokes John Paul II's 1980 Synod on the Family (*Ordinary Way*, 5–6).

[4] LG, 32. This first appearance of "perfection" is set in the context of rejecting racial, ethnic, or any other kind of prejudice.

[5] Ibid., 39. Here the Council begins by noting how Christ makes the entire Church perfect as his one bride by the power of the Holy Spirit. Within this one Church which will be finally perfected, each Christian is called to personal perfection in the imitation of Christ, who "is believed to be indefectibly holy."

"Thus it is evident to everyone," states *Lumen gentium*:

> that all the faithful of Christ of whatever rank or status, are called to the *fullness* of the Christian life and to the *perfection of charity*...In order that the faithful may reach *this perfection*, they must use their strength accordingly as they have received it, as a gift from Christ. They must follow in His footsteps and conform themselves to *His image* seeking the will of the Father in all things.[6]

As the Council has it, the call to complete, perfect holiness that is an imitation of Christ is not limited to some upper-crust of Christians (it never truly was) but is the vocation of all; "Fortified by so many and such helpful means of salvation, all the faithful, whatever their condition or state, are called by the Lord, each in his own way, to that [perfection of holiness] whereby the Father Himself is perfect."[7] This statement is particularly important for its location within the dogmatic constitution. This sentence serves as its own paragraph and as a conclusion to the first section on the universal priesthood of the people of God. It immediately follows a paragraph treating the power of the sacraments in the life of the Christian, and it specifically links the pursuit of holiness to marriage and religious life. The paragraph preceding this sentence contains the momentous identification of the family as the "domestic church,"[8] wherein the parents are the first

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[6] Ibid., 39–40 (emphasis mine). To follow in Christ's footsteps would mean sharing his virtues of poverty, chastity, and obedience. In VC, 30, John Paul II explicitly states that the poverty, chastity, and obedience are in a certain sense evangelical imperatives: "In fact, all those reborn in Christ are called to live out with the strength which is the Spirit's gift the chastity appropriate to their state of life, obedience to God and to the Church, and a reasonable detachment from material possessions."

[7] LG, 11: "Tot ac tantis salutaribus mediis munitis, christifideles omnes, cuiusvis conditionis ac status, ad perfectionem sanctitatis qua Pater ipse perfectus est sua quisque via, a Domino vocantur." I have altered the translation here to emphasize what is being perfected.

[8] The interesting history of the term "domestic church" at the Second Vatican council has been well documented by Michael Fahey, "The Christian Family as Domestic Church at Vatican II," in *The Family*, ed. Lisa Sowle Cahill and Dietmar Mieth (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1995), 85–92. Bishop Pietro Fiordelli's intervention at the 34th general congregation (December 5, 1962) was to argue that the Constitution on the Church required a substantial section on marriage. He argued that the smallest division of the Church was not the diocese but the Christian family. His evidence was patristic; John Chrysostom, in his commentary on Ephesians, had called families *minisculae ecclesiae*. Augustine referred to the father of a home in terms of a bishop. See John Chrysostom, "Homily 20 on Ephesians 5:22–33," in John Chrysostom, *Marriage and Family Life*, trans. Catherine P. Roth and David Anderson (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Press, 1986), 43–64; and Chrysostom, "Homily 26 on Acts 12:1–2,"; where Chrysostom encourages families to let their homes be little churches (available at

preachers of the faith and first to encourage their children toward their own proper

vocation, with special attention to the religious vocation.

Post-Vatican II theology has made much of the insight that all are called to

Christian perfection, but few have taken their egalitarian sentiment to its logical *telos*.[9]

Rather than being seen as an invitation to the rest of the laity to take up the greatest

commandment and the evangelical counsels according to their own state of life, it has

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http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/210126.htm, accessed on 1 December, 2010). See Augustine, "Sermon 94" in *The Works of Saint Augustine: Sermons, (51–94) on the Old Testament*, vol. 3.3, 3rd release (Hyde Park, NY: New City, 1991), 478. In this sermon, Augustine chastises visiting bishops for their slothfulness in works of charity and defense of doctrine. He then exhorts any head of a household to "do my job in your home," namely, leading to salvation by right teaching, working for the poor, and protection against heresy. For both of these authors, the family shares in the evangelical, charitable, and educational ministries of the church, but not the ministry of the sacraments.

[9] Authors vigorously take up the universal call to holiness, but in the call they hear confirmation and sacralization of current practices of marrying and householding. Understood less as a call to alternative ways of living marriage and family life, it is heard too frequently as a mere blessing and renaming of practices that already exist. Florence Caffrey Bourg (*Where Two or Three Are Gathered: Christian Families as Domestic Churches* [Notre Dame, IN.: University of Notre Dame, 2004]) claims that it is only after the Second Vatican Council that the family is rediscovered as a context for living out the general Christian vocation. Bourg notes two types of reference to the domestic church: symbolic and juridical. She is wary of the juridical approach to family as domestic church, that is, as smallest unity of the ecclesial hierarchy, because she thinks it too easily opens a way to exclusionary, structure-based notions of which families count as domestic church and which families do not count as domestic church. Families without the correct, observable features will not be valid domestic churches, leading to their discouragement and continued loss of contact to the larger church. Instead she prefers the symbolic notion of domestic church, where the most essential feature of domestic church is "the way members see and interpret the world and their lives" (*Where Two or Three are Gathered*, 28). Moreover, Bourg identifies the crux of the problems surrounding theologies of "domestic church" after the Second Vatican Council: does the family model itself on the Church or does the church model itself on the family? Unfortunately, answers to this question of directionality, as Bourg points out, have become embroiled in the same turfwars typically seen between "progressive" and "conservative" camps—where "progressives" see diverse families as informing and changing the nature of what it means to be church, and "conservatives" restricting and repressing the move in this direction. Bourg's own tendency is to emphasize the family as a source for understanding what it means to be church. Christina Traina ("Papal Ideals, Marital Realities: One View from the Ground," in *Sexual Diversity and Catholicism: Toward the Development of Moral Theology*, ed. Patricia Beattie Jung, with Joseph Andrew Coray [Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 2001], 269–88) makes the argument that married people need to be sources of data and participants in the development of moral theological principals and conclusions as they relate to marriage and the family. Adrian Thatcher is among Anglican scholars who point to their own church moving in this direction in the Anglican Church's document *Marriage and the Church's Task: The Report of the General Synod Marriage Commission* (London, CIO Publishing, 1978). Adrian Thatcher chastises the Catholic Church for a continual failure of "loyalty to experience." In other words, Catholic theology of marriage and sexuality must listen to the voices of those who have relevant but excluded experience (*Marriage After Modernity: Christian Marriage in Postmodern Times*, Studies in Theology and Sexuality 3 [Sheffield, U.K.: Sheffield Academic, 1999], 19-20.

meant a virtual rejection of the evangelical counsels, especially celibacy, as helpful for

Christian perfection.[10]

In contrast to this tendency, the Council encourages the universality of the life of

the evangelical counsels, a Christoform life. Below, the Council states that the holiness

manifested by those who live the evangelical counsels is the one holiness of the church,

the *sanctitas Ecclesiae*. This one holiness is not individual but universal:

> This holiness of the Church is unceasingly manifested…it is expressed in many
> ways in individuals, who in their walk of life, tend toward the perfection of
> charity, thus causing the edification of others; in a very special way this [holiness]
> appears in the practice of the counsels, customarily called 'evangelical.' This
> practice of the counsels, under the impulsion of the Holy Spirit, undertaken by
> many Christians, either privately or in a Church-approved condition or state of
> life, gives and must give in the world an outstanding witness and example of this
> same holiness.[11]

The authors continue, briefly noting how each state in life can manifest the one holiness

of the Church by living out in particular the general call to Christian perfection of charity:

> Married couples and Christian parents should follow their own proper path [to
> holiness] by faithful love. They should sustain one another in grace throughout the
> entire length of their lives. They should imbue their offspring, lovingly welcomed
> as God's gift, with Christian doctrine and the evangelical virtues.[12]

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[10] At the demographic level, the number of men and women religious has dropped significantly since the Second Vatican Council, see Kenneth Jones, *Index of Leading Catholic Indicators: The Church Since Vatican II* (St. Louis, Mo.: Oriens, 2003). Patricia Wittberg, in *The Rise and Fall of Catholic Religious Orders* (Albany: State University of New York, 1994), treats the relationship between celibacy and the decline in religious life after the Second Vatican Council. She links the decline to a collapse of the reigning ideology of celibacy.

[11] LG, 39: "Haec autem Ecclesiae sanctitas in gratiae fructibus quo Spiritus in fidelibus poducit, incessanter manifestatur et manifestari debet; multiformiter exprimitur apud singulos, qui in suo vitae ordine ad perfectionem caritatis, aedificantes alios, tendunt; proprio quodam modo apparet in praxi consiliorum, quae evangelica appellari consueverunt. Quae consiliorum praxis, Spiritu Sancto impellente, a multis christianis assumpta, sive privatim sive in conditione vel statu in Ecclesia sancitis, praeclarum in mundo fert, et ferre oportet, eiusdem sanctitatis testimonium et exemplum."

[12] LG, 41. I must note that "to holiness" is not in the Latin text, but the context clearly suggests its inclusion in the English. The English renders "totius vitae decursu" as "throughout the entire length of their lives," but "totius vitae" also carries the meaning of the entire content of life. "Decursu" should not limit the meaning to the duration of the fidelity. A total fidelity in all parts of life for the entire duration of life is intended. The desire to invite all Christians to the quest for Christian perfection of holiness as a response to God's grace is necessarily tied to the doctrine that there is one common origin and one common destiny of man. The universal call to holiness is also emphasized an expression of John Paul II's attempt to renew the moral theological method according to the doctrine of common dignity and common destiny. See *Veritatis*

The Council even goes as far as to suggest that all Christians are obliged to strive for a

life of the counsels:

> The holiness of the Church is fostered in a special way by the observance of the counsels proposed in the Gospel by Our Lord to His disciples. An eminent position among these is held by virginity…a particular source of spiritual fecundity in the world…There are some who, in their freedom as sons of God, renounce their own wills and take upon themselves the state of poverty. Still further, some become subject of their own accord to another man, in the matter of perfection for love of God. This is beyond the measure of the commandments, but is done in order to become more fully like the obedient Christ.
> Therefore, all the faithful of Christ are invited [and held to pursuing] the holiness and perfection of their own proper state. Indeed they have an obligation to so strive…Let neither the use of the things of this world nor attachment to riches, which is against the spirit of evangelical poverty, hinder them in their quest for perfect love.[13]

These exhortations to a life in the image of Christ and suffused with grace toward

evangelical virtues come directly before the section on vowed religious life. They suggest

that all the laity should strive toward the virtues (chastity, poverty, and obedience)

expressed in the life of those who explicitly vow a life in the pattern of poverty, chastity,

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*Splendor*, where John Paul II does away with the dichotomy between spirituality and morality, between ascetical and mystical theology, the division between intention and action, counsel and command. For John Paul II, the question of moral theology is not "what is permitted and what is forbidden? But "what is the good life, that is, what is the fullness of life?" Jesus' command in Matthew 5:48 is to be perfect as the heavenly father is perfect. This command is not reserved for the spiritual elite, but available to all Christians. When Christ responds to the rich young ruler's question "What is the fullness of life?" there is no break between the two responses. They possess a continuity of charity. Christ refers to stages of movement in holiness rather than to two independent states of life. This seemingly impossible call to holiness is a moment of grace. Quoting Augustine, John Paul II finds that "The law was given so that we might ask for grace; grace was given so that we might fulfill the law." See Servais Pinckaers, "An Encyclical for the Future: *Veritatis Splendor*," in J. A., Di Noia, O. P., and Romanus P. Cessario, O. P., eds., *Veritatis Splendor and the Renewal of Moral Theology: Studies by Ten Outstanding Scholars* (Princeton, N.J.: Scepter, 1999), 35.

[13] LG 41, 42. The English translation on the Vatican website omits "et tenentur" from the translation. I have placed it back into the translation. Second, the English translation from the Vatican website renders "Omnes igitur christifideles ad sanctitatem et proprii status perfectionem prosequendam invitantur et tenentur" as "Therefore all of the Christian faithful are called to strive for *the* holiness and perfection of their own state of life." One might as easily translate render this passage, "Therefore all of the Christian faithful are called and held to pursuing holiness and perfection of one's proper state of life." Note that this translation does not add the definite article "the" before "holiness and perfection." This second translation is to be preferred since it is more flexible, allowing for a distinction between "holiness" and "perfection of one's proper state of life" *or* a conjunction of the two.

and obedience. If a theology of marriage and family is to take seriously the universal call to holiness in Christian perfection, then it ought to investigate manners and practices of how married couples can strive toward that Christian perfection as an act of receiving God's grace worked out in a life of evangelical virtue. If we take the words of the Council to heart, then, we at least have reason to begin this study, to ask whether there is a further theological bond between the vowed religious and married ways of life.

**RELATING MARRIAGE AND CONSECRATED LIFE AS WAYS OF HOLINESS IN RECENT SCHOLARSHIP: A STANDARD NARRATIVE**

The question of a consonance between vowed religious life and married life is not entirely untrodden ground. Some contemporary scholars have considered the relationship between the two ways of life. In this section I will analyze and critique attempts by Frederick Parrella, Kenneth Russell, and Peter Phan. I identify one typical "level-playing-field" approach to married and consecrated life, which tries to put the two states of life beside one another (purportedly to free marriage from a "normative" monastic spirituality). Parrella wants a family spirituality that is authentically its own, that is, distinct from monastic spirituality. It must be trinitarian and sacramental.[14] Russell proposes a contemplative marital spirituality based on spiritual friendship (via the thought of Aelred of Rievaulx) and a spousal love that does not conflict with a love of God.[15] Phan argues for a vision of marriage and monastic life on parallel spiritual tracks,

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[14] Frederick J. Parrella, "Towards a Spirituality of the Family," *Communio* 9 (1982): 128-41.

[15] Kenneth Russell, "Marriage and the Contemplative Life," *Spiritual Life* 24.7 (1978): 48–57; and "Loves in Conflict: Maritain on Marriage and Contemplation," *Eglise et Théologie* 7.3 (1976): 333–340.

separate but equal ways of attempting to love God with one's whole heart, mind, body, and soul.[16] These modern attempts are laudable, but I will critique them on four counts: (1) these modern spiritualities tend to maintain a dichotomy between the two states of life rather than seeing them as sharing in the same task; (2) these modern spiritualities perpetuate a competitive relationship between married and vowed religious life (albeit defanged); (3) the modern spiritualities of marriage (particularly Parrella's) inadvertently privilege married life as an expression of God's life as Trinity; and (4) the modern complication of the ascetical hierarchy of merit is not new, and, therefore, spiritualities assuming the novelty of complicating this hierarchy lack important material from the tradition. I will develop some of this crucial material from the tradition in chapter 3. The most important missing link, though, in these accounts of the relationship between marriage and consecrated life is their Christology—they lack a recognition of Christ, son of man and Second Person of the Trinity, as the true nexus of religious and conjugal life. As will be argued in chapter five, it is Christ the poor, chaste, and obedient Son of the Father and brother to humanity who draws these two states of life together into one body, household, and task. It is this Christological and trinitarian nexus that I will develop more fully in chapter five. But prior to developing this Christological-trinitarian account of the nexus of consecrated and conjugal life we must first explore the standard, adversarial narrative embedded in even the attempts to find consonance between the two states of life.

The alternative proposed in this dissertation emerges from the thought of Augustine. It proposes that both married and consecrated life share in the common task of being church and in the common membership in two shared bodies (the bride's and the

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[16] Peter C. Phan, "Possibility of a Lay Spirituality: A Re-Examination of Some Theological Presuppositions," *Communio* 10 (1983-Winter): 378-395.

bridegroom's).[17] The dual mystery of the church, at once the bride of Christ and Christ's

own body, is constituted by both the married and the celibate. This bride is purified and

finally made whole eschatologically. As St. Paul writes, Christ gives himself up for the

Church "to sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that

he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such

thing, that she might be holy and without blemish" (Eph 5:26–27). The notion of

common task and corporate belonging that undergirds the mystery of the Church's

identity as bride of Christ also founds the consonance between married and religious life

and frees our discussion from the adversarial structure that has dominated the scholarship,

popular reflection, and the historical narrative offered therein.[18]

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[17] I will speak about Christ as bridegroom in chapter 5, but for now, it should be noted that Scriptural sources come from an allegorical reading of Psalm 45, wherein the church is being married to Christ. For example, see Augustine's interpretation of the passage. *Ennarrationes in Psalmos* 44. 3 (CSEL 38, 495). In the wedding procession, after the bride of Christ, the virgins follow into the wedding banquet. "To what extent do virgins now seek favor with the King? How are they moved to do so? Because the Church has preceded them. 'Behind her the virgins shall be brought to the King, her companions shall follow her.'" *Ennarrationes in Psalmos* 44, 30 (CSEL 38, 515). See Hunter, "The Virgin, the Bride, and the Church," 298–99. Ephesians 5:21–32 is a source for analogy between Christ and Church and bridegroom and bride in general, but the passage does not state that Christ *is* literally bridegroom. At the same time, Christ refers allegorically to himself as bridegroom in many parables. He is not explicit that the bride, though, is the church, which is inferred. See Mt 9:14–17, and Mk 2:19–20, and Lk 5:34–36 (the impossibility of fasting when the bridegroom is present); Mt 25:1–13 (the wise and foolish virgins waiting for the bridegroom; Jn 3:29 (John the Baptist's reference to Christ as bridegroom). Christ is also seen as bridegroom through early Christian allegorical readings of the Song of Songs. See Mark W. Elliott, *The Song of Songs and Christology in the Early Church* 381–451 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000).

[18] My project is in part suggested by Jana M. Bennett in *Water is Thicker than Blood: An Augustinian Spirituality of Marriage and Singleness* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2008). Her hope is that the book will "provide direction for discussion about same-sex marriage and a conception of 'married monks,' while allowing single people to see themselves as Christian parents" (*Water is Thicker than Blood*, chap. 7). My project, I hope, is a fulfillment of her own hope, though I do not take up in this dissertation the issue of same-sex marriages. Bennett's thesis is that through salvation history, the virtues of married life and singleness have both been required for obedience (in the garden) and for returning to God through life in the Church (the complementarity of marriage and singleness after the Incarnation). In her final chapter she suggests a further investigation of what the consequences of the deep ecclesial relationship between marriage and singleness for how we live together in domestic, ecclesial situations. My development of consonance between marriage and celibacy in Augustine complements Bennett's, which focuses on the way that both marriage and celibacy reveal a semi-realized eschatology. Bennett develops Augustine's insight that "neither marriage and sex nor virginity are standard for what it means to be domestic church. This is because on Augustine's insight, every state of life, every life of virtue, is surrounded by domestic cares and troubles" (*Water is Thicker than Blood*, chap. 7). My recovery of Augustine's thought in chapter three will turn on his "middle way" for addressing the competitive spiritualities of his day and develops an

The common method for putting married life in direct conversation with vowed religious life-in-community has been to begin with a narrative. The now-standard narrative follows this pattern: the historical Jesus radically resisted the idolatry of Greco-Roman and Jewish 1st-century householding:[19] its patriarchy and its tendency to close off the outsider. Jesus himself lived a celibate life and called disciples to a kind of life that may have required a conflicted departure from the household;[20] his practice and theory amounted to the support for what could be called a right to remain unmarried, a relativization of the earthly household in favor of the spiritual household of believers. Saint Paul, in his eschatological fervor, his desire to open Christians to broader love of

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Augustinian notion of what the marital sacrament does to integrate the goods shared by the virtuous lives of married and celibate persons.

[19] John Howard Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus: Vicit Angus Noster*, second ed., (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994), chap. 9. He considers the writers of Colossians, Ephesians, and 1 Peter to have called married people to "revolutionary subordination" that is more or less in continuity with Jesus' own insights on the participation in the family. The goal of the gospel is not to use righteous violence to change idolatrous social structures, but to witness to the fact that Christ has already overcome and defeated them. They fall away while Christ's kingdom remains and is fulfilled. Yoder's exegesis, which I support, rejects the commonly held "evangelical inadequacy" interpretation of Martin Dibelieus, who states that Christianity did not initially need to organize itself at a domestic, social level, but once the need arose Christian leaders looked to Hellenistic and Jewish philosophy because Jesus did not provide them resources for social organization. Lisa Sowle Cahill (in *Family: A Christian Social Perspective* [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000], 39–42) sees in Jesus an initial insight that is eventually lost. This insight is the radical rejection of married kinship and patronage structures of his social milieu in favor of a new "fictive kinship" that expands who counts as "family." Despite this initial insight, the church, in her telling, (which depends on Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza and an "accomodationist" approach) soon lost the practice of this radical equality in favor of familial structures that were less threatening to the status quo of Roman household organization.

[20] Jesus' demand "Whoever comes to me and does not hate his father and mother and wife and children, brothers and sisters, even his own life, cannot be my disciple" (Lk 14:26) might be seen by Cahill, John Dominic Crossan, Gerhard Theissen, and others as an example of Jesus rejecting the patriarchal Jewish family. Wolfgang Stegemann ("The Contextual Ethics of Jesus," in *The Social Setting of Jesus and the Gospels*, ed. Wolfgang Stegemann, Bruce J. Malina, and Gerd Theissen [Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002], 45–61, at 55–59) reads passages where Jesus distances himself and his disciples from current domestic practices in the context of the command to love one's neighbor and enemy, that is, in the context of social attachment and reciprocity. Stegemann finds no evidence for a direct rejection of the patriarchal kinship model per se in any of the commonly cited passages. Instead, passages such as these reflect Jesus' claim that belonging with Jesus is prior to and in a sense involves "the dissolution of attachment to one's family." Following Jesus then, has a large social cost. It is a rejection of the priority of extending reciprocal relations of mutual service to those in one's kin group (however patriarchal or egalitarian it may be). At the same time it is a requirement to extend reciprocal relations to social enemies, that is, to give without the hope of getting anything in return.

neighbor, or his philosophical tendencies, preferred celibacy to marriage.[21] Some chose the path of celibacy and austerity as an attempt to follow Christ more closely, prepare for martyrdom, live a life of penance, or master their sin and do battle with the devil. Early treatises on chastity and virginity focus on the perfection of virtue and the offering of one's complete self, body and soul, exclusively to God, rather than imitation of Jesus.[22] The silent majority of Christians, though, married.[23] The early church recognized the good of marriage, but (as this narrative goes) troublesome philosophical tendencies (e.g., stoicism, a Platonic dualism, and gnostic dualism) invaded Christian thinking and resulted in a dubious, skeptical, even fearful stance toward sexuality and therefore marriage.[24] In the confusion, Augustine's theological preference for the virginal life, especially when lived in community, and his skeptical stance toward right use of sexuality in marriage take center stage through the medieval tradition, and up through the Council of Trent. During this time ecclesiastical institutions develop in light of the

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[21] Francis J. Moloney (*Life of Promise*, 98–102) largely reduces Paul's preference for the unmarried life to his expectation of an imminent end to the world. He argues further that Paul changed his theology in the light of discovering that such an end was not imminent. Richard B. Hays, in *The Moral Vision of the New Testament: A Contemporary Introduction to New Testament Ethics* (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1996), reduces Paul's counsel to remain unmarried to a perception of the eschaton's imminence. "Presumably, Paul's belief in the imminent eschaton made him relatively indifferent to the raising of families" (51). Furthermore, "Marriage inevitably brings with it a concern for 'the affairs of the world' and thereby hinders total devotion to the mission of the church at the turn of the ages (7:32–35). That mission is 'the present necessity' that leads Paul to opine that singleness if preferable to marriage" (52). This analysis prescinds from questions of moral psychology in Paul. Others reduce Paul's apparent disregard for the goodness of sexuality to stoic or cynic philosophical influences. See Will Demming's comprehensive treatment of the philosophical sources *Paul on Marriage and Celibacy: The Hellenistic Background of 1 Corinthians 7*, second edition (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004), 1-46.

[22] See, for example, St. Methodius of Olympus *Symposium: A Treatise on Chastity*, trans. Herbert Musurillo (New York: Newman, 1958).

[23] See Carol Harrison, "Silent Majority: The Family in Patristic Thought," in *Family in Theological Perspective* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1996), 87–105.

[24] See Kim Power, *Veiled Desire: Augustine on Women* (New York: Continuum, 1996); and John Mahoney, *The Making of Moral Theology* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987) for two typical analyses of Augustine's thought on sexuality as negative, overly determined by his philosophical commitments, his own sexual obsession, and a latent Manichaeism. For a more historically accurate and complete understanding of Augustine's position on sexuality and the context within which Augustine addressed the issue see David Hunter, *Marriage, Celibacy, and Heresy in Ancient Christianity: The Jovinianist Controversy* (New York: Oxford University, 2007).

Augustinian doctrine, and the pinnacle of Christian life continues to be seen as a renunciation of marriage.[25] Married Christians can attain holiness too, but only in the following ways: (1) in spite of their marital sexuality; (2) after one spouse dies, allowing the other to take up monastic life; or (3) by renouncing what is essential to marriage—if both spouses take on a celibate life of poverty and prayer, that is, a monastic life. The only way for married people to grow, it would seem, is to import the consecrated religious spirituality.[26] At the same time, monastic spirituality apparently owes but a pittance to married life for contributions to the vowed religious pursuit of holiness.[27]

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[25] Jana Bennett's work too follows the first part of this common narrative: "Throughout Christian history the tendency has been to sharply define and separate marriage and celibacy from each other in ways that have not allowed the church to draw on the gifts and opportunities of each state of life" ("Mark 8: Support for Celibate Singles Alongside Monogamous Married Couples and Their Children," *Schools of Conversion: 12 Marks of a New Monasticism* [Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2005], 112–123, at 117).

[26] The tendency to think this is not without cause. Augustine does suggest that the holier a couple is, the sooner they will begin abstaining from conjugal intercourse. See *De Bono Coniugali*, 3 (CSEL 41:190-91); *The Excellence of Marriage*, 35: "the better persons they are, the earlier they begin by mutual consent to abstain from carnal union." Also see *De Genesi adversus manichaeos*, 2.19.29 (CSEL 91), where Augustine interprets the punishment of Adam and Eve spiritually: "there is no restraint from carnal desire which does not have pain in the beginning, until habit has been bent toward the better part." Even in marriage, the proper use of sexuality can be bent toward what is better, the gift of continence. For Augustine, even chaste marriage would have included what would be unimaginable amounts of abstinence from intercourse by modern "sexually liberated" standards. He expected chaste married couples to abstain during pregnancy, menstruation, and after menopause entirely. All abstinence is off, however, if one spouse is on the brink of committing adultery or some other sexual sin. For evidence from his later writings, see *De Nuptiis et Concupiscentia* 1.12 (CSEL 42, 242); *Marriage and Desire*, 35–36, where he states that spouses grow closer companions as they are not bound by the bond that requires use of concupiscence. "In fact, it [the marital bond] will be stronger to the extent that they have entered more deeply into those agreements with each other, which have to be observed in greater love and harmony, not by pleasureful embraces of their bodies, but by willing affections of their hears." Augustine does not take the position because sexuality must be rejected and that married people must become monks. Rather he understands the virtue of continence to be one all persons should seek, whether married or unmarried. The incontinent who are married should seek continence. This may lead to abstaining from conjugal intercourse at times, but it need not in all cases.

[27] As Parrella has it, "a spirituality of the family, one that included the meaning of marriage and the raising of children, subsequently developed in a subordinate relationship to the spirituality of monasticism and a theology of virginity. The family was always understood in the context of a higher ideal, namely the monastic life. This inevitably led to a hierarchy of holiness within the Church. In a standard work on the laity in the Church, Yves Congar (*Lay People in the Church* [Westminster, MD: Newman, 1965), 12) cites a Bull of Pope Urban II from 1092 which stated, "From the beginning the Church has offered two kinds of life to her children: one to help the insufficiency of the weak, the other to perfect the goodness of the strong." In reality, this one-way directionality is a false characterization. As will be shown in the subsequent chapter, the life of religious orders has relied on domestic language of the family to make sense of and order their own project.

Furthermore, because of the "dark" Augustinian doctrine on sexuality—that it must be excused by various goods (as the means of procreation, or as a remedy for concupiscence, or as an act of mercy)—married people remain second class Christians until the Second Vatican Council. Finally, we hear, the Church has officially declared two major points: (1) the universal call to holiness and Christian perfection; and (2) the goodness of sexuality in and of itself and the notion that sexuality in marriage is part of how the married couple achieves holiness in and through their marriage. In the marital act the couples give themselves to each other as an expression of a human love that is taken up into a divine love.[28] The marital act is the consummation of the marriage, seen by many as the pinnacle and clearest expression of sacramental love of the spouses.[29] No longer to be excused, the conjugal act must be celebrated. The sexual desire (which is in part subject to *concupiscentia carnis*, one of many expressions of the basic concupiscence [*concupiscentia*][30] resulting from the fall) was formerly viewed suspiciously for its idolatrous tendencies, but is now celebrated as each person's natural

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[28] According to GS, 48 and 51: "Authentic married love is caught up into divine love," and married couples "preserve the full sense of mutual self-giving and human procreation in the context of true love," when they consummate their marriage.

[29] John Paul II's Wednesday audiences, published as *Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body*, Trans., intro., Michael Waldstein (Boston: Pauline, 2006), develop this personalist approach, which has been popularized by Christopher West in the United States (e.g., *Theology of the Body for Beginners* [West Chester, PA: Ascension, 2004]). For another personalist approach, see Vincent Genovesi, *In Pursuit of Love: Catholic Morality and Human Sexuality* (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1987).

[30] For an accurate description of the relationship between *concupiscentia* and sexuality in Augustine, see John C. Cavadini, "Feeling Right: Augustine on the Passions and Sexual Desire," *Augustinian Studies* 36 (2005): 195–217; David G. Hunter, "Augustinian Pessimism? A New Look at Augustine's Teaching on Sex, Marriage, and Celibacy," *Augustinian Studies* 25 (1994): 153–77. Cavadini's contribution is to reconsider whether Augustine might be right about just how ambivalent are our sexual desire and our feelings regarding sexual pleasure. Cavadini argues that modern thought is not as unanimously positive about sexual pleasure as one might assume.

desire to be given entirely to another and receive the other entirely as gift.[31] With this

development, the door had been opened for a supposed authentic spirituality of the laity.

As the story goes, it was only recently that marriage came back into view as a

path to holiness on its own terms. Frederick J. Parrella, in a 1982 article in *Communio*,

"Towards a Spirituality of the Family," applauds the early church for the demand that

even spouses had to be perfect (Clement of Alexandria), but he finds this insight to have

been rather quickly lost and only recently recovered in any substantial way. He rejects,

moreover, what he calls a context for thinking about marriage that "subsequently

developed in a subordinate relationship to the spirituality of monasticism and a theology

of virginity."[32] Among the problematic constructs of this context Parrella lists the strict

hierarchy of holiness, a notion of "duo genera Christianorum," and the idea that a virginal

life was a sort of this-worldly "vita angelica." As clear evidence of this kind of

adversarial stratification Parrella finds Pope Urban II (1092) stating that "From the

beginning the Church has offered two kinds of life to her children: one to help the

insufficiency of the weak, the other to perfect the goodness of the strong."[33] In light of

this stratified relationship, Parrella laments that, throughout history, when spouses

"aspired to deeper levels of holiness, however, their model of spirituality was primarily

derived from monastic life, not from their immediate roles as husband, wife, lover,

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[31] See, for example, *Innocent Ecstasy: How Christianity Gave America an Ethic of Sexual Pleasure*, (Oxford: Oxford University, 1985); and Christine Gudorf, *Body, Sex, and Pleasure: Reconstructing Christian Sexual Ethics* (Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim Press, 1994).

[32] Frederick J. Parrella, "Towards a Spirituality of the Family," *Communio* 9 (1982): 128-41, at 131. Despite the early insight of Clement of Alexandria, who wrote, "we must be holy in the whole manner of our lives…the obligation to be perfect is incumbent on all, lay and religious alike," spirituality of marriage developed as subordinate and with nothing to contribute to the spirituality of the celibate life. "By the end of the fourth century, a strong dualism solidified in Christian spirituality so that *duo genera* Christianorum existed: the monk, the cleric, the virgin on the one hand and those left to life in the secular world on the other," (Parrella, "Towards a Spirituality of the Family," 131).

[33] Ibid., 131.

childbearer, craftsman, homemaker. Growth in the spirit did not take place directly

through the procreative relation of the family."[34] As he tells the story, throughout history,

married spirituality was either (1) impossible; (2) accomplished only in spite of the

realities of marriage, that is, not in an through those realities; or (3) accomplished only if

one excised what was essential to married life *qua* marriage.

The narrative I have outlined generally makes three moves: First, it attempts to

villainize a former hierarchical stratification of the religious and lay states while praising

a supposedly modern, level-playing-field approach to these ways of life assumed to be

*novel*. Authors in the second-half of the twentieth century write as if the Second Vatican

Council finally introduced this kind of discourse into Catholic theology's mainstream, but

in fact this method of argumentation was by no means a product of the Second Vatican

Council or even the first half of the twentieth century. The attempt to equalize married

and religious states is an ancient argumentative strategy, nearly as old as Antony of the

Desert.[35] Second, the narrative attempts to move beyond a supposed dichotomization of

the married life and the celibate life that paved the way for the hierarchical assessment of

the states. Finally, the narrative has assumed a historical one-way street, seeing a

unidirectional spiritual invasion from monastic life into marriage but little to no

dependence on non-vowed life to inform the monastic spirituality.

My contention in this chapter will be that the late twentieth-century equalization

of married and religious life does not escape the dualism and competitive spirit it seeks to

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[34] Ibid., 131.

[35] In late fourth-century Rome, for example, Jovinian attempted to propose that marriage and virginity were of equal merit. The content of Jovinian's argument known from the condemnations text of Pope Siricius, a letter from Ambrose to Siricius (*Epistola. 42, Rescriptum ad Siricium papam* 4) concerning Ambrose's condemnation of Jovinian through a council in Milan, Jerome's first response (*Adversus Iovinianum*, 1.3; PL, 23, col. 206–338) and a letter he sent when that response met with lack of enthusiasm (*Epistola. 49*, CSEL 54; and *Epistola. 52*).

avoid; and that this way of putting marriage and vowed religious life in dialogue is not to be preferred, because a better narrative and a better alternative for relating the two ways of life can be offered from within the tradition. A renarration complicates the simple prioritization of monastic life over married life by seeing them share in the same goods and the same domestic project of being church. In the chapter that follows, I will allow the desert fathers and Augustine to begin this renarration with the alternative they offer for their own time, a non-adversarial, complementary vision of the married life and the consecrated life.

## MARRIAGE AND VIRGINITY, EQUALS AT LAST?
## THREE SCHOLARS' PROPOSALS

### Parrella's Lay Spirituality—Inadvertently Inverting a Hierarchy of Holiness

With the door opened for an authentic lay spirituality, how have recent scholars walked through it? The first step has been *apophatic* and the second is positive, though *heuristic*. In the apophatic step, the project has been to reject past attempts at a spirituality of marriage and the family and to clear the deck of false theological presuppositions that prevent the development of an authentic spirituality of marriage. The second, heuristic step has been to lay out principles or hypotheses for how an authentic lay spirituality might be developed. Most authors perform both the apophatic and the heuristic tasks at the same time, so I will treat the two together in my analysis of the works of Frederick J. Parrella, Peter Phan, and Kenneth Russell. I make this decision in part because the principles the authors reject determines to a certain extent the kind of

principles the author positively proposes. I begin with Frederick J. Parrella. His article, "Towards a Spirituality of the Family," offers three theological presuppositions (one negative and two positive) required for a family spirituality: (1) marriage is not subordinate to virginity; (2) Family is an expression of God's triune life; and (3) the family is a sacramental, incarnational locus of grace in history.

Parrella's critique of subordinating married spirituality to religious spirituality is based in a rejection of "dualism" in Christian life that sees a hierarchy or difference in holiness between marriage and virginity. His account of the dualism between monasticism and marriage in history follows the narrative presented above. Parrella wants to end the debate on ascetic hierarchy by enfolding each into the one seamless garment of the Church. For Parrella, Vatican II's statement on the universal call to holiness "offers the Church a new vision of herself as the one and whole bride of Christ and the seamless robe that covers his Body."[36] The question of personal holiness should be tabled because of this "new" vision. Because we are one, it would seem, the question of personal holiness vanishes. Invoking universal vocation is enough for Parrella to allow the question to disappear. This vision of Vatican II, however, is not novel (as we will see chapter 3), and does not utterly destroy questions of personal merit.[37] Since married holiness is no longer subordinate to monastic, Parrella can develop a theology of "the family as a unique locus of transcendence and embodiment of divine grace."[38]

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[36] Ibid., 132.

[37] This debate raged in the fourth and fifth century. St. Ambrose, St. Jerome, and St. Augustine, Jovinian, and Julian of Aeclanum were embroiled in arguments about a hierarchy of merit within the church and the preference for a virgin life over married life. The most complete treatment is by David Hunter, *Marriage, Celibacy, and Heresy in Ancient Christianity*. For a history of the question in the early Church, see Peter Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University, 1988).

[38] Parrella, "Towards a Spirituality of the Family," 132.

Parrella's second principle, that the family is an expression of the Trinity, is a rich

and at the same time dangerous source of reflection. Marc Cardinal Oullett has taken up

the same question in *Divine Likeness: Toward a trinitarian Anthropology of the Family*.[39]

The richness of this principle lies in the fact that "In speaking of God as Person and as

Trinity, we enter into the central mystery of theology, which, when properly considered,

includes all other mysteries within itself."[40] Parrella finds in the family a privileged

location where the Trinity is revealed as radical relatedness *ad alium*: "No other

commitment is as absolute in its intensity nor as eternal in its duration as marriage…In

uttering Thou, he [sic] stands in relation, existing *ad alium* with his whole being. In this

process he becomes himself, *in se*, a person. Sexuality in marriage is the unique language

that expresses the all-encompassing power of the relationship."[41]

Parrella's third proposal, that the family is a sacramental, incarnational locus of

grace in history, stands on solid ground; Catholic scholarly consensus leans toward this

position already.[42] Christ is the perfect sacrament of God; he makes the father visible in

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[39] Marc Cardinal Oullet does well to operate with this caution, which originates as early as Augustine's *De Trinitate*. To his credit, Oullett notes that he will use analogical approaches, but only in dialogue with and corrected by what von Balthasar calls the katalogical or "top-down" approach.

[40] Parrella, "Towards a Spirituality of the Family," 133. For Parrella, the danger of the trinitarian approach is to objectify and reduce the Trinity "to an abstract question of three *persons* in one divine nature, isolated from history and human experience," (133). Parrella has been influenced by Karl Rahner's declaration that "*The 'economic' Trinity is the 'immanent' Trinity and the 'immanent' Trinity is the 'economic Trinity*" (Rahner, *The Trinity* [New York: Herder & Herder, 1970], 22, italics original). Behind Parrella's thought is the work of Catherine LaCugna, *God For Us* (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1991), who attempts to renew trinitarian theology by arguing that the God is per se relational. His essence is to be related *ad alium*.

[41] Parrella, "Towards a Spirituality of the Family," 137.

[42] Parrella relies on AA, 11; as well as LG, 1, 9, and 48; *Sacrosanctum concilium*, 5; and GS, 47–52; the 1980 World Synod of Bishops, "A Message to Christian Families in the Modern World," *Origins* 10, no. 21 (6 November, 1980). This question of how the family is a sacrament of Christ is distinct from the question of how marriage is one of the seven sacraments instituted by Christ. See Matthias Scheeben, in the classic *Mysteries of Christianity*, trans. Cyril Vollert, S.J. (St. Louis: Herder, 1946), 600; Michael Lawler, *Marriage and Sacrament: A Theology of Christian Marriage* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1993; Theodore Mackin, *The Marital Sacrament* (New York: Paulist Press, 1989); Walter Kasper, *Theology of Christian Marriage* (New York: Seabury, 1980), chap. 2; Marc Cardinal Oullet, *Divine Likeness: Toward a Trinitarian Anthropology of the Family*, 50–55; Bernard Lonergan, "Finality, Love, Marriage," 477–510; Thomas Norris, "Why the Marriage of Christians is One of the Seven Sacraments," *Irish Theological*

the very paradox that threatens to make God invisible: the cross. Both nadir and pinnacle

of Christ's revelation (when taken as one with the resurrection), the church's

sacramentality requires this bipolar form. The same is true for the sacramentality of the

nuclear family. By pointing to the sacramental character of the family, Parrella

emphasizes the real experience of the family, as "at once both the image of divine life

and of human estrangement and sin; at once both the community where salvation is

present and the community in which salvation seems difficult if not impossible to

attain."[43] The brokenness and vulnerability of our family experience is the ground from

which its reality as sacrament emerges. The family is a sacrament of Christ analogously

to the way the church is a sacrament of Christ—"it embodies grace in concrete form

while pointing to a grace that is absolute and eschatological."[44] The Christian family is

"the domestic sanctuary of the Church," where each member shares in the common

priesthood, prophecy, and kingship of Christ through the sacraments of initiation.[45]

Following upon this overview, Parrella identifies three additional ways to

envision the family as sacrament of grace. Though he does not explicitly cite the

document, Parrella seems informed by *Familiaris consortio* for each of these three

sacramental views of the family. [46] First, for Parrella, "each family member is a

sacrament to other members of the family, not just by virtue of his or her individual

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*Quarterly* 51.1 (1985): 37–51. While scholars agree that marriage is a sacrament, there is diversity of scholarly opinion as to what the sacrament is and what character it confers (if any). The Church's official position is that that the grace of the sacrament confers indissolubility to the marriage bond, which is ratified in the liturgy and consummated at first conjugal intercourse. Other graces of the sacrament are the taking up of the human, spousal love into a divine love, as well as the helps toward the fidelity, perseverance, self-discipline, and the other virtues required for a Christian marriage. See GS, 48–52; and CIC, 1055–1057, 1134.

[43] Parrella, "Towards a Spirituality of the Family," 138.

[44] Ibid.

[45] The 1980 World Synod of Bishops, "A Message to Christian Families in the Modern World," art. 6, in *Origins* 10, no. 21 (6 November 1980), quoted in Parrella, "Towards a Spirituality of the Family," 138.

[46] FC 17–21, 28–41, 42–48, 49–64.

baptism into Christ, but first and essentially by simply being a member of that particular family community."[47] With this first notion, Parrella parallels John Paul II's phrase "communion of persons," the end of which is to be "at the service of life." Both of these principles are central to John Paul II's understanding of the family's role in the Church.

Second, the family must also be a sacrament *ad extra*. Because Christian family members "seek first God's kingdom and his righteousness…loving relationships and strong family ties grow from this openness to a world beyond the confines of their intra-familial circle."[48] This second aspect of family sacramentality aligns with John Paul II's call for the family to full "participation in the development of society" and "participation in the mission of the church." The family is a sacrament of Christ when it brings his mercy and justice to life in places of oppression and injustice.

Third, "the family is a sacramental expression of the import of the personal sphere to contemporary culture…It embodies the powerful truth that the person and personal relations, whether between individuals or nations, are the ultimate meaning and destiny of life."[49] This third principle is a kind of restatement of John Paul II's emphasis on the term "communion of persons." It is a strong rejection of the idea that the family provides an affective escape from the harsh world "out there."

These three principles are an important contribution to the development of a spirituality of the family. I also echo Parrella's assertion that "a spirituality of the family must be rooted in the triune God, in Christ incarnate, and in grace sacramental."[50] Parrella's principles do provide spouses with a certain language to understand how they

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[47] Parrella, "Towards a Spirituality of the Family," 139.
[48] Parrella, "Towards a Spirituality of the Family," 139–40.
[49] Ibid., 141.
[50] Ibid., 127.

might seek holiness in and through married life. Unfortunately, Parrella never overcomes the dualism that he so wants to reject. The constructive proposal he offers for a spirituality of the family is in many ways compelling, but his married spirituality remains one that envisions itself over against consecrated religious life. The only thing that has changed about a competitive relationship between these two ways of life is the identity of the winner. He speaks of the church as a seamless garment, but then goes on to outline a *unique* spirituality of family that privileges the nuclear family's ability to image God. This seems to be the opposite of his intention. His high praise for family has come at a price: the implicit diminution of monastic spirituality as a means to fully realize human personhood as being related in love *ad alium*. I imagine Parrella does not intend such a marginalization of monastic spirituality. Nor does he likely intend to re-order the hierarchy of merit with marriage on top as most perfect image of the Trinity and celibate life beneath it as only partially imaging the Trinity. The danger I see in Parrella's approach, especially his trinitarian angle to understanding the family, is the failure to acknowledge the radical contingency and provisional nature of any bottom-up approach to understanding what the Trinity is. For now, it is enough to say that the family's ability to reveal the nature of the Trinity must always be interrogated. It is the Trinity that reveals definitively to each person and to the family what he, she, or they are to be. Parrella's claim for marriage as a privileged place of trinitarian revelation unfortunately results in a stunted theology of religious life and a continuing adversarial construal of the relationship between the two. I must leave off this trinitarian avenue, though, until chapter 5, where I can deal with Parrella and other authors as part of a larger theological context and argument. Parrella's attention to the Trinity is essential, but unfortunately, he

puts too much effort into finding the "unique" quality of the nuclear family's spirituality. The result of Parrella's spirituality is that he cannot achieve the goal he so desires, namely to work with the family spirituality as part of the Church "vision of herself as the one and whole bride of Christ and the seamless robe that covers his Body." This is, in part, why I am not arguing for a spirituality of the *family* here but a theology of marriage as a common way of life in Christ. In chapters 4 and 5, my use of principles that belong to the Church (Christian householding, evangelical counsels), rather than to the nuclear family, to understand the consonance between consecrated religious life and marriage better accomplishes the task Parrella has set for himself.

**Kenneth Russell and the Loss of a Distinction**

A second scaffolding for working on marriage and consecrated life is offered by Kenneth Russell, who proposes the following two principles: (1) love of spouse poses no conflict to love of God, and in fact, the love of spouse is a mediation of the love of God;[51] and (2) a contemplative spirituality of marriage requires a model, but none has been developed. He proposes that such a model could be developed from Aelred of Rievaulx's work *Spiritual Friendship* but does not undertake that development himself.

Kenneth Russell lays out four typical arguments against the possibility of a contemplative married life. First, according to St. Paul in 1 Corinthians 7, he notes, it

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[51] Russell proposes the idea in two places: "Marriage and the Contemplative Life," 48–57, at 54–55; and "Loves in Conflict," 333–340, at 338 and 340: "The neighbor is not an obstacle to God but the personal intersection where God himself is loved…in the intimacy of marriage the love that goes out to the beloved does not need to be redirected toward God—there is no need to lift either the physical or spiritual eyes from the spouse toward the heavenly realms." "In fact," Russell continues, "the neat dichotomy of nature and grace is challenged by marriage's status as a sacrament in which two people are called to be completely given over to each other in oneness. It follows from this that no aspect of the union—neither the sexual nor the deep interpersonal attachment—can be seen as a barrier to union with God."

would seem that married life presents a distraction from completely undivided concern or care for the things of God. Second, whereas a contemplative life seems to require a life of detachment, the married life necessitates involvement. Third, whereas contemplative life involves a general expression of charity, married life involves a particular, incarnate love, with sexual pleasure. Finally, whereas the contemplative's heart is centered completely on the love of God, the husband's or wife's love is centered on his or her spouse.

In answering the four arguments, Russell is honest about the ambiguity of sexuality, even within marriage. The sexual act, he writes, "is not rightly ordered just by the fact that it is in marriage."[52] He concedes even more ground to St. Paul when he suggests that marriage too is ambiguous, especially in its economic and child-rearing aspects. It is meant to draw us together in love, but spouses often splinter in opposite directions. Worse, the two "egos" can pool and become one larger married "ego," which acts for its own self-centered good.[53] Russell, though, dismisses Paul's argument by stating that he was not speaking against marriage per se, but against an over-asceticism regarding sexuality within marriage. For Russell, the danger Paul identifies "is not in the service of the other in a bond of love nor in the need to care for the family but in the risk that the proper hierarchy of values may be threatened by absorption in 'the cares of the world.'"[54] Finally, Russell claims that holiness is not found in avoidance of social belonging (e.g., marriage), but in a right ordering of that belonging. Just as holiness in marriage is not in avoiding the involvements of daily life and sexual contact, so too for the monk holiness is not avoiding love of brethren and the material concerns of the monastery.

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[52] Russell, "Marriage and the Contemplative Life," 53.
[53] Ibid., 54.
[54] Ibid.

So how does Russell hope to ground this right ordering and harmony of marriage's daily round with the concerns of contemplative life? Russell makes two suggestions: (1) "the work of the family for the Church and society could primarily be contemplative prayer"; and (2) "it is the task of theologians to make this intuition intelligible and to provide the married contemplative with a model of the spiritual life which respects his dual vocation. I suggest Aelred of Rievaulx's sound understanding of friendship and its bearing on our progress toward God provides the ground for a theology of contemplative style of life within marriage."[55] Aelred's vision of friendship allows for intimacy between a man and wife to function as an aid rather than a barrier to union with God inasmuch as the spouses would make space and time for each other to practice contemplative prayer.[56] His final and perhaps most powerful insight linking contemplative and familial life is to suggest that the "work" of the family for the Church and society could be a form of contemplative prayer.[57] This is the kind of re-imagination of the married couple's and the family's task that is required to contextualize marriage again as an ecclesial reality which takes as its primary social role a participation in the building up of the body of Christ, the *Civitas Dei* rather than the *civitas terrena*.

While I admire Russell's call for "a model of the contemplative life which will integrate the sexual and spiritual intimacy of the married couple" I contest Russell's easy claim for this model's function. By such a model, he purports, spouses "will be able to

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[55] Ibid., 56. For a description of Aelred of Rievaulx on marriage, see Marie Anne Mayeski, "'Like a Boat is Marriage': Aelred on Marriage as a Christian Way of Life," *Theological Studies* 70 (2009): 92–108. Aelred characterizes marriage as a boat that will get spouses to their goal of God's kingdom, but they will need to continually bail out their vessel, which suffers from more leaks than the boat of vowed religious life.

[56] Ibid., 49–52. Dietrich Bonhoeffer (*Life Together*, trans., John W. Doberstein [New York: Harper & Row, 1954], 87) argues that each person in the Christian community has the right to demand time for contemplative prayer and devotional Scripture reading. "We have a right to this time, even prior to the claims of other people, and we may insist upon having it as a completely undisturbed quiet time despite all external difficulties."

[57] Russell, "Marriage and the Contemplative Life," 55.

reconcile on an intellectual level the harmony between marriage and contemplation they know experientially."[58] Unfortunately, this "they" is a small lot, and given the tradition of married saints who have chosen celibacy within marriage, I wonder just how obvious the harmony between conjugal intercourse and contemplation is experientially—even for those attracted to the contemplative life.[59] Further, a model of married spirituality is needed not principally to justify the life of those already experiencing a "harmony between marriage and contemplation." Theology is not a justification of their practices. Instead, a model that finds consonance between contemplative and married life is required principally for those married or engaged couples who want to see their marriage as a pilgrimage toward the City of God, but find themselves besieged and battered by what seems disharmonious and distracting in their daily lives.

One important point at stake in Russell's attempt to level the playing field between consecrated and conjugal life is the question of the way God is the object of love and the kind of love occurring in consecrated and conjugal life. He argues that spousal love mediates the love of God in the same way that the consecrated religious person's love of every neighbor mediates the love of God. Jacques and Raissa Maritain's writings on the *amour fou divin* and *amour fou humain* serves as the touchpoint for this hypothesis. Maritain believes that the human heart has room for one of these loves. A marriage may exist with either but not both of these loves.[60] As opposed to Maritain, Russell argues

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[58] Ibid., 49.

[59] See Dyan Elliott, *Spiritual Marriage: Abstinence in Medieval Wedlock* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University, 1993).

[60] Jacques Maritain wrote an extended explanation of his wife Raissa's journal entry on love from Easter Sunday, 1924. See *Raissa's Journal*, pref. René Voillaume (Albany, N.Y.: Magi Books, 1974 [1963]), 161–66; and Jacques Maritain, *Notebooks*, trans. Joseph Evans (Albany, N.Y.: Magi Books, 1984), 219–57. Maritain writes, "The state of father or of a mother of a family is compatible with progress in infused contemplation and in mad, boundless love for God." At the same time, though, "Human mad, boundless love is not compatible with progress in infused contemplation and in mad, boundless love for God."

"that for married people the best preparation for contemplation is the vigorous living out of the daily reality of the state to which they have been called."[61] Maritain believes that sexuality and the completely consuming gift of love a spouse might give the other, a love that makes the spouse the center of gravity for the life of love, prevents the spouse from making God the gravitational center of one's life. There is only room for one total love in the person. Russell rejects this position on the grounds of De Lubac's and Rahner's efforts to maintain the distinction but not the complete separation between the "natural" and "supernatural." "In fact," Russell states, "the neat dichotomy of nature and grace is challenged by marriage's status as a sacrament in which two people are called to be completely given over to each other in oneness. It follows from this that no aspect of the union—neither the sexual nor the deep interpersonal attachment—can be seen as a barrier to union with God."[62]

Although Russell thinks the point of contention with Maritain is whether love of God and love of a person conflict in marriage, in fact a more basic distinction lies at the discussion's base. Russell and Maritain, it seems, disagree about the nature of the love that is essential for marriage. In line with the thought of John Paul II, Russell sees the

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(Jacques Maritain, *Notebooks*, 248–49). This is the case because "mad love" or "amour fou" obtains when "the person or subjectivity gives himself *directly, openly or nakedly,* without hiding himself under the forms of any other gift less absolutely total, he gives himself wholly from the very first in giving or communicating to the beloved, in ecstasizing in him that which he is. It is the very person of the lover which is the Gift, simple, unique and without any possible reserve, made to the beloved. This is why love, especially in the extreme sense in which we are taking it here, is gift-of-self *absolutely and pre-eminently*" (ibid., 221). It is not possible to have this kind of love for two beloveds. A love of friendship, however, a "bel amour," is one "in which the lover gives himself to the beloved by giving to the beloved his goods or that which he *has*—and this more or less completely up to that perfect love of devotion in which one gives all that one has, all one's goods, and one's life itself…in giving that which he has, not doubt also gives, *in a certain manner*, at the same stroke that which he is, his own person or subjectivity itself, but *covertly and indirectly*, *through something else*" (ibid., 221). This kind of love, "bel amour," can be given to more than one beloved.
[61] Russell, "Loves in Conflict," 340. See Jacques Maritain, *Notebooks* (Albany, NY: Magi Books, 1984), 223–54; and Raissa Maritain, *Raissa's Journal* (Albany, NY: Magi Books, 1974), 163.
[62] Ibid.

love essential to marriage as a complete self-gift, a love that makes the other spouse the

gravitational center of life: "To married people who take the commitment to one another

as persons seriously any advance toward God which would take them away from their

sacramental call to be totally for the other, body and soul, can only be regarded as a

deviation."[63] Maritain, though, does not see this kind of love as the love essential to

marriage. Instead, he sees only a love of friendship as essential to marriage:

> In the unique and sacred friendship of which I have just spoken, together with
> (when it is there) the love, the *bel amour*, equally unique and sacred, which is
> joined to it or should normally be joined to it, consists the essence of conjugal
> love...Mad, boundless love arises in this case as a surplus.[64]

Spouses may have a mad, boundless love for one another (*amour fou humain*), but this

love in Maritain's thought is not essential to marriage and would necessarily inhibit the

spouses ability to have mad, boundless love for God. "Maritain sees a radical and

irreconcilable opposition between the perfection of human love which is sometimes

attained in marriage (*amour fou humain*) and the perfect love (*amour fou divin*) which the

contemplative must, he maintains, give exclusively to God."[65] Because in Maritain's

thought, the only legitimate object of *amour fou divin* is God in Himself, either the

spouse gives complete, passionate love to God or to their spouse, but not to both. Russell,

though, cannot accept such an assertion. "The neighbor is not an obstacle to God but the

personal intersection where God himself is loved…in the intimacy of marriage the love

that goes out to the beloved does not need to be redirected toward God—there is no need

to lift either the physical or spiritual eyes from the spouse toward the heavenly realms."[66]

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[63] Ibid., 339–40.
[64] Jacques Maritain*, Notebooks*, 244.
[65] Ibid., 333–34.
[66] Ibid., 338.

At one level, Russell agrees with Maritain that there is only one ultimate love (*amour fou divin*), but Russell does not think (as Maritain does) that it is given either to God or to the spouse. Russell's solution is to say that the religious give *amour fou divin* to God through the neighbor in general, and the spouse gives that love to God through a specific neighbor.

Perhaps, though, Russell's answer is too neat. Russell would not have had to go this direction if he had seen his deeper disagreement with Maritain was actually about the kind of love necessary to make a marriage contract and covenant. The loves are not in conflict, because the one leads to the other. Spousal love (*bel amour*, and sometimes *amour fou humain*) disposes a couple to develop *amour fou divin* in and through their relationship. Russell, like so many authors, is overly anxious to equalize and level out the consecrated and conjugal life. There is no need to give either state of life a self-esteem boost or a piece of humble pie. Rather, we can see them, as I will propose in the next chapter, as two parts of the same task of being church, living in the household of God.

**Separate but Equal: Peter Phan on Marriage and Consecrated life**

Russell and Parrella are not alone in the attempt to level the spiritual playing field. Peter Phan has taken up the task in his attempt to set the groundwork for an authentic spirituality of the laity. Phan, too, takes the initial, *apophatic* step toward a lay spirituality (saying what it is not) in his article, "The Possibility of a Lay Spirituality." He overturns and qualifies three theological principles that says have obstructed a lay spirituality: (1) virginity is superior to married life; (2) monastic spirituality is normative for the laity; and (3) those not living consecrated religious life only love the Lord with a divided heart.

Like Parrella, Phan wants to excise lay spirituality from "monasticization," that is, from the normative context of monastic or vowed religious spirituality.[67] Interestingly, he wants to overturn and yet affirm the three theological principles given above. "A misunderstanding of the statement regarding the normativity of monasticism for the laity," he writes, "has produced a stunted, jejune spirituality with dwarfed monastic practices intended to transform the laypersons into monks in the world… a misunderstanding of the statement regarding the divided heart of the laity has prevented the development of a theology in which marriage is seen as the way to perfection."[68]

Phan attempts a both/and approach, seeking to hold both hierarchy and egalitarianism in one hand. Phan makes the case for a qualified superiority of marriage and a qualified superiority of the state of the counsels. The problem Phan sees in arguing for equal spiritual worth of the married and vowed religious life comes in the form of the traditional and contemporary magisterial teaching that the life of the counsels is objectively superior.[69] The life of the evangelical counsels, writes Phan, "considered as a renunciation and a practicing of the passion of Christ himself, is the more evident, visible, graspable mode of the *objectivation* and *manifestation* of the mystery of Christ and the

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[67] Phan, writes, "It goes without saying that the presumed normativity of monasticism cannot mean that the *actual* practice of the three vows of poverty, celibacy, and obedience is required for holiness…Nor can it mean that the laity must take over monastic practices and adapt them to their conditions, a sort of 'benign reduction' of monasticism *ad usum laicorum*," ("Possibility of a Lay Spirituality," 390).

[68] Peter C. Phan, "Possibility of a Lay Spirituality," 394–95.

[69] See The Council of Trent, Session 24, canon 10: "Si quis dixerit, statum conjugalem anteponendum esse statui virginitatis vel coelibatus, et non esse melius ac beatius manere in virginitate vel coelibatu, quam jungi matrimonio: anathema sit." If one were to say that the state of marriage is to be put before the state of virginity or celibacy, and that it is not better and happier to remain in virginity or celibacy than to be joined in matrimony, may he be anathema." Pope Pius XII, in his 1954 encyclical *Sacra Virginitas* (32, 42, 45) reaffirms the superiority of consecrated life. The second Vatican Council document *Optatum* totius, 10 reaffirms the greater excellence of virginity over Christian marriage. John Paul II vigorously defends the teaching in his own writings, e.g., VC, 18, where he states: "This is why the Church has always spoken of the objective superiority of the consecrated life."

Church in its *transcendent* and *eschatological* dimension."[70] Therefore he can, in a way, affirm the superiority of consecrated life in a precise context—as a way to manifest and objectify the transcendental and eschatological dimension of the mystery of Christ and the Church. On the other hand, Phan asserts the objective superiority of married life as well: "Marriage objectively and absolutely speaking is a 'better means' than virginity insofar as it is the more evident, visible, graspable objectivation and manifestation of the immanent, intramundane dimensions of the mystery of Christ and the Church."[71] Phan can make this claim because he limits the context of the comparison. Marriage is in the context of the world; consecrated life is in the context of the eschaton. Marriage is a better means to manifest and objectify the dimensions of the mystery of Christ and the Church in the world.

Despite his rejection of "monasticizing" marital spirituality, Phan does attempt to articulate the evangelical counsels as normative in a unique way for married persons. "A radical transcendence over the world and its structures is an essential characteristic of Christianity and, therefore, every Christian, including the laity, must realize that dimension in his or her life. It is in this context that the affirmation that monastic spirituality is normative also for the laity takes on a definitive and valid meaning."[72] Monasticism, then, is essentially a renunciation of earthly values in preference for a greater good found outside the world. Because all Christians are destined for an end beyond the world, they must practice some measure of renunciation. For Phan the evangelical counsels are normative for married Christians, but only if their application

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[70] Phan, "Possibility of a Lay Spirituality," 388.
[71] Ibid.
[72] Ibid., 390.

qualitatively differs from monastic application.[73] For the laity, they cannot be a renunciation of earthly values. Monastic spirituality, after all, is not "the only way to reach the one holiness to which all Christians, lay or clerical, are called."[74] Below I briefly treat his description of each of the three counsels in both states of life.

For Phan, the religious renounces certain values of the world to find God outside the world, whereas the lay person renounces the world in that she relativizes the world, that is, she relates everything to Christ as the center and heart of all things.[75] The non-vowed apply poverty as a sober use of the material world and an avoidance of luxury and self-indulgence, as well as the practice of almsgiving in various forms.[76] For Phan the non-vowed apply chastity as "a total transformation and integration of human sexuality into a creative and integrative force in one's life with a required dose of asceticism and self-discipline leading to fidelity and love."[77] Finally, for Phan the non-vowed apply obedience as docility to the divine call and invitation in every situation…going out of oneself and advancing towards perfection."[78]

Phan's attempt to understand the difficult teaching of Trent regarding the comparison between marriage and celibacy deserves praise, but unfortunately his effort

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[73] Ibid., 391. Here, Phan writes that the laity "renounce the world in a way different from that of the priest and the religious. Because of their vocation religious renounce even the values of the world in order to find God *outside* the world…The laity, on the contrary, renounce the world not insofar as it is good—hence they should not renounce any earthly value at all—but because and insofar as it may, given the infralapsarian condition, hinder them from living their Christian faith. Moreover, because of their mission to Christianize earth values, a mission which demands a full immersion in the world, they 'renounce' the world only in the sense that they should *relativise* the world, that is, *relativise* everything to Christ as to the center and heart of all things."

[74] Ibid., 390. Phan cites Karl Rahner (Passion und Aszese," *Schriften zur Theologie*, vol. 3 [Einsiedeln: Benziger, 1960–], 84–100) who argues for a certain asceticism necessary in any person's life whether Christian or non-Christian. This way of stating the claim is problematic. First of all, the distinction between lay and clerical life is secondary to the distinction between non-vowed and vowed religious life.

[75] Phan, "Possibility of a Lay Spirituality," 391.

[76] Ibid., 391–92.

[77] Ibid., 391.

[78] Ibid.

amounts to a comparison of apples and oranges. He can assert that each state is "better" than the other only by giving each its own unique end, further driving a wedge between them. In other words, marriage is better than the life of the counsels at accomplishing what marriage is supposed to accomplish (sanctification of life in the world). Likewise, the life of the counsels is better at accomplishing what the life of the counsels is naturally ordered toward (sanctification of life apart from the world). In other words, an apple makes a better apple pie than an orange does. Unfortunately, Phan's assertions of superiority amount to little more than tautologies. The ways of life are equally worthy because they are each the best at doing what they do.[79]

Again we have a view of married and vowed religious life that maintains an unfortunate dichotomy between the two. The task common to both falls into the background. When language of the counsels or communal contemplative life arises in married spirituality, it is seen as a "monasticization," a monastic invasion into the properly married realm of spirituality.[80] A more fruitful path, I argue, is to propose that the language typically found in religious life (that of evangelical counsels and contemplative prayer) is fundamental to and common to both states of life rather than the purview of either. So when married people take up the counsels or the apostolate of prayer they are not becoming "monks-lite," with all the flavor but half the calories, but rather they are embracing an evangelical spirituality shared in common by the entire

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[79] I cannot help but think of when some people say to their oldest child, "you are the best oldest child in this family," but then turn to their younger child and say, "you are the best younger child in this family." Since there is only once oldest and youngest, the statement is meaningless. Of course the oldest child is the best oldest child. He is the only one!

[80] See also Jörg Splett, who finds that marital spirituality has been, even up to today, an abbreviated form of monastic spirituality ("Evangelical Counsels in Marriage?" *Communio* 31.3 [2004]: 404–18, at 412). Splett also supports my claim that a true understanding of married and monastic spiritualities will result in a vision of the two states of life as more than mere alternatives or complements. In some way they are participants in the same task.

ecclesia, the entire body of Christ and people of God though manifest uniquely depending on state of life. The evangelical counsels are not somehow first the property of the monastics, which must be adapted by non-vowed people. Rather, the evangelical counsels are the virtues of Christ and thus properly belong to anyone incorporated into Christ's own body—each Christian and the entire Church.[81] It is precisely this shared language of vows that I will take up and develop in chapter 5.

Second, Phan's goal of avoiding a monasticization of marriage or "lay adaptation" of monasticism in marriage is laudable; in fact it is a goal we share. Unfortunately, I do not believe his attempt fully hits the mark. I find that Phan does not succeed in offering an application of the evangelical counsels for married people that is qualitatively different from the religious applications. What he actually describes is more a difference of degree than a difference of kind in the application of the evangelical counsels. Take, for example, his treatment of poverty. In Phan's description, the vow of poverty taken in vowed religious life seems but a further specification and intensification of this practice rather

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[81] See VC, 18. John Paul II states that the life of the counsels is lived *per filium*, in the footsteps of Christ. It requires that they "strive to become one with him, taking on his mind and his way of life." They must "share his experience as the chaste, poor, and obedient One," with "*an explicit desire to be totally conformed to him*" (emphasis original). See also Francis J. Moloney, (*A Life of Promise: Poverty, Chastity, Obedience* [Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1984]) who follows the Pauline notion of the Christian life as common "life in Christ," an incorporation into his cross and participation in his resurrection. Therefore the Christian necessarily lives the virtues of Christ. Moloney argues that when Paul speaks of life "in Christ," he is referring to the Christian entering into a "new situation." "The 'new situation' is not a new frame of mind or a change of attitude. Paul seems to claim that by becoming a Christian, the ex-Pagan or Jew has moved into a new 'place.' In the passage from Galatians Paul describes this new situation as a place where all constitute 'one man,' while in Colossians Paul goes further and explicitly says that 'the new man' is a place *where* (Greek: *hopou*) there cannot be such divisions" (36). Moloney's book is devoted to discovering in the biblical record of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus the exemplary virtues of poverty, chastity, and obedience as three evangelical imperatives for all Christians. He rereads the classical loci for each of the evangelical counsels. He finds these loci to offer imperatives for all Christians rather than counsels for a set of elite Christians. "*All* Christians are called to live *all* the Gospel…It is probably a helpful thing that none of these so-called 'proof texts' are available for an immediate solution to the question of obedience, because, more than any of the vows, this is the one which is most biblical. This is the case because behind the call for obedience in the Christian life stands the call to follow the life-style of Jesus of Nazareth. We have already spent a great deal of time and space tracing the poverty and chastity of Jesus in an attempt to find the prime model of Christian and Religious poverty and chastity. However, both of these aspects of Jesus' life pale into insignificance before the grandeur of his obedience" (121).

than a qualitatively different understanding of the vow.[82] Even the most austere

renunciation of property must relativize, reorder, and soberly use the material world. A

complete renunciation of the material world would not be Christian at all. Again, with

chastity, Phan seems to be working with a difference of degree. For example, when Phan

says chastity for the married is "not total abstinence," it seems that chastity for the

religious would be "total abstinence." No theology of religious chastity reduces the vow

to total abstinence. In fact, though, theological descriptions of the vow sound similar to

Phan's unique definition of the vow for married Christians.[83] The vow of chastity

requires a successful integration of the person's whole sexuality expressed not only in

genital acts, but by the very nature of a person as sexed. One can abstain from genital

intercourse and sexual pleasure, but one cannot abstain from sexuality, the fact of being

biologically and culturally sexed and gendered. Chastity requires a mastery of sexuality

so that it may be rightly ordered and completely given as gift.[84] The vow of chastity ends

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[82] In terms of canon law, "The fundamental manifestation of this vow [poverty] is to be found in the dependence, promised to God or before God, on legitimate superiors, who are to be the distributors of whatever is useful or necessary," (A. Delchard, S.J., "Religious Poverty in Canon Law," in *Poverty*, trans. Lancelot C. Sheppard, Religious Life 4 [Westminster, MD: Newman Press, 1954], 126–39, at 138).

[83] Various definitions of the evangelical counsel of "chastity" understand the term as a radical gift of the entire self, a gift that necessitates a fully integrated sexuality. The difference between married and religious chastity is the manner of expressing that integrated sexuality. See VC, 14, 15, 21, 32, and 36, where John Paul II casts the entire vowed religious life, and especially chastity, in terms of the transfiguration, a giving over of the entire person to God out of a yearning that is not satisfied by any finite love. See Francis J. Moloney, *A Life of Promise*, 74–118, where he describes "chastity" as the virtue of being entirely given over to the presence of the kingdom within and around that one's actions are completely given over to that kingdom . For married people, this kingdom is the "kingdom of love" between the spouses. The spouses can do no other than to vow a life of chaste living within it. For religiously chaste persons, e.g., Jesus, the kingdom of God is so urgently present to them that they can do nothing else but pursue it through dedication to an evangelical apostolate. Marriage never comes to their mind. Moloney too tries to find as much similarity as possible in the chastity of the married and the chastity of the vowed religious. The vow of chastity is, for Moloney, not the most central of vows; obedience is. Sandra Schneiders, *Selling All*, defines "consecrated celibacy" as the distinguishing, unique aspect of religious life: "Consecrated celibacy is the freely chosen response to a personally discerned vocation to charismatically grounded, religiously motivated, sexually abstinent, lifelong commitment to Christ that is externally symbolized by remaining unmarried" (117).

[84] *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1993), nos. 2339, 2346: "Chastity includes an *apprenticeship in self-mastery* which is a training in human freedom. The alternative

in the same result as the marital vow of fidelity. The consecrated religious person gives

his or her entire person, including his or her sexuality, over in freedom to God (mediated

by the authority of another person).[85] Thus the religious vow of chastity expresses the

same complete and necessarily sexual self-gift that is visible in marriage of two

Christians.[86]

Again, the definition of "obedience" offered by a vowed religious community

would certainly include what Phan identifies as a uniquely lay application.[87] To define

obedience as an absolute renunciation of one's own will is in a certain sense to ask the

impossible. For it must always remain one's will to submit to the authority of another,

even when such submission becomes habitual. The religious does not seek ultimately to

obliterate her will and replace it with God's or the abbot's or abbess's, but rather to

conform her own will to that of God the Father. Phan's explications of the counsels in the

life of a married or non-vowed person leave us with a version of the counsels that are

subsumed in the way they would be lived by a consecrated religious person, or as a

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is clear: either man governs his passions and finds peace, or he lets himself be dominated by them and becomes unhappy." Further, "Self-mastery is ordered to the gift of self. Chastity leads him who practices it to become a witness to his neighbor of God's fidelity and loving kindness," available at http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/_INDEX.HTM#fonte, accessed on February 7, 2011. All quotations from the catechism are from the Vatican website unless otherwise noted.

[85] See Aquinas, *The Religious State, The Episcopate, and The Priestly Office: A Translation of the Minor Work of the Saint on The Perfection for the Spiritual Life*, ed. F. J. Procter (Westminster, MD: Newman Press, 1950), 51–52; and Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* 2-2, q. 186, articles 7 and 8.

[86] See David Crawford, "Christian Community and the States of Life," 337-365. The notion that the evangelical counsels disclose the fundamental nature of the human person and thus the fundamental nature of human community will be taken up later to support the claim of a deep consonance between vowed religious life and married life.

[87] Moloney (*Life of Promise*, 144) sees obedience as a disposition to be available for the future God has in store, a future that will not be the one we have planned for our self. "The Christian is called to know Christ Jesus, and to move further and further away from our own securities into God's future, cost what it may." See also, *Obedience: Being the English version of L'Obéissance et la religieuse d'aujourd'hui* (Westminster, MD: Newman, 1953), 5–13 where obedience is first and primarily introduced as the person's response, as sinner in need of redemption, to the call issued by Christ to return to the will of God. Adam, hiding in the garden after the fall, hears God's call and is afraid, for he is no longer walking with but disobeying God. Jesus' perfect obedience to the will of the Father makes possible and resounds for us the call to renounce "who we are," that is, our own will.

scaled back application of the vow as understood by the consecrated religious.

Unfortunately, Phan cannot escape the kind of "monasticization" or "lay adaptation" or

"heart of a monastic" characterizations of lay spirituality he wishes to avoid.

As we have seen, Parrella's, Russell's and Phan's attempts to liberate lay, non-

vowed spirituality from monastic spirituality have yielded similar results. First, whenever

they deal with the notion of "monastic spirituality" these authors risk treating the term as

if it were monolithic. The fact is that there are myriad spiritualities of consecrated

religious life (e.g., monastic orders, societies of apostolic life, secular institutes). Ignatius

of Loyola, who suggested that the Jesuit "find God in all things," would not agree with an

over-simple characterization of vowed religious life as seeking sanctification "apart from

the world." While there is a certain unity of "monastic spirituality," the varied ways of

expressing and living that theology throughout history resist reduction to simple

formula.[88] As another example, religious orders differ amongst themselves as to the

content of the vows (e.g., some have stability as a vow) and the kind of vows (simple or

solemn). In addition, religious life can be monastic and cloistered (set apart physically

from the rest of the world) or apostolic and secular (existing physically within the rest of

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[88] For example, the way of living the evangelical counsel of poverty has varied dramatically over two millennia. The vow was not part of the religious profession explicitly until the twelfth century. Additionally, there is a distinction in the practice of poverty between individual poverty, and communal or institutional poverty (wherein a religious community cannot own any property). The tension between these two throughout history has been the focus of much theological reform, debate, and even scandal. Another distinction that has caused a varied practice of the evangelical counsels has been the distinction between simple and solemn vows. A simple vow of poverty, for example, does not render a person juridically incapable of owning or acquiring property, but a solemn vow of poverty does so render a person. See CIC, 668; and John D. Beal, James A. Coriden, and Thomas J. Green, eds., *New Commentary on the Code of Canon Law*, Commissioned by the Canon Law Society of America (New York: Paulist, 1999), 1416–1420. For a sense of the variety of religious spiritualities and manners of living the vows, see the four-volume series *Religious Life* studying the vows historically, doctrinally, psychologically, and practically. In particular see *Obedience*; and *Poverty*, trans. Lancelot C. Sheppard (Westminster, MD: Newman, 1954). See also the series by Sandra M. Schneiders, *Finding the Treasure: Locating Catholic Religious Life in a New Ecclesial and Cultural Context*, Religious Life in a new Millennium, vol. 1 (New York: Paulist, 2000); and Schneiders, *Selling All: Commitment, Consecrated Celibacy, and Community in Catholic Religious Life*, Religious Life in a New Milennium, vol. 2 (New York: Paulist, 2001).

the population. These differences affect how the communities live their vows and hold house together.[89]

Second, in an attempt to create a level playing field, the authors do not relieve the oppositional tension between the ways of life. Parrella, for his part, implicitly privileges married life over religious life as an image of the Trinity. Russell and Phan end up with a zero-sum game in the comparison between the two states of life, which maintains a competitive tension between the two rather than finding a complementarity. Thus the authors dichotomize the states of life so that their common end and common task of being church blurs and falls from the field of vision. We find ourselves with apples and oranges that cannot be compared using the same criteria because they are different paths seeking different ends. Or we find that they are separate but equally effective means of achieving the one holiness sought by all Christians. Third, while these authors are all interested in seeing the evangelical counsels in married and religious life, they cannot avoid applying them as if the counsels are somehow on loan from the vowed religious; in fact they belong properly to Christ and, by virtue of baptism, to each Christian and the entire Church that composes at once Christ's own body and Christ's pure and holy bride.

**CONCLUSION**

This chapter set out to accomplish three tasks. First, it proposed initially that the universal call to Christian perfection issued by the Second Vatican Council was sufficient

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[89] Consider the difference between religious institutes that are apostolic and thus organize their common life around mission and those institutes that are monastic and organize their common life around geographical stability. There is a distinction here, but at the same time, we might note that the cloistered monastery or convent is still organized around "mission." It is their mission to become holy in this place with these people, and reach those beyond their walls spiritually.

reason to begin looking for a deeper connection between the consecrated and religious ways of life.[90] Second, it identified and explored the historical narrative offered by scholars seeking to understand the relationship between vowed religious life and married life in the Church. And third, it argued that current attempts to put these two states of life in dialogue according to the standard narrative do not overcome competitive posturing and have resulted in a further isolation of the vowed religious life from married life. Furthermore, they miss the deepest nexus of the religious and married states of life, namely, the Son of God, the Second Person of the Trinity. It is toward this Christological, trinitarian focus that the rest of this dissertation will be moving. The subsequent chapter, though, follows closely on the second part of this chapter, where I explicated a common scholarly narrative for envisioning the connection between vowed religious and married life. The third chapter complicates this narrative with patristic evidence and advocates for an alternative account from the thought of Augustine.

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[90] LG, 32: "Therefore, the chosen People of God is one: 'one Lord, one faith, one baptism'; sharing a common dignity as members from their regeneration in Christ, having the same filial grace and the *same vocation to perfection*; possessing in common one salvation, one hope and one undivided charity" (emphasis mine). Throughout the dissertation I will want to keep "perfection" moored to qualities or virtues such as "holiness" and "charity."

CHAPTER 3: COMPLICATING A STANDARD NARRATIVE AND DISCOVERING

AN ALTERNATIVE IN PATRISTIC SOURCES

In the previous chapter I outlined a narrative advocated by some contemporary scholars attempting to understand the relationship between marriage and religious life. By means of this narrative, modern scholars such as Kenneth Russell, Frederick J. Parrella, and Peter Phan have developed spiritualities of the laity that amount to a kind of zero-sum game for married life and vowed religious life. As became clear, in the process these authors further dichotomize the two states of life and implicitly maintain the antagonism and the kind of monasticization of marriage they hoped to avoid. This happens because, in order to put conjugal and consecrated life on the same level next to each other, the authors must first isolate the states from each other. I contend that these authors have been asking the wrong question. In their effort to make arguments about the equal holiness and dignity of married and consecrated life, the authors have (ironically) had to focus their attention on making distinctions between the two states. Instead of asking "what are the hard distinctions between vowed religious life and married life?" we could be asking, "what do these two ways of life in the church share?"

In this chapter I argue that attention to primary evidence from the first centuries of the desert fathers and the beginnings of cenobitic life show the insufficiency of the narrative proposed by the modern scholars looking for a unique, married spirituality that is equal to monastic spirituality. To this end, I show that two central claims of the common narrative about the relationship between religious and matrimonial life do not hold. In fact, it is the thesis of this chapter that their opposites are true: (1) the resistance

to a facile ascetic hierarchy is ancient; and (2) there has been a bi-directional flow of influence from married life into the monastic, and vice versa. In the process of demonstrating these claims I argue for an alternative to the commonly used narrative, the shape of which stems from Augustine's thought on the meaning of marriage and consecrated life in Christian community as revealed in salvation history.

My argument will proceed as follows. First, I will show that Eastern monastic fathers had a more complicated view of personal holiness than was given credit by scholars treated in the previous chapter. Second, I will show in the theology of Augustine, who enters the battles over ascetical hierarchy, an alternative to both the competitive spirit and its egalitarian challenge. He recognizes distinction in personal merit, but emphasizes its elusiveness and moves beyond the question through a development of our common and primarily ecclesial identity as Christians, which he develops with spousal language that relates to both the consecrated and the married life. Over the course of his life he develops three "nuptial goods," (*proles*, *fides*, and *sacramentum*) shared by both consecrated virgins and married persons. These "nuptial goods" are properly and primarily ecclesial goods that are differentially shared by all those baptized into Christ.

**PATRISTIC EVIDENCE TO COMPLICATE THE NARRATIVE OF A SIMPLE ASCETICAL HIERARCHY IN EASTERN DESERT TRADITION**

According to the narrative of theological development given in the last chapter, a dichotomization and hierarchy of religious and married life began early in the Church and persisted until the second half of the twentieth century, when the Church and many theologians finally rejected the preference of the consecrated life over married life. While Parrella, Russell, and Phan may be correct to note that a tide seems swelling against the claim that the life of vowed religious life is objectively better than marriage, it is important to note that the pot of popular and theological fervor on this question has been boiled and bubbled, toiled and troubled throughout history.

First, there is evidence from the Eastern monastic fathers to suggest a complication of the simple hierarchy of merit assumed by the common narrative. Kalistos Ware's study "The Monk and the Married Christian: Some Comparisons in Early Monastic Sources" offers telling examples of monks finding themselves inferior to married men and women.[1] Some might argue that examples of monks comparing themselves negatively to married persons are the exceptions that prove the rule of a simple ascetic hierarchy. After all, there would be little rhetorical power to the comparisons if they did not in some way surprise the reader. Such an argument might be convincing if the examples really constituted a miniscule sample. In fact, it appears that the debate was more evenly split. St. Isaac the Syrian and St. Theodore the Studite

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[1] Kalistos Ware, "The Monk and the Married Christian: Some Comparisons in Early Monastic Sources," *Eastern Churches Review* 6.1 (1974): 72–83.

doubted that the grace of contemplation and vision of God could be given to the married.[2] On the other hand, St. Gregory the Great thought the *lumen contemplationis* was available to all. [3] Furthermore, Ware finds that "St. Maximus the Confessor, embodied some of his deepest teaching about *theosis* and union with God in his Second Letter, addressed to a layman, a civil servant; St. Gregory Palamas considered that continual prayer is for lay people as well as monks, and that full purity of heart can be attained by the married Christian, 'although with the greatest difficulty.'"[4]

A second kind of evidence suggesting that holiness could be achieved in marriage comes from a genre of literature popular in the Byzantine empire, the *vitae* of the saints, or hagiographical literature. These *vitae* were the popular media of the day, and every bit as exciting for the audience. The earliest versions of some of these *vitae*, e.g. those of St. Symeon the Stylite and Melania emphasize the monastic aversion to marriage and the superlative value of physical virginity. The lives of some married saints are related, but they either do not consummate the marriage, or they eventually lead a life of celibacy. Take Melania the Younger, for example. The earliest versions of her *vita* claim that "After the death of her two sons she felt an aversion to marriage (*misos tou gamon*) and told her husband that she would stay with him 'as her lord and master' only if he agreed to lead a life of chastity; if not, she would give him all her belongings and 'liberate her body.' In the later *Vita* of Melania, the sharpness of this anti-marital tendency was

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[2] *Mystic Treatises by Isaac of Nineveh*, trans. A. J. Wensinck (Amsterdam, 1923), 102; and  Theodore the Studite, *Epistle* ii 43 (PG, xcix, col. 1245AB), cited in Ware, "The Monk and the Married Christian," 74.
[3] St. Gregory the Great, *Homilies in Ezekiel* 2, 5, 19 (PL, lxxvi, col. 996A), cited in Ware, "The Monk and the Married Christian," 74.
[4] Ware, "The Monk and the Married Christian," 74. Ware cites St. Maximus the Confessor from the PG, xci, col. 391–408; Ware cites St. Gregory Palamas from *Encomium S. Gregorii Thessalonicensis* (PG, cli, col. 573a–574a), and *De passionibus et virtutibus* (PG, cl, col. 1056A).

reduced, the 'aversion' disappeared, and only the call for chastity (agneia) remained."[5] For example, revised versions of Melania's and Symeon's *vitae* include the praise of marriage as 'honorable' and the aversion to marriage is muted. From this trend, Alexander Kazhdan has made the following observation that over three centuries "the concept was developed that sanctity could be achieved not only in the desert or in the monastery but in family life. Maria the Younger and Thomais of Lesbos…were married women who deserved the reward of holiness; Nicholas Kataskepenos, in the *Vita* of Cyril Phileotes, conjured up the image of a saint who, after the birth of his child, limited his sexual intercourse with his wife but did not accept consistent celibacy."[6] Even more surprising, Eustathios of Thessalonike judges the lay saint of greater honor than lonely anchorites living in isolation.[7]

A third kind of evidence for a more nuanced view of the ascetical hierarchy comes from a genre of literature known as *Streitnovellen* or "stories of rivalry" found in the *Apophthegmata Patrum*. In each of these stories, a monk is told in a dream or by and angel about a person (man or woman) whose holiness exceeds his own. The monk investigates and discovers his own weakness, which is usually pride or a lack of charity. When the married person is judged holier than the monk, it is on one of four grounds: (1) on account of holy, ascetic practices, (2) on account of virtuous deeds; (3) on account of holy disposition, such as the virtue of humility or simplicity; and (4) on account of an intention to live a life of renunciation even if such a life is impossible. In the first case, a

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[5] Alexander Kazhdan, "Byzantine Hagiography and Sex in the Fifth to Twelfth Centuries," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, vol. 44 (1990): 131–43, at 133.

[6] Ibid., 133.

[7] Ibid. For more on the development of a positive theology of marriage in comparison to monasticism in Byzantine tradition see Alexander Kazhdan, "Hermitic, Cenobitic, and Secular Ideals in Byzantine Hagiography of the Ninth [to Twelfth] Centuries," *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 30 (1985): 484–87.

villager named Eucharistus is holier than a certain monk. This shepherd and married man divides his money in thirds, giving one third to the poor, one third for hospitality, and one third for his own needs. He lives an ascetic life, is married, and practices celibacy within his marriage. In this story, it is Eucharistus' ascetic practices that impress. There is a suggestion that his life conforms to the monastic already since he practices celibacy. Regarding the second case, a monk is told he is not as holy as a local flute player and known sinner. This flute player, though, saved a woman in distress on two occasions, and for this is counted holier than the ascetic monk. The emphasis here is on his deeds of compassion. In the third case, a monk is compared to Emperor Theodosius. Here Theodosius' superiority to the monk is not his asceticism nor his charitable deeds but his true humility, simplicity of heart, and detachment from the world, the chief expression of which is his ability to copy religious manuscripts while in attendance at the hippodrome.[8] It is of special interest that the author does not suggest Theodosius would be holier as a monk whereas in the first two models becoming a monk would perfect the holiness of the non-vowed persons.

Finally, Macarius of Egypt is compared to two women. These women married brothers and had children by them. The two couples live together, but despite their wives' request the husbands have refused to live in celibacy. These two women, out of a desire for holiness, vow to never speak a word of quarrel or conflict between them. Seeing the holy intention of these two women and "marveling at their ability to live so long together without quarrelling, Macarius exclaims: 'In truth there is neither virgin nor married, neither monk nor secular, but God gives his Holy Spirit to all, according to the intention

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[8] Ware, "The Monk and the Married Christian," 75–76. He relies on *Patrologia Orientalis* viii, ed. F. Nau (1912), 171–74.

of each."[9] Here the emphasis falls on the strong intention to a life of renunciation despite

the fact that it could not be realized in full.

In the final analysis, these "rivalry stories" are ill-named. Any reader is

confronted with the fact that the very desire and attempt to rank oneself with respect to

another person is already a symptom of pride, and already betrays an incomplete

renunciation of and detachment from the world and its temptations toward renown. Ware

concludes that, in the world imagined by these anecdotes:

> Inward purity is always possible, whatever the outward circumstances. The true
> flight is not geographical but spiritual; the real desert lies within the heart…The
> Christian in the city, by virtue of his very involvement in worldly things, can
> attain a *distinctive* type of sanctity—of detachment, humility and inner
> simplicity—not accessible to the monk in the desert. Even if the idea is not
> developed, there exists here in embryo a theology of the layman's vocation. The
> Emperor enthroned in the hippodrome, hearing the acclamations of the crowd yet
> never lifting his eyes from his manuscript; the greengrocer sitting in his room at
> night hearing the songs of the drunkards yet thinking only of their salvation—
> these are two of the most striking figures in the *Apophthegmata*. It is not easy to
> forget them.[10]

## AUGUSTINE AND EQUALITY OF MERIT IN MARRIAGE AND VIRGINITY: A RADICAL ALTERNATIVE TO THE ZERO-SUM GAME

The debates and hortatory literature relating the personal holiness of the vowed

religious and the married Christian were not limited by any means to the Eastern tradition.

Augustine and his contemporaries hotly disputed the same questions, though their

audiences and genres differed. In this section, I argue this basic thesis: the common

imagining of Augustine's position on marriage and celibacy as a "middle way" requires a

nuanced reconsideration. Augustine does offer a "middle way"—he says so himself in *De*

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[9] Ibid.," 79.
[10] Ibid.," 82–83.

*sancta virginitate*. His way is the *"medium veritatis,"* "the middle way of truth." [11] As I will argue, the nuance here is that he offers us a "middle path" rather than just a "middle conclusion." In other words, Augustine offers an alternative manner of proceeding, not simply a conclusion that falls between the "excesses" of Jovinian (equality of married and virginal life) and Jerome (hierarchy of merit). Augustine makes a unique proposal that moves beyond concern for individual merit and picks up a social, ecclesial, co-participative understanding of the "*bonum nuptiarum*." The *bonum nuptiarum*, in other words, is principally *bonum ecclesiae* that people of different states share.

First I will present the context for Augustine's involvement in three ecclesial controversies as they relate to marriage (manicheism, Jovinianism, and Pelagianism). I will also address their relationship to the modern construals of the problems and solutions to the "crisis" of marriage, as well as their relationship to the modern zero-sum understanding of the relationship between consecrated and conjugal life. The second part attempts to reconstruct Augustine's "middle way" and explore the three major accomplishments of his constructive task: prioritizing ecclesial belonging over individual merit; complicating but not rejecting differentiation of merit; and creating a three-fold, *bonum nuptiarum*. These accomplishments ground and shape the Augustinian counternarrative I use to understand the relationship between marriage and celibate life in juxtaposition to the one offered by scholars in the previous chapter.

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[11] *De sancta virginitate* 19 (CSEL 41,252–53). Ironically, this passage is not cited when authors describe Augustine as staking a middle ground on marriage.

**Augustine's Context**

Just as the Eastern fathers experienced and reflected on the tension between

married and religious life, especially with respect to how persons might locate themselves

on a hierarchy of holiness, so too did the Western fathers. At the end of the fourth and the

beginning of the fifth century, Augustine himself was embroiled in debates over the

relative merit of virginity over against married life. Whereas the Eastern fathers offered

anecdotal stories to challenge individual monastics in their own life with Christ,

Augustine dealt with three major controversies and opponents in his thinking on marriage:

the manichaeans, the Jovinian controversy, and the Pelagians. Augustine's genius in his

defense of marriage and virginity, a genius that makes him relevant to my claim for

consonance between the two, is Augustine's "making them both magnificently social."[12]

As social, they must constitute part of a larger association; this larger association is first

and foremost the ecclesia, the mystical body of Christ. Augustine understands this

mystical body to be one with and composed of Christ's bride the Church. Christ is head

of his body, which is also his own bride in realistic and analogical ways.[13]

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[12] See Peter Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University, 1988), 402.

[13] See Stanislaus J. Grabowski, *The Church: An Introduction to the Theology of Saint Augustine* (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Company, 1957). Augustine's ecclesiology is chiefly that of the mystical body. The church is the body of Christ. Augsutine nonetheless includes Church as bride and Christ as bridegroom. We see this in two ways. First explicitly, for example see *Ennarrationes in Psalmos* 44. 3 (CSEL 38, 495, 515) where Augustine refers to Christ as the bridegroom in this wedding feast of the King and the Church as the virgin to be wed. Second, whenever Christ refers to the Church as the mystical body of Christ, the church as bride is also included therein implicitly on account of scriptural warrant (e.g., Eph 5:23–32). As Pius Schelkens argues, "Christus, caput et sponsus, et Ecclesia, corpus et sponsa, in unam personam et in unam carnem copulantur, itaque mysticam unionem matrimonialem verificant secundum verba Apostoli. Cum autem duo sint in carne una, erunt pariter duo in voce una, et in passione una" (Pius Schelkens, "De Ecclesia Sponsa Christi," *Augustiniana* 3 [1953]: 145–64). Schelkens' position lends support to the claim that Augustine holds to more than merely metaphorical understanding of the bond between Christ and his Church as bridegroom and bride. Schelkens is arguing for a bond wherein the bride becomes one body with Christ analogously (though not sexually) to the way husband and wife are one body. Likewise, Tarsisius

Before I tackle Augustine's constructive task itself, I must fill in the polemical

background of the two theologies Augustine takes on in *De bono coniugali* (Manichaeism

and Jovinianism) and the final heresy that will dominate the late portion of his career

(Pelagianism, as propounded by Julian of Aeclanum). A Manichaean for ten years

himself,[14] Augustine vigorously fought against Manichaean teachings after his

conversion to Christianity, especially regarding marriage. In works predating *De bono*

*coniugali* against Manicheans, Augustine resists Manichean arguments against

marriage,[15] and he does not leave that polemic behind in *De bono coniugali*, especially

given that he is still trying to complete his *literal* commentary on Genesis (a crucial peg

in an argument against Manicheans).[16] Manicheans often ridiculed Christian reading of

the Old Testament; Augustine had to find a way to read Genesis in light of the

Manichaean arguments against the text. The Manicheans taught that the material world

was evil, having been created by a god who rivals the true god. In this material world the

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van Bavel has argued that when Augustine speaks of the mystical body of Christ, it is more a matter of realism than symbolism. "En general, il est plus juste de parler de realism—meme exagéré parfois!—que de symbolisme" (Tarsisius van Bavel, *Recherches sur la christologie de saint Augustin. L'humain et le divin dans le Christ d'apres saint Augustin* [Fribourg: Editions universitaires, 1954], 79–85, at 83). For more on Augustinian ecclesiology see; Denis Faul, "Ecclesia, Sponsa Christi: Origenes y Augustín ante la exegesis de Eph. 5, 27," *Augustinus* 15 (1970): 263–80; Charles Journet, *L'Eglise du Verbe Incarne*, vol. II (Paris: Desclee de Brouwer, 1951), 116–18; and Emilien, Lamirande, *Un siècle et demi d'etudes sur l'ecclesiologie de saint Augustin: Essai Bibliographique* (Paris: Etudes Augustiniennes, 1962).

[14] See Augustine, *Confessions*, book 4. The classic biography is Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography*, second ed. (London: Faber and Faber, 2000), 35–49; a newer biography that challenges Brown's for comprehensiveness is Serge Lancel, *Augustine*, trans. Antonia Nevill (London: SCM, 2002), 37–42.

[15] Augustine wrote many works against the Manichaeans, among them *De moribus ecclesiae catholicae et de moribus Manicheorum*, *Acta contra Fortunatum Manicheum*, *De Genesi ad litteram liber unus imperfectus*, *Contra Faustum Manicheum*, *De Genesi adversus manichaeos* 1.19, as well as a work in progress when he wrote *De bono coniugali*, namely *De Genesi ad litteram* (his third and final attempt at a commentary on Genesis). For a wider treatment of Augustine and the Manichaeans, see Kam-Lun Lee, *Augustine, Manichaeism, and the Good*, Patristic Studies 2 (New York: Peter Lang, 1999).

[16] See *Retractationes* 1.10, on *De Genesi ad litteram* (extracted in, *On Genesis*, 36–37). A "literal" interpretation of Genesis is important because the Manicheans rejected the goodness of procreation, which keeps the "light" trapped in matter. In *Confessions,* 5.23–24 (chap. 13) (CCL 27:70–71) Augustine reports that learning to read Scripture spiritually had a great deal to do with his ability to read the Old Testament in the face of Manichean criticism. Ambrose was certainly a large part of this new way of approaching Scripture for Augustine.

rival god has trapped pieces of the true god. Human souls are these trapped pieces. The

goal of life, then, is to escape material reality, a process completed by certain dietary and

ascetical practices, accompanied by gaining secret knowledge. Their teachings on

marriage follow logically from their understanding of the origin and purpose of the

material world, that is, the origin and nature of evil. As procreation traps more spirit in

the prison of matter, the Manicheans naturally treat procreation with abhorrence.

Therefore they conclude that marriage is the invention of the rival to the true god of spirit.

Those who are truly holy must be celibate on account of the evil, material world. While

sexual intercourse is allowed for those outside the Manichaean inner circle (as Augustine

was), contraception was mandated.[17] Augustine pulled no rhetorical punches when

attacking this position:

> You think that taking a wife is not for the sake of procreating children but for the
> sake of satisfying lust. But marriage, as the very laws of marriage cry out, unites a
> man and a woman for the sake of procreating children. Whoever, then, says that
> to beget children is a more serious sin than to have intercourse certainly forbids
> marriage and makes the woman no longer a wife but a prostitute, who in return
> for certain compensation is given to the man to satisfy his lust. After all, as she is
> a wife, it is matrimony. But it is not matrimony when the effort is made that she
> not become a mother.[18]

The translation to English unfortunately loses Augustine's rhetorical skill. He links the

word "mater" to "matrimonium" in this sentence, claiming that there is no "matrimonio"

absent the intent to become "mater."

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[17] Augustine provides information regarding the above beliefs and practices in *De Moribus Ecclesiae Catholicae et de Moribus Manicheorum*. In his later writings, especially those against Julian of Eclanum, Augustine vehemently resists any sexual instrumentalism of the spouses. Marriage is entered for the mutual, honorable purpose of *liberorum procreandorum causa*, not for the sake of satisfying lust (*Sermon 51.22*; *Sermons [51–94]*, 33–34).

[18] See in particular *De moribus* 2.65 (CSEL 90: 147): "Si enim uxor est, matrimonium est. Non autem matrimonium est ubi datur opera ne sit mater." See *The Catholic Way of Life and the Manichean Way of Life*, 98.

As a second point of attack, the Manicheans assailed the moral character of the Old Testament patriarchs. For one, these men had multiple wives, an obvious contradiction to Christian practice. In *De bono coniugali* Augustine defends the patriarchs by seeing in their multiplicity of wives a certain sign or prophetic character, as well as the expression of the virtue of obedience:

> Just as the multiple wives of the fathers of old signified us the future churches, from all peoples subject to one man Christ, so our bishop, a man of one wife, signifies the unity, from all peoples, subject to one man, Christ.
>
> In truth, in those times, when the mystery of our salvation was veiled by the sacred signs in the prophecies, even those who were [continent] before marriage united in marriage for the obligation of begetting children, not as a victory from sexual desire but as having been led by piety; for if such an option were given them, as is given in the New Testament when the Lord says, "Whosoever can take this, take it," one does not doubt that they would accept it [celibacy], even with joy.[19]

According to this account, the patriarchs, then, are not only morally sound, but they are more virtuous than the vast majority of married people today, even though they had multiple wives.

While the Manichaean issue perhaps most closely affected his own life, Augustine also had to deal with polemics brought his way by concerned Christian friends; among these we find the Jovinianist controversy. In his *Retractationes* Augustine writes that the two works *De bono coniugali* and *De sancta virginitate* respond to the heresy propounded by Jovinian.[20] Jovinian taught four contentious doctrines: "(1) Virgins,

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[19] Augustine, *De bono coniugali*, 15 (my translation). See *The Excellence of Marriage*, 44–45.

[20] The content of Jovinian's argument known from the condemnations text of Pope Siricius, a letter from Ambrose to Siricius (*Epistola. 42, Rescriptum ad Siricium papam* 4) concerning Ambrose's condemnation of Jovinian through a council in Milan, Jerome's first response (*Adversus Iovinianum*, 1.3; PL, 23, col. 206–338) and a letter he sent when that response met with lack of enthusiasm (*Epistola. 49*, CSEL 54; and *Epistola. 52*). In *Adv. Iovinianum* Jerome lays out four Jovinian theses. Ambrose gives a fifth in his polemical work. Another battle entirely is over the interpretation of Song of Songs at this time as it relates to the Church and the Christian, particularly the celibate woman. This is a debate that Augustine did not enter with Jovinian. See David G. Hunter, "The Virgin, the Bride, and the Church: Reading Psalm 45 with

widows, and spouses, having been washed once in Christ, if they do not differ in other

works, are commended as of the same merit; (2) whoever in full faith is born again in

baptism cannot be overthrown by the devil; (3) there is no distinction between abstinence

from food and receiving it with acts of thanksgiving; (4) for all who will preserve their

baptism, there is one reward in the kingdom of heaven."[21] Pope Siricius had condemned

Jovinian in Rome as had Bishop Ambrose in Milan. He was sentenced to exile and

flogging. At the theological level, Jerome attempted a vitriolic rebuttal of Jovinian's

teachings, which only further fanned the flames.[22] This heresy continued to grow despite

efforts to stop it, and Jovinian had even inveigled some consecrated virgins to precipitate

marriage.

Most importantly, Augustine had to answer the charge that Jovinian could only be

refuted by denigrating marriage, that is, by taking a Manichaean position. Augustine,

therefore, sets out to prove that a praise of marriage is possible that refutes Jovinian's

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Ambrose, Jerome, and Augustine," *Church History* 69 (2000): 281–303. He discusses the role of the virgin bride in each of these thinkers as it related to the ascetic debate, but unfortunately he ends up making the fundamental character of each authors work about power relations, that is, how to deal with a crisis of rising female ascetic power. He closes by trying to put Augustine into the debate about whether power in the Church is through ascetic practice or Episcopal authority. Hunter thinks Augustine sides with Episcopal authority (302).

[21] As reported in Jerome's *Adversus Iovinianum* 1, lines 41–50, the four positions of Jovinian are these: *"Virgines, viduas, et maritatas, quae semel in christo lotae sunt, si non discrepant caeteris operibus, eiusdem esse meriti…approbare eos, qui plena fide in baptismate renati sunt, a diabolo non posse subuerti…inter abstinentiam ciborum et cum gratiarum actione perceptionem eorum, nullam esse distantiam…esse omnium qui suum baptisma servaverint, unam in regno coelerum remunerationem."* CLCLT electronic version published electronically through Brepols, available at http://clt.brepolis.net/clt/start. (translation mine).

[22] Jerome's friends in Rome were not receptive to his rebuttal of Jovinian. Jerome's efforts help soften his language somewhat, and his letter 48 to Pammachius, thanking him for pulling the *Adversus Iovinianum* from the public sphere, is endearing and humble. But ultimately, even Jerome's *pièce justificatif* (Letter 49) leaves unanswered exactly what good the married couple is doing. It is all well for Jerome to say he is between the Manicheans and Jovinian, but he has not been specific enough about what that small good of marriage is. *Defining this good of marriage*, is the unique, creative task of Augustine.

heresy.[23] The challenge was to succeed where Jerome and Ambrose had failed. Jerome

had refuted Jovinian but at what seemed to be the cost of marriage's inherent good.

Augustine's challenge, then, in refuting Jovinian, was not merely to construct a positive

account of marriage. Jovinian could easily do as much. What Augustine needed was to

offer an optimistic theology of marriage while maintaining the basic doctrine that persons

can differ in virtue and that difference in virtue has eternal consequence. Augustine

would have to argue that, despite their both being Christian, the married Christian can

contrast in merit from the celibate Christian, and the difference will be rewarded

differently in the kingdom of God. Augustine's answer measures merit based more upon

the virtues operative in the person than on his or her state in life.

David Hunter, in a series of articles that culminate in his recent book *Marriage,*

*Celibacy, and Heresy in Ancient Christianity: The Jovinianist Controversy*,[24] has

significantly expanded our understanding of what is at stake in the polemical context of

*De bono coniugali* and *De sancta virginitate*. He sees the debate occurring on three fronts:

(1) the concern among all the authors (Jovinian, Ambrose, Jerome, and Augustine) to

fight Manichaean tendencies in any theology of marriage; (2) the competition among

theologians to garner favor and to proliferate their theological positions among the

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[23] See *Retractationes* 2.22, CCSL 57, 107–08: "Sed etiam occultis venenos repentibus facultate quam donabat Dominus occurrendum fuit, maxime quoniam iactabatur Ioviniano responderi non potuisse sed cum vituperatione nuptiarum. Propter hoc librum edidi cuius inscription est *De bono coniugali*."

[24] See David Hunter, "Resistance to the Virginal Ideal in Late-Fourth-Century Rome: The Case of Jovinian," *Theological Studies* 48 (1987): 45–64; Hunter, "Clerical Celibacy and the Veiling of Virgins: New Boundaries in Late Ancient Christianity," in *Limits of Ancient Christianity* (An Arbor: University of Michigan, 1999), 139–152; Hunter, "The Virgin, the Bride, and the Church: Reading Psalm 45 in Ambrose, Jerome, and Augustine," *Church History* 69.2 (2000): 281–303; Hunter, "Augustine, Sermon 354A: Its Place in His Thought on Marriage and Sexuality," *Augustinian Studies* 33.1 (2002): 40–44; Hunter, "Reclaiming Biblical Morality"; Hunter, "Rereading the Jovinianist Controversy: Asceticism and Clerical Authority in Late Ancient Christianity," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 33 (2003): 453–70; and Hunter, *Marriage, Celibacy, and Heresy in Ancient Christianity: The Jovinianist Controversy*, Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

Roman, aristocratic elite; and (3) the clerical and lay resistance to or embrace of an ascetic hierarchy in the late fourth and early fifth century.

As to the first point, Hunter has successfully demonstrated that Jovinian was genuinely as anti-manichaean as Jerome, Augustine, Ambrose, Siricius, or any other of the less-controversial authors involved in this debate. Jovinian cannot simply be labeled a heretic and brushed aside. His authentic concern about Manichaean tendencies in Christian asceticism demand attention.[25] It is not difficult to see how Jerome's rebuttal smacked of Manichean theology and drove more Romans into Jovinian's camp:

> When you [Paul] come to marriage, you do not say it is good to marry, because you cannot then add 'than to burn;' but you say, 'It is better to marry than to burn.' If marriage in itself be good, do not compare it with fire, but simply say 'It is good to marry.' I suspect the goodness of that thing which is forced into the position of being only the lesser of two evils. What I want is not the smaller evil, but a thing absolutely good.[26]

Hunter has pointed out how much of Jerome's letters 48, 49, and 50 are dedicated to a defense against accusations of Manichaeism, which his overly strong rhetoric opened him up to.[27] Further, with Pierre-Marie Hombert, Hunter supports a later date for *De bono coniugali* and *De sancta virginitate* (both in 403–4 instead of 397 or 401)[28], which puts

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[25] Hunter writes, "Jovinian deserves to be reexamined for historical and theological reasons." He continues, "Jovinian is best understood not as an opponent of Christian virginity or asceticism per se, but rather as an opponent of Manicheism and what he saw as Manichean tendencies among Christian ascetics at Rome," ("Resistance to the Virginal Ideal," 45–46).

[26] Jerome, *Adversus Iovinianum*, 1.9: "Ubi ad nuptias venis, non dicis, bonum est nubere, quia non potes iungere, quam uri; sed dicis: melius est nubere quam uri. Si per se nuptiae sunt bonae, noli illas incendio comparare: sed dic simplicte, bonum est nubere. Suspecta est mihi bonitas eius rei, quam magnitude alterius mali malum esse cogit inferius. Ego autem non levius malum, sed simplex per se bonum volo" (available at Library of Latin Texts – Series A [http://clt.brepolis.net/llta/pages/Toc.aspx], accessed on 5 Oct, 2010). See Jerome, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 2nd series, vol. 6, trans. W.H. Fermantle, et al. (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature, 1893), available at http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/30091.htm (accessed on 5 Oct, 2010).

[27] See Hunter, *Marriage, Celibacy, and Heresy in Ancient Christianity*, 29–30, 244, 246–47, 257, 275–7.

[28] Hunter makes a strong case for this dating in "Augustine, Sermon 354A," 40–44. In his 2001 critical edition and translation of *De bono coniugali* and *De sancta virginitate*, P.G. Walsh notes the traditional date of AD 401 (H. I Marrou and A. M. La Bonnardiére, *Saint Augustin et l'augustinisme,* [Paris: Éditiones Sueil, 1955], 183) and the earlier date proposed by M. –F. Berrouard, *Augustinus Lexicon*, vol. 1 (Basel:

these texts in the same couple of years that Augustine preached a host of sermons on marriage, engaged in vigorous debate with Manichaeans in Africa, and argued with Jerome over exegesis of Scripture relevant to marriage.[29] Hunter has also shown the relationship between this first point of the debate and the second: courting favor among Roman Christian aristocrats.[30]

As to the third point, Hunter actually aligns Augustine with Jovinian against Jerome's and Ambrose's strong embrace of a clearly and easily defined ascetical hierarchy in the Latin West. Hunter titles a section of chapter 6 in his *Marriage, Celibacy, and Heresy in Ancient Christianity* "Subverting the Ascetic Hierarchy: Augustine of Hippo."[31] In a concluding paragraph of that section, Hunter writes, "Augustine undermined the ascetic hierarchy in a form that mirrored the intentions, if not all the arguments, of Jovinian."[32]

Hunter has expanded the polemical context and squarely located Augustine's position as a "middle way" that retains some of Jovinian's, Ambrose's, and Jerome's conclusions, but where Hunter leaves off is on the question of Augustine's particular,

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Schwabe, 1992), 658–66). Strangely, Walsh seems unaware of Pierre-Marie Hombert's later dating of *De bono coniugali* and sermon 354A based on La Bonnardière's methodology (see Hombert, *Nouvelles recherches de chronologie augustinienne* [Paris: Institut d'etudes Augustiniennes, 2000]). Hombert's book was published in the year preceding Walsh's critical translation, which may have given Walsh little time to consider the evidence. By 2002, though, David Hunter had written an article in favor of Hombert's dating (Hunter, "Augustine, Sermon 354A").

[29] See Hunter, "Between Jovinian and Jerome: Augustine and the Interpretation of 1 Corinthians 7," *Studia Patristica* 43 (2006): 131–136. During these years Augustine gave Sermons 354A, 51, 162C and gave sermons on psalms 99, 103, and 44. Interestingly, all of these sermons deal with marriage, even when the Scripture does not directly treat marriage. What's more, Augustine's letters 28 and 82 to Jerome, his debates with the Manichaeans in Carthage, and the thoughts that are carried through from the 397 *Contra Faustum* seem to indicate that Augustine's *De bono coniugali* was written as much with an anti-manichaean tone as it was with an eye toward preventing the rise of Jovinian or Jeromian theology of marriage in North Africa.

[30] See David Hunter, "Resistance to the Virginal Ideal in Late-Fourth-Century Rome," 45–64. Hunter conducts a detailed exploration of the situation in Rome in *Marriage, Celibacy, and Heresy*, 15–86.

[31] Hunter, *Marriage, Celibacy, and Heresy*, 269–84.

[32] Ibid., 284.

*constructive* project for marriage. Can we identify what Augustine calls the "middle way of truth" (medium veritatis)? What are its payoffs in this debate? It is here, then, that I must pick up. If Hunter has demonstrated what Augustine did to deconstruct and subvert ascetical hierarchy and the Manichaean tendencies of certain Christians (e.g. Jerome), I hope to show in the next section that which Augustine built up in its place. For now, though, I must finish contextualizing Augustine's theological soundings as they relate to marriage with the third, most taxing debate of Augustine's late life—Pelagianism.

As the fifth century went on, battles were waged in Rome for influence over wealthy young women and men, as well as wealthy widows. Priests and ascetical spiritual masters gathered followings around themselves. Peter Brown has argued that at this point in Roman Empire (early fifth century), the wealthy elite were rediscovering ascetic Christianity as a way to stand out in society, to make a name for oneself in society and the government. In Brown's mind, the stability of the empire and the standard of a modest Christianity among the elite led to a centrifugal force among some of this class, which encouraged a sort religious competitiveness. The pressure to stand out may have encouraged young, power-seeking Roman elite to find in Christianity again a religion of strong discontinuity from pre-conversion life.[33] Thus when Pelagius and Julian of

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[33] See Peter Brown, "Pelagius and His Supporters: Environment and Aims," in *Journal of Theological Studies* 19 (1968): 93–123. Just as Augustine has a context, so too does Brown. Brown, writing in the late sixties, is applying a social-scientific model to the Pelagian and Jovinian controversies. He views the Pelagian controversy as a social movement. This movement begins due to a need for "stand-outs" in a socially secure environment that produces a socially centrifugal force; the movement ends with the fall of Rome because the need for social cohesion in an overturned society creates a "centripetal force" that reduces the need for Christians to use their religion as a means to stand out. Rather, the cultural elite will find ways to stand together. Other scholars have rejected this reading of the controversy as a "social movement." See Josef Loessl, "Augustine, Pelagianism, Julian of Aeclanum, and Modern Scholarship," *Zeitschrift für antikes Christentum* 11.1 (2007): 129–50, who argues that the Pelagian controversy was not a social movement, as some have claimed, but was and is a theological tendency. For Loessl, at base stands the history of *Paulusrezeption* and battles over proper Pauline exegesis. Ultimately, "the Pelagian controversy became the paradigm for Pauline reception in the West and in a certain sense it has remained so until today," (Lössl, "Augustine," 130–33). Lössl is quick to point out that "Julian was never condemned

Aeclanum enter the scene, these Christian masters find a population ready for their emphasis on a postbaptismal clean-slate that *demands* and allows for rigorous asceticism in any who would claim to be a true Christian.

There were a host of fundamental theological points at stake in Augustine's debates with the Pelagians, especially Julian of Aeclanum (perhaps Augustine's most worthy opponent). Among the most important points was the doctrine of one holiness, and all "*Integri Christiani*" (authentic Christians, as Pelagius called them) must live it.[34] In other words, Christianity demanded one, rigorous moral standard for inclusion in the community. Only those meeting this rigorous standard counted as authentic Christians. The tendency toward forming a "church within the Church" had sprung up before in the heresies of Montanism[35] and Donatism,[36] and here again it was visible in the efforts of Pelagius and Julian.[37] Both Montanism and Donatism required extraordinary witness of holiness for ecclesial membership (and certainly for ministry). For the Montanists this

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for any of his positions specifically;" in fact, he was the one questioning Augustine's orthodoxy. The most striking of his conclusions is that "Augustine and Julian are both arguing for, if not equally valid, then at any rate equally reasoned, and certainly equally interesting forms of early Christianity" (ibid, 147).

[34] Peter Brown, "Pelagius and His Supporters," 101.

[35] In the case of Montanism, which emerged out of a charismatic pietism, "true Christians" were those who received gifts of the Spirit to speak in tongues and receive private revelations. The early Latin Father Tertullian slowly drifted into this theological camp. See William Tabbernee, *Fake Prophecy and Polluted Sacraments: Ecclesiastical and Imperial Reactions to Montanism*, Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae 84 (Boston: Brill, 2007); Christine Trevett, *Montanism: Gender, Authority, and the New Prophecy* (New York: Cambridge University, 1996); Daniel H. Williams, "The Origins of the Montanist Movement: A Sociological Analysis," *Religion* 19.4 (Oct 1989): 331–51; and John G. Davies, "Tertullian, *De Resurrectione Carnis 63*: A Note on the Origins of Montanism," *Journal of Theological Studies*, n.s. 6.1 (Apr, 1955): 90–94. Interestingly, Montanism developed a rigorous teaching on marriage in the works of Tertullian, e.g., *Ad uxorem*. Tertullian and other Montanists did not allow remarriage of widows.

[36] Peter Iver Kaufman, "Augustine, Evil, and Donatism: Sin and Sanctity before the Pelagian Controversy," *Theological Studies* 51 (1990): 115–126. Another article that links the Donatist and Pelagian controversies is Carol Scheppard, "The Transmission of Sin in the Seed: A Debate Between Augustine of Hippo and Julian of Eclanum," in *Doctrinal Diversity: Varieties of Early Christianity*, ed. Everett Ferguson (New York: Garland, 1999), 233–42.

[37] A later example of this kind of theological tendency, though in many ways from the opposite approach, appears in Jansenism. See Ronald Arbuthnott Knox, *Enthusiasm: A Chapter in the History of Religion, with Special Reference to the XVII and XVIII Centuries* (New York: Oxford University, 1950); and Nigel Abercrombie, *The Origins of Jansenism* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1936). The "church within the church" tendency based on moral or liturgical rigorism is still alive and well in the contemporary church. Examples abound.

took the form of ecstatic prophecy, and for the Donatists heroic faithfulness in the face of persecution. Peter I. Kaufman points out that the Donatist claim to be a church of the pure, authentic Christians was part of Augustine's impetus for developing the doctrines of sin and grace that become even more pronounced in his later debates with the Pelagians. These understandings of sin and grace have an important role in how Augustine conceptualizes the relationship between consecrated and conjugal life (which I will explore below).

These groups were, in a sense, theologically "conservative." The Montanists wanted to hold on to the early tradition of prophecy, and the Donatists the early tradition of radical *martyros* (witness) and ecclesial exclusion of sinners. For the Donatists, the Church was the church of the holy, the pure, not a church of sinners.[38] In a similar way, the Pelagians too could be construed as "conservatives" of their day, hoping to preserve Christianity as a religion requiring a practice of existing in severe tension with the surrounding societal mores. Augustine, on the other hand, could have been cast as a sort of "liberal," allowing luke-warm Christians in the Church with his "ontological,"

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[38] This is the distinction at stake and clearly apparent in Augustine's debate with the Donatists and later the Pelagians. See Kaufman, "Augustine, Evil, and Donatism," 115, 117–18, 122–23. Kaufman, though, hypothesizes that Augustine "probably made Donatist puritanism seem more perfectionist than it actually was" (ibid., 122). For Augustine, baptism cleans the soul of guilt and frees the will, but it does not completely repair the wound of original sin (*Contra Iulianum*, 6.18; *Against Julian*, 364–66). "Christian baptism gives us perfect newness and perfect health from those evils by which we were guilty, not from those evils we must still combat lest we become guilty. These, too, are in us and they are not another's, but our own." English translations of *Contra Iulianum*, unless otherwise noted, come from *Saint Augustine: Against Julian*, trans. Matthew A. Schumacher, Fathers of the Church 16 (New York: Fathers of the Church, 1957). *Contra Iulianum* is not in the CCL or the CSEL. The best Latin edition is *Saint Augustine: Opera Omnia CAG*. Ed. Cornelius Mayer (Basel: Scwabe, 1995), available at http://0-library.nlx.com.libus.csd.mu.edu/xtf/view?docId=augustine_la/augustine_la.00.xml;chunk.id=div.augustine_la.pmpreface.1;toc.depth=1;toc.id=div.augustine_la.pmpreface.1;brand=default&fragment_id=, accessed on February 7, 2011. Citations of *Contra Iulianum* will appear in this way: *Contra Iulianum*, book.chapter; *Against Julian*, page.

supravoluntary understanding of baptism's effectiveness and his emphasis on our slow

limp toward the kingdom.[39]

Below I will lay out Julian of Aeclanum's theological accusations against

Augustine, as well as his positive theological assertions, which will help us understand

Augustine's response and Augustine's counternarrative for the relationship between

conjugal and consecrated life.[40] It will become apparent that much of Julian's theology

has survived and even gained popularity in the late twentieth- and early twenty-first

century.[41] As for accusations, Julian called Augustine first and foremost a Manichaean, a

charge not uncommon even to this day.[42] Second, Julian belittled Augustine's grasp of

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[39] Augustine makes note of the supravoluntary character of salvation in *Contra Iulianum* 4.8; *Against Julian*, 204, when he states that baptism's effect is real when undesired and even when contradesired, e.g., when an infant resists reception of the sacrament, "Actually, even while they are being baptized they sometimes scream, spit, and struggle against it—yet they receive and find it is opened to them, and they enter into the kingdom of God where they have eternal salvation and the knowledge of the truth." Furthermore, in *Contra Iulianum* 6.3; *Against Julian*, 312, Augustine states, "we hold that infants believe in Christ through the hearts and voices of those who carry them."

[40] Julian's of Aeclaunum's theology survives in the lengthy quotations by Augustine in his polemical responses to Julian.

[41] The problem preventing a clearer vision of this fact is that there is a general assumption that Augustine "won" his argument against the Pelagians (especially Julian of Aeclanum). The immediate reception of Augustine with respect to this debate was moderate, and theologians (including Cassian) more or less loudly disagreed with Augustine until the Council of Orange 529. Josef Lössl, Peter Brown, and B.R. Rees have made the argument that the Pelagian theological tendency is a matter deeply rooted in our notions of sin and Christian identity vis-à-vis the world, and our interpretations of Paul. Furthermore, the Pelagian theological tendency continues to exist (validly) today. See Lössl, "Augustine, Pelagianism, Julian of Aeclanum, and Modern Scholarship," 129–50; and Peter Brown, *The Body and Society*, pp. 408–27; and B. R. Rees, *Pelagius: Life and Letters* (Rochester, NY: Boydell, 1998). William E. Phipps has claimed, even more forcefully, that Augustine not Pelagius is the great heresiarch ("The Heresiarch; Pelagius or Augustine?" *Anglican Theological Review* 62.2 [1980]: 124–133).

[42] See Augustine, *Contra Iulianum*, book 1, where Augustine explicitly defends himself and all other theologians Julian lumps with the Manicheans. Augustine goes on in this first book to demonstrate how Julian's position ironically supports manicheism. For more of the specific grounds on the accusation, see Mathijs Lamberigts, "Was Augustine a Manichean? The Assessment of Julian of Aeclanum," in *Augustine in the Latin West,* Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion, 2002, 113–136. While few actually claim Augustine is overtly Manichean, it is more commonly held that Augustine never completely left behind all Manichean tendencies in his theology. For example, with Julian, some find Augustine's doctrine of sin and evil closely tied with the Manichean understanding of evil as substantial, that is, material. Furthermore, his concession of a kind of sexual desire or movement in Eden leave him even more open to charges of Manicheism (Elizabeth Clark, "Vitiated Seeds and Holy Vessels: Augustine's Manichean Past," in *Ascetic Piety and Women's Faith: Essays on Ancient Christianity* [Lewiston: Edwin Mellen, 1986]).

philosophy as inept and confused.[43] Third, Julian called Augustine's Christology docetic,

or Apollinarian.[44] Augustine is also supposed to have taught the following: the devil is

the creator of man and his marriage is the devil's instrument;[45] Augustine makes God

unjust for damning infants;[46] Augustine denies the forgiveness of all sins in baptism;[47]

and Augustine says sin is inevitable, which encourages moral laxity and despair.[48] As for

his positive assertions, Julian claimed first that only Adam was harmed by original sin.[49]

As a correlative, Julian taught that people learn sin by imitation not propagation. Only

personal (not original) sin sends people to hell. Another corollary is that sin cannot be

passed to the child of baptized spouses, since sin is gone from them.[50] Furthermore,

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[43] Augustine quotes Julian's attacks in various places. Julian says that because Augustine is unsophisticated in philosophy, he "will probably assert we should use the testimony of Scripture, *not syllogisms*, to prove that offspring born of the union of bodies must be ascribed to the divine work" (*Contra Iulianum*, 3.10; *Against Julian*, 124). Julian takes Augustine to task on the philosophical impossibility of passing on guilt: "That which inheres in a subject cannot exist without the thing which is the subject of its inherence." (*contra Iulianum* 5.14; *Against Julian*, 291). Furthermore, he uses philosophical categories to de-theologize sexual desire by philosophical dissection of its genus, species, mode, excess, and origin (*Contra Iulianum* 3.13).

[44] Ibid., 5.15, where Augustine defends himself against the Apollinarian charge. See also Mathijs Lamberigts, "Was Augustine a Manichean?" 113–136, at 130. He is citing Julian's letter, *Ad Florum* IV, 47, PL, 45, col. 1365.

[45] *Contra Iulianum*., 2.1, 10; 3.18, 24; 5.7; 6.23.

[46] Ibid., 2.1, 3.5., 19. Julian claims that Augustine makes God unjust for damning innocent infants. Augustine agrees with Julian that infants are innocent of personal sin, since that would require will and action. Infants, though, are not just because they incur guilt, as it were, by contagion. Augustine distinguishes between innocence and justice. Interestingly, for Augustine, "indeed it would be unjust if he who was disobedient to his lord were obeyed by his own slave, that is, his body" (*De nuptiis et concupiscentia* 1.7, my translation).

[47] *Contra Iulianum*, 2.1; *Against Julian*, 55–56: "Surely these are, it would appear, the topics of your dreadful arguments by which you terrify the weak and, less than is expedient for you, those versed in sacred literature. For you say that we 'by asserting original sin, say that the Devil is the creator of men who are born, condemn marriage, deny that in baptism all sins are forgiven, convict God of the crime of injustice, and make men despair of perfection.' You contend that all these things follow if we believe that infants are born bound by the sin of the first man, and for this reason are subject to the Devil unless they are reborn in Christ."

[48] Ibid., 2.8. On the authority of Ambrose, Cyprian, and Hilary, Augustine claims here that a sinless life is possible, but only by a special grace of God. Even holy Christians do not have enough control of their hearts and minds to reach such a life alone. A sinless life is only made perfect in the weakness of total dependence on the grace of God.

[49] Ibid., 1.5; 2.9.

[50] Ibid., 2.9, where Augustine cites Julian's positive arguments: if God is just, he cannot condemn in the children the sins of the parents since those sins have been forgiven; furthermore, if all sins are forgiven in

concupiscence (here limited to the unwilled desire for sex and the non-rational arousal of the sexual organs) is a natural, biological force and gift that are only evil when used in excess. Their genus is vital fire. Their species is genital action, their mode is the conjugal act, and their excess is intemperance of fornication.[51] Finally, Mary and Joseph did not have a true marriage, as they never had conjugal intercourse.[52]

The stark contrast between Augustine and Julian on these topics has many implications for the relationship between consecrated and religious life. If Julian is correct, then biological reproduction would be equivalent to ecclesial, spiritual reproduction. If children are born just (that is, in right relationship to themselves, the community, and God) then they are born in the Church. Procreation is like evangelization. Furthermore, if sexual desire is not somehow disordered and, therefore, need not be fought against, then it is certainly no more honorable to abstain entirely from sexual congress than to make good use of the same. The same virtue is required for both, since what is being restrained is a good rather than something broken that we might still put to good use anyway. Julian and Jovinian, then, are early representatives of the theologians we saw in chapter two. They all attempt to find a way to level out the Christian life, that

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baptism, then those born of the reborn cannot contract original sin; if God creates men, they cannot be born with any evil; and if human nature is capable of perfect justice, it cannot have natural faults.

[51] Ibid., 3.13; and see Elizabeth Clark, "Vitiated Seeds and Holy Vessels: Augustine's Manichean Past," 291–349. Clark makes a good analysis of the Manichean roots in the background of Augustine's debate with Julian and how Augustine's thought changed over time. She gives too much credence, though, to the distinction between "biological" and "theological" understandings of human sexuality and origins. The strictly "biological" understanding she attributes to Julian is not value-free. By calling it "biological," an attempt is made to locate it in the realm of the good, as if the "theological" nature of Augustine's account is what prevents him from seeing carnal concupiscence as good. For Augustine, "biology" has an explicit theological meaning and significance. Julian assumes the theological positive meaning of biology while pretending it is theologically neutral. Human physiology and genetics has theological meaning; it is ultimately a question of what meaning the theologian attributes to it. Is it broken or properly functioning? If it is broken, is that brokenness transmittable materially?

[52] *Contra Iulianum*, 5.12; and *De nuptiis et concupiscentia*, 1.11–1.13; *Marriage and Desire*, 35–37. Augustine defends the reality of Mary and Joseph's marriage on the grounds that, more than any other marriage, they achieved the three goods of marriage (*proles*, *fides*, *sacramentum*).

is, work against easy hierarchical judgments about the holiness available to members of certain states of life. The result is an account of conjugal and consecrated life where the two states have little to teach each other. If Augustine is correct, though, then there is a distinction between consecrated life and conjugal life, and these two states of life will have reason to speak to one another. If the process by which biological procreation functions is somehow malfunctional as a result of sin, then even the best use of this capacity (for the procreation of children to be regenerated in Christ) will be less virtuous than the complete abstinence from that capacity (for the sake of the kingdom of God). At the same time, as we will see in Augustine's thought below, even the most continent, temperate consecrated virgin will have much to learn from the conjugal life of an obedient, humble, chaste, and faithful spouse. It only makes sense to talk about a consonance between conjugal and consecrated life if in fact they are distinct. Augustine maintains this distinction, while much of the modern scholarship moves dangerously close to losing the distinction on the altar of an egalitarian approach to Christian spirituality.

We have just walked through Augustine's polemical context with respect to his doctrine on marriage. Let me take a moment now to review the connection between this section on Augustine's context and a concern of the whole chapter—to demonstrate that modern attempts to equalize marriage and monasticism are not new. Julian's and Jovinian's teachings have a certain post-Vatican II sensibility to them, that is, they have affinities with theological conclusions of post-conciliar attempts to put consecrated and conjugal life in dialogue. Julian's theology sounds hopeful in the face of Augustine's apparent pessimism; it is inviting rather than condemning. In baptism, according to Julian,

we are cleansed from all the guilt of our personal sins, and all that is required is for us to unlearn our bad habits and replace them with virtue by the Holy Spirit's help.[53] Julian and Jovinian both seem to echo the Second Vatican Council's invitation to the one universal holiness available to all.[54] Certainly Jovinian in his forceful claim that there is no difference in merit between celibate and married life, per se, would garner popularity today. The same is true for Jovinian's decidedly social understanding of Christian identity as expressed by modern, communion ecclesiology;[55] he emphasizes the unity of the Church as the primary place of belonging over-against a tide of individualistic ascetical competitiveness: "be not proud: you and your married sisters are members of the same Church."[56] This mantra would find many an adherent in contemporary theology—and I share it.

Just as Jovinian's theology has remained popular, so Julian's theological commitments remain throughout history and in current theology as well. Julian's doctrine that sin is taught anticipates the enlightenment's "noble savage" and twentieth-century lamentation of structural sin. Most relevant is Julian's understanding of concupiscence. For Julian, the concupiscence required for the conjugal act is considered chiefly in its biological (thus natural, given) character; therefore, it is a "gift" from God. This approach to sexual desire as natural and gift seems to resonate well even with magisterial

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[53] Julian has a hard time affirming the need for infant baptism. According to Julian, in baptism, what is made good by creation "God makes better by renovation and adoption" (*Contra Iulianum*, 3.3; *Against Julian*, 112).

[54] See LG, 5, on the universal call to holiness.

[55] Communion ecclesiology has grown in popularity since the second Vatican Council and is well expressed in Henri de Lubac's *Catholicism: Christ and the Common Destiny of Man*, Trans. Lancelot C. Sheppard and Elizabeth Englund (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1988); as well as the overview Dennis Doyle, *Communion Ecclesiology: Vision and Versions* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2000).

[56] Jerome, *Adversus Iovinianum*, 1.5.

statements on sexuality from the Second Vatican Council onward,[57] and has gained place

in the Catechism of the Catholic Church.[58]

It is true that there is much beneficial in the thought of Jovinian and Julian, and

that many of their insights were carried through history as part of authentic development

of doctrine. My goal here is not to villainize these theologians and holy men,[59] but to

point out that their theological tendencies tend toward the same conclusions made by the

theologians we studied in the previous chapter. Jovinian's and Julian's attempts to

valorize married life exemplify the same zero-sum game played by theologians in the

latter half of the twentieth century. The apparent tension between consecrated and

married life, as well as the desire to relieve that tension, is (like most ideas and trends)

both *nova et vetera*.

It is this tension that Augustine must cut. He is aware of the issues at stake, and

the insights of Jovinian and Julian.[60] His solution incorporates some of those insights, but

uses them to fashion a counternarrative for the relationship between celibate and conjugal

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[57] See, for example, *Gaudium et Spes* 51: "The sexual characteristics of man and the human faculty of reproduction wonderfully exceed the dispositions of lower forms of life. Hence the acts themselves which are proper to conjugal love and which are exercised in accord with genuine human dignity must be honored with great reverence."

[58] Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 2337: "Chastity means the successful integration of sexuality within the person and thus the inner unity of man in his bodily and spiritual being. Sexuality, in which man's belonging to the bodily and biological world is expressed, becomes personal and truly human when it is integrated into the relationship of one person to another, in the complete and lifelong mutual gift of a man and a woman.
The virtue of chastity therefore involves the integrity of the person and the integrality of the gift."

[59] Augustine made note of their particular piety and irreproachability, and treated them cordially (Gerald Bonner, "Pelagianism and Augsutine," in *Doctrinal Diversity: Varieties of Early Christianity*, ed. and intro. Everett Ferguson [New York: Garland, 1999], 198–99). Furthermore, Josef Lössl has argued that "Augustine and Julian are both arguing for, if not equally valid, then at any rate equally reasoned, and certainly equally interesting forms of early Christianity." As he has it, the modern challenge is not to determine the "right choice" between Augustinianism and Pelagianism, but to draw the right conclusions from the fact that both phenomena have arrived at the present time together, through an immensely rich and complex reception process (Lössl, "Augustine, Pelagianism, Julian of Aeclanum, and Modern Scholarship," *Zeitschrift für antikes Christentum* 11.1 (2007): 129–50, at 147–50;

[60] Serge Lancel's *St. Augustine*, 325–46; Bonner's "Pelagianism and Augustine," 191–210; and Bonner's "Augustine and Pelagianism," 211–232, explore the shifts in the argument between Augustine and the Pelagians that show well the high stakes of the debate.

life. In the following section I will lay out the Augustinian counternarrative and revision of the simple, antagonistic account (whether zero-sum or not) of the consonance between consecrated and conjugal life. I intend to show how this saint and theologian met the challenge of ranking holiness with a far more creative and liberating alternative than had been offered by his contemporaries or by the modern authors treated in the preceding chapter.

## Augustine's Accomplishment: The "medium veritatis"

I can now focus on what I consider the three major accomplishments of Augustine's lifelong constructive project for marriage and family: (1) while leaving intact a version of ascetical hierarchy, he rejects any attempt to evaluate the merit of an individual in any particular state of life; (2) he prioritizes the social nature of Christian life over a more individual approach easily co-opted by competition and pride; and (3) he creates an account of the good of marriage and virginity that allows the two a participative share in the same goods. The combination of these three outcomes is an enduring reformulation of the place of marriage and virginity within Christian life, wherein it could neither be said that all people were of equal virtue, or that all virgins are of greater virtue than all married persons.

*Complicating but not Rejecting an Ascetical Hierarchy*

In his articles and book on the Jovinian controversy, Hunter highlights how "Augustine's theology of marriage and celibacy radically destabilized the ascetic hierarchy maintained by Jerome."[61] Further, he states that "by introducing virtues that were superior to sexual continence (e.g. readiness for martyrdom) and by emphasizing that it was impossible to know if one possessed such virtues, Augustine had introduced a note of radical instability into the discussion of marriage and celibacy. While acknowledging a *theoretical* superiority of celibacy over marriage, Augustine simultaneously undermined the *practical* validity of this hierarchy, since no individual celibate could ever claim superiority over any individual married person."[62] I depend on Hunter for these insights, but I take them in a new direction. If the work on this question ends on Hunter's point, then we never progress past an argument over individual merit: who can earn more? Can anyone earn more? Whereas Hunter suggests that Augustine denied a certain "validity" of the hierarchy, I argue that Augustine is more concerned to positively defend the hierarchy and emphasize its social and mysterious nature. Taking Hunter's insights in this direction, we can see how Augustine moves beyond the argument over individual merit and refocuses on a common yet differentiated sharing in the gifts of the virtues in the one body of Christ's bride, the Church.

First, if Augustine's constructive project is to leave an ascetic hierarchy in place while resisting arguments over personal merit, he must subvert the way people position

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[61] Hunter, *Marriage, Celibacy, and Heresy in Ancient Christianity*, 281.
[62] Ibid., 283–84.

themselves within that hierarchy rather than subvert the hierarchy itself.[63] The first step to

combating evaluations of individual merit is to relativize the virtue of continence in the

conversation by introducing a virtue accessible to all Christians, married or virgin—

obedience. On this account, as Hunter has highlighted, Augustine has much in common

with Jovinian. But where Hunter sees both Jovinian and Augustine undermining ascetical

hierarchy itself, I see Augustine replacing arguments over merit gained with questions

about virtues received. Both Jovinian and Augustine share a theological tendency,

namely, militating against the vice of pride, and placing the virtues of humility and

obedience above continence. Both worry more about pride in the virgin than incontinence

in the married. Jovinian declares to all virgins, "Be not proud! You belong to the same

Church as married women."[64] For his part, Augustine says in *De bono coniugali*, "the

matron who is more obedient is to be preferred to the virgin who is less so."[65] In *De

sancta virginitate*, Augustine continues, "For we must not only preach virginity…we

must instruct [admonish] it, so that it does not become puffed up."[66] As he states in *De

bono coniugali*, the one who forgoes the goods of marriage is only holier, "provided,

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[63] It is clear that Augustine intends to leave a hierarchy of merit in place. In *De bono coniugali* 28 (Walsh, *On the Good of Marriage*, 53) he states, "So if we compare the issues themselves, we can be in no doubt whatever that the chastity of continence is better than the chastity of marriage, though both are a good. But when we compare persons, the better of the two is the one who possesses a greater good than the other." "Res ergo ipsas si comparemus, nullo modo dubitandum est meliorem esse castitatem continentiae quam castitatem nuptialem, cum tamen utrumque sit bonum; hominess vero cum comparamus, ille est melior qui bonum amplius quam alius habet" (*De bono coniugali* 28, CSEL 41, 224). In *De sancta virginitate*, 24; Walsh, *On Holy Virginity*, 95–96, he asks: who would "maintain that those who with devoted resolve remain continent, disciplining their bodies to the point of spurning marriage, castrating themselves not physically but at the very root of concupiscence, pondering the life of heaven and of angels in their mortal life on earth, are merely equal to the merits of married people?" "et pio proposito continentes, corpus usque ad contemptas nuptias castigantes, se ipsos non in corpore, sed in ipsa concupsicentiae radice castrantes, caelestem et angelicam vitam in terrene mortalitate meditantes, coniugatorum meritis pares esse contendat…?" (*De sancta virginitate*, CSEL 41, 259–60).

[64] Jerome, *Adversus Iovinianum* 1.5.

[65] *De bono coniugali* 30 (CSEL 41, 225); Walsh, *The Good of Marriage*, 55: "Quapropter non solum oboediens inoboedienti, sed oboedientior coniugata minus oboedienti virgini praeponenda est."

[66] *De sancta virginitate*, 1 (CSEL 41, 236); Walsh, *On Holy Virginity*, 68: "Non solum ergo praedicanda est virginitas ut ametur, verum etiam monenda ne infletur."

however, that individuals exploit that freedom to ponder, in Scripture's words, 'the things of the Lord, how to please God,' which means pondering constantly that obedience should not take second place to continence."[67]

The second step in combating the competitive spirit over individual merit is to show the near impossibility of proving (outside of revelation) the moral character of any individual. Both Jovinian and Augustine fight the tendency to pride by refusing a facile insistence on a clear hierarchy of merit in the Church.[68] They part ways, though, on their method. Jovinian and Augustine both say the same words, "are you [a celibate] better than Sara?" but they are asking different questions. Jovinian asks as if the assumed answer "no" will prove that the married state cannot be per se worse than the celibate state. Augustine asks as if the assumed answer "no" simply means that judging our own virtue, let alone that of others, is a practical impossibility. Both questions embattle the Jeromian and Ambrosian notions of ascetical hierarchy: the former by attempting to destroy it entirely, the other by destabilizing the link between a given virtue and one's state in life.[69]

To this end, destabilizing the position within the ascetical hierarchy without completely rejecting it, Augustine reflects on Jovinian's favorite question: "Are you better than Sara, Susana?" In *De bono coniugali* Augustine deals with the complex

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[67] *De bono coniugali*, 32 (CSEL 41, 228); Walsh, *The Good of Marriage*, 57: "Si tamen ea vacatione sic utantur homines, quomodo scriptum est, ut cogitent *quae sunt domini, quomodo placeant deo*, id est up perpetuo cogitet, continentia ne quid minus habeat oboedientia."

[68] Both Jovinian and Augustine level the playing field of Christian life, and both see Christian identity in terms of belonging to a new social body, yet for Augustine, the married state is and always will be more problematic than the celibate life. While the married make good use of an evil (*concupiscentia carnis*), the celibate do without that evil in at least one sector of life, though each Christian must constantly fight against this tendency for as long as their pilgrimage on earth continues. So, assuming exactly equal virtue in both persons other than their way of life, the celibate is closer to God for their avoidance of that evil entirely. The problem is, no people are of equal virtue. The consecrated virgin may be prideful, whereas the married wife might be humble.

[69] See Hunter, *Marriage, Celibacy, and Heresy in Ancient Christianity*, chap. 6, esp. 281–84.

answer: the virgin could respond "yes, insofar as I have the practice of continence," but "no, inasmuch as I do not possess the virtue any more than Sara did," and "no, insofar as I would not have lived the married life with as much obedience as Sara did."[70] Augustine also offers the case of the apostles John and Peter. Who is more virtuous? John the virgin or Peter, married? Jerome argued that even Peter's martyrdom could not wash away the grime of his married state; thus he was inferior to John.[71] Augustine, however, insists that John's equal holiness to Peter comes not primarily from the continence he expressed, but the virtue necessary for martyrdom, namely patience, which he possessed "solely in disposition," that is, *in habitu*. John's virtue of patience is comparable to Abraham's virtue of continence; both were maintained, "solely in disposition," *in habitu*, hidden from view.[72] The virtues given to any individual, then, may be hidden or may be expressed, and so judgments of merit become exceedingly complicated.[73]

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[70] *De bono coniugali*, 27 (CSEL 41, 223); Walsh, *On the Good of Marriage*, 51: "Sic et femina innupta…cum audierit imprudentem illum percunctatorem dicentem 'Tu ergo melior quam Sarra?' respondeat 'Ego melior sum, sed his quae virtute huius continentiae carent, quod de Sarra non credo. Fecit ergo illa cum ista virtute quod illi tempori congruebat, a quo ego sum immunis, ut in meo etiam corpore appareat quod in illa in animo conservabat."

[71] Jerome, *Adversus Iovinianum* 1.26.

[72] *De bono coniugali*, 26 (CSEL 41, 221): "Quocirca sicut non est impar meritum patientiae in Petro qui passus est et in Iohanne qui passsus non est, sic non est impar meritum continentiae in Iohanne qui nullas expertus est nuptias et in Abraham qui filios generavit. Et illius enim celibatus et illius conubium pro temporum distributione Christo militaverunt; sed continentiam Iohannes et in opere, Abraham vero in solo habitu habebat."

[73] It may be argued that Augustine makes judgments of individual merit not only complicated but impossible by introducing the possibility of virtues *in habitu* and also a hierarchy among the virtues themselves (e.g. obedience is greater than continence, and readiness for martyrdom is greater than continence). One might also argue that Augustine speculates on merit in theory but not when it comes to particular persons. Augustine does, nonetheless, offer real comparisons of merit and ways of analyzing merit that only work for actual persons rather than in theory. For example, in *De bono coniugali* 27 (CSEL 41, 221) (Walsh, *On the Good of Marriage*, 51) Augustine offers his reader a way of answering the question "are you better than Abraham?" that speaks of specific virtues and acknowledges their hierarchy as an opportunity for the reader to respond humbly. As Augustine writes: "So far as this issue of continence goes, I am no better than Abraham was. He did not lack it, even if it was not apparent. But I am not the sort of person whose actions runs contrary to his dispositions. He can say this frankly, for even if his intention is to boast, he will not be stupid since he speaks the truth."

*Prioritizing Ecclesial Membership over Personal Merit*

The second major accomplishment of Augustine's constructive task is to prioritize membership in the Church through baptism over individual merit. The most important piece of evidence supporting this claim is that, for Augustine, the bride of Christ is first and foremost the one Church instead of the sole ascetic.[74] In a recent article, Hunter showed that Augustine makes this position clear, in contradistinction to Jerome and Ambrose, for whom the virgin bride of Christ was equally the ascetic virgin. Hunter uses this point to indicate Augustine's support for organizing power within the Church in terms of Episcopal hierarchy over against ascetical hierarchy, but I will use the point to help fill out how Augustine's intervention in this debate was an effort to take focus off of arguments about personal merit within the ascetical hierarchy and create an ecclesial, social account of the good of marriage.

So strong is Augustine's sense that all Christians (married or celibate) belong first to one ecclesial, bridal body, that he is wary to approach Julian as "an individual." Augustine's first argumentative strategy against Julian is, in fact, not to defend himself but to bring to bear the cloud of witnesses that Julian also of necessity accuses, that is, the Church itself.[75] Augustine does not construe the debate the way Julian does, as some kind

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[74] Hunter, "The Virgin, the Bride, and the Church," 296–302. Hunter writes, "In contrast to Ambrose and Jerome, whose reflections on the virginal church as the bride of Christ led them naturally to speak of the celibate Christian or consecrated virgin as bride of Christ, Augustine resisted this ascetic reading. For Augustine, Episcopal authority, rather than ascetic effort, defined the contours of the true church." For one study of how Augustine goes in this direction for his understanding of marriage, see Émile Schmitt, *Le marriage Chrétien dans l'oeuvre de saint Augustin: Une théologie baptismale de la vie conjugale* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1983).

[75] Augustine, *Contra Iulianum* 1.3; *Against Julian*, 6–7: "Consider, you who so often accuse us of Manichaeism, if you are alert, whom and what kind of men and what great defenders of the Catholic faith you dare insult with such a detestable charge…I shall cite a very few, by which, however, our adversaries may be compelled to blush and to yield, if they have any fear of God or shame before men that can

of single combat, mind against mind. Augustine makes a social argument. He argues with and for the Church. "God forbid," he writes, "that I among Catholics should arrogate to myself the role you are not ashamed to assume among Pelagians…Before I was born to this world and before I was reborn to God, many Catholic teachers had already refuted your future errors."[76] Alone we are lost, but with the Church we are saved and find the truth.

In his sermon on Psalm 45, thought to have been preached on September 2, 403 in Hippo, Augustine develops just this sort of social account of Christian life with nuptial imagery.[77] Herein, Augustine refers to the bride of Christ as the Church first; our common identity as members of one bride precedes any analogy of the individual virgin as bride. "These invited to the wedding are themselves the bride, for the Church is the bride, and Christ the Bridegroom."[78]

This claim is asserted and argued more deeply in *De bono viduitatis*. Here Augustine countermands those who claim that a person who marries after vowing celibacy commits adultery. Augustine's argument against this position hinges on his social ecclesiology and his resistance to the idea that an individual becomes in any strong sense the bride of Christ by taking a vow of celibacy. "Because those who in Christian holiness do not marry are said to choose marriage with Christ, some argue like this: 'If a

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overcome that great evil of their obstinacy." The list Augustine provides includes Irenaeus of Lyon, Bishop Cyprian, Bishop Reticius of Autun, Bishop Olympius from Spain, the Gallic bishop Hilary, and many more.

[76] Augustine, *Contra Iulianum*, 6.8; *Against Julian*, 332.

[77] See the chronology in *St. Augustine: On the Psalms*, trans. Dame Scholastica Hebgin and Dame Felicitas Corrigan, Ancient Christian Writers 29, ed. Johannes Quasten and Walter Burghardt, S.J. (Westminster, MD: Newman, 1960), 17. This kind of thinking with respect to marriage, then, would have been on Augustine's mind at the time he wrote *De bono coniugali* and *De sancta virginitate*.

[78] *Ennarrationes in Psalmos* 44. 3 (CSEL 38, 495). In the wedding procession, after the bride of Christ, the virgins follow into the wedding banquet. "To what extent do virgins now seek favor with the King? How are they moved to do so? Because the Church has preceded them. 'Behind her the virgins shall be brought to the King, her companions shall follow her,'" *Ennarrationes in Psalmos* 44, 30 (CSEL 38, 515). See Hunter, "The Virgin, the Bride, and the Church," 298–99.

woman marries someone else while her husband is still living, she is an adulteress, as the

Lord himself declared in the gospel. Therefore, as Christ is alive…if a woman who has

chosen marriage with him marries some mere man, she is an adulterous. Those who say

this, indeed, are very sharp, but they fail to notice the absurd consequences of this

argument." It would mean that the vow of celibacy within marriage would result in

adultery because "she becomes his spouse while her husband is alive." The argument also

bans celibacy in widows, since second marriages are less perfect, and a celibate widow

would be making Christ their second husband. This claim against the widow is ridiculous,

Augustine writes, because "He [Christ] was already their spouse [the now widows], not

physically but spiritually, before that, when they were faithful and submissive to their

husbands (1 Pt 3:5–6)." Furthermore, "the whole Church, of which they are members, is

itself his spouse, because by the integrity of her faith, hope, and love she is a virgin, *not

only in holy virgins but in widows and the married faithful too*. The apostle says *to the

whole Church*, of which they are all members, *I have prepared you to present you to the

one husband, Christ, as a chaste virgin* (2 Cor 11:2)."[79]  Augustine also emphasizes this

richly social nature of Christian life in *De bono coniugali*, written at the same time or

during the next year. "The one city," says Augustine, "will be composed of many souls

who have 'one soul and one heart' in God, and after this earthly pilgrimage it will be the

perfection of our unity…for this reason the sacrament of marriage has in our time been

reduced to one husband and one wife."[80] This approach to the meaning of Christian life

mitigates claims to personal merit, as a consecrated virgin can identify as the bride of

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[79] *De bono viduitatis*, 10; *The Excellence of Widowhood*, 118–19.
[80] *De bono coniugali*, 21, Walsh, *On the Good of Marriage*, 27.

Christ primarily in a participative way, that is, as a constitutive part of the one bride that

is gathered up from the Church.[81]

Augustine also approaches the priority of ecclesial relatedness to Christ, that is,

spiritual kinship, by an exegesis of Mt 12:48–50 and Lk 11:27–28 (Jesus asks "Who is

my mother! Who are my brothers?"), which much modern scholarship typically offers,

ironically, as an example of Christ distancing himself from his biological mother.[82] When

Christ says "Whoever does my Father's will, that person is my brother and mother and

sister," he was teaching the following:

> To value our spiritual family more highly than relationship by birth, and that what
> makes people blessed is not being close to upright and holy persons by blood
> relationship, but being united with them by obeying and imitating their doctrine
> and way of life. It was a greater blessing for Mary, therefore, to receive Christ's
> faith than to conceive his flesh…Finally, what advantage was that relationship for
> his brothers and sisters, that is those related to him by birth, who did not believe
> in him? So even the close relationship of being his mother would have been no
> benefit to Mary, if she had not carried Christ in her heart, a greater privilege than
> doing so in her body.[83]

No belonging matters other than the spiritual belonging in Christ's family. This

belonging is entered baptismally and lived by obedience to God's will and imitation of

Christ's life. In other words, being related to Christ is only possible ecclesially, no matter

how continent or ascetic a person might be.

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[81] *De bono coniugali* 32 (CSEL 41, 227–28): "Nec prolem autem carnalem iam hoc tempore quaerere ac
per hoc ab omni tali opere immunitatem quamdam perpetuam retinere atque uni viro Christo spiritaliter
subdi melius est utique et sanctius." Notice that here Augustine says "uni viro Christo" —"to only one man,
Christ." Augustine's image of marriage as a sacred sign does not work without prioritizing the social aspect.
Also, you see that this marriage is one all Christians can and must take part in, but the continent may take
part in it alone, and they may avoid participating in the carnal "opera" of marriage in this world in favor of
the spiritual "opera" of the one marriage between Christ and Church.
[82] See, e.g., Ahearne-Kroll, S. P., "'Who Are My Mother and My Brothers?' Family Relations and Family
Language in the Gospel of Mark," *Journal of Religion* 81 (2001): 1–25. According to Ahearne-Kroll, while
Mark's language sees Jesus distancing himself from his biological family to some degree, he avoids the
extremes of the contemporary Cynics and Therapeutae. Furthermore, the family language is more to talk
about what the new community looks like rather than to exclude biological members.
[83] Augustine, *De sancta virginitate*, 3; *Holy Virginity*, 69.

Augustine's social, ecclesial approach to "the bride of Christ" is significant for its divergence from the position of his contemporaries Ambrose and Jerome, as well as for its apparent dependence on Jovinian's stance. In his treatment of Psalm 45's place in patristic discussions of "the virgin bride of Christ," Hunter has noted that for Jerome and Ambrose the bride of Christ trope could be applied to the Church but was more often applied to the individual consecrated virgin. As Hunter points out, the *velatio* liturgies in use by Ambrose closely resemble many aspects of weddings, and it seems Ambrose used these ceremonies to emphasize paternal, Episcopal power structures in the Church.[84] On the other hand, whereas Ambrose only referred to consecrated virgins as brides of Christ, Jerome included consecrated virgins *and* all other celibate women as brides of Christ, thus highlighting his preference for ascetical rather than liturgical language.[85] J. N. D. Kelly shows that for Jovinian, the principal bride of Christ is the Church herself over above any individual ascetic.[86]

Ironically though, Augustine and Jovinian move in opposite directions despite their common ground on the identity of the virgin bride of Christ. Whereas Jovinian destabilizes the ascetical hierarchy because it seems too individualistic and too Manichaean[87], Augustine defends a type of ascetical hierarchy, because although all Christians compose one virgin bride of Christ, each receives a unique position of greater

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[84] Hunter (*Marriage, Celibacy, and Heresy*, 225) finds that "The ceremony of virginal consecration was modeled on the veiling that took place at a traditional Roman wedding and marked the moment at which a woman publicly and canonically became a 'bride of Christ'."

[85] Hunter, "The Virgin, the Bride, and the Church," 285–95.

[86] The radical conversion to a new social body by the grace of baptism in faith is Jovinian's central theological position. As Kelly writes, "Although Jerome fails to bring it out, what gave a theological basis and inner cohesion to these propositions was Jovinian's stress on the element of faith in baptism, and his conviction that the transformation effected by it not only rescued a man from the power of sin but *created a unified, holy people* in which considerations of merit were irrelevant" (Kelly, *Jerome: His Life, Writings, and Controversies* [New York: Harper Row, 1975], 181).

[87] See Hunter, *Marriage, Celibacy, and Heresy*, chap. 4.

or lesser honor in that social body.[88] To demonstrate this point, Augustine deals with

what was a controversial text in the debate: the parable of the steward who gave each

worker one denarius despite their variety of hours worked:

> What else does it [the denarius] stand for except something that everyone will have in common, such as eternal life, the kingdom of heaven itself, which will be the home of everyone whom God has predestined, called, justified and brought to glory? *This corruptible nature has to put on incorruptibility, and this mortal nature immortality* (1 Cor 15:53). This is that denarius, the wages everyone receives. At the same time, *star differs from star in splendor, and it is like that with the resurrection of the dead* (1 Cor 15:41–42); these are the different rewards earned by the saints. If the denarius stood for the sky, is it not common to all the stars that they are in the sky? Yet *the splendor of the sun is one thing, the splendor of the moon another, and the splendor of the stars another* (1 Cor 15:41). If that denarius stood for bodily health, is it not the case that when we have our capacities in all parts of the body, there is health in all of them, and if it stays that way until death, it is present the same and equally in all of them? Yet *God established the organs of the body in the way he wanted them to be* (1 Cor 12:18), and so they are not all eyes, nor all for hearing, nor all for smell. Each of these, as well as any other, has its own special characteristics, although they all have health equally, all receive the equal payment of a denarius; but because in that eternal life the brilliance of their merits will shine out differently, in the Father's house *there are many rooms* (Jn 14:2). So it will be that with the equal denarius no one will live more lavishly than anyone else; but with the many rooms some will be honored with greater distinction than others.[89]

What we see here is that, for Augustine, the organic unity of Christians in one body, the

unity of Christian saints as stars in one sky, the unity of the kingdom as one edifice with

many rooms preserves the corporate and individual nature of salvation and coheres with

Paul's and Jesus' explicit statements about the distinction of reward.

A weakness of Jovinian's emphasis on the unity of the holy people in the one

bride, and their one shared reward, as well as the inability of the Christian to be lost to the

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[88] Interestingly, Augustine proposes that widows who remain continent, spouses who mutually practice abstinence, and consecrated virgins all get the same reward in heaven: "These ones [widows] will certainly be given the same reward as those who made this vow by mutual agreement with their partners, or those who had no marriage ties but chose celibacy as the greater good" (*De bono viduitatis*, 20), *Excellence of Widowhood*, 183.

[89] *De sancta virginitate*, 26; *Holy Virginity*, 84.

devil, is the risk it runs of subsuming the person into the social whole. These positions

follow from his robust, social understanding of baptism's effects. If we are made one

body, how can that body be complete if a limb is lost to the devil? If Christ truly brings

his bride to himself pure and spotless, then we all share the one reward of union with

Christ and it is impossible for any to be lost. Jovinian's theory of the one reward for the

one bride of Christ leaves little room for individuals within that bride receiving more or

less honor depending on their individual identity in the whole. Instead, if there is only

one reward for one bride, then we only receive it as a collective and not in any way as an

individual. The individual is lost in the common whole, the one bride of Christ.

Augustine's intervention in the debate avoids this problem by affirming the primary

position of the person as part of a new social body while emphasizing the person's

uniqueness and remaining wholeness within that body.[90]

On the other hand, Julian's conception of sin and sanctification, rather than

subsuming the individual into the group, has the opposite socio-political consequence,

over-emphasis on individualism. Carol Scheppard has drawn attention to the way that this

conception of holiness singles out the individual and puts all the weight of a holy life on

her shoulders.[91] Julian's conception of sexuality is individual, private, and personal. By

arguing that sexual generation does not pass on the wound inhering in the parents and

that only personal sin is damning, he has unmoored sexuality from its social location and

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[90] We will see below that he distinguishes between the way virgins and married persons manifest the motherhood and spousalhood of the Church, as well as the way individuals manifest the nuptial and motherly qualities of Mary.

[91] Carol Scheppard, "The Transmission of Sin in the Seed: A Debate between Augustine of Hippo and Julian of Eclanum," in *Doctrinal Diversity: Varieties of Early Christianity*, ed. and intro. Everett Ferguson (New York: Garland, 1999), 233–42. Scheppard's article is very insightful, but does not go far enough. I pick up where Scheppard leaves off. Scheppard emphasizes the convalescent, limping character of each Christian on their way home. What I hope to do is emphasize the cooperation of those clean but still wounded pilgrims as one body that will reach the destination together, as a body.

from its social repercussions. This is true in the strongest sense if we (with Augustine)

believe that ecclesial belonging is primary. Julian's version of holiness is both populist

and elitist all at once. These repercussions were not lost on Augustine. Had they been so,

Augustine might have agreed to disagree with Julian. After all, he was leading people

toward a rigorous Christian praxis, wasn't he? The socio-political problem with Julian,

from Augustine's standpoint, is well addressed in Augustine's enarration on Psalm 147.

Herein Augustine points out the same sort of false eschatology we heard Jana Bennett

decry in the thought of many who think perfect marriage will solve the world's problems.

Augustine asks: "When will full peace come to even one single person? The time when

full peace comes to each is the time when peace in its fullness will have come in all the

citizens of our Jerusalem."[92] In other words, either we all have peace or none of us has

peace. Either we are all at war with our pride and passions, or we are all in harmony with

truth.

Augustine saw Julian as wanting to have his cake and eat it too; the individual

Christian has to fight and deal a knockout blow to concupiscence, even though

concupiscence is a good, and even though it seems very few are equal to the task.

Augustine saw in Julian the Donatist problem all over again, the problem of the church

within the Church, the problem of putting the weight of God's righteousness squarely on

an individual's shoulders.[93] So Augustine needed the concept of *concupiscentia carnis* as

the great leveler; not because he was overly dark and pessimistic, but because he was

attentive to experience. Augustine's account of sin, sexuality, marriage, and virginity

helps Christians understand their experience of just how hard it is to live the way Jesus

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[92] *Ennarratio in Ps*. 147.20. See Peter Brown, *Body and Society*, pp. 423–27.
[93] See Scheppard, "The Transmission of Sin," 241.

did. For Augustine, there is no elitism in the church; instead the church is the community of the convalescent limping and being carried home. There is little room for superstars on this journey.

It is these two extremes (over-social, and over-individualistic) that make these theologies extraordinarily relevant to the modern crisis of marriage addressed in the first chapter. As we saw, some authors saw the family's abnegation of its roles and authorities to the state as the problem while others saw the family's underparticipation in society and over individualistic attitude as a root of breakdown. Correspondingly, authors offered "social" or "individualistic" solutions: better state and social policy, or holier individuals can save marriage.

Augustine's conception of all Christian belonging (both consecrated and conjugal) in the bride of Christ avoids both of these problems through the way he conceives of salvation and virtue. While Jovinian and Julian are arguing about what an individual is capable of or not capable of, Augustine proposes the solution that we are saved by incorporation into a new body, a new body free from the *concupiscentia carnis* that limits our own ability and freedom. We are incorporated into the *corpus Christi* itself.[94] As Christ's body is free from this concupiscence, so too will we be as Church. While we share the benefit and reward of one who is without concupiscence (delivery from death and eternal life) we must war against it until we inhabit God's kingdom. Each individual differs in virtue, their capacity and habit of ordering their actions to God's kingdom, but their incorporation into the ecclesial body, and therefore their share in the Church's end, and the Church's faith, hope, and love make their own personal virtue true Christian virtue. They are at once sharing in the one identity and the one reward of the Church—

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[94] Mathijs Lamberigts points up this fact in his article, "Was Augustine a Manichaean? 132.

union with Christ—but at the same time developing personal, unique virtues. In the one

body of the pure bride of Christ, a consecrated virgin may have a more noble position

than a married woman who shares equally in all other virtues, but that noble position

would be meaningless if disconnected from the body. For example, even if married

people are the toe of the bride and the virgin is her eye, an eye severed from the body is

grotesque in comparison to the toe united with its body. As Augustine puts it, a virgin

who has continence but not obedience loses what should be common among all

Christians, namely obedience, which is a command rather than a counsel.[95] Said boldly,

for Augustine, virtues are no virtues at all unless they are Christian. "God forbid," writes

Augustine, that "there be true virtues in anyone unless he is just [here this means

baptized], and God forbid he be truly just unless he lives by faith, for he who is just lives

by faith.'"[96]

In Augustine's thought, there is no virtue in the non-Christian.[97] Therefore, the

non-Christian marriage, be it ever so chaste, does not possess conjugal chastity. Likewise,

the celibate virgin, be she ever so humble and modest, has no true modesty.[98] These lack

virtue by their disconnection from the body of Christ, because their actions and

dispositions have not been ordered to a Christian end. "Whatever good is done by man,

yet not done for the purpose for which true wisdom commands it be done, may seem

good from its function, but because the end is not right, it is sin."[99] It is the fact of our

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[95] *De bono coniugali* 30–31 (CSEL 41, 225–26).

[96] Augustine, *Contra Iulianum*, 4.3; *Against Julian*, 181.

[97] Ibid., 4.3. Augustine even goes as far as to say that a gentile clothing a naked man as an act of mercy would be committing sin. Clothing the man is not sin per se, but not honoring God in such a work is sin. "In itself, mercy out of natural compassion is a good work…and he who does this good thing unbelievingly does it in an evil way; but whoever does something in an evil way sins." The unbeliever is not yet a "good tree" and cannot bear good fruit.

[98] Augustine, *Contra Iulianum*, 4.3.

[99] Ibid.; *Against Julian*, 196.

membership in the ecclesial body that makes any holiness whatsoever possible for either the virgin or the married. This belonging is prior to anything else they might hope for or hold out. It is this belonging that brings these states of life together.

In his writings on the topic of marriage and virginity, Augustine is at pains to bring his ecclesial location and value of these to the forefront of the discussion, especially in terms of the shared Christian identity as bride of Christ, but what remains for Augustine is to offer an account of the good of marriage ("bonum nuptiarum") that brings this good into the ecclesial body so that the entire church (celibates and married persons) has a share in it. In doing so, Augustine reconfigures the conversation about conjugal and consecrated life, taking the focus off of the individual merit gained by either. This success is applauded, but in order to avoid an eventual return to Jovinian's (and the modern scholarship's) egalitarian yet unconsciously antagonistic approach (which thus far resonate with Augustine's position), Augustine must construct a notion of the goods of marriage that distinguishes between spousal and celibate participation on those goods. All members in Christ's pure and holy bride share in the one reward of union with the bridegroom, but they share it according to the perfection of the virtues and charisms they possess, which in all likelihood vary from one Christian to another.

## A Threefold, Integrating, *Bonum Nuptiarum, Bonum Ecclesiae*

It is to this third accomplishment, Augustine's threefold construction of the "bonum nuptiarum," that we now turn. In *De bono coniugali* Augustine identifies two

*universal* goods of marriage (*proles*, and *fides castitatis*).[100] There is a third, integrating and *particularly Christian* good, though "sacramentum."[101] First I will treat the way ecclesial belonging transforms the meaning of *proles* (procreation) and *fides castitatis* (chaste faithfulness) to allow both married and virginal participation in their good. Then I will treat the most central Christian meaning of marriage in Augustine's thought, *sacramentum*. Augustine's account of this good of marriage provides the basis and shape of the Augustinian counternarrative for the relationship between conjugal and consecrated life.

The spouses' membership in the body of Christ dignifies these two (*proles* and *fides*) universal goods of marriage, giving them Christian significance and allowing both married and celibates a share in their practice and meaning. Because the spouses are members of the one bride of Christ, these goods contribute to their own sanctification inasmuch because they aid the sanctification of the universal bride. A movement toward the Christianization of these goods of marriage (*proles* and *fides*) takes shape over Augustine's life as a whole.

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[100] *De bono coniugali* 6: "The sealing of the marriage compact is so clearly governed by a kind of sacrament that it is not made void even by the act of separation" (Walsh, *The Good of Marriage*, 17). In the next section, Augustine continues, though: "However, it is only 'in the city of our God, upon his holy mountain' that this situation with a wife applies" (Walsh, *The Good of Marriage*, 19).

[101] There is a wealth of literature on Augustine's understanding of "sacrament." Four important strains of thought to follow are these: (1) the relation between the Latin term "sacramentum" and the Greek term "mysterion," (mystery or secret revealed by God); (2) Augustine's understanding of "sacramentum" as a character of the marriage between two Christians that demands it be monogamous and confers on its bond indissolubility; (3) Augustine's use of the term "sacramentum" to describe what marriage symbolized during different ages of salvation history; and (4) to what extent Augustine had or paved the way for what would become a scholastic understanding of the marital sacrament as sign and instrument of grace. Among many sources, see Theodore Mackin, *The Marital Sacrament* (New York: Paulist, 1989), 129, 215–19; John Cavadini, "The Sacramentality of Marriage in the Fathers," paper given for the USCCB Committee on Marriage and Family's 2006 Theological Colloquium on the Sacramentality of Marriage at Notre Dame, available at http://www.usccb.org/laity/marriage/Cavadini.pdf (accessed on July 8, 2009); and Emile Schmitt, *Le mariage Chrétien dans l'oeuvre de Saint Augustin: une théologie baptismale de la vie conjugale* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1983).

Let us treat first the good of procreation. In the earliest years of the fifth century, (ca. 403–04), Augustine had not decided how Adam and Eve would have reproduced in the garden, but he believed they would have procreated somehow, as an act of obedience.[102] After the fall, and as part of salvation history, the patriarchs participated in the good of *proles*, again by obedience, so as to prepare for the coming of Christ.[103] Finally, after the coming of Christ, the duty to perform this good physically has gone away.[104] It would not be until later, in the anti-pelagian writings, that Augustine will fully develop the notion (beyond its incipient form in *De bono coniugali*) that the good of procreation too is only intelligible within the Church. Marriages are honorable, but "not because they produce children." Instead, they are honorable for producing children "honorably," "lawfully," "chastely," and "in a social role."[105] That social role is not principally for the world but for the kingdom of God. Rather, what lends value to procreation at all (after the incarnation) is that the child may become a member of the Church and thus a potential member of God's eschatological kingdom. Of Christian marriage he writes this:

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[102] In the years shortly following *De bono coniugali*, Augustine concludes that the sexual organs would have been used in procreation in paradise. He concludes that they would have operated as one's arm operates." (*De Genesi ad ltteram* 9.3, CSEL 28/1:271), "Si autem quaeritur, ad quam rem fieri oportuit hoc adiutorium, nihil aliud probabiliter occurrit quam propter filios procreandos, sicut adiutorium semini terra est, ut virgultum ex utroque nascatur; hoc enim et in prima rerum conditione dictum erat: masculum et feminam fecit eos et benedixit eos dues dicens: crescite et multiplicamini et inplete terram et dominamini eius." Later, in his debates with Julian of Aeclanum, Augustine admits that there could have been a kind of concupiscence in paradise that would have moved the sexual organs, a concupiscence of marriage. This concupiscence would not have preceded nor exceeded the will, though. See *Contra Iulianum* 4.35: "Cur autem non creditis, hominibus in paradise constitutes ante peccatum divinitus potuisse concede, ut tranquilla motione et coniunctione vel commixtione membrorum sine ulla libidine filios procrearent; aut in eis saltem libido talis esset, cuius motus nec quia placet, nisi et talis placeat, quae nolentes etiam repugnantesque sollicitet?"

[103] Jana M. Bennett, *Water is Thicker than Blood*, 56–65. Man and woman need each other so that they can live in obedience to God.

[104] In *De bono coniugali* 10, Augustine answers the question, What if no one gets married anymore? He replies that such a turn of events, if inspired by true charity, would be acceptable and merely hasten the end of the world.

[105] Augustine, *De Sancta virginitate*, 13.

> Inasmuch as the goal of its journey is not merely the end to which its own work tends [i.e. biological reproduction and natural friendship], the purpose of the will presses onward even to this: that it may generate men to be regenerated, and this is why modesty in it is true modesty, that is modesty pleasing to God. For without faith it is impossible to please God.[106]

Consequently, "children should be generated…by good use of the evil of lust, with the intention of reigning with them in eternity."[107]

In stark contrast to this praise of procreation in Christian marriage is the shocking character Augustine attributes to procreative activity among non-Christians: "By using the good of marriage without faith, unbelievers turn it to evil and to sin; likewise the marriage of believers turns the evil of concupiscence to the use of justice."[108] Procreation of spouses in marriage, therefore, is allowable and good (though not required) within the ecclesia. Outside the church, however, for those without faith, even procreative use of sex cannot put the evil of concupiscence to good use. Outside of the ecclesial context, sex—even for procreation—is sin.

For Augustine, procreation is a divine activity, not properly a human one, in which spouses participate biologically and celibates spiritually. Of course "God makes man from the parents," writes Augustine; "not even parents are able to make man."[109] Procreation is a good which the couple participates by their posture of receptivity and openness to what God is doing. "You cannot deny that God gave life to the dead womb of Sara for the reception of seed, and to the dead body of Abraham for generation in the way

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[106] Augustine, *Contra Iulianum*, 5.34; *Against Julian*, 278.

[107] See also *Contra Iulianum* 5.41: "sicut non adulteria commitendo, sed coniugaliter bene utendo malo libidinis, ea voluntate generandi sunt filii, ut cum eis renetur in aeternum."

[108] Augustine, *De nuptiis et concupiscentia*, 1.5; *Marriage and Desire*, 30: "When those without the faith have this obvious good [the good of marriage], they turn it into an evil and a sin, because they make use of it without faith. Similarly, then, the marriage of believers turns even that desire of the flesh, by which *the flesh has desires opposed to the spirit* (Gal 5:17), into the practice of righteousness."

[109] Augustine, *Contra Iulianum*, 3.18; *Against Julian*, 137–38.

in which young men generate."[110] Procreation is "the good which marriage possesses in the end to which its office tends, even if none [children] be actually born. The man sows the seed; the woman receives it; and *precisely this much the married are able to accomplish by their own activity.*"[111] "That offspring be conceived and born is the *divine work*, not the human, yet it is with this intention and wish that marriage achieves even that good which belongs to its own work."[112] Even the "biological" aspect of procreation in marriage is good on account of its Christian, theological meaning, on account of what God does in and with it. Christian spouses are not "making a baby" but setting up material conditions necessary for the generation of a new child of Adam who may become a child of God.

Far from being speculative or irrelevant to the matter at hand, or linked to some deep-seated pessimism or optimism, the conclusions of Julian and Augustine have serious, practical implications for the kind of shared, ecclesial identity between consecrated and married persons. For example, Augustine's teaching on the transmission of the guilt and punishment of original sin from parents to children is a result of Augustine's consistency in his social understanding of sin and reward. Sin and its effects come to persons by two means: ownership or contagion.

> In a way, the sins of our parents are said to be another's sins, and, in a way, they are also our own. They are another's by right of ownership of the action; they are ours by means of contagion of offspring. If this were false, the heavy yoke upon

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[110] Ibid.

[111] Ibid., 5.8; *Against Julian*, 278.

[112] Ibid.

children of Adam from the day of their coming out of their mother's womb would in no way be just (Ecclesiasticus 40:1).[113]

In the same way reward comes to us by two means: ownership or proxy. "How can an infant receive good that he may enter into the kingdom of God, if each one receives for what he has done, unless what an infant has done, that is, believed through another, belongs to him?"[114] Just as Augustine is convinced from Scripture and tradition that something supravoluntary garners us the effects of original sin, so too something supravoluntary frees us from that effect by entering us into a body, a family we could not have joined by our own power. "All children of this concupiscence of the flesh, no matter whence they are born, deservedly come under the heavy yoke of the children of Adam, and all the children of spiritual grace, no matter whence they are born, without their own merit arrive at the sweet yoke of the children of God." [115]

It is in this anti-pelagian context that we find an important distinction between the fertility of the virgin mother and the fertility of the married. Augustine neatly summarizes his entire dispute with Julian with this phrase: "The whole point between us in this controversy is whether the thing of which good use is made is good or evil."[116] Julian of Aeclanum identified an equivalence between the reproduction of the virgin and the reproduction of the spouses. Both resulted in the birth of a sinless, guiltless, new creation. For Julian, concupiscence of the flesh, the non-willed arousal of the sexual organs, works as properly now as ever. Therefore, for Julian the distinction between the married and the virgin is that the married makes restrained use of a good (concupiscence of the flesh), and

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[113] Ibid., 6.10.
[114] Ibid.
[115] Ibid., 6.14.
[116] Ibid., 3.21.

the celibate abstains entirely from that good.[117] For Augustine, though, married persons make use of a broken instrument in their procreation, and thus they cannot but end up with a flawed product. No matter how good the musician, the sound is always a bit off key. Although the spouses themselves may have been cured from the disease, their offspring nevertheless feel the effects of that disease's scars; the child is born wounded by the guilt and punishment of original sin. Those "who give birth physically in the married state do not give birth to Christ but to Adam, and therefore, because they know what they have given birth to, they hasten to have their children made members of Christ by being bathed in the sacraments."[118] This child is born to be reborn in Christ, from death to life. The married, in availing themselves of the concupiscence of the flesh, use a crooked ruler to draw a straight line. Their intention and end may be noble, but they cannot avoid evil, that is, the good that has been distorted or broken, a good that lacks something proper to it. In this case, the good is the lost human capacity to perform sexual activity by a perfect harmony of mind and body (e.g., the way humans write letters, by reasoned and willed manipulation of the hand).[119] As Augustine puts it, the celibate abstains from this evil entirely, but the married person may use this evil virtuously. In other words, the virgins "preserve in their bodies what the whole Church preserves by faith, in imitation of the mother of its spouse and Lord!"[120]

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[117] Ibid., 3.21

[118] Augustine, *De sancta virginitate*, 6.

[119] As Augustine puts it in *Contra Iulianum* 4.14: *Against Julian*, 226–27: "I would never believe that, in a place of such great happiness [paradise], either the flesh lusted against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh, and there was no internal peace; or that the spirit did not war against the carnal desires, but carried out in the base service of lust everything lust suggested." Furthermore, he continues, "What lover of the spiritual good, who has married only for the sake of offspring, would not prefer if he could, to propagate children without it [concupiscentia carnis], or without its very great impulsion? I think, then, we ought to attribute to that life in Paradise, which was a far better life than this, whatever saintly spouses would prefer in this life, unless we can think of something better."

[120] Augustine, *De sancta virginitate*, 2.

The virgin, focused exclusively on leading people to regeneration in baptismal grace of rebirth, participates in God's fecundity spiritually. Virgins do not sacrifice motherhood by their vow: "There is no reason, therefore, why God's virgins should regret that they too cannot be mothers physically while still preserving their virginity." With Mary as her model, the virgin mystically participates even in Mary's motherhood of Christ: "They too are Christ's mothers, along with Mary, if they do the will of his Father."[121] These virgins, mothers like Mary to Christ and the whole church, are worthy of special honor because their fertility goes beyond that of the married. They are able to procreate without making use of concupiscence of the flesh and, in fact, their procreation may be even more fruitful.[122] The married procreate well by using an evil, but the virgins procreate without recourse to an evil. The married preserve the total commitment to God as spouse by faith, whereas the virgin maintains total commitment to God as spouse in faith *and* in body: they "preserve even in their bodies what the whole Church preserves by faith, in imitation of the mother of its spouse and Lord!"[123] In their virginal motherhood, all the baptized call them mother and they call all the baptized children.[124]

These distinctions are all well and good, but on what grounds does ecclesial belonging allow married and consecrated persons to share in the same ecclesio-nuptial good of *proles*? Augustine's thrust is that it is ecclesial belonging that renders value of any kind to either the life of the virgin or the married. Marrying and procreating outside of Christ, spouses procreate unto and in sin. Living as virgin outside of Christ renders

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[121] Augustine, *De sancta virginitate*, 5; *Holy Virginity*, 70.

[122] Augustine, *De sancta virginitate*, 9; *Holy Virginity*, 72: "What then if some rich woman spends a great deal of money on the good work of buying slaves of various nations in order to make them Christians? Will she not procure the birth of members for Christ more abundantly and fruitfully than would be possible from her womb, however fertile? She still will not dare to compare her money to the gift of holy virginity."

[123] Ibid., 2 *Holy Virginity*, 68.

[124] Ibid.

oneself a useless and prideful eunuch for the sake of worldly convenience. On the other

hand, if both live in Christ, both make up the one Church and share in the great

procreative good of Mary and the Church as mother of all Christians.

> His [Jesus'] mother is the whole Church, because through God's grace she
> certainly gives birth to his members, his faithful. In addition every devout soul
> that does the will of his Father by the fertile power of charity is Christ's mother in
> those to whom it gives birth, until Christ himself is formed in them. In doing
> God's will, therefore, physically Mary is only Christ's mother, but spiritually she
> is both mother and sister…The Church as a whole, in the saints destined to
> possess God's kingdom, is Christ's mother spiritually and also Christ's virgin
> spiritually, but as a whole she is not these things physically. Rather, in some
> persons she is a virgin of Christ and in others she is a mother, though not Christ's
> mother. Both married women of faith and virgins consecrated to God are Christ's
> mothers spiritually, because with holy practices and with love they do the will of
> the father *with a pure heart and good conscience and a sincere faith* (1 Tm
> 1:5).[125]

Notice here the way both married and virgins share in the good of procreation. Both are

spiritually mothers of Christ and both spiritually participate in the Church's motherhood

of all Christians. How? For both married and virgins it is by "holy practices and with love"

living in obedience to the Father's will with a pure heart. All that is unique to the virgin's

participation in this motherhood is her closer, physical approximation to Mary: the

physical preservation of their virginal state and abstinence from the evil of

*concupiscentia carnis*. Herein Augustine has provided a deep consonance between these

states in life, a consonance linked in the ecclesio-nuptial good of procreation. In other

words, the good of *proles* belongs first to the church. It is properly ecclesial and

secondarily called nuptial. This will come up again in chapter five when I discuss the role

of the vows and their practice.

The second good of marriage, too, takes on new form when considered as

primarily a shared ecclesial good. In *De bono coniugali*, faithfulness of chastity (*fides*

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[125] Augustine, *De sancta virginitate*, 6; *Holy Virginity*, 70–71.

*castitatis*) becomes the growth in holiness of the spouses, who learn through prayer and mutual encouragement to surpass any need for the conjugal act beyond that of procreation. "The better persons they are," Augustine claims, "the earlier they begin by mutual consent to abstain from carnal union."[126] Seeing married life in terms of mutual growth in holiness, Augustine further takes the focus off of a competition for personal merit. To this end, Augustine warns, "While seeking to do something that brings greater honor to itself, conjugal love should be careful not to do anything that causes the spouse to incur damnation."[127] Even stronger is Augustine's confidence that each spouse participates in the salvation of the other inasmuch as their own *fides castitatis* takes on the shape of the cross, "in ministering, so to say, to each other, to shoulder each other's weakness."[128] Finally, as I mentioned above, Augustine finds no virtue, let alone Christian chastity, without ecclesial belonging: Christian "Love is needed so that conjugal modesty may also be a beatific good; and that the intention in carnal union is not the pleasure of lust but the desire for offspring. If, however, pleasure prevails and extorts an act for its own sake and not for the sake of propagating children, this sin will be pardonable, because of Christian marriage."[129] The implication, of course, is that this sin is not pardoned apart from the church.

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[126] *De bono coniugali*, 3; *The Excellence of Marriage*, 35. The position that growth in holiness among spouses leads to their cessation of conjugal intercourse is not the Church's teaching and may deserve critique in light of the role the Church accords to sexuality in married love. As Paul VI writes in *Humanae vitae*, 12: "if each of these essential qualities, the unitive and the procreative, is preserved, the use of marriage fully retains its sense of true mutual love and its ordination to the supreme responsibility of parenthood to which man is called." Furthermore, John Paul II writes in *Familiaris consortio*, 11, that sexuality "is realized in a truly human way only if it is an integral part of the love by which a man and a woman commit themselves totally to one another until death."

[127] Ibid., 7; *The Excellence of Marriage*, 38.

[128] Ibid.

[129] Augustine, *Contra Iulianum*, 4.3; *Against Julian*, 198.

The virgin, too, participates in this good of exclusive, faithful, chastity in and for Christ, "as spouse." Permanent celibacy is useless unless it is a manifestation of the gift of faith for the kingdom of God:

> Just as no one uses one's body impurely unless wickedness first has its beginning in the soul, so too no one keeps one's body pure unless chastity first takes root in the soul. Furthermore, although conjugal chastity is observed in the flesh, it is not attributed to the flesh but to the mind, as it is under its control and guidance that the flesh itself has union only with its own spouse. If this is so, with how much greater justification, and with how much more honor, must celibacy be counted among the spiritual goods, when bodily integrity is vowed and consecrated to the very Creator of soul and body, and preserved for him!"[130]

Again, Augustine is folding together the married and consecrated life to participate in one nuptial good while avoiding the problem of reducing one to the other.

Again, with respect to *fides castitatis*, we see Augustine taking the focus off of a competition for personal merit by involving the married and the celibate in the same good. The virgin may already practice the virtue of continence to the degree that holy spouses may have taken much struggle to reach. Perhaps only after years do both spouses refrain from seeking the marriage debt. At the same time, though, married spouses may be more continent than a virgin if the term is understood in the wider sense of resisting any and all evil desires.[131] For Augustine, when it comes to the spiritual virtue of continence, "the first thing to say, and demonstrate, is that continence is a gift from God." He continues:

> In the book of Wisdom we find it written that *unless God grants it*, no one is able to be continent (Wis 8:21). Speaking about the superior and more splendid continence, whereby one abstains from marriage, the Lord said, "Everyone does not accept this, but only those to whom it is granted" (Mt 19:11). Since even conjugal chastity is unable to be preserved without abstaining from illicit sexual

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[130] Augustine, *De sancta virginitate*, *Holy Virginity*, 8.

[131] This position develops throughout Augustine's life and is clearly given in *De continentia* 2, 3, 13, and 28 (CSEL 41: 142, 155–56). This work is no longer considered among Augustine's early works (formerly dated at 395). It is now thought to have been written no earlier than 416/17, with 418 most probable. See Anne-Marie La Bonnardière, "La date du *De continentia* de saint Augustin," *Revue des etudes augustiniennes* 5 (1959): 121–27; and David Hunter, "The Date and Purpose of Augustine's *De continentia*," *Augustinian Studies* 26 (1995): 7–24.

union when the apostle was speaking about both ways of life, he proclaimed that both are God's gift.[132]

Chastity, then, like the other goods of marriage, finds its source in God and is shared by both celibates and married Christians.

We now move on to the third, integrating good of marriage, the *sacramentum*. Again, as with the *proles* and *fides*, the *sacramentum* is an ecclesial good shared by both celibates and married Christians. Nuptial language is used to describe the way these states of life can participate in these goods. When using *sacramentum* here I am referring to Augustine's use of the term as the signifying character of the marriage at a given point in salvation history.[133] Consecrated religious persons share in this *sacramentum* inasmuch as they are baptized into the church, the bride of Christ, whose own nuptials (at an allegorical level) have a signifying, but also a participatory and literal character (though spiritually and not physically). With the good of *sacramentum* in sight, I am now in a position to walk through an Augustinian counternarrative for understanding the relationship between consecrated and religious life. It is the narrative[134] offered for understanding the meaning of marriage, the symbolic quality of marriage, that is, the *sacramentum* of marriage. Augustine fashions this narrative in terms of salvation history, isolating three sections of salvation history to narrate a trajectory of the relationship of

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[132] *On Continence* 1.1, in *Marriage and Virginity*, 192.

[133] See Augustine, *De bono coniugali* 21 (CSEL 41:215); *The Excellence of Marriage*, 49–50, where Augustine speaks of the signifying character *sacramentum* of the Patriarchs' marriages.

[134] Jana Bennett (*Water is Thicker than Blood*, chaps. 3 and 4) has offered a similar, Augustinian narrative for understanding how man and woman have needed each other for obedience to God's commands throughout salvation history, as well as for how married and religious life are related to one another. Unlike, Bennett, I focus more on Augustine's polemical debates as an inroad and perspective onto this narrative, and as a way to understand its relevance to our modern theological context. Bennett offers a theology of "household" instead of a theology of marriage, and hopes that future authors will continue mining Augustine and others to further develop this project. My dissertation takes up Bennett's call.

marriage and virginity among the people of God: (1) marriage before the fall; (2)

marriage after the fall but before the Incarnation; and (3) marriage after Christ.

For Augustine, the nuptial union of man and woman in the garden was intended

for and required for the perfect obedience to God, joyful rest in God and eternal

beatitude.[135] To express their social nature and capacity for friendship, to tend and till the

garden, to increase and multiply, Adam and Eve needed each other in perfect partnership.

In Eden, their conjugal union, based, as it was on Eve's origin in Adam, their mutual

friendship (*amicitia*), and their way of life together (*societas*), was an image of the unity

of human society, as well as the integral unity of the human mind in one individual.[136]

The first couple needed gendered complements not for romantic interests or to satiate an

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[135] See Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram*, 4.17 (CSEL 28/1:113–14); and Oliver O'Donovan, *The Problem of Self-Love in Augustine* (New Haven, CT: Yale University, 1980), 30.

[136] *De Genesi ad litteram*, 3.22 (CSEL 28/1:89). See also *De Genesi ad litteram*, 9.5.9; and *De bono coniugali* 1.1; *The Excellence of Marriage*, 33: "Every human being is part of the human race, and human nature is a social entity, and has naturally the great benefit and power of friendship. For this reason God wished to produce all persons out of one, so that they would be held together in their social relationships not only by similarity of race, but also by the bond of kinship. The first natural bond of human society, therefore, is that of husband and wife. God did not create them as separate individuals and bring them together as persons of a different race, but he created one from the other, making the side, from which the woman was taken and formed, a sign of the strength of their union. For those who walk together, and look ahead together to where they are walking, do so at each other's side. The result is the bonding of society in its children, and this is the one honorable fruit, not of the union of husband and wife, but of their sexual conjunction. For even without that kind of intimacy, there could have been between the two sexes a certain relationship of friendship and kinship where one is in charge and the other compliant." The nature of the friendship between the first man and woman, and subsequent men and women in Augustine has been treated in many places. Some find Augustine identifying a mutual relationship between man and woman that requires male headship only because the fall has deranged the *ordo caritatis* (order of love), leading to an ever-present need to avoid the risk of *contrariae voluntates* (opposing wills) (Willemien Otten, "Augustine on Marriage, Monasticism, and the Community of the Church," *Theological Studies* 59 [1998]: 385–405, at 399). Others, however, consider Augustine's hierarchical approach to friendship with women as a result of his lack of experience with female friendships (Elizabeth A. Clark, "'Adam's Only Companion': Augustine and the Early Christian Debate on Marriage," *Recherches augustiniennes* 21 [1986]: 157–58; Brown, *Body and Society*, 402; and Reynolds, *Marriage in the Western Church*, 258). Still others find Augustine's negative appraisal of friendship with women a result of an understanding of femininity as essentially less than fully rational (Kim Power, *Veiled Desire: Augustine on Women* [New York: Continuum, 1996], 105). For example, Power writes: "In *De Genesi ad litteram* Augustine denies that a man should recognize his need for a wife and receive her as precious…His misunderstanding of the Hebraic unity of body and soul, his projection of Neoplatonic dualism onto the Genesis text, and his personal rationalizations merge in an exegesis which maintains his fiction that the 'rending of what used to be one; was a strictly physical rending of bodies, not persons, and validates his concubine's dismissal as morally acceptable" (*Veiled Desire*, 105). She suggests that Augustine's subconscious desire to validate the treatment of his concubine not only colors but determines his exegesis.

irascible concupiscence of the flesh, but for a complete union of persons, of flesh

(physical reproduction in the garden of Eden) and of spirit (perfect, mutual obedience to

God). As their nature is social, they require and have the capacity for friendship, but, in

Augustine's thought if friendship were the greatest reason for creating mankind, then

God would have created two males: "How much more agreeably, after all, for

conviviality and conversation would two male friends live together on equal terms than

man and wife?" The greatest good of humanity is not conviviality and human

companionship, but obedience to God in the context of human companionship. God's

command was to tend and till the garden, and to fill it. Only a sexually complementary

humanity could live in the great good of friendship while also fulfilling God's command

to be fruitful and multiply. Furthermore, their acts of procreation would have expressed

their friendship peacefully. Their procreation would have been a peaceful act of the will

out of loving obedience to the divine command, and would not have been subject to the

potentially destructive powers of inordinate desire required to arouse men and women to

the conjugal act after the fall.[137] In the fall, humans encounter the freedom of their

potency for interpersonal union of friendship. It is a potency that, because of its power for

good, can be equally turned for harm. Physical virginity would have had no place for

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[137] Augustine later reemphasizes this fact clearly in *De Civitate Dei*, 21 (CCL 48/2:786-87): marriage was without "passion" as we now experience it—as something beyond our rational control; 24: "Man himself also might very well have enjoyed absolute power over his members had he not forfeited it by his disobedience; for it was not difficult for God to form him so that what is now moved in his body only by lust should have been moved only at will"; and 23: "Nevertheless, it ought not to seem incredible that one member might serve the will without lust then, since so many serve it now. Do we now move our feet and hands when we will to do things we would by means of these members?...And shall we not believe that, like as all those members obediently serve the will, so also should the members have discharged the function of generation, though lust, the award of disobedience, had been wanting?" Augustine's enemies resisted Augustine's descriptions of paradise, and Augustine suggests a reason for their distaste. Our brokenness, our passions, prevents us from finding paradise rapturously attractive; if we saw paradise, we would not want to live there. *The City of God*, trans, Marcus Dods, ed. Philip Schaff, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, first series, vol. 2 (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing, 1887), available at http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/120114.htm, accessed on February 22, 2011.

Adam and Eve before the fall, since procreation was a matter of obedience for filling up

the number God desired, yet the virtue of continence would have been theirs.[138] Because

of the fall, we will see that the *sacramentum*, or sacred sign and mystery of marriage

takes on a new meaning, a new, prophetic character.

What does this scene of the narrative tell us about the relationship between the

consecrated and conjugal life? Before the fall, there was no place for virginity, since God

had given the command to be fruitful and multiply, and since he gave the command in the

context of sexual beings. Virginity would have been disobedient. The kind of friendship

obtained between members of religious communities, though, has found its source in the

friendship of Eden. It would be a friendship focused on the obedience of God for the sake

of eternal life lived in the subjection of one to the other. What Eden tells us about the

relationship between religious and married life is that the vowed religious can learn from

the married. The kind of relationships needed for monastic life can be found in the first

married life. This Augustinian insight countermands contemporary fears of a one-way

street from monastic life into married life. It is married life, after all, that serves as the

paradigmatic friendship. The key difference between monastic and married friendship, of

course, is that their project of obedience to God would not involve the command to be

fruitful and multiply in a physical way. Let us see, then, how all this changes after the fall.

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[138] *De Genesi ad Litteram* (9, 14, 15); *On Genesis*, 384: "For the earth to be filled through just two human beings—how could they possibly fulfill this social duty except by having children?" "It was with foreknowledge of the completion of this vast multitude in the resurrection of the saints joining the company of the angels that the Lord said: *In the resurrection they are neither married nor do they take wives; for they will not be going to die, but will be equal to the angels of God* (Lk 20:36). Here, however, the earth still had to be filled with human beings; and since for the sake of a close family relationship, and above all for giving the highest commendation to the bond of unity, it was essential to start its being filled from one man, for what other reason was a helper like him sought in the female sex, than that a wife by her very nature should assist him, like fertile soil, in sowing and planting out the human race?"

For Augustine, the fall requires that marriage become a different kind of sign; when humans fell, there was a substantial wound to their relationships: humanity's relationship to God, the human person's relationship to her own body and will, and the human relation of friendship between man and woman. Human nature was wounded so that persons lost their ability to order their passions in accord with their will. The rebellion of the soul from its master and maker, expressed in the rebellion of will and action from God's will, results in the rebellion of human body from its own master. The result is mortality. Additionally, the human will is no longer in the human subject's complete control. The result is our inability to have properly ordered affection for properly ordered goods, and our inability even to choose the goods we may even know to be better.[139] Having been turned in on itself by pride, the human will disobedient to God is no longer free to choose the good as it was in Eden. Not only does this inward turning of the will derange humanity's relationship with God its master and creator, but it deranges and makes more difficult a true friendship between man and woman who were once equals but now seek to rule one another out of a *libido dominandi* rather than as an expression of the *ordo caritatis*. The hierarchical relationship that would have obtained between the two arbitrarily now exists in the form of a punishment. As Augustine has it, "It was God's sentence, you see, that gave this position to the man, and it was by her own fault that the woman deserved to have her husband as her lord, *not by nature*."

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[139] Thus, while the three goods of marriage are not lost after the fall, they have been deranged. First, whereas we would have procreated with a peaceful movement of the will, we must now procreate by agitation of lust, which is not always subject to the decision of the will. Furthermore, the offspring we beget suffer from the wound of nature inflicted by the prevarication to which the Devil persuaded man. Second, whereas our fidelity of chastity would have been an expression of the order of charity, after the fall it becomes a remedy for concupiscence. Third, whereas before the fall the bond of marriage represented the unity of the human species and the integral unity of the human person, after the fall, the bond represents in two persons the difficulty of overcoming the rebellion and division will and body in each of us. Additionally the marriage bond represents, until the coming of Christ, the disunity of the people that will eventually be gathered together under one husband.

Nonetheless, we must not think that men and women cannot reclaim the kind of friendship and service to one another indicated by the gospel. After all, "the apostle indeed says, *Serving one another through love* (Gal 5:13); but he would never have dreamed of saying, 'Lord it over one another.' And so married couples can indeed serve each other through love."[140] Their relationship, then, despite the fall, can take on the character of service in friendship that it once had, provided they do not attempt to reverse the conditions of the punishment.

As it is, the fall produced a mutation of practice (e.g., polygamy) and meaning (e.g., subjection of women) in marriage, but even this modified institution retained a prophetic, signifying character. In the mind of Augustine, the marriage of one patriarch to multiple wives was a *sacramentum* or sign of the plurality of peoples that will be brought together in the one church in a union of perfect harmony of love.[141] These marriages, Augustine argues, were entered out of obedience as well, and for the sake of bringing about the eventual, physical birth of Christ Jesus. "What this means is that in the earliest ages of the human race, especially because of the need to propagate the people of God, through whom the Prince and Savior of all peoples would be proclaimed and be born, holy persons had a duty to make use of the benefit of marriage that is not desirable for its own sake but necessary on account of something else," namely, redemption in Christ.[142]

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[140] Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram*, 11.38; *On Genesis*, 459.

[141] Augustine, *De bono coniugali* 21 (CSEL 41:215); *The Excellence of Marriage*, 49–50: "Just as the several wives of the ancient fathers were a symbol of our future Churches arising from all nations though subject to the one man Christ, so too the fact that our ecclesiastical leader is a man who has had only one wife symbolizes the union of all races in submission to the one man Christ…Therefore, just as the sacrament (*sacramentum*) of polygamous marriage of that age was a symbol of the plurality of people who would be subject to God in all nations (*gentibus*) of the earth, so too the sacrament of monogamous marriage of our time is a symbol that in the future we shall all be united and subject to God in the one heavenly city."

[142] Augustine, *De bono coniugali*, 9; *The Excellence of Marriage*, 41. See David Hunter, "Reclaiming Biblical Morality: Sex and Salvation History in Augustine's Treatment of the Hebrew Saints," in *In Lordly*

Augustine sees these marriages as preparing what will be revealed and made present in

Christ's wedding to the Church by his life, death, resurrection, and eschatological return.

Just as in the garden, there is little place for virginity in the age between the fall

and before the Incarnation. Marriages were entered for the sake of Christ's advent, and

virginity required a special vocation. As noted above, Augustine's arguments against

Jovinian and the Manicheans put him at pains to show that the patriarchs were equally as

continent as any celibate person. What is more, they were not only continent but obedient

and humble, for they would have rather chosen celibacy had it been an option. These

great men and women possessed the virtues of the celibate *in habitu* (in habit).[143] In this

second stage of salvation history, from the first sin to the first noel, virginity remains

hidden in the lives of those who marry in hope for Christ, out of obedience to the need for

a nation to be the bearers of God's prophecy and the physical progenitors of the Christ.

Again the direction of influence is turned. The virgins ought to read the Scripture and

learn from the virtue of Susanna, Abraham, and all the rest of the married Old Testament

saints who excelled in secret, in their hearts, at the virtues these same virgins struggle to

imitate.

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*Eloquence: Essays on Patristic Exegesis in Honor of Robert Louis Wilken*, eds. Paul M. Blowers, Angela R. Christman, David G. Hunter, and Robin D. Young (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2002), 317-336.  Also in this same volume, see the work of Joseph T. Lienhard, "Augustine, *Sermon* 51: St. Joseph in Early Christianity," 336-348. Lienhard explores Augustine's thought on why Joseph might have taken Mary as wife.

[143] In *De bono coniugali* 21 Augustine describes virtues present without being manifested in action. "Celibacy, to be sure, is a virtue of the mind, not of the body. Virtues of the mind, however, sometimes manifest themselves in deeds, sometimes lie hidden as a habitual disposition" (*in habitu*). He continues, "The chastity of John, who did not have the experience of marriage, was not superior to that of Abraham , who fathered children. The one's celibacy and the other's marriage were both practiced in the service of Christ in response to the different demands of the times. John, however, also practiced celibacy, *whereas Abraham had it only as a disposition of mind*. At that time, therefore, when subsequent to the period of the patriarchs the law still declared that anyone who did not emit seed for Israel was accurse, even those with the capacity for celibacy gave no outward evidence of this, but it was there just the same" (*De bono coniugali* 21–22, emphasis mine; *The Excellence of Marriage*, 51–53).

In the mind of Augustine, no couple since the fall of man has demonstrated the spirituality of marriage better than Mary and Joseph; they are the paradigm of marriage and the fulcrum between the *sacramentum* of marriage before Christ and the *sacramentum* of marriage after Christ. Mary and Joseph offer us the climax of this Augustinian narrative relating conjugal and consecrated life. Augustine treats this ideal couple most explicitly in his later work *Sermon 51* (ca. 418), but the pair also appears in *Contra Faustus*, *De bono coniugali*, *De Genesi ad litteram*, *De sancta virginitate*, *Epistle* 262, *De nuptiis et concupiscentia*, and *Contra Iulianum*.[144]

The marriage of Mary and Joseph overflows with spiritual wealth; it exemplifies the mutuality and friendship of marriage in paradise, and, more than any other marriage, it contributes to the advent of God's kingdom.[145] It was at once more fecund and more continent than any other marriage ever has been or will be. Augustine presents the relationship of Mary and Joseph as a model of holiness based on mutuality, friendship, and love of God above all else.[146] Mary and Joseph testify that "intercourse of the mind is more intimate than that of the body."[147] "Joseph," Augustine writes, "was not the less his [Jesus'] father, because he knew not the mother of our Lord, as though concupiscence (*libido*) and not conjugal affection (*caritas coniugalis*) constitutes the marriage bond." Furthermore, "a chaste man and woman are husband and wife 'because there is no fleshly

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[144] Of great help for this section was Joseph T. Lienhard, S.J., "Augustine, *Sermon 51*," 336-47.

[145] According to Augustine in *De nuptiis et concupiscentia* 1.13; *Marriage and Desire*, 37. Mary and Joseph are the paragon of the gift of continence in marriage. Augustine is adamant, though, that the marriage of Mary and Joseph demonstrates all three goods of marriage (*proles*, *fides*, *sacramentum*): "Every good of marriage, then, was realized in those parents of Christ: offspring, fidelity, and sacrament. We recognize the offspring in the Lord Jesus, fidelity because there was no adultery, and the sacrament because there was no divorce" (ibid., 37).

[146] In *De Sancta Virginitate*, 4 (CSEL, 41:238); *Holy Virginity*, 70. Augustine states that Mary consecrated her virginity to God "The imitation of heavenly life in a mortal earthly body arose from a vow rather than a command, chosen from love rather than imposed by obedience."

[147] *Contra Faustus* 23.8. See Elizabeth Clark, "Adam's Only Companion: Augustine and the Early debate on Marriage," *Recherches Augustiniennes* 21 (1986), 139–62.

intercourse, but only the union of hearts between them."[148]  In fact, for Augustine, the

marriage itself was ordered toward procreation, but was made valid by consent, the

shared will of the spouses in their decision to be married.[149] All marriages after the fall

are based on *caritas coniugalis*, but only Mary and Joseph manifested the material fruit

of matrimony without recourse to *libido* or *concupiscentia carnis*. Not only does Mary's

fleshly offspring fulfill the promise of the kingdom of God prepared for by Patriarch's

children, but Jesus is the fulfillment in himself. Therefore, even in its very materiality, the

fruit of Mary's womb and Joseph's son is the greatest spiritual good the world will ever

know.[150] The fruit of their marriage is not only a physical good, a child, but it is the

greatest spiritual good, the salvation of the world.  In this sense, Joseph is Jesus' father in

a more pure way than if had begotten Jesus by intercourse with Mary.[151]

Just as Mary remained Joseph's wife even though she had vowed virginity,

Joseph did not seek another wife, even though there was no hope of sexual union with his

wife.[152] In that sense, the matrimony of Mary and Joseph is a sort of foil to that of the

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[148] "Quia non sibi carnaliter miscentur sed cordibus connectuntur," in *Sermon 51.21*, in Pierre-Patrick Verbraken, "Le sermon LI de saint Augustin sur les genealogies du Christ selon Matthieu et selon Luc," *revue Bénédictine* 91 (1981), 20–45, at 36.  The translation I used is in R.G. MacMullen, trans., *Saint Augustine: Homilies on the Gospels*, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, 1st series, vol. 6 (reprinted, Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1974), 245–59.  See RB, 91 (1981), 23–45.

[149] Lienhard, "Sermon 51," 342, where he characterizes Augustine's statement as congruent with roman law's necessity of consent as the binding factor of a marriage, and against Julian of Eclanum's position that the physical consummation constitutes the marriage.

[150] Ac per hoc illa una femina non solum spiritu, uerum etiam corpore et mater uirgo. Et mater quidem spiritu non capitis nostris, quod est ipse salvator, ex quo magis illa spiritaliter nata est, quia omnes qui in eum crediderint," *De Sancta Virginitate*, 6 (CSEL, 41: 239–240). "So that woman, and she alone, was both mother and a virgin, not only spiritually but also physically. She is not spiritually the mother of our head, as that is the Savior himself. On the contrary, she was born spiritually from him, as everyone who believes in him" (*Holy Virginity*, 70).

[151] Augustine's scale of fatherhood places adopting parents at the highest end, and parents begetting in adultery at the lowest end.  The former is a father only by *voluntas*, whereas the other is by *natura*. Interesting, especially for those who think Augustine is a slave to natural law, is the fact that Augustine ranks the will (*voluntas*) over nature (*natura*).  See Lienhard "Sermon 51," 345.

[152] *Contra Iulianum* 5.12; *Against Julian*, 289: "When he saw the holy Virgin already fruitful with the divine gift, he did not seek another wife, although he would never have sought the Virgin herself if she had

Patriarchs. Mary and Joseph embraced virginity in order that God's kingdom might be

fulfilled, while the Patriarchs, out of the same motive, embraced their wives in conjugal

intercourse. After Jesus is born, procreation is no longer a duty for the married couple,

although it remains a good of marriage. Mary and Joseph, then, exemplifying the

obedience of the Patriarchs in their willingness to have offspring, and the virtue of

continence as they remained virgins in both spirit and body, signal the paradigm-shift in

the expression of the way marriage contributes to the kingdom's advent. With Jesus' birth

into the marriage of Joseph and Mary, the kingdom has become available to the whole

world.

So what do we learn about the relationship between married and consecrated

states from this great fulcrum in history? Here we have a nexus of consecrated and

married life once and only once in history—Mary and Joseph. Mary is both vowed virgin

and mother, both truly married to a man and truly consecrated to Christ. For one moment

in history, the disposition and the practice of conjugal love and continence are expressed

in one conjugal *societas*, one *amicitia*. Here we have a return to Eden for a recapitulation

of humanity in Christ. This holy couple, similarly to how Adam and Eve might have,

receives the gift of procreation without recourse to the broken tool of concupiscence. This

pivot point in salvation history has shown us that consecrated and conjugal life are not

inimical to each other. They existed at once, for once, in one couple. They show us,

furthermore, that the true origin of the *practice of* continence is in fact marriage, the true

marriage of Mary and Joseph, a marriage that for its absence of intercourse was no less

fecund. Rather than consecrated life influencing and bringing about married life, it is

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not needed a husband. He did not think the bond of conjugal faith should be dissolved because the hope of
carnal intercourse had been taken away."

conjugal life in Mary and Joseph that will inaugurate the age of consecrated life as a novel, Christian possibility and a necessary complement to marriage. In Mary and Joseph, religious and matrimonial life do not compete, they co-exist and constitute the center from which both states of life once again move forward in light of the Incarnation. Both spouses and virgins participate in Mary's spiritual and physical fecundity. Virgins model Mary's spiritual fecundity by bearing Christ in their heart. Married persons model Mary's physical fertility. They cannot bear Jesus as she did, but they bear Adam and bring Adam to rebirth in Christ through baptism. Both married and consecrated, thus, participate in Mary's motherhood of the Christ (as theoretically distinct from "Jesus"), born in their hearts to the extent that they obey the will of the Father "with a pure heart and good conscience and a sincere faith" (1 Tm 1:5).

The Incarnation, thus, turns the tables on the relationship between the married and religious states. Mary and Joseph's climatic marriage serves as the transition to the marriage between Christ and the Church, the one pure and holy bride composed of all Christians (including Mary). After the incarnation, the focus shifts from Mary the individual person to the Church as corporate bride. While Mary is the model, the virgin shares in Mary's motherhood of Christ only because she is a member of the *Church*. As a result, Christ may be born in their hearts not of their flesh (as he was for Mary). The signifying character, the *sacramentum* of marriage shifts, therefore with the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Christian marriage can now sacramentally image and make present the nuptial reality of Christ and church, that is, Christ's bond of love for the church.[153] After Jesus, marriage serves as a *sacramentum* or sign of Christ's own practice

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[153] The fall of man in some ways added to the list of the goods of marriage. Before the fall, man and woman had no need for redemption, merely development. After the fall, they require rebirth and renewal in

of abiding with his church, which gathers up all peoples into *one* bride exclusively for him the *one* bridegroom.[154] Marriage, therefore, it must be indissoluble, faithful, and fruitful, just as is Christ's bond to the Church.

Since Christ, the new Adam, the recapitulation of humanity has come as the seed of Abraham and fulfillment of the Abrahamic promises, the biological fruitfulness of marriage is relativized in light of the spiritual fruitfulness of the Church as mother.[155] Inasmuch as any Christian shares in the Church's motherhood, all newly baptized are that person's children. "The Church gives birth spiritually to that head's members."[156] The number of persons present on the planet suffices for God's kingdom, if only they would be born into that kingdom through spiritual parenthood of other Christians. From now until Christ returns, "since among all peoples everywhere there is an abundant provision

themselves and their relationships. The coming of Jesus and his redemptive marriage to the Church mediate this rebirth to the world. It is possible, then, for married partners, by grace, to be conformed in themselves and their relationship to the image of Christ's marriage to the Church as it was evident in Adam and Eve. In *Tractates on John*, 10.4, Augustine describes the connection between Jesus' saving work in his marriage to the church, and the first marriage between Adam and Eve, "Adam sleeps that Eve may be made; Christ dies that the Church may be made. Eve was made from the side of the sleeping Adam; the side of the dead Christ is pierced with a spear that the mysteries may flow forth by which the Church is to be formed." Here I used *Tractates on the Gospel of John*, trans. John W. Rettig (Washington: Catholic University of America, 1988). Augustine also states that the spouses participate in the redemptive work of Christ on the cross in bearing the weight of each other's sins (*De bono coniugali*, 6 [CSEL 41: 195]).

[154] Speaking of Christ as married to the church must remain in some ways allegorical. At the literal level, of course, Jesus did not marry, and could not have literally married the church, which is a fellowship of persons and a post-paschal reality. Furthermore, if marriage is a relationship and practice involving sexual intimacy, then it becomes still more difficult to apply the term literally to Christ and the church. Finally, since the church as Christ's bride is at present incomplete, it would seem that the marriage of Christ and church is in some sense understood eschatologically.

[155] Augustine writes, "At earlier times, before Christ became man, there was need to have descendants physically for a large nation, for it to be the bearer of prophecy. Now, however, since members of Christ to be God's people and citizens of the kingdom of heaven can be brought in from the whole human race and from every nation, *Let anyone who is able to accept it, accept* sacred virginity (Mt 19:12), and only those who are unable to be continent should marry; *for it is better to marry than to burn* (1 Cor 7:9)" (*De sancta virginitate*, 9; *Holy Virginity*, 72).

[156] *De Sancta virginitate*, 2.2; *Holy Virginity*, 58.

of the spiritual kinship required for creating a true and holy society," virginity will be entered for the sake of the kingdom, and marriage need only be exceptional.[157]

In fact, Augustine treats the "threat" of universal abstinence as a boon; it would hasten the coming of the kingdom.[158] Another way to say this is that all Christians already anticipate the one eschatological marriage when they are incorporated into Christ's bride via baptism. Spouses make provision for the world by giving birth to Adam, but they can make provision for the kingdom too (because they are church) by bearing those children again in the font of baptism. At the same time, the virgin makes provision for the kingdom alone, by her central focus on spiritual offspring. During this time between times, this time after the Incarnation but before the eschaton, Christian marriage is related to consecrated virginity not principally by comparison of merit, but chiefly through participation. Both participate in and symbolize in different ways the one nuptial union of Christ and Church begun through the Incarnation. Spouses represent the indissolubility of the bond between Christ and church while consecrated virgins represent the complete purity and integrity of the sanctified church.

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[157] Augsutine, *De bono coniugali*, 9; *The Excellence of Marriage*, 41: "Now, however, since among all peoples everywhere there is an abundant provision of the spiritual kinship required for creating a true and holy society, even those who desire to marry solely for the sake of having children should be advised to avail themselves rather of the greater benefit of abstinence.

[158] Augustine, *De bono coniugali*, 10; *The Excellence of Marriage*, 42: "But I know what they are muttering: 'What if everyone chose to abstain from all sexual union,' they say, 'how would the human race survive?' Would that everyone did want this, provided it is based on a love that comes from *a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith* (1 Tm 1:5). Then the city of God would reach fulfillment much sooner and the end of the world would come more quickly."

**Summary**

I will now spend a moment to bring together the insights from the sections above. I began by detailing Augustine's complex theological context: his Manichean past, the Donatist crisis, the Jovinian debate, and the Pelagian controversy all shaped his doctrine on marriage because they all dealt with fundamental theological issues of sin, grace, merit, and Christian identity. At the same time, each of these pieces of the context carries enduring socio-political, philosophical corollaries that have endured in modern theological tendencies. For example, the Jovinian (and even the Manichean) opponents to Augustine emphasized a social, corporate ecclesiology much like Augustine's, but went too far by not allowing for a fall from grace or adequate differentiation among members within the ecclesial body. The personal identity of each elect is lost in the communion of the saved. On the other hand, the Donatists and Pelagians emphasized an individualized ecclesiology and soteriology to the point that the church becomes an exclusive gathering-place for holy individuals only. Recall my mention that these socio-political undercurrents still find a home in and even drive modern theologies of marriage and family, which find problems and solutions either at the individual or the social level. Augustine understood the strength of both positions, but also saw their flaws. He offered, therefore, his own *medium veritatis*, a three-fold good of marriage rooted in a corporate, spousal ecclesiology that maintains personal identity through the differentiation of virtues among Christians.

Because all Christians share in the one marriage to Christ, all Christians share in the *bonum nuptiarum*, specifically *proles* and *fides castitatis*, though in different manners.

In a sense, these *bonum nuptiarum* are actually *bona ecclesiae,* the Church's goods. The final, synthesizing good shared by both consecrated and conjugal life is the *sacramentum* of marriage, which Augustine understands as the signifying aspect of marriage throughout the narrative of salvation history. It originally signified the union of persons in obedience and friendship, and the union of the mind in each person. In the time after the fall and until the Incarnation, it signified the diversity of peoples that would be brought together in the one church; and after the incarnation it signifies the indissoluble bond of Christ to his bride, the Church. Married and celibate participate in what marriage has signified throughout all of salvation history. What Augustine has offered is a non-competitive narrative for understanding the relationship between the religious and consecrated life that maintains doctrines many find difficult to abide—in light of modern theological tendencies that have more in common with Jovinian and Julian than they do with Augustine.

## CONCLUSION

This study of Augustine's marital theology in its polemical context shows, then, the ancient character of a movement within the Church that is assumed by some to be rather new: namely, the attempt to level the playing field when discussing marriage and consecrated life. More importantly, though, I bring Augustine to the foreground for his unique alternative to the problems presented by a hierarchy of merit in the Church. My contribution has been to nuance what has been meant by Augustine's "middle way," hoping to have shown it is a new manner of conceiving the debate that accomplishes

three tasks: (1) maintaining an ascetic hierarchy while resisting any attempt to evaluate the merit of particular individuals; (2) prioritizing a social vision of Christian life less easily co-opted by competition and pride —each person is only bride of Christ by participation in the Church as bride; and (3) accounting for the good of marriage and virginity in a way that allows the two a participative share in those goods. Such is Augustine's "medium veritatis," his way of seeing the "*bonum nuptiarum*" that envisions married and celibate Christians participating in one body, moving toward one good, an eschatological union with the one bridegroom.[159]

In exploration of Augustine's complex *bonum nuptiarum*, which is primarily a *bonum ecclesiae*, the great good of *sacramentum* becomes the source for an Augustinian counternarrative for the relationship between consecrated and conjugal life. This telling sees virginity and marriage relating differently depending on the age of salvation history. In the garden, marriage is the image of all friendships (between men and women religious, or spouses). From the fall to the first noel, the virtues of virginity lie hidden in the prophetic witness and obedient marriages of the patriarchs, who inspire married couples and humble virgins of today. In Mary and Joseph is the nexus of what has come before and what will go after: the friendship of edenic marriage, procreation for the sake of the kingdom after the fall, a virgin and a spouse, and the conjugal and consecrated life united

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[159] Modern readers find Augustine's hierarchy of merit difficult to bear, but Augustine must retain the hierarchy of merit for two reasons: (1) scriptural; and (2) theological. As to the first, he finds the hierarchy clearly described in Scripture—those who practice continence or have continence *in habitu* have a virtue more meritorious than those who do not. Second, those who make use of the sexual organs after the fall can only do so by making use of something that is somewhat broken or disordered—namely, the rebellious relationship between the mind and the sexual organs, between will and desire; therefore it is better to avoid the use of the sexual organs than to make good use of them. It is on this second point that Augustine disputed against the Pelagians in particular. See, for example, *Contra Iulianum* 3.23; *Against Julian*, 154–55: "Married who use the evil well cannot be accused, and the offspring must be regenerated in order that they may be delivered from evil. If the goodness of marriage were only good use of a good, we might well wonder how evil can be thence derived. But, since the goodness of marriage is good use of an evil, it does not surprise us that from the evil which the goodness of marriage uses well is derived the evil which is original sin."

on one occasion in one person and one couple. Finally, after the incarnation marriage and virginity signify the two aspects of what is united in Mary: spiritual and physical motherhood, conjugal friendship and consecrated virginity (with the virtue of continence and obedience). To be spiritual mother of Christ is open to all Christians, and each person may be mother to all the members of Christ's body by participation in the Church as mother and bride. The true friendship of redemptive love and service witnessed in Eden is once again available to the married if they bear each other's weaknesses in all chastity and humility, just as that friendship is available to the celibate through humble, chaste obedience to the superior. Whatever we may want to say to distinguish the consecrated and conjugal states, we must first say with Augustine that both states are vanity apart from the Church; both married and religious participate in one marriage that supervenes their own state, the wedding of Christ and Church. Both image different eschatological aspects of that nuptial reality (e.g., marriage the indissolubility of the bond, and virginity the integrity and purity of the one bride), but neither can do so alone and apart from the other. Far from competing with each other, the states of life inform and educate each other in the practice of living with Christ in the household of God.

The following chapter jumps off from the Augustinian narrative of participation in the direction of this "abiding" with Christ in the household of God. The consonance and bi-directional dialogue between the states of life will be explored through a study of the Johannine principle of householding with God, the practices of "Christian householding" as developed by modern scholars, and the domestic, familial language that has ever been a part of the way religious institutes understood their identity and mission. The first section, on the Johannine principle of abiding in God's household (most

completely developed by Mary Coloe) follows from Augustine's prioritization of ecclesial belonging. The Church is the primary context for all of life. Jana Bennett, Thomas Breidenthal, and Dolores Leckey embrace this concept and further explore its theory and practices for both married and consecrated life in a common "Christian householding."

CHAPTER 4: HOUSEHOLDING WITH GOD

Two chapters ago I considered modern scholars who attempted to counter what seemed an artificial, antagonistic connection between consecrated life and married life. These authors suggested that monastic spirituality had been invading the lives of married people and obstructing an authentic spirituality of marriage from developing in the Church. If married couples sought holiness, their recourse was to live less like married people and more like consecrated religious Christians. I argued that such a view depended on an overstated difference between the consecrated and the married life, as well as a subtle and likely unintentional perpetuation of a competitive approach to the relationship between these two states of life. Furthermore, these approaches could do more to locate the Christian married life within the church. In particular, in the effort to identify unique spiritualities of the family that distinguish it from religious life, the authors missed the shared ecclesial practices and identity at the center of both states of life. In the chapter immediately preceding this one, I complicated this typical, competitive narrative by suggesting an Augustinian foundation for reimagining the relationship between married and consecrated life: one that saw them as participants in the same the same threefold, ecclesial good of *proles*, *fides*, and *sacramentum*. We saw that both states in life participate in these goods. Sharing in this complex good is the task of being church, the bride of Christ, the household of God.

Chapter Four makes three movements toward better understanding the consonance between consecrated and conjugal life, each of which follow from Augustine's project, which saw married and virgins practicing life in the City of God.

The previous chapter dealt with the adversarial relationship between monastic and married life, but this chapter must contend with the false conception of a unidirectional relationship between consecrated and conjugal life, that is, thinking monasticism has influenced marriage but marriage has had little to say to monasticism. The first step is to develop the Johannine concept of "dwelling with God" to suggest that all Christian life is a domestic project, a cohabitation in the household of God. Part two shows the way vowed religious life has understood its own identity and practices in domestic, familial language. Particularly, this language occurs in early cenobitic life and in post-Vatican II reforms of religious institutes. Finally, part three forwards and critiques principles and practices of Christian householding as they appear in the work of twentieth-century scholars. "Christian householding" functions as a term large enough to incorporate all forms of Christian life together. The result of the chapter will be to undermine the claim that the "dialogue" between monastic and married life throughout the tradition has been a one-sided invasion of monastic spirituality into married life, and replace it with the understanding of "Christian householding" as a set of ecclesial principles and practices that undergird both consecrated and conjugal Christian community.

**CHRISTIAN LIFE AS DOMESTIC: THE WITNESS OF JOHN'S GOSPEL**

In this section I argue for "householding" as a primary ecclesiological principle and as a term that can contain and embrace the practices of both vowed religious and married Christians with respect to their identity as members of the Church. To understand this term I begin with Scripture, particularly the Gospel of John, though one could easily

begin with Paul's letter to the Ephesians or Timothy, which explicitly proclaims that the church is properly called "the household of God" (Tm 3:15; Eph 2:19) or the "household of faith" (Gal 6:10).[1]

As Mary L. Coloe has proposed in her 2007 monograph *Dwelling in the Household of God: Johannine Ecclesiology and Spirituality*, a key symbol for understanding Johannine ecclesiology and spirituality is "household."[2] Coloe applies narrative criticism to John's Gospel and finds in the text an extended depiction of life in the household of God. The terms "*meine*," and "*oikos*" take central roles in John's Gospel.[3] The author repeatedly refers to Christian life as a dwelling with God (*meine*).[4]

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[1] Much of the New Testament uses the terms of domestic life to describe Christian community and belonging. Thomas Breidenthal, *Christian Households* bases his concept of Christian householding on Paul's letters to the Corinthians and to Timothy rather than John's Gospel. Furthermore the word root of *oikos* appears in 1 Cor 16:15; 1 Cor 9:17; 1 Cor 4:1–2; Col 1:25; Titus 1:7–8 (Ekkehard W. Stegemann and Wolfgang Stegemann [*The Jesus Movement: A Social History of Its First Century*, Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999], 277). Among other household terms used by Paul are *adelphos/adelphe* as well as "children," "father," and "sons" (Rom 16:1; 1 Cor 4:15; 1 Thess 2:11; Phil 10; Rom 8:16–17; and Acts 2:17.

[2] Coloe (*Dwelling in the Household of God: Johannine Ecclesiology and Spirituality* [Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 2007]) begins by noting the shift in God's presence from the temple to the Christian community mediated by the use of the term "household" which refers to the temple itself (Jn 2:16, Jesus cleanses the temple; Jn 14:2 last supper) as well as a personal community (e.g., Gen 24:38; 28:21; 46:31; Josh 2:13; Jdg 6:15; 9:18; 16:31; 1 Sam 22:15; 2 Sam 14:9; 1 Chr 28:4). The temple represented God's place of dwelling in creation, but "the incarnation makes personal the mode of God's being in the world, first in Jesus; then, in and through his departure and gift of the Spirit, God's dwelling has its locus in the community of believers, born into the Father's household" (ibid., 2–3). The temple raised up by Jesus is not only his body but is the Christian community, "my father's household" (ibid., 3).

[3] The new Testament makes multiple references to "oikos" and "oikonomia." See Karin Lehmeier, *Oikos un Oikonomia: antike Konzepte der Haushaltsführung und der Bau der Gemeinde be Paulus* (Marburg: N. G. Elwert, 2006); and  P. Brandt, and A. Lukinovich, "Oikos et oikia chez Marc comparé à Matthieu et Luc," *Biblica 78* (1997): 525–33 for a word study of "oikos" and "oikia" in Mark, Matthew, and Luke. Households, economics, and God's dwelling among his people are also central concerns of the Old Testament. See Leo G. Perdue, et al., *Families in Ancient Israel* (Louisville, KY: Westminster, John Knox Press, 1997), esp. 223–58; and C. R. Koester, *The Dwelling of God: The Tabernacle in the Old Testament, Intertestamental Jewish Literature, and the New Testament*, Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series 22 (Washington: Catholic Biblical Association, 1989). "Oikonomia," management of the household, is also the root of the modern English "economy." This link between the household and "economy" is particularly interesting because the modern attempt to make the home a center of affective, consumptive, recreational life together makes it harder to understand a vision of home as being intrinsically related to economics. The New Testament concern for the management of the *oikos* will touch with modern economy again in chapter six, where I will look at practices of poverty in Christian marriage.

[4] The question of Jesus coming to "dwell" is central to the Gospel of John. Scholars have used "dwelling" language to link Jesus to the wisdom tradition (Prv 8:34; Wis 7:28). The wisdom tradition is also linked John's gospel to the wisdom tradition through the imagery of Jesus as the wisdom of God coming to dwell

Jesus meets people in homes (Jn 12, Lazarus' home), takes disciples to his home (Jn 2:12, after Cana), and tells his disciples that he will make a home for them (*oikos*) (Jn 14:1–5, last supper discourse). An *oikos* becomes a temple when Jesus enters (Jn 12, anointing of Jesus), and both the Christian and the Christian community become the temple of God when the Father and the Son dwell (*meine*) within them (Jn 14:1–15:17, last supper discourse). Furthermore, the Gospel's narrative structure characterizes life with Christ in terms of the experiences of a household: chapter 1 presents an invitation to join the household and ends with a type of betrothal; chapter 2 continues with a marriage to formally begin the householding; we see a birth in chapter 3; a death in chapter 11; a welcome and description of life in the household in chapters 13–17; and chapter 20 shows us the promise that our householding with God never ends, but continues in the resurrection.[5]

What does Coloe mean by "household?" Coloe is clear that Christian householding is not coterminous with the extended or nuclear family-life of the first-century Jews or that of Hellenistic society. The term "household," has a historical shape linked to the time John's Gospel was written, and this shape has been filled in by sociological study.[6] The term "household," however, must be allowed to exceed its

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with man for a time and returning to God. The Wisdom of God both does and does not find a home among men. The image of wisdom inviting the unlearned to be in her presence is also related to Jesus' ministry in John's Gospel. See Richard Dillon, "Wisdom Tradition and Sacramental Retrospect in the Cana Account (Jn 2, 1–11)," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 24 (1962): 268–96.

[5] Coloe, *Dwelling in the Household of God*.

[6] It is popular to apply social sciences to early Christian community, and the Johannine community in particular. Raymond Brown's hypothesis regarding the shape and history of the Johannine community is one such sociological experiment, though an older one. The classic text is Brown, *The Community of the Beloved Disciple* (New York: Paulist Press, 1979). More recent, and more social-scientific are the attempts of Bruce J. Malina, Richard L. Rohrbaugh, *Social-Science Commentary on the Gospel of John* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1998); and Wolfganag Stegeman, et al., *The Social Setting of Jesus and the Gospels* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002). Modern studies of household and church are numerous. Among the influential are Carolyn Osiek and David L. Balch, *Families in the New Testament World: Households and House Churches* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1997); Jan Gabriël van der Watt,

sociologically narrated and historically descriptive meaning if it is to function as a

symbol for dwelling with God.[7] Coloe uses the term as a metaphor, that is, as a linguistic

double meaning. "The linguistic tension between the 'is' and the 'is not' is the dynamic

that enables a metaphor to create a new perception or reality. The meaning of a metaphor

transcends the literalness of the words…and the image evoked by the metaphor creates a

new reality in the mind of the reader that cannot exactly be translated."[8] While

householding with the Trinity takes place within an earthly, domestic setting, the

structures of earthly households pass away and are not the end or defining characteristic

of Christian householding.[9] We cannot reduce the gospel of Christ to the claim that Jesus

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*Family of the King: Dynamics of Metaphor in the Gospel According to John*, Biblical Interpretation Series 47 (Leiden: Brill, 2000); Joseph H. Hellerman, *The Ancient Church as Family* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001); David L. Balch and Carolyn Osiek, eds., *Early Christian Families in Context: An Interdisciplinary Dialogue* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003); and Roger W. Gehring, *House Church and Mission: The Importance of Household Structures in Early Christianity* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2004).

[7] I am dubious of the explanatory power of Social Science for making sense of Scripture. Social scientists apply their own theoretical frameworks to historical social realities that can no longer be directly studied. The explanatory frameworks brought to bear on the texts and the communities determine the theological conclusions and significance up-front. "For example," writes John Milbank, "Engels saw Christianity as the religion of the oppressed lower orders in the Roman Empire; Nietzsche saw it as an expression of the resentment of the powerless and excluded; Weber, on the other hand, saw Christianity as a 'salvation-religion' of the urban middle classes, displaced and individualist, in contrast to the merely magical religion of the peasants and the aristocratic cults of honour" (*Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason* [Oxford, U.K.: Blackwell, 1990], 114). Sociology offers as much of a value-laden narrative as theology does. See John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory*, 111–12. Milbank writes: "What Biblical sociology tends to forget is that, were more historical 'evidence' available, it would only consist of more texts. These other texts might or might not confirm the account of, for example, Christian genesis that is given in the Gospels, but they would not reveal to us a level of 'social genesis' unmediated by a series of interpretative perspectives. The point here is not that one never has 'unbiased' access to the social genesis, but rather that there is no pre-textual genesis: social genesis itself is an 'enacted' process of reading and writing. Curiously enough, it is much easier to talk about 'the social background' of a text when it stands relatively alone; in the mesh of intertextuality provided by a situation of rich evidence, the objective social object much more evidently disappears…Biblical sociology is at its best when it appeals to extra-Biblical historical archives, although this work least of all permits it to arrive at sociological conclusions" (Ibid., 114). Joseph H. Hellerman (*The Ancient Church as Family*, 2–25) also critiques sociological and ideological explanations of early Christian Origins.

[8] Coloe, *Dwelling in the Household of God*, 11.

[9] John Howard Yoder (*The Politics of Jesus: Vicit Agnus Noster*, second edition [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994], chap. 9) argues that the early Church was *not* moving to an accomodationist position (as argued by Martin Dibelius [Yoder, *Politics of Jesus*, 164–65]). Yoder rejects Dibelius's claim that the church took on common social structures because the teachings of Jesus were inadequate to create and ethic of everyday life. Instead, the early church realized that these social structures were fading away and the best witness to that fact was to live as if they were not "givens."

came to replace this or that culturally conditioned form of householding with some other culturally conditioned form of householding. In other words, Jesus did not come to replace 1st century Jewish and Greco-Roman forms of patriarchal householding with 21st-century quasi-egalitarian householding.

While a strictly sociological study of John's Gospel might suggest that the Christian community was built upon prevailing patriarchal structures or acted to resist them, our concern with "household" here is explicitly rather than implicitly theological. The term "household" represents a reality that is not limited to this world. As Coloe puts it, "the household model for the Johannine community is not to be found in the social sphere of the first century, but must be located in the world of divine relationships."[10] The household of God is an eschatological, mutual indwelling of God and the believer; it is present now inasmuch as the believer participates in common the life of God as Trinity, that is, communion of Persons. In John's Gospel, discipleship is *menein*, a dwelling with Jesus (e.g., Jn 1:39, the disciples of John go and stay with Jesus). John's Gospel explores the contours of this life and invites the Christian to participate in all its joys and sorrows.

Two symbolic events take place to signify the beginning of life of the household of God. First, John takes his reader through a narrative of "gathering the household"— introduction, betrothal, and wedding. Coloe compares John the baptizer to the role of "friend of the bridegroom," who would announce the bridegroom's intention to wed and negotiates with the bride's family to set up the betrothal. John is the preeminent disciple, inviting all who can hear him to a wedding with the bridegroom. Andrew also takes on this role of "friend of the bridegroom" when he invites Philip, who finds Nathanael and leads him to Jesus (Jn 1:45). The betrothal begins with this encounter, when Jesus gives a

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[10] Coloe, *Dwelling in the Household of God*, 11.

promise to Nathanael that he will see "greater things still." Nathanael and others follow

Jesus to a wedding, where he is both guest and benefactor for the festivities. The wedding

banquet and the wine imagery would recall for the Jewish reader images of the

eschatological wedding banquet pictured in apocalyptic literature, as well as the wine of

judgment and the cup of God's wrath. This wedding, wine, banquet imagery has also

been interpreted as Jesus' way of inaugurating himself into the wisdom tradition, which

emphasizes God's wisdom abiding with Israel. Other opinions find Jesus' actions of

transforming water into wine to be a symbolic supersession of preceding prophetic

traditions.[11] Furthermore, Jesus' calling Mary his mother "Gyne" or "woman"

emphasizes her recapitulating role as "Eve," as "woman" who gives birth to the new

Adam whose hour is to come. It is here that the first confession of faith is made (Jn 2:11,

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[11] Dillon, "Wisdom Tradition and Sacramental Retrospect," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* (1962): 68–96. The link between the wine of this feast and the eschatological, messianic age appears in Jer 31:12; Hos 14:7; Amos 9:13–14; Isaiah 62:5; and 1 En 10:19. Edmund Little proposes that the eschatological context pointed out by other scholars is only half the story. Not only does the abundant wine and wedding imagery call to mind the apocalyptic and eschatological feasts of joy in the messianic age, but they also call to mind the wine of damnation and judgment. Jesus' miracle at Cana foretells both aspects of the eschaton (*Echoes of the Old Testament in the Wine of Cana in Galilee (John 2:1–11) and the Multiplication of the Loaves and Fish (John 6:1–15): Towards and Interpretation*, Cahiers de la Revue biblique 41 (Paris: J. Gabalda). Luís Chacón, in his exhaustive word-study of the conversation between Mary and Jesus at the wedding, determines that the meaning must be prophetic, and is certainly linked to the appearance of "gyne" again at the cross (Luis Chacón, "Principales lineas de interpretación de Jn 2.3c–4 en la historia de la exégesis," *Estudios eclesiásticos* 77 no 302 (Jl-s 2002): 385–460. Other scholars take a sociological approach, reducing Jesus' decision to act to a concern to protect his "doxa" or "honor" (Matthew S. Collins, "The Question of Doxa: A Socioliterary Reading of the Wedding at Cana," *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 25 (Fall 1995): 100–109. Edward W. Klink, III's study of Jn 2:1–11 offers multiple motivations and meanings behind Jesus' seemingly distancing statement to his mother: "What is it to you and to me?" For example, Jesus may have been invoking the prophetic tradition of Elisha in 2 Kgs 3–4 (Edward Klink, III, "What Concern is that to you and to me? John 2:1–11 and the Elisha Narratives," *Neotestamentica* 39 no 2 (2005): 273–87. Some feminist readings of Jesus' presence at the wedding of Cana and his conversation with his mother argue that Jesus used the event as an opportunity to distance himself from his mother in two ways: first, in that her biological motherhood was not important; second, insofar as "the mother of Jesus" can be understood as the Jewish people with all its religious and political meaning, Jesus at Cana breaks his relationship to his Mother, saying his concerns are not her concerns (Lyn M. Betchel, "A Symbolic Level of Meaning: John 2.1–11 (The Marriage in Cana)," in *A Feminist Companion to the Hebrew Bible in the New Testament*, ed. Athalya Brenner (Sheffield, U.K.: Sheffield Academic, 1996), 241–257. This feminist interpretation is most problematic since its logic of rejecting the mother cannot make sense of the inclusio created by the return of "gyne" and motherhood at the foot of the cross. If Jesus is in one place rejecting his mother (Judaism), why then is he giving it to his closest disciple so it can abide in his home?

"and his disciples believed in him") and the disciples are incorporated into the household of Jesus. "After this he went down to Caper'naum, with his mother and his brothers and his disciples; and there they stayed for a few days" (Jn 2:12).

The second chapter of John continues the domestic theme along nuptial lines.[12] Immediately after the wedding and the move to Jesus' home, Jesus and his disciples find themselves in the Father's house. After a typical wedding ceremony, the bridegroom returns to his own home, which is often still his father's house; here the veil is lifted in a revelatory moment.[13] This is an important moment for the relationship, as the couple meets each other face-to-face at this moment. The Father's house is the temple, and the revelation is that a mess has been made of this house and the Father's son has returned to restore order. The Father's son must drive out those who have dishonored the house so that he may dwell there with his bride.

Following close upon this return to the Father's house comes birth, the second symbol for entering life in the household of God (Jn 3, Nicodemus' clandestine, shadowy conversation with Jesus).[14] In the context of second-temple Judaism, birth is not only a physical continuation of Israel, but it is an eschatological event pointing toward the restoration of Israel. Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus revolves around the eschatological meaning of birth. As Jesus tells Nicodemus, the birth of the flesh ends in

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[12] There is an important distinction between "nuptial" and "domestic." Nuptiality is a possible but not necessary characteristic of the larger Christian household, but it would have been the most common for any household in the New Testament age to be built around a marriage. It happens that John's Gospel uses a variety of images from domestic life, and many of them relate to marriage.

[13] See H. Clay Trumbull, *Oriental Social Life*, 33, 43, 58 (quoted in Coloe, *Dwelling in the Household of God*, 34–35). Coloe links the typical walk back to the bridegroom's home and the revelation to the disciples' journey to Jesus' home and his "Father's house," where his identity as God's son is revealed.

[14] Coloe, *Dwelling in the Household of God* (59): "The birth of a child is so critical that the biblical word for a childless man comes from the same root as the Hebrew word meaning 'destroyed' (*arîrî*). See B. Seevers, "ariri," in Willem A. VanGemeren, ed., *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1997), 3:527–31. In the Old Testament, Israel is referred to as the "firstborn of God" (Exod 4:2; Exod 19:5; Jer 31:8). In the New Testament the "firstfruits" applies to the Christian community (Jas 1:18; and Rev 14:4).

death while the birth of the spirit leads to life.[15] Physical birth in the ages of the patriarchs

and throughout Israelite history eventually led to Christ's incarnation, but Christ's

dwelling in the world makes possible our own spiritual rebirth into the eternal household

of God. After this discussion of birth, the bridegroom's friend John the baptizer makes

his last appearance, testifying to the completion of the nuptial union. "He who has the

bride is the bridegroom," says John; "the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears

him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice; therefore this joy of mine is now *full*,"

(Jn 3:28–30).[16] John the Baptist here rejoices at a twofold union: (1) Christ's nuptial

union with humanity, the first fruits of which is the Christian community; and (2) the

nuptial union of Christ with each believer as part of the one church his bride. Finally, as a

sort of lived parable of John's testimony, Jesus encounters a Samaritan woman at a well

(a traditional betrothal site) and reveals to her the nature of her true bridegroom who has

come to claim her and her people.[17]

Having described incorporation into the household of God with the symbols of

marriage and birth, John's gospel continues to characterize that householding, now

speaking in liturgical terms. In chapter 12, as in chapter 2, the disciples and Jesus are

present in an *oikos*, here referring to a building. But this building takes on a liturgical

dimension and characterizes the household of God as a unity of action (worship) and

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[15] John's Gospel continues to describe life in the household of God by dealing with other typical events in household life. For example, he renarrates the meaning of death in that household. The story of Lazarus in Jn 11 shows us a household of Jesus' friends where death occurs. John uses Lazarus' death to explore a household context for the desire of Jesus' presence and the problem of his absence (Martha and Mary send for him and lament that had he been present Lazarus would not have died), as well as the reliability of Jesus' word as the word of life (Martha and Mary do not understand the power of Jesus' word). The words of Jesus' call bring forth Lazarus from the tomb.

[16] For Coloe this completes a narrative chiasm of A (1:19-34, witness); B (1:35-51 disciples of John and Jesus); C (2:1-12, wedding); D (2:13-25, My Father's House); C' (3:1-21, birth); B' (3:22-24, disciples of John and Jesus); and A' (3:25-36, witness of the bridegroom's friend).

[17] See Coloe, *God Dwells with Us: Temple Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2001) 85–113.

place (a material temple of God).[18] When Mary anointed Jesus' feet with "a pound of costly ointment of pure nard" and "wiped his feet with her hair," we see that the response to Jesus' presence and the power of Jesus' word to bring new life is worship. The house in which Jesus and the disciples are eating becomes a temple as "the house was filled with the fragrance of the ointment." This scene recalls Exodus 40:9 and Exodus 30:22-29, which instruct the Israelites to anoint with oil the instruments and of worship. The scene also brings to mind liturgical images of aroma and God's presence and glory filling the tabernacle and the temple (Exod 40:34–35; Lev 2:2; 1 Kgs 8:10-11). The household of God, where Christ's presence, power, and word are known, is a household of worship.[19]

The household of God not only welcomes new life and invites the response of worship, but makes demands of obedience. At the last supper, Jesus teaches his disciples the hospitality of God's household. He washes his disciple's feet (Jn 13:3–12). This process of welcome is also an inclusion of the disciples into the introduction of Jesus' own hour by means of a deep, mutual indwelling of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit in this new Christian community. The father dwells in Jesus. Jesus will send the paraclete to dwell in the believers. The Father and the Son too will dwell with the believer. The uniting principle of all this indwelling is love manifested in obedience. The Son's love for the Father, which the Christian community can have by the presence of the Holy Spirit, will bring to the community the remembrance of the words Jesus said. For "If a

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[18] There is a constant tension in the narrative between the temple of God as referring to Jesus, the temple in Israel, the Christian community, and the individual Christian.

[19] Thomas has the same response of faith and worship to Jesus' presence and the revealed power of his resurrection ("My Lord and my God!" Jn 20:26–29). Coloe argues that the resurrection appearances in Jn 20 have a liturgical, eucharistic setting and form, *Dwelling in the Household of God*, 171–81. The seven points of connection are these: (1) the day of both gatherings is the Sunday; (2) the disciples gather inside a house; (3) the doors are shut; (4) Jesus comes to them; (5) Jesus shows the disciples and Thomas signs of the crucifixion; (6) Jesus greets them with 'peace'; and (7) there is a response of faith. The first to note this connection was John Suggit, "The Eucharistic Significance of John 20:19–29," *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 16 (1976): 52–59.

man loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him." In the last supper discourse (Jn 14:1–15:17) the disciples learn that dwelling with Jesus in God's household is going to mean becoming true brothers and sisters to Jesus, sharing in the cross and acting out of the same love Jesus has shown them. Jesus invites his disciples to abide with him: "Abide in me, and I in you…He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing" (Jn 15:4–5). But to abide in Christ is for Christ's word to abide in the disciple (Jn 15:7), and Christ's word is to love. "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (Jn 15:12–13).[20] As the response to new life in God's household was worship, here in the last supper discourse the demand and fruit of dwelling in the household of God is radically self-giving love that joins disciples to the cross and the resurrection. "The cross is the new tree of life," writes Coloe, "where the Nazarene Temple-builder creates the Father's household as a community of beloved disciples."[21]

What can be concluded from this domestic framing of John's Gospel? What does it mean that John uses domestic images and activities (betrothals, weddings, births, absences, deaths, rites of welcome, meals, and communal worship) to make sense of who Jesus is and what it means to be his disciple? First and most important, we conclude that *all* Christian life is domestic, a participation in the household of God. The domesticity of

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[20] See also 1 Jn 2:24, 27, 28: "Let what you heard from the beginning abide in you. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, then you will abide in the Son and in the Father…But the anointing which you received from him abides in you, and you, and you have no need that any one should teach you; as his anointing teaches you about everything, and is true, and is no lie, just as it has taught you, abide in him. And now, little children, abide in him, so that when he appears we may have confidence and not shrink from him in shame at his coming."

[21] Coloe, *Dwelling in the Household of God*, 167.

Christian life takes on three forms: (1) the Christian and the Christian community (the church) can understand their participation in the household of God as a familial householding started by rebirth into that household now and fulfilled in an eschatological rebirth into God's heavenly kingdom. At the same time, though, we participate in this familial householding communally as Christ's spouse. These two aspects are contained in the mysteries of baptism and the Eucharist. (2) The Christian and the Christian community (the church) can take on the domestic moments of John's Gospel (e.g., the radical hospitality demonstrated by the footwashing; or John the Baptizer's role as friend of the bridegroom, betrothing people to this marriage and its fruit); (3) the Christian and the church are the temple, the dwelling place of God the Father inasmuch as they obey the words of the Son by the power of the Spirit, that is, when they love as Jesus loved— completely and sacrificially. Vowed religious or non-vowed, single or married, Christian life is cohabitation with the triune God.

## FROM MANOR TO MONASTERY: CONSECRATED RELIGIOUS LIFE AS DOMESTIC, FAMILIAL PROJECT IN THE TRADITION

### Domestic Language in Early Rules of Life

In this section I take on a second assumption in the modern narrative of the relationship between married life and vowed religious life, namely that there has been a uni-directional flow from monastic life to married life throughout Christian history. In fact, a look at monastic *regulas* shows the opposite. The ecclesial principles "householding," abiding, and "domesticity" draw together both the married and monastic

life.[22] This section will study the domesticity of vowed religious life in patristic, medieval, and modern sources to show the consonance between married and monastic life on the domestic ground. In the earliest sources, the use of familial language by the "Rule of the Master," (attributed to Pachomius) is apparent. In the centuries that follow, Benedict uses domestic, but less familial language to refine and explain the vowed religious life to his own community. Modern evidence of the influence of family on religious life is a trend after Vatican II toward greater use of familial language among religious orders.

*The Rule of the Master*, a 6th century precedent to and a primary source for Benedict's own rule,[23] explicitly employs familial language to characterize the way of life in the monastery. *The Rule of the Master* follows late antique understanding of family structure, where the abbot is the *paterfamilias* who delegates his power to subordinates, who rule over the household. *The Rule of the Master* calls the monks "sons" of the abbot, and defines their relationship to the abbot in terms of the fourth commandment, as a matter of honoring one's parents. The abbot, in disciplining, "must show now the harshness of a master, now the affection of a father." Furthermore, he "will combine in himself the characteristics of both parents for all his disciples and *sons*, by offering them equal love as their mother and showing them uniform kindness as their father."[24]

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[22] I agree with Breidenthal, who states that "The Christian tradition has always been quick to distinguish marriage from celibacy, and family life from the life of the religious community, but this always assumed that both were examples of Christian householding" (*Christian Households*, 43).

[23] See *The Rule of the Master*, trans. Luke Eberle (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1977), 73–75. Marilyn Dunn, *The Emergence of Monasticism: From the Desert Fathers to the Early Middle Ages* (Malden, MA: Blackewell Publishers, 2000); Timothy Fry, et al., eds., *RB 1980: The Rule of St. Benedict in Latin and English with Notes* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1981); Douglas J. McMillan and Kathryn Smith Fladenmuller, sel. and intro., *Regular Life: Monastic, Canonical, and Mendicant Rules* (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1997); and Georg Holzherr, ed., *The Rule of Benedict: A Guide to Christian Living: The Full Text of the Rule in Latin and English* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1994).

[24] *Rule of the Master*, nos. 25, 30–31, p. 113. Benedict's rule uses less father-son language in, even though he uses a wisdom-literature style that often employed such tropes. Beginning with the "Our Father" as a theme, the *Regula Magistri* immediately situates the monastic life in the domestic context, saying that "if we have now found our mother the Church and have dared to call the Lord in heaven our father, it is right

According to the Rule of the Master, the abbot "must always remember what he is,
remember what he is called," namely *abbot*, or father.[25]

Byzantine monasticism demonstrates the use of familial language throughout its
tradition, even beyond rules of life, in some *vitae*.[26] Specifically, in convents, mother
superiors use familial, maternal language to describe community's relationships. As one
monastic foundation has it, the mother superior is to care for the nuns "as a true mother
looks after her own daughters, and cares for them like her own limbs and organs."[27] More
interesting still is the appropriation of the female, familial imagery on the part of male
monastic communities. The *vita* of Euthymios the Younger describes a spiritual father
"who labored to give birth to his disciple through the Bible, who wrapped him in the
swaddling clothes of prayers and admonitions, and nourished him with the milk of virtue
and the life-giving bread of divine knowledge."[28] Not only did the monastery take on this
familial language, but it also took on familial functions. Monasteries offered what some

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that we should leave our earthly father and our mother according to the flesh, lest being subject to both sets of parents we not only offend those who are citizens but, if we do not abandon the parents according to the flesh, we be considered adulterine offspring" (*The Rule of the Master*, no. 2–3, p. 96).

[25] Ibid., 32, p. 113.

[26] See Alace-Mary Talbot, "The Byzantine Family and the Monastery," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 44 (1990): 119–29, at 120–23. The essay studies the witness of Byzantine *typika* (rules of life) to the relationship between byzantine biological family and monastery in the 9th to fifteenth century byzantine tradition. Talbot finds that the relationships span a wide spectrum: "They can vary from a rigid denial of all links to one's biological family to daily contact with relatives" (ibid., 127). The conclusion, though, is that monasteries' relationships to biological family outside the walls and within the walls relates to the founding members and their ethos rather than simply the date of founding. Talbot identifies "aristocratic typika" and "non-aristocratic typika" not linked to date. "Aristocratic typika were written for monasteries such as Kecharitomene, Pantokrator, Lips, and Bebaia Elpis, which are characterized as having lay founders, preferential treatment of aristocratic monks or nuns, strong family ties, an emphasis on administration and property, and a preference for the cenobitic form of monasticism. 'Non-aristocratic' typika are rules for such foundations as Stoudios, Evergetis, Skoteine, and Theotokos Areias, which had monastic founders, replaced blood ties with spiritual kinship, emphasized equality of the monks, enjoined strict rules on enclosure and renunciation of relatives, and permitted some monks to live as hesychasts" (ibid., 128).

[27] Typikon for convent of Beaia Elpis, ed. H. Delehaye, *Deux typica byzantins de l'époque des Paléologues* (Brussels: M. Lamertin, 1921), chap. 35, p. 397–98 (quoted in Talbot, "Byzantine Family and the Monastery," 121).

[28] Vita of Euthymios the Younger, ed. L. Petit, *ROC* 8 (1903): 169.10–13 (quoted in Talbot, "Byzantine Family and the Monastery," 121).

families could not, and monasteries provided a spiritual family where no biological one

remained. "Monasteries could offer a secure home for orphans, battered wives, the

mentally ill, widows and widowers, the elderly."[29] Despite the attempt and ideal of

leaving behind the biological family for the spiritual kin, the reality of monastic life

witnessed to the difficulty of actually dissecting the two completely. Often times,

members of the same biological family resided in one monastery or in double

monasteries (which were rare in the East), or biological parents would visit or influence a

monastery wherein resided their child or children.[30] At times, monasteries were even

founded by a biological family.[31] Connections to families went even as far as this: some

monasteries included funerary chapels or church narthexes serving as mausolea.[32]

The most influential rule of life, Benedict of Nursia's, takes a step away from the

heavy use of earthly parental paradigm and language used in Pachomius' *Rule of the

Master*[33] in favor of a more spiritual understanding of fatherhood. Benedict's rule

nonetheless characterizes the monastic life as a domestic enterprise, a project of living

together in the daily tasks of life sustainably and in holiness. Benedict simply emphasizes

brotherhood and lessens the focus on the abbot's fatherhood and status as "master."

Dolores Leckey, in *The Ordinary Way: A Family Spirituality*, contends that Benedict's

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[29] Ibid., 121.

[30] Ibid., 123–24. The rule of Theodora, for example, allowed relatives to visit with nuns and allowed the nuns to visit their relatives at home provided they were accompanied by two nuns. Earlier, stricter rules allowed such visits only if a relative was terminally ill (ibid., 125).

[31] Ibid., 121–22.

[32] Ibid.," 124.

[33] This is a commonly cited distinction between the Rule of the Master and Benedict's Rule. See *Benedict's Rule: A Translation and Commentary*, trans. Terrence Kardong (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1996), 6; and Augustine, *The Monastic Rules*, trans. Sr. Agatha Mary and Gerald Bonner, The Augustine Series (Hyde Park, NY: New City, 2004), 64–65. The Bonner translation and commentary cites the work of Adalbert de Vogüé, who emphasizes The *Regula Magistri*'s preference for "vertical relationships" and the preference in Benedict's rule for "horizontal relationships." As a result, Benedict's rule uses less father-son language, even though he uses a wisdom literature style that often employed such tropes.

project was essentially and explicitly domestic.[34] He saw his rule as organizing a domestic life that would lead to Christian perfection. Laymen of all ages, young to old, formed the household, not esoterically, but in ordinary events and rhythms of daily life.[35] Benedict's rule is "not so much a treatise on spirituality or a strict regimen, but rather more a way of *simply being in life*, of setting up a household—Benedict's household of God."[36] The Benedictine life is a dwelling with God: "And so, brothers, we have queried the Lord about what is required of a *dweller in his tent*, and we have received the teaching about *dwelling there*. The question is—will we fulfill the duties of an *inhabitant*?"[37] Benedict calls the community to daily response to God through their common life.[38] The way of salvation in the monastery is a quotidian answer to God's invitation: "Let us listen with astonished ears to the warning of the divine voice, which daily cries out to us: "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts."[39] This Psalm was recited daily in Benedictine monastic life (RB 9.3; 10.10). Thus, "the Lord waits for us to respond by action every day to his holy warnings."[40] In chapter four of the Rule, among the "tools of good works" is the counsel to "put the commands of God into action every day." The "tools of the spiritual craft," "if we have wielded them ceaselessly

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[34] See Leckey, *Ordinary Way*, 6, 8. Her goal in writing the book was to "draw forth and name those characteristics of community life that centuries of experience affirm as helpful guideposts on the spiritual journey." "The central focus of this book," she says, is to "apply Benedict's basic patterns to families of men, women, and children in different ways and with different styles and tastes in a rapidly changing culture." Her project could be, in some ways, a "monasticization." Her project is related to but distinct from my project, which is not to import helpful ideas into a married spirituality but to identify the common ground and practices of vowed religious and married life. Breidenthal makes the same assertion (*Christian Households,* 43): "The *Rule of St. Benedict*…clearly understands the monastic community as a household."

[35] Leckey, *Ordinary Way*, 7.

[36] Ibid.

[37] RB, Prologue.39; *Benedict's Rule*, 5 (emphasis mine).

[38] Benedict calls his monks "cenobites" RB, 1.2; *Benedict's Rule*, 34–35. This word derives from the Greek "Koinos" and "bios," thus "common life."

[39] RB, Prologue.9–prologue.10. *Benedict's Rule*, 3. Interestingly, the Rule of the Master (prologue 36) has another "cotidie" (daily) that Benedict removed from his prologue 36. See *Benedict's Rule*, 19.

[40] RB, Prologue.33; *Benedicts Rule*, 4.

day and night, and returned them on Judgment Day," will win the reward of eternal life.[41]

In the prologue, Benedict defines the task of the monk as an effort to grow in holiness

together through the works of every life constantly responding to God's call.

The body of the Rule contains for the most part practical details and descriptions

of how this domestic project of training in holiness ought to happen; herein we see that

the details of the rule order the humdrum tasks of daily life explicitly to the service and

love of God and neighbor. I will provide here a few of examples. Benedict notes that

sleeping arrangements should be separate beds in one room rather than separate cells,

emphasizing the communal nature of this aspect of daily life. Highlighting their need to

be always ready for the continual task of domestic holiness, Benedict's rule commands

the brothers to "sleep clothed and girt with belts or cords…so the monks will always be

on the ready to rise without delay at the signal. They should hasten to beat one another to

the work of God."[42] Chapters 23–30 of the rule detail the important task of discipline in

the community. Even included is a section on the discipline of children. Benedict then

describes the qualities required for the practical office of cellarer. This brother would be

responsible for maintaining, organizing, and distributing the community's goods. "He

should consider the pots of the monastery and all its goods as if they were holy bowls of

the altar. He must not hold anything as negligible. Let him not be controlled by avarice,

nor should he waste or dissipate the goods of the monastery. But he should take a

balanced approach to everything and follow the abbot's orders."[43] Chapter 32 treats the

monastery's tools and goods. Chapter 35 describes the task of serving in the kitchen. As

with the instructions to the cellarer, the treatment of the everyday items and duties in the

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[41] RB 4.75–76; *Benedict's Rule*, 81, 95.

[42] RB 22.5–6; *Benedict's Rule*, 224, 226.

[43] RB 31.10–12; *Benedict's Rule*, 258–59.

monastery takes on the character of and are ordered explicitly to spiritual growth. "The brothers should serve one another. Therefore no one may be excused from kitchen duty except for illness or occupation with an essential task, for thus is merit increased and love built up." As part of the weekly cleaning task, "both the one completing service and the one beginning it should wash the feet of all." Furthermore, the serving monks would kneel before the others and ask for prayers, as well as invoke God for help, saying "God, come to my assistance; Lord, hasten to help me."[44] The rule goes on, detailing care for the sick in chapter 36, care for the elderly and young in chapter 37, the duties of the weekly reader in chapter 38, the amount of food and drink to serve, when to eat, and when and what kind of daily manual labor to do (chaps. 39–41, 48). The monastic concerns are the concerns of every household, every domestic situation, conjugal or otherwise. The monastic tradition is taking on the domestic life and infusing it with a divinely ordered pattern, using the language and principles of the early church and the gospel to understand what it is we do when we live together and how we ought to solve the real, practical problem that arise in common life, that is, in everyone's life.

We see the same kind of domestic concerns throughout another popular rule of the middle ages: St. Augustine's rule.[45] Augustine emphasizes the realities of life in a common household even more than Benedict. While Benedict's rule begins with a tone and language invoking wisdom literature ("Listen, O my son, to the teachings of your

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[44] RB, 35.1–2, 9, 15; *Benedict's Rule*, 289.

[45] See *Augustine of Hippo: The Monastic Rules*, 26; and Luc Verheijen, *Nouvelle approche de la Regle de saint Augustin*, Collection spiritualite orientale et vie monastique (Godewaersvelde, France: Editions de Bellafontaine, 1980). Augustine's rule did not become widely popular until the 12th century. Gerald Bonner argues that this is chiefly because Augustine's rule was less tied to the notion of stability and, therefore, was better adapted to religious families wishing to pursue active life. The textual history of Augustinian rules is complex. Four fundamental documents exist that are argued conclusively to have direct connection to Augustine: the *Ordo Monasterii*, the *Praeceptum* (along with the feminine version of the *Praeceptum*), and the *Obiurgatio* (letter 211, which is a response to bumptious nuns).

master"),[46] Augustine's begins with a call to unity imaging that of the apostolic community and its concern for all things in common. "In the first place—and this is the very reason for your being gathered together in one—you should live in the *house in unity of spirit* (Ps 67:7[68:8]) and you should have *one soul and one heart* (Acts 4:32) centered on God. And then, you should not call *anything your own, but you should have everything in common* (Acts 4:32)."[47] Not even garments are to be retained for exclusive, personal use, but returned to the store daily at the proper time.[48]

While Augustine's rule does not cloister the monks, it provides for permanent companionship: "When you go out, walk together; and when you come to your destination, stay together."[49] Interestingly, the monks worshiped at mass with the rest of the diocese at a local parish.[50] Like Benedict's rule, Augustine's has less concern for "vertical," master-student relationships than he does for "horizontal," friend-companion relationships. This fact has much to do, no doubt, with Augustine's own commitment to deep friendships. The monastic life begun around his episcopal house developed from his experiments with communal life as a young Christian at Cassiciacum. He speaks of himself and his friends as *Servi Dei* (servants of God), a loose term for himself and his friends who have committed themselves to Christian discipleship.[51] Carol Harrison, in a short article on friendship, monasticism, and marriage in Augustine, links the friendship so central to Augustine's monastic community back to his own reading of the friendship between Adam and Eve in the garden. For them, one ruled and one obeyed, but only

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[46] RB, Prologue.1, *Benedict's Rule*, 3.
[47] Augustine, *Praeceptum*, 1.2–3, in *The Monastic Rules*, 110.
[48] Ibid., 5.1, in *The Monastic Rules*, 117.
[49] Ibid., 4.2, in *The Monastic Rules*, 114.
[50] Ibid., 4.6, in *The Monastic Rules*, 114, 71–72. Bonner comments that their attendance at the local parish serves as a reminder that the monastery is association of non-ordained people wherein the presence of a priest is the exception.
[51] Augustine, *Confessions*, 9.22–25; Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 110–11.

because in order to preserve order in any society a leader must be chosen to avoid a clash of wills. In Augustine's mind, God's way of deciding the leader, at least initially, was to make one later in time than the first, or to make the later one from the material of the first. In Eden, says Augustine, this hierarchy would have been the case, even had God created two men.[52] Ordered society requires an office of leadership, whether permanent or temporary.

As we have seen, the early monastic Rule of the Master, the later Rule of Benedict, and the Rule of Augustine adopted in the Middle Ages each concerned themselves with questions of how to sanctify the quotidian project of life together. In other words, consecrated religious life is domestic and has used language of household, father, cellarer, etc. from the world of the households built around married people to frame its own patterns of life. The Rules integrated the concerns of domestic life with the explicit desire to order those domestic activities toward prayer together and training in virtues together, the kind of virtues that help persons live in God's kingdom, God's household. All this has demonstrated that, far from being a unidirectional influence from monastic to married life, monastic life has learned much and borrowed much or the domestic wisdom from Christian households centered on marriage.

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[52] See Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram* 9.5; *On Genesis*, 380: "If it was expedient that one should be in charge and the other should comply, to avoid a clash of wills disturbing the peace of the household, such an arrangement would have been ensured by one being made first, the other later, especially of the latter were created from the former, as the female was in fact created. Or would anyone say that God was only able to make a female from the man's rib, and not also a male if he so wished?" See also *De bono coniugali* 1.1; and Carol Harrison, "Marriage and Monasticism in St. Augustine: The Bond of Friendship," in *Studia Patristica* 22 (Louvain: Peeters, 1997), 94–99.

**"Family" Language in Modern Consecrated Life**

While the notion of cenobitic life as domestic project is well attested to in ancient and medieval sources, we find an increased use of domestic, even familial language to describe consecrated life among modern documents of religious orders. For example, as a result of reforms following the Second Vatican Council, the Dominican Order changed the language it uses to describe the place of lay persons in the mission and charism of the order. At the 1974 General Chapter Meeting, the Dominicans did away with the terms "first order," "second order," "third order secular," or "tertiaries," and "third order regulars." Instead, they adopted the term "Dominican Family," as a way to render to all these ways of being Dominican an equal dignity and share in the responsibility for the mission and charism of the order.[53] The term "family" is newly employed for the purpose reducing the seemingly liminal character of the lay associate to the mission and charism of the order. By calling themselves the Dominican Family, the order attempts to assert that lay persons forming lay fraternities approved by the order are true and full members of a Dominican family; they are not merely partial or tertiary members unable to make the full commitment. Lay persons associated in the Dominican family are making the full commitment to the mission and charism of the order that is commensurate with their own state in life.[54]

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[53] As early as 1968 a new rule of life was created and approved in 1969 on an experimental basis. This rule did away with the term "third order" in favor of "Lay Fraternities of Saint Dominic." This change in language was officially legislated in the Acts of the General Chapter of 1974. In 1983 the General Chapter in Bologna issued the first official document on "The Dominican Family." From this point forward, official documents use "Dominican Family" to refer to all the persons associated formally with the order.

[54] The rule of the Dominican Laity states that lay persons "are incorporated into the Order by a special promise according to the statutes proper to them." Further, "they constitute with other groups of the Order, one Dominican Family." "As members of the Order, they share its apostolic mission by study, prayer and preaching according to the state proper to lay persons." Rule of the Lay Fraternities of St. Dominic, nos. 2,

Other orders (e.g., the Franciscans) have made similar moves along this trend, using "family" as a term that suggests an affective bond of love and cooperation between members. We can read in the Rule of life for the Order of Secular Franciscans that the Secular Franciscan order "holds a special place in this family circle." "The Franciscan family, as one among many spiritual families raised up by the Holy Spirit in the Church, unites all members of the people of God—laity, religious, and priests—who recognize that they are called to follow Christ in the footsteps of Saint Francis of Assisi. In various ways and forms but in life-giving union with each other, they intend to make present the charism of their common Seraphic Father in the life and mission of the Church."[55]

This use of "family" as a big-tent term to include all persons associated with a religious order is, of course, a mixed bag. On the one hand it affirms the equal dignity and the sharing of responsibility for the charism and mission by all those formally vowed into the order. In addition, the use of the term family is typically accompanied by descriptions of the common end of the order and the common good sought by the order. Both of these uses of "family" align well with the understanding of family as a social unit with shared responsibility and benefits that is ordered cooperatively through common practices toward a common good and common end.[56] There is a certain non-voluntary character to the family that resonates with religious life. Both religious and spouses

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3, 4, available at
http://curia.op.org/en/index.php?option=com_docman&task=cat_view&gid=41&Itemid=102, accessed on February 8, 2011.

[55] The newest version of the Rule of Life for Secular Franciscan Order includes this familial language. The rule is available at http://www.nafra-sfo.org/sforule.html, accessed on February 8, 2011. Additionally, the General Constitutions from 2000 also make family language official. See Rule 1: "*Rule 1* There are many spiritual families in the Church with different charisms. Among these families, the Franciscan Family, which in its various branches recognizes St. Francis of Assisi as its father, inspiration, and model, must be included" (Secular Franciscan Order, *General Constitutions* [Rome: National Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order, 2001], available at http://www.nafra-sfo.org/index.html, accessed on February 8, 2011).

[56] See David Matzko McCarthy, *Sex and Love in the Home*, chap. 4.

choose to enter into their particular domestic forms of life that pre-date them, but there is much about even one's spouse and the religious community that they will not choose and would not have chosen. Just as children do not choose their siblings in a conjugal family, members of a religious order do not always choose the sisters and brothers with whom they live and work. Domestic life must go on, whether in the monastery or in the home, regardless of whether or not a particular member of the community finds it easy to love her fellow community members any given day.

The life of the community, if it is a domestic project of householding with God, continues not for the sake of the community itself, nor for the sake of the affective bonds between the members, but for the sake of the common good and end, the union of each and all with God and each other. Likewise, both the family and the religious order have a shared common end and a common good—the sanctification of the persons in the community and a ministry to those outside the community. The work done for this common end together will often create the affective bonds some would posit as necessarily prior to and constitutive of the community itself.[57] One common good that both vowed religious and matrimonial families share is training in chastity.[58] Another task common to both the religious "family" and the conjugal family is, as expressions of the life of the Church, is "to bear the story of God from generation to generation, and for this reason and in this expansive sense, family is the way of the church. To love with the love of God, we are called to live as community, as an embodied interpretation, through

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[57] Ibid., 155: "Family love attains depth through an outward orientation, through common endeavors, and 'productive' relationships, through an ordering of roles and reciprocal duties." This position is held over against a popular thought that romantic love is best produced by escaping from normal quotidian situations and productive relationships.

[58] For a thorough study of chastity and the common good, see Patrick G. D. Riley, *Civilizing Sex: On Chastity and the Common Good* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2000).

time, of the world as the household of God."[59] The religious family reproduces and regenerates and traditions the love of God incarnationally through the quotidian, domestic tasks of their "family" life just as the conjugal family's daily round must embody their cross-bearing, love-building, and disciplined training of each other in holiness. There is much, then, to recommend the language of "family."

At the same time, though, the language of "family" employed by religious orders in contemporary documents unfortunately remains open to the problems of the modern understanding of family as "haven in a heartless world."[60] Family, in Robert J. McAllister's account, "occurs as a spontaneous outgrowth of loving relationships."[61] McAllister, a psychologist devoted to study and treatment of vowed religious, argues that emotional love is the one vital ingredient to the family community. Once a group becomes goal-oriented community it is no longer a family. The family, he argues, does not arise from need.[62] Whether or not he is correct (I believe his characterization is overly romantic and inaccurate), McAllister's position represents a common narrative of family life in twentieth- and now twenty-first century America. Religious communities are different from families on McAllister's account because communities are formed by "definite decisions and practical objectives…they are established because common goals, similar beliefs, geographic propinquity, temporal need, or official fiat unite."[63] McAllister warns that vowed religious persons living in community set themselves up for disappointment and frustration when they expect the same affective bonds and fulfillments from their religious community that they should expect from their family. As

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[59] McCarthy, *Sex and Love in the Home*, 151.
[60] Christopher Lasch, *Haven in a Heartless World* (New York: Basic, 1977).
[61] McAllister, *Living the Vows*, 28
[62] Ibid., 27–29.
[63] Ibid., 28.

a psychologist dedicated to treating consecrated persons, McAllister provides ample

example of the kinds of problems that manifest in the lives of those entering religious life

with misguided expectations for a "family life" in their religious community.[64] Religious

communities should not advertise that their community life will "extend to include a

sense of intimacy, which it cannot produce, and to promise an atmosphere of affection,

which it cannot provide." Finally, he counsels that "religious communities should not

mistakenly assume that they can proffer to candidates or to professed members a life that

compares with family life or creates relationships similar to family relationships."[65]

The use of family in the Franciscan and Dominican documents aligns in places

with the understanding of family that favors affective bonds and sees the family as a

privileged, even therapeutic place of emotional fulfillment and personal development.

While I agree with McAllister that this alignment with a definition of family along

affective, romantic lines is potentially dangerous, I agree for the opposite reason. I find

his operative definition of family deficient. Marriages entered for reasons other than

simply "falling in love" seem to be ruled out as "family." In McAllister's account,

persons marrying for the explicit purposes of growing in holiness with a particular person

and raising up saints for Christ, or those who marry for economic benefit, would not

actually be forming families but rather communities. While I am wary of "family"

language that overemphasizes affective bonds and reduces the non-voluntary character of

the family once it has been entered, McAllister embraces this understanding of family as

essentially a center of mutual affection and fulfillment. I find "family" language

potentially dangerous for religious communities because it often involves the kind of

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[64] Ibid, 29–36.
[65] Ibid., 37.

definitions of "family" McAllister promotes. Reductively emotional family language is dangerous when applied to religious life because it is associated with the destructive trends of increasing breakdown in modern matrimonial life. If the use of "family" in the documents of religious orders leads to a privileging of affective bonds rather than bonds of a shared charism and mission, that is, their common good, then these religious orders will be destabilized in the same ways as the modern family has been. In adopting a preference for "affective" bonds, culture becomes increasingly indifferent to structure, since structure is less and less determinative for the definition of "family" in twenty-first century culture. In other words, the use of "family" in these documents easily corresponds to overly voluntaristic, romantic definitions of family, where family is entered for one's own fulfillment and abandoned when no longer emotionally satisfying.[66] "Religious life is intrinsically communitarian," writes Schneiders, "but it does not exist to provide a surrogate family, social rehabilitation, psychological therapy."[67] Too many people are joining religious orders for "community:" "an expressed desire for community today, however sincere, does not necessarily imply an outward

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[66] Sandra Schneiders develops a similar insight. She employs as evidence the largely unhappy lives of consecrated celibates who entered or seek entrance to religious life for the sake of "community" as an end in itself. She hopes to maintain a distinct identity for consecrated life. "This particular lifestyle…creates a particular kind of community that is distinct from that of family life or householding. And it has a special prophetic contribution" (Schneiders, *Selling All*, 246). It might seem that Schneiders is developing a counterposition to my own in that she wants a distinction between the consecrated life on the one hand, and family and householding on the other. In her thought, consecrated life is not entered for the sake of community but as a prophetic witness, but it seems family and householding should fulfill people's desire for community and can be entered on such grounds. I agree with Schneiders that people will be disappointed entering religious life in order to fulfill a desire for community. However, I think the same is true for people entering household or family life for the sake of community. My point is that both consecrated life and householding are prophetic and most fulfilling when entered out of an explicit vocation to holiness lived in this particular path. Schneiders' isn't a counterposition, it is just a refocusing of consecrated life, not household life. If she were writing a "new context for family and householding life" I believe she would resituate householding and family life within the church to the same degree she emphasizes the prophetic, ecclesial character of religious life.
[67] Schneiders, *Selling All*, 61.

orientation toward the love of others in love," which is necessary for religious vocation.[68] In their charitable desire to embrace the world, this new use of "family" vocabulary may in fact leave some religious orders open to the same debilitating effects of the modern destabilization of family life in general.

## CONTEMPORARY CONCEPTS OF CHRISTIAN HOUSEHOLDING

### Principles and Practices

John's Gospel has suggested the domesticity of all Christian life, that being church is the practice of cohabiting with God and being incorporated into his family by marriage and birth. Additionally the tradition of the rules of life has shown an ever increasing use of domestic, even familial language to understand the identity, mission, and practices of householding with God and each other. Modern scholars, too, have pondered how both religious and married persons might participate in the one practice of householding with God. In this section I will analyze and critique the work of Dietrich Bonhoeffer,[69] Thomas Breidenthal,[70] Jana M. Bennett,[71] Dolores Leckey,[72] and Wendy

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[68] Ibid., 61.

[69] Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, trans. John W. Doberstein (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco: 1993 [orig. 1954]).

[70] Thomas E. Breidenthal, *Christian Households: The Sanctification of Nearness* (Cambridge: Cowley, 1997); and Breidenthal, *Sacred Unions: A New Guide to Lifelong Commitment* (Cambridge: Cowley, 2006). Under the principles of nearness and availability, familiarity and universality, Breidenthal offers nine disciplines of Christian householding: bodily fellowship, exclusivity, accountability to the church, permanence, equality, nonviolence, generosity, hospitality, and nurture.

[71] Jana Bennett, *Water is Thicker than Blood*; and Bennett, "Mark 8: Support for Celibate Singles Alongside Monogamous Married Couples and Their Children," *School(s) of Conversion: 12 Marks of a New Monasticism* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2005), 112-123. Bennett writes on the 8th Mark of the new monasticism, but the twelve marks are as follows: (1) relocation to the abandoned places of Empire; (2) sharing economic resources with fellow community members and the needy among us; (3) hospitality to the stranger; (4) lament for racial divisions within the church and our communities combined with the

Wright,[73] all of whom have experienced, studied, and written on the practices of common

life, specifically those that can unite vowed religious and married people. Rather than

walking through the individual writings of each author, I will offer below a thematic

analysis of the principles and practices commonly held by the authors. While there are

marked differences between the authors (e.g., Bonhoeffer is Lutheran, Breidenthal

Episcopal, and Bennett Catholic), and much must be left out, their common ground is

wide enough for me to draw together their thought around certain themes. After the

analysis I will offer a critique of specific authors and positions.

First, the term "Christian householding" needs definition. According to Thomas

Breidenthal: "Broadly speaking, a household is two or more people sharing the daily

round of life to a significant degree and over a period of time, whether the sharing is

freely chosen or not."[74] The fact of householding, though, is nearly universal at some

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active pursuit of a just reconciliation; (5) humble submission to Christ's body, the church; (6) intentional
formation in the way of Christ and the rule of the community along the lines of the old novitiate; (7)
nurturing common life among members of intentional community; (8) support for celibate singles alongside
monogamous married couples and their children; (9) geographical proximity to community members who
share a common rule of life; (10) care for the plot of God's earth given to us along with support of our local
economies; (11) peacemaking in the midst of violence and conflict resolution within communities along the
lines of Matthew 18; (12) commitment to a disciplined contemplative life. Available at
http://www.newmonasticism.org/12marks.php (accessed on 18 October, 2010).

[72] Dolores Leckey, *The Ordinary Way*. Leckey's thesis is "that the monastic dynamics of ordinary living
were a framework for experiencing God in family life" (ibid., 93). She structures the book around 9
elements of monastic domestic life: (1) intimacy, the virtue at the heart of marriage; (2) equality, between
all in domestic and professional contexts; (3) authority, shared responsibility for conduct; (4) prayer, alone
and in common; (5) solitude, as necessary for ordered community life; (6) play, enhances creativity and the
ability to work; (7) study, continuing to understand and enhance our commitments; (8) stability, foundation
of the family; and (9) hospitality, a rhythm of receiving and reaching in solidarity.

[73] Wendy Wright, *Sacred Dwelling: A Spirituality of Family Life* (New York: Crossroad, 1989).

[74] Breidenthal, *Christian Households*, 2. I wish to point out two strengths of this definition: (1) it is
intentionally loose enough to include monastic communities, married life, celibate persons, and even mixed
communities of married and celibate persons. The definition does not somehow privilege nuclear families,
as if they have the market cornered on domesticity. Marriage is but one form of householding among three
general types: marriage, monasticism, and all variations of single life. He includes marriage not because of
its social function (which seems increasingly minimal), nor because of its status as a romantic center, nor
even "as an institution subordinated to the claims of social (including ecclesiastical) continuity." Instead,
marriage is included in the definition of "householding" because it is "a form of life together which, like all
Christian life together, cannot unlock its particular goods until we have determined what Christians suppose
the purpose of any kind of life together to be" (ibid., 4). (2) The definition frames householding in terms of

point in every person's life. The question at hand is to identify explicitly "Christian" householding. One may name this project "Christian" if it fits certain criteria: principles, motivation, end, shared doctrinal beliefs, or particular practices, for example. All the authors studied are concerned to identify those criteria. Among the authors listed, Dolores Leckey and Wendy Wright concern themselves mainly with finding ways that monastic life (understood as a domestic project) can be applicable to the conjugal household while Bonhoeffer, Breidenthal, and Bennett intend to schematize forms of common life that could be taken up by diverse groups of people (including vowed or non-vowed celibate persons, married persons and their children, or even a combination of married and celibate persons).

Bennett is most explicit about the variety of forms Christian householding can take. "If we do truly believe that water is thicker than blood [baptism is stronger than biological kinship], it is also necessary to question the assumption that only those with specific blood ties ought to be living together."[75] Since she takes the position that married and non-married ways of life are complementary, then it follows that married need the celibate single and the celibate need the married in real and practical ways. Integrating single celibates with married Christians in one living situation allows for a fuller sharing of prayer and apostolate, and a more direct witness and accountability between the two. A recent movement called the New Monasticism has attempted this sort of living, with rules

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practice rather than affect. The household is not, on Breidenthal's account, a group of people bound by mutual affection, but by the kinds of things that they do together. Breidenthal is free to note, therefore, that householding is for most people *not* a matter of choice. For example, no child chooses his parents and, for that matter, the child always comes to the parent as a stranger, a beggar. A household is comprised of a "broad range of living arrangements, from the partnership of people who share shelter, sleep, sex, food, childrearing, financial resources and so forth, to communities on the monastic model, to people who live alone but whose daily life is a rich weave of shared meals, hospitality, deep attachments, and daily care for others, or whose solitude is heavy with the remembered presence of the dead" (ibid., 2).

[75] Bennett, *Water is Thicker than Blood*, 185.

of life for each community, with twelve general marks characterizing the new monastic project.[76] The New Monasticism attempts to bring diverse forms of Christian community to the abandoned places of the Western society.

If Christian householding is a participation in the church, then the gathering around the household table ought to reflect the gathering around the Eucharistic table. Christians need each other to learn how to live in love together.[77] The source and summit of this life together is the eucharistic meal, where all Christians unite to receive and become the very body and blood of Christ.[78] Both married and consecrated religious have come together at the eucharistic table for as long as both have been practiced. The altar where all sacrifices become united in the one Christ broken for all ought to be imaged in the common table where Christians receive and break in thanksgiving our daily bread. A common life among those Christians related through baptism rather than blood provides a living expression of our mutual dependence and our radical reunderstanding of "family" once we have been reborn and adopted into brotherhood and sisterhood with Christ.

Having in mind the kinds of communities these scholars envision, we can now move on to the principles and practices of Christian life in community shared by these authors. Inevitably, these practices relate to each other by a dynamic tension, or polarity. But this tension does not, must not, mean choosing only one or the other. It is the tension

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[76] Some of these communities are Catholic worker houses, communities founded during the 60's (Reba House, in Chicago), or newer ecumenical communities (Rutba House, in Durham North Carolina, and the Simple Way, in Pennsylvania). Bennett makes reference to these communities in *Water is Thicker than Blood*, 185, but also contributed to a book explicating the 12 marks of the New monasticism. See The Rutba House, *School(s) for Conversion: 12 Marks of the New Monasticism*, New Monastic Library: Resources for Radical Discipleship (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2005).

[77] Bennett, *Water is Thicker than Blood*, 186–86.

[78] SC, 10. "The liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; at the same time it is the font from which all her power flows. For the aim and object of apostolic works is that all who are made sons of God by faith and baptism should come together to praise God in the midst of His Church, to take part in the sacrifice, and to eat the Lord's supper."

and the polarity that make the practices and principles solid footing for Christian householding. The tension insures against destructive extremes in either direction.[79] In treating the various principles and practices below, we will note the polar interactions between them. I will identify four sets of principles in polar tension. First, the intentionality of Christian householding goes hand in hand with the supravoluntary, given nature of householding itself. Second, the nearness, availability, familiarity, and vulnerability of inhabiting a space and sharing daily activities with other people stands in a proper tension with the formal, ritual, patterned, even liturgical elements of the Christian household. Third, the exclusivity of the Christian household, especially the sexual exclusivity of the conjugal household requires a polar tension with openness, and permeability. Finally, the *ora* of the Christian household must always be directed to and energize the *labora* of the community for those within and without its borders. Without tension, principles and practices risk losing vigor or becoming overbearing. Proper tension helps to ensure that each principle and practice is employed as a strong push or pull.

Above all, Christian householding appears under the complementary principles of intentionality and given-ness or stability. There is a sense in which Christian life together must be chosen, willed with a firm conviction about the specific project entered. At the same time, though, Christian householding always surpasses our own ability to choose, and often times countermands our own willing. Dietrich Bonhoeffer is especially clear on

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[79] Allow me an example from chemistry. A water molecule is polar, that is, it has an area of higher negative charge and an area of higher positive charge. It is in part this polarity that lends water the marvelous properties of cohesion (water molecules stick to each other) and adhesion (result is capillary action that takes water up plant stems). Thus by calling them polar I mean to say that the seeming opposed aspects actually attract one another and draw each other together. In other words, where there is exclusivity there must also be openness.

this point—Christian life together is not about finding "the community we've always wanted." Christian life together is *not* about finding a cadre of people who like each other and want to live together for community's sake. In fact, it is quite the opposite. "Jesus lived among his foes," writes Bonhoeffer. "The kingdom," he continues, "is to be in the midst of your enemies. And he who will not suffer this does not want to be of the kingdom of Christ; he wants to be among friends, to sit among roses and lilies, not with the bad people but the devout people. O you blasphemers and betrayers of Christ. If Christ had done what you are doing who would ever have been spared?"[80] Whenever Christians can say with the Psalmist, "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" then he knows the privilege he is experiencing is the exception to the rule of life together.[81] But to hold out for this dream as the norm is to betray what Christ has done in the Incarnation. "He who loves his dream of a community more than the Christian community itself becomes a destroyer of the latter, even though his personal intentions may be ever so honest and earnest and sacrificial."[82]

Not only is Christian householding sometimes contrary to what we would like or will or hope to experience, but even when it aligns with our will, it does so in an excessive way. For example, when two people marry, they choose to make an unbreakable covenant. The ramifications of that choice, though, and even the direct

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[80] Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, 17–18.

[81] Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, 20. Furthermore, "Christianity means community through Jesus Christ and in Jesus Christ. No Christian community is more or less than this" (ibid., 21). True community, he continues, "dismisses once and for all every clamorous desire for something more. One who wants more than what Christ has established does not want Christian brotherhood. He is looking for some extraordinary social experience which he has not found elsewhere; he is bringing muddles and impure desires into Christian desires into Christian brotherhood" (ibid., 25).

[82] Ibid., 27. "By sheer grace," he continues, "God will not permit us to live even for a brief period in a dream world. He does not abandon us to those rapturous experiences and lofty moods that come over us like a dream. God is not a God of the emotions but the God of truth" (ibid., 27). Bennett makes a similar point in her rejection of "theologies of the family." Her claim is that people have entered and studied marriage and family with the wrong expectations. Their dreams for what it can be (a savior of society and a bastion of emotional warmth) are misplaced (Bennett, *Water is Thicker than Blood*, chap. 1).

object of the choice, always remain mystery. No person can ever completely know another, especially since we are historically contingent, ever-changing beings. We know that when we receive our spouse in matrimony, we receive a book half-written and as yet unread. Furthermore, the couple welcoming and hoping for children is welcoming a mystery, welcoming a stranger, an alien, a naked and begging, and homeless infant: "Children are strangers by nature, because they come into the picture as if out of nowhere."[83] At the same time, those "we thought we knew well become unfamiliar when they are filled with the pain of mental or physical illness."[84] Furthermore, when Christians choose to open their home to the stranger, their expectations may be shattered, often for better consequence than they had originally hoped.[85] Schneiders and McAllister want to downplay the all-importance of choice in Christian community. It must also be remembered that not every person in a Christian household may have chosen to be there. Children, for example, do not choose their parents, or their siblings, or any of the members in their home. Likewise, monks profess vows in a particular religious institute and a specific community within that institute, but they did not elect the members of that community. Wendy Wright, on the other hand attempts to distinguish between monastic and conjugal Christian communities on the basis of choice. She criticizes the notion that the monastery is a place where a monk "creates an intentional family" because she finds it far more a matter of choice than familial belonging.[86]

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[83] Breidenthal, *Christian Households*, 114.

[84] Ibid., 114. He continues, saying, "It may even be easier to open one's home to the homeless than to welcome offspring into one's life and bring them up with patience and kindness" (ibid.).

[85] Dolores Leckey gives the examples of her own family welcoming strangers into their home during the many marches and protests of the 60's, as well as the time a priest called to ask her to house a parolee into their home for some time when he was released from prison. She could not have sought or willed these events or their results (*The Ordinary Way*, 134–35).

[86] Wright, *Sacred Dwelling*, 139–40. I think the jury is out on whether familial or monastic belonging involves less choice. Of course the spouses choose to enter the community just as the monk does. Second,

Ultimately, the common element behind the tension involving choice in Christian householding is the claim that true Christian community must be received as gift. We cannot demand community, only receive it gratefully. "The very hour of our disillusionment with [our] brother becomes incomparably salutary because it so thoroughly teaches me that neither of us can ever live by our own words and deed, but only by that one Word and Deed which really binds us together, the forgiveness of sins in Jesus Christ."[87] Christian householding, then, must be intentional, that is, it must be hoped for and desired; Christian householding, though, may only be desired as gift, as a grace, as better than what we in fact wanted both in principle and practice.

As an expression of the relationship between intentionality and given-ness, Christian households commit to stability amidst the unanticipated events and contingencies of life. Whether or not Christians enter projects of householding temporarily or permanently, they benefit from a commitment to stability. Breidenthal succinctly notes the necessity of stability in married and non-vowed Christian householding. In marriage, the kind of openness and vulnerability spouses have with one another (e.g., economic, emotional, sexual) necessitates permanence and stability to prevent major damage to either spouse.[88] In religious life, the vow of stability is not

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while the spouses can elect to be open to new members, neither they nor the existing members of the family have much say in what that new member will be like (this assumes the couple is not using genetic manipulation now available through *in vitro* fertilization).

[87] Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, 28.

[88] Breidenthal, *Christian Householding*, 105–107. The demand of permanence in marriage has a long history in the Catholic Church. Arguments have shifted from the nature of the marriage bond, to the requirements of parenthood, to the nature of married love, to anthropological and Christological grounds. For Augustine, the permanence is demanded on account of Scriptural command (*De bono coniugali* 7) and the *sacramentum*, or signifying character of the marriage. As an image of Christ's union to the Church and our Christian unity in God's kingdom, it is impossible for the consummated marriage between Christians to be dissolved by any human power; the bond ends at death of one party. (See *De bono coniugali* 18, 24.) For Aquinas, the demands of educating and caring for the child, and the sacramental character of the marriage bond as a sign that makes present the bond of Christ to Church, both demand that the marriage commitment be permanent (See *Summa theologiae*, supplementum, q.67, art.1, response, and reply to objection 2). In

principally given by one individual to another individual, but permanence and stability

are owed by a person to the community and the rule.[89] Stability is a continuity of place

and practices or rituals.[90] According to Leckey, stability in Christian householding, apart

from vowed religious life, is required for a similar reason. Those entering it must realize

the fact that their every action forever has wide and permanent consequences for those

with whom they share life. The practice and principle of stability, or permanence, is an

important medicine for short attention spans and the ever-driving force of the market

asking us to seek and consume more and more, newer products, and newer persons.

Leckey argues that stability "unmasks our temptations to flee people, work, and love." [91]

Those living in the Christian household do well to realize the power of place: "by

this vow the monk is reminded that he need not travel across the face of the earth to find

God."[92] Rather, in permanent commitment to a particular community we make total

acceptance of God's plan that we "be inserted in to the mystery of Christ through this

particular family and no other."[93] For those in Christian households (married and

religious), the gift of stability is the peace of accepting God's promise that we can seek

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20th century theology, especially in Vatican II's *Gaudium et spes* and Paul VI's *Humanae vitae*, the Church began to articulate the permanence of the marriage bond because of the spouse complete and total gift of self to one another in love. The quality of marriage as a covenant and partnership of the whole of life rooted in conjugal love is what demands and inherently creates the permanent bond (see GS, 50; and CIC, 1055, 1056; and FC, 11, 20).

[89] See Breidenthal, *Christian Households*, 99. "Like marriage," writes Breidenthal, "the monastic rule invites us to share what is most our own, yet it invites us to share this not with one primary partner, but with a larger (though clearly defined) group. In both forms of householding, the body is given over, in differing though equally unsparing ways, in the hope that the soul will follow."

[90] Lecky, *Ordinary Way*, 130–31.

[91] Ibid., 121. I question Leckey's dichotomization between the life before and after marriage or entrance to religious life. There is never a time when the consequences of a person's action are limited to themselves. They always affect those with whom we share life because we always share life with others.

[92] Ibid., 119–121.

[93] Ibid.

and find God with *this* person or *that* family.[94] As we recall from the section above,

though, seeking and finding God with *this* person of family is more often harder than

easier. It is perhaps in these moments especially when we must rely on or discover the

fact that "God's stability is found in ever expanding boundaries of community and that

the bonds of baptism are as real as the bonds of marriage or blood."[95]

At the same time, though, Christian householding is not always stable. Fracture

attacks Christian households through the many contingencies of life. The brokenness of

life manifests itself either in moral failure (e.g., infidelity or lack of perseverance in a

religious vow) or historical accident (e.g., death, reassignment, loss of a job, sickness,

etc.). The response to these fractures and commitments to stability is, in Leckey's mind,

the same virtue needed to develop permanence at all: perseverance.[96] In terms of cardinal

virtues, one might say fortitude. Perseverance is the continuing commitment to live

honestly and completely the way of life of the community, despite the inevitable failings

we encounter therein.[97]

While breakdown in the ecclesial practice of Christian householding is a fact

generally brought on by a failure of multiple parties, Bonhoeffer leaves room for

responsible dissolution of Christian householding. He writes:

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[94] Ibid., 119–20. I am not comfortable with her implicit claim here that permanence in marriage is a commitment to *this one* person while permanence in religious life is a commitment to *this community*. McCarthy, *Sex and Love in the Home*, is at pains to highlight the need for a return to "place" in marriage and family. His goal in the book is to once again find a way to give sex and love a stable location. His answer is to grab sex and love from the winds of market capitalism's logic of consumption and plant them back in the home, but only a home contextualized within the Church.

[95] Ibid., 127. McCarthy (*Sex and Love in the Home*, chap. 5); and Bennett (*Water is Thicker than Blood*, 181–85) share Leckey's strong claim for the ecclesial bonds of persons in Christian community. We must find ways to depend on, even need, people in our local parishes if this understanding of stability is to be true.

[96] Leckey, *Ordinary Way*, 122–24.

[97] Ibid., 123.

> Where Christ bids me to maintain fellowship for the sake of love, I will maintain it. Where his truth enjoins me to dissolve a fellowship for love's sake, there I will dissolve it, despite all the protests of my human love. Because spiritual love does not desire but rather serves, it loves an enemy as a brother.[98]

The question of dissolving Christian householding is complicated, but the authors all assume that situations are possible wherein breakdown might be for the good. It is important to keep in mind, though, that dissolution here is of complex households *not* joined permanently by an ontological bond such as the bond of matrimony. These authors are speaking about households that may be composed of a group of non-vowed non-married persons, or a group of married persons and non-married or religious persons living in one place. These forms of domestic life may change or dissolve as the community discerns new directions on ministry, or for some other reason part of the membership is relocated due to a new job.

The question that confronts so many attempting to live in Christian households is this: where can stability be found amidst failures and misfortunes? Leckey suggests the cross of Christ and the wider ecclesial, social community, as of primary importance.[99] She gives the example of St. Catherine of Genoa, whose husband repeatedly broke faith in their Christian householding, yet St. Catherine continually forgave her husband, even paying off debts he had incurred through vice. Eventually she and he went on to lives of

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[98] Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, 35. Bonhoeffer makes the strong distinction between human love and divine love with respect to their attitude toward Christian community. Human springs from and has the nature of desire—desire for human community—and will tyrannically hold on to that community. Spiritual love starts when human love stops: at the point when it looks like the desire will not be fulfilled (ibid., 35). I am disposed to find a greater connection between human and spiritual love than Bonhoeffer, especially in light of GS, 48–49, which claim that conjugal "love is an eminently human one since it is directed from one person to another through an affection of the will; it involves the good of the whole person, and therefore can enrich the expressions of the body and mind with a unique dignity, ennobling these expressions as special ingredients and signs of the friendship distinctive of marriage" (GS, 49). Furthermore, this "authentic married love is caught up into divine love and is governed and enriched by Christ's redeeming power and the saving activity of the Church" (GS, 48). Human love is distinct from divine love, but never disconnected from it or counterposed to it as if one were over against the other, especially in the sacrament of conjugal love. On this point my assessment differs from Bonhoeffer's.

[99] Leckey, *Ordinary Way*, 127.

serving the poor and sick in their city.[100] John Paul II has explored this topic as well.

Despite the fact that many modern scholars have criticized him for what can be seen as

his potentially discouraging or alienating emphasis on the ideal of married life rather than

its "reality,"[101] John Paul II actually approached the difficult realities of marriage from a

popular direction. As Karol Wojtyla, he wrote a drama titled *The Jeweler's Shop*, which

dealt with marriages both smooth and difficult, brokenness and reconciliation, jealousy

and coldness, joy and resentment. His psychological and theological depth allows the

audience to see the true stability in marriage is the love of Christ which is always present

to reconcile, take up, and transform the love of the spouses.[102]

     In the practice of stability, Christian households necessarily encounter the next

pair of polar householding principles in Christian community: familiarity and formality.

At the bottom of the relationship between familiarity and formality is the principle of

"radical availability," or our susceptibility to nearness, "a condition of accessibility to

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[100] Ibid., 124. The insight that we encounter God in the brokenness of the world around us, often in the imperfections of Christian community is made by Florence Caffrey Bourg (*Where Two or Three Are Gathered*, 118).

[101] See, e.g., Christina Traina, "Papal Ideals, Marital Realities: One View from the Ground," in *Sexual Diversity and Catholicism: of Moral Theology*, ed. Patricia Beattie Jung with Andrew Coray (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 2001), 269–88.

[102] John Paul II, *The Jeweler's Shop: A Meditation on the Sacrament of Matrimony Passing on Occasion into a Drama*, trans. Boleslaw Taborski (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1992). Interestingly, John Paul II's insight on the true stability of marriage sometimes found only in the midst of its challenges and fractures take us back to the first section on given-ness and intention. It is precisely because the sacrament of marriage so exceeds what we could have willed that it has stability; in the sacrament of marriage God acts with and through the consenting couple to do more than they could have asked for. St. Paul writes in Ephesians 3:14: "For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with might through his Spirit in the inner man, and that Christ may *dwell* in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have power to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with the fullness of God. Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to do *far more abundantly than all that we ask or thing*, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, for ever and ever. Amen."

others which cannot be chosen because it can never be successfully refused."[103] Among

the scholars in question, Breidenthal has done the most to explore these categories. He

asks the question: Why do Christians live together? Salvation, the Church, The Trinity,

and the human person are all social realities. We live together because we cannot live

otherwise.[104] Again, it is not a question of whether we hold house together, but what kind

of householding will we enact? Just as Christ did, we experience life as a sanctification

(or rejection) of unavoidable nearness. Jesus experienced this kind of nearness. From the

woman at the well (Jn 4), to the Syrophoenician woman (Mt 15:21–28; Mk 7:24–30), to

the woman who grabs his clothes (Mk 5:24–34), to the crowd of his townsfolk clamoring

to throw him from the cliff (Lk 4:14–30), to the crowd forcing him into the boat (Lk 5:1–

3), to the crowd filling the house so that people stood outside to listen (Mt 12:46–50; and

pars.), to the five thousand who sat, listened, and ate with him (Jn 6 and pars.), people

compel Jesus to act by being physically present. Their very proximity held a claim on

him. In our own householding it is this nearness, often nonvoluntary and intrusive, that

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[103] Breidenthal is aware of Gabriel Marcel's term "*disponibilité*." A difference between the two notions of availability is in the matter of the will. For Marcel, "*disponibilité*" is an attitude of availability to be chosen, whereas for Breidenthal we cannot avoid our availability (Breidenthal, *Christian Households*, 32).

[104] Breidenthal, *Christian Households*, 20. Leckey's version of the "familiarity" and "nearness" is "intimacy." Like Breidenthal, she gives a biblical, narrative account of God's intimacy with his people. Genesis begins with the question of seeking, finding, and being sought by or hiding from intimacy with God. Human's intimacy with God (a cycle of being sought, seeking, being found, embracing, and rejecting) is a story of God's revelation of Godself to us and of ourselves to us. Intimacy with God is costly to humans, and demanding. Finally, it is costly to God, as God himself enters history to show what the highest intimacy with him looks like, We are shown that to be one with and love God we must lose ourselves and find God in the neighbor. This kind of intimacy, a being present and knowing one another in love was practiced in the early Church as witnessed to by Acts (*Ordinary Way*, 10–13) . For Leckey, intimacy ought not to be reduced to sexuality. She uses the friendship of the spouses, the relationship of parent to child, and an openness to relationships outside the home (e.g., with neighbors, the poor) as examples of intimacy (ibid., 21–31).

provides the rough reminder of our calling to love and forces us to either grow in that love or reject it.[105]

Nearness cannot be avoided and it cannot be made safe. Nearness is an occasion of grace, as when one spouse nurses another back to health. But nearness is also an occasion of the cross, as in the case of marital abuse or coldness. The dialectical tension of Christian householding comes in the fact that the nearness of grace always depends on the nearness of the cross. Attempting to insulate Christian householding from the cross inevitably insulates household from the nearness of grace. The less we allow ourselves to need each other, the less we experience the grace of receiving aid. At the same time, the less we allow ourselves to need each other, the less we can be let down or injured—the less we experience the cross and give mercy.[106] The patriarchal family and radical individualism are both attempts to hide from our availability.[107] Our refusal to hide from availability to the neighbor, our willingness to embrace nearness to others comes from a nearness to Christ, the kind of nearness ironically rejected by those living near Jesus in his own home town (Lk 414–28; Mt 13:53–58; and Mk 6:1–6). Ongoing Christian life

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[105] As Breidenthal writes, "Nearness is never something we choose, any more than connection to another is something we can choose." Furthermore, "If we resist our connection, then an encounter with the neighbor is likely to seem like an assault, an interruption, or a detour," (*Christian Households*, 23, 24).

[106] Bonhoeffer emphasizes the need for practices of confession within Christian householding. If we do not make confession and reconciliation a common practice, we live with the lie that we are a pious fellowship and we will be shocked when we find a real sinner among the "righteous." "We cannot find the Cross of Jesus if we shrink from going to the place where it is to be found, namely, the public death of the sinner…Where sin is hated, admitted, and forgiven, there the break with the past is made" (*Life Together,* 114–15). Furthermore, this confession must happen between persons rather than in an unmediated manner between God and the individual. Confessing solely to God is so easy because it is "living on self-forgiveness and not a real forgiveness" (ibid., 116). Bonhoeffer does not have the Catholic sacrament of penance in mind here, but rather a confession among members of the household. His insights hold true for the sacrament, though. Additionally, practicing confession in the Catholic Christian household has the same great benefit that it would in any other Christian household. It is the reconciliation reached through confession that prepares us for true communion with our fellow householders, the wider church, and ultimately with Christ in the Eucharist (*Life Together,* 121–22).

[107] About the ways that individualism and patriarchy avoid nearness. For example, a father who comes home and declares his need to relax in front of the TV without being bothered by the children, or without domestic duties, is attempting to avoid nearness.

together in the household is a compilation of events of nearness: waking, dressing, meals, washing, prayers, play, study, work, and more. Christian householding "takes these occasions of nearness and, as it were, stretches them out, so that we come to life in the constant knowledge of our extreme availability to one another, as persons who are in each other's power."[108]

In Breidenthal's thought, this task of Christian householding maintains a dialectical tension between "familiarity" on the one hand, and "universality" (or formality) on the other.[109] Every form of Christian householding fits somewhere on the pole between the formality of the church as public, universal gathering, and the familiarity of the home as a place of nearness and vulnerability.[110] At the institutional level, the representatives of this distinction are the married household (familiarity) and the Church (universality).[111] Christian householding, then, exists in dialectical tension with "Church." Breidenthal is quick to point up the distinction, which he rhetorically emphasizes: "The Church's claim to universality is a necessary check to our tendency to let familiarity be an excuse for insularity, exclusivity, and bigotry. Familiarity must be balanced by a

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[108] Breidenthal, *Christian Households*, 35.

[109] For Breidenthal, "familiarity" must be distinguished from "nearness." Familiarity is the knowledge about a person that comes from living in a household with that person, a knowledge of idiosyncrasies, foibles, and particularities. It is an informality that amounts almost to a taking for granted. On the other hand, "nearness" is a term that means an acceptance of each other person's demand on me by the fact of their physical proximity, a demand grounded in our common origin and destiny, and the example of Christ's incarnation. Nearness does not necessitate familiarity. It can be experienced in a more formal, universal setting such as a Eucharistic liturgy, or in a familiar setting such as a household dinner.

[110] For Breidenthal, religious communities live out the Church's commitment to universality and inclusivity, but they also involve a great deal of in-house familiarity. "The monastic life is life together with a maximum of space between all fellow householders" (*Christian Households*, 43). On the other hand, the Christian household centered on conjugal love minimizes the distance between the members, because the nearness that is sanctified (sexual, physical nearness) is so tied up with emotion and vulnerability. "This extreme availability, which is death-dealing in the context of sin, is life-giving when it occurs in Christ" (ibid., 49).

[111] Jesus came to sanctify the *nearness* present in both familiarity and formality. Familiarity is not enough for true understanding between persons. Jesus' own life witnesses to as much. The disciples often do not understand Jesus, and Jesus' own hometown people find him too familiar to draw near to him and his message. On the other hand, strangers such as the woman with the hemorrhage, the Syrophoenician woman, and the woman at the well draw near to Jesus despite their lack of familiarity with him.

genuine welcome to the stranger, even if the stranger does not wish to be made into a friend. The church in its essence is always city, it is never hearth."[112]

Breidenthal's concern is to distinguish ultimate, eschatological reality from earthly, provisional society. In the kingdom of God, eschatologically speaking, we will love each person with the same familiarity and affective power that people often have for those in their own households. But here on earth, such familiarity at a large scale would be untenable. Christian households are necessary as "spiritual workplace," as training ground for the kind of familiarity we will have in heaven but which would be dangerous on earth. Therefore, where "church" refers to the public worship and communal activities of people who may or may not live together, it requires a certain amount of formality, enough so that the stranger is welcomed.[113] For example, on Breidenthal's reading of 1 Cor 11, Paul sees the Eucharist as a public, formal rite, not a household dinner. "Church is not essentially a household marked by familiarities, but a mystery where there are not

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[112] Breidenthal, *Christian Households*, 14. Bonhoeffer, too, recognizes the tension between the familiarity of a Christian community and the formality of universality of the wider church. For Bonhoeffer, though, this tension is more of a contrary than contradictory nature. If the Christian householding community's familiarity ever secludes it institutionally or attitudinally from the wider church, the community has already failed. "Life together under the Word will remain sound and healthy only where it does not form itself into a movement, an order, a society, a *colloquium pietatis*, but rather where it understands itself as being a part of the one, holy, catholic, Christian Church" (Bonhoeffer, *Life together*, 37). This strong claim appears to pose a challenge to the Catholic practice of forming associations of lay faithful and religious and secular institutes of consecrated life. I believe, however, that his clearly Augustinian insight here relates to a central point of this dissertation (recall chapter 3 and the "church within a church" problem of the Montanists, Donatists, and Pelagians). Any project of Christian householding, whether conjugal or consecrated or both, exists first within the context of the Church and, therefore, shares first and foremost in the goods and practices of *being church*. Any practice of Christian householding must be assessed on the criteria of its contribution to and fittingness within the ecclesial context. Bonhoeffer's insight aligns with this claim; being church and practicing Christian householding is not about being with the people you share every common interest with, but being with the people you happen to be with. "Every principle of selection and every separation connected with it that is not necessitated quite objectively by common work, local connections, or family connections, is of the greatest danger to a Christian community" (Ibid., 37).

[113] It may be counterintuitive to some that a certain amount of formality makes a stranger welcome. A certain, open and accessible formality, though, invites the outsider into the patterns and rhythms of the community plainly and clearly. One does not become a member of the community by achieving a special, close, or exclusive friendship with any parishioner but by joining oneself to the others present in the same act of worship, incorporating oneself into the same mystery.

outsiders and no insiders." In our provisional ecclesial communities awaiting the

consummation of God's kingdom, we offer the Eucharist until the Lord's return. In our

fallen state, nearness must be re-sanctified, and therefore requires some exclusivity and

training. Christian householding is the practice of this training. "The household

accomplishes the sanctification of nearness which the church cannot, as a public

gathering, accomplish, but which finally only the church can fully reveal. Thus, each

Christian household is a mirror to the whole church of the church's corporate destiny;"[114]

at the same time, the church as public gathering always pulls the household away from

the insular familiarity. The household, as a "little church," participates and requires

practices of universality and openness to the stranger not typically associated with the

family hearth.

While the practice of householding should be a familiar embrace and

sanctification of our nearness, households (Christian and otherwise) must decide whose

nearness they will embrace. Who is part of the household and who is not? Who shares

responsibility for its charism and mission, and who is a temporary participant or guest?

Thus the next two principles of exclusivity and permeability address this point. The kinds

of Christian households envisioned by Breidenthal,[115] Bennett,[116] and Bonhoeffer[117] have

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[114] Breidenthal, *Christian Households*, 15. I find Breidenthal's distinction between household and church too strong, and will revisit this fact in the critique section.

[115] Ibid., chap. 6. Breidenthal does not explicitly describe a vision of common life combining persons from these different states of life, but his nine disciplines would allow for such a form of living. His sixth chapter explores how each of his nine disciplines of Christian householding apply to marriage, monasticism, and single life. The result is that the reader unconsciously sees the possibilities of some kind of integration of these life forms.

[116] Bennett envisions explicitly the possibility of married couples, consecrated religious persons, and non-vowed Christians living a common way of life together. This vision flows now only from her theology but her experience of life in a community associated with "new monasticism." See "Mark 8: Support for Celibate Singles Alongside Monogamous Married Couples and Their Children," (112–123) for a description of her experience in this kind of community. Shane Claiborne and others have also begun intentional communities involving persons of various states in life (*The Irresistible Revolution: Living as an Ordinary Radical* [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006]). Their movement invites members from varied

more inclusive groups in mind: non-vowed single persons, a conjugal family, a vowed

religious community, or any combination thereof. Wright and Leckey, on the other hand

are looking more at how the insights from consecrated religious life can help conjugal

life.[118]

On the one hand, the great vulnerability presented in daily life together demands a

kind of exclusivity. "The gift of familiarity is a gift to be honored and protected, and the

inclusion of strangers inside the circle of privacy presents understandable problems if it

has not been agreed to by every other member of the group."[119] Furthermore, in order to

live the Christian household according to the Benedictine principle that life together is a

school of virtue, it will need to involve the same group of people over a long term. The

virtues required for life in the kingdom of God, as social habits (whether infused or

acquired), can only be actualized in community and over time with repeated practice and

correction. Additionally, a community committed to availability for each individual must

not exceed a certain size lest members begin to be ignored or generalized.[120] Finally,

members must share the goals of the community and the willingness to work for their

completion in fidelity to the household's practices. A group that welcomes every person

to all aspects of its life together will reach no goal other than increased size (and that only

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states in life much as the Catholic Worker Movement, the Community of the Beatitudes, Focolare (The Work of Mary), and other associations of the lay faithful do.

[117] Although, strictly speaking, it seems Bonhoeffer would oppose the life of a religious institute, his work is supportive of and relevant to their practice.

[118] Wright (*Sacred Dwelling*, 136–37) wants to take the theological inheritance that understands life as a continual formation and reformation out of the celibate male context and see how it fits in married life. Leckey (*The Ordinary Way*, 2) notes the various shapes of families (two-parents intact, one parent, and alternative families such as "extended Christian households"), but the book focuses almost exclusively on applying monastic principles to married families or families with only one parent.

[119] Breidenthal, *Christian Households*, 101.

[120] Ibid., 99–100.

until people decide they want to leave for something better).[121] Thus, Christian

householding requires a kind of exclusivity. All Christian households have central

members and a many layers of persons participating in, aiding, and being helped by that

household; among the crucial tasks of the household, then, is to identify those categories

and negotiate the way they are entered and left.[122]

While the Christian household needs be exclusive, it also requires permeability.

Households require boundaries, but they must not be hermetically sealed. "Permeability"

can be understood as referring to the porousness of the body's boundaries, the ease or

difficulty with which anything crosses over those boundaries. Permeability is as

important to the life of the household as it is to the life of a living cell. A human blood

cell's membrane physically distinguishes it from the surroundings, but the cell can only

exist and achieve its telos because that boundary is selectively permeable. The cell exists

*not* as an individual unit but as part of an interwoven system.[123]

The relationship of the Christian household to the Church is similar. For Christian

households, one important aspect of permeability comes in the form of accountability.

The wider society (principally the church and the neighbor) demand a kind of access to

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[121] Ibid., 100–01. Monasteries, for example, must have "means of ensuring that those who are admitted into the monastic household understand the weight of responsibility they bear for the souls of their brothers and sisters."

[122] Authors suggesting creative forms of Christian householding have been vague on this topic. Bennett suggests that more robust marriage prep programs, might be pondered, and that intentional Christian communities need to set up communal discernment practices for dating, novitiate, and engagement (*Water is Thicker than Blood*, 173–75; and "Mark 8," 119–20. Bennett mentions Michael Lawler's proposed betrothal process as a possible means for reunderstanding marriage and better preparing people to live it as a means of Christian householding, though Bennett is critical of the idea (ibid., 173). I share her critiques. For more on Lawler's proposal, see, e.g., "A Marital Catechumenate: A Proposal," *INTAMS Review* 13 (2007): 161–77. The question of exactly how to regulate the permeability of Christian households has not been answered.

[123] The cell is permeable to Oxygen and Carbon dioxide, as well as water (and many other molecules). This permeability allows the cell to act in concert with the rest of the body by delivering transferring Oxygen and Carbon dioxide molecules. In the same way, permeability facilitates the life of the Christian household and its working as a cell within its primary context, the body of Christ, the ecclesial society.

the activities, resources, and persons within the household's boundaries. The household is permeable to the needs and standards of the wider ecclesial community.[124] At the practical level, the church as public gathering cannot survive without the financial and bodily participation of households in liturgy and evangelism. Furthermore, the church as public gathering cannot survive as "Christian" unless participating households are themselves "Christian." In other words, the households participating in the institution constitute its character. If the institution describes itself in accord with certain principles of action (faith, hope, love, works of mercy, etc.) then the households that constitute the institution must abide by the same principles. Not because the institution says they must but because the institution cannot otherwise claim to be what its constitutive parts claim it is. If the households comprising the church do not feed the poor out of love for Christ, then the church they constitute can hardly be called Christian and can hardly be called a sacrament of Christ's love in the world.

At the same time, though, households are permeable to the needs of the wider ecclesial community because the households need the wider ecclesial community. For example, our household feeds the hungry and clothes the naked, but with a small kitchen, two bedrooms, and one bathroom, our hospitality is limited. We need the Church's kitchen and meeting area, not to mention its parishioners, to put on our meals and clothing give-aways. Bennett, therefore, correctly critiques modern theologies of marriage and family that seek to answer social woes exclusively or principally with more focus on marriage and family.[125] Similarly, David Matzko McCarthy develops a theory of

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[124] Here one might recall my first chapter's application MacIntyre's definition of "practice" to marriage; the ecclesially determined standards and goods partially determinative of Christian marriage.

[125] Bennett, *Water is Thicker than Blood*, 5–9. Specifically she has in mind the work of the Religion, Culture, and Family Project associated with Don Browning.

the "open" household over-against the typical model of the closed, nuclear family to counteract individualistic, non-Christian philosophy and ethics of marriage. The answer to the family's problems will not be found within the encapsulated nuclear family, but in the neighbor who helps paint your house and those friends from the church down the street who have you over for dinner. [126] Seeing other Christian practices of life together, participating in them, and even contributing to them is more helpful for the good life of one's own household than any managerial, specialist counseling session a person could buy. Seeing how my neighbor deals with his picky toddler at dinner, relying on my neighbor to shovel my sidewalk if I'm in a pinch—these little interactions do more for the good life of my household and my community than hiring an expert in child-rearing or a professional service to shovel for me.

In addition, Julie Hanlon Rubio and Lisa Sowle Cahill have both developed Christian social-ethics approaches to the theology of marriage that see the family's task as intrinsically extraverted.[127] Finally, John Paul II, in *Familiaris consortio* outlined four tasks of the family, each of which is per se missional, that is, ordered outward to the service of life, society at large, and the church in particular.[128] McCarthy's summary statement serves for what all these authors have in common: "The meaning of family is larger than us, particularly as it plays a part in the life of the church."[129] The Christian household, then, exists not as an isolated nucleus but as an organ within the church, and it

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[126] McCarthy, *Sex and Love in the Home*, chap. 8.

[127] See Julie Hanlon Rubio, *A Christian Theology of Marriage and Family* (New York: Paulist, 2003); and Lisa Sowle Cahill, *Family: A Christian Social Perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000).

[128] FC, 17. The domestic church is to be a communion of persons, to serve life, to serve the development of society, and to share in the mission of the church. In addition, Paul VI, in *Evangelii nuntiandi* 71 refers to the family as sharing in the Church's evangelical mission. "One cannot fail to stress the evangelizing action of the family in the evangelizing apostolate of the laity…In a family which is conscious of this mission, all the members evangelize and are evangelized."

[129] McCarthy, *Sex and Love in the Home*, 159.

can only accomplish its end within the context of the whole. It must be permeable then to the demands and benefits of presence within the ecclesial body.

How does accountability to the primary context, which is the Church, work? First, there is accountability to the share each form of Christian householding has in the common destiny of the ecclesial body. As Bennett writes, "Neither state of life [married or consecrated religious] should be seen as having a different ultimate purpose than [sic] the other."[130] At times, she continues, the role of an abbot-figure or a member of the hierarchy outside the community may be necessary to hold members to account for these goals and practices.[131] A Breidenthal has it, "outsiders can call us to account for our tendencies to collusion and complicity against God and neighbor," especially in matters wherein we may have blinded ourselves.[132] Therefore, he continues, "most monastic communities have an official 'visitor,' often someone who is not a monastic, who can be counted on to speak the truth in love."[133] Left to themselves, the idolatrous tendencies of familiarity would take over Christian households, and they could soon become sectarian and self-serving. Christian households must be permeable to the wider community to accomplish their apostolic mission, but they must also allow wider community to pass through their boundaries in order to support them with resources and accountability along the way. For example, a few families living in a lower-middle class neighborhood where

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[130] Bennett, "Mark 8," 119.

[131] Ibid.

[132] Breidenthal, *Christian Households*, 104. This thought corresponds well to Lonergan's notion of scotosis, a self-blinding to questions or data that would lead to conclusions the subject is not interested in reaching. (For more on bias and scotosis see note 32, introduction.)

[133] Ibid. Furthermore, "the church, especially the local church, can act as a collective 'observer' of every household, helping each household stay on track" (ibid., 104). This is related to what Stanley Hauerwas has said when he means that for Christians sex is public and that *Humanae vitae* is a social encyclical (Hauerwas, *A Community of Character: Toward a Constructive Christian Social Ethic*, [Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 1981], chap. 10). Similarly, see David Matzko McCarthy, "Procreation, the Development of Peoples, and the Final Destiny of Humanity," *Communio* 26 (1999): 698–721.

kids go unwatched in front of drug houses and street corners, might decide to invite all the neighborhood kids to a park once a week for a "neighborhood recess." Pretty soon, the neighborhood kids need no invitation. Instead, they are ready and waiting, or are even approaching their neighbors' doors to play on other days. The households of all these children are permeable to the influence of the people putting on the "neighborhood recess," and likewise the household putting on the neighborhood recess opens itself up to the influence and even potential risk of being affected by the children and parents of the other families in the neighborhood (for better or worse).

The final principle shared by these authors as they develop the life of Christian householding, namely prayer, is also related to the outward turning and permeability of the Christian household. Among the principles and practices, prayer is unique in that it ought not have any kind of tension with other principles of life together. In fact, enacting this principle would lead to its maximization in Paul's exhortation to "pray constantly, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you" (1 Thess 5:17–18). Leckey identifies prayer as the integrating practice of Christian householding. Prayer brings together the virtues of intimacy, egalitarianism, authority, study, play, stability, solitude, and hospitality.[134] Members of the Christian household pray together and alone. Leckey emphasizes the importance of devotionals such as the rosary, and the sacraments, especially the Eucharist,[135] but Bonhoeffer emphasizes the

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[134] Leckey, *Ordinary Way*, 75. Prayer invites intimacy when we share our deepest concerns in the presence of God. Prayer is a time of equality before the greatness of God and a chance, therefore, to grow in solidarity. Prayer qualifies all human authority as we experience the authority of Christ and examine our own use. Prayer encourages study—of ourselves, others, and God. Prayer is not without play, a relaxing time of creativity to enjoy being in God's presence. Prayer makes for stability, unmasking and counteracting our temptations to flee people, work, and love. As a time of solitude, prayer calls us to ourselves in the darkness we may find in our hearts. As a practice of hospitality, prayer creates more room for God in us, and consequently for all those who are in God.
[135] Leckey, *Ordinary Way*, 70–72.

need of the community to make meditative prayer in solitude available for every member

of the community individually: "we have a right to this time, even prior to the claims of

other people, and we may insist upon having it as a completely undisturbed quiet time

despite all external difficulties."[136] Where a Christian household "lives close together in a

constricted space and the individual does not have the quietness he needs, regular times

of quiet are absolutely necessary. After a time of quiet we meet others in a different and

fresh way. Many a household fellowship will be able to provide for the individual's need

to be alone, and thus preserve the fellowship itself from injury, only by adopting a regular

order."[137] With this statement, Bonhoeffer introduces a thought common to all the authors:

regular times and rituals of prayer as a household. The typical suggestion includes

common morning prayer, meal prayers, mid-day prayer, evening prayer, as well as daily

meditative prayer and Scripture reflection for each member in solitude.[138] Prayer together,

as it did for the early cenobitic communities, must serve as the organizing principle of the

household's day. Prayer provides daily anchor-points. Far from over-determining daily

life, the structure offered by daily prayer and the liturgical year function as a kind of

skeleton for creative overlay.[139]

If taken as primarily reflective and contemplative, the most complementary

characteristic of the Christian household for prayer would be ministry, which is active

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[136] Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, 87. Leckey, *Ordinary Way*, 73–74.
[137] Ibid., 80.
[138] See ibid., 40–80; Leckey, *Ordinary Way*, chap. 5.
[139] Leckey, *Ordinary Way*, 63. The idea of prayer as the organizing principle of the day is important for building up within the Christian household the Lonerganian notion of "common consciousness." Prayer and the perspective of prayer becomes the shared perspective of all the members of the household. Lonergan treats the connection between marriage and "common conscience" explicitly in "Finality, Love, Marriage," 477–510, at 494–96, 503, and 507.

and focused both within and without the walls of the home.[140] For Bonhoeffer, the

Christian household exemplifies the following ministries: holding the tongue, meekness,

listening, helpfulness, bearing, proclaiming, and authority.[141] Bonhoeffer focuses on how

the members of the community practice these ministries first among each other as a

requirement for authentic community in Christ. His vision does not have in focus the

work of Christian householding for the wider community. Breidenthal, though,

incorporates Bonhoeffer's intramural ministries as part of an outward direction for the

Christian household. Christian householding is "a vocation to life together which is both

familiar (family-like) and universal (church-like)."[142] As "familiar" the household is a

spiritual "workshop," for the occupants to practice the kind of love that will be

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[140] Herein the dynamic in religious life between contemplative and active orders is relevant. The contemplative is no less extraverted in mission than religious with a specific active missionary end, however. As John Paul II writes in VC, 8: "They contribute, with hidden apostolic fruitfulness, to the growth of the People of God."

[141] Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, 92–109. Following the letter of James, Psalm 50, and Ephesians 4:29, Bonhoeffer concludes, "thus it must be a decisive rule of every Christian fellowship that each individual is prohibited from saying much that occurs to him" (92). Bonhoeffer would bear marked similarity to Benedict on this point. For this practice has the effect to "stop scrutinizing the other, judging him, condemning him, putting him in a particular place where he can gain ascendancy over him and thus doing violence to him as a person" (93). The ministry of meekness specifies the way any Christian must approach her own plans and designs of for the community on the grounds that, "because the Christian can no longer fancy that he is wise, he will also have no high opinion of his own schemes and plans." Furthermore, "if my sinfulness appears to me to be in any way smaller or less detestable in comparison with the sins of others, I am still not recognizing my sinfulness at all" (95–96). The ministry of listening is "the first service we owe to others in the fellowship" (97). The love of God begins with listening to his word, so beginning of love of neighbor is listening to him. As a ministry, helpfulness "is a part of the discipline of humility that we must not spare our hand where it can perform a service and that we do not assume that our schedule is our own to manage, but allow it to be arranged by God." Furthermore, "in the monastery his vow of obedience to the abbot deprives the monk of the right to dispose of his own time. In evangelical community life, free service to one's brother takes the place of the vow" (99–100). Because we are Christian, the brother is a burden to be born joyfully, though with all the more difficulty when what is born is not merely a foible but a sin. In light of sin, the Christian community must minister proclamation, that is, "where defection from God's word in doctrine or life imperils the family fellowship and with it the whole congregation, the word of admonition and rebuke must be ventured. *Nothing can be more cruel than the tenderness that consigns another to his sin. Nothing can be more compassionate than the severe rebuke that calls a brother back from the path of sin*" (107, emphasis mine). Finally, authority as a ministry is not linked to charismatic leadership, but (in light of 1 Tm 3:1) the leader should be merely a "simple, faithful man, sound in faith and life, who rightly discharges his duties to the Church. His authority lies in the exercise of his ministry. In the man himself there is nothing to admire" (109).

[142] Breidenthal, *Christian Households*, 113.

experienced eschatologically. As "universal," the household is already a place where the

eschatological love of God's kingdom can be practiced in the form of hospitality

ministries. Leckey sees the ministry of the Christian household more in terms of the

scriptural and monastic tradition of welcoming any stranger as Christ himself. She begins

her chapter on hospitality with a reflection on Abraham's generous, unknowing

hospitality to three angels (Gen 18) and continues reflecting on Chapter 53 of Benedict's

rule, where the monks are reminded to welcome any as they would welcome Christ,

allowing them to enjoy a week of leisure before giving them a share in the community's

work.[143] Becoming the kind of household that not only welcomes the stranger but seeks

and finds the outcast takes practice and prayer, but in light of how we have conceived of

the Church as the household of God and Jesus' practice of inviting people to life in that

household, we must conclude that active hospitality to strangers, as a fruit of prayer, is

essential to the identity of any Christian household.[144]

**Critique**

Having analyzed the thought of scholars proposing forms of Christian

householding to find their common ground and shared insights, I will now critique the

thought of these same scholars in an effort to raise some questions as well as forward

their sound proposals. I will offer six critiques of the scholarship on Christian

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[143] Leckey, *Ordinary Way*, 134–35.

[144] This practice is especially important as a means to counteract the modern dichotomization of the public and private aspects of householding. Unfortunately, even some who theorizes and practice ministry and outreach in the Christian household operate with this dichotomy. For example, see Leckey, *Ordinary Way*, 145: "People enter the intimacy of our homes through the doorway…We, too, pass through the doorway, moving from the privacy of the home to the outside world, where we ally ourselves with the suffering and need that lie beyond our threshold."

householding: (1) Breidenthal's overdrawn distinction between household and church; (2) the lacking development in theories of preparation and formation; (3) the need for understanding domestic practices of dealing with sin in ecclesial terms; (4) the underdevelopment of "parenthood" as a common task of all who inhabit the household of God; (5) a lack of grounding in Christology and Trinity; and (6) the absence of the virtues poverty, chastity, and obedience from practices and principles of Christian householding.

The first critique reconsiders Breidenthal's strong distinction between the task of the "household" and the task of the "church." Breidenthal drives the wedge too far between Christian householding and the "church," which he sees as "public gathering." He is correct to affirm that the relation of the household to the Church is one of interdependence and common purpose, but I think his following statement contains some difficulties:

> The household, which is *necessarily small and self-centered*, needs the horizon of the church to keep it focused on the ultimate goal, which is redeemed connection with everyone. Thus the household must subordinate itself to the church through regular attendance at prayers and participation in the Lord's Supper, the sacrament of the kingdom of God. At the Same time, the church needs the household, with its commitment to and its experience of holy familiarity, to remind the church that it is not a support group for solitary pilgrims.[145]

Breidenthal seems to be putting the household over against the church as if the two were separate entities rather than nested ones. Breidenthal seems to overlook the fact that the household's relation to the church goes beyond common purpose to include common practices, even common identity (especially in the case of the conjugal household, which is domestic church). The household attends liturgy and participates in ecclesial activities not out of subordinate dependence on the church but because when the household participates in liturgy and other ecclesial activities it *is* church. The church and the

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[145] Breidenthal, *Christian Households*, 16.

household do not need each other for reminders of mundane concerns (household) and

eschatological destiny (church) but rather because the church is constituted by

households whenever those households engage in the practices of the church.[146]

Although Breidenthal overstates the distinction between church and household,

his nine disciplines of Christian householding have much to recommend them. The

benefit of Breidenthal's approach is threefold. First, his criteria for naming any kind of

householding "Christian" are based in practices, whose corollaries are virtues. Such

criteria highlight the consonance between married and vowed religious vocations better

than the criteria of "relationship." Understanding marriage as a particular kind of

relationship is helpful for understanding what is unique about the sacramental bond

between man and woman, and in so doing tends to put the focus on individuals.

Obviously, the vowed religious does not have that kind of relationship with any one

member of his or her congregation. If there is consonance between these two vocations, it

can be found in an analysis of the practices and virtues common to both, practices and

virtues that give both a share in the mission and identity of being church. Second,

imagining Christian householding in terms of nine disciplines removes from focus the

question of which way of life is "superior." The vision of disciplines emphasizes that

marriage and vowed religious life are training grounds in Christian discipleship,

preparations for a common end, the kingdom of God. Thus the competitive spirit

vanishes, but not simply because the referees have called a tie game. Rather, when

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[146] Recall Paul VI's statement from *Evangelii nuntiandi*, 71, that the family is a community wherein all are evangelized and all evangelize. "One cannot fail to stress the evangelizing action of the family in the evangelizing apostolate of the laity…In a family which is conscious of this mission, all the members evangelize and are evangelized. The parents not only communicate the Gospel to their children, but from their children then can themselves receive the same Gospel as deeply lived by them" (EV, 71).

disciplines take center stage, both forms of life come into focus principally as schools of virtue, and more importantly, schools of the same virtues.

Third, seeing Christian householding in terms of disciplines or practices addresses the confusion in answering question: "what counts as domestic church?" Within the scholarly debate, finding the answer relies on two sets of criteria. Some authors emphasize the formal (ontological) elements of a Christian household as determinative (e.g., sacramental marriage and baptism). On the other hand, others highlight the functional (subjective, volitional) elements of a Christian household as determinative (e.g., *intending* to be a domestic church, living the *practices* and principles of Christian householding).[147] Florence Caffrey Bourg, for example, diminishes the "ontological" criteria because they give too much weight to "ideals" instead of "reality." "Ideally," she writes, "all domestic churches might arise from an intact, sacramental marriage, but in fact, many families that seem to deserve the name do not."[148] Holiness, then, determines for these scholars what can be called a domestic church.[149] Breidenthal's criteria, though, suggest a complementarity between the form and function of Christian householding.[150] One criterion cannot be relied upon to the exclusion of the other.

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[147] The central magisterial sources for understanding the grounding of "domestic church" at a more ontological level are *Lumen Gentium*, *Gaudium et spes*, *Evangelii nuntiandi*, *Familiaris consortio*, and *Christifideles laici*. These sources tend toward matrimony as definitive for "domestic church" though they frequently speak of baptism and the mission of the church in connection with the family's identity as domestic church, which accounts for much of the confusion on this topic. See also Mitch and Kathy Finley, *Christian Families in the Real World: Reflections on a Spirituality for the Domestic Church* (Chicago, Ill.: Tomas More Press, 1984).

[148] Bourg, *Where Two or Three are Gathered*, 78.

[149] See Bourg, *Where Two or Three are Gathered*, 83. "Structure alone is not the key criterion of Christian identity, and it opens up the possibility that even 'nontraditional' families may exhibit the most important Christian family values, and for that reason be considered authentic domestic churches." In this conclusion, Bourg is relying on and developing the work of Michael Lawler and Lisa Sowle Cahill.

[150] For a successful attempt to blend form and function, subjective and ontological, objective criteria for "domestic church" see Donald A. Miller, *Concepts of Family Life in Modern Catholic Theology: From Vatican II through "Christifideles laici"* (San Francisco: Catholic Scholars Press, 1996). The most recent and comprehensive treatment of domestic church that favors the subjective approach to defining the term,

Also at stake is the question of whether matrimony or baptism makes the conjugal

household into domestic church.[151] I take the position that Christian marriage is definitive

for application of "domestic church" to any Christian household. Thus I claim that both

baptism and sacramental marriage are required for designation as "domestic church."

Therefore, any Christian household that includes sacramentally married persons is

domestic church. Domestic Church is a distinct kind of Christian householding. All

domestic churches should be Christian households, but not all Christian households can

be domestic church—even if they can describe themselves with the language of "family."

This choice is important to the thrust of the dissertation because I am looking for

consonance and common ground amidst diversity. If all Christian householding is

"domestic church," then when we look for consonance between conjugal householding

and vowed religious life in community, we are not finding consonance between different

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see Florence Caffrey Bourg, *Where Two or Three Are Gathered*; and for a critique of the history of the term's application see Joseph C. Atkinson, "Family as Domestic Church: Developmental Trajectory, Legitimacy, and Problems of Appropriation," in *The Church, Marriage, and the Family*, ed. Kenneth D. Whitehead (South Bend, IN: St. Augustine's, 2004), 378–91. He identifies the problems of legitimacy, epistemology, and appropriation in attempts to use "domestic church." I contend that any effort to dislocate one criterion from the other is erroneous. Formally, the Christian household is a group of baptized Christians intentionally committed to being a sacrament of Christ in the world in and through a domestic setting. Functionally, a Christian household is a group of baptized Christians actually being a sacrament of Christ in the world in and through a domestic setting.

[151] Bourg, *Where Two or Three are Gathered*, 68–80. Bourg argues for the primacy of baptism in defining "domestic church." She gives five reasons ultimately geared toward expanding the inclusiveness of the term, taking the focus off "marriage" and putting it on "family." Family, for her, is an ascetic, domestic discipline educating, evangelizing, and doing works of mercy that cultivates a sacramental perspective of God's work in daily life (ibid., 105–107). For Bourg, where there is Christian family, there is "domestic church." For Bourg, the most essential feature of domestic church is actually "the way members see and interpret the world and their lives" (ibid., 28, 95–101). Bourg's worry about "juridical, objective, or ontological definitions of "domestic church" is that they might offend emotional sensibilities. If there are clear observable features that make a household a domestic church, then some families might be seen as "other" or "inferior" to families that do qualify as domestic churches (*Where Two or Three are Gathered*, 28–29, 69). I find her concern compassionate and important but suffering from two oversights: (1) defining "domestic church" is not about making eternal judgment or even judgment of virtue. It is entirely likely that an "irregular" family situation may be far more virtuous than any given "domestic church." That this is a fact need not make us shy away from clear definitions, but it should redouble efforts at humility. (2) That no definition of "domestic church" is possible without observable features and marks that will potentially be misused to rank and label some families as "other" or "inferior." Bourg even gives "signs" that a family has the proper vision and interpretive framework to qualify as domestic church. They are "shared baptism, sacramental wedding, and regular Eucharistic worship." These are signs, though, and not determinative.

melodies in one song; we are merely describing one melody that sounds different when heard in the open air or under water. The "domestic church" and all other forms of Christian householding share their ecclesial identity but in different ways.

So the general practices and principles for how to live any Christian household are universal, but the identity of that Christian household as "domestic church" depends on the presence of the marital sacrament in the household. For this sacrament symbolizes and makes present Christ's bond to his bride in the domestic practices of the couple and all who hold house with them, whether by choice or not. They gain the title "domestic church" because the sacrament redoubles church's presence as the sacrament of Christ. Where the church is, there is Christ, and where marriage is, there Christ promises (by taking up the human conjugal love into his own indissoluble love) to be present in the couple's commitment to practices and principles of holding house together.[152] All other

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[152] See David M. Thomas, "Home Fires," in *The Changing Family: Views From the Theology and the Social Sciences in the Light of the Apostolic Exhortation* Familiaris consortio, ed. Stanley L. Saxton (Chicago: Loyola University, 1984), 16. Thomas takes an approach similar to Bourg's. For Thomas, wherever there is Christian family, there is domestic church. Because family is included in his general understanding of church, family events become ecclesial events. Family gains eternal significance, and evangelization, worship, and ministry happen in and as everyday occurrences. On the other hand, Walter Kasper (*Theology of Christian Marriage*, trans. David Smith [New York: Crossroad, 1981], 38) makes a stronger distinction between the domestic church and the universal church. The domestic church has the special charism (1 Cor 7:14) of accepting children, forming living cells in the Church by life together as believers, and hospitality and openness in the home. My position is that the Church is family ontologically, that is, we actually become sons and daughters of God in baptism. Thus we must conclude that all Christian householding is in a certain sense "domestic church." By this I mean that Christians living together engage in a domestic project, and they are members of the church. The ecclesiality of their householding is accidental to it. The ecclesiality of their householding comes from their baptism into God's household rather than from their householding itself. The converse is true of marriage. Married persons' ecclesiality comes from the householding itself, which is initiated and made possible by the sacrament of matrimony. Conjugal householding is domestic church essentially rather than accidentally. This is true because the ecclesiality of their householding comes from the sacrament of matrimony, that is, from their permanent vow to engage in a life-long domestic project for the purpose of allowing Christ's own indissoluble bond of love for the church to be present in and through their own practices of Christian, conjugal householding. Married couples enjoy a specification and intensification of the baptismal grace of adoption into God's household, but the sacramental grace makes their Christian householding an instantiation of the one household of God. All other forms of Christian householding are participations in but not new, unique, sacramental instantiations of the ecclesial reality of Christ's saving love for and bond to his bride the church. Our own domestic projects do not become "domestic church" in this strong sense without the sacramental presence of Christ's bond to whole church. This bond, the substance of which is Christ's love,

Christians forming domestic communities may commit to similar practices and principles, but their bond and commitment to those ecclesial practices of householding is not made indissoluble by sacramental grace.[153] The bond between members of all other Christian households does not require the sacramental action of God because it is not indissoluble. No matter how permanent the vow made by members of any other Christian household, it remains a human vow (certainly aided by God and having eternal consequence) that does not *ex opere operato* include a divine action that makes the bond between spouses an efficacious sign of the indissoluble bond of Christ to humanity, the bond that makes us his bride, which makes us church. Therefore, without matrimony, the term "domestic church" cannot properly apply to a Christian household. This is true even if the household is ostensibly more Christian and more engaged in the work of the church than any household that includes a married couple.

The consequences of these debates are significant. Using both functional (subjective) criteria and formal (ontological) criteria allows us to judge the identity of a Christian household as "domestic church" by answering three questions: (1) Does a community hold house together? (2) Are the members of the community baptized or near baptism? And (3) is at least one couple in the household married? If the answer to all questions is "yes," then the community is domestic church, even if it includes persons beyond the "nuclear family," and even if it involves failure and "irregularity." Even if its members are unfaithful to the principles and practices essential for Christian

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is present wherever there is sacramental marriage, which is a commitment to image and embody this love through the domestic project that is uniquely blessed with the graces necessary for that task.

[153] Here presents another opportunity to note the distinction between religious consecration and marriage on the level of the Church's seven sacraments. This distinction is important and should receive attention in another study, but receives only limited focus here since my concern is principally with the consonance between the two states in life.

householding, the Christian household that is domestic church retains the identity of domestic church regardless. The Christian household, however, is only a good domestic church if its members exemplify the practices and principles, virtues and internal goods essential to Christian householding.

Too much focus on "domestic church" though, will distract from the main point of this chapter, which is that, although conjugal life and vowed religious life in community are distinct, the consonance between these two domestic projects lies in the principles and practices of Christian householding that they share. With this in mind, I will return to my critique of these principles as they appear in the authors studied.

The second major critique of approaches to Christian householding that attempt to bring together consecrated and conjugal life is that they offer little theorization or practical information about preparation and formation. Even Leckey and Wright, who are explicitly looking to bring insights from monastic life into matrimony, give little space to the concept of novitiate or formation. Only Sandra Schneiders, whose work on the renewal of consecrated religious life (not Christian householding) after Vatican II compares the processes of formation and vows for religious with the process of discernment and preparation for marriage.[154] Schneiders's reflection on the renewal of the novitiate in consecrated life provides a seed for future work to understand preparation for marriage in light of this phased entry into the religious life without full membership until final vows. I believe a program for marriage preparation could be developed to incorporate the insights from the concept of religious novitiate, and this dissertation, which finds a common ground between conjugal and consecrated life in community, could serve as a basis to develop such a program.

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[154] See Schneiders, *Selling All*, chaps.1–2, "Vocation and Discernment," and "Formation and Incorporation."

My third critique of the principles of Christian householding is to note a need for deeper research and greater precision in the area of dealing with contingency of accident and sin, as well as the ordering of brokenness toward reconciliation. The question of dissolving Christian householding is complicated, and can only be answered by looking specifically at the kind of community in question. The authors treat this question, but much more, careful consideration and precision is required.

For example, a Christian conjugal union, as a sacrament of Christ's union to the Church, cannot be dissolved, but the practices of conjugal householding may require temporary, even legal dissolution (e.g. cohabitation and right to physical proximity may need to be terminated in the case of abuse) in the loving service of all the parties to the household. On the other hand, a congregation within a religious institute (as a canonical reality) or a household of married persons and religious together, or an intentional community of celibate, non-vowed Christians may well be dissolved for any number of reasons. Ultimately, though, the motive remains the loving service of the community's members toward their common destiny. The criteria for decision about whether a household must be dissolved, then, will vary based on the kind of household.

Let me spend a bit more time dealing with the question of dissolution in a domestic church (which I have identified as a Christian household based around a conjugal family). For the non-Catholic authors (Breidenthal and Bonhoeffer), a Christian household based in marriage has a covenantal and civil standing above that of any other intentional Christian community, but nonetheless its dissolution is possible. To avoid sidetracking the discussion, I cannot focus on the possibility or impossibility of the dissolving the marital *bond*, but rather I must take up the question of the ceasing the

domestic church's *practices*. If a Christian household (specifically a domestic church) truly is ecclesial by virtue of its covenantal, sacramental commitment to certain domestic practices, then those practices never cease. Breakdown in positive practices of Christian householding in the domestic church does not cause the conjugal communion to cease being domestic church. Rather, the breakdown initiates a new set of ecclesial practices in the conjugal household: practices of suffering, admonition, conversion, and reconciliation, thanksgiving, and restitution. These are practices as ecclesial as the common family meal or the marital consummation ever could be.

Even in conflict, the struggling spouses engage in ecclesial practices of householding with God. We can understand both the typical and grave domestic church breakdown by analogy with typical and grave breakdown in wider household of God, the church in general. At a more typical level, spouses not communicating well, spouses at odds with each other over seemingly "simple" issues (neatness, a specific child-rearing practice, a rude comment, etc.), feel real division between them. They will go on occupying the same home, continuing the same domestic tasks, but their union is incomplete, and they will slowly drift apart as the cool feelings become cold and frigid and a hermeneutic of suspicion takes over. As a result they will feel little desire to express or experience the fullness of their union in a bodily way. Sin, even minor sin, disrupts the communion of persons in the household. The same is true for the ecclesial community in general. Many baptized Catholics slowly drift apart from the Church. This growing rift may not be due to any serious sin, but merely a result of lack of communication, a failure (by either party) to listen, a discovery of fault in an authority figure, or an "uncharitable" sermon or church teaching. The cool feelings for the church

at large may turn, as they can in the domestic church, to feelings of suspicion and anger. These situations are not unlike those that most frequently cause alienation in marriage. Just as the toothpaste cap causes divorce, so too the "problems people have with the church," which are often perceived of as simple issues (e.g., why don't they just ordain women already?) cause rifts and coldness among the inhabitants of God's household. Because of this coldness these members of God's household are unlikely to seek or express their communion with each other in joyful worship, especially in the summit of Christian life, the Eucharist. At a more grave level, in the household of God at large, any member of the household, having committed mortal sin, separates herself canonically from full communion with her Bridegroom in the Eucharist. In the same way, grave sin among the domestic church must exclude the spouses from the fullness of its communion. This exclusion from communion may even require legal action in separation.

Just as the Church at large exists as a domestic project with practices for exclusion, admonition, reconciliation, and restitution, so to the domestic church exhibits such practices. We must continue to contextualize all the practices of Christian householding, even painful ones, as ecclesial ones. In all Christian householding, practices of exclusion must be pastorally ordered toward reconciliation and restoration of communion. Christian households, both the church at large and the domestic church, in this example, must continually cultivate opportunities and practices ordered toward rediscovery and reconciliation. Inviting ecclesial events such as "Theology on Tap" might re-open lines of communication between the church and a person whose feelings for her have cooled. This renewed communication between the riches of the church's tradition and the fallen away Christian might lead to a deeper development of faith, hope,

and love, and a deeper commitment to the practices of life in the household of God than were ever present in this person's life previously.[155] Reconciliation in the domestic church might happen in a similar way. A newly discovered common interest, a moment of crisis demanding teamwork, a retreat or marriage formation night, or even a class preparing for their infant's baptism might serve as a touchpoint to reconnect lines of communication and commitment between spouses more or less estranged. At the same time, dealing with sin in the wider household of God is not unlike dealing with it in domestic church. Minor mistakes in the ecclesial communion are brought to mind and expressed before the community begins the opening prayer at mass. Further, request for forgiveness and commitment to forgiveness in the Lord's prayer, as well as the kiss of peace, precede the reception of the Eucharist in the communion rite. In the same way, practices of confessing minor sins ought to be a regular part of prayer in any Christian household or domestic church. More serious divisions, though, require formal processes of reconciliation and reincorporation that involve the entire household. Couples may need professional pastoral counseling or even legal, temporary separation before they can return to forgiveness and full communion with each other. The Church's practice of sacramental penance serves as an official rite for a member the church at large to return to communion in the household by reconciling formally with the bridegroom, Christ, through contrition, forgiveness, and grateful penance.

As this short exploration has shown, the practices of Christian householding must not be limited to those done in happy times, good times, acts of worship, feasts, acts of

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[155] Thus, the idea here is not "romantic." I am not suggesting that the church or married couples are most closely connected when they rediscover the "passionate heat that brought them together." No, the true love between members of the conjugal household, whether the Church in general or the domestic church, is a love that grows through understanding of and commitment to common work for a common end. Passionate feelings at times occur in householding, but they are not its essence.

tenderness and care. The household of God, if it truly is a household, will have to deal

with the same problems of brokenness that every household meets daily. Christian

households experience breakdown, but if the experience of breakdown can be located

ecclesially, we can find ways in which the focus can remain on reconciliation and return

to communion. The way is open here for much more research. Perhaps one source might

be to look at practices of discipline in religious communities throughout history. This

work, though, will have to be saved for another volume.

A fourth critique of the principles and practices of Christian householding

mentioned above is the underdevelopment of the practice of parenthood as common to all

Christian households. Bennett mentions the idea that parenting should be a task shared by

the whole church, but she does not have occasion to develop the idea.[156] Similarly,

Breidenthal highlights the fact that Benedict's rule includes sections on how to handle

and discipline children, and that St. Paul includes marriage in Christian householding, but

does not explore the topic in much depth.[157] Leckey, for her part, spends the most energy

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[156] Bennett, *Water is Thicker than Blood*, 183–85. Bennett goes on to highlight some examples of the kind of efforts she envisions. In the face of parishes where married parents are often forced to do all the legwork for Christian education, Bennett imagines non-married celibate persons (vowed or non-vowed) contributing to the work of Christian education at the parish level, or helping children learn to worship in the mass. Some celibates at a Catholic Worker house in Indiana have run a preschool for the children of single mothers living there. A community Bennett herself lived with occasionally invited married people over, made them dinner, and cared for their children so that the parents could have some time for conversation. ("Mark 8," 120).

[157] See Breidenthal, *Christian Households*, 52: "For Paul, marriage counts as Christian householding because it makes the familiarity between husband and wife, and between parents and children, the means by which they learn to be each other's neighbor…Looked at this way, Christian parents raising children do not look so different from Christian monks trying to live in community. Parents and monks alike are struggling to turn life together, with all the familiarity that goes with it, into a means of embracing nearness and extending to others the communion we already have with Christ. Both the parental family and the monastery turn out, in this view to be distinct but related versions of the same thing—the Christian household. Both kinds of households are called to the sanctification of familiarity within the household, and to hospitality and care for the stranger. But each takes a different approach and faces different pitfalls." He continues to state that the monastic temptation is toward individual isolation if their flight from familial and exclusive friendships is not intentionally linked to a spirituality of nearness. On the other hand, the family's temptation is the over-emphasis on familial and exclusive friendships to the detriment of the big picture (ibid., 52).

on the topic of parenting, taking good insights from Benedict's Rule of Life and the older

Rule of the Master. She is looking primarily at how the rule might help married

Christians in their own role as parents. Parenting, though, does not make any scholar's

list of principles and practices.[158] All the scholars understand Christian householding as

necessarily welcoming to children, but it seems only coincidentally so. It does not seem

as if Christian householding is per se ordered toward parenting, a task that goes far

beyond the mere welcoming of the child.

Christian householding, though, does not exist for its own sake, nor merely for the

sake of those who voluntarily enter its practice. The practice trains persons in the

sanctification of nearness through exclusive, familiar relationships that prepare for the

eschatological, universal familiarity of the kingdom of God, but the Christian household

exists as it does for the sake of those who will enter it in the future, for those to whom the

practice of sanctifying nearness will be traditioned. This practice of traditioning is

parenthood. Although Breidenthal's study of Christian householding spends little time on

the practice of parenting as a discipline common to consecrated and married life, Jana

Bennett explicitly takes up the question in her own attempt to see a common ground for

married and consecrated life.

Bennett finds parenthood a central shared task of both married and celibate

members of Christ's body. "I also hope," she writes, "that married people will see in

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[158] This topic does not take a major position in Leckey, *Ordinary Way* either. Her nine elements of
monastic structure readily applicable to families include intimacy, equality, authority, prayer, solitude, play,
study, stability, and hospitality. Leckey deals with the link between parents and children, as well as the
question of family structure (*Ordinary Way*, 21–24, 39, 50, 58, 110, and 127), but parenting itself does not
make the list of major elements. More interesting is the fact that her discussion of hospitality mentions
receiving unexpected and planned for guests. Unfortunately, children do not appear as the object of this
hospitality. Stanley Hauerwas has made much of contending the opposite point. See Hauerwas, "Radical
Hope in the Annunciation: Why Both Single and Married Christians Welcome Children," *The Hauerwas
Reader*, ed. John Berkman and Michael Cartwright (Durham, N.C.: Duke University, 2001), 505–518.

themselves the possibility of being married 'monks,' while those who are single will see

in themselves the possibility of being Christian parents, and that these are all states of life

bound up in the one Household of God of which we are part."[159] "Neither state of life

should be seen as having a different ultimate purpose than [sic] the other."[160] Celibate

single persons, whether vowed or not, are to share in the duties of Christian parenting.

This claim is made from a robust understanding of the extent to which baptism makes

new children, for whom all have responsibility.

> Augustine's sermons about baptism generating new children, and making all
> Christians new parents suggest a very new and distinctly Christian way of
> understanding what it means to have and raise children…this is one of the ways
> the unmarried may be parents, because they, too, are responsible for parenting the
> newly baptized 'infants.'[161]

Bennett's conclusion also lends itself to arguments for strengthening of the role of

Godparents on the same account. "It is a myth of contemporary society and some

contemporary theology," she writes, "to see that households can be self-sufficiently run.

We see this sense of self-sufficiency in the view that parents are alone responsible for

how their children behave in grocery stores or in church…The fact of our baptism and its

relationship to our roles as both parents and children suggests that non-biologically

related people have a responsibility to raise children."[162]

A look at Benedict's rule itself gives us an even clearer picture of how both

vowed religious and married life share in parenthood. Below I offer just a beginning at

where this kind of reflection might go. In his rule, St. Benedict self-consciously describes

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[159] Bennett, *Water is Thicker than Blood*, 158–59.
[160] Bennett, "Mark 8," 119.
[161] Bennett, *Water is Thicker than Blood*, 175.
[162] Ibid., 184

the monastic life in terms of the parent-child language and relationships.[163] In the very

first sentence of the Rule's prologue, Benedict calls the reader "son." "Listen, O my son,

to the precepts of thy master, and incline the ear of thy heart, and cheerfully receive and

faithfully execute the admonitions of thy father, that by the toil of obedience thou mayest

return to Him."[164] Here, Benedict casts the abbot in the paternal language of Old

Testament wisdom literature, as the wisdom teacher as father leading his pupil the son.[165]

Second, Benedict calls the head of the monastery the "abbot," a word closely related to

the Aramaic term Jesus uses to refer to his heavenly father, "Abba." The abbot is

considered to hold the place of Christ in the monastery, which means that all he does

must flow from a true sonship to God the Father. As the rule states: "He is believed to

hold the place of Christ in the monastery since he is addressed by a title of Christ, as the

Apostle indicates: You have received the spirit of adoption of sons by which we exclaim,

abba, father (Rom 8:15)." The abbot is father, but only inasmuch as he authentically

witnesses to God his own Father. The abbot is commanded to care for the spiritual

development and the development in virtue of the monks as a father does for his children,

with attention to the particulars of each child. "As occasion may call for, let him show the

severity of the master and the loving affection of a father."[166] Quoting Proverbs 23:14,

Benedict reminds abbots: "Strike thy son with the rod and thou shalt deliver his soul from

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[163] Adalbert de Vogüé (*The Rule of Saint Benedict: A Doctrinal and Spiritual Commentary*, [Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian, 1983], 66) emphasizes the role of spiritual paternity in the Benedictine rule and life.

[164] RB, prologue, 1–2. "Obsculta, o fili, praecepta magistri, et inclina aurem cordis tui, et admonitionem pii patris libenter excipe et efficaciter comple, ut ad eum per oboedientiae laborem redeas." In the background can be heard the wisdom tradition and its notion of parenthood as the traditioning of wisdom for right living. See Proverbs 1:7, "Hear, my child, your father's instruction, and do not reject your mother's teaching."

[165] See, e.g., Sirach 2:1; 3:1–3; 5:1; Proverbs 1:8, 10; 2:1; 3:1, 11; 4:1; 5:1.

[166] RB 2.24: "miscens temporibus tempora, terroribus blandimenta, dirum magistri, pium patris ostendat affectum."

death."[167] Benedict notes that the monasteries may take in boys of young age. Further,

chapter 30 provides a rule for the correcting young boys.[168] For as long as these practices

endured, the monastic life was concerned not only with spiritual fatherhood of adults, but

with the daily practice of turning boys into men: the spiritual formation, education, and

daily training in virtue of children. The monks become adoptive fathers of a sort.[169] The

role of fatherhood in the monastery, though, must not be sought or even desired. It is

received as gift and heavy burden, as an act of obedience and an expression of

humility.[170]

The beauty of Benedict's notion of the abbot's fatherhood is the way he always

locates it as subordinate and subject to the Fatherhood of God. The abbot is called "abbas"

or "father," because he witnesses as Christ did to the true fatherhood of God. Benedict

shifts the fatherly image from the abbot to God the father, and back again throughout the

rule. For example, in the very first sentence of the rule, which begins "Listen, my son, to

the precepts of the master, and incline the ear of your hear to them, and willingly follow

and complete the admonitions of your affectionate father, that you may return to him

through the work of obedience."[171] Earlier on, I cited this passage as an example of

Benedict seeing himself or the abbot in a fatherly role, leading the monastic sons back to

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[167] RB 2.29: "et iterum: Percute filium tuum virga et liberabis animam eius a morte."

[168] RB 30.1–2; *Benedict's Rule*, 249–50: "Every age and mentality [degree of understanding] should have an appropriate regimen [discipline]. Therefore, as regards children or youths, or those who have little understanding of the gravity of excommunication, when such people misbehave, they should be deprived of food or pressured with sharp blows to correct them."

[169] See RB 59; *Benedict's Rule*, 485–92. This section deals with sending a child to live in the monastery, essentially to be raised in the monastic life with the option of membership at a later date.

[170] See RB 7.31; *RB 1980*, 197: "The second degree of humility is, when a man loveth not his own will, nor is pleased to fulfill his own desires but by his deeds carrieth out that word of the Lord which saith: 'I came not to do my own will but the will of Him that sent Me' (Jn 6:38);" and RB, 64.: "But when the Abbot hath been elected le him bear in mind how great a burden he hath taken up (*suscepit* = accepted, received also) and to whom he must give account of his stewardship."

[171] RB, pr.1: "Obsculta, o fili, praecepta magistri, et inclina aurem cordis tui, et admonitionem pii patris libenter excipe et efficaciter comple, ut ad eum per oboedientiae laborem redeas."

God, their eternal father. However true this may be, close attention to the text shows that the "affectionate father" of this passage may be read as God the father as well. The hint comes from the pronoun "eum" or "him." The fact that the pronoun is used suggests that an antecedent exist. In this case, the antecedent is "pii patris" or "of the affectionate father." It is this same "father" who in the first clause addresses the reader as "child." This first passage then, can be read in two ways: (1) the abbot, as father, entreats his children to listen to his affectionately given advice, so that they may return to God; (2) God the Father addresses the reader as "child" and admonishes him to willingly follow his own affectionately given advice, so that the reader may return to him, to God the Father.

A second example of this kind of constant subordination of the abbot's fatherhood to God's fatherhood comes in chapter 2, where Benedict explains on what grounds the abbot is an "abbot," or father, but then he goes on to call the abbot a "shepherd" and refers to God as father. "The *abbot* must, therefore, be aware that the *shepherd* will bear the blame wherever the *father of the household* finds that the sheep have yielded no profit."[172] Here the father is God and the household is the monastic community and the entire church.

Much of what is true of parenthood in the monastic household of God is true of parenthood in the married household of God. Married couples can learn about their own vocational task from the practices of monastic parenthood. Biological parents are the first educators and evangelizers of their children in the basic virtues of living in a communion of persons. Likewise, the abbot and all the brothers receive and are the first educators of

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[172] RB 2.7; *RB 1980*, 173: "Sciatque abas culpae pastoris incubere quidquid in ovidubs paterfamilias utilitatis minus potuerit invernire" (emphasis mine).

their new brothers in the basic virtues of living in an explicitly Christian life in common. This is just what a domestic church, or Christian family, should be, an explicitly Christian life in common. Just as was the case in monastic parenthood, the children learn more by example than by word.[173] Just as the abbot must account for the profitability of his sheep (their spiritual progress), so too the biological parents are held accountable for the destiny of their child's soul.[174] Just as the abbot's paternity is authentic only as a Christoform witness to the Divine Paternity, so too biological parents exercise authority in justice only insofar as they witness to the true paternity of God the Father. Finally, just as no monk may seek or intrigue to attain the paternal role of abbot, likewise biological parenthood must always be received as gift rather demanded as right or sought as something to be made by man.[175] Both roles of parent and abbot share a non-voluntary character. The abbot does not choose to be elected and serve as father to the holy monks but not the rebellious ones; likewise biological parents always receive their children as strangers (though they typically know and intend to be engaged in the kind of activity that makes one a parent). The ground is rich, thus, for research into what the parenthood of monastics and married persons share.

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[173] See RB 2.12; *RB 1980*, 173: "he must point out to them all that is good and holy more by example than by words...demonstrating God's instructions to the stubborn and the dull by a living example."

[174] See Alphonsus Liguori, who is citing St. John Chrysostom in a sermon on parenthood: we have been given "a great deposit in children; let us attend to them with great care'—*hom.* ix., in *I. ad Tit.* Children have not been given to parents as a present or possession, which they may dispose of as they please, but as a trust, for which, if lost through their negligence, they must render an account to God" (quoted in Alphonsus Liguori, "Liguori, "Sermon 36," in *Sermons of St. Alphonsus Liguori: For all Sundays of the Year*, 4th edition [Rockford, IL: TAN Books, 1982], 269–78, at 270).

[175] See note 72 above; see EV, 43: "Thus, a man and woman joined in matrimony become partners in a divine undertaking: through the act of procreation, God's gift is accepted and a new life opens to the future." See also EV, 92, where John Paul II states that serving the Gospel of life "is a responsibility which first concerns married couples, called to be givers of life, on the basis of an ever greater awareness of the meaning of procreation as a unique event which clearly reveals that human life is a gift received in order then to be given as a gift. In giving origin to a new life, parents recognize that the child, 'as the fruit of their mutual gift of love, is, in turn, a gift for both of them, a gift which flows from them.'" See *Donum vitae* 4, which argues that human dignity demands that the human person be received as gift and be created in the act of self-gift.

A fifth critique of the principles and practices of Christian householding in the authors treated above is the absence of trinitarian and Christological grounding for the practices. This critique harkens back to chapter two as well, where I noted the lacuna of Christ and the Trinity as the true nexus for and attempt to bring consecrated and conjugal life into dialogue. If these principles and practices are to be authentically Christian they must be rooted in this nexus, Christ the second Adam and the second person of the Trinity. Chapter 5 will develop this Christological, trinitarian connection between these two states of life. This development will provide a more sure footing for the principles and practices that have been developed, as well as for those yet to be developed.

The final critique of the principles of Christian householding shared by these authors is that the virtues of poverty, chastity, and obedience attract relatively little attention. Only Wendy Wright does any kind of reflection on them, and she looks explicitly in the context of the domestic church, not any broader version of Christian householding. These evangelical virtues have much to do with the life of the Christian household, especially the conjugal household, or domestic church, as we will see in the next two chapters, but much more could be done to look at their relevance for the entire household of God. In what way, for example, do all those living in God's household practice obedience, chastity, and poverty? In what way would these virtues apply in the kind of mixed communities that Breidenthal and Bennett imagine? I will leave these questions, however, and return to the one closer to the heart of the dissertation: what do the virtues, states, and vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience have to do with marriage as domestic church, as practice of Christian householding? How do these virtues demonstrate the consonance between consecrated and conjugal life?

**CONCLUSION**

In this chapter I set out to demonstrate the way consecrated religious life and married life in the Church share in their domestic character. The hope has been to avoid a unidirectional flow of witness or influence and invite a mutual cooperation in the one task of abiding in the household of God as His children and as the parents of the "least of these." In fact, I argued, monastic life and married life are sharers in practices common to all Christian householding. To that end the chapter began with a scriptural development of an ecclesiology of "householding" from John's Gospel, relying on previous work by Mary Coloe. Following on this notion of householding, part two noted the domestic and familial language and images employed by early, medieval, and modern documents of vowed religious life. This chapter proposed four sets of polar practices or principles that exist in these scholars' conceptions of Christian householding: intentionality and given-ness; familiarity and formality; exclusivity and permeability, and prayer and ministry. Finally, I forwarded and critiqued principles and practices of Christian householding in the work of twentieth-century scholars who see all of Christian community in domestic terms. This final section offered six critiques of the scholarship on Christian householding: (1) Breidenthal's overdrawn distinction between household and church; (2) the lacking development in theories of preparation and formation; (3) the need for understanding domestic practices of dealing with sin in ecclesial terms; (4) the underdevelopment of "parenthood" as a common task of all who inhabit the household of God; (5) a lack of Christology and Trinity; and (6) the absence of the virtues poverty, chastity, and obedience from practices and principles of Christian householding.

The following chapter takes a step toward answering the critiques above. It investigates three two additional paths for encountering consonance between consecrated life and married life. The first is the religious vows, or the evangelical virtues themselves. The study contributes to filling the gap in the principles of Christian householding where poverty, chastity, and obedience ought to appear. A start has been made by David Crawford at the level of Christian anthropology. Crawford argues that the evangelical counsels as lived by Christ—poverty, chastity, and obedience—reveal the nature of the human person and human community. Therefore, to live a human life of Christian perfection necessitates participation in these virtues. The second path is Christ. Both marriage and monasticism, then, as ways of pursuing Christian perfection, are necessarily christomorphic—they lead to the imitation of Christ who was poor above all, perfectly chaste, and obedient unto death. The challenge is to understand the ecclesial context for these virtues, taking the focus off of the individual, pursuing holiness on her own but as part of the ecclesial body. The third path, which remains untrodden, is to find a trinitarian ground for the consonance between married and religious life. Trinitarian language has been applied in places to married life (*Christifideles laici*, and the work of Marc Cardinal Oullet) and in other places to consecrated life (*Vita consecrata*). What remains is to draw together these sources in a synthesis and flesh out the consequences.

# CHAPTER 5: THEOLOGICAL LOCI FOR CONSONANCE AMONG THE STATES: ANTHROPOLOGY, CHRISTOLOGY, AND TRINITY AS FOUNDATION FOR MARRIED AND RELIGIOUS STATES

The last chapter saw marriage and consecrated life drawn together through a study of an ecclesial principle, their participation in the one household of God. Among my major critiques was to point out the lack of attention given to the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience as principles of Christian householding, as well as the lack of Christ as the nexus of Christian householding, and finally a disconnection from the Trinity as the Christian mystery central to both states of life. This chapter explores three additional methods for hearing consonance in the melodies of married and consecrated religious life, each of which answers critiques made throughout the dissertation.

Part one explores the centrality of vows: specifically how might we call the consent given in marriage a vow in the same way that we name religious profession with vows? This step explicitly answers the lacuna just mentioned, that of losing the notion of vow at the center of both religious and matrimonial forms of Christian householding. Establishing that vows lie at the center of both Christian states of life, which we already understand as forms of Christian householding, has the benefit of furthering the consonance between these states without "monasticizing" marriage. Vows made in an ecclesial context are essential to both states, not borrowed from one for the sake of the other.

The second part is developed from the thought of John Paul II, David Crawford, and Hans Urs von Balthasar.[1] I will show that the vows of religion themselves (poverty, chastity, obedience) connect religious and matrimonial life because they lie at the heart of

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[1] The concept of attunement is developed by Hans Urs von Balthasar in *Theological Aesthetics: The Glory of the Lord*, vol. 1, Seeing the Form (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1982).

what it means to be a human person (anthropology) and what the human person is called

to be (Christology). They sum up the state of the person *coram conjuge* and *coram Deo*,

that is, they show us what a person can give and what a person requires. The vows

themselves are summed up in the person of Christ, the model and source of both conjugal

and consecrated states of life. Turning our attention toward Christ, we see the connection

of both religious and marital life to poverty, chastity, and obedience in Christ, who

reveals to us through these virtues all that the human person is called to become.

The third section finding consonance between religious and married life answers

another critique of previous attempts—a lack of proper attention to the Trinity. Not only

is Christ the source of human fulfillment and flourishing and in a life of poverty, chastity,

and obedience, but he is the source of our eternal beatitude as Second Person of the

Trinity who invites us to share in his divine life as communions of persons. Specifically,

trinitarian language has been used to describe both conjugal and consecrated states of life,

but always in separate treatments. I intend to bring these descriptions together in one

account. The connection between religious and married life, then, will not only be

anthropological and Christological, but trinitarian as well.

## IS CONSENTING TO MARRIAGE THE SAME AS MAKING A VOW?

The thesis of this section is that one can call the giving and receiving of consent to

Christian marriage in the Catholic Church the making of vows. The purpose of making

the argument is to further the consonance between the consecrated and conjugal states as

vowed ways of life. It is of little consequence that both would be vows *simpliciter*; the

real upshot is that both are ecclesial vows, that is, they situate Christians more deeply within the life of the Church.

Contrary to popular understandings of marriage, neither the rite of marriage nor canon law refers to anything in the celebration of matrimony as a vow. The key words from the *Ordo Celebrandi Matrimonium* (hereafter, OCM) are *consensus*, *manifestastis*, and *promittere* (OCM, 60–64)[2], and key words from the *Codex Iuris Canonici* are *foedus* (CIC, 1055)*, contractus* (CIC, 1055.2), and *tradere* (CIC, 1057.2). Words central to both are *consensus* and *accipere* (OCM, 60–64, and CIC, 1057.2; 1095–1107). The person assisting the marriage first asks about the *intentus* of the couple (*Interrogationes ante consensum*). The spouses then express (*exprimere*) and manifest (*manifestare*) their consent in the presence of God and Church (*coram Deo eiusque Ecclesia consensum vestrum exprimite*)[3] by means of answers to questions or by recitation of promises (*promittere*). The person assisting then formally receives the consent (*receptio consensus*) which the spouses just manifested in the presence of the Church (*coram Ecclesia manifestastis*).[4]

Not only do canon law and the OCM avoid the word "vow" (*votum*), but canon law seems to place an impediment against thinking of what happens at matrimony as "vows," properly speaking. Canon law defines "vow" as "a deliberate and free promise

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[2] See the *Ordo Celebrandi Matrimonium*, editio typica altera (Rome: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1991), 16–19. References to the Latin of the rite will be from the 1991 OCM, which has no official English translation publicly released. I will note wherever the Latin differs from the 1969 OCM. The English of the rite will come from the 1969 translation.
[3] OCM, 61, p. 17.
[4] OCM 1991, 64, p. 18.

made to God about a possible and better good, [one that] must be fulfilled by reason of the virtue of religion."[5]

> More specifically, a vow is *public* if a legitimate superior accepts it in the name of the Church; otherwise, it is *private*. A vow is solemn if the Church has recognized it as such; otherwise, it is simple. A vow is *personal* if the person making the vow promises an action; *real* if the person making the vow promises some thing; *mixed* if it shares the nature of a personal and a real vow.[6]

Given these definitions, if one is to refer to what couples do in celebrating their marriage as making vows, a case will have to be made for it.

Let us now establish that the giving of intent and consent in the wedding rite has the character of a vow. I am not attempting to demonstrate that any official Church document has called the giving of consent a vow, but whether the consent given in marriage fulfills the definition of public, solemn vow given in canon law as it refers particularly to the vows of religious life. First, is marriage "deliberate" and "free?" The answer is yes. These facts are established three ways: (1) it is common practice in diocese of the United States to require a 6-month period of preparation before marriage can be solemnized in a Catholic parish; (2) by the priest's investigation of impediments; and (3) in the three questions of intent before the fiancés formally manifest their consent. The priest asks, "have you come here freely and without reservation to give yourselves to each other in marriage? Will you love and honor each other as man and wife for the rest of your lives? Will you accept children lovingly from God, and bring them up according to the law of Christ and his Church?"[7] The first question asks the couple to declare their

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[5] CIC 1191.1: "Votum, idest promissio deliberata ac libera Deo facta de bono possibili et meliore, ex virtute religionis impleri debet."

[6] CIC 1192.1–1192.3: "Votum est publicum, si nomine Ecclesiae a legitimo acceptetur; secus privatim. Sollemne, si ab Ecclesia uti tale fuerit agnitum; secus simplex. Personale, quo action voventis promittitur; reale, quo promittitur res aliqua; mixtum, quod personalis et realis naturam participat."

[7] "Venistisne huc sine coactione, sed libero et pleno corde ad Matrimonium contrahendum?" OCM 1991, 60.

freedom to marry and their deliberate desire to marry. The second and third questions

verify that they intend the same things about marriage that the Church intends, that is, it

asks the couple to express their deliberate intent to contract a marriage as understood by

the Church. That the consent be deliberate is clear also from rotal jurisprudence;

ignorance can prevent a marriage from being valid.[8] The giving of marital consent, then,

is necessarily free and deliberate.

Second, is marriage a "promise made to God?" Based strictly on word usage,

"promise" might appear to be inessential to the marriage rite. "Promise," *promitto*,

appears in but one of the two options for giving consent. The promise (*promitto*) spoken

in matrimony is spoken *not* to God directly. Rather, the spouses say "Promitto me tibi

fidem servaturum" (I promise to preserve faithfulness to you).[9] The other form avoids

"promise" (*promitto*) entirely; instead this second form (approved in the United States,

and without a Latin text) uses "take." "I, N., *take* you, N., for my lawful…" (OCM 1969,

25, in *The Rites*, 542). The fact that only one of the two forms of the vows includes the

term "promise" countermands any attempt to argue that "promise" is essential to the

consent that ratifies a marriage. If "promise" were essential to the consent, then it would

necessarily be included in any form of the "vows." Since "promise" is essential to "vow,"

and "promise" is not essential to matrimonial consent, then we might conclude that

matrimonial consent is not a vow.

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[8] See Jerry M. Sherba, "Canon 1096: Ignorance as a Ground for Nullity," *Canon Law Society of America, Proceedings* 59 (1997): 282–299; Elissa Rinere, "Error Which Causes the Contract," *Studia Canonica* 38.1 (2004): 65–84.

[9] The current English translation has the couple saying "I promise to be true to you." (OCM 1969, 25). This official translation allows the suggestion that the spouses are actually making promises to God about their relationship to each other.

Overcoming these literalist readings of the rite and its translations is not difficult if one understands the meaning of the verb "promise" to be a person's binding commitment entered into by word (whether spoken or written). Whether or not the word "promise" is used, couples bind themselves by word to certain actions on behalf of the spouse and to dispositions toward the spouse. The consent, therefore, has the character of a promise regardless of the term's appearance in the rite. Furthermore, the Catechism of the Catholic Church states that "Baptism and Confirmation, Matrimony and Holy Orders always entail promises."[10] Since, in Aquinas's formulation (which the CIC essentially follows), vows and promises are equivalent, we can say that the fiancés make vows when they give their consent in the form of a promise.[11]

Third, is the giving of consent a promise made "to God?" The marriage rite is set up with the assumption that the consent is expressed in the presence of God and the Church (*coram Deo eisusque Ecclesia consensum vestrum exprimite*).[12] Whether or not the fiancés explicitly think of themselves as talking to God at the moment they are expressing consent (I think this number is quite low), the language of the rite contextualizes the expression of consent as something that takes place in the very presence of God. The promise of matrimony, then, is as much made to God as it is to anyone else present. Furthermore, the 1969 English translation of the OCM takes the focus off of the person to whom the consent is given and emphasizes what is consented to. Fiancés express a promise made *to* God *about* disposition toward and actions on behalf of

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[10] CCC, 2101.

[11] See Aquinas, ST II-II, q. 88, a. 1, s.c.: "It is written (Ecclesiastes 5:3): 'If thou hast vowed anything to God, defer not to pay it, for an unfaithful and foolish promise displeaseth Him.' Therefore to vow is to promise, and a vow is a promise." For Aquinas, three things are essential to a vow: "the first is deliberation. The second is a purpose of the will; and the third is a promise, wherein is completed the nature of a vow" (ST II-II, q. 88, a. 1, resp.).

[12] OCM 1991, 61.

the spouse. It reads, "I promise to be true to you" rather than "I promise to you that I will be true." We could thus read the English text as a promise to God mediated by the spouse, the assistant, and the witnessing body of the church. This is all for the better, for the promises are made not only to God, but to the spouse, the assisting minister, and the gathered community. Finally, the contextualization of the marital consent within a liturgy characterizes the activity as an act of worship. The only legitimate object of worship is God. All liturgical actions, then, including the consent of marriage, have God as their end.

Fourth, is the giving of marital consent a "free and deliberate promise made to God *about a possible and better good*?" We cannot answer "yes" or "no" to this question before asking another: vows concern promises about a good that is "possible and better" than what? First, the answer cannot be "better than any other possible good." If this were true, then the a vow could only concern the "best possible good." Since the canonical definition of a vow follows Aquinas' definition, his clarification on the matter of a vow is instructive here:

> That which is not necessary, neither absolutely, nor on the supposition of an end, is altogether voluntary, and therefore is most properly the matter of a vow. And this is said to be a greater good in comparison with that which is universally necessary for salvation.[13]

It is not necessary for salvation that a person indissolubly, irrevocably bind herself to another as a partner in seeking sanctification through a *consortium vitae et amoris*, yet this is the commitment of marriage. Because it is voluntary, making a commitment to work for the salvation of at least one person can be considered a better good than making no commitment to seek any particular person's salvation. The marital consent promises a better good than a non-vowed celibate life because it takes on duties and obligations

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[13] Aquinas, ST II-II, q. 88, a. 2, resp.

beyond those required of the Christian life in general, namely, the practices and duties of marriage as an ecclesial practice of Christian householding, a *consortium totius vitae et amoris*.

Finally, does the expression of marital consent establish duties that "must be fulfilled by reason of the virtue of religion?" The virtue of religion, according to Aquinas, belongs under the species of "justice," as religion is the virtue of giving to God what is God's due.[14] Understood thus, fulfilling the duties of marriage must be seen as acts of devotion to God, acts of worship. If our duties to the spouse exist as a result of a vow, then the primary reason to fulfill them is that their fulfillment is owed to God. Again, the liturgical context and nature of the marital rite makes a suggestive case for the necessity of fulfilling marriage vows by reason of the virtue of religion. First, the marriage rite is performed *coram deo* and *coram ecclesiam*. Second, the Church strongly suggests linking the rite of matrimony to the Eucharist by celebrating the rite in conjunction with a nuptial mass. The spouses are encouraged to contextualize their own expression of consent to love and honor one another within the Lord's consent to love his Church and give himself to the Church in his life, death, and resurrection. The couple's marriage situated within the prayer over the gifts, the eucharistic memorial, and the eucharistic preface. In this way the spouses are invited to see their own future self-sacrifice as participations in Christ's own paschal mystery made present in the celebration of the Eucharist.[15]

A case has now been made for calling the expression of intent and consent a vow as the term is defined in canon law in the context of religious life. For the rest of this chapter, then, I may speak of the marital "vows" as the complex manifestation and

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[14] Aquinas, ST II-II, q. 81, articles 1, 2.
[15] OCM, 1991, 231–39, pp. 74–77; *The Rites* (1969), 543–45, 563–69.

expression of intention and consent spoken by the fiancés, received by the assisting minister or lay person, and witnessed by the gathered faithful during the nuptial rite, but I must now ask further what kind of vow is the expression of marital intent and consent. The religious profession is considered a public, solemn, and mixed vow. Is the marital vow a public, solemn, and mixed vow?

First, are the marital vows public? According to canon law, "a vow is *public* if a legitimate superior accepts it in the name of the Church; otherwise, it is *private*."[16] Certainly, since the nuptial rite requires an assistant and witnesses, and since the Church has made many efforts throughout history to reduce clandestine marriages, the vows are understood to be public in nature. They are the concern of the entire ecclesial community, the entire body of Christ. After all, the spouses are not merely married *coram deo* and *coram ecclesiam*, but they are married (as Christians) *in Christ*. Their marriage affects all who are in Christ and places requirements on all who are in Christ. These points are easily understood, but do the marital vows fit canon law's definition of "public?" The Code of Canon Law defines "vow" within a section on the "other acts of divine worship" (CIC, 1191–92). The use of "superior" in the definition of "vow" seems to suggest that authors of the code have religious profession explicitly in mind. I doubt that the authors of the code, by mentioning "superior," are attempting to rule out "vow" as the action of fiancés during the marriage rite. Nonetheless, we must take the code seriously here. Even if a superior is required for a valid vow, the actions of spouses can still be regarded as vows; if we consider a "superior" to be a person canonically responsible for holding the vowing party accountable to the object of the vow, then we can easily describe the action of fiancés in the nuptial rite as public. After all, they express their consent to each other,

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[16] CIC, 1192.

the assistant, and the congregation, all of whom represent and are the church. The

assistant, the other spouse, and all the faithful witnessing (as well as those not present),

are canonically bound to offer "the Christian faithful the assistance by which the

matrimonial state is preserved in a Christian spirit and advances in perfection."[17] They

are canonically bound to provide the assistance necessary for the fulfillment of the vows.

Especially the assistant and the two official witnesses bind themselves to supporting and

holding accountable the spouses. In this sense, then, the spouses can be said to make their

vows to a superior; therefore, the conjugal vows are public vows.

Are the conjugal vows, like the vows of religion, mixed vows? Are they both

"personal" and "real?" According to canon law, "a vow is *personal* if the person making

the vow promises an action; *real* if the person making the vow promises some thing;

*mixed* if it shares the nature of a personal and a real vow."[18] The religious profession of

obedience is a personal vow to actions done in obedience to the rule and the superior. The

religious profession of poverty is a real vow that makes all material wealth the property

of the community rather than the individual. The vow of chastity requires an omission of

certain actions, as well as a commitment to positively chaste actions; it is, therefore, a

personal vow. Taken together, then, the vows of religion are mixed. The same is true for

the conjugal vows. The conjugal vows are unquestioningly personal; spouses promise to

"give yourselves to each other in marriage," to "love and honor each other as man and

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[17] See CIC, 1063–1064: "Pastors of souls are obliged to take care that their ecclesiastical community offers the Christian faithful the assistance by which the matrimonial state is preserved in a Christian spirit and advances in perfection. This assistance must be offered especially by: (1) preaching, catechesis adapted to minors, youth, and adults…(2) personal preparation to enter marriage, which disposes the spouses to the holiness and duties of their new state; (3) a fruitful liturgical celebration of marriage which is to show that that the spouses signify and share in the mystery of the unity and fruitful love between Christ and the Church; (4) help offered to those who are married, so that faithfully preserving and protecting the conjugal covenant, they daily come to lead holier and fuller lives in their family…It is for the local ordinary to take care that such assistance is organized fittingly."
[18] CIC, 1192.3.

wife," and to "accept children lovingly, and bring them up according to the law of Christ and his Church." All of these promises require a whole host of actions and practices, what *Gaudium et spes* calls a "*totius vitae consuetudo.*"[19] Further, the conjugal vows are no less real vows than the religious vows. The distinction is that the conjugal vows are implicit rather than explicit regarding the "things" concerned. The plain fact is that no spouse could fulfill the actions required in the personal aspect of the vows without a sharing of things. Secondly, one of the forms of expressing consent uses the words "for richer, for poorer." The implication here is that the spouses will be richer or poorer together, and that possession of certain material wealth will not be a condition of their union.[20] The conjugal vows, like the vows of religion, are mixed.

Finally, we must ask what it means to say that a marriage vow is solemn. A marriage vow will not be solemn in the same sense that religious vows are solemn. Some religious institutes center around simple vows (e.g., institutes of apostolic life) and others around solemn vows (e.g., monastic orders).[21] Whereas simple vows make actions contrary to the vow illicit, solemn vows make actions contrary to the vow invalid. For example, a member of an apostolic religious congregation requires permission to use items she owns, but a member of the Jesuit order is canonically incapable of owning any property. In marriage, though, all marriage vows are solemn. Aquinas offers some help in understanding how "solemn" applies to marriage. Aquinas uses the term "solemn" and

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[19] GS, 50.

[20] Civil marriage law understands both of the spouses to be sharers in the property of the marriage, requiring an equal division of assets in the case of divorce. Of course, this has less to do with the notion of sharing the whole of one's life and more to do with protecting divorcees (especially women) from destitution upon divorce. I am not making recourse to the civil law for support to the claim that marriage is a real vow.

[21] See John P. Beal, et al., *New Commentary on the Code of Canon Law* (Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist, 2000), 1417–18.

"solemnization" to speak of the marriage rite.[22] His explanation offers good reason that a

marriage ought to be considered as including solemn vows. "Solemnization," writes

Thomas:

> Is not wont to be employed, save when a man gives himself up entirely to some
> particular thing. For the nuptial solemnization takes place only when the marriage
> is celebrated, and when the bride and bridegroom mutually deliver the power over
> their bodies to one another…or [when a person] embraces the state of perfection
> by renouncing the world and his own will by the profession of a certain rule.[23]

"It is not customary," he continues, "to solemnize particular acts, but the embracing of a

new state, as we have said above."[24] For Aquinas, it is on account of the total gift

involved that one can consider the nuptial rite and the religious profession solemn. If we

understand the marital promise to give oneself and receive the other, then we would be on

solid ground to call such the conjugal vow solemn indeed.

This section has shown that the giving and receiving of consent in marriage can

be called a vow as the term is understood in canon law and the theology of Aquinas. The

upshot of this fact is that marriage can be more fully understood as a participation in

vowed ecclesial life, not because married people are borrowing some aspect of what is

proper only to religious life, but because both are sharing in a common ecclesial practice

of making vows about the way people commit to living in God's household.

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[22] Civil codes of many states in the United States refer to "solemnization" of marriage. A solemnization
was required and is required in many civil codes for the marriage to be considered valid. The Anglican
communion still refers to the marriage rite as a "solemnization." This fact is reflected in the development of
marriage theology and pre-marital preparation programs among Anglican theologians. For example, Bishop
Spong (John S. Spong, *Living in Sin? A Bishop Rethinks Human Sexuality* [New York: HarperCollins,
1988]) and Adrian Thatcher have both proposed step-wise entrances into marriage that begin with a
betrothal rite, a civil marriage, and a later solemnization of the marriage in an ecclesial rite. See Thatcher,
*Marriage After Modernity: Christian Marriage in Postmodern Times* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield
Academic, 1999), chap. 4.

[23] Aquinas, ST, II-II, q. 88, a. 7., resp.

[24] Aquinas, ST, II-II, q. 88, a. 7, rpl. obj. 2.

## MARRIAGE AND CONSECRATION AS ANTHROPOLOGICALLY FUNDAMENTAL

Vows, which take central position in both consecrated and matrimonial life, provide a consonance between the matrimonial and consecrated states. Those making vows of religion and marriage both offer themselves as gift to an other, and both accept all that an other has to give. The question among scholars remains, what is the most basic gift the human persons can make to each other in community? What does the human and the human community need to be given? In light of the Christian anthropology of John Paul II, which finds a spousal, or nuptial, orientation at the center of human existence, one group of scholars will find celibacy to be the most revelatory vow of religion, and the one that both links and distinguishes conjugal life and consecrated life. On the other hand, we will find in Aquinas and von Balthasar the opinion that obedience, as a gift of the will, constitutes a more fundamental gift than celibacy. On this account, marriage and religious life are both distinguished and united by the living of these vows.

Much of this chapter will deal with truths about each human person, but what must remain in the forefront of our minds is the social, ecclesial shape of the argument I have been making and continue to make here. Whatever they may tell us about the human person, the religious and conjugal vows only speak in the ecclesial context. They are only possible, after all, for persons who, by baptism, constitute a communion of persons in Christ, a communion of persons formed into the bride of Christ. David Crawford, who studies the anthropological foundations within the vows of religion, notes the following: "Marriage and virginity are also fuller 'expression' (FC, 11, 56; RD, 7) or 'articulation' and 'disclosure,' of the interior meaning of the communion initiated in the 'fundamental

choice' of faith (VS, 65–66), contained universally in Baptism, and the other sacraments of initiation."[25] This baptism foresees already the future vows. Furthermore, the vows of religion and matrimony are, in a sense, the church's vows. Rather than disclosing this or that truth about each individual, they declare the truth about the church as Christ's pure and holy bride, as God's holy people renouncing sin and embracing the way of the Lord Jesus. In the vowed religious, the church prophetically declares Christ's complete gift of self in renunciation and obedience; in the married the church prophetically declares present Christ's complete gift of self in favor of his indissoluble bond of love for the Church. The vows of religion manifest ecclesial truths: (1) that the church is Christ's body, living in and sharing his virtues of poverty, chastity, and obedience; and (2) that the Church is Christ's bride given to the bridegroom fully, faithfully, freely, and fruitfully. Thus, while I may be speaking in the coming sections of what the vows tell us about *anthropos*, what they say is only intelligible within the context of the church and because of what Christ has done by joining himself to humanity in the Incarnation.

With John Paul II, David Crawford has made the claim that "the states of life— that is to say, marriage and consecration—are 'fundamental to,' and therefore disclose the meaning of, Christian community and, indeed, all authentically human community."[26]

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[25] David Crawford, "Christian Community and the States of Life: A Reflection on the Anthropological Significance of Virginity and Marriage," *Communio* 29.2 (2002): 337–365, at 342. Crawford's thesis is about Christian community rather than the Christian individual, ultimately: "The thesis of this essay, then, is that the states of life—that is to say, marriage and consecration—are 'fundamental to,' and therefore disclose the inner meaning of, Christian community and, indeed, all authentically human community. By 'fundamental' I mean that marriage and virginity engage the human person's desire and freedom for community at their deepest level, the level at which the human person is *capax Dei*. This is because human desire and freedom are ordered at their deepest level within the human vocation to communion in love (cf. *Veritatis Splendor*, 86)" (ibid., 341). Furthermore, Matthias Scheeben, in the classic *Mysteries of Christianity* (trans. Cyril Vollert, S.J. [St. Louis: Herder, 1946], 374, 543–44) points to the nuptial character of all the sacraments of initiation. The Incarnation itself is a union of Christ to all of humanity that is nuptial in character because it prepares for and makes possible a union of one flesh, a nuptial union between the Christian and Christ, as well as the entire Church to Christ.

[26] David Crawford, "Christian Community," 341.

Recall that Christian community can be understood as householding with God, and that entering the household was understood through John's Gospel with domestic language (birth, death, filiality, and marriage).[27] Crawford's claim is, in a sense, an intensification of the reality I described in the last chapter. For Crawford, spousal language reveals not only a part of ecclesial and human domestic reality, but spousal language discloses the reality of ecclesial community and all human community. As Crawford puts it, "marriage and virginity engage the human person's desire and freedom for community at the deepest level, the level at which the human person is *capax Dei*. This is because human desire and freedom are ordered at their deepest level within the human vocation to communion in love."[28] This desire is a desire to love and be loved; this freedom is a freedom for communion with God and man.

Both of these capacities (for love and freedom) are fulfilled, Crawford suggests, in Mary the mother of God, in whom resides both virginal and nuptial vocations. But even though Mary is one person, we must continue to see this as an ecclesial truth. Mary is an embodiment of the Church. She is mysteriously mother, body, and bride of Christ at once. Recall from chapter three how Augustine claimed that virgins and married persons share in Mary's motherhood of Christ by bearing the same Christ in their heart. As Crawford has it: "Both the counsels and marriage offer the form and content of the Marian fiat and receptivity, and therefore, as I would argue, of nuptial 'belonging,' and all Christian and human communion."[29] Mary's *fiat*, and the church's with it, are meaningful not because they are said by Mary as individual woman, but because they

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[27] Chapter four spoke of John the Baptist as the friend of the bridegroom calling us to wed the Lord who is both bridegroom and wedding guest. This same Lord is also our brother. This same Lord also washes and feeds us, and raises us to life. John's vision of the ecclesial life is domestic.

[28] Crawford, "Christian Community," 341.

[29] Ibid.

were and are uttered by one taken up into the mystery of salvation. In Mary's case by the grace of immaculate conception, in the church's case by the grace of the Spirit at Pentecost and the continued grace in the sacraments of Christian initiation.

What is it about marriage and consecrated life that makes them revelations of human nature and the nature of human community? Crawford had proposed that both states in life relate to the fundamental human desire to love and be loved. Von Balthasar has suggested that "any true love has *the inner form of a vow*."[30] The fact that both the married and religious states of life are constituted by vows provides Crawford guidance. The vows of religion, for Crawford, fundamentally disclose the nature of the human person as *creature*. Poverty "expresses the true situation of the creature before his Creator." Vowing poverty makes a prophetic reality of the fact that we are radically contingent beings, dependent and without rightful claim before God to personal goods and resources, let alone existence itself. The vow of poverty reminds the religious and the non-vowed that we depend on God as and for our origin, our sustenance, and our *telos*. We did not originate ourselves, nor do we sustain ourselves by something we have created. As church we do not sanctify ourselves. We offer continual thanksgiving at the eucharistic table for the holiness God has wrought in us. Finally, we are destined for something beyond ourselves completely. Poverty is witnessed by the Incarnation (Phil 2:16), as well as in the Trinity itself, which contains an eternal "from"—Son begotten *from* the Father, Spirit proceeding *from* Father and Son.[31]

Obedience too reveals the contingent nature of the person *coram Deo*. In our post-lapsarian context, the vow of obedience is our constant reminder of the long narrative of

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[30] Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Christian State of Life*, trans. Mary Frances McCarthy (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1983), 64.
[31] Crawford, "Christian Community," 346–47.

salvation history. Because of the Fall, all Christian life takes the character of "returning to God."[32] Following the *exitus*/*reditus* motif, obedience is a reminder of the fellowship and friendship with God that we left behind, as well as the friendship and fellowship with God to which Christ invites us. Christ's own obedience discloses not only what we are *from* but what we are *for*. God the Son is begotten *from* the Father and exists *for* obedience to the Father's will. The Son's obedience is so complete that the Son's will is identical to the Father's will. This fact is expressed in the Christological doctrine of Christ's two wills, both human and divine.[33] In light of who Jesus is and what he has done, we are invited to live as Christ did, entirely for God's will and purpose, which is our participation in his reign on earth now and his eternal heavenly kingdom to come. As Crawford has it, "Creaturely, finite freedom is the 'image of the triune Persons' infinite freedom, and again, in the first instance, the image of the 'from' and 'for,' and the freedom in the obedience of the Son." "Freedom, in other words, is both 'given' to the creature and authentically his own."[34] Interestingly, even our obedience amplifies our awareness of the poverty mentioned above. We cannot obey as Christ does, freely and completely. Our power to obey freely is itself a gift from God: one we possess as our own, but one that did not originate in us. Furthermore, obedience requires discipline and asceticism.

Before moving on, I would like to offer a nuance to Crawford's exposition of obedience, poverty, human nature, and freedom. We must keep in mind that his thesis is to demonstrate that the evangelical counsels reveal the nature of Christian and human

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[32] Columba Marmion, *Christ the Ideal of the Monk*, 18–19.

[33] See the Council of Constantinople III, in Henry Denzinger, *The Sources of Catholic Dogma*, trans. Roy J Deferrari from the 13th edition of Henry Denzinger's *Enchiridion Symbolorum* (St. Louis, MO: B. Herder, 1957), 113–16.

[34] Crawford, "Christian Community," 347–48.

community, not merely individuals. In what we have seen above, the focus, though,

seems to land more on the individual than the community. That the social question is not

explicitly taken up here need not imply that he rejects it. What I would like to do is

foreground the social implications of what he has said about poverty and obedience.

Poverty declares our need for community, and obedience enacts our commitment to

return to God in community (that is, together), understanding that obedience to God the

Father must be mediated in and through community. For poverty in solitude is destitution,

and obedience in isolation ends with pride, the obedience to oneself alone.

## Consecrated Celibacy as Anthropologically Fundamental

While poverty and obedience are important, it is virginity (consecrated celibacy)

that often takes primacy of place and honor in thinking on the vows of religion.[35]

Crawford argues that virginity is fundamental in the deepest, anthropological-ontological

way:

> Poverty expresses the fact that man's origin and end can never be claimed as his
> own; obedience expresses the fact that freedom always implies obedience to the
> truth of the other. However, virginity's particular expression of creaturehood
> seems more explicitly to indicate the fundamental human 'desire' and possibility
> of belonging to God.[36]

Virginity transforms and contains within it the breadth of human love, which

involves desiring the other for oneself (eros) as well as desiring the good of the other

(agape). Relying on John Paul II's theology of religious life in *Vita consecrata* and

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[35] It is not the physical state of virginity that I am speaking of nor even the individual commitment to
maintain that state. Virginity as anything but a participation in the virginity of Christ or Christ's bride the
church is not the concern of the vow in this section.

[36] Crawford, "Christian Community and the States of Life," 350.

*Redemptionis donum*, as well as on John Paul II's collection of audiences now titled *Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body*, Crawford identifies the deepest human response as nuptial, and concludes with John Paul II that the deepest human desire is also nuptial or spousal.[37] Thus, what makes virginity fundamental among the religious vows is the same thing that makes it so similar to the conjugal vows. Or, as Crawford has it, the vow of virginity "reflects the totality of the gift of self as bodily-spiritual creature."[38]

Crawford is not alone in finding sexual renunciation the most fundamental of the religious vows. Nor is he alone in relating it explicitly to the marital vow of fidelity. Sandra Schneiders, who does not treat Crawford's work, shares his conclusion that virginity is the essential vow of religion; in her in-depth analysis of consecrated celibacy she defines it as the central vow of the consecrated religious life in community. In fact she calls vowed religious life by the title "consecrated celibacy" throughout the work. Schneiders prefers the term "consecrated celibacy" to "virginity," as the latter often over-focuses on physical state and has been reduced to a commitment that makes a person more available for ministerial freedom. Schneiders prefers "celibacy" for its

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[37] In VC, 14, John Paul II calls this vow the first and essential counsel. Further, in *Redemptionis donum*, 11 he states that virginity "is addressed in a particular way to the love of the human heart. It places greater emphasis on the spousal character of this love, while poverty and still more obedience seem to emphasize primarily the aspect of redemptive love contained in religious consecration.

[38] Crawford, "Christian Community," 348. See *Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body*, trans. and intro., Michael Waldstein (Boston: Pauline, 2006), 78:4, p. 431. John Paul II writes that both of the states, marriage and religious life, are spousal because they expressed through the complete gift of self: "In the life of an authentically Christian community, the attitudes and the values proper to the one and the other state [marriage and consecrated religious life]—that is, to the one and the other essential and conscious choice as the vocation for one's whole earthly life and in the perspective of the 'heavenly Church"—*complete each other and in some sense interpenetrate*. Perfect conjugal love must be marked by the faithfulness and the gift to the one and only Bridegroom (and also by the faithfulness and gift of the Bridegroom to the one and only Bride) on which religious profession and priestly celibacy are based. In sum, the nature of the one as well as the other love is 'spousal,' that is, expressed through the complete gift of self. The one as well as the other love tends to express that spousal meaning of the body, which has been inscribed 'from the beginning' in the personal structure of man and woman."

anthropological richness. She, with John Paul II, values the nuptial language of consecrated celibacy. Sexual abstinence in celibacy, she writes, "is analogous to the role of sexual fidelity in monogamous marriage."[39] It is a corollary flowing from the total gift of self to the other—in marriage the spouse, in celibacy Christ.[40] Schneiders defines "consecrated celibacy" as "the freely chosen response to a personally discerned vocation to charismatically grounded, religiously motivated, sexually abstinent, lifelong commitment to Christ that is externally symbolized by remaining unmarried."[41] Furthermore (for Schneiders), celibacy is the fundamental vow of religion because it alone is a biblical counsel, the vow most prophetic in the face of contemporary culture, and the most anthropologically basic vow.[42] "Celibacy is the constitutive vow of religious life because it creates the lifeform of unmediated quest for God to the exclusion of all other primary life commitments."[43] In Schneiders's account, who and what we love determines who we are and whose we are. Thus celibacy is the definitive vow of religion since by it a person commits to love and seek God exclusively.

What we have seen in these authors[44] is that some theologies of the consecrated and conjugal life place celibacy in a central a position because the authors assume the anthropological priority of the human person's nuptial potency as developed by John Paul II. Marriage to another Christian or marriage to Christ himself are the two responses to

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[39] Schneiders, *Selling All*, 128. See also chap. 5, where she argues that, among images used to understand the spirituality of religious life, the image of consecrated person as spouse of Christ offers the richest possibilities.

[40] I say both to Christ, one mediated by the whole religious community, the other mediated by the spouse and the community issuing therefrom.

[41] Ibid., 117.

[42] Ibid., 126. As one might expect, this claim is not uncontested nor without support. Schneiders argues that poverty and obedience are commands while consecrated celibacy is a charism not given to all and must be freely chosen. Francis Moloney, S.D.B., *A Life of Promise* (Wilmington, DE: Glazier, 1984), sees all three (poverty, chastity, obedience) as evangelical imperatives.

[43] Schneiders, *Selling All*, 132.

[44] Other authors take this position as well. For example, see Angelo Cardinal Scola, *The Nuptial Mystery*, trans. Michelle K. Borras (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005).

the fundamental human potency to be given to and receive another person completely and definitively as mysterious union of spirit and flesh. Both are connected to the eschatological union of the church with its bridegroom, but in distinct ways: one is an anticipation of the eschatological union of the entire church to Christ as bride to bridegroom; the other is the commitment in this world to make present by grace that eschatological reality in the relationship of one man and one woman.[45] This nuptial reality, as a reality of receiving and giving, reveals where we are from and what we are for. Therefore, if this nuptial reality really is at the heart of both religious and conjugal life, it also determines that both religious and matrimonial life "constitutively and objectively possesses the 'form of holiness.'"[46] The consonance between religious and conjugal life, then, includes the fact that both are "specific source" and "original means" of sanctification.[47]

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[45] See VC, 7. John Paul II writes that consecrated virgins, "either alone or in association with others, they constitute *a special eschatological image of the Heavenly Bride and of the life to come*, when the Church will at last fully live her love for Christ the Bridegroom." See also VC, 16, where he writes that "it is the duty of the *consecrated life* to show that the Incarnate Son of God is the *eschatological goal towards which all things tend*, the splendor before which every other light pales, and the infinite beauty which alone can fully satisfy the human heart. In the consecrated life, then, it is not only a matter of following Christ with one's whole heart, of loving him 'more than father or mother, more than son or daughter' (cf. Mt 10:37)— for this is required of every disciple—but of living and expressing this *by conforming one's whole existence to Christ* in an all-encompassing commitment which foreshadows the eschatological perfection, to the extent that this is possible in time and in accordance with the different charisms" (emphasis mine). The same point appears again in VC, 26, 27, 29, 59. As for the eschatological character of marriage, John Paul II is at one remove from such a claim. His "eschatology" of marriage is only implicit. Sacramental marriage is a witness to an eschatological truth (Christ's marriage to the Church) and a sacrament of that truth. Spouses make present God's own love in communion, that is when they together order their lives by conjugal charity, which is a participation in Christ's own charity, the selfsame charity that binds the Church eschatologically to her Bridegroom. "In this sacrifice there is entirely revealed that plan which God has imprinted on the humanity of man and woman since their creation; the marriage of baptized persons thus becomes a real symbol of that new and eternal covenant sanctioned in the blood of Christ. The Spirit which the Lord pours forth gives a new heart, and renders man and woman capable of loving one another as Christ has loved us. Conjugal love reaches that fullness to which it is interiorly ordained, conjugal charity, which is the proper and specific way in which the spouses participate in and are called to live the very charity of Christ who gave Himself on the Cross" (FC, 13).

[46] Crawford, "Christian Community," 354.

[47] FC, 56.

While Schneiders and Crawford identify the prophetic and signifying quality of the vows (especially celibacy), they leave out the understanding of the vows as "means" or "practices." Consecrated life functions as a means because it is constituted by practices ordered explicitly to growth in holiness (e.g., through a rule of life). Marriage, too, functions as such a means because each spouse daily ministers to the other the grace of the sacrament constituted by their marriage as a "*totius vitae consuetudo et communio*."[48] Marriage and virginity are complements, but not because one is a group of holy persons to pray for the other, nor because one renounces what the other takes up. True, consecrated celibacy witnesses to a complete devotion to our primary relationship with the God who created, redeemed, and gives himself to each person in the power of the Spirit, but "marriage helps consecration to avoid a kind of individualism: in revealing something of the nature of nuptiality, it shows that virginity is not a kind of 'aloofness,' or a self-centered search for 'my holiness,' but is ordered to a radical communion of persons,"[49] a similar earthly communion of persons and the identical trinitarian communion of persons toward which matrimony orders spouses.

It is no surprise, then, when Crawford makes the further claim that, since the states of life both reveal anthropological truth, the states of life also disclose ecclesial truth. The states of life tell us as much about community as they do about the individual. Again, at the center of this claim lies the assumption that the nuptial desire and response of the human person is most fundamental, and that this desire and response is active in the life of both vowed religious and married persons. In this way of thinking, the consecrated life is directed toward the universal, the whole ecclesial community whereas

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[48] GS, 50. "Ideo etsi proles, saepius tam optata, deficit, matrimonium ut totius vitae consuetudo et communio perseverat, suumque valorem atque indissolubilitatem servat."

[49] Crawford, "Christian Community," 362.

marriage is directed toward a particular person and a particular *ecclesia domestica* as a specific instantiation of the ecclesial communion.[50]

While Crawford and Schneiders identified celibacy as the most fundamental vow of religion because they follow on John Paul II's notion of the nuptial orientation at the center of the human person,[51] another contemporary theologian, Jörg Splett gives primacy to virginity for different reasons. Splett bases his anthropology of human relations and desires on Paul Zulehner's phenomenology of humanity's primordial and intrinsically measureless desires for name, power, and a home.[52] Zulehner's is a specification of Paul Ricoeur's phenomenological understanding of human striving for property, dominion, and recognition.[53] For Splett, these measureless desires are manifested in a fundamental I-Thou relationship.[54] The Christian is the one who, like Jesus in his desert temptation, has died to the totalizing hunger of these desires in preference for the word and will of God. In other words, "my human person is nothing but how I am called by God and how I am to answer his call."[55] The response of the Christian is to find oneself named, empowered, and at home in and with another. The "I" is found in and with a "Thou." For the consecrated religious, this I-Thou relationship is principally between the believer and God in as unmediated a way as possible. If it is mediated, then it is mediated by the whole religious community.

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[50] Ibid., 363.

[51] FC, 37; John Paul II, *Theology of the Body*, 14:3–6, pp. 182–85.

[52] Splett, "Evangelical Counsels in Marriage?" 407.

[53] See Paul Ricoeur, Fallible Man, revised trans. Charles A. Kelbley (New York: Fordham, 1986), 106–25.

[54] Interestingly, Splett does not have recourse to Martin Buber, who played a significant role in originating this kind of phenomenological anthropology of dialogue. See Buber, *I and Thou*, trans. Ronald Gregor Smith (New York: Scribner, 2000 [orig. pub., 1923]).

[55] Roman Guardini, *Der Herr. Betrachtungen über die Person und das Leben Jesu Christi,* 14th ed., 2007 (Paderborn: Verlag Ferdinand Schönigh, 1950), 42, quoted in Splett, "Evangelical Counsels in Marriage?" 409.

That this human-divine, I-Thou relationship is the fundamental one for the vowed religious is expressed and effected in the vow of chastity. Together with God, the consecrated religious is oriented toward love for and service to whomever God places in her path, in a union and service that are mediated through life with God. On the other hand, for married persons, the principal I-Thou relation is between the spouses. The spouses seek a relationship as unmediated as possible, a sign of which is their conjugal intercourse. It is first with and in the spouse that each finds a name, empowerment, and a home. That this relationship is fundamental for the spouses is expressed and effected in their conjugal vow of fidelity. Together with her spouse, a wife is oriented toward union with and service to God, a union and service that are mediated through life with the spouse.

On the one hand, there is much to recommend these conclusions about the fundamental centrality of celibacy and its ability to create availability for ministry. Vowing *not* to marry another person would seem to create the freedom for more radical devotion to ministry in the larger community. By renouncing sexual intimacy with any one person, the religious seems to become more available for more widespread relational commitment as well. Vowing spousal fidelity to Christ in consecrated celibacy, the religious prefigures the universal, eschatological wedding in which the entire church will participate. Vowing poverty explicitly orders one's use of material things to the good of the community and subjects that use to obedience of the community. Vowing obedience involves honoring the will of the community in preference to one's own.

On the other hand, many authors in the last 15 years authors resist this apparently over-simple dichotomy. As we saw in the introduction and chapter 1, For Donald Miller,

Lisa Sowle Cahill, Julie Hanlon Rubio, Florence Caffrey Bourg, and David M. McCarthy, the family has for too long been besmirched as radically more inward-focused than consecrated life. If it truly is an *ecclesia domestica*, then it ought to be as outward-focused on mission and ministry of evangelism and charity to the poor as the rest of the church.[56] Further, Parrella and Russell have argued that the vowed religious life provides no more of an unmediated experience of and devotion to God than the married life;[57] therefore it cannot be characterized as any more universally oriented than married life. Ultimately, while authors disagree over the universal/particular orientations, and the ministerial/inward foci of the states of life, it is agreed that both disclose in a complementary way the nature of the person and the nature of human, ecclesial community. Both, then, while distinct, are consonant with one another.

**Vowed Obedience as Anthropologically Fundamental**

Not all theologians of the twentieth century assess the vows through a lens that finds celibacy at the center. Those who find another vow at the center of conjugal and religious life often follow the lead of Aquinas. Aquinas treats the vows in the *Summa theologiae* and in his less studied work *The Perfection of the Spiritual Life*. In both places, Aquinas identifies the religious state as a unity in three parts:

> [1] as being a practice of tending to the perfection of charity; [2] as quieting the
> human mind from outward solicitude, according to (1Cor 7:32): "I would have

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[56] We see this trend growing in steam with Paul VI's *Evangelii nuntiandi*, 17 and the four tasks of the family found in John Paul II's *Familiaris consortio*, one of which is to participate in the life and work of the church (FC 17, 49–64).

[57] Frederick J. Parrella, "Towards a Spirituality of the Family," *Communio 9* (1982): 127–41; Kenneth D. Russell, "Marriage and the Contemplative Life," *Spiritual Life* 24.7 (1978): 48–57; and Russell, "Loves in Conflict: Maritain on Marriage and Contemplation," *Eglise et Théologie* 7.3 (1976): 333–40.

you to be without solicitude"; and [3] thirdly, as a holocaust whereby a man offers himself and his possessions wholly to God; and in corresponding manner the religious state is constituted by these three vows.[58]

Among these aspects of human life (external possession, body, and will) and the three vows, the will and its corollary, obedience, rank first as most essential because they include the other two and are preferred in Scripture:

> The vow which, of all the three religious vows, belongs most peculiarly to the religious life, is that of obedience. This is clear for several reasons. First, because, by obedience man sacrifices to God his own will; by chastity, on the other hand, he offers his body, and by poverty his external possessions. Now, since the body is worth more than material goods the vow of chastity is superior in merit to that of poverty, but the vow of obedience is of more value than either of the other two. Secondly, because it is by his own will that a man makes use either of his body or his goods: therefore, he who sacrifices his own will, sacrifices everything else that he has. Again, the vow of obedience is more universal than that of either poverty or chastity, and hence it includes them both. This is the reason why Samuel preferred obedience to all other offerings and sacrifices, saying, "Obedience is better than sacrifices (1 Kgs 15:22).[59]

So important is the vow of obedience, that even "if a man without taking a vow of obedience were to observe, even by vow, voluntary poverty and continence, he would not therefore belong to the religious state, which is to be preferred to virginity observed even by vow."[60] Aquinas has made an argument that depends on a stepwise anthropology. A sacrifice of the body includes a sacrifice of the way the body interacts with external possessions. A sacrifice of the will, however, involves a sacrifice of the body as well as external possessions, for the one giving up his own will no longer determines for what end to use his body nor controls the use of what were his external possessions.

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[58] ST 2–2, q. 186, a. 7, c.
[59] Aquinas, *The Religious State, The Episcopate, and The Priestly Office: A Translation of the Minor Work of the Saint on The Perfection of the Spiritual Life*, ed. F. J. Procter (Westminster, MD: Newman Press, 1950), 51–52.
[60] ST 2–2, q. 186, a. 8, c.

The notion of "holocaust" is also central for why Aquinas privileges obedience over celibacy. Aquinas sees the religious state as a "holocaust," or complete offering to God. Aquinas depends here on the distinction between "sacrifice" and "holocaust" made in the Jewish law, and an interpretation of that distinction made by St. Gregory's commentary on Ezekiel, which states, "when, therefore, a man vows one thing to God and does not vow another, he offers a sacrifice. When, however, he dedicates to the Almighty all that he has, all that he takes pleasure in, and his entire life, he is offering a holocaust."[61] Because the vows of religion offer the whole of the person, they are the perfection of charity[62] and penitence in sacrifice to God.[63] They are a holocaust to God. Furthermore, "nothing," writes Aquinas:

> is dearer to any man than the freedom of his will, whereby he is lord of others, can use what he pleases, can enjoy what he wills, and is master of his own actions…Nothing is so repugnant to human nature as slavery; and, therefore, there is no greater sacrifice (except that of life), which one man can make for another, than to give himself up to bondage for the sake of that other. Hence, the younger Tobias said to the angel (Tobit 9:2), "If I should give myself to be thy servant, I should not make a worthy return for thy care."[64]

Aquinas's position was not lost with the turn to an appreciation of love as motive and constituent element in marriage. There are twentieth century theologians who embrace Aquinas' position as he argued it. For example, Hans Urs von Balthasar argues

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[61] Gregory the Great, *Commentary on Ezekiel*, quoted in ST 2-2, q. 186, a. 1

[62] When a person is able to love God with the entirety of mind, heart, soul, and strength, all of the person is turned toward God in love. According to Aquinas, only Christ achieved the second degree of love on earth, since "Jesus Christ, is, at the same time, both travelling on the road to Heaven, and enjoying the happiness of the Blessed" (*The Religious State*, 11–17, at 16.

[63] Christian exegesis of Old Testament distinction between sacrifice and holocaust understood "holocaust" to serve as reparation for sin. Aquinas writes, "According to the Levitical law the offering of sacrifice was ordained for the atonement of sin. Again, in Psalm lv., immediately after the verse, 'the things you say in your hearts, be sorry for them upon your beds,' we read, 'offer up the sacrifice of justice,' that is to say (as the Gloss explains), 'perform works of justice after your lamentations of penitence.' Since, then, a holocaust is a perfect sacrifice, a man who makes the religious vows, (thereby offering, of his own will, a holocaust to God) makes perfect satisfaction for his sins. Hence we see, that the religious life, is not only the perfection of charity, but likewise the perfection of penitence" (Aquinas, *The Religious State*, 50).

[64] Aquinas, *The Religious State*, 45–46.

that "one must agree with Thomas Aquinas when he says that obedience is the most essential and most decisive act of the total gift of self (2a 2ae 186, 8)." Seeing obedience rather than celibacy at the center of self-gift does not prevent an explicitly thomistic understanding of the vows from linking the religious state and the married state. In von Balthasar's thought, for example, both the matrimonial state and the religious state are constituted by a complete gift of self in vows.

Von Balthasar must place obedience at the center of each state of life if there is to be a consonance between them. It is obedience that simultaneously draws the two states of life together and distinguishes them. Both married and religious make a complete gift of self that is a gift of the will necessarily involving both body and possessions. For Von Balthasar the distinction is in the direct recipient of this gift. For the religious, the gift is made to God in the most unmediated way; whereas for the married person the gift is made directly to the spouse, who mediates it as a gift to God.[65] The religious can completely expropriate her will for the common good of the church and be subject to Christ through the Church, but the married person's will can be completely expropriated only within the confines of the marriage and family, whose claims on the will of each spouse precede those of the wider church:

> It would not make sense, nor would it likely be beneficial, for a married woman to make a private vow to her confessor concerning one of the three areas of life [possessions, body, soul], since the power over these spheres belongs in principle to the common spirit of marriage and family that holds sway between the marriage partners. If this spirit is understood and lived aright, it already expropriates the individuals sufficiently and trains them in the gift of self. Thus one can say that the states of life ought not to be mixed, precisely because they are already adequately united in that which distinguishes them, namely in selfless Christian love.[66]

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[65] Von Balthasar, *The Laity and the Life of the Counsels*, trans. Brian McNeil, C.R.V., with D. C. Schindler (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2003 [1993]),143, 192–93.
[66] Ibid., 193.

So the difference between von Balthasar and John Paul II, for example, is not that only one of these theologians can speak of total self-gift in marriage. The distinction is between the language used to describe the constitutive elements of that gift.

Von Balthasar's position is clear, but perhaps he misses an avenue whereby spousal will can be understood as completely expropriated for the common good of the whole Church. After all, the claim of the dissertation is that married and monastic belonging in ecclesial communion is the vital link between these states of life. If one understands the Christian family as domestic church, the smallest unit of the church, then, even if the family is the immediate context, the will of the spouses is put directly at the service of this domestic church, which simultaneously serves the common good and mission of the entire Church. Perhaps, then, it is not a question of whether the will can be completely expropriated for the common good of the Church, but rather it is a question of who mediates the expropriation of that will. For the will of spouses or celibates can be expropriated, and both can be expropriated ecclesially. In the case of the religious, the superior of the order mediates the expropriation as a representative of God the Father; in the case of the married person, the other spouse (or the spouses "common will" for their marriage) mediates the expropriation as a representative of Christ the bridegroom.

**Nuptial and Obediential language of Vowed Life:**
**Point of Contact, Point of Distinction**

The question now appears, is there any way to find a common ground between those who use the "nuptial" language of self-gift and the "obediential" language of self-

gift? The answer is yes. For both groups, the principle of "giftedness" lies behind the anthropological truth disclosed by the vows of religion, and also by the vows of matrimony. I mean this in two ways. First, the vows disclose the radical contingency of the human person, his or her need to receive the gift of communion, the gift of love, the gift of God's will in the person's life. Even before the fall it was not good for Adam to be alone; partnership is requisite, commanded. In nuptial terms one would say that each person is incomplete unless she has received the gift of love from another in an unconditional, indissoluble way. This gift can be received in marriage, but it is always received by the child, who in the first days of life accepts love from the tender embrace of a nursing mother or the cooing father. Those using "obediential" language would emphasize the fact that the call to a vowed life (whether matrimony or religious orders) requires a gift and is, therefore, supra-voluntary. So whether through marriage or consecrated life, a vowed life requires in itself an abnegation of the will. As von Balthasar puts it, "the act of handing oneself over to God must be done not at one's own disposal, but only on the basis of a particular condition of being disposed of, being called, and receiving grace; otherwise this act would contradict itself as soon as it was posited." All one can do is "to allow oneself to be brought into this state."[67] Both see a lack in the human person, but where the "nuptial" language sees it filled by the reception of love from a person (whether Christ is mediated by religious community or a human spouse), the "obediential language" sees this lack filled by a gracious gift of God's will in the person's life (for example, in Mary's *fiat*). It is Mary who brings both of these positions together in herself. Mary receives the love of a person (Christ the Son of God, and also Joseph of Nazareth) as an act of obedience to God.

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[67] Ibid., 23. Von Balthasar refers to Mary as the model of this kind of obedience.

By the second sense of human "giftedness," both nuptial and obediential language of the vowed life demonstrate the human person's potency *to be given* to another completely. For those who use nuptial language this means that a person's definitive and unconditional gift of self to another is expressed in the giving over of the body, which is a sign of and necessarily involves the presence of the whole person. Thus we find sexual exclusivity of marriage and the sexual exclusivity of religious life central for those using nuptial language.

For those using obediential language this capacity for gift of self is expressed in terms of the will rather than the body alone as sign of what is given. When one hands over the will, the body necessarily comes with it. Again Mary serves to synthesize the two positions well. Her *fiat* involved the gift of both body (the pregnancy and her perpetual virginity) and the will (she would not have chosen pregnancy out of wedlock for herself). "Mary is the origin and foundation of both Christian states of life: quite explicitly of virginity (Lk 1:35), but also of marriage, since we cannot overlook her presence at Cana and under the Cross. She is Virgin and Mother; but considered more precisely, she is Mother because she is Virgin."[68] Mary's complete gift of self draws together the tension between celibacy and obedience at the root of a vowed life.

## MARRIAGE AND CONSECRATED LIFE AS CHRISTOLOGICALLY FUNDAMENTAL

Not only do the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience disclose what human nature has and what the human person lacks, but as evangelical counsels (or as some have it, evangelical imperatives) they disclose the truth about Christ and thus the truth about

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[68] Ibid., 194.

what we as church, as Christ's body and Christ's bride are invited to become and are in fact incorporated into with baptism.

In this section I make the argument that the evangelical counsels are Christomorphic, that is, they take the shape of Christ's life, death, and resurrection. For the most part, my exploration here will be more directly related to the life of the consecrated religious, and I will leave to chapter six a fuller demonstration of the evangelical counsels in the conjugal life. This section is most concerned to show how these counsels are firmly rooted in Christ, and are, therefore, a proper goal of all practices of Christian householding.

"Those called by God to the practice of the evangelical counsels," states *Perfectae caritatis*, "bind themselves to the Lord in a special way, following Christ, who chaste and poor (cf. Mt 8:20; Lk 9:58) redeemed and sanctified men through obedience even to death on the Cross (cf. Phil 2:8)." In the words of the Blessed Columba Marmion, O.S.B., "Christ is 'the Religious' supereminently, and the character of the Rule is Christocentric."[69] As John Paul II puts it in *Vita consecrata*, those who live the evangelical counsels "make Christ the whole meaning of their lives," and they "reproduce the form of life that Jesus accepted and lived." Consecrated life is a "living memorial of Jesus' way of living and acting."[70] Inasmuch as they are lived, they conform the Christian to Christ. The life of the vows is a gift from the Father to be like the son, joined to him in a special way by imitation, by a marriage of sorts, but through the Spirit by which the life of the vows expresses the eschatological fulfillment the Church awaits

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[69] Marmion Columba, O.S.B., *Christ the Ideal of the Monk: Spiritual Conferences on the Monastic and Religious Life*, trans. a nun of Tyburn Convent (London: Sands, 1926), 19.
[70] John Paul II, VC, 22.

(VC, 14).[71] Because all Christians are incorporated into Christ, all should be conformed to his virtues in a manner appropriate to their state. Furthermore, if (as was argued above) the religious vows reveal a truth also found in marriage, then it follows that these vows have a role in conforming conjugal life as well as religious life to Christ's own life, death, and resurrection.

**Christ the Poor**

Jesus Christ, son of Mary, son of God, is at once the richest and poorest man to live. The loci for developing the evangelical counsel of poverty are biblical and traditional. Mt 19:16-22 (rich young ruler; passage through the eye of a needle; reward in heaven), Lk 18:18-23 (rich young ruler; passage through eye of needle; reward now and in heaven), and Mk 10:17–22 (rich young ruler; passage through eye of needle; reward now and in heaven) are three gospel passages directly associated with the vow of poverty. Jesus called particular people to sell all and follow him (rich young man). His closest followers, the twelve, left all and followed him to great reward. Others took similar action without an explicit request from Jesus (Zaccheus [Lk 19:1–10]; Matthew [Mt 9:9]). On yet other occasions, Jesus seems to make renunciation a requisite for discipleship ("So therefore, whoever of you does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple" [Lk 14:33]). At a broader level, Jesus' own iterant lifestyle witnessed to a kind of poverty. Jesus claims that "foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the son of man has nowhere to lay his head (Lk 9:58). When he sends out his disciples to preach he

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[71] Here John Paul II speaks of the consecrated life as an "icon of the Transfigured life." He also makes reference to the trinitarian grounding I will demonstrate in a later section.

forbids them to carry anything beyond the most basic needs (Mt 10:5–15; Mk 6:7–13; Lk 9:1–6, 10:1–11). Even more extreme, Jesus seems to suggest that people throw planning and caution to the wind ([Mt 6:25–34] be as the birds and the lilies; care for today not tomorrow). Finally, Jesus even seems to reverse the proverbial wisdom of his forbears when he states in the sermon on the mount/plain: "blessed are the poor" (Mt 5:3–12; Lk 6:20–26). Finally, in light of their experience of Jesus, and after Jesus has risen and sent the Spirit, the Christian community in Acts 2:44–45 and 4:32–35 voluntarily shared possessions in common in order to provide for the needs of all.

At the same time, though, Jesus was not destitute, and commentators have been quick to declare that Jesus does not condone destitute poverty.[72] Although Jesus possessed nothing as his own, he certainly relied on and commended supporters who remained wealthy. Jesus and his disciples travelled with a communal fund of money (held by Judas [Jn 12:6]). Martha, Mary, and Lazarus (who hosted Jesus [Lk 10:38; Jn 11–12:3]), Joseph of Aramathea (in whose tomb he was buried [Mk 15:42–43]), Zaccheus (who hosted Jesus [Lk 19:1–10]), and the woman who spent 300 denarii on perfume for Jesus (Mk 14:1–11; Jn 12:1–11) each possessed substantial means. Each of these generously applied their means on behalf of the gospel. For Jesus, the question of riches often came down to a question of *where* and *what*. Where are your riches, and what counts as riches? (E.g., Mt 6:19–24, store up treasure in heaven, not on earth.) Christ's poverty claims that God is man's only treasure and portion. Jesus witnesses to this fact during his desert temptation, recalling a spirituality rich in the Hebrew Scriptures. When the devil tempts him to rely on his own power for sustenance, Jesus rejects him with

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[72] Practitioners of liberation theology are especially quick to point out this fact. See Gustavo Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics, and Salvation*, rev. ed. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1988), chap. 13, "Poverty: Solidarity and Protest." See also the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*.

God's word in Scripture (Deut 8:3), saying that "man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God" (Mt 4:4; Lk 4:4). In John's gospel, just after Jesus has told a woman at a well that he offers life-giving water, the disciples return from their trip to buy food. They then "besought him, saying, 'Rabbi, eat.' But he said to them, 'I have food to eat of which you do not know.' So the disciples said to one another, 'Has any one brought him food?' Jesus said to them, 'My food is to do the will of him who sent me, and to accomplish his work" (Jn 4:31–34).

The witness of Jesus' own life, the lives of those who followed him and supported him, and the life of the early Church suggests that poverty is as much about "giving everything" as it is about "having nothing."[73] In one sense, poverty is not a means to holiness but a reaction to what Christ has done in our life. Francis Moloney offers an interesting exegesis of the "rich young man story" as it appears in the synoptic Gospels. A young man approaches Jesus and asks what he must do to attain the kingdom of heaven. Jesus replies, and the man is satisfied to be on track. But the man continues, asking Jesus what he must do to be perfect. Jesus replies that he must sell all, give to the poor, and then come follow him. As is well known, the man leaves crestfallen, for he has many possessions. The assumption is that he does not sell all and follow Jesus. One interpretation of this passage is that there are two kinds of Christians, those called to attain the kingdom (by following the commandments), and those elites called to radical renunciation. Moloney refuses any such reading. Instead he suggests that Jesus was not describing a higher path, but merely the one and only path: the path of "immediate,

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[73] This insight is well developed by Moloney, *Life of Promise*, chap. 1.

wordless obedience of the one called."[74] Moloney casts the entire passage as a drama of

who should take the initiative in discipleship. Jesus issues the call, and we can merely

give the response. For this particular person to be a disciple of Christ, he was required to

sell all and follow Jesus as an itinerant. Jesus strongly states that asking "what must I do?"

is the wrong question. The correct question is "where Jesus is calling me to respond to sin

in my life and oppression in the world with conversion and love?" Moloney's claim

amounts to a redefinition of evangelical poverty. Living in poverty is a reordering of our

material possessions for the common good in actions that proclaim, "All that I have I give

to the community, and all that I need I receive from the community."[75] It is not only a

state[76] but a virtue, a habitual disposition "which is one of the external consequences of

our life in Christ, [and] is a part of the vocation to 'perfection' of all the baptized (see

Lumen Gentium 40)."[77]

Authors such as Moloney are quick to cast off notions of the evangelical counsel

(or imperative) of poverty as a state,[78] and this is with the obvious intention to avoid

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[74] Ibid., 55–61. The interpretations of this pericope as it appears in the synoptic gospels follow a typical set. A most common claim is that Jesus' teaching here is about having complete, total faith in him and his promise rather than in anything else, e.g., our material wealth. Commentators are quick to point out the contextual link between piety and wealth in Jesus' day, but unfortunately they are slower to find such a link in our present context. Soteriology is also at stake in the interpretation of this encounter. Would the ruler be saved if he did not sell all? Is he saved by a work or by faith? For a typical interpretation of this pericope that emphasizes "justifying faith" see Alan P. Stanley, "The Rich Young Ruler and Salvation," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 163 (January–March, 2006): 46–62. For a socioeconomic reading see Joseph H. Hellerman, "Wealth and Sacrifice in Early Christianity: Revisiting Mark's Presentation of Jesus' Encounter with the Rich Young Ruler," *Trinity Journal* 21.2 (2000): 143–164.

[75] Moloney, *Life of Promise*, 70.

[76] In the above section I spoke of the "states of life" while here I am speaking of each of the evangelical counsels itself as a state. These counsels are also virtues and practices. "State of life" refers to a person's official status within the Church. Here "state" refers more generally to a person's status before all other people (or specific persons) and before God. For example we exist in a state of poverty before each other because the world's goods have a "universal destination" (GS 69), and before God because we are radically contingent beings dependent on Him for origin, continued existence, and final end.

[77] Ibid., 64–65.

[78] See also Diarmuid O'Murchu, *Poverty, Celibacy, and Obedience: A Radical Option for Life* (New York: Crossroad, 1999). O'Murchu's goal is to retrieve and reinterpret the vows from their situation within a

indifference, paternalism, or a gospel of wealth, but at the same time the claim that poverty is simply a virtue rather than a state is not wholly accurate. Even if poverty is a virtue (I agree that it is), one must ask the question: what kind of community or what kind of concrete conditions would have to maintain for this virtue to be practiced? Conditions of *real need* must obtain for poverty as imperative evangelical virtue to be practiced.

Jesus was not only disposed to share all that was at his disposal for the good of all, but he actually disposed of all he had and all he was so that he might order it for the common good of the world he created and the humanity he would take up. "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ," writes Paul, "that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich" (2 Cor 8:9). As John Paul II puts it in *Vita consecrata*, Christ "gave up all to come to earth, receives all from and gives all back to the Father." Because Jesus renounced his divinity as something to be grasped at, he made possible our own divinization (Phil 2:6–10; Eph 3:14–21; 2 Peter 1:3–4).[79] Because Jesus renounces his own inheritance by becoming a curse (Gal 3:13), he shares it with all those he makes his brothers and sisters and thus co-heirs (Jn 1:1–9; Rom 8:10–17; Gal 3:29; Eph 3:6; Tit 3:7; Jas 2:5; 1 Peter 3:7). Jesus, through whom all creation is made, enters that creation only to be rejected by it. How great a poverty this is. It can only be heightened by the poverty of Holy Saturday, when Christ, as von Balthasar has proposed, experienced the true suffering of hell as no human could experience it. He suffered the greatest poverty imaginable, the loss of God from

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hierarchical, patriarchal, oppressive ecclesial structure and make them once again about pursuit of Christian and universal values.

[79] Theosis (divinization) has a long history in Christianity from both the Greek and the Latin traditions. See Michael J. Christensen and Jeffrey A. Witung, eds. *Partakers of the Divine Nature: The History and Development of Deification in the Christian Traditions* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007). See Peter S. Williamson, *Ephesians*, Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009).

Godself. Only one who had experienced the beatific vision and complete union with God could understand, let alone experience complete separation from God. Christ, and no one else, has experienced the deepest poverty possible.[80] Because Jesus renounced his very nature as "the life," as "the light" and experienced death and the darkness of separation from God, he shares his eternal life with all. Jesus, far from merely considering all his possession as ordered for the common good, actually existed in conditions of poverty that required dependence on others, especially God the Father. Jesus did not help us "from above" but joined us in the dust to remake humanity again. Poverty, then, is ultimately not a virtue isolated in an individual piety; rather, poverty is a definition of our relationships in community. Christian, religious poverty is a commitment to solidarity with our co-inhabitors in God's household.[81]

Jesus entered the world as we all do, in the position of radical dependence— namely, infancy. His mother depended on the mercy of Joseph, who could have easily rejected her. In John 5:19 Jesus relays his radical dependence on the father for everything, even all that he does: "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing." Further, when Jesus says, "Foxes have

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[80] Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Mysterium Paschale: The Mystery of Easter*, trans. Aidan Nichols, O.P. (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1981), 49–52, 168–76.

[81] The theme of solidarity is central to liberation theology and Catholic social teaching. Gustavo Gutiérrez writes: Christian poverty has meaning only as a commitment of solidarity with the poor, with those who suffer misery and injustice…Because of this solidarity—which must manifest itself in specific action, a style of life, a break with one's social class—one can also help the poor and exploited to become aware of their exploitation and seek liberation from it. It is a poverty lived not for its own sake, but rather as an authentic imitation of Christ; it is a poverty which means taking on the sinful human condition to liberate humankind from sin and all its consequences" (*A Theology of Liberation*, 172). While I think the notion of solidarity is correct and often well expressed by liberation theologians, I am not here forwarding the arguments of liberation theology that may justify the use of violence or those that would reduce the preaching of the good news to the changing of economic and political conditions, as necessary as these activities are for Christians. See also *Solicitudo rei Socialis* 38. Solidarity "is not a feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes of so many people, both near and far. On the contrary, it is a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say, to the good of all and of each individual, because we are all really responsible for all."

holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man has nowhere to lay his head," (Mt 8:20; Lk 9:58) he is not merely stating his radical "otherness," but a simple fact about his own life. Just as he lives a life of dependence, Jesus puts his disciples in situations of radical dependence. He sent his disciples to preach carrying no extra food, water, or supplies (Lk 10:1–11); their dependence on hospitality becomes a matter of life and death.

The virtue of evangelical poverty then, even as a disposition to make all our goods available for the common good and to receive our personal good from the community, is reduced wherever there is an attempt to insulate people from the fact that we actually need each other. The American dream of married suburban self-sufficiency and independence has created a class of people for whom the conditions necessary to learn the virtue of poverty are all but completely non-existent.[82] The American dream is that I will never have to depend on anyone except myself. If I will need to rely on someone else, then I should not undertake the task. Over against this notion is the evangelical notion of poverty. Not only must we seek dependence on others, but we must realize the unavoidability of such dependence.

This interdependence reminds us of the essentially communal aspect of poverty as principle of Christian life together. Certainly poverty is the individual person's renunciation of possession as her own, but no less is poverty the formation of a communion of goods. This social aspect of poverty is most clear in the early Church's example of poverty in the Jerusalem community (Acts 2:44–45 and 4:32–35). The early

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[82] McCarthy (*Sex and Love in the Home*, 2–3, 66, 80, 88–89, 93, 96, 155, 171–72, 174, and 243) describes this kind of situation. He describes the virtue of reciprocity, which is developed only in conditions where needs and dependences are real. Asymmetrical reciprocity is a kind of positive feedback loop whereby persons respond to the needs of each other in non-symmetrical ways.

Jerusalem community, the desert fathers, and the vowed religious who came after them

ordered their renunciation to goal of reaching the kingdom of God. This meant their

poverty was entered for the sake of those in need, in solidarity with those who do not

choose poverty, and as a commitment to creating the kind of community that prepares for

and attempts to participate now in the coming kingdom . In his rule, we hear Augustine

emphasize the fact that poverty is about creating social conditions for growth in

evangelical virtue as a community and not about the holy actions of one or another

individual:

> Before all else, *live together in harmony* (Ps. 68:7), *being of one mind and one heart* (Acts 4:32) on the way to God. For is it not precisely for this reason that you have come to live together? Among you there can be no question of personal property. Rather, take care that you share everything in common. Your superior should see to it that each person is provided with food and clothing. He does not have to give exactly the same to everyone, for you are not all equally strong, but each person should be given what he personally needs. For this is what you read in the Acts of the Apostles: "*Everything they owned was held in common, and each one received whatever he had need of*" (Acts 4:32, 35).

Though Augustine's rule is clear on the social orientation of renunciation, St. Basil, the

first to call a community together around a formal rule, did so because eremitism failed to

develop social virtues, the kind of virtues that would necessarily characterize sanctified

life. After all, Jesus describes beatified life as a kingdom , a social reality. Basil also saw

that one, all-inclusive community would also fail to offer the conditions for growth in the

evangelical virtues. The community would be too large for the brothers to know and love

each other. They required smaller communities if they were to live in love.[83]

    Our modern, western communities must be mined for possibilities for creating the

conditions to develop the virtue of poverty. Let me provide an example in which the

social conditions necessary for the virtue of poverty obtain. The Thompson family just

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[83] See *Poverty,* trans. Lancelot C. Sheppard (Westminster, M.D.: Newman Press, 1954), 20–22.

came home from the hospital with baby number three. They are overwhelmed, at their wits' end. The Jones family hears their yelling from next door. Instead of calling the police, the Jones' offers to cook some meals for the Thompsons and takes their older children to the park each day for the next week. Two weeks later, when the Jones' faucet springs a leak, Tom Thompson offers to come over and fix it, etc., etc.[84] This principle of becoming aware of one's own and others' needs, and then responding to them, is a basic application of Jesus' response to the Pharisees' complaint about the woman who cleans Jesus' dirt-covered feet with her hair and tears. She has been forgiven much and so loves much (Lk 7:36–50). She experienced much need, that need was met gratuitously, and her response is a disposition to act with that same kind of gratuitous love by washing her savior's feet, a need which Jesus' host did not even notice.

Even for the middle class of the Western world, the conditions necessary to develop the virtue of poverty will require active renunciation. We should not be surprised that this is the case, though, for even the early monastic fathers, whose standards of living (before renunciation) were not nearly as comfortable as Western, 21st-century middle class standards, thought the renunciation of material goods was central to their life.[85] Filled by our possessions and our comfort there is no room in us for what can truly fulfill

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[84] This kind of asymmetrical reciprocity is developed and supported by McCarthy in *Sex and Love in the Home*, 93–94, 101–06, 133–37; and Lawrence C. Becker, *Reciprocity* (New York: Routledge, 1986).

[85] Until the standardization of vows (poverty, chastity, and obedience) "poverty" did not appear in the vows of many religious communities, notably Benedict's. From the earliest fathers of the desert, which began with a famous renunciation, and through the golden age of monastic life, though, renunciation of personal possession was not explicit in the profession itself of many communities because the needfulness of this renunciation would have been so obvious and so much in the forefront of their minds. It is merely assumed by the rules. See, for example, Augustine's and Benedict's rules, where he notes as matter of course that any person entering the monastery sells all he has and holds all things in common. The poverty of these communities was not initially vowed, but it was most certainly lived. Augustine writes: "Among you there can be no question of personal property. Rather, take care that you share everything in common...Those who owned possessions in the world should readily agree that, from the moment they enter the religious life, these things become the property of the community" (*The Rule of Saint Augustine*, trans. Raymond Canning, OSA, Cistercian Studies 138 (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1996), 1.3, p. 11.

us. Poverty correlates well with the orthodox, apophatic approach to theology, wherein our first theological step is always a renunciation. Before ascend to God, we must renounce that God is an object of our knowledge, and we identify all that God is not, and all that I am not. [86] Wherever it is practiced, a moment of renunciation in voluntary poverty is an apophatic theological moment declaring what will not satisfy me. Only God, not material possessions will satisfy.

Thankfully, the tradition of monasticism provides ample example of how this renunciation of any thing as "mine" is done in the spirit of the early Jerusalem community and in imitation of Christ. In the early desert Fathers, this renunciation of anything as "mine" took the form of having a common store from which weekly allotments were meted out. [87] In Augustine's rule of life this humility and simplicity meant a willingness to wear whatever tunic was handed to you in the morning from the store, even if you preferred another. [88] St. Francis and St. Dominic, not content with merely ordaining all goods of the community to the common good, attempted to live poverty not merely as a disposition to share all with the community, but as a state of life. Their early practices of owning nothing, even at the institutional level, witness to poverty not only as a response to what Jesus has done, but as a means (as Ignatius of Loyola would put it) for God to fulfill the request of our soul: Lord, "place me with your Son."

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[86] See Vladimir Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*, trans. members of the Fellowship of St. Alban and Sergius (Cambridge, U.K.: James Clarke, 1991), 7–43.

[87] *Poverty*, 17–18.

[88] *The Rule of Saint Augustine* 5.1, pp. 19, 86. "Your clothes should be looked after in common by one or more brothers who are to see that they are well aired and kept free from moths…And, as far as possible, it should not matter to you greatly which summer or winter clothes you receive. It does not make any difference whether you get back the same clothes you handed in or something that has been worn by another, *provided no one is denied what he needs* (Acts 4:35)" (emphasis original).

**Christ the Chaste**

As with poverty, chastity finds its exemplar in the Lord. Conciliar and synodal documents call Jesus "the exemplar of chastity."[89] Moreover, the evangelical virtues lived by consecrated religious are a participation in and an effort to make present to the whole world "Christ who is chaste, poor, obedient, prayerful, and missionary."[90] These documents understand Christ's chastity in a twofold sense. First, it is the means by which Jesus, and now vowed religious, can "dedicate themselves with undivided heart to the service of God."[91] In a sense, there is a logic of effectiveness at work in this claim—that celibacy makes a person more radically available for the service of God in ministry (a claim which one may or may not find convincing). As *Perfectae caritatis* has it, chastity for the sake of the kingdom is "the most suitable means" for this devotion.[92] Jesus was of pure and singular devotion in his love, and the religious, it is argued, imitate that devotion by making themselves radically available for prayer and ministry. Second, chastity, as expressed in consecrated celibacy, is a sign of and witness to the eschatological goods we all share as members of the one church, the one body of and bride of Christ. It is an eschatological maximalism that anticipates the fulfillment toward which the Church is tending.[93] Christ's pure love for the Church is the model for consecrated celibacy, a pure and complete gift of love that unfailingly bears fruit.

Theologians since the Second Vatican Council have reacted against the logic of availability for ministerial effectiveness and any claim that celibacy is lived by Jesus

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[89] Second Vatican Council, *Perfectae caritatis*, 25 (hereafter, PC); VC, 16, 21.
[90] VC, 77.
[91] PC, 12; and VC, 14.
[92] PC, 12.
[93] VC, 14.

because it somehow makes persons more available than the conjugal life. For instance,

Moloney's 1984 work *A Life of Promise*, and Sandra Schneiders's 2004 monograph

*Selling All: Consecrated Celibacy* both resist the argument that the Christ chose the life

of chastity because it allowed for greatest ministerial availability. Both of these authors

ultimately rely on nuptial language to explain how Christ's life is the root of celibacy.[94]

Moloney goes about the task with a rereading of Mt 19:3–12 (Pharisees question Jesus on

marriage and divorce), which is a typical locus for the superiority of celibacy in the Bible.

There are two interpretations of Jesus' statement that one might make himself a eunuch

for the kingdom of God. The first is to say that Jesus made himself a eunuch to better

participate in the bringing of God's reign. This is the interpretation most associated with

the logic of ministerial availability. The second interpretation is to say that Jesus made

himself a eunuch because God's reign was so present to him that he could not possibly

give any part of his life exclusively to any one person.[95] In Moloney's exegesis Jesus can

do no other than to live a celibate life; he has "fallen for" God's reign in the same way a

person "falls for" a beloved. There is nothing else the smitten parties can do but devote

their entire lives to each other. This is the romantic imagery employed by Moloney to

argue that celibacy was essential to who Jesus was rather than simply the most effective

career choice.

While I sympathize with Moloney's attempt to avoid reducing Christ's celibacy to

a means chosen for effectiveness, I am wary of his overly romantic language that

attempts to put marriage and consecrated life on a level playing field of affective love.

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[94] Schneider, *Selling All*, 137–59. She considers ministerial effectiveness a possible explanation for why a person might consecrate their life in celibacy, but she is wary of its power to endure trials. Instead, she suggests that the nuptial imagery to understand celibacy provides the strongest and richest symbolism.
[95] Moloney, *Life of Promise*, 108.

"Celibacy," he argues, "is nothing else but the existential consequence which flows out of the prior experience of the urgent presence of the kingdom of God."[96] "Just as, in an authentic situation of sexual love, the couple can do no other than marry and consecrate themselves to each other and their families through a life of consecrated chastity, so also the celibate, in an authentic situation of celibate love, can do no other than be a 'eunuch because of' the kingdom of love in his or her life in a different but parallel form of consecrated chastity."[97] I would suggest that persons who plan to marry because "they can do no other than…" should wait for a moment. This kind of intoxicating, over-taking love is not permanent but effervescent and momentary. People who marry or choose celibate life because they have, in Moloney's words, "fallen," and "can do no other," will quickly find that they very easily can and may very soon want to do something other. Unfortunately, the reasons for marriage cited by Moloney are normal, but they ought not be normative. The kind of irreplaceability and definitive love Moloney wants to see at the center of celibate and conjugal love in Christ develops over time through struggle. It is received as gift, as Christ's love. Christ's witness to this love comes at the dark moment of Gethsemane, when he was tempted to do something other than live out his love of complete devotion to God. In the same way, for example, true married love is found in challenge of saying "yes" to marital chastity when it is so easy to do other than live out the love of sexual self-possession and self-gift.

Hans Urs Von Balthasar, in his meditations on consecrated celibacy, has offered perhaps the best way to understand the union of ministerial effectiveness and the essence of a kenotic love that "can do no other." For von Balthasar, virginity is "a participation in

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[96] Ibid., 110.
[97] Ibid., 110.

the bodily mystery of the Cross and Resurrection." "The Lord's surrendered flesh and blood," he continues, "is the origin of all Christian fruitfulness through the ages; it is the archetype and source of the consecration of life in the 'vowed state'. This bodily midpoint (where the spirit takes on bodily form and where eternal goods become a man's very essence) makes it possible to understand the form that structures the life of those who follow the Lord."[98] The Lord Jesus, for von Balthasar, does not give up his body because he knows it will be the best way to bring the kingdom , but his redemptive love for all of creation, as expressed in the incarnation, requires the sacrifice of his entire person, body and soul, for whatever God's plans may have in bringing about that redemption. He loves and redeems all of creation and so must make a universal gift of his whole person. He would be unavailable for this kind of gift if he were married to one person. Christ's own body, given entirely to God on the cross and offered once again entirely for the Church in the Eucharist is at once the font and result of the gift of self in virginity.[99] Furthermore, Christ the chaste, as font and first fruit of consecrated virginity, is witnessed in the life of Mary. Mary is both mother and virgin, even more, she is mother because she is virgin, and she could respond to God with pure, complete love because the grace of Christ was already at work within her by the Immaculate Conception.[100]

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[98] Von Balthasar, *Laity and the Life of the Counsels,* 197.
[99] Ibid.
[100] Ibid., 194–196.

**Christ the Obedient**

The obedience of Christ is perhaps the most well attested of the evangelical counsels from the New Testament sources.[101] According to the witness of Paul, "by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by one man's obedience many will be made righteous" (Rom 5:19). Christ's obedience is a recapitulation of Adam's failure, an obedience that makes possible our rebirth in baptism by which we have a share in Christ's filial obedience to God. In the letter to the Philippians, Paul holds out Christ's own humility and obedience for the community, saying Christ removed from himself the glory of his godhead and "humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross" (Phil 2:8). The author of Hebrews also invokes Christ's obedience as an encouragement for Christians suffering for their faith. "Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered" (Heb 5:8).  For his own part, Jesus is reported in the Gospels speaking about his own obedience. It is a complete obedience that puts him in harmony of action and word with the Father. As to his actions, particularly those relating to the Sabbath, Jesus says, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing; for whatever he does, that the Son does likewise" (Jn 5:19). Moreover, "I have not come of my own accord; he who sent me is true, and him you do not know. I know him, for I come from him, and he sent me" (Jn 7:28–29). As to his teaching, Jesus makes clear that "My teaching is not

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[101] Moloney has argued that "there is no easy proof-text for obedience because this is the one that is most biblical" (*Life of Promise*, 121). See PC, 25: "The sacred synod highly esteems their way of life in poverty, chastity, and obedience, of which Christ the Lord is Himself the exemplar." See VC, 22: "Jesus is the exemplar of obedience, who came down not to do his own will be the will of the One who sent him (cf. *Jn* 6:38; *Heb* 10:5, 7). He places his way of living and acting in the hands of the Father (cf. *Lk* 2:49)."

mine, but his who sent me; if any man's will is to do his will, he shall know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on my own authority" (Jn 7:16–17).

Christ's obedience comes from his close connection to the Father's will; in fact the connection between the two wills is so close that they are identical. This fact is reflected in the Christological doctrine regarding the Christ's two wills, human and divine. It is because Jesus' will is at once God's will that obedience and poverty are so connected in Christ. Christ completely gives over his own will to the will of the Father, so that his own will is the Father's. In this obedience is his freedom. The son's attitude discloses the mystery of human freedom, that we as communion of persons are together destined for a path of obedience to the Father's will, a path that will demand our response in practices of Christian householding made free by grace.[102] Christ does and teaches nothing of his own but only what he sees the Father doing (Jn 5:19; Jn 7:28–29). Jesus has nothing to sustain him and no mission but the will and word of God (Jn 6:38; 8:38–50; Mt 4:4). Indeed Jesus' mission is not simply to gather whom he wills, but the flock chosen by the Father. Christ has no flock except the one the Father gives him, and the flock belongs to Christ as a gift of the Father's love because Christ obediently lays down his life (Jn 10:1–18, good shepherd discourse). Hans Urs von Balthasar has put it in this helpful way:

> The existential act of the Son is his *permitting himself* to be sent from the Father into human life and to be made incarnate by the Spirit in Mary's womb and then to behave in all the situations of his human life as the one *sent* by the Father, the one *made available* to the Spirit and *led* by him in his mission. The fundamental act of his existence is that he does, not his own will, but the *will of his Father*, and all his individual tasks are specifications of this fundamental act, all of what he does and what he refrains from doing, all his dealings with those around him, but also his suffering and dying. Only this fundamental act supplies the key to the

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[102] VC, 91–92. John Paul II takes up the challenge of modern notions of freedom as "license" as opposed to freedom as the capacity to do the good.

Christological paradox that Jesus can appear with the highest claims and, at the same time, the greatest humility.[103]

In the practices of Christian householding, those incorporated into Christ through baptism share in this fundamental act of being made available for the will of God in the service of the community whether it is composed of consecrated religious, a conjugal family, or a combination of both.

Christ's obedience offers again the same the tension we saw with poverty, a tension between "virtue" and "state." As we saw, Christ's obedience is closely tied to his poverty. Is obedience a disposition, a virtue of general humility? Or is obedience a state of humble submission to God's will as mediated through a superior or another to whom a vow is made? The weight of Scripture and monastic rules would seem to fall on the notion that obedience is both. It is a state of obedience to God mediated by a particular person, community, or common will, and this state is only fulfilled as a practice of the virtue of humility.[104] The documents of Vatican II offer both kinds of language as well. In *Perfectae caritatis*, we find that, "in professing obedience, religious offer the full surrender of their own will as a sacrifice of themselves to God and so are united more firmly and securely to God's salvific will."[105] *Lumen gentium* echoes this account of renunciation. It is done to "become subject of their own accord to another man on account of God, in the matters of perfection. This is beyond the measure of the commandments, but is done in order to conform oneself to the obedient Christ."[106] The synod on religious life that produced *Vita consecrata* develops this language of sacrifice;

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[103] Von Balthasar, *The Laity and the Life of the Counsels*, 211 (emphasis original).
[104] See RB, 7, "de humilitate."
[105] PC, 14, my own translation from the Latin, because the Vatican's English translation dismisses the comparative form of the modifiers here (constantius, securius).
[106] LG, 42.

consecrated religious "sacrifice their own freedom to accept the mystery of Christ's filial obedience and thus profess that Jesus Christ is infinitely beloved and loving as the one who delights only in the will of the Father."[107] The obedience of the religious, then, is not merely modeled on Christ's obedience, but is a participation in the *mystery* of Christ's filial obedience and his all-consuming delight in the will of the Father. This kind of participatory language helps allay the fears of some theologians and psychologists, that obedience can be destructive to the human person, especially those for whom it remains a means to continue in emotional, spiritual, and psychological immaturity. The motive and goal of obedience is to come to a union of will with the Father as close as possible to what Christ Jesus experienced, a union that joins our will to the Father's without obliterating our own personal will and identity.

Christ's example of obedience is of especial importance in that it demonstrates the essentially social character of obedience as a virtue. Even Christ, whose obedience to his Father was as unmediated as possible, experienced obedience not as an autonomous individual but in a social context. Christ learned, practiced, and knew obedience at the very least as mediated by his mother Mary and father Joseph. Luke's Gospel (Jesus lost at the temple) and John's Gospel (Jn 2:1–11, Cana) give example of Christ practicing obedience in domestic settings. Christ's example must demonstrate for us that obedience is not the task of an individual but a practice of life together. If even Christ's obedience to the Father was mediated in a social, domestic context, then certainly we must understand obedience of the vowed religious as a practice situated in the context of Christian householding as well. This fact was not lost on the spiritual masters who first organized desert ascetics into communities. One of the central reasons for the development of

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[107] VC, 16.

cenobitic life was the discovery of this insight. Monks attempting to live in unmediated obedience to the will of God more often than not ended up being ruled by self-will rather than divine will. Benedict, for his part, emphasizes the need for mediated obedience, that is, obedience as a domestic practice, as a key reason for making religious life a domestic project rather than an individual project. Of the four kinds of monks Benedict describes, two of them are detested for their lack of mediated obedience to God's will:

> The sarabites, the most detestable kind of monks, who, with no experience to guide them, no rule to try them *as gold is tried in a furnace*, have a character as soft as lead…Two or three together, or even alone, without a shepherd, they pen themselves up in their own sheepfolds, not the Lord's. Their law is what they like to do, whatever strikes their fancy. Anything they believe in and choose, they call holy, anything they dislike, they consider forbidden.[108]

Still worse are the gyrovagues, who "spend their entire lives drifting from region to region, staying as guests for three or four days in different monasteries. Always on the move, they never settle down, and are slaves to their own wills and gross appetites."[109] Benedict would not abide those seeking the way of the Lord who could not submit themselves to a rule other than their own.

We must ask why Benedict made such a strong case for the expropriation of one's own will. Was he overly pessimistic about human capacity to know God's will? Was he infantilizing with respect to spirituality? Certainly not. Benedict sought to protect his monks from slavery to a soft will that confused one's own desires (however noble or ascetic they might be) with God's, but his interest in placing monks in the state of obedience was out of a desire to grow in them the virtue of humility and strike down the ever-present threat of pride. He was honest about human experience. Even the most ascetic Christian would benefit from expropriation of the will. The experience of the

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[108] RB 1.6; *RB 1980*, 169.
[109] RB 1.10; *RB 1980*, 171.

desert Fathers had taught Benedict and the cenobitic monks much in this regard. For

these early heroes of renunciation, obedience had a primordial importance as a

counterweight to asceticism. Even though they lived and battled alone, their obedience

was integral to their quest for God. Obedience was identified in practice with humility,

and reminded all that pride was the radical enemy of Christian life.[110] As the Virgin

Syncletica reminds those she counsels, "Bodily mortification begets pride, whereas

obedience produces humility."[111] Obedience to a master who visits but occasionally and

commands at times absurdities, however, proved difficult for the early desert Fathers.[112]

In light of the difficulties, it was a belief in the power of obedience and humility to

overcome the specter of pride that in part led to the dominance of cenobitic life from

Basil to Pachomius, to Augustine, and Benedict.[113] Any acquaintance with Augustine's

understanding of sin, for example, makes clear the primacy of place and power he

accords pride.[114] Within his own rule Augustine wars that the danger of pride is always

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[110] M. Olphé-Galliard, S.J., "From the Fathers of the Desert to St. Basil and St. Benedict," *Obedience*, 25.
[111] Quoted in ibid., 26.
[112] Ibid., 25. Olphé-Galliard relates the story of a monk's obedient response to the command that he enter into a crocodile-filled river. The crocodiles amicably lick the body of this obedient monk.
[113] Olphé-Galliard, "From the Fathers," 27.
[114] Augustine, *De Genesi ad Litteram*, claims that the first sin was pride, which preceded the first couple's disobedience. Augustine concludes that humans would not have been successfully tempted by the serpent had it not been for "a certain self-aggrandizement" in the soul: "Nor is it to be supposed that this tempter was going to succeed in throwing the man, unless there was first in the man's soul a certain self-aggrandizement that needed to be stamped on, so that, humiliated by sin, he might learn how false and unjustified was his presumptuous opinion of himself. True indeed is the saying: *The heart is exalted before ruin and humbled before* glory (Prv 18:12)" (*De Genesi ad litteram* 11.5; *On Genesis*, 432). In his argument against Julian of Aeclanum, Augustine makes a case pride has caused us to exist in our current battle against sin, a battle that cannot be finished (though victory is assured) this side of the eschaton: "But on account of the vice of pride by which human beings abandoned God, life in this world is lived amid various human evils under the heavy yolk *upon the children of Adam from the day they leave the womb of their mother until he day of their burial in the mother of all* (Sir 40:1). Furthermore, Augustine linked pride (as the first sin) not only to the first outward disobedience against God, but also to avarice, our inordinate desire for personal property: "Rightly has scripture designated pride as the beginning of all sin, saying, *The beginning of all sin is pride* (Sir 10:3). Into this text can be slotted rather neatly that other one also from the apostle: *The root of all evils is avarice* (1 Tm 6:10), if we understand avarice in a general sense as what goads people to go for anything more greedily than is right because of their superiority and a kind of love for their very own property. The Latin—and English—languages have given such property a very shrewd

lurking. It is so powerful because, while other vices encourage evil deeds, "pride waits to destroy good deeds."[115]

The simple fact in Benedict's preference for cenobitic over anchoritic life is that life in community demands a virtue that often slips away in solitary life—humility. Living in community means living according to a rule other than one's own, and if that community is to be a means of salvation, it means finding, loving, and obeying Christ in each member of that community.[116] Benedict's own desire to replace pride with humility is so strong that his rule constructs a step-wise approach to the virtue that can only take place within a situation of mediated obedience. Always, the state and the virtue are held together. "The first step of humility," he writes, "is *unhesitating obedience*, which *comes naturally* to those who cherish Christ above all."[117] Benedict's twelve-step ladder seems to be an attempt to work from the outside in as much as from the inside out. It is by no means Pelagian, though. Benedict sees the twelve rungs of humility's ladder in light of Jacob's ladder. "Without doubt, this descent and ascent can signify only that we descend

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name by calling it 'private,' a word clearly suggesting loss rather than gain in value; every privation, after all, spells diminution. And so the very means by which pride aims at pre-eminence serve to thrust it down into sore straits and want, when its ruinous self-love removes it from what is common to what is its own property" *De Genesi ad Litteram* 11.15; *On Genesis*, 439. The religious life in community, then provides the conditions for healing both of these ills in the person, avarice and disobedience by addressing the greater evil of pride.

[115] Augustine, *Regularis informatio, 1.7*; *The Monastic Rules*, 132–33: "Every other vice prompts people to do evil deed; but pride lies in ambush even for good deeds in order to destroy them. What advantage is it *to scatter abroad and give to the poor* (Ps 111 [112]: 9; 2 Cor 9:9) and become poor oneself, if the wretched soul becomes prouder in despising riches than it was in possessing them?" Pride is a worse vice than inordinate sexual desire. God allows sexual desire to remain in those living continent lives as a partial antidote against pride. In responding to Julian of Aeclanum, Augustine has this to say of pride: "Since in our present state of misery pride is a worse enemy, calling for continual care, we venture to say that perhaps concupiscence is not wholly extinguished in the flesh of holy celibates in order that, while the soul is fighting against concupiscence, it may be mindful of its dangers and thus escape a false security. This must continue until it attains that perfection of sanctity where it is no longer disturbed by the thought or the swelling of pride. 'For strength is made perfect in weakness' [2 Cor 12:9]—and fighting is of weakness" (*Contra Iulianum*, 4.11; *Against Julian*, 175).

[116] Michael Banner, "Who Are My Mother and My Brothers?: Marx, Bonhoeffer and Benedict and the Redemption of the Family," *Studies in Christian Ethics* 9 (1996): 1–22, makes a study of the way Benedict maximizes the amount of communal time and space as a way to force the issue of humility and giving way.

[117] RB, 5.1–2; *RB 1980,* 187.

by exaltation and ascend by humility. Now the ladder erected is our life on earth, and if we humble our hearts the Lord will raise it to heaven."[118] As Paul Evdokimov writes of the vowed life of holiness, we sweat but God does the work. The spiritual life is "no question of reward or merit, but of man working within the divine action."[119] It is the monk's task to practice obedience and God's to grow humility within him.

In summary, Benedict's insight, and the insight of the practice of obedience and humility in vowed religious life in community is that, for humans, obedience to God must be mediated personally, communally, dialogically. Even for the first Christian disciples, even for Mary the *theotokos*, God's will was not immediate. As von Balthasar aptly puts it, "the disciple's obedience to the Master is in the first place unambiguously obedience to a human being."[120] "The disciples' paradigmatic, archetypal obedience to the Lord," he continues, "is and remains obedience from man to man in the clearest possible way; it remains a genuinely dialogical and genuinely incarnate obedience, which through the juxtaposition of two wills and two freedoms always keeps the person from believing he is obeying God when in fact he is ultimately obeying only his own self."[121] Obedience, then, is not essentially the sacrifice of one's will to an arbitrary other's will, even the will of a spiritually superior director. Rather, it is a state and virtue of coming to know God's will in humility through accepting the way another shows us how our own will is hardly identical to God's. In this way we finally participate in Christ's obedience to the Father

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[118] RB, 7.7–8; *RB 1980*, 193.

[119] Evdokimov, *Sacrament of Love*, 79.

[120] Von Balthasar, *Laity and the Life of the Counsels*, 198–99. He continues, "It is an obedience based on an acknowledgment of the spiritual superiority of the Master and his prestige but, at the same time, also his selflessness and humility vis-à-vis God. Accordingly, this obedience is understood implicitly from the beginning as obedience to God."

[121] Von Balthasar, Ibid., 199–200.

by doing what Jesus does, namely, putting ourselves at the service of others, even our enemies.

**Christ the Poor, Chaste, and Obedient Bridegroom**

As we have just argued above, the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience flow from and lead to Christ, that is, they are christologically fundamental. As virtues and states they are gifts of God that become habitual in the Christian through practices of living in the household of God, conforming her more to Christ in a harmony of will and action. This section briefly shows that the person of Christ takes these virtues up into the life of Christian spouses, through spousal language used about and by Christ. A fuller treatment, though, awaits chapter six. Christomorphic virtues are as fundamental to marriage as to religious life, that is, through it Christ discloses truth about marriage in the heart of his identity and mission. It is among the Lord's frequently chosen images for speaking of himself and proclaiming the kingdom .[122] Christ not only reveals himself as a poor, chaste, and obedient Son but as poor, chaste, and obedient spouse. His possession of the evangelical virtues applies equally to his role as groom. Christ the groom is poor because he has shared his inheritance with the church, counting the spiritual treasure of his merit not as his own but to be shared with his spouse. Christ is chaste because his love for the Church is complete and exclusive, an eternal act of the will rather than a flight of the passion (Rm 8:31–38, nothing can separate us from the love of God). This pure love bears fruit in the coming of the Spirit and its gifts in the life of the Church (Gal 5:22).

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[122] Mt 9:14–17, and Mk 2:19–20, and Lk 5:34–36 (the impossibility of fasting when the bridegroom is present); Mt 25:1–13 (the wise and foolish virgins waiting for the bridegroom; Jn 3:29 (John the Baptist's reference to Christ as bridegroom).

Christ the son and bridegroom is obedient because he weds as a completion of the

Father's will to bring the blessing of the Abraham's covenant to all nations, to make a

holy people for himself, a pure and spotless bride (2 Cor 11:2; Eph 5:25–32; Rev 19:7;

21:2, 9; 22:17). It is this obedient, chaste, and poor Christ who reveals the essence of

marriage to us, the indissoluble and redeeming love that serves and purifies, often in and

through suffering. Christ's marriage, after all is begun, or ratified, with Mary's words of

consent at the annunciation (Lk 1:38, "let it be to me according to your word"); it is

brought to completion on the cross, when Christ declares "it is finished" (consummatum

est) (Jn 19:30); and it is renewed when Christ's obedient gift of self is made present again

in the worshipping community and the bread and wine at each Eucharist.[123]


**MARRIAGE AND CONSECRATED LIFE AS TRINITARIAN**


We have seen now an anthropological, Christological nexus that both draws

together and distinguishes conjugal and consecrated life. Both are rooted in what we are

as persons (beings oriented toward self-gift, and reception of other) and what we are

called to become in Christ the poor, chaste, and obedient. There is, however, a third, still

deeper theological connection between the two states of life. If the vows have disclosed

that consecrated and married persons are called to be conformed to Christ, then it follows

that they are also invited into Christ's life in the Trinity (*Lumen gentium* 2; *Ad gentes* 2).

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[123] The moments of consent and consummation are, in cannon law the moments when the marriage becomes valid as "ratum" and indissoluble as "consummatum." This doctrine was developed through the scholastic period when controversy abounded as to whether consummation or consent made the marriage. Canonically the Church has opted for a both/and approach, but one that puts more weight on consent. In juridical situations, consummation is assumed unless challenged and proven otherwise. See CIC 1141, 1142. See John P. Beal, et al., eds., *New Commentary on the Code of Canon Law* (New York: Paulist Press, 2000).

The central mystery of Christianity, the Trinity itself, orchestrates the most profound consonance between these states of life. While authors have considered the relationship between consecrated life and the Trinity (principally John Paul II in *Vita consecrata*), as well as the connection between the Trinity and marriage (chiefly Marc Cardinal Oullet in *Divine Likeness: A trinitarian Anthropology of the Family*), neither has seen this as an opportunity for dialogue. In what follows, I will outline the fundamentally trinitarian grounding in both states of life and demonstrate how that foundation both draws together and distinguishes marriage and vowed religious life.

In the course of this section, "model," "metaphor," "analogy," and "image," will be used in describing the relationship between created realities and the Trinity. Each of these has a host of meanings and histories. Therefore, where the terms first appear a note will accompany them to indicate the precise use of the term in work.

**Consecrated Life and the Trinity**

The Second Vatican Council has made clear the trinitarian grounding of the Church in general. The Church finds its origin in the Trinity, "proceeding from the love of the eternal Father…founded by Christ in time and gathered into one by the Holy Spirit."[124] Originating in the Trinity, the Church also finds there its model:[125] "The

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[124] *Lumen gentium*, 40.

[125] Here the Council uses "exemplar" to describe the relationship of the Church to the Trinity. An exemplar is the object of imitation. It is a model for fashioning a re-presentation. The Church's unity *is not* the Trinity's unity in a univocal way, since the intersubjective and intrasubjective unity of the Church is created and accidental rather than uncreated and essential. The Church's unity finds it "source" in the mystery of the Trinity inasmuch as the Church's unity is fashioned after the Trinity's unity as revealed in Christ and his relationship to the Father and the Spirit. Also, the Trinity is the source of Church's unity because the Trinity has inspired and enlivened that unity since the Pentecost with the gifts and fruits of the Spirit.

highest exemplar and source of this mystery is the unity, in the Trinity of Persons, of one God, the Father and the Son in the Holy Spirit."[126] It is precisely the trinitarian nature of religious life as a specification of ecclesial life, though, that we seek. Reflections and studies of the nature of vowed religious life (especially historical studies) abound, but only infrequently, does "Trinity" appear in these studies. One recent monograph and a journal that dedicated an entire issue to this relationship have worked to fill this void.[127]

The Trinity, as the origin and exemplar of all ecclesial communion, is also the exemplar of unity in vowed religious life. *Perfectae caritatis* summarizes the Trinity's role in religious life: "After the example of *Jesus Christ* who came to do the will of the *Father* (cf. Jn 4:34; 5:30; Heb. 10:7; Ps 39:9) and, 'assuming the nature of a slave' (Phil 2:7), learned obedience in the school of suffering (cf. Heb 5:8), religious under the motion of the *Holy Spirit*, subject themselves in faith to their superiors who hold the place of God."[128] To enter religious life, then, is to step into the narrative of the Trinity's own life: the life of the Son who does the will of the Father in the power of the Spirit. In other words, it is to follow or imitate the drama of the Trinity's life as it is revealed to us in Christ.

John Paul II continues and expands this narrative line of thought when saying that those entering religious life state with their lives: "confessio Trinitas."[129] Those

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[126] *Unitatis redintegratio*, 2. See also Ciardi, *Koinonia*, 220–22, for an analysis of this trinitarian ecclesiology.

[127] Fabio Ciardi, O.M.I., *Koinonia: Spiritual and Theological Growth of the Religious Community* (Hyde Park, NY: New City, 2001); A. Ablondi, "Dalla Trinità alla comunità," *Consacrazione e Servizio* 28 (1979), n. 10, pp. 7–17; G. Cabra, *Breve meditazione sui voti* (Brescia: Queriniana, 1983 [1978]); X. Pkaza, 'Trinidad', in *Diccionario Teológico de la Vida Consagrada* (Madrid: Publicaciones Claretianas, 1992), 1758–77; X. Pikaza, "En communidad: Como la familia del Dios-Trinidad," *Vida Religiosa* 66 (1989) 57–66; N. Silanes, "Trinidad y vida consagrada," *Comunidades* 17 (1989) no. 66–67, pp. 47–65 (this issue is dedicated to a bibliography of "Trinity and consecrated life").

[128] PC, 14.

[129] VC, 16.

professing the vows of religion are responding to a gift that draws them to the giver. As the Son responds eternally in kenotic love (as he is eternally begotten of the Father,) so the religious too are "a patre ad patrem."[130] They receive their charism and vocation from the Father, but that vocation is a grace that allows nothing else but a return to the Father. This *reditus* to the Father is worked "per filium," in the footsteps of Christ, who is himself the way, and in whom every virtue comes to perfection. With the counsels, the religious embarks on "a divine way of living embraced by Christ as an expression of his relationship as the Only Begotten Son with the Father and the Holy Spirit."[131] Finally, the consecrated life is lived "in Spiritu," that is, as a reliving of James, Peter, and John's experience on Tabor.[132] It is their experience of being enveloped in the cloud wherein Christ is transfigured and to remain on the mountain, sharing Peter's overwhelming desire to abide with the one he now sees as God (Mt 17:1–13; Mk 9:2–13 "Master, it is well that we are here; let us make three booths, one for you and one for Moses and one for Eli'jah").

This Tabor experience, this falling in love that tends toward a desire to abide in the presence of the beloved, can authentically lead and be part of the complete gift of self to God in the explicit vows of the evangelical counsels. Nonetheless, I would not want to romanticize the decision. This love is a love for the whole Trinity: (1) for the Son, which leads to closeness to him; (2) for the Holy Spirit, which opens hearts to his inspiration; and (3) for the Father, the origin and supreme goal of the consecrated life.[133] The practice of these counsels themselves witness to the Trinity. Chastity proclaims the infinite love

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[130] Ibid., 17.
[131] Ibid., 18.
[132] Ibid., 23, 40.
[133] VC, 21.

that links the three Divine Persons indissolubly and unconditionally. Poverty, by proclaiming that God is man's only treasure and portion, becomes an expression of dependence and gift that participates by grace in the self-gift and interdependence among the three Divine Persons. Obedience reflects the filial rather than the servile relationship between the Son and the Father, which is so fruitful that from it the Spirit proceeds.

Not only does the life of the individual religious confess the Trinity, but the common life of the religious community attempts to imitate the shared life of the three-in-one God as well. As the Second Vatican Council so well expressed in *Lumen gentium*, God the Father desires to make of humanity one family. Religious orders witness to this fact in their life of fraternal love. Giving form to the Lord's saying, "call no man your father on earth, for you have one Father, who is in heaven" (Mt 23:9). Only the abbot or abbess is called by a name other than "brother" or "sister," and this title is highly qualified, having nothing to do with the particular person holding the office. Instead, the term refers to the One whose will and paternal love are represented in the direction of the abbot or abbess.[134] This life together, according to the medieval rule of St. Francis, is nothing other than the living of the gospel,[135] that is, a conformity to the life, death, and resurrection of the Son, "who gathers the redeemed into a unity, pointing the way by his

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[134] See Ciardi, *Koinonia*, 223–24; RB 2.1–3; *RB 1980*, 173: "He [the abbot] is believed to hold the place of Christ in the monastery, since he is addressed by the title of Christ, as the Apostle indicates: You have received the spirit of adoption of sons by which we exclaim, abba, father. Therefore, the abbot must never teach or decree or command anything that would deviate from the Lord' instructions." There is a two-step remove from the abbot himself to God the Father. The person given the title abbot (father) on account of the fact that he holds the place of Christ. Christ is *not* the Father. So why does this make sense? Christ is not the Father, but he possesses and mediates the Father's will to his flock, just as the abbot is to shepherd his flock according to the Lord's will, which is identical to the Father's will. The abbot is "Father" because he mediates Christ's will, which is identical to the Father's.

[135] "The rule and life of the lesser brothers is this: To observe the holy gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, living in obedience without anything of our own, and in chastity" *Rule of 1223*, available at "Medieval Sourcebook: The Rule of the Franciscan Order," (http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/stfran-rule.html [accessed on 9 November, 2010]).

example, prayer, words, and above all his death."[136] Christ the Son recapitulates

humanity in the Incarnation, providing both the example and the capacity for us to live as

communion of persons in love. Finally, it is the Holy Spirit that enlivens this communion

of love. Imagine the initial gathering of frightened disciples in the upper room. They had

come together in their love for the Father and their desire to imitate his Son, yet their

community bore no fruit for it was deadened by confusion, and fear of death and failure.

When the Spirit descended on Pentecost, the confidence and first fruits of the Church are

born.[137] As the early disciples did not embody life of the Trinity as a communion of love

that overflows beyond its own borders until the flame of the Spirit rested on their heads,

so too a religious community is dead without the Spirit enlivening their mission and

aiding their authentic development of and reliance on their original charism.[138]

**Conjugal Family and the Trinity**

Theological reflection on the relationship between the family and the Trinity sets

any author or reader before a theological minefield. On the one hand, creedal statements

about God as "Father," and Jesus as "begotten" "Son" explicitly draw a link between

God's trinitarian life and the life of the human, conjugal family. The image of Church as

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[136] VC, 21.

[137] See Ciardi, *Koinonia*, 226. Ciardi focuses on the Holy Spirit as gift of love, which aligns the Christian in community with the relations among the Trinity. Quoting Aquinas, Ciardi states that, as Christians, "We have to reproduce this unity which exists in God. Therefore it is not enough for us all to have, by grace, the same divine life which makes us partakers in the divine nature. We must also be united by love with God and one another, in the personal Love which is the Holy Spirit" Aquinas, *In Johannem* 17, 26 (quoted in Ciardi, *Koinonia*, 227).

[138] See PC, 2, where principles of renewal for religious life are outlined. The second principle emphasizes the founder's "spirit and special aims." "The adaptation and renewal of the religious life includes both the constant return to the sources of all Christian life *and to the original spirit of the institutes*." Furthermore, "it redounds to the good of the Church that institutes have their own particular characteristics and work. Therefore let *their founders' spirit and special aims* they set before them as well as their sound traditions— all of which make up the patrimony of each institute—be faithfully held in honor" (emphases mine).

born from Jesus' side on the cross,[139] and the picture of Jesus as the new Adam with Mary as the New Eve also seem to invite trinitarian ideas for the conjugal family. [140]

Risks abound, though, in any attempt to relate the Trinity to human family, or any social body for that matter. Whose family? Which relationships? There is a temptation to use the conjugal family (or any family) as an expansive analogy for the Trinity, that is, as a means to discover the nature of and relationships among the Trinity. This analogical method is a bottom-up approach. If conjugal family (or any family) is the source of information on the Trinity, then there is a chance that destructive relationships and practices of family life may erroneously be mistaken for revelations of the nature of trinitarian life. These destructive relationship and practices could become reified and normative since they are taken as analogies of the Trinity. Furthermore, a strictly analogical approach does not comprehend the great rift between the divine, uncreated, eternal nature of the Trinity and the created, temporary nature of the universe. After all, the Church officially holds that "all resemblance between the Creator and his creature is limited by an always-greater dissimilarity."[141]

Part of the mystery of the Trinity is finding a way to talk about reality that is essentially related *ad alium* yet that *alium* is yet itself. As Aquinas has it, "relation in God is not an accident in a subject, but is the divine essence itself; and so it is subsistent, for

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[139] In *Tractates on John*, 10.4, Augustine describes the connection between Jesus' saving work in his marriage to the church, and the first marriage between Adam and Eve, "Adam sleeps that Eve may be made; Christ dies that the Church may be made. Eve was made from the side of the sleeping Adam; the side of the dead Christ is pierced with a spear that the mysteries may flow forth by which the Church is to be formed." Here I used *Tractates on the Gospel of John*, trans. John W. Rettig (Washington: Catholic University of America, 1988) and *Homilies on the Gospel According to St. John, and his First Epistle by Saint Augustine, Bishop of Hippo*, trans. with notes and indices, 2 Volumes (Oxford: J. H. Parker, 1848).
[140] By "conjugal family" I mean that family created by the sacrament of matrimony in the Catholic Church. I am not ruling out other kinds of families altogether, but I prescind from treating those families here explicitly.
[141] See the doctrine of analogy (Denzinger-Schonmetzer, 806). John Paul II makes note of it in *Mulieris dignitatem*, 8.

the divine essence subsists…that which subsists in the divine nature is the divine nature itself."[142] In other words God exists as unity relation, but distinction of persons is required for that relation, yet these distinct persons must be in essence identical for the relation to be real and not accidental. God, thus, is three who are one. God is *per se* related to another who is Himself. God is *per accidens* related to creation, which exists not by necessity or emanation but by creation ex nihilo.

The immanent Trinity remains mystery unbeheld until the beatific vision, yet God has made known his relation to creation through the revelation of the economic Trinity. God has revealed Himself as Father and source of all being, as Son who is Word and truth of the Father become flesh, and Spirit who proceeds from both to sanctify. As relation *ad alium*, the Trinity is most definitively in Christ Jesus. We learn that the Trinity is *per se* self-donative and generative. In salvation history, the Trinity is God for us. God for us is the Father who creates a universe for fellowship with himself. He walks in the garden with Adam and Eve. God for us is the Father who sends his Son, Jesus in perfect filial obedience to return us to his friendship. In Christ Jesus, God reveals himself as God for us, who empties himself to bring us into communion with himself and sends his Spirit to vivify that communion.

To show just how difficult it is to avoid problems with Trinity and the family, let me explore one modern example of a trinitarian theology of the family that has much to recommend it.[143] Frederick J. Parrella, whose work was introduced in chapter two, is clear in noting that God has revealed himself as three relations *ad alium*, yet the "other"

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[142] Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, 1, q. 29, a. 4, co.
[143] Also see Bertrand de Margerie, Bertrand, "L'analogie familiale de la Trinité," *Science et Esprit* 24 (1972): 77–92; Gérard Rémy, "L'analogie et l'image: de leur bon usage en théologie," *Recherches de science religieuse* 92 (2004): 383–427.

to which each Person of the Trinity is related is also itself. He then goes on to talk about

human relatedness by mean of an implicit analogy wherein the relation *ad alium* of each

person of the Trinity to the other is as the relation *ad alium* of each human person to each

other, especially within the family. Human persons are constituted in their relationships

to others and for others. "*We are God's image only in so far as* we stand in relation to

others."[144] For Parrella, the primary occasion and location for these relationships of

persons "ad alium" is the family. "The family," he writes, "allows us an insight into the

very heart of God."[145]

> No other commitment is as absolute in its intensity nor as eternal in its duration as
> marriage…In uttering Thou, he stands in relation, existing *ad alium* with his
> whole being. In this process he becomes himself, *in se*, a person. Sexuality in
> marriage is the unique language that expresses the all-encompassing power of the
> relationship. Through this language, two persons are so intensely *ad alium* in
> body and soul that the spirit of love between them becomes incarnate as a free and
> independent third person, the child. *No other formal relationship allows a human
> being to reveal God as Trinity so perfectly.*[146]

Marriage, then, especially in its genital expression of integrated sexuality is the privileged

means of expressing the Trinity in the world.

On this regard I would issue three caveats with Parrella's point of entry to the

family as analogy for the Trinity. First, the Bible and the Christian tradition have often

referred to the human person "in" or "to" the image of God (Gen 1:26–27), but only

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[144] Parrella, "Towards a Spirituality of the Family," 136. Here we see "image." This term is a biblical one that is related to both Christ and humanity. Human persons (Gen 1:26–27) are created in or to the image of God. Christ himself *is* the image of God (Col 1:15). By image is meant visual representation of an original. It is different from an analogy. An image may have more or less in common with the original. When looking at an image and an original, any similarity may be intrinsic or extrinsic. For example, in my son I see an image of myself. In a picture of myself I see an image of myself. In the first case, my son is intrinsically an image of me, that is, essentially my image, and the picture's similarity to me as image is extrinsic or accidental. Christ is essentially the image of God whereas human persons extrinsically image God. They have been made as the kind of creations with certain qualities and characteristics like God's own.

[145] Ibid., 137.

[146] Ibid. As I will indicate later, drawing these kinds of one-to-one analogies is always dangerous.

Christ "is the image of the invisible God" (Col 1:15). Thus we must be more reserved than Parrella is here with respect to the ability of the human person to reveal the nature of the Trinity. Second, at the social level, we must hesitate to say that the human person is God's image inasmuch as he is related *ad alium*, that is, related to a person other than himself. The difficulty in claiming that our relatedness to other persons provides an analogy for the intersubjective relatedness of the Trinity is that the "other" to which each person of the Trinity is related is still one subject is still itself. This is not true when speaking of humans relating to other humans. Though each human is an instantiation of "human nature," each person of the Trinity is not merely an individual instantiation of "God's nature." Any social analogy, then, will fail to maintain the intrasubjective unity and relatedness of God who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. With these caveats in place we can continue exploring Parrella's thought.

Third, we must recognize that Parrella's move to privilege married sexuality risks absolutizing the revelatory power of marriage, and especially the sexual act within marriage, potentially making it an idol. Despite his best efforts, Parrella has fallen prey to the chief danger of using trinitarian analogy; it would appear that married people have the market cornered on expressing God's own nature. When Parrella states that marriage is the superlative form of eternal commitment, he would seem to be forgetting Jesus' own words in response to the Sadducees, "In the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven" (Mt 22:30). If the marriage commitment were eternal, then widows or widowers would be theoretically incapable of remarriage. Of course, Parrella may be referring to the fact that the marriage commitment is ordered toward the eternal reality of the child born of the spouses, a child destined for eternal

beatitude. If this is the case, he is forgetful of the tradition regarding the true fruitfulness of the consecrated celibate spousally given to Christ. Further, when Parrella argues for the superlatively eternal commitment of marriage, he erroneously privileges genital, orgasmic expression of human sexuality. From his claim, it follows that that the only way to authentically give oneself completely and intensely to another, the only way to become a person in the fullest sense, is to give oneself over in genital activity. What of chaste celibacy? Is it not a complete gift of self? Does not the religious give over herself as sexual person? Is this gift not an expression of an intense desire to be wholly and completely *ad alium*, where the other is the Trinity itself, or the entire human family? Cannot this self-donative love of the religious be equally as intense as the love of spouses, even though it is not expressed in orgasm? Is the self-donative love of the consecrated celibate person not as fruitful as that of the married person, even though it results only in spiritual offspring? Unfortunately, in his effort to resist the subordination of marriage to monastic spirituality, Parrella has perhaps unwittingly subordinated consecrated religious life to sacramental marriage.

Parrella's desire to understand the family's relationship to the Trinity is helpful and needed. My critique is not that the using the term "image" is wrong or misguided. Quite the opposite. My critique is that the image of the Trinity is so powerful that it can enlighten our understanding of all examples of true human community. The nuclear family centered on Christian marriage does not have a unique claim to being in the image of the Trinity. Vowed religious life in community has the same domestic characteristics that make the home a space and time for relatedness *ad alium*. For example, married sexuality—conjugal intercourse and marital chastity in general—may be part of the

unique way that the spouses attempt to conform their lives to the image of the self-donative love of the Trinity, but vowed religious sexuality expresses the same self-donative, fruitful love in its chaste celibacy. Again, just as children and parents have claims on each other without regard to each other's wants or even feelings, the members of the religious congregation have a claim on each other beyond the individual religious' own willing. The claim is based on the permanence of the community formed and the *telos* of the community, to become the kind of persons who seek first God's kingdom. Take, as another example, the vow of poverty. Poverty canonically requires each to provide for and rely on the other. Vowed religious, then, participate with married Christians in the same task of existing as beings *in relation*, beings directed toward another. Therefore, both married and religious must live in the image of the same divine reality, the Trinity, but in distinct ways. In an effort to find a unique spirituality for the nuclear family, Parrella has missed the catholicity of the one baptismal family working at the same task of imaging the Trinity. The Trinity unifies married and religious life more powerfully than it sunders them. Instead of finding in the Trinity an occasion for bringing together the religious and married life, Parrella sees there a moment of distinction.

On the other hand, there is a temptation to limit all reflection on the Trinity and the family to a strictly katalogical approach, that is, to say that the Trinity allows us to discover the nature, meaning, and relationships among the human, conjugal family.[147] The katalogical approach is a top-down method, but contemplating the Trinity to discover the family runs a double risk: (1) it may never get off the ground, because there are no adequate ways to speak of the divine reality; or (2) it may end in silence as one

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[147] Hans Urs von Balthasar has outlined the shape of a katalogical approach in *Theologik II: Warheit Gottes* (Einsiedeln; Johannes, 1985), 159–200.

continually finds the Trinity's revelation in history to be a revelation of what the Trinity is not. In other words, if we take a top-down approach to understanding the family through the Trinity, where can we begin? With what words, images, and categories do we start? Second, as we continue from where we begin, will not all words, images, and categories that will not then become "analogical" by the very fact that we use them and their common meaning to signify the truth about the Trinity?

These worries can be in great part allayed by combining the analogical and katalogical approach to reflection on the relationship between the Trinity and the conjugal family. On the basis of our sources of revelation, Scripture and Tradition, we can hold a kind of warrant for the analogical method. At the analogical level, Catholic theological reflection could say that God's creation of man and woman in God's image suggests at least a potency for disclosing truth about God within the created order. That potency has been diminished by the fall, but nonetheless remains. Augustine, after all, found in human psychology an analogy of memory, intellect, and will for Trinity.[148] On the other hand, "it is only in the mystery of the Word made flesh" that the truth of God and God's will for creation becomes revealed definitively and completely.[149] Therefore, the question to ask of the reality of family is not, "What can the family bring to our grasp of the trinitarian mystery? But rather: What does the Trinity wish to express through the family?"[150]

Church Fathers of the fourth and fifth century, such as Gregory Nazianzen and other Cappadocians, supported the family analogy for the Trinity. These Fathers of the

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[148] Augustine, *On the Trinity*, book 9.

[149] GS, 22.

[150] See Marc Cardinal Oullet's description of how analogical and katalogical approaches to Trinity and family should be combined in *Divine Likeness*, 14–16.

Church relied on the first human family of Adam, Eve, and Seth (or Abel) to make their analogy. For them, the human family's intrasubjectivity discloses the Trinity's intrasubjectivity in that all the members of the family share in the primordial *anthropos*.[151] The conjugal family's intersubjectivity discloses the Trinity's intrasubjectivity because Adam, as Father, is ungenerated; Seth (or Abel), as Son, is begotten; and Eve, as Spirit, proceeds from Adam in a manner other than generation.[152]

The tension in seeing the conjugal family as analogy for the Trinity is visible already with Augustine. For his part, Augustine rejects the family as an analogy for the Trinity.[153] The family does not tell us what the Trinity is. In *De Trinitate* Augustine's concern is chiefly that finding a group of three persons to be the image of the Trinity is contrary to what Scripture reveals. In coming to this conclusion, Augustine is reading Genesis 1:26–27 (man and woman made in God's image) in light of 1 Cor 11:7 (man is the glory of God; woman is the glory of man).[154] Augustine finds that the image of God is seated in each person's mind rather than a man, wife, and child. Each person is made to the image of the whole Trinity. Thus, inasmuch as any person, either male or female, has

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[151] As Lionel Gendron writes, "For these fathers [Gregory of Nazianzen and other Cappadocians] it was relatively easy to show the consubstantial unity of the Trinity thanks to the image of the human family, and particularly thanks to the first family," "La famille: reflet de la communion trinitaire," in *La famille chrétienne dans the monde d'aujourd'hui* (Montreal: Bellarmin, 1995), 127–48, at 133 (trans. Oullet).

[152] See Gregory of Nazianzen, *Oratio XXXI (Theol. V)*, Patrologia Graeca 36, p. 144.

[153] For a detailed study of symbol of family and the Trinity, see Lionel Gendron, *Mystère de la Trinité et Symbolique familiale: approche historique* (Rome: Pontifica Universitas Gregoriana, 1975). See also, Karin Heller, "The Interpersonal Communion of Trinity, Origin and Aim of Communion between Man and Woman," in *Dialoghi sul mistero nuziale: Studi offerti al Cardinale Angelo Scola*, ed. Gilfredo Marengo and Bruno Ognibeni (Rome: Lateran University, 2003), 115–29.

[154] Genesis 1:26–27, "Then God said, "Let *us* make man in our image, after our likeness…So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created *him*; male and female he created them." See also, 1 Cor 11:7: "For a man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man." Augustine has to find the harmony between these two passages, since he believes Genesis affirms that both men and women are created in the image of God, and he believes Corinthians does not contradict Genesis (See *De Genesi ad Litteram* 3.22; *De Trinitate* 12.2.9). See also Roland J. Teske, "The Image and Likeness of God in St. Augustine's *De Genesi ad ltteram liber imperfectus*," *Augustinianum* 30 (1990): 441–51.

the potency to contemplate and order their lives toward eternal reality and beauty, they are in the image of God.[155] The sexual, material difference between male and female, though, is not an image of the distinctions in the Trinity but is an image of the parts of the human mind. Man, considered as only one aspect of the human's mind, represents the mind rising up to God; the woman, considered only in her aspect as partner or helper, represents the mind ordering the things of this world in themselves. In this way, man and woman together represent both aspects of the human mind, but concomitantly each has the image of God in him or herself because each has the entirety of a mind. Augustine, here, finds a way to synthesize Paul's claim that woman is the glory of man, and man the glory of God, while affirming a reading of the Genesis creation account wherein each woman and man is created in the image of God.

To say that the family of husband, wife, and child discloses an analogy for the Trinity creates additional problems for Augustine. Again, the central problem is scriptural. It would certainly make his synthesis of 1 Cor 11 and Genesis 1:26–27 more difficult. Aside from this fact, the family as Trinity fails to communicate the truth of the Trinity's

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[155] Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram* 3.19–20, 22; *On Genesis*, 237–38, writes that "There may be the most subtle arguments, to be sure, about the actual mind of man, in which he was made to the image of God, that its activity as a kind of rational life is divided between the contemplation of eternal truth and the management of temporal affairs; and that in this way it was made, as it were, male and female, with the former function directing, the latter conforming. With this division of roles however, that part alone is rightly said to be the image of God which clings in contemplation to the unchangeable Truth. It was as symbolically representing this that the apostle Paul says the man alone *is the image and glory of God, while the woman,* he goes on, *is the glory of the man* (1 Cor 11:7). And so, although this external diversity of sex in the bodies of two human beings symbolizes what is to be understood internally in one mind of a single human being, still the female too, because it is simply in the body that she is female, is also being renewed in the spirit of her mind in the recognition of God according to the image of him who created that in which there is no male and female." See also, *De Trinitate* xii.2.5–9; *On The Trinity*, 324–27. "We should not then understand man being made to the image of the supreme trinity, that is, to the image of God, as meaning that this image is to be understood in three human beings. Particularly so in view of what the apostle says about the man being the image of God, for which reason he removes the covering from his head while he warns the woman to wear it: he says, *The man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God. But the woman is the glory of the man* (1 Cor 11:7). Now what are we to say to this? If the woman in her own person completes the image of the trinity, why is the man still called the image when she has already been extracted from his side?"

intrasubjective identity, that it is all one substance, one God. Augustine is not convinced

by the Cappadocian confidence that male and female sharing in the one nature of

*anthropos* suffices. Furthermore, the family comes-to-be over time whereas the Trinity's

relations of generation and spiration exist without time. If Adam is Father and Eve Spirit,

then the Son (being Seth) would not have existed from all time (except in germ). This

does not abide with the co-eternality of the three persons.[156] Finally, the family as

analogy for the Trinity miscommunicates the intersubjective relations between the three

Divine Persons. Augustine notes that some have called Eve, the first wife, analogous to

the Holy Spirit. This is not altogether inappropriate for the way it demonstrates the

relationship of origin from the Father, but it confuses the relationship between Son and

Spirit. If Eve is to the Spirit, and Seth to the Son, then how can it be said that the Spirit

proceeds from the Son? Eve does not proceed from the Seth. Imagining Eve as Spirit also

erroneously assumes that there is something about "womanness" that aligns with a

principle of distinction within the Trinity. Since the distinction between male and female

is merely bodily, no such principle in truth exists in the woman.[157]  As we have seen

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[156] Augustine, *De Trinitate*, xii.8; *On the Trinity*, 326: "What happens if we take this image of the trinity as realized not in one but in three human beings, father and mother and son? It would seem to follow that man was not in fact made to the image of God until a wife was made for him and until they had produced a son, because there was as yet no threesome or trinity. Is someone going to say, 'The trinity was there all right, because in their germinal nature even if not in their proper form the woman was there in the side of her husband and the son was there in the loins of his father'?"

[157] Augustine, *De Trinitate*, xii.5, *On the Trinity*, 324: "It will be clear that I do not find the opinion very convincing which supposes that the trinity of the image of God, as far as human nature is concerned, can be discovered in three persons; that is, that it may be composed of the union of male and female and their offspring, in which the man suggests the person of the Father, what proceeds from him by way of birth that of the Son, and thus the third person of the Holy Spirit, they say, is represented by the woman, who proceeds from the man in such a way that she is not son or daughter, although it is by her conceiving that offspring is born; for the Lord said of the Holy Spirit that *he proceeds from the Father* (Jn 15:26), and yet he is not a son. The only thing about this mistaken opinion that carries any conviction is the point that, as the origin of woman according to the reliable authority of scripture shows clearly enough, not everything that comes into being from one person to make another can be called son…The rest of the theory is so absurd, indeed so false, that it can easily be refuted. I pass over what an error it is to think of the Holy Spirit as the mother of the Son and the wife of the Father."

above, Augustine hesitates to use any intersubjective analogy for the Trinity. Instead he prefers the intrasubjective analogy of one person because he thinks it a bigger mistake to miss the unity of the Trinity rather than its distinction among the Persons.[158]

Despite his hesitancy, Augustine does provide one intersubjective, ecclesial analogy for the Trinity (in terms of the love binding the Christians in the Church) that eventually works its way back into the family as analogy for the Trinity.[159] In the 11th century, Richard of St. Victor developed Augustine's concept of love as uniting principle in a way that would be taken up in following century by Bonaventure and applied to all conjugal family as image of the Trinity. As communion of love, the Trinity was a communion of "three Friends gathered together in one love: a Lover, a Beloved, and a *condilectus* loved by both."[160] Richard applied this thought to the original family and the Trinity in a way that might have made sense for Augustine; he answers the problems of the relations between the Persons of the Trinity.[161] Augustine, though, would still have been uncomfortable with the inability of this social analogy to represent the perfect unity of identity in the Trinity. For Augustine's ecclesial analogy, love binds the Trinity, but

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[158] Maurice Nédoncelle, "L'Intersubjectivité humaine est-elle pour saint Augustin une image de la Trinité?" *Augustinus Magister*, vol. 1 (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1954), 586.

[159] Oullet expands on this idea (*Divine Likeness*, [24]) when he writes, "In his *Tractatus XXXIX*, while describing Church unity founded on the charity between the community members, Augustine states that therein lies an analogy of the unity which exists between the divine Persons. He observes, in fact, that love possesses the capacity to create a common soul and a common heart among those who love one another. He perceives this capacity especially in God, in whom the Holy Spirit appears as the bond and the fruit of the mutual love of Father and Son. However, he also sees it in ecclesial love, which the Holy Spirit brings to life and consecrates within the community. This analogy will henceforth become the most fruitful and most adequate approach to the trinitarian mystery."

[160] See G. Salet, *Richard of St. Victor, La Trinité* (Paris: Cerf, 1999), cited in Oullet, *Divine Likeness*, 25.

[161] As Salet writes, "It is from Adam's substance that Eve, Seth and Enoch proceed. But the first procession alone was immediate, the second was both mediate and immediate: for Seth proceeded from Adam's substance immediately, in that he was procreated by him, and also mediately, in that he is also engendered by Eve," (*Richard of St. Victor* [quoted in Oullet, *Divine Likeness*, 25] ). As Oullet rightly points out, "The originating processions in God follow from this double immediate and mediate mode: the Son proceeds immediately from the Father, whereas the Spirit proceeds from the Father by the mediation of the son" (*Divine Likeness*, 25).

love is at once the substance of the Trinity. In the social analogy of Richard of St. Victor, love binds the persons, and is a person itself, but it is not the substance of all three persons.

In the generation after Richard of St. Victor, Bonaventure takes the notion of a *condilectus*, a third good shared by both the lover and the beloved, deep into the life of the conjugal family. The child, for Bonaventure, is not merely that which is loved by both man and woman, but the child is the very hypostasis of the parents' love. "This new analogy thus takes up as its own the social analogy [two friends and a *condilectus*], no longer only favoring the family dimension but this time insisting on it. For this reason, we believe that it may indeed be called a typically familial-social analogy of the Trinity."[162]

What we have seen developed from the patristic version of the family analogy is a sort of inversion of identities within the original (Adam and Eve) and typical (man and woman) conjugal family. For the Cappadocian authors, Adam was analogous to the Father, Seth (or Abel, or Enoch) the Son, and Eve the Spirit. By the time of Bonaventure the identities of Eve and Seth (or Abel or Enoch) have reversed. Adam remains in the place of Father, but Eve represents the Son, and Seth (or Abel or Enoch) holds the place of Spirit. The payoff in switching these identities resided in understanding how the Spirit can proceed from both the Father and the Son while being the principle of unity between them. This was not the chief theological concern for the Cappadocians. They were more concerned to explain how the Spirit proceeds as other-than-generated. The typical-familial vision of the Trinity established in the scholastic period fell from use until the

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[162] Oullet, *Divine Likeness*, 25, here relying on L. Gendron, *La famille*, 140; and Klaus Hemmerle: "Matrimonio e Famiglia in una antropologia trinitaria," *Nuova Umanità* 6 (1984), 3–31, at 31.

seventeenth-century, when Petau and Tommasinus briefly took up the analogy. Once again it disappeared until the 20ᵗʰ century, when it reappeared under the impulse of M. J. Scheeben and others.[163] The analogy has gained strength in no small part due to the increased attention given to love (especially see *Gaudium et spes* 48–52) as the cause and principle bond of marriage.[164]

While it is important to draw on this tradition of thought that sees in the communion of marriage an image of the Trinity, I believe, with Cardinal Oullet, that John Paul II is correct when he argues for a qualification of the family as analogy for the Trinity. John Paul II desires a katalogical approach to the question: "the original model of the family must be sought in God himself, in the trinitarian mystery of his life."[165] Note John Paul II's use of "model" here. The family is to make itself like what has been revealed about the Trinity. For John Paul II, the actual connection between the Trinity and the conjugal family is not strictly a correspondence between the persons themselves (as man or woman) but between the "communio personarum." In other words, the family should attempt to imitate the communion of persons that God has revealed the Trinity to be, to provide a kind of image of that communion for and in the world:

> In the words of the [Second Vatican] Council, the 'communion' of persons is drawn in a certain sense from the mystery of the trinitarian 'We', and therefore

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[163] Oullet (*Divine Likeness*, 26) here cites the work of M. J. Scheeben, M. Schmaus, and H. Muhlen, as well as H. Doms, B. Haering, and Th. Rey-Mermet as examples of trinitarian theologies of marriage and family.

[164] GS, 48: "Thus a man and a woman, who *by their compact of conjugal love* 'are no longer two but one flesh' (Mt 19:f), render mutual help and service to each other through an intimate union of their persons and of their actions… Christ the Lord abundantly blessed *this many-faceted love, welling up as it does from the fountain of divine love…Authentic married love is caught up into divine love* and is governed by Christ's redeeming power." See also GS, 49: "The biblical Word of God several times urges the betrothed and the married to nourish and develop their wedlock by pure conjugal love and undivided affection. Many men of our own age also highly regard true love between husband and wife as it manifests itself in a variety of ways…This love is an eminently human one since it is directed from one person to another through an affection of the will; it involves the good of the whole person…This love God has judged worthy of special gifts, healing, perfecting, and exalting gifts of grace and of charity. Such love, merging the human with the divine, leads the spouses to a free and mutual gift of themselves."

[165] John Paul II, *Letter to Families*, 6.

'conjugal communion' also refers to this mystery. The family, which originates in the love of man and woman, ultimately derives from the mystery of God.[166]

Furthermore, "this conforms to the innermost being of man and woman, to their innate and authentic dignity as persons" with the capacity and need to live in truth and love.[167] Inasmuch as the conjugal family is a true communion of persons, it is made to the image of the Trinity.

Following John Paul II's thought, we can call Trinity a communion of love that eternally engenders, maintains, and gives the Divine Persons to, from, and for each other; the Trinity contains a genealogy of persons that is the source of the genealogy of persons in the conjugal family. When spouses consent to be "willing to accept children from God," they are taking up a mission that is revealed by the life of the Trinity, whose love is so personal as to actually *be* a person. The married couple is choosing to live in this image, as a communion of persons whose love is a personal reception of the other as person and a gift of one's own person; this love becomes a person in the child welcomed into the home as gift, as stranger, as Christ, as good in herself or himself.[168] Gendron points out that John Paul II is here developing the social, ecclesial, thought introduced by Augustine, which became a love of friendship and the original family in Richard of St. Victor, and

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[166] Ibid., 8. Earl Muller has developed a "communitarian analogy" of the Trinity from Pauline sources. See *Trinity and Marriage in Paul: The Establishement of a Communitarian Analogy of the Trinity Grounded in the Theological Shape of Pauline Thought* (Frankfurt: Lang, 1990).

[167] John Paul II, *Letter to Families*, 8.

[168] Stratford Caldecott, in "The Drama of the Home: Marriage, The Common Good, and Public Policy," (in Kenneth D. Whitehead, ed., *Marriage and the Common Good: Proceedings from the Twenty-Second Annual Convention of the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars* [South Bend, IN: St. Augustine's, 2001], 1–26, at 19–21), reflects on the idea of the child as the "embodiment" of the common good of the marriage. He is relying on John Paul II, *Letter to Families*, 10–11. John Paul II writes, "*In the newborn child is realized the common good of the family.* Just as the common good of the spouses is fulfilled in conjugal love, ever ready to give and receive new life, so too the common good of the family is fulfilled through that same spousal love, as embodied in the newborn child. Part of the genealogy of the person is the genealogy of the family, preserved for posterity by the annotations in the Church's baptismal registers, even though these are merely the social consequences of the fact that 'a man has been born into the world' (cf. *Jn* 16:21)" (*Letter to Families*, 11, emphasis original).

which became the love of each marriage for Bonaventure.[169] John Paul II ties together

what these authors had been developing by noting the supra-biological, spiritual

fruitfulness of the family's love—the cooperation of the family with God in their

willingness to accept children as persons given from God and ordered to God:

> In affirming that spouses, as parents, cooperate with God the Creator in
> conceiving and giving birth to a new human being, we are not speaking merely
> with reference to the laws of biology. Instead, we wish to emphasize here that
> *God himself is present in human fatherhood and motherhood* quite differently
> than he is present in all other instances of begetting 'on earth.' Indeed, God alone
> is the source of all that 'image and likeness' which is proper to the human being,
> as it was received at creation. Begetting is the continuation of Creation.[170]

Creation is an act of the Trinity, and spousal love is a willingness to participate by

receptivity in that act of creation at the spiritual and biological levels.

It is this weave of spiritual and biological fecundity originating in the trinitarian

communion of persons that points finally to the ecclesiality of the family and the human

person and recovers Augustine's use of ecclesial imagery to reflect on the Trinity. Recall

that the Trinity has been understood as the source of ecclesial communion; it is the Spirit

of brotherhood that allows each person to call Christ the Son our brother, and therefore

God our (Abba) Father. It is the Father who wills us to be his people born by the Son on

the Cross and enlightened at the Pentecost by the Spirit to send the good news to the

nations. These unifying and evangelical impulses of the Trinity in ecclesial communion

of persons carry over into the conjugal communion of persons, creating in the family

engendered by sacramental matrimony a domestic church. John Chrysostom commanded

the families of his diocese to "make your home into a church."[171] He was speaking of the

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[169] Gendron, *La famille,* 144.

[170] John Paul II, *Letter to Families*, 9 (emphasis original).

[171] John Chrysostom, *Homilies on* Genesis 6.2 (PG 54, 607), trans. Oullet, *Divine Likeness*, 41: "On
returning home [from liturgy], let us prepare two tables, one for food and one for the Word of God,

practices required for a trinitarian communion of persons: "domestic concord, openness to strangers and the poor, welcome and hospitality as essential virtues."[172] Paul VI, developing on the Second Vatican Council's renewal of the term "domestic church," emphasized in *Evangelii nuntiandi* that the family's criteria of ecclesiality was evangelization. The home is a legitimate source of evangelization. John Paul II, in *Familiaris consortio* makes three kinds of references to the family as "domestic church." One is to affirm that the family is such an ecclesial reality, sharing by word, sacrament, and unity in the life and mystery of the Church.[173] Second, with Paul VI he restates the family's evangelical mission.[174] Finally, he sees the family as a sanctuary (as a church building has a sanctuary) wherein prayer and worship are offered.[175] For John Paul II, because the conjugal family's proper identity and role is to share in the Trinity's (and thus the wider Church's) genealogical and function, "the family is more than a field for

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whereupon the man should repeat the things that were said in Church. Let the wife learn and the children hear; nor should the servants be deprived of this reading. Make of your home a church, because you are accountable for the salvation of your children and servants." See also Chrysostom, *Expo. In Ps 41:12* (PG 55, 158), trans. Oullet, *Divine Likeness*, 41: "All, even the smallest ones, must feel actively committed to seeking the message of the Word of God and to living it together…Make your home into a church. For where we find psalmody, prayer, and the inspired songs of the prophets, there is certainly no mistake in calling such a gathering a 'church.'"

[172] John Chrysostom, *Homily 20 on Ephesians*: "If we regulate our households in this way, we will also be fit to oversee the Church, for indeed the household is a little Church. Therefore, it is possible for us to surpass all others in virtue by becoming good husbands and wives" (*On Marriage and Family Life*, 57). See also, John Chrysostom, *Homily 26 on Acts*: "Do this [make vigils of prayer], thou also the man, not the woman only. Let the house be a Church, consisting of men and women. For think not because you are the only man, or because she is the only woman there, that this is any hindrance. '*For where two ,*' He says, '*are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them.*'…If you have children wake up them also, and let your house altogether become a Church through the night: but if they be tender, and cannot endure the watching, let them stay for the first or second prayer, and then send them to rest" (J. Walker et al., trans., and Philip Schaff, ed., *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 11 [Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing, 1889], available at http://newadvent.org/fathers/210126.htm, accessed on February 9, 2011). From these quotes it is apparent that for Chrysostom, the household is a church because it shares in the *practices* of the Church and because it benefits from Christ's promise of presence to the gathered Christians. Lisa Sowle Cahill, in *Family: A Christian Social Approach* (50–60), emphasizes Chrysostom's attention to the domestic church as locus of training in virtue through practices of almsgiving and prayer—over against the vice of greed. She goes on to compare him favorably to Augustine, whom she characterizes as being more concerned with lust than greed, and less concerned about the practices of child-rearing.

[173] See FC, 21, 38, 48, 49, cited in Oullet, *Divine Likeness*, 41.

[174] See FC, 51, 52, 53, cited in Ibid.

[175] See FC, 55, 59, 61, cited in Ibid.

implementation of church pastoral policy, but is an authentic manifestation of the Church."[176]

## The Trinity: Point of Contact, Point of Distinction

In the preceding two sections I have laid out some of the ligations both vowed religious life in community and matrimonial life have to the Trinity. What remains is to identify and explore points of contact and points of distinction in the ways each state is in the image of the Trinity. In brief, the points of contact are three. The Trinity is (1) the source of both consecrated and married life; (2) the model of unity within marriage and consecrated life in community; (3) and the source of the fertility in both states.

First, Trinity is source. For the religious, the Trinity unites each member in the practice of eschatologically prophetic brotherhood with Christ, the Son who leaves and returns to the Father in obedience as one who comes to make all people his brothers and sisters. In the married state, the spouses are united on account of the sacrament because in it their love is taken up into the love of Christ, the Son and second person of the Trinity, who serves and even dies for his spouse in obedience to the Father's will. The Trinity is a touchpoint for both conjugal and consecrated life because entering either state is entering the narrative of the Trinity. For the religious, it is to respond to the Father's call to belong exclusively to the Son and live in the Spirit as though God's reign has already begun. Again, for the religious, professing the vows is to confess to having been sent by the Father to live the life of the Son and bear the fruit of the Spirit in the world. For the

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[176] See Oullet, *Divine Likeness*, 41; and Normand Provencher*,* Vers une théologie de la familie: L'Eglise domestique," *Eglise et théologie* 12 (1981), 9–34."

married, the spouses enter the narrative of the Trinity because in their sacrament, their love is incorporated into Christ's love so that they may serve and love each other as Christ loved and served the Church—humbly, in suffering, and unto death. Furthermore, their love for each other, as a participation in Christ's love, sends the Spirit of sanctification into the world and bears the fruits of the Spirit in the lives of the spouses and their household. Finally, the spouses insert themselves into the narrative of the Trinity by ordering their own parenthood as a participation in Christ's own statement, "I do nothing of my own, but only what comes from the Father, what I see the Father doing." When they see their children as the Father's work that they are invited to participate in, as God's gift which they must relinquish better than they received it,[177] as the naked Christ knocking at the door, they then enter the Son's total dependence on the will of the Father for his own mission in the world.

Recall from chapter 3 that Augustine's primary understanding of human belonging is ecclesial. Where persons are being Church, whether vowed religious or married, they are being one church, sharing in the one creative fecundity of the Trinity. True, Augustine saw the motherhood of the virgin as preferable and more fertile to the motherhood of the married, but they both participated in the begetting of Christians, in the begetting of Christ in the world. It is with this thought that we step into a consideration of how this trinitarian language provides a point of convergence and a point of distinction for further reflection on married and consecrated religious life.

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[177] Lk 19:11–27. The context of this parable is Jesus' ascent to Jerusalem, which was accompanied by much anticipation by his disciples. The parable speaks to our own context, awaiting the kingdom . Our marrying and parenting occur in this context and ought to be lived with the same radical trust (and yes even risk) taken by the more aggressive of the servants. We are not to bury ourselves or our children in the ground to protect them from fear that we will mess them up, or that the world "isn't a safe place for kids." The parable is an answer to the rhetorical question: how could I bring a child into such a messed up world?

The ecclesiality of marriage and consecrated life brings the two states together in their witness to the Trinity. All Christians, whether consecrated religious or vowed in matrimony, share the same baptismal initiation into the Trinity's own life by their integration into the body of Christ. At the same time, the church is the household of God, where Christians, whether consecrated religious or married, abide with Christ under the motivation of the Spirit in the one household of the Father. Being Church, then, is a domestic project of returning to the Father by imitating the Son under the inspiration of the Spirit. Both states of life witness to the trinitarian aspects of this householding. Religious life practices a domestic task of filial love for one another in shared brotherhood to Christ by the power of the Spirit and called to return in filial obedience to the Father. As we saw in chapters three and four, this project as envisioned by John's Gospel and the practice of Benedictine monastic life is decidedly domestic. Through the regular life of waking, praying, maintenance, cooking, cleaning, eating, and work, the religious fill each moment with charity for their fellow community members and for all peoples. The work of the community members for the maintenance of daily life, whether inside the household or outside (for non-cloistered religious orders), is an obediential, receptive participation in the creativity of the Father. The obedience each renders to one another and the abbot, and the service of prayer and care each monk renders for one another and the world is a participation in Christ's own obedience to the Father, his prayer for the church, and his humble service of his flock. Finally, the joyful spirit which can raise a community member to prayer, to a humble act of service, or to their apostolic work outside the community is a share in the Spirit that inspired the original community

of Christians in the upper room and filled those who heard the message with new life in Christ.

Married life, for its part, has a privileged share in this householding with God, for its own practice of householding with God is a task of being domestic church. In this sense, by participation in the life of the Trinity, the spouses' sometimes humdrum tasks of ordering a household, working for the economic preservation of the family, and educating children are transformed. Economic work and ordering the household becomes an obediential, receptive, and appropriated participation in the creativity of the father.[178] But they are also a graced participation in the evangelical mission of the son. Bearing, educating, and caring for children becomes a participation in Christ's humble servant leadership that washed the feet of the disciples, tended to a mother-in-law, and gathered children for blessing. This task of educating children also becomes a share, too, in the Spirit-filled mission of the Church, not only because the parents are the child's first preachers of the good news of freedom from sin and death, but because the family shares in the Church's and the Trinity's outward, diffusive orientation. The family, if it is domestic church, if it is the household of God, not only welcomes the child and the stranger, but actively runs over its own boundaries into evangelical opportunities wherever they are. Finally, the Spirit of love inspires any action in the household to be accomplished as an act of love. Whether changing a diaper or waiting for a turn in the shower, the work of the domestic church is a participation in the enlivening Spirit sent to guide and sanctify the church in the world.

Third, because ecclesial belonging, as domestic project, is trinitarian, it is genealogical. Just as the life of the Trinity is fruitful, that is, its love generates persons, so

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[178] John Paul II, *Laborem exercens*, 25.

too must be our domestic abiding with Christ as church fruitful. The consecrated religious witness to a new era of salvation history, where the command to be fruitful and multiply has been transformed into an evangelical, spiritual command to bring people to life in the household of God.[179] The married Christian too witnesses to this transformation of the command to be fruitful and multiply. Rather than understanding biological procreation as a duty required for the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham, or as a matter of self-fulfillment, or as means to carry on their own name and possessions (or even the continuation of the human race), spouses now welcome God's gift of the child as a spiritual fruit of their love. The couple is to see the child as God's own, principally the work of God, not their own work, to be loved for her own sake and guided to authentic development as daughter of God. This view follows from the spouse's understanding that their mission as spouses and parents is an authentic participation in the evangelical mission of the Church. This is their crowning participation in that evangelical mission.

While there is much about their trinitarian grounding that brings together conjugal and consecrated life, the Trinity also offers points of distinction between the consecrated and the conjugal life. As we said before, persons in both states are sent by the Father to live the evangelical mission of the Son and share in the sanctifying power of the Spirit; however, each state lives this reality distinctly. While the primary factor drawing together these two states is the community in which the vows of religion and matrimony take place, the ecclesial community, which is itself rooted in the Trinity, the primary distinction lies in community as well. For the consecrated, the principal community is the brothers and sisters of a religious order, not any one brother or sister. For the spouses, the

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[179] In chapter three I noted how Augustine develop this position based on his understanding of the meaning of marriage at different stages of salvation history.

principal community is the communion of persons created in the consent and consummation (i.e., a communion initially involving only two persons). Whether in active or contemplative orders, the religious participate in the evangelical and sanctifying mission of the Church to the whole world because they are bound to practices of Christian householding with the religious community and any person who happens inhabit the community wherein they profess their vows. The foundational community for married persons, on the other hand, is from the bond between spouses, who commit to practices of Christian householding with one person in particular (at least initially). Spouses are sent by the Father to love a particular person as Christ loves the Church, to order a life with that person according to the sanctifying Spirit. Furthermore, they are sent to be one in Christ and love the Church as Christ does. They must bring Christ's love to the whole Church by, through, and with their service to one another and their immediate community. This conjugal life, insofar as it is rooted in the Trinity will be diffusive, personal love; its love will become persons received from God the Father in an expression of love for the spouse. The religious life, insofar as it is rooted in the Trinity will be diffusive, personal love; its love will become persons received (in baptism) from God the Father in an expression of love for the entire people of God, who constitute Christ's body.

Of course, even in this distinction we have another point of common ground. First, both the vows of the marital sacrament and vows of religion can only be made by those already living in the same community, that is, the household of God. In other words, only baptized Christians can make these vows. Second, even though the wedding vows bind two persons and the religious vows bind a larger group of persons, both the nuptial and

the religious vows are public, graced, made in the presence of the church, and as members of the ecclesial community that will hold the vowing subject accountable. Third, even though the spousal communion of persons created by the consent and consummation essentially bonds only two persons, it is not any more "voluntary" or "nuclear" than entrance into religious life. The conjugal covenant binds two persons, not two autonomous individuals. These two persons come to the altar with all manner of familial connections and histories; the newly created marriage bond does not sever those persons from their previous households (whether biological or volitional). In fact, the conjugal covenant creates new bonds to those pre-existing households. The spouses may need to invite their parents into their home as they advance in age, for example. Also, just as the other members of the religious order were not chosen by the novice, the spouses do not elect who will be in their wife's extended family, or who their wife's uncle may decide to marry in five years. The bonds between persons in religious communities and extended kinship groups are equally non-voluntary and equally wide-ranging. The distinction here is that vows of religion explicitly bond the person to the entire community, whereas vows of matrimony explicitly bond the spouses to each other and any persons who may enter that community over time (e.g., children).

## CONCLUSION: SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

Let us pause for a moment to reconsider the trajectory of thought in this chapter. Where have we come from in this chapter, and what point have we reached? The chapter considered three theological loci for consonance between marriage and consecrated life:

vows, Christ and his evangelical virtues as the nexus of both Christian states, and finally

the Trinity as fundamental source and model for the states as ways of life in God's

household. The chapter began by arguing that marrying people do make vows. I

continued by forwarding and developing the arguments of those who claim that the vows

of consecrated religious life disclose a fundamental reality of human nature and

community, both what it is and what it lacks. At the basis of the human person and

community various authors found a nuptial orientation or the will. Despite this difference,

both considered the human person to be oriented toward complete gift of self as

expressed in both consecrated religious life and matrimony. If the vows of religion tell us

about who we are, I proposed that they also disclose what (or better, who) we are called

to become—Christ. Christ, it was argued, is the source and summit of poverty, chastity,

and obedience. Since the destiny of each Christian, having been incorporated into

Christ's body, having become a part of the community witnessing to the story of Christ's

life, death, and resurrection, is for a Christoform life, then we must hold that the

evangelical counsels are in truth a kind of evangelical imperative. They will be lived in

the life of all Christians inasmuch as any Christian truly lives in Christ. Just as the vows

of religion find their font and form in Christ, so too does conjugal life. The sacramental

bond of marriage was first made present by Christ's own generous (poor), exclusive

(chaste), and unconditional (obedient) love for the church manifested in the life, death,

and resurrection that sanctify his spouse and continue to enliven her through the

Eucharist today. Finally, a third section showed that both consecrated and conjugal life

find their source in, provide an image of, and participate in the narrative of the Trinity in

ways that unite these states of life and ways that distinguish these states of life. Through

these investigations we have arrived at a rich theological consonance between the harmony of religious life and the melody of matrimony.

From what I have argued above, we can conclude that married life and consecrated life meet in Christ who, as *christos*, *anthropos*, and *Secunda Persona Trinitatis*, reveals himself as poor, chaste, and obedient son and bridegroom, and who presents the evangelical counsels as the font springing forth both the consecrated and married life as practices of abiding in God's household.

There are two immediate implications of this conclusion about the meeting of consecrated and conjugal life in Christ as second person of the Trinity, along with what has been said in previous chapters about the shared practices and principles of marriage and consecrated life as two instantiations of Christian householding. (1) My conclusion should fairly put to rest worries of those who fear a "monasticization of marriage." This is the case not because aspects of spirituality practiced in consecrated religious life might be applicable to conjugal life, but because I have reframed the question of how the two states relate to and influence one another. Frederick J. Parrella and Peter Phan and others (see chapter 2) have shied away using from language from the religious life to explicate an "authentic" married spirituality because it appears to them that such recourse to this language will lead to spouses who are semi-monastic, or spouses who cannot find holiness in what they do *as married couple*. They come to this conclusion because they see marriage and monasticism as parallel tracks to the same goal. In place of this image, I have offered a picture that imagines conjugal and consecrated life as intertwined practices of being conformed to Christ the poor, chaste, and obedient Christian householding. Poverty, chastity, and obedience constitute the fiber of both threads of this one twine

inasmuch as both are a participation in Christ. We need not fear recourse to language of

"vows" and evangelical counsels as an incursion of monasticism into married life.

Poverty, for example, belongs no more to the religious than it does to the married. We

have now reached a point where we can speak of poverty, chastity, and obedience not as

"things the religious life can offer married people" but as practices inherently though

distinctly expressed in both states of life. The chapter that follows, therefore, explores

marriage as a vowed life, especially as a life of implicitly vowed poverty, chastity, and

obedience.

(2) This chapter is, thus, a springboard for further reflection on Christian

householding as a setting for the virtues and practices of poverty, chastity, and obedience.

Such a reflection occupies chapter six. With the conclusion that the evangelical counsels

are foundational in both married and consecrated religious life, a trove of theological

experience, vocabulary, and imagination are opened up for the field of moral theology in

marriage. As we have seen, even accounts of Christian householding relying on practice

language do not have recourse to poverty, chastity, or obedience.[180] A vast body of

resources might now be plumbed to aid married persons in discerning and developing

their practices of being and following the poor, chaste, and obedient Christ in their

domestic Church. Among these resources are the notion of the novitiate, the liturgical

richness of religious life in community, as well as the concept of religious life as regular,

that is, lived according to a rule.

Chapter six deals principally with integrating the insights of previous chapters

into a framework for the third paradigm proposed in chapter 1: marriage as Common

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[180] Julie Hanlon Rubio's recent monograph (*Family Ethics: Practices for Christian Families* [Washington: Georgetown University, 2010]) was organized around five practices: sex, eating, tithing, serving, and prayer. Poverty, chastity, and obedience, however, found no place in her treatment.

Way in Christ. Marriage, as Common Way in Christ, is an ecclesial, christomorphic practice lived according to principles of Christian householding, among them the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience integrated by a *regula vitae*. Chapter six frames this paradigm out by bringing to bear MacIntyre's definition of "practice," by prioritizing the ecclesial location of the practice through reference to Augustine's ecclesio-nuptial goods and the principles of Christian householding, and by a consideration of poverty, chastity, and obedience in the married state. The chapter ends with a reflection on the synthetic power of a *regula vitae* for the evangelical virtues in marriage, and closes with suggestions for future research into a novitiate for the married state.

CHAPTER 6: CONSTRUCTIVE PROPOSAL FOR MARRIAGE AS A COMMON
WAY IN CHRIST—THE EVANGELICAL COUNSELS, HOUSEHOLDING
PRINCIPLES, A *REGULA MATRIMONII*, AND
A MARRIAGE NOVITIATE

The first five chapters of this dissertation have paved the way for the constructive

attempts offered here. The introduction identified problems affecting marriage and family,

as well as typical solutions offered in terms of "narratives" for where marriage is, how it

got there, and where it must go. The diagnosis of the disease and the shape of its cure

were related to the paradigms used to understand marriage itself. In demonstrating this

claim I described the approach to marriage as "relationship" and marriage as "practice."

Each of these approaches contributes to solving some of the difficulties in marriage, but

each leaves other challenges unaddressed. "Relationship" language was too

anthropological and not theological enough—with little connection to Trinity and the

church as the context for the relationship. On the other hand, practice language also

lacked a rich theological grounding, but had made a strong move to see marriage as

principally within the Church. Some third paradigm that involves aspects of both

"relationship" and "practice" was required, with a theological foundation to ground it.

The language for this paradigm, I argued, must come from the life of the Church rather

than the grammar of the state or civil society, because Christian marriage's primary

context is ecclesial and its primary end, as determined by that context, is the

sanctification of the spouses. To this end, I hypothesized a consonance between vowed

religious life and matrimonial life.

Chapter two continued by turning to twentieth-century scholars who are aware of

an area of ecclesial life that has more theological development as a practice rooted in

Christology and the Trinity, namely vowed religious life. While these authors offered

many insights into the relationship between the two states of life, they ultimately

maintain a version of the oppositional, competitive account that necessarily dichotomizes

the two states and fails to see their common ground in Christ the second person of the

Trinity. I intended to overcome the oppositional narrative with a counter-narrative that

demonstrates complex relationship between these states, and the dialogue and sharing of

images and concepts that has existed between them for throughout Christian history. The

counter-narrative sees the two states as composing together the one bride of Christ who is

united with and abides with the bridegroom; in other words, both marriage and

consecrated religious life are complex domestic practices of inhabiting God's household.

In the fourth chapter I arrived at contemporary scholars who envision Christian life in

terms of householding practices. The principles of unity they offer for matrimony and

monastic life are a good start, and they help alleviate the absence of a wider

ecclesiological connection in theologies of the family. These principles of unity reminded

us that both vowed religious life and conjugal life are shaped by the larger identity and

purposes of the Body of Christ. While these principles are helpful, chapter four noted

significant lacks, among them the understanding of life according to a *regula*, the

evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience, and Christ and the Trinity as

foundation for these principles and practices.

In chapter five, therefore, I grounded both married and religious life in vows,

specifically the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. As we saw, these three are not

only vows, but states and virtues as well. As virtues and states they are present in the

nexus of Christian life: Christ, the second Adam and the second person of the Trinity.

Married and religious share in these virtues ecclesially, that is, by virtue of the sacraments of initiation all Christians are incorporated into Christ's body. They share, therefore, what pertains to Christ. They are one with Christ the poor, chaste, and obedient bridegroom. They also share in Christ's life as second person of the Trinity. Both matrimonial and vowed religious life are specifications of and confessions of the Trinity by the practices and relationships they hold as *communiones personarum.*

Having argued for the fundamental character of poverty, chastity, and obedience as vows, virtues and states in the nexus of Christ as new Adam and second person of the Trinity, I am now free to explore these vows, virtues, and states as they might be applied in marriage. The key distinguishing factor of my own attempt at this kind of exploration is that it does not interpolate poverty, chastity, and obedience as essentially monastic wisdom that can be lived in some partial way by married folk. In other words, the effort to understand poverty, chastity, and obedience in the married state is not a monasticization of marriage. I am instead basing the exploration on the stronger claim that these virtues, states, and vows, lie behind both religious and married life as principally ecclesial goods.[1] These virtues and states—poverty, chastity, and obedience— are primarily evangelical counsels or imperatives of the church, instantiated in slightly different ways in the lives of the consecrated (as we saw in chapter five), the married (as discussed here), and even single, non-vowed members of the church (who are not considered here). This chapter, then, will hypothesize householding practices for poverty, chastity, and obedience within the larger ecclesial practice of Christian marriage.

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[1] The good of the child or procreation can be reflected on as an ecclesial good both married and consecrated share in by (though differently) by practices of parenthood. I cannot explore topic here, since it would involve more work in the theology and practice of religious life than I can do here, but a separate study of parenthood as a practice of the whole church is a natural complement for this study.

The structure of the chapter will be to recall insights from the previous chapters and integrate them into the paradigm of marriage as Common Way in Christ. The first section recalls MacIntyre's definition of "practice" as applied to the goods internal to the marriage of the one Church to Christ. These goods come from the insights of Augustine and the scholars studied in chapter four. The second deals explicitly with expressions of poverty, chastity, and obedience in marriage through examples of these three that also integrate principles of Christian householding from chapter four. From here the chapter moves to a consideration of a *regula matrimonii*, as an integrating order for the practice of Christian marriage. Finally, the chapter ends with some suggestions for further research into a marriage novitiate.

Being honest about where the practices of Catholic marriage are today and where they need to go requires affirming two points: (1) marriage is currently a status quo of Christian life entered for any number of reasons and for any number of goals apart from the ecclesial purposes and ends; (2) marriage should be referred to as a vocation requiring as much discernment, training, and intentionality as the consecrated religious life. Marriage can no longer be something people "fall into." Thomas Merton's thought represents the precarious position we find ourselves in today: "The ordinary way to holiness and to the fullness of Christian life is marriage. Most men and women will become saints in the married state."[2] This statement might seem to resonate with my position, but it can just as easily perpetuate an attitude to be avoided—that marriage itself should be "ordinary," and that's okay because God sanctifies his people in ordinary, worldly pursuits as much as he does in those extraordinary pursuits such as the vowed religious life. Just by adverting to marriage as "ordinary" Merton subtly and

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[2] Thomas Merton, *No Man Is an Island* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1965), 111.

unintentionally maintains the "clericalism" and dualism of Christian life that contemporary theology so wishes to rid itself of. Calling marriage ordinary and saying that most people will become saints in marriage amounts to saying that consecrated religious life is something exceptional, un- or super-natural, and at least implicitly a greater or more radical calling. Among my emphases in this dissertation has been the idea that the practice of Christian marriage makes no small demand for virtue and is equally as extraordinary as religious life, both being Christomorphic practices in the Church.

Furthermore, in the twenty-first century West, it is incredibly challenging to order the married state explicitly toward the service of God and neighbor. Very little cultural or economic formation and support exist for such successful performance of such a practice. More Christians are married than vowed religious, but it is not therefore to be assumed that the majority of married people are actually becoming saints in and through their marriage. So common are divorces and annulment proceedings in the Church that they are a scandal, raising serious questions about the Church's failure to prepare people well for marriage and protect people from attempting invalid marriages.[3] At the descriptive

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[3] Michael Lawler has made the argument that the marriage of baptized non-believers is not a sacrament, since all sacraments presume intention and faith. For Lawler, the intention and faith must be explicit. For Lawler, the faith of the church does not satisfy this requirement as it does in baptism. See Lawler, *Marriage and the Catholic Church: Disputed Questions* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical, 2002), 43–66; Walter Kasper, *Theology of Christian Marriage* (New York: Crossroad, 1980), 78–84; Susan K. Wood, on the other hand, has argued in favor of the Church's current position, that the marriages of baptized non-believers are assumed to be valid sacraments. See Wood, "The Marriage of Baptized nonbelievers: Faith, Contract, and Sacrament," *Theological Studies* 48 (279–301). Bernard Cooke's approach is to say that marriage comes in to being over a long period of time, and just as well may dissolve over a period of time. See Cooke, "What God Has Joined Together…" in Kieran Scott and Michael Warren, eds., *Perspectives on Marriage: A Reader* (New York: Oxford University, 1993), 353–360. This debate has the laudable pastoral intent to find ways to decrease annulments and broken marriages. The most interesting pastoral solution is the introduction of a marital catechumenate in the Catholic Church. Two proposals for such a catechumenate have emerged in the Catholic Church (many already exist in the Episcopal Church). Michael Lawler's proposal is to invite couples to a formal betrothal rite that would initiate a period of cohabitation that would eventually be solemnized with the rite of matrimony. See Lawler, "A Marital Catechumenate Proposal," *INTAMS Review* 13 (2007): 161–77. A better, more developed proposal or a marriage catechumenate comes from Rev. Paul Holmes. Because he supports the Church's position that marriage begins with the sacrament of matrimony rather than with betrothal (as Lawler argues), Holmes

level, marriage might as easily be construed and lived a practice of self-fulfillment than a practice of sacrifice and service. Too many couples enter and live marriage unaware of its theological nature, and uninformed of the virtues and internal goods sought by this ecclesial vocation and practice.

What must happen, and this dissertation makes an attempt, is to provide Christians the language and paradigm to understand marriage as a common way to holiness in the Church, a way that participates in similar principles of Christian householding as consecrated religious life and requires the same evangelical virtues as consecrated religious life.[4] This is why it is so important to understand marriage with consecrated life as a practice of householding with God. Living in God's household requires a complete gift of self: one's external goods (poverty), one's body (chastity), and one's will (obedience). A person makes these gifts to God by becoming radically available and vulnerable to serve and love for the sanctification of another. In the case of religious life it is a universal availability that requires a permanent gift of possession, sexual intimacy, and self-reliance to Christ, that is, through a renunciation of the possibility for possessing anything as one's own, for sharing sexual intimacy with any person at all, and for privileging one's own will over a superior's. These gifts are made to the one Christ, for the sanctification of the universal church, which constitutes the very body of Christ.[5] In the case of conjugal life, spouses vow a particular availability that

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does not introduce cohabitation into the catechumenate. See Holmes, "A Catechumenate for Marriage: Presacramental Preparation as Pilgrimage," *Journal of Ritual Studies 6.2* (1992): 93–113. The theory, as well as the rites necessary for the catechumenate are developed and presented in his dissertation, *Betrothal: A Liturgical Rite of Passage. The Anthropological Perspective of Victor W. Turner as the Basis for the Development of a Catechumenate for the Betrothed* (Rome: Pontifica Universita S. Tommaso d'Aquino, 1991).

[4] By "common" I do not mean descriptive of the majority. Instead I mean something to be shared.

[5] This is not at all to say that the consecrated religious person has sexual intimacy with Christ, but rather that all possibility of that intimacy is given to Christ for the service of the whole church.

requires permanent gift of possession, sexual intimacy, and self-reliance to a spouse, that

is, through a renunciation of the possibility for possessing anything as one's own, for

sharing sexual intimacy with any other person, and for privileging one's own will over

the spouse's. The gift is made to Christ through the spouse (and all community that may

be engendered therefrom), for the sake of their salvation together, achieved by service to

the other with each other.


## PRACTICING MARRIAGE AS A COMMON WAY IN CHRIST


In this first section, I will recall MacIntyre's definition of "practice" as it was

applied to Christian marriage in light of the Augustinian ecclesio-nuptial good from

chapter three, and the principles of Christian householding from chapter four. MacIntyre

defined "practice" thus:

> Any coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity
> through which goods internal to that form of activity are realized in the course of
> trying to achieve those standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and
> partially definitive of, that form of activity, with the result that human powers to
> achieve excellence, and human conceptions of the ends and goods involved, are
> systematically extended.[6]

A key component of this definition is that, if marriage is a practice, it is socially

established. If it is socially established then its establishment and continued existence

have a history. Furthermore, contemporary practitioners become sharers in this history.

When they choose to begin the practice they elect to place themselves in relationship with

all others currently living the practice, all who have lived it before them, and those who

might follow them. In other words, to enter a practice is to enter an intergenerational

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[6] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 189.

relationship, whether or not one likes it. Here we see two Christian householding principles rising into view: the supravoluntary aspect of Christian householding, and the permeability of the Christian householding across the boundaries of the nuclear family.

These two principles carry implications for the practice of Christian marriage. Married Christians must understand their supravoluntary, intergenerational relationship to those with whom they share the practice of marriage, beginning with their own biological parents. At the concrete level, a respect for the non-voluntary intergenerational relationship will mean greater permeability of their own home to that relationship. One example of this increased permeability is a greater openness to and even provision for intergenerational living. In light of the increasing privatization of elder-care, a privatization linked in no small part to the increasing cost of healthcare, the increasing life expectancy, and the already stressed position of most dual-income couples, ever more mothers and fathers, husbands and wives, end up spending their last, weakest, and sometimes loneliest and most frightening years with rare or occasional contact with family. Because they have become radically dependent, they are no longer included in the practice of householding. The society of individualism has created a situation where our practices of householding cannot abide those who need help, those who cannot make it "on their own." Living with and caring for these people is becoming less a task of the Christian household but of private businesses or state-funded institutions. Take, for example, the company named Extended Family.[7] There is much to praise about this business's endeavor to "promote independence, good health, and engagement in life" for the elderly. Their services include all the kinds of things biological family or kin would do if they lived near their parents or could afford to take the time: opening mail, filling

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[7] See http://www.extended-family.net/, accessed on February 3, 2011.

out and paying bills, taking to doctor appointments, helping with domestic maintenance, etc. They help keep elderly people in their home, but as an exercise of independence rather than as a domestic practice of life together toward shared goods. That this kind of company exists is evidence that we live in a society that prefers contractual relationships to open-ended and asymmetrical ones.[8] Contractual relationships are easier, neater, and less risky, but they are also less human.

In light of the fact that Christian householding is per se intergenerational and that commitments to sacrificial care do not end when people become "independent," we need to find cooperative activities within the practice of Christian householding to account for these facts. For example, Christian spouses ought not only to be open to intergenerational living arrangements but to plan for them. There are many ways this kind of planning could work. The Becker family, for example, decided to buy a house with and begin living with one set of their parents, even though they did not yet need extra care. The idea behind the move was twofold. First, the grandparents could, while still able, contribute to the childcare of the children during the day. Second, anticipating a future need for elder-care, the children and grandchildren could accustom themselves to intergenerational living before it became a necessity. Learning to live together and love each other now would be much easier than when the stress would be much higher.

The move, of course, involved challenges for all parties. For one spouse, it meant a decision to live with in-laws. For all, it meant sacrificing a certain independence. The decision was made, though, in the spirit of Christian householding, with the Dietrich

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[8] See McCarthy, *Sex and Love in the Home*, 140, 141, 155, and chap. 9. McCarthy pointed out other examples of preferences for contractual relationships. For example, rather than hiring the neighbor kid to help paint a house, a person might hire a painter because it is easier and less risky. No need to teach a kid how to paint, worry if he will be late, or slow, or if he will spill paint everywhere.

Bonhoeffer's notion in mind that Christian life together is not about finding "the community we've always wanted." Christian life together is *not* about finding a cadre of people who like each other and want to live together for community's sake. Rather, says Bonhoeffer, "The kingdom is to be in the midst of your enemies. And he who will not suffer this does not want to be of the kingdom of Christ."[9] As much as we love those who have traditioned the practices of Christian marriage to us, we can at times seem to be each other's enemies.

This insight about intergenerational Christian householding takes on a new character when we understand that, as ecclesial practices of householding, religious life and Christian marriage widen the scope of those to whom we have a supravoluntary relationships, those to whom should consider offering hospitality and a share in our own householding. Intergenerational living within the biological household is not the only option. What if, in light of the rising need for elder-care, a new association of the lay faithful, or new religious order arose whose apostolate was to hold house with the elderly in need? If our truest family is those who are incorporated into Christ, then this suggestion need not sound so strange. What if large, lonely church rectories housing one priest became places of Christian householding for new kinds of Christian life together involving elderly from the parish? If true religion is to care for the widow, and if

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[9] Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, 17–18. He is relying on a statement by Martin Luther in making this point. Sandra Schneiders (*Selling Al*, chap. 8) draws a sharp distinction between religious life and intentional community. Schneiders reduces intentional community to a group of persons that comes together "in order to satisfy their own or one another's emotional or affective needs" (ibid., 287–88). Schneiders is right to point out that experimentation [after Vatican II] showed that people want to be able to live together, but they tend toward the mistake of 'intentional community' of likeminded people, which becomes exclusive and ultimately insular and destructive (ibid., chap. 9). Later she identifies "intentional community" as one of three typical social groups. It is the one with the highest affective commitment and sacrifice for belonging. It has the highest payout of relational, affective benefit, but the highest cost of insularity and loss of individuality (ibid., 357–73). Ultimately, Schneiders argues that Christian life together in religious community should be a mixture of intentional community, bureaucracy (official, formal, administrative), and association (completely voluntary, low commitment).

Christian householding is truly a task of the whole church, then these options should not sound all that far-fetched.[10]

At this point, another of MacIntyre's criteria for practice comes to the foreground. In the excellent pursuit of a practice, there are times in which external goods associated with the practice may be harder to attain, or even temporarily sacrificed for the sake of the internal goods and standards of excellence essential to the practice itself. As MacIntyre put it, faithfulness to the excellent performance of a practice and its standards leads "from time to time [to] the taking of self-endangering and even achievement-endangering risks."[11] Furthermore, "the possession of the virtues may perfectly well hinder us in achieving external goods."[12] This is frequently the case in the practice of Christian marriage and householding, particularly if we keep in mind the householding principles of familiarity and formality.

Familiarity, as explored in chapter four, requires nearness, a quality of domestic life that cannot be made safe. It relies on the virtue and internal good of *fides*, fidelity in its fullest sense. For example, spouses must keep faithful to the common goods of their practice of Christian marriage. One of those goods might be time spent together in productive activity. Fidelity to a commitment to this kind of presence in the home may bar one or both working parents from greater job promotions that would result from or lead to extended absence from the life of the home. Faithfulness to standards of

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[10] See M. Therese Lysaught, "Practicing the Order of Widows: A New Call for an Old Vocation," *Christian Bioethics*, 11 (2005): 51–68. Lysaught argues for a revival of the Order of Widows, a version of the kind of Christian householding I hypothesize here, in light of the 1998 document from the Pontifical Council for the Laity entitled "The Dignity of Older People and their Mission in the Church and the World." She thinks such a renewal would combat the devaluation, marginalization, impoverishment, debilitation, loneliness, and euthanasia of the elderly through a traditional, concrete, ecclesial practice while witnessing to the culture the Church seeks to transform.

[11] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 193.

[12] Ibid., 196.

excellence in Christian householding as a spouse and parent include eating, praying, playing and working together for common goods (e.g. cleaning the house or repainting a wall) on a daily basis may involve achievement-endangering risks. The Bryant couple, before committing to marriage, considered the career path of the spouse who planned on being a primary income-earner. This spouse had already prepared for a career in medicine, but determined that the particular career of interest within medicine would require an infidelity of time and energy to the non-wage earning aspects of their future householding. The couple, through prayer and research discovered a new, less auspicious and prestigious career path that enables one spouse to work from home on two days of the week, and allows the couple to work for income together part-time.

A second example also touches financial matters and emphasizes the ecclesial character of marriage as a Common Way in Christ. As MacIntyre reminds us, those purposes and ends are in part defined by the social body in which the practice takes place. For Christians, marriage takes place in the ecclesial body, so the purposes and ends of the Church are in part determinative of the purposes and ends of the marriage. The Roberts household, in an effort to make the Church's ends their own, gives a tithe of ten percent from the top of their gross income to their geographical parish. For them, faithfulness to the mission of this parish means a steady, planned financial commitment rather than a chunk here or a piece there. This kind of commitment, though, at a middle class wage is a substantial portion of their income. It means the loss of some external goods for this family, in their case cable TV and cell phone. Members of religious orders often make an even more radical statement of fidelity to the mission of their ecclesial institutions. For example, employees of educational institutions who are also members of religious orders

often give (with their order's permission) a substantial or even the entirety of their salary back to the institution. In both of these cases, standard of *fides* to the internal goods of the practice leads to a sacrifice of goods external to the practice of their Christian householding.

A final aspect of MacIntyre's definition that brings Christian marriage, as common way, into discussion with the principles of householding from chapter four is that the cooperative activities and virtues determinative of the practice contribute to the internal good of "living as X." In the case of a painter, the virtues and activities of her practice extends the internal good of "a painter's life, or living as a painter." In the case of the Christian marriage as a Common Way in Christ, the virtues and activities of Christian householding integrate the internal goods of the practice into "living as Christ, or the life of Christ."

In particular, the householding principles of *ora et labora* are at work integrating the practice of Christian marriage into "living as Christ."[13] For example, the Jenkins household tries to envision its household practices as part of Christ's own actions through the work of the Church. To that end, the household commits to daily prayer for the hungry and homeless as a support for the ecclesial ministries that aid them. This *ora*, though, as a shared work for a common good internal to the practice of being church (feeding the hungry and sheltering the homeless) extends the capacity of the family to achieve that good in the concrete. In other words, it extends their ability to express the virtues of "living as Christ." One Saturday of the month, as a fruit of and natural companion to their prayer, the household, young and old alike, goes to the parish and sets

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[13] See Russell, "Marriage and Contemplative Life," 48–57. Russell argues that *ora* can be considered the vocation of the family.

up the tables, food, and clothes for the wider ecclesial household who lives in need. The two and three year old children push chairs into places, the four-year-olds set out napkins, five-year-olds fold and set out clothes, the older children help cook hot meals and pack bag lunches, etc. Meanwhile, homeless and poor from the neighborhood make their way in and interact with the members of the Jenkins household (and other households). The ecclesial dining hall is transformed into a hearth where hospitality is offered in a familiar way to strangers who become friends. For the Jenkins household, this kind of activity is not an extra-mural, accidental aspect of their householding done because of their participation in a voluntary association. It is part of the practice of Christian householding done out of the standards of excellence built into the practice of living in the household of God. If "living as Christ," is the internal good achieved by the integrating the virtues and activities of their practice of Christian householding, then doing the things the Church (as sacrament of Christ) does is a standard for the achieving this internal good. "Living as Christ," is the integration of their activities of *ora* and their *labora* toward their share in the common purposes, ends, and goods of God's household.

The preceding section has attempted to explore concrete cooperative activities of marriage as a Common Way in Christ, an expression of Christian householding, a practice of being church. The section proceeded by recovering chapter one's application of "practice" to marriage and strongly situating it with in the larger context of Christian householding. This was accomplished by combining the MacIntyrian concepts of internal goods, virtues, and standards of excellence determinative of practices with the principles of householding from chapter four. First, the historicity and intergenerational aspects of a practice were linked with the Christian householding principles of supra-voluntary

relationships and permeability. Concrete examples came from questions of intergenerational living. Second, the role of virtue in attaining internal goods, even in the face of sacrificed external goods came into contact with the householding principles of familiarity and fidelity. Examples of career decisions and tithing were explored. Finally, the integration of a practice's standards and virtues into the internal good of "the life of x, or living as x" was borne out in the householding principles of *ora et labora*. It was seen that a conjugal household's integration of "the life of Christ, or living as Christ," involved praying and acting with the church (as sacrament of Christ) and for the church (as household of God).

These principles of householding and their relationship to the grammar of practice have helped establish marriage as a Common Way in Christ, a share in Church's own purposes and identity. What remains now is to further explore this Common Way in Christ that follows directly from chapter five, through the vows, virtues, and states of poverty, chastity, and obedience.

## CONJUGAL POVERTY, CHASTITY, AND OBEDIENCE

### Conjugal Poverty

The chief difficulty in suggesting concrete practices for marriage and family life is, well, reality. The fact of the matter is the wide variety of socio-economic and cultural situations of marriages and families in the world. For example, how can any practice of poverty be universally applicable, especially when a majority of the world's people

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already live in conditions Americans would consider impoverished? Furthermore, the fact that the elective poverty of religious orders is often materially richer than the poverty that crushes so many in the world is flatly scandalous. What, then, is conjugal poverty? This exploration will think in terms of state and virtue, just as was proposed in the previous chapter, and in terms of the practices of Christian householding outlined in chapter four. I will look to Christ as the exemplar and the source making the virtue of poverty possible in the spouses. Traumatic material poverty may or may not be a reality for the married couple, but regardless, the state and virtue of poverty are necessary for the couple to live a life a Common Way in Christ. In other words, poverty has a deep theological meaning about dependence and reliance on God, but this section will avoid reducing poverty to a pious metaphor by attempting to maintain a connection to the real and economic aspects of poverty.

This notion of common possession goes beyond shared bank accounts and cars to common possession of goals, practices, values, and narrative. Practicing poverty in marriage means working toward what Lonergan calls a common consciousness.[14] The household of two Christian spouses and their children (along with anyone else who might live with them), as place of formation, becomes a community where spouses achieve ever-greater sharing in the capacity to write and tell the narrative of their union in love with one another. Spouses must hold in common the ends, purposes, and goods of marriage if they are to come to the same understanding, judgments, and decisions about their common marital activities such as parenting and domestic maintenance. Achieving a

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[14] Lonergan treats the relationship of "common consciousness" and "common conscience" to marriage explicitly in "Finality, Love, Marriage," *Theological Studies* 4 (1943): 477–510, at 494–96, 503, and 507. Lonergan expands on the terms and ideas involved with "common consciousness" and "common conscience" as they relate to meaning and communication, progress and decline in all human community in *Method in Theology*, 50–51, 79, and 356–58.

common consciousness takes time, and begins almost accidentally early in the couple's relationship. By the time of formal engagement, though, the couple must explicitly address the issue and begin sharing in ever more common activities for common ends. Once the couple enters marriage, they begin to share in the whole of life together, through activities that constitute the path toward a common consciousness or toward decline and division. Arriving at and living in the common consciousness necessary for sharing in such a narrative is only possible within a state of poverty, a realization that nothing in the marriage is mine, least of all the authority to determine the goals, values, and practices of the married household.

What is the state of spouse, *coram conjuge*, in the face of the other spouse? If the spouses enter into an institution that images the Incarnation, then we should find an answer if we ask the same question of Christ: what is Christ's state, *coram conjuge*? As argued in the last chapter, Christ's state is one of poverty. Christ made himself poor so that we (his spouse) might be rich. He puts himself in relationship with us so that we might share his inheritance. All his merit can become ours. All his reign can become our reign as we rule with him eternally. His kingdom becomes our kingdom if we are joined to him as his spouse. The clearest practice suggested by this theological description is that the marital consent is a vow of poverty *coram conjuge*. There is no more "mine," there is only "our." Whereas members become canonically incapable of owning property personally, spouses become morally incapable of owning property personally.[15] There must be no financial, material aspect of conjugal life that belongs solely to one spouse.

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[15] In terms of civil law, assets gained after the marriage are considered marital property held equally by both spouses, even if the property is not held in the name of both spouses. See, for example, Wisconsin's Marital Property Act of 1986 (available at http://nxt.legis.state.wi.us/nxt/gateway.dll?f=templates&fndefault.htm&d =stats&jd=ch.%20766, [accessed on January 7, 2011]).

All property should be held in common, as in a religious order. The couple and the religious order, then, must determine the poverty they will embrace at the institutional level.

For married Christians in the middle class and the wealthy, embracing poverty (both spiritual and material) presents a challenge that must be met. Poverty for these folks requires practices to break the myth of economic, social, and ultimately theological independence by creating conditions that require economic and spiritual reliance on others and fidelity to being reliable in answering the economic and spiritual needs of neighbors. One possibility that has worked is for households or members of a parish to share a car, a grill, washer and dryer, snowblower, construction skills, babysitting, etc.

Married persons ought to practice the virtue and state of poverty by putting themselves in positions of dependence, as well as making themselves more available to those who necessarily depend on them. Householders can only develop the virtue of poverty from within real conditions of need. To describe what I mean, I will explore a common suburban family practice: the baby-sitting coop. The baby-sitting co-op, in many ways, is an example in the practice of poverty. Couples understand their poverty; they need babysitting and they cannot afford to pay for the service. Networks of families who are friends turn to each other for help. The currency for the co-op system is hours. Families begin with a certain number and spend or accrue hours as they have their children watched or as they watch other children. A system like this one has much to recommend it: availability to others, dependence on others, accountability, justice, and a disconnection from monetary economy. The co-op is a practice born of the state of poverty and fulfilled with the virtue of poverty.

At the same time, though, the practice decidedly maintains a market inspiration and economic structure. In other words, it does not go far enough to address the problems of the contractual individualism that has invaded practices of householding (even among Christians).  Yes it is relational and expresses availability and dependence, but it does so on a client-customer level. This co-op system operates on the market logic of saving and spending currency. Unfortunately, it attempts to concretize, contractualize, and monetize friendships in terms of relational and interpersonal capital. Our friendship has only so much capital to spend, so to speak. Once you've spent your 40 hours, you are out of currency. You cannot ask for babysitting help until you've accrued more hours watching other people's children. There is only one kind of currency to spend, namely, hours. So, while there is a certain justice in having symmetrical reciprocation and a standard currency, the project will fail at being truly a practice of friendship, availability done through the virtue of poverty because it does not allow for the way friendships typically work: asymmetrically.[16] A meal and hospitality, or help in some other way, can serve as an expression of gratitude for baby-sitting and asymmetrically reciprocates the time and energy spent by the other family or single person. For example, occasionally my brother's family watches our children. Occasionally, my wife and I help my brother paint his house or work on landscaping. There is no logging of hours and no attempt to reciprocate in exactly the same way. There is only the understanding that we need each other and a willingness to be available for each other. Our needs arise from poverty and are fulfilled in poverty. As a second example, not all persons have the same skills or the same needs. A baby-sitting co-op might make sense for some groups of married persons,

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[16] McCarthy defines "asymmetrical reciprocity," its practical, and theological implications well in *Sex and Love in the Home*, 133–51.

but some married couples with children are not in a position to look after their friends'
kids. They may need to rely on non-married friends for help. With the co-op model, the
married folk cannot repay the favor symmetrically. They will have to informally,
asymmetrically show gratitude to that friend by being available to answer the call of their
friend's poverty. Spouses, then, ought not to seek to insulate themselves from poverty,
but to experience true need and make themselves available to fulfill the poverty of people
who need them.

Among the activities that create conditions requiring reliance and fidelity in
poverty, though, is inviting God's gift of fertility in a marriage. Such an activity is an
openness to the Augustinian, ecclesio-nuptial good of *proles*. The activities of conceiving,
preparing for, and parenting a child demand mutual reliance and fidelity more than any
other activity in the Christian household.

Just as for Christ, poverty meant complete dependence on God the Father for all
he was to receive (his flock) and all he was to do (the will of God), so for the married
couple, the state of poverty and the virtue of poverty will be to exist in a similar, radical
dependence on God the Father for the children they may *or may not* receive in marriage.
A great number of couples find themselves faced with the specter of infertility. This great
and heavy cross highlights the fact that spouses are dependent on the will of God for
children. They are received as gift; they are not ordered and patiently awaited like items
on a restaurant menu. They are given to the couple as Christ's flock is given to him—by
the Father's will.[17] As Christ cares for and shepherds his sheep, so parents shepherd theirs,
with the same trust Christ has—that not a single sheep given him will be lost. This was

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[17] See Jn 11:11–18, 29, where Jesus refers to his flock as those given to him by the Father, and for whom he
will lay down his life. Jn 17:9–10, where Jesus prays during the last-supper discourse for those whom God
has given him and whom he has guarded.

the trust St. Monica showed in her persevering prayer for Augustine. This is the trust parents show when they fulfill their wedding vow to boldly raise their children "according to the Law of Christ and the Church."

Especially early in marriage, before couples are accustomed to dual income and upper middle class life, the gift of pregnancy develops the virtue and state of poverty. Parenting is an activity for which only a rare soul finds herself or himself "ready." At least in middle America, "not being ready" economically is all too often an excuse for Christian households to remain closed to God's gift of fertility. This state of affairs relates to a misconception of the economic resources parenting actually demands. Too often parenting is construed according to the logic of the market rather than the logic of the cross. A household can never be prepared for children if parenting is construed as a consumer activity. Spouses tend to prepare economically for children based on their own expectations rather than on questions of need. Often the gap between what a child needs and what parents want for that child, and what things the parents will train their children to want is large indeed. The current plague of obesity in America testifies that the middle class problem (and especially the problem among the poor) is not that parents can't give their children *enough* but that parents can't give children enough of *the right stuff*. Even among the poor, our problem is a more than enough consumption of what we don't really need. Our most scandalous poverty is our overabundance of junk that is bought, eaten, and played with by and for children. Parenting is an opportunity for voluntary and supravoluntary poverty at the economical level that Christian households must embrace. They must embrace poverty not merely because it is an accurate reflection of their

relationship to God in Christ, but also because the alternative is a scandalous affront to the solidarity called for in Catholic social teaching.

Parents often feel a complete poverty of knowledge and "things" when it comes to their first child. A positive pregnancy test is often accompanied by a rush to the store for all the newest parenting books and the mountain of things the latest parenting magazine says all mothers and fathers who love their children really need. Before a baby is even born, parenting is cast as a consumer activity. Loving the child means buying the right material goods. For Christians the story is no different. They are just told to buy different, "Christian" material goods (e.g., the Noah's ark pajamas instead of the Batman pajamas). This moment is a key touchpoint for nourishing the virtue and state of poverty in the Christian household. This is a moment of renunciation for the parents, who can declare that raising their children for Christ is not principally a consumer activity. It is economic activity, but most concerned with salvation economy and home economy, the creation of practices that will form the kind of person who can inhabit God's household. Relying on second hand children's clothes, furniture, and toys can be a way to resist the economy of consumption and embrace reliance on God and neighbor. All of our most useful children's furniture, for example, (cribs, beds, changing table) were received second hand, either purchased or received as gift from neighbors.[18] Our minivan, too, we bought second-hand from our parish friends who needed a bigger car for their still-growing family. We sold our own car to a first-generation college student who needed a deal. Personally receiving and giving used goods contributes to the development of the virtue of poverty by building relationships of reciprocity. Furthermore, teaching children to

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[18] Catholic pregnancy help centers often share and give material goods to expecting mothers along with preparation and training programs.

participate in shared resources like libraries and parks develops the virtue of poverty through learning care for common goods.

Practically speaking, each couple should choose at least one "thing" they will do without as a practice of poverty. Absence of this item should be obvious for the couple. Examples might be a cellphone, a television, cable TV, a second car, five degrees on the thermostat, etc. In deciding on this voluntary poverty, couples should be thinking about things that would be normal inclusions on a budget rather than luxury items or discretionary spending. This activity could be increased periodically to coincide with liturgical seasons or days. For example, Lent could be a time to increase a household's voluntary poverty for the sake of households who have no choice about their material lack of necessities. Furthermore, developing the virtue of poverty requires friendship with the poor. Friendship is different from institutional, or even patron-client charitable relationships with the poor. Friendship means a reciprocal relationship wherein people seek and work for the same ends together. This embrace of poverty challenges middle and upper-class families to take steps to not only help the poor but enter solidarity with them—to be with the poor. Families, yes families, might consider moving to less than desirable locations to live among those with less, might consider serving *and* eating at soup kitchens, might consider taking in a person (e.g., a foster child, a single pregnant woman) in need and working with them toward stability.

These practices help remind spouses and parents of their radical poverty in the face of their own children. Parents can buy the newest and best material goods for their children, but they cannot ensure their children will become Christian disciples, or even that they will be happy in this life. Christian parents who realize their poverty also

understand that the greatest gifts they can give their children are those that initiate the child into the Common Way in Christ (the first of which is baptism) and those that form them in the practices of Christian householding. Baptism expresses the virtue of poverty inasmuch as it declares before the Church that the life the biological parents give to the child is secondary to the life the parents cannot give the child but God offers the Child, namely God's own life. The church (and the parents as members of the church) claims the child for Christ and the child is reborn into a life given by God and cared for by the parents. The child's life is not the parents' but Christ's to be formed and guided by the parents.

Again, the reason to live in a state of poverty with the virtue of poverty is not because it makes life easier. In fact, needs make life difficult, and being available for the needs of others makes life difficult. The reason marriage requires poverty is, again, because it accurately represents our own position *coram Deo* and Christ's own position *coram conjuge*. In other words, we find poverty in Christ. Christ, the creator of the universe, becomes a naked, cold, crying, and hungry infant. Christ has radical need. He will die if Mary and Joseph do not make themselves available for his needs. Christian parents are continually reminded of this fact whenever they tend to their children's daily needs. Christ the king of kings becomes a babbling one-year old, a tantrum-throwing two-year old, a curious five year old, who needs training and formation in the virtues of a holy life. Christ cannot symmetrically repay his mother nor can she repay her child. We too find ourselves in a situation of radical need with the impossibility of repayment. Dead and lost in the darkness of sin and ignorance, of disordered desires and misdirected intellect, only baptism into Christ and formation in the virtues of faith, hope, and love can

fill us with the riches we require. Ours is the need, God's the gift. Ours is a need we cannot fulfill; his is a gift that cannot be repaid, symmetrically or otherwise. Our state is poverty, but a poverty fulfilled. Our posture is gratitude and joy at giving back to the one who fulfills our need all that we have to give, which is both nothing and everything at once. Arriving at an understanding of one's radical dependence and responding with gratitude leading to availability is the reality of conjugal living. The realization that it was "not good for the man to be alone" is a moment of poverty. Adam did not need Eve to complete him, but the two needed each other to fulfill their human vocation. All persons find themselves in the state of poverty, in need of human and supernatural fellowship. Some will fulfill their human vocation in community without vows; some will fulfill their human vocation vowing poverty in a particular religious community; and others with a vocation to marriage will fulfill their human vocation vowing a life of poverty in complementary, sacramental union with one other person.

**Conjugal Chastity**

Perhaps no aspect of marriage has received as much attention as sexuality. This fact is not without reason. Sexuality is an essential part of the human person; the partnership of the sexes has a primal connection to our sexuality; and our desire for holistic sexual, personal, complementary partnership can express in part our deepest desires for perfect union with God.[19] Just as the consent to marriage, a consent to give all

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[19] In married sexuality we know and are known, we see and are seen, we give and receive, we transcend ourselves yet are at home. Yet all of these relationships are conditioned, temporary, and imperfect. Only in the beatific vision will we be fully known while knowing all that can be known, will we be fully seen while

that one is and receive all that another is, includes the vow of poverty, so too does it include the vow of chastity. Spouses promise to "be faithful to you" (*promitto me tibi fidem servaturum*). The *fidem* promised has been developed throughout Christian history to be understood in a totalizing sense of complete personal fidelity, but from the earliest sources it has always included sexual fidelity. Even in the days of Christ, conjugal fidelity included more than merely genital exclusivity: "Every one who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart" (Mt 5:28). Christ assumes that spouses will maintain chastity in a full sense, that is, a self-possession of not only of the body but also their thoughts and desires. For his part, Augustine continues this thought. The virtue associated with marital fidelity was chastity. He calls this fidelity *fides castitatis* (faithfulness of chastity).[20]

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seeing all that we can see, will we be fully given and fully receive the love of God, will we entirely transcend while entirely being at home.

[20] "Bonum igitur nuptiarum per omnes gentes atque omnes homines in causa generandi est et in fide castitatis; quod autem ad populum dei pertinent, etiam in sanctitate sacramenti" (*De bono coniugali*, 32, CSEL vol. 41, p. 226, my trans.). The good of marriage, therefore, for all people and all men is in the cause of procreation and in the faith of chastity, but as they pertain to the people of God, the goods of marriage also lie in the sanctity of the "sacrament" (bond)" (trans. mine). Nonetheless, in his mind *fides* cannot be reduced to sexual exclusivity. For example, he scolds a woman for an imprudent breaking of faith with the greatest end of the marriage, the sanctification of the spouses. She acted on her own rather than together with her husband. While her husband was away, she entered a life of poverty and celibacy in the husband's absence and against his will, giving their wealth to two travelling monks, and taking a personal vow of celibacy. The husband eventually ended up committing adultery. Augustine writes that "this great evil has occurred because you have not treated his heart with the prudence that you ought to have. For, even if by agreement with each other you were not having sexual intercourse, as a wife you still ought to have been mindful of your husband in other matters out of marital obedience, especially since you were both members of the body of Christ. Furthermore, her action constitutes a break of the *fides castitatis*: "For he should not have been deprived of the debt of your body that you owed him before his desire [for continence] had also joined yours for that good which surpasses marital chastity." Furthermore, if she had waited to give away their possessions until they were both prepared, Augustine argues, "God would be praised in your works since you would have so *faithful* a union that you would hold in common not only perfect chastity but also glorious poverty." He asks whether "anyone's temporal well-being have been more precious to you than his eternal well-being?...For, if bread shared with a poor person has great weight in heaven, how much weight ought we to think mercy has there, by which a human being is snatched from the devil, who is like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour" (Epistle 262, in *Letters 211–270*, 204–07). The woman seeking Augustine's advice in this letter seems to have privileged the external good of continence over the internal good and virtue of chastity. Furthermore, at the expense of obedience, she achieved poverty. Because her donation scandalized her husband and broke marital obedience, the poverty was achieved not as an internal good of Christian marriage, but by ill-performance of the marital practice. In

The virtue associated with the sexual fidelity of the marriage vows is the same virtue associated with the sexual fidelity required by the vows of religion: chastity. For Aquinas, chastity exists as a species of temperance, which is the power of properly ordering pleasures.[21] Among twentieth-century theologians (and even in the Catechism of the Catholic Church), expressions of chastity given shape by the phenomenology of personalism and advances in psychology prevail.[22] The human person is a unity of spiritual and bodily existence. Both of these aspects of the human person become especially expressive and vulnerable in sexuality, and especially open to dislocation from one another. In summary, then chastity is this:

> the successful integration of sexuality within the person and thus the inner unity of man in his bodily and spiritual being Sexuality, in which man's belonging to the bodily and biological world is expressed, becomes personal and truly human when it is integrated into the relationship of one person to another, in the complete and lifelong mutual gift of man and woman.[23]

This lifelong mutual gift is clearly expressed in the conjugal vows, but may also be expressed in the vows of religious profession, as was explained in chapter five.

If chastity is a virtue, then we must understand that it expresses a person's character but also forms that character. All couples will need formation in chastity. Not only is chastity a sign of marital love but also a generator of that love. In every marriage, spouses enter with different levels of chastity. Sound practice of religious life must offer a set of conditions and formative activities that aid in the development of chaste celibacy;

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other words, one might say she won the game (achieved continence and poverty), but only by cheating, by breaking faith with the standards and virtues internal to the practice of their Christian marriage.

[21] See Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, II-II, q. 151. The conjugal act was not only allowable in Aquinas's mind, but virtuous. See *Summa theologiae*, suppl., q. 41, a. 4 and q. 49, a. 4 (though as an expression of the virtue of religion). For a good historical overview of the development of chastity as a central virtue for marital sexuality, see John Grabowski, *Sex and Virtue: An Introduction to Sexual Ethics*, Catholic Moral Thought (Washington: Catholic University of America, 2003).

[22] Grabowski, *Sex and Virtue*, 85–95.

[23] CCC., 2337, p. 561.

no less does married life require conditions formation for developing chaste married sexuality. Specifically, the church sanctions the program, or skill, of natural family planning. Among the benefits of natural family planning is that it offers a set of conditions that can dispose couples to growth in the virtue of chastity toward the practice of chaste married sexuality integrated into the rest of married life.

Because there is much confusion over the use of natural family planning in marriage, I would like to contextualize it within the wider practice of chaste married sexuality. I will offer below some clarity on these two terms: natural family planning (hereafter NFP), and a new term that I am offering as a practice (in the MacIntyrian sense) of chastity in marriage—chaste marital sexuality (hereafter CMS). It is easy to equate natural family planning with CMS, as if the use of the method is itself a virtuous expression of married sexual love. I think natural family planning must remain distinct from CMS as a possible (but not strictly essential) part involved in the whole. By way of analogy we can say that the Kieninger trap is to chess as NFP is to CMS. The skill of NFP is nested within the practice of CMS, which sits within the overall practice of Christian marriage, a consortium of life and love.

Here I will offer definitions of NFP and CMS. *NFP is a method of timing conjugal intercourse to either avoid or invite pregnancy based on data gathered from the normal female physiology*. Two parts constitute natural family planning: (1) gathering and analyzing data from naturally occurring physiological signs to determine the probability that conception will result from conjugal intercourse on any specific day; (2) employing the conclusion of the first part as a datum for deciding whether or not to engage in the marital intercourse on any specific day. CMS, on the other hand, is *an*

*integration of a couple's sexuality into the consortium vitae et amoris that is Christian marriage. CMS is a firm disposition to love the spouse as "man" or "woman" in all the quotidian interactions and activities of Christian marriage.* Only occasionally do spouses express this love in sexual intercourse. For the most part spouses express CMS in the small, trivial touches throughout the day, in the way they dress, in the way they communicate with each other about sexuality openly, the way they pray about and for each other and their children, the way they talk about each other to their children and co-workers, the kinds of media they consume, and the way they interact with persons of the opposite sex in general. CMS is a practice that orders sexuality with the whole of marriage, as a complex of activities and habits, toward openness to God's gift of life. This orientation sees openness to life as the status quo, and avoidance of pregnancy as an exceptional situation. NFP, in this understanding, would only be desirable, let alone necessary, in cases of serious reasons to avoid conception. These would be cases where the possibility of another pregnancy seriously endangers the goods internal to the practice of marriage. The endangerment of external goods is sometimes required of CMS, and so it is difficult to make the case that endangering these goods would constitute a serious reason to avoid pregnancy. NFP is a skill helpful for determining the *when* of conjugal intercourse, but CMS is the practice concerned with the *how* and the *why* of loving the spouse and children as *man* and *father*, or *woman* and *mother* as a whole.

CMS, as a richly ecclesial practice, ties in especially well with one pair of principles from chapter four on Christian householding: familiarity (nearness) and formality (universality). Here the familiarity of the home and the universality and formality of the church meet. This first section treats the more obvious of the two:

familiarity. The link between chastity and familiarity is intuitive. No other part of the marital practice involves as much physical and emotional nearness. As a primary practice wherein couples experience the powerful affective love of familiarity, CMS can contribute to making the entire household into what Breidenthal calls a "spiritual workplace."[24] The Christian household, and especially chastity within it, are a training ground for the kind of familiarity we will have in heaven but would be dangerous on earth. Training in sexual self-possession teaches us that genital expression is not the only or even greatest way to love those to whom we are nearest. Frequently, it is washing out the diapers, shoveling the sidewalk, giving the kids a bath, and offering a shoulder massage to a tired wife that more deeply manifest and embody conjugal love than does expressing one's interest in sexual intercourse. The key of chastity is that it allows a person to put in action the statement, "I love you with my whole body."

This viewpoint is helpful especially for the formation of teens in Christian households. Many teens and young college students engage in sexual intercourse "when they are ready for that next step," or "to give the deepest expression of our love for each other." Genital contact is not in most cases a "next step" or the "deepest expression of love." Genital contact is a consequence and physical expression of a personal, public (ecclesial), and sacramental commitment to love one person unconditionally and without fail. Apart from this context, it is unintelligible to say that sexual intercourse is the greatest expression of love for each other or that it is a "next step" in romantic love. Genital contact in the context of Christian householding requires chastity because chastity is the capacity to order one's sexuality to this kind of exclusivity. Before marriage chastity enables a person to love without genital contact. Within marriage

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[24] Breidenthal, *Christian Households*, 15.

chastity does the same thing; it gives the person the capacity to love with the whole body, except now there is occasional genital expression of love. Without an actualized capacity to love with the rest of the body, that is, without chastity, conjugal intercourse (even in marriage) expresses not married love, but lust. The familiarity of the bed is then more a concession to weakness than an embodiment of self-donation.

What often goes unnoticed in marriages, and even in discussions of familiarity and chastity, is the dynamic tension between this familiarity and nearness against the pole of universality and formality. Christ comes to redeem and sanctify our nearness, part of which is sexual. To redeem our nearness to each other, Christ becomes near to us, formally, in a universal way. Christ incorporates any person into his body through the sacramental grace of baptism, an incorporation continued and enlivened in the participation in the grace of the Eucharist. If each of us is in Christ, all of our nearness to each other is nearness to Christ, a nearness manifested and actualized liturgically and formally. Sexuality, as part of the nearness of spouses in a Christian household benefits from this formality. At the concrete level, the formal, liturgical practices initiate the activities of sexual familiarity in Christian marriage through a universal, liturgical, rite of matrimony. The formal is bound to the familiar, commencing the ratified marriage created in the public words of consent. Soon after this formal rite, the familiarity of Christian marriage formally consummates the marriage. The very nearness, the intimate familiarity of the conjugal act between spouses in Christ completes the marriage's formal, universal, ecclesial foundation and inception.

The link between the familiarity and the formal, liturgical aspects of marriage in the church is also a source of concrete actions for developing goods internal to CMS and

destroying its contrary vice of lust. For example, a couple who makes the formal pattern of the liturgical year their own, could decide to incorporate it into their pattern of sexual intimacy. If a couple truly experiences their conjugal union as an expression of joy, a celebration of their love, then they might consider the relationship between this expression of joyous, superabundant love and the days and seasons of fasting and penance in the liturgical year. The Church recommended abstinence from conjugal sexuality on a great many days in years past, and it is easy to think that any effort to renew or make a similar suggestion would betray a negativity about sexuality. If anything, asking couples to reconsider the relationship between sexuality and the liturgical year must be cast as an exceptionally positive understanding of conjugal intercourse. Because it is an authentic good and contributes to the joy of couples and their superabundant love for each other, it can be sacrificed not "as something bad" but as something whose absence will be felt as a loss of a good that reminds us of the loss of Christ in death, as a good we hold away from ourselves in penance, and as a good that eventually reminds us in a small way of the return of Christ and his gift of eternal life to the world.

Couples who want to grow in CMS, then, ought to attempt a greater integration of their conjugal familiarity into the formal seasons of the liturgical year. Specifically, couples could consider abstaining during Lent, or on Fridays in addition to abstaining from meat, on Wednesdays, during ember days, for the period of a novena, etc. Such commitments would necessarily take seriously St. Paul's letter to the Corinthians. "Stop depriving one another," he writes, "except by agreement for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer" (1 Cor 7:6). Their time of abstinence must, however, be intentionally discerned and must follow the words of St. Paul, lest it lead to even greater

lust or coldness. In other words, the time of abstinence must be *for prayer together*. This is not because sexual intercourse detracts spouses from prayer per se, but because practically speaking it in fact does detract from prayer. By the time spouses (especially those working long hours or those with kids) have enough time and energy to relax together, they may be faced with the option to either pray or be physically intimate. If they choose conjugal intimacy first, they may fall asleep together without prayer. If they spend time in prayer first, they may have little energy or time left for physical intimacy. These are concrete realities of married life. Sexual intercourse is splendid, but it takes time and energy that could be put into prayer, wiping the floors, discussion of what to do about Johnny's behavior problem, or just sleeping. This is in part why a temporary, intentional abstinence from conjugal intercourse entirely can be such a boon. It can relieve some of this pressure to find time for it all and the unspoken tension that can accompany that pressure.

To bear fruit, this time should include daily prayer and Scripture together (perhaps the Divine Office), spiritual reading, and communication about the goods, ends, and purposes of sexuality in marriage. Prayer together during a time of abstinence should remind spouses that their conjugal intercourse is a physical expression of their marital love, a love that is a participation in Christ's own love for the church. This is a time for spouses to evaluate their practice and reconsider the standards of excellence and virtues necessary to help them live the life of chaste persons in the household of God. This is a time to remember and re-learn how to live Christ's love in non-genital ways. Without these little ways of love, after all, there is no chaste married sexuality, and there will be little desire to express love sexually—even when not in a time of abstinence.

Chaste married sexuality, in a MacIntyrian sense, extends the couple's capacity for and understanding of the goods internal to its practice. The more chaste spouses become, the more they will see their sexuality as integrated into their service to each other's sanctification and the sanctification of the world. Furthermore, the more chaste spouses become, the more they will see their sexuality integrated into the larger mystery of Christ's love for the Church. At the practical level, chastity will increase the ease with which couples love each other in the quotidian activities of life, and the ease with which they determine the demands of responsible parenthood through obedient attention to God's will in the education of their children and their openness to or avoidance of a new pregnancy. With CMS, as spouses possess their whole bodies and can love with them in non-genital ways, the more fully they understand what it means to give it freely, fully, faithfully, and fruitfully to each other and God when they love in the greatest physical intimacy. NFP, on the other hand, does not of itself extend these goods. This skill can serve as a path toward lust, frustration, infidelity, and ruin, or as a road toward sanctity, chastity, responsibility, and true conjugal love. The skill of NFP must be contextualized within the practice of CMS if it is to be intelligible.

As with attempts at any practice, though, practitioners will encounter difficulty.[25] Couples having difficulty with CMS, especially those growing in lust as opposed to chastity, might be suffering because they have unfortunately reduced CMS to NFP. If CMS is reduced to the question of *when*, it is clear that there exists some lack not in the practice of CMS itself, but in the couple's own formation in that practice. They may not have the formation required to achieve the standards of excellence appropriate to and

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[25] Mary Shivanandan, *Crossing the Threshold of Love: A New Vision of Marriage in the Light of John Paul II's Anthropology* (Washington: Catholic University of America, 1999), chap. 8.

definitive of the activity. In this case the fault lies as much with the Church as with the couple. CMS requires formation especially in prayer; the internal goods of poverty, chastity, obedience, communication, attentiveness, patience, and well-ordered conjugal sexuality are ineptly achieved without it. Prayer, and especially celebration of liturgy together as spouses garners the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and the infused virtues (especially infused temperance, fortitude, and prudence) required for the practice. Another standard of excellence is communication. One partner's impatience may result from a lack of communication: about stress in the spouse's life, about an unstated conflict, about the woman's place in the cycle, about the decision to avoid or achieve pregnancy, etc. In other words, in as much as a couple actually practices CMS, they practice it well and they grow in virtue.

From a Christian perspective, as part of the practice of CMS, there is no way to use the skill of NFP with a "contraceptive mentality," as some fear.[26] The formation of a life-giving mentality is an internal good of CMS itself. There is a clear distinction between NFP and CMS. NFP is the skill of assessing probabilities of conception and abstaining from or engaging in sexual intercourse accordingly. The practice of CMS is a practice that may or may not require the skill of NFP to achieve and extend the internal goods of chastity, or responsible parenthood, etc. In chaste marital sexuality, as a Christian practice involving responsible parenthood, couples should be able to identify their fertility and prayerfully, thoughtfully, and virtuously discern God's will for a

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[26] John Paul II has warned couples not to use NFP as the result of a "decision to be closed to life which would be substantially the same as that which inspires the decision to use contraceptives" (see John Paul II, "Pope Calls Spouses to a Sense of Responsibility for Love and for Life," in *L'Osservatore Romano* [Dec 17, 1990]: 3, no. 5). John F. Kippley argues that couples using NFP for selfish reasons are in fact selfish but not guilty of a contraceptive mentality, since a contraceptive mentality is a disposition to engage in contraceptive actions (see Kippley, *Sex and the Marriage Covenant: A Basis for Morality*, second ed., [San Francisco: Ignatius, 2005], 69–70).

couple's openness to inviting growth of the Christian family during any given cycle of fertility. Then, ordered by chastity, they can positively act to express conjugal sexuality appropriately based on that discernment.

## Conjugal Obedience

Less studied, but perhaps equally as incendiary as chastity, is the virtue and state of conjugal obedience. The question of marital obedience has a place in the feminist debates on patriarchy in the Christian tradition, which inevitably take up the endless exegetical arguments over biblical *Haustafeln*, moral exhortations appearing in Colossians 3:18:4–1, 1 Peter 2:18–3:6, and Ephesians 5:21, 22–6:9.[27] I will not be

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[27] The most common modern reading of the household codes is to say that they were accomodationist, that is, they were attempts by the early Christians to at find a place in the existing society. According to this theory the early church conceded to existing social hegemony while trying to infuse it with Christian values. This position comes largely from the work of David Balch, *Let Wives Be Submissive: The Domestic Code in 1 Peter* (Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1981); Balch, "Household Codes," in *Anchor Bible* Dictionary, vol. 3, ed. Gary A. Herion and David N. Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 318–20. For an overview of the accomodationist interpretation and critique thereof, see James D. G. Dunn, "The Household Rules in the New Testament," in *The Family in Theological Perspective*, ed. Stephen C. Barton (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1996), 43–63. Feminist and liberation approaches to Scripture suggest that we must leave these *Haustafeln* in the past because they are not liberating for the weak but have become ingrained into some majority presentations of the gospel's essence. In this area the work of Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza has been fundamental. Furthermore, they represent a backward move from the initial Christian insight of radical equality in Christ. They represent the early church's attempt to address charges of social disorder. See Elisabeth Schuessler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (New York: Crossroad, 1983); Clarce J. Martin, "The *Haustafeln* (Household Codes) in African American Biblical Interpretation: 'Free Slaves' and 'Subordinate Women,'" in *Stony the Road We Trod: African American Biblical Interpretation*, ed., Cain Hope Felder (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 206–31. At the same time, others have argued that Jesus' ethics did not provide for social or political organization, so the Christians had to turn to Greco-Roman customs. See Martin Dibelius, *An die Kolosser, Epheser, und Philemon,* Handbuch zum neuen Testamentem 12 (3rd ed., 1953), 48–49. John Howard Yoder and David Schroeder have challenged this position. See Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus:* Vicit Agnus Noster, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994), 162–92; David Schroeder, *Die Haustafeln des Neuen Testaments: ihre Herkunft und ihr theologischer Sinn. 2 Anmerkungen* (Hamburg: Universitaet Hamburg, 1959). Yoder has challenged this position, stating that the Church's use of these moral lists was a radical witness to the contingent and non-permanent nature of social structure in light of the gospel message. Yoder agrees that the household codes may have been a less revolutionary modification of an original vision of equality in Christ, but he adds the argument that the use of the household codes carried a Christological component, a witness to Christ's

arguing that any one member of the partnership of life and love has a gender-based claim to authority while the other has a gender-based position of subjection. One might claim that a wife obeys the husband because in the marriage she represents the Church and the husband represents Christ. This argument would be biblical in a certain sense, but I am not making that argument here. Certain aspects of the nuptial mystery and the practice of Christian married life are illuminated by this imagery, but certain insights, particularly those regarding obedience have attracted less attention. I will, therefore, take up a distinct vantage point on this same idea of marriage as mystery of Christ and Church. This section will propose obedience in marriage from another direction. I do not here submit that spouses must obey each other as they obey Christ, but rather they ought together to seek obedience to the Father inasmuch as together they are in Christ, who perfectly loved, knew, and obeyed the Father's will—so much so that he possesses that selfsame will.

As previous chapters have argued, the primary social location for Christian marriage as a Common Way in Christ is ecclesial, and it is this focus on the ecclesial location of marriage that offers a distinct vantage for finding a common obedience in Christian marriage. Instead of reifying one individual spouse as "Christ" and the other as "Church," I ground marital obedience in the same foundation that grounds religious obedience, namely Jesus, the Son of God whose perfect obedience to the will of the Father was so encompassing that Jesus possessed the divine will itself. Perhaps we can understand conjugal obedience better if we focus on the couple's common share in

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revolutionary subordination to structural evils, subordination that destroys the power of the evil and witnesses to its impermanence. As to Ephesians 5:21–6:9, John Paul II has read the passage with an emphasis on 5:21. He reads 5:21 as the beginning of the new section (5:21–33). He argues that the author of the letter asks spouses to be "reciprocally subject in the fear of Christ." He supports a use of the head/body analogy for the relationship of husband/wife and Christ/church. See *Man and Woman He Created Them*, nos. 89–93, pp. 472–487.

Christ's obedience to the Father. After all, as baptized Christians the couple is joined in Christ. They are two parts of Christ's body linked forever for a mission in the service of the Church. Their conjugal love together is to be Christ's love for the Church. Their love is a share in God's own love; therefore, it is generative, free, and faithful. Furthermore, if the couple is seen corporately as Christ, rather than individually as Christ and Church, their mutual participation in the Son's obedience to the Father comes into sharper focus. What the couple is aiming at in their conjugal love is not only a mutual submission to one another in reverence to Christ. The couple is aiming even more at a united, corporate submission to the will of God *together*, that is, *as, in, and with Christ*. They are to be a sacrament of Christ's obedient love.

Because each is Christian, each must share in Jesus' obedience to the father, but because together they are one flesh in Christ, they now have a specification of that obedience. They are enjoined to a common obedience to the Father's will together. God's will is for both to hear and for both to obey as one flesh and in one flesh, because the separate parts they were in Christ are now irrevocably joined in mission and identity. The spouses marry in Christ and serve the Church as Christ served her, unto death and resurrection. The sacrament of the spouses' marriage is a sacrament of Christ's love for the Church, so the spouse's conjugal love binds the couple in Christ for the Church. When they marry, their spousal unity in Christ makes present Christ's love for the Church, a love that is indissoluble and generative, chaste and obedient. As Christ did what he saw the Father doing and said what he heard the Father saying, so must married Christians. Their practice of Christian marriage must incarnate Christ's obedience to the

Father, an obedience that was at once painful and dreadful (from Gethsemane to the cross) and live-giving and glorious (at Cana, at Tabor, at Lazarus' tomb, and at the resurrection).

What, then, will this complex obedience look like? Of course both spouses must submit to each other out of conjugal love, out of reverence for Christ residing in each, and as a general precept of Christian life (cf.1 Cor 13; Eph 5:21). In the concrete this will mean that if one spouse expresses a desire for some good (e.g., to read a book in the evening), that the other spouse will be disposed to aid in the acquisition of that good, even if desirous of a different but relatively equivalent good (e.g., playing a game with the spouse in the evening). This kind of giving way is important and requisite for Christian marriage, but it is not the subject of the marital obedience I am speaking of here.

Because the religious and conjugal obedience are linked in Christ, I can look to the religious life for language and example of how conjugal obedience might be practiced. For vowed religious, obedience to a superior is a mediation of obedience to the Father and an attempted participation in Christ's own obedience to the Father as a complete gift of one's own will to the service of God. While a larger social institution such as a religious congregation has the numbers and structure to make a superior necessary and possible, the consortium of man, wife, and whoever else holds house with them does not initially seem to lend itself to the notion of a superior, even on a temporary, rotational basis.

In considering obedience and the relationship between spouses, we can recall chapter three's earlier mention of Augustine's thought that any association of friends (even among just two men) would necessarily include one who commands and another

who obeys.[28] Marriage, though, is a unique kind of friendship wherein the two are not a leader and a follower, but, as Augustine points out, the spouses are joined as two side-by-side walking the same direction together.[29] Given this image, the question for spouses remains—who commands and who obeys? To answer this question we must shift focus from the asking which individual obeys which, to the asking of whom the couple together gives obedience.

The couple must give obedience to their shared will for the marriage. This will is at once their own and other-than-their-own. It is at once their will and (they hope) a mediation of the Father's will. When they consent to Christian marriage in the Church, they express their will to enter a common way of life in Christ, a practice of Christian householding with ecclesially established standards of excellence, internal goods, and virtues necessary for the achievement of those goods. The couple does not create these standards, goods, and virtues, but rather consents to them. Recalling MacIntyre, we are reminded:

> "the goods [of a practice] can only be achieved by subordinating ourselves within the practice in our relationship to other practitioners. We have to learn to recognize what is due to whom; we have to be prepared to take whatever self-endangering risks are demanded along the way; and we have to listen carefully to what we are told about our own inadequacies and to reply with the same carefulness for the facts."[30]

Concretely, working with this kind of obedience means that a couple must actualize a pair of principles from Christian householding: supravoluntarity, and intentionality. Let us presume that couple has a shared will and intention for their

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[28] Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram*, 9.5; *On Genesis*, 381. In *De bono coniugali* 1.1; *The Excellence of Marriage*, 34.

[29] Augustine, *De bono coniugali*, 1.1, ibid.

[30] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 191.

marriage, that it be a common way of life in Christ. This shared will and intention creates a supravoluntary situation in their marital practice. The shared will should supersede their own personal wills whenever the two come into conflict. For example, a friend of mine skips breakfast and lunch to save money and accomplish more at work. Sometimes he stays up too late in order to increase productivity. He knows that these goods (productivity and riches) are external to the practice of marriage and are beginning to conflict with the will for marriage that he and his wife share. This husband would be well served by the virtue and state of obedience. In a conversation with his wife about the situation, he can ask her to mediate for him their shared will for these activities in marriage for the time being. The topic will be revisited in a determined amount of time. Their shared will to "live as married people live" supersedes his own will to business achievement and penny-pinching. This husband, then, will submit himself in obedience to his wife's reasonable regulation of these activities: that he eat at least a small breakfast and lunch, that he not stay up late more than twice a week, etc. The wife is mediating their shared, spousal will to him. In time his own personal will shall be reshaped into their shared will.

**Summary**

This section has explored some implications of Christian marriage as a common way rooted in the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience. Through the course of this exploration, principles of Christian householding were seen to be at work in these evangelical virtues. Poverty, chastity, and obedience were all explored as spouses'

common way of life in Christ. Through these virtues they manifest an ecclesial identity

and purpose to go with each other to salvation. Furthermore, they realize their

sacramental, marital mission to be a sacrament of Christ's love for the church. Examples

for formation in each of these virtues and states were provided. Poverty is linked with the

permeability of the household to its ecclesial and neighborhood context. Chastity is

bound to principles of familiarity and universality. Obedience is tied to the

supravoluntary and intentional character of marriage as a common way of life in Christ, a

practice of Christian householding. In what follows, I will make a proposal that integrates

the life of poverty, chastity, and obedience as lived by any in the church who make such a

commitment.

## A *REGULA MATRIMONII*[31]

If poverty, chastity, and obedience are essential virtues for Christian marriage as a

Common Way in Christ, there must be a way to integrate them within that practice.

Unsurprisingly, an answer comes from a method that has enlightened the life of the

church for sixteen hundred years, the *regula* or rule of life. The rule of life encompasses

the virtues and states of poverty, chastity, and obedience and integrates them within the

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[31] Alphonsus Liguori wrote a rule for lay persons. See *The Christian Virtues and the Means for Obtaining them*, trans. and ed., Robert A. Coffin (New York: Dunigan and Brother, 1855), 413–18; and "Rule of Life," in *The Way of Salvation and of Perfection*, vol. 2, rev. ed., Eugene Grimm, ed. (Brooklyn: Redemptorist Fathers, 1926), 502–10. A popular author has promoted the idea of a family rule of life with a book and a popular blog. See Holly Pierlot, *A Mother's Rule of Life: How to Bring Order to Your Home and Peace to Your Soul* (Manchester, NH: Sophia Institute Press, 2004); and http://www.mothersruleoflife.com/ , accessed on February 4, 2011. See also the more general Margaret Guenther, *At Home in the World: A Rule of Life for the Rest of Us* (New York: Seabury Books, 2006); Anthony Marrett-Crosby, et al., eds., *The Benedictine Handbook* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2003); and Wil Derkse, *The Rule of Benedict for Beginners: Spirituality for Daily Life* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2003). The popular literature even has ecumenical reach. See Dennis Okholm, *Monk Habits for Everyday People: Benedictine Spirituality for Protestants* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos, 2007)

wide varieties of Christian householding. In this section I will treat a general format of a married rule, how it should be formed, and how it integrates the evangelical virtues.

A rule of life should begin with a couple's own statement of what they believe to be their unique mission, or charism, as a married couple. This statement summarizes their common will for the marriage. They can feel free to include a narrative account of how God worked in their lives to bring them together, as this is often helpful in discerning a mission or discovering a charism. A couple would likely be aided by a spiritual director in making their rule, especially one with experience in religious orders. An example of such a statement of mission or charism could include a section like this one:

> Imitate Jesus in our everyday interactions with each other, friends, neighbors, and strangers. Specifically, being present, generous, and hospitable to people in our neighborhood; joyfully and thankfully accepting the difficulties and delights God gives us; and praying constantly for needs of others that we see, hear about, and remember.[32]

This statement identifies a Christological foundation and a two-part charism for the household's practices of a Common Way in Christ. This household sees God calling them first to imitate Jesus through an incarnational presence and an intentional outreach to their neighbors (both inside and outside the walls of their house). Second, they see prayer as part of their unique charism; they commit to praying together as an act of solidarity with those in need and beyond their material reach.

Beyond this general statement of charism or mission, a *regula Matrimonii* should include a description of roles within the household, and explanations of virtues and goods internal to the common life of the household. For example, the distinction between child and parent, the general roles taken by each parent, the expectations of each and the role of each in the working of the household should be spelled out. If possible, the general

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[32] This section comes from a rule of life written by and currently used by my own household.

methods of discipline should be included as well. Following this description of roles should come the daily activities from rising to bedding down. As with all rules, the point is not to constrain but to free. The question is not whether to live by an order, for we all do. We all live according to a rule of life, even if that rule is "to never live the same way two days in a row." The question is whether to live by a good one that we rationally and prayerfully choose to fit the purposes and goals of our common life in Christ, or whether to live a haphazard one that we simply fall into in an unthinking manner?

In this regard a rule can be specific with times or it can be general, merely stating the kinds of things that happen at certain times throughout the day and the week. The couple's married *regula* ought to include times and direction for prayer (both common and individual), work (domestic, for pay, and directly ecclesial, e.g., works of mercy, missionary activity, church council, etc.), and relaxing time for the household together. The rule ought to be ordered toward the household's stated mission and charism. For example, a household who see their mission as one principally of intercessory prayer for the world will build-in more time in for this activity. A household who sees their mission as related to educating their children in the home will have a rule designed uniquely for this purpose. A household who sees their mission as oriented toward their neighborhood will include regular time for outreach and being present for the people living around them. One example might be as follows:

> Normal weekday order: Upon rising, mother and father pray the morning offering. While mother readies herself for the day, father prepares and sets out breakfast with children's help. After a family prayer, the breakfast begins. After mother or father has finished eating, one reads the gospel of the day from mass. After cleaning up breakfast together, children are excused to dress. Mother helps younger children dress while father readies for work. Once all are ready, a family prayer for the day is offered and father begins work. Children and mother have time to play or read. School time for school-aged children begins while youngest

child naps. After school time, children play while mother takes care of home maintaining tasks. Children help mother prepare lunch and set table. Children clean up house. Midday prayer begins lunch. After lunch, younger children nap, and older children read or play board game with mother. Children awake from nap and have snack until father finishes daily work. Upon father's return, family offers prayer of safe returns. Father and children play outside with neighbors and/or work together on household maintenance while mother prepares dinner. Children set table and meal begins with family prayer. Once mother and father finish eating, Scripture devotional begins at table. Dinner ends and post-dinner clean up by whole family takes place. Children are prepared for bed. Mother reads with older children, father reads with younger children. After reading, family gathers for evening liturgy. After prayer, children go to sleep. Mother and father work on household maintenance for one hour, and then do evening prayer together. After evening prayer, mother and father have time for relaxation or, if necessary, additional work together until bed.

This daily order is general enough to allow for flexibility regarding what time and how long certain activities take, but the shape of the day is, on the whole, set. This is an order for a typical weekday, and so no provision is made for errands and outings, which ordinarily take place with a modified daily order included in a rule. An order for Saturdays and Sundays should also be included. The rule is concerned principally to ensure that those standards of excellence and virtues necessary to achieve the goods of the Common Way in Christ are maintained. Here, the rule attempts to frame the entire day with prayer, ensure time for both parents to contribute to the children's education (understood in a wide sense), create time for parents to spend together, share work among all for common goods of the household, and promote the charism of the household.

The Common Way in Christ for married Christians is a living practice, and thus its charism, mission, and the activities required to achieve these purposes will change throughout the course of its existence. Therefore, a Christian household must revisit its rule occasionally and in prayer and discussion decide whether and how to amend it. For example, our own statement of mission and charism changed after we had children, and

again after we had children who could contribute to discerning that charism. Also, the daily order changes as children grow or with the addition of new children to the home, or with a move to a new city or location.

The power of the *regula matrimonii* is that it integrates the virtues and states necessary to excel in the practice of Christian householding. First, the rule is a matter for obedience. Married couples mutually submit in obedience to the *regula*. Spouses understand the rule to be an expression of their shared will for their Common Way in Christ. Even if, at times, their own will is contrary to the rule's (and it certainly will be), the rule is a supravoluntary aspect of their Christian householding to which they owe obedience. The spouses should prefer the will represented by the rule rather than their own will if a conflict arises. Spouses, after all, in constructing this rule, are prayerfully hoping that their own will as expressed in the rule is actually God's will for their marriage. In a strong sense, then, the couple intends that this rule mediate God's will for their practice of a Common Way in Christ. Through obedience together to the rule, the household hopes they are obedient together in Christ to the will of God the Father. The spouses cannot expect each other to mediate God's will in the way a superior of a religious order does for the vowed religious, but the household listens to God's will for their household and creates a rule to mediate that will and live in mutual obedience to God through their practice of a regular life.

Second, the *regula matrimonii* encompasses chastity. The spouses' sexuality is subject to the ordering of the rule. The rule may build in times of abstinence that coordinate with liturgical days or seasons, annual novenas, etc. Additionally, if a couple finds need to delay pregnancy, the rule can be helpful in ordering the skill of NFP to the

service of CMS. If a couple is discerning their stance toward further pregnancy, this process can be intentionally built into the rule. Couples following this kind of a rule will be encouraged to see their sexual expression as another regular part of their Common Way in Christ, but it will allow them also to be spontaneous. By building in extra time in the evening a couple may or may not decide to be physically intimate, but the option exists if the couple has interest. By incorporating times of abstinence, the couple will likely experience less unexpected coldness toward physical intimacy. The periods of abstinence can act to kindle the spouses toward one another.

Finally, the rule incorporates a commitment to poverty. The rule might state, for one, state that no person in the household exclusively owns any goods therein. The mother and father should be given the role of determining just appropriation of goods to each person, though this task can be shared with other, older members of the household. Second, the rule should specify the level of economic simplicity a household hopes to achieve and what steps the household will take to achieve them. Traumatic material poverty may strike any household, and this is to be avoided, but intentional poverty of some kind ought to be sought. Households should put themselves in positions of reliance on others and positions where others rely on them, even if it something as simple as buying a snowblower together with a neighbor, or something as complex as owning a home together with another household, vowed religious, or single, non-vowed persons.

The couple will also have daily orders that will account for home economics, that is, they will include shopping and errands. These daily orders encourage the virtue of poverty inasmuch as they resist the reigning economic milieu that seeks to make consumption the ordering principle of life. Greater intentionality and planning in

shopping leads to greater frugality and attention to Christian economic principles a household may find difficult to do when shopping more spontaneously. For example, thinking in terms of preferential option for the poor and commitment to personal relationship with the producers of goods, a family friend decided to buy a farm share from a local, family farm: an organic CSA (community supported agriculture that provides food to 30 families). This meant that the family would not buy any vegetables from grocery during the Spring, Summer, or Fall (even if the farm share gave them vegetables they did not prefer). Additionally, the family had to find the extra money to cover the expense by opting out of a cellphone and high-speed internet. Beyond the upfront cost, though, is the true risk involved; if the farm has a low yield, the family will not have many vegetables to eat. In previous years, the family has bought a work-share in the farm with two other families. The mandatory 100 hours of work was too much for one family, so three families in the neighborhood split the share and the work. This meant adjusting and creating a rule to cooperate with the other families. One day a week, they cooperated to put in their hours, some car-pooling to the farm, some staying at their paid jobs, and another staying with the children for the day. Families can also build poverty, or a dependence on God, into their rule of life, by using it to determine giving practices regardless of income. Regardless of how little comes in, or how much expenses may grow, the household commits to giving the same percentage of income.

As we have seen, a *regula matrimonii* has the potential to integrate poverty, chastity, and obedience of married spouses into a Common Way in Christ. The promises of this kind of rule, though, extend beyond married households alone. One of the promises of a wider application of *regulas* in Christian, especially conjugal life is the

ability for a rule to unite conjugal and celibate life in one Christian household. Among

the authors who spoke of principles of Christian householding, the rule did not take a

central place, though Bennett and the "new monastic" movements have taken a big step

in that direction with their charter of the 12 characteristics of the "new monasticism."[33]

Living in community, in obedience to a rule, celibates and married persons can serve

each other and share in common and distinct ministries. Shared domestic endeavors in the

household of God can provide unique, ecclesial solutions to problems faced both by

celibates and married families as well as new possibilities for missions and ministries. Of

course such efforts must not be rushed into, as they require clear vision, expectations,

goals, and roles, but neither should they be avoided. After all, it has been the claim that

both married and religious people are sharing in one domestic project, cohabiting in the

household of God.

## PRELIMINARY SUGGESTIONS FOR A MARRIAGE NOVITIATE

In this final section, I will make some suggestions regarding a marriage novitiate.

This topic itself deserves its own dissertation. In fact, there are already two strains of

thought at work within the Catholic tradition on this topic. Michael Lawler and Paul A.

Holmes have both proposed versions of a married catechumenate.[34] Their approaches are

at once similar and radically different. Both want to recover from the tradition rites and

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[33] See Rutba House, ed., *School(s) for Conversion: 12 Marks of a New Monasticism* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2005).

[34] See Paul A. Holmes, "A Catechumenate for Marriage: Presacramental Preparation as Pilgrimage," *Journal of Ritual Studies* 6.2 (Summer 1992): 93–113; *Betrothal: A Liturgical Rite of Passage. The Anthropological Perspective of Victor W. Turner as the Basis for the Development of a Catechumenate for the Betrothed*. Dissertation, directed by Giles Dimock, O.P. (Rome: Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas, 1991); Michael Lawler, "A Marital Catechumenate: A Proposal," *INTAMS Review* 13 (2007): 161–77.

practices that prepare people for sacramental married life in a stepwise, liturgical, and pedagogical fashion. The radical difference, though, is that Lawler believes he has found strong support in the tradition for arguing that marriage begins at betrothal. Lawler's catechumenate, therefore, involves cohabitation and sexual intimacy. For his part, Holmes finds the historical and current teaching to say that marriage begins with the rite of matrimony. His catechumenate, therefore, involves many recovered and translated rites from the tradition, but no cohabitation or sexual intimacy.

Holmes's position is closer to my own, but my research takes marriage preparation more into the direction of the novitiate. A novitiate is, perhaps, more along the lines of *how* engaged couples ought to prepare and *for what* they are preparing. The couples, like seminarians, are preparing for a sacrament of service, not a sacrament of initiation. In that sense, novitiate may be a more apt analogy for describing the time of engagement. Furthermore, if catechumens were to die during preparation, they can be said to possess their end by intent. Conversely, if a fiancé were to die before marriage, he or she would not be considered married by intent, nor would a survivor be considered a widow or widower. Again, in this sense the novitiate seems more apt. Also marriage is entered by spoken consent, as is religious life, whereas baptism is an action done *to* the new Christian. Finally, the novitiate preparing for religious orders or for the priesthood is not fully initiated into the order until the liturgical rite of profession. Until that time, they are not permitted the fullness of that life's practice. In the same way, engaged couples are not married until they perform that rite of matrimony. Thus, their participation in the whole of married life, including cohabitation and sexual intimacy is unintelligible as a way to prepare for the marriage. A full argument for use of the term novitiate for

marriage preparation is not offered here, though. In fact, the term itself may not be apt—

after all, while fiancés are preparing for a sacrament, novices in a religious order are not

preparing for any of the seven sacraments. This section, then, lays out some ground for

new studies by making suggestions for how engaged persons might prepare for their

Common Way in Christ by beginning to practice poverty, chastity, and obedience as a

process of formation and partial participation.

First, a moment on poverty. Engaged couples, no less than spouses, should begin

to work toward poverty as a state of common possession and a virtue of radical

dependence on God. Engaged couples need to begin discussing their current spending

habits, expenses, goals, career aspirations, budgets, and moral criteria for consumption.

For some couples this will be a discussion about how they see themselves getting out of

poverty. For others this will be a discussion of how to embrace intentional forms of

poverty, dependence on God, and solidarity with the poor. Couples should also be

introduced to the evangelical counsel of poverty explicitly, through discussions with a

priest and spiritual readings.[35] On those grounds, couples could consider renting or

buying in a poorer section of their city than they otherwise might have. The couple must

decide if their marriage will be subject to the prevailing economic winds of ever-

increasing consumption. Mentors and priests should encourage couples to contribute

together to a charitable cause, as well as to discuss whether and to what degree they will

tithe. They ought to work of lists of "things" that are necessities and wants. Together they

should anticipate expenses and hold each other accountable to their spending while still

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[35] I would suggest excerpts from the Gospels, especially the sermons on the mount and the plain, as well as Masie Ward, ed., *Be Not Solicitous: Sidelights on the Providence of God and the Catholic Family* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1953); Robert Farrar Capon, *Bed and Board: Plain Talk about Marriage* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1965).

unmarried. They should talk about how they will put into action the notion of common possession. They should also talk about how money will affect their willingness to be open to God's gift of fertility, that is, whether their poverty or lack thereof constitutes a serious reason to avoid pregnancy temporarily. They should ask how they see themselves entering relationships of interdependence with neighbors and church. Co-ownership, especially a future place-of-residence, before marriage is risky, but under the right circumstances could be an opportunity for developing habits of fidelity to common goals and practice in working together. Rather than a practice in sharing and work for a common good, co-ownership could easily amount to a serious occasion for sin. Couples should be prepared for a distinct change upon beginning their marriage, and holding off on co-ownership helps reinforce the difference in state from single to married. The life they prepare to enter is a paradox that requires all they have and reminds them that they have nothing to give but themselves.

Second, if chastity is as important and as difficult in entering the conjugal state and reaching its goals as it is in the religious state, then we as the church must identify and effect bold practices to form marrying couples in this virtue. Remote preparation for marriage in childhood and adolescence should provide a formation in the virtue of chastity, but the fact is that many couples will approach their parish priest with little or no training in the capacity to regulate and integrate their sexuality into the Christian conjugal life. Formation in chastity must begin from the very moment they approach a pastor for marriage. I suggest the following practice: require couples to make a verbal commitment to a chaste period of engagement as a condition for their celebrating matrimony in the Catholic Church. This requirement would hold for any couple, whether cohabiting or not.

The couple would not have to succeed to perfection, but their most earnest attempt should be expected. There would be no documentary record of the couple's success or failure to keep the commitment, but the couple would be encouraged to avail themselves of the sacrament of penance if necessary. Regular conversations with mentor couples and/or a pastor should not hesitate to broach the topic. With respect to the wide variety of moral development and the uniqueness of each couple's situation, the definition of "chaste" should be discussed and defined along a spectrum with at least the pastor, but hopefully also with a mentor couple. The definitions will include clarity on chaste ways for the couple to express affection. For example, some couples may choose to refrain from any kind of touch or kiss that can typically cause sexual arousal. The definition will include clarity on the kinds of situations, media, language, and clothing to avoid (again, determined uniquely for each couple). The definition will also institute positive practices to advance in chastity. For example, conversations on sexual expectations and experience, on struggles relating to body image, and on struggles relating to current sexual sin.

Chastity training should also include a course in human sexuality, including sessions on natural family planning. The priest and mentor couple should be sure to talk about prayerfully discerning what is meant by "responsible parenthood," and what might constitute "serious reasons" for the couple to avoid a pregnancy. These pastoral actions of formation may lead to a decline in the number of marriages in the Church, at least initially. Some way must be found, though, to avoid any decline on account of the hurdles of material poverty and a lack of education. Extra resources must find their way to aid parishes that marry Catholics for whom the leisure time necessary for this kind of preparation in chastity is greatly difficult to come by. Baptized Christians have a right to

marriage in the Church, but their right is to a valid marriage. Without adequate preparation they are not free to exercise that right, and a pastor may be compelled by canon law to delay the wedding. Couples seriously lacking in, or unwilling to commit to chastity demonstrate their incapacity to make the marriage vows. As the body of Christ, we must insist on the public nature of married sexuality, that joining Christians ill-prepared does the spouses as well as Christ's body a dis-service and a great irreverence.

Finally, couples should prepare for obedience by common prayer, spiritual reading, and common works of mercy (soup kitchens, habitats for humanity, etc.). These kinds of activities will help engaged couples discern God's initial calling for them in their marriage. Through this discussion, reading, prayer, and action, the couple should develop at least an initial regula matrimonii with the help of a mentor couple, a priest or religious person. They should consider the virtues and goods they want to privilege, the roles they want to inhabit, and the form of life they hope to live. The engagement would be an opportunity for couples to visit a religious order and married friends' homes to see how others living according to a rule order their lives as a Common Way in Christ. They might even consider different forms or creative forms of Christian householding at this point with vowed religious or with single non-vowed persons in community. By the time the couple reaches their wedding day, they should be ready to hit the ground running with a well-ordered rough draft of their *regula matrimonii*, one that will certainly change, but will guide them in the early days as they discover God's will for their Christian householding together.

**CONCLUSION**

This chapter has sought to creatively integrate the insights of those before it into a constructive proposal for Christian marriage understood under the paradigm of Common Way in Christ. The chapter has sketched a framework for what Christian marriage, as a form of Christian householding participating in the ecclesial states and virtues of poverty, chastity, and obedience, might look like in the contemporary context. To that end I have introduced practical consequences for the theoretical consonance between marriage and religious life developed in the first five chapters.

The first section recalled the way that MacIntyre's definition of "practice," the Augustinian notion of ecclesial-nuptials good, and the principles of Christian householding contribute to understanding marriage as a Common Way in Christ. MacIntyre's social-historical aspect of "practice" went along with the householding principles of permeability and supravoluntarity. Fidelity to the standards of excellence in a practice occasionally calls practitioners to sacrifice external goods for the sake of internal goods; this fact is expressed by aspects of the familiarity and formality of Christian householding. Finally, the internal good of "living as married people live" was understood according to the householding principles of *ora et labora*.

The second section explored the place of poverty, chastity, and obedience as virtues and states in marriage as a Common Way in Christ. This task also incorporated common ground in Christ, as well as the principles of Christian householding and MacIntyre's definition of "practice." In poverty, households resist the economy of consumption as the ordering principle for their practice of householding. Instead they

choose solidarity with the poor and conditions of real interdependence, reliance, and reliability. The notion of poverty as a virtue and state in marriage must avoid remaining at a merely metaphorical level. If it does, then the Christian household will remain under the power of the same economy of desire and consumption that has in part led to its current crisis. In conjugal chastity, couples integrate their entire being as sexed and gendered into their spousal love by realizing that love in the daily, bodily actions of their Christian householding. Far from being reducible to natural family planning, the practice of chaste married sexuality may incorporate this skill in service to marriage's internal good of the child (or responsible parenthood). In obedience, members of a conjugal household submit themselves to the common will for their marriage, a will they hope mediates the Father's will. In doing so the couple act together to live in Christ obeying his Father.

Part three considered how a *regula matrimonii* integrates poverty, chastity, and obedience into one common way. The rule contains a statement of charism, a description of principles and roles, and a daily order for each kind of day. Among the benefits of a rule is its ability to order forms of Christian householding that might include spouses with children along with vowed religious or single-non-vowed, or multi-generational domestic arrangements. Finally, I suggested some hypotheses and sources for further research on how Christians might prepare for their common way of poverty, chastity, and obedience in Christ along the lines of a novitiate.

Admittedly, since I have provided merely a constructive framework and not a definitive account, this chapter gives only a few examples and indications enfleshing this framework's practical workings. A more detailed, complete account of marriage as

Common Way in Christ will have to be fleshed out in a subsequent study. Among aspects

requiring further development is the way Augustinian ecclesio-nuptial goods of *proles,*

*fides*, and *sacramentum* figure as internal goods of marriage as a Common Way in Christ.

Second, the practice of chaste married sexuality, a sub practice of Christian marriage

itself. Third, the possibilities for Christian householding among spouses, children, parents,

vowed religious, or single non-vowed persons need more attention. Fourth, the notion of

parenthood as a practice shared by the whole church, especially under the lost rubric of

"spiritual parenthood" deserves renewed focus. Finally, this study focused on the

conjugal side of the conjugal-consecrated consonance. A complementary study on the

consecrated life and its participation in a Common Way with the goods of *proles*, *fides*,

and *sacramentum* could prove a worthwhile project.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSIONS AND CONSEQUENTS

This dissertation began by invoking the Second Vatican Council's declaration that "Christ summons the Church to continual reformation as she sojourns here on earth."[1] The council's language of "reformation" is especially apt for conjugal life and consecrated life in the way this dissertation seeks to envision them—as domestic practices situated within the greater household of God that conform people ever-more to the likeness of Christ. Practices, after all, are complex cooperative human activities in which virtues are formed and vices are reformed. Marriage and religious consecration, as christomorphic practices, form and reform people in Christ's virtues of poverty, chastity, and obedience. Furthermore, as ecclesial practices, the Church is the authoritative social milieu in which the internal goods, virtues, and standards of excellence exist. Likewise, as domestic practices of explicitly Christian householding, marriage and consecrated life are eschatologically ordered, conscious that the church "sojourns here on earth" in anticipation of and in training for eternal life in the heavenly household of God, where Christ prepares a room for those who do now and always will abide with him and his Father.

The goal of the dissertation has never been to fix marriage, but rather to reform our understanding and practice of what Christian marriage has always been by finding a suitable, paradigmatic approach. To this end I introduced the project with a sociological snapshot of the problems affecting contemporary marriage and family in America, as well as with theological, sociological, economic, political, and philosophical narratives for where marriage is, how it got there, and where it must go. Each narrative forwards its

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[1] *Unitatis redintegratio*, 6.

own diagnosis of the disease and a related cure. The diagnoses and treatments for the illness plaguing marriage relate to the paradigms used to understand marriage itself. In demonstrating this claim, chapter one described two existing paradigms for thinking about the purpose, goods, and virtues involved with marriage: thinking of marriage as "relationship" and marriage as "practice." Each of these paradigms contributes to solving some of the difficulties in marriage, but each leaves challenges unaddressed or even creates additional challenges. The relational paradigm is overly anthropological—with little connection to Trinity and without the church as the primary context for the relationship. The relational paradigm can be christological and even ecclesial (e.g., the relationship between the spouses is the sacrament of Christ's bond to the Church), but in a way that tends to reify one spouse as Christ and the other as the church. Authors using the relational paradigm also tended to see marriage as a relationship between two persons alongside of the church rather than within it. At the same time, practice language lacked a rich theological grounding, but had made a strong move to situate marriage principally within the Church. Some third paradigm that involves aspects of both "relationship" and "practice" was required, with a theological foundation to anchor it.

The language for this paradigm, I argued, must come from the life of the Church rather than the grammar of the state or civil society, because Christian marriage's primary context is ecclesial and its primary end (as determined by that context) is the sanctification of the spouses. Thus I sought an aspect of ecclesial life with an already rich tradition and theological grounding in Christ and the Trinity as a practice for moving toward the universal vocation of Christian perfection: vowed religious life in community. Hoping to find a common ground and a higher viewpoint, I hypothesized a consonance

between vowed religious life and matrimonial life. In developing that consonance, a new paradigm for understanding marriage was conceived and came to birth: Christian marriage as Common Way in Christ.

Chapter two continued by turning to contemporary attempts to relate and distinguish conjugal and consecrated life. These authors produced helpful insights into the relationship between the two states of life, but they ultimately maintain a version of the oppositional, competitive account that necessarily dichotomizes the two states and fails to see their common ground in Christ the Second Person of the Trinity. The risk of relating the two states is that essential aspects of one will be borrowed or interpolated into the other, thereby adulterating its authentic practice. The result is "monasticized" marriage or "domesticated" religious life. My paradigm avoids this pitfall by identifying aspects essential to both ways of life, since they are both manifestations of a larger practice—householding with God. Furthermore, I intended to overcome the adversarial narrative of the consecrated-conjugal relationship with a counter-narrative that demonstrates complex relationship between these states, and the bi-directional sharing of images and concepts that has existed between the states throughout Christian history. The counter-narrative sees the two states as composing together the one bride of Christ who is united to and abides with the bridegroom.

Chapter three took on the challenge of showing the complex relationship between consecrated and conjugal life had already existed in the patristic era, and that, in the patristic tradition accounts of that relationship, we could find a non-adversarial and cooperative perspective. Augustine's position within the Donatist, Manichean, and Pelagian controversies provided ample opportunity for him to answer the same level

playing field and hierarchical approaches to marriage and monasticism that exist in modern scholarship from chapter two. Augustine's creative renarration of this relationship shows a dialogical relationship between the two states and their sacramental (signifying) value throughout salvation history. Ultimately, both married and virgins share in the ecclesio-nuptial goods of *proles*, *fides*, and *sacramentum* whether literally, allegorically, analogically, or anagogically. The Augustinian vision of these states' common participation provides us with an authoritative source in the tradition that suggests a refocusing of our attention away from antagonistic distinction between the states of Christian life and toward the common share these states have in the life of Christ, in the life of the church.

In the fourth chapter, contemporary scholars who envision Christian life in terms of Christian-householding principles take center stage. Four pairs of principles in tension were identified: intentionality and supravoluntarity; familiarity and formality; exclusivity and permeability; and *ora et labora*. These Christian-householding principles offer for matrimony and religious life a good start, and they help alleviate the confusion regarding the connection between family and church in theologies of the family. These principles of unity reminded us that both vowed religious life and conjugal life are shaped by the larger identity and purposes of the Body of Christ. While these principles are helpful, chapter four noted significant lacks, among them the understanding of life according to a *regula*, the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience, and Christ and the Trinity as foundation for these principles and practices.

In chapter five, therefore, I grounded both married and religious life three theological loci not attended to by the principles of Christian householding. Marriage and

religious life are grounded in vows, specifically the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. Poverty, chastity, and obedience, though, are not only vows, but states and virtues as well. As virtues and states they are present in the nexus of Christian life: Christ, the second Adam and the Second Person of the Trinity. Married and religious share in these virtues ecclesially, that is, by virtue of the sacraments of initiation all Christians are incorporated into Christ's body. They share, therefore, what pertains to Christ. They are one with Christ the poor, chaste, and obedient bridegroom. They also share in Christ's life as Second Person of the Trinity. Both matrimonial and vowed religious life are confessions of the Trinity in the practices and relationships they hold as *communiones personarum*.

Having argued for the fundamental character of poverty, chastity, and obedience as vows, virtues and states in the nexus of Christ as new Adam and Second Person of the Trinity, chapter six could proceed to integrate the insights from all previous chapters into a framework for marriage as Common Way in Christ. This paradigm makes advances over the two that I offered in chapter one. By grounding the married life in Christ, what the human person is called to be, this paradigm succeeds where the relational paradigm did not; the relational paradigm was grounded in anthropology not closely linked to Christology. While the practice paradigm attempted to situate marriage within the church, the Common Way in Christ paradigm develops the specifically Christian householding principles to fill out that situation. Furthermore, the Common Way I Christ paradigm offers theological grounding in Christ and the Trinity to strongly affirm the legitimacy and consequences of that ecclesial location. Marriage as Common Way in Christ, by relying on Augustine's accomplishments in his own time, as well as the principles of

Christian householding in contemporary though, has overcome the adversarial difficulties and the problem of dichotomizing the states of life that plagued modern attempts to put the marriage and consecrated life in dialogue (which we saw in chapter two).

A key distinguishing factor of my own attempt at this kind of exploration is that it does not interpolate poverty, chastity, and obedience or the principles of Christian householding as essentially monastic wisdom that can be lived in some partial way by married folk. In other words, the effort to understand poverty, chastity, and obedience in the married state is not a monasticization of marriage. I based the exploration, instead, on the stronger claim that these virtues, states, and vows, lie behind both religious and married life as principally ecclesial goods. These virtues and states—poverty, chastity, and obedience—are primarily evangelical counsels or imperatives of the church, instantiated in slightly different ways in the lives of the consecrated (as we saw in chapter five), the married (as discussed in chapter six), and even single, non-vowed members of the church (who are not considered here). Chapter six, then, hypothesized householding practices for poverty, chastity, and obedience within the larger ecclesial practice of Christian marriage.

The first section of chapter six recalled MacIntyre's definition of "practice" as applied to marriage in light the goods internal to participation in the marriage of the one Church to Christ. These goods come from the insights of Augustine and the scholars studied in chapter four. The second section sketched examples and possibilities for poverty, chastity, and obedience in marriage as they relate to the principles of Christian householding from chapter four. From here, the chapter moved to a consideration of a *regula matrimonii*, which integrates the practice of Christian marriage around its internal

goods, principles, and virtues. The chapter closed with suggestions for further research into how couples might prepare for this kind of Common Way in Christ in terms of a marriage novitiate.

The paradigmatic framework for marriage as a Common Way in Christ is admittedly skeletal, heuristic, and not definitively fleshed out. Since it offers only a theological grounding and constructive framework and not a definitive account, this dissertation produced but a few examples and indications for this framework's practical working. A more detailed, complete account of marriage as Common Way in Christ will have to be fleshed out in a subsequent study. Among aspects requiring further development is the way Augustinian ecclesio-nuptial goods of *proles, fides*, and *sacramentum* figure as internal goods of marriage as a Common Way in Christ. Second, the practice of chaste married sexuality, a sub practice of Christian marriage itself needs additional development. Third the notion of parenthood as a practice shared by the whole church, especially under the lost rubric of "spiritual parenthood" deserves renewed focus. Finally, while this study focused on the conjugal side of the conjugal-consecrated consonance, a complementary study on the consecrated life and its participation in a Common Way with the goods of *proles*, *fides*, and *sacramentum* could prove a worthwhile project.

Without question, much remains to be done in the effort to understand what conjugal life is and how spouses can live it as part of the larger practice of inhabiting God's household. Rather than answering all the questions, this dissertation has set down a foundation for future studies and constructive efforts. Specifically, fruitful study should continue on how fiancés prepare for this Common Way and how spouses are continually

formed in this Common Way. As an example of the latter, in chapter four I briefly considered the possibility of thinking ecclesially about breakdown in conjugal, consecrated, or mixed communities with the language of cessation, repentance, reconciliation, and return to communion. This avenue of study ought to bear fruit for practices of preparation, formation, and reformation in both states of life. The possibility of "novitiate" language in preparation is promising, as it is practical, liturgical, long-term, and forms persons in the virtues they will need to successfully live their marriage. Additionally, greater focus deserves to be placed on forming fiancés in poverty, chastity, and obedience. The possibilities for conjugal formation in these same areas is exciting, especially because it could incorporate the activities of religious orders.

Hopefully, more scholars will pursue creative ways to organize and structure Christian householding intergenerationally, with a mix of consecrated and married persons, perhaps with a renewal of an order of widows. Historical resources and contemporary practices of religious institutes and associations of lay faithful will prove helpful to this endeavor. Finally, with the riches of the Christian tradition's reflection on poverty, chastity, and obedience (and other virtues of Christian householding) opened onto new light by seeing marriage as Common Way in Christ, the possibilities for future articulation of marital practice as participation in God's household will hopefully bear fruit for generations to come.

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