

## OPENNESS TO LIFE

Marriage and conjugal love are by their nature ordained towards the begetting and educating of children. Children are really the supreme gift of marriage and contribute very substantially to the welfare of their parents. (*GS*, #50)

By its very nature the institution of marriage and married love is ordered to the procreation and education of the offspring and it is in them that it finds its crowning glory. (*GS*, #49)

The most serious duty of transmitting human life, for which married persons are the free and responsible collaborators of God the Creator, has always been a source of great joys to them, even if sometimes accompanied by not a few difficulties and by distress. (*HV*, #1)

In the task of transmitting life, therefore, they are not free to proceed completely at will, as if they could determine in a wholly autonomous way the honest path to follow; but they must conform their activity to the creative intention of God, expressed in the very nature of marriage and of its acts, and manifested by the constant teaching of the Church. (*HV*, #9)

On the other hand, to make use of the gift of conjugal love while respecting the laws of the generative process means to acknowledge oneself not to be the arbiter of the sources of human life, but rather the minister of the design established by the Creator. (*HV*, #13)

Fecundity is a gift, an end of marriage, for conjugal love naturally tends to be fruitful. A child does not come from outside as something added on to the mutual love of the spouses, but springs from the very heart of the mutual giving, as its fruit and fulfillment. So the Church, which “is on the side of life” teaches that “each and every marriage act must remain open to the transmission of life. “This particular doctrine, expounded on numerous occasions by the Magisterium, is based on the inseparable connection, established by God, which man on his own initiative may not break, between the unitive significance and the procreative significance which are both inherent to the marriage act.” (*CCC*, #2366)

Called to give life, spouses share in the creative power and fatherhood of God. “Married couples should regard it as their proper mission to transmit human life and to educate their children; they should realize that they are thereby cooperating with the love of God the Creator and are, in a certain sense, its interpreters. They will fulfill this duty with a sense of human and Christian responsibility. (*CCC*, #2367)

The family is based on marriage, that intimate union of life in complementarity between a man and a woman which is constituted in the freely contracted and publicly expressed indissoluble bond of matrimony, and is open to the transmission of life; marriage is the natural institution to which the mission of transmitting life is exclusively entrusted. (The Holy See, *Charter of the Rights of the Family*, October 22, 1983, B)

The revealing sign of authentic married love is openness to life. (PCF, *The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality: Guidelines for Education Within the Family*, December 8, 1995, #15)

It is in their bodies and through their bodies that the spouses consummate their marriage and are able to become father and mother. In order to respect the language of their bodies and their natural generosity, the conjugal union must take place with respect for its openness to procreation; and the procreation of a person must be the fruit and the result of married love. (CDF, *DV*, February 22, 1987, II B 4 b)

Created in the image and likeness of God, the origin of all life, men and women are called to be partners with the Creator in transmitting the sacred gift of human life. (PCF, *The Ethical and Pastoral Dimensions of Population Trends*, March 25, 1994, #73)