

A Love Which is Total

February 2018

[Married love] is a love which is total—that very special form of personal friendship in which husband and wife generously share everything, allowing no unreasonable exceptions and not thinking solely of their own convenience. Whoever really loves his partner loves not only for what he receives, but loves that partner for the partner's own sake, content to be able to enrich the other with the gift of himself.

(Humanae vitae no. 9)

Reflection

A profound way that we, as men and women, image God is in our call to form a communion of persons. This happens in the gift of our self to God and to others. This reality is lived and seen par excellence in the sacrament of marriage, the one-flesh communion of persons between a man and a woman. Husband and wife vow to live the complete gift of self to one another in God through their shared life together. In every aspect of the married couple's life, from the daily tasks involved in married and family life to the marital embrace (conjugal union), the couple lives the gift of self and finds fulfillment in this.

In this excerpt from *Humanae vitae*, Blessed Paul VI emphasizes that part of the gift of self involves loving the other not for what one can receive from him or her, but for his or her own sake. What does loving one's spouse for his or her own sake look like? How can you love others more for their own sake, as God loves us?

Intercessory Prayer to Paul VI

God our Father,
fill all married couples
with your love.

Give them the grace
to love one another every day,
living out their promise to love
in all times and circumstances.

Help them to imitate your
freely given, sacrificial love,
that they may choose each day
to give of themselves,
reflecting your love for us
when you sent your Son to
die for our sins.

We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord,

Blessed Paul VI, pray for us!
Amen.

