

*FOR THE HAPPINESS
OF COUPLES AND FAMILIES*



LÉANDRE LACHANCE

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La Fondation des choisis de Jésus

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The Foundation's mission is to promote the diffusion, experimentation and integration of Love messages from the Lord entrusted to Léandre Lachance.

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PREFACE

If someone were to tell you that one out of every two air planes could crash, you would doubtless be very hesitant to use this method of transportation to get around. You would hope that expert mechanics, engineers, and technicians could improve the machine so that the plane would be more secure and allow you to travel throughout the world.

We are conscious that the life of couples is suffering. Yet, men and women seek their soul mate and wish to find happiness in life as a couple. Even if one marriage out of two ends in divorce, in forming a couple, people want it to last forever and both partners to be filled with happiness. We also notice that many people hesitate to become engaged. People decide to live together to see if it will work; they are not in a hurry to get married. It's attempted marriage.

The little booklet that you have in your hands is not an exhaustive reflection on marriage. It is the product of a lived experience. Mandrel La chance, preoccupied with the happiness of people and particularly of children, took the time to write down his experiences as a husband, father and grandfather. In it we will also recognize the teachings of the Lord and of His Church. Yes, marriage is a beautiful challenge and it is possible to succeed in it.

To profit from these reflections, you must read them slowly. They are full of good advice. This book will help successful couples to go farther. Those who are in the storm will find paths to solutions within it. Those who are torn will find in it lights to heal their wounds and believe in love again.

May God, Source of Love, be at the heart of your life as a couple and as a family. With Him, you will cross great distances which will lead you to happiness.

Fr. Guy Giroux, priest

MOTIVATION

In publishing this booklet, I want to express my thanks to God for the precious treasures that He has allowed me to discover in the Sacrament of Marriage, and share them with you. In spite of the highs and lows of life, I consider myself to be a man coddled to have lived with my wife, Elisabeth, for over fifty years. This limitless wealth is available to everyone.

My wife and I have been called to walk with couples. We have witnessed the actions of God and the repercussions in their lives as couples and families.

This document is addressed to all couples who wish to live a greater happiness in their relationships, no matter what their marital situation may be, whether it is:

- couples married before God;
- couples who are separated or divorced;
- future couples;
- couples bound by civil marriage;
- couples living in concubinage.

GOAL

In hope of encouraging a most harmonious family environment, the objective of this work is to shine a light on various family situations and to try to prevent certain suffering which flows from conflict within the couple. Thus, constant love between parents and children is a promise for them:

- to live in the security provided by a unified home;
- to have a framework necessary to their full development;
- to be free of the suffering caused by the separation of their parents;
- to be influenced, for their future, by the example of good parents;
- to become happy, responsible people capable of clear discernment;
- to enjoy a good conscience that builds profoundly free beings;
- to be better equipped to build a New Society, more just and more beautiful.

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PART ONE - THE FAMILY

The family is the institution and the vehicle where the growth of the child and the full development of the couple occur.

The family is, more than ever, in the grip of unheard of suffering: problems that grow from the discord between spouses and the division of couples. These situations directly influence the complete evolution of our children and, by that fact, affect our whole society.

In the face of the magnitude of the damage, it is urgent that we stop to reflect and ask for God's help... for, He alone has the power to turn the situation around and help us find our balance. That is why, we put all our confidence in Him, while remaining at His service.

If, today, I present you this document, it is to follow up a reflection that my wife and I have shared:

Elisabeth and I have an experience that many people who act as marriage counsellors don't have. We have fifty years of life in common and now, thanks to God, we are very happy together, in spite of the suffering and difficulties that we have endured.

I would like to be able to give you a grace that I received at a time when I was finding our relationship difficult. I had to, for the first time, accept putting my pride aside and confide in a person full of wisdom. Older than I, he had a long experience of life as a couple. Deacon and faithful witness of Divine Providence, he had a great faith.

After having confided my sorrows to him, I believed that he would say: “I will meet with Elizabeth,” or: “I will meet with the two of you.” After having listened attentively to me he said: “Love Elisabeth, and tell her that you love her”.

Truly, I felt that it was God who was speaking to me through him. So, I followed his advice to the best of my ability. That was the solution; undoubtedly too simple a path for the wise and the intelligent.

One day, while Elisabeth was having a very animated and aggressive discussion with one of our daughters who was seventeen years old - such a painful situation for me to put up with and in which I had vainly tried several times to modify my wife's behaviour - I withdrew to the living room and I prayed like this: “Lord, wouldn't it be possible to walk with You in Love?” And I opened the volume: *The Power of Praise*:¹

“Can't our faith grow in easy and pleasant circumstances? Yes! But the purification and trial of our faith must be done through events which are a challenge to our will to believe the Word of God, to rely on it and to count on it.” Thus, our faith grows when - God telling us that he makes everything work for our good when everything seems to be going wrong - we cling to His Word and thank Him for everything that happens.

Without delay, I told the Lord: *“If this cross is the one that you are giving me, I accept it and join my suffering to Yours so that they will fall back as graces and blessings on Elisabeth and the children...”* Spontaneously, the following reflections rose in me:

- Who are you to think that your way of raising the children is better than Elizabeth's?

1 Merlin R. Carothers, p. 92

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- Lord, You could not have been wrong when You chose Elisabeth to be the mother of my children. She is surely the mother that You want her to be, and I hope to be the father that you want me to be!

I therefore accepted Elisabeth the way she was, as wife and mother. this acceptance on my part was the beginning of great transformations and, together, we have witnessed the Action of God in people's hearts. Love has replaced verbal aggression and violence.

It became clear to our eyes that our relationship as a couple had to come first, for, if we wanted happiness for our children, we had to be unified parents. To remain unified, there had to be someone beyond the partner, and that Someone was God.

One day, I said to Elisabeth: "*You are the being that I love most on Earth after God.*" She answered me the same way. We had just taken a big step forward in our life as a couple!

CAUSES OF PROBLEMS IN COUPLES AND FAMILIES

I took some time to find the causes which menace the harmony in couples or in families. It would be interesting to underline those which concern you, and to add others, if applicable. This little exercise will allow you to see more clearly to identify the elements which could be improved:

- The differences which divide you instead of completing you;
- The wrong idea of love;
- The absence of good social contacts favouring acceptable decisions;

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- The fear of commitment which slows the love of the couple;
- The absence of expressions of our love;
- The lack of communication: we put off to tomorrow the fine tuning we need, thinking that things will get better by themselves;
- Non-acceptance of our limitations, our poverty, our wounds;
- The unresolved complexes which poison our relationships;
- The measure of our expectations: I expect too much of my partner, without wanting to implicate myself too much;
- The lack of real presence in the couple and the family: I feel better outside the home than in it;
- Money that brings stress and discord;
- Grudges, jealousy, infidelity which trouble relationships;
- Competitiveness: I am better than my partner, he does nothing, I do everything;
- Suspicion which leads to over-control.

Faced with these many problems, one can imagine a multitude of more or less effective solutions. To solve them, it would be enough to begin by realizing that there is a problem, and to have a deep desire to remedy it. After that, the solution that seems extremely effective to me is to turn to God and pray. If it is possible to do it as a couple, that is even more effective.

To my eyes, this solution includes and surpasses all the others. God is Love! He is the Source of Love from which gushes healing. No suffering, no waywardness, no folly is serious enough to stop His Grace from reaching us. Faced with His Action, we look at Him, we contemplate Him and we give thanks for what He does and, in faith, for what He will continue to do.

As a solution, and on the other hand, I allow myself to give you a few lessons taken from the books which I have published.²

2 For the Happiness of Mine, My chosen ones - Jesus, volumes 1, 2, 3

PART TWO

TEACHINGS TAKEN FROM THE BOOKS *FOR THE HAPPINESS OF MY OWN,* *MY CHOSEN ONES - JESUS*

2.1 - COUPLES IN TROUBLE

Here is the prayer that I addressed to the Lord for couples:

Lord Jesus, I present You couples in trouble. You know that they are numerous and they are influenced by counsellors who, often, direct them toward separation, thinking that suffering is too hard to bear and that, according to them, there is no other solution.

We know that this option leads to another path of suffering for, very often, it leads these people into an adulterous situation, bringing with it more failures in relationships.

Here I am listening to You and I want to be available to write down Your teachings.

Thank you for hearing and answering my prayer. I love You.³

“My very little one, succeeding in dividing a couple is what pleases the Adversary, and here is a way he uses to achieve that.”

God unites couples who are complementary for the good of children, therefore they are different from each other. One often sees that it is precisely this difference which attracted them to each other. There comes a time when, after having lived together, one - and often both - would like to change the other so that he or she will think and act as the spouse wishes. Faced with failure, he or she becomes more and more aggressive and even cutting in order

3 NDLR: This message has not been published

to achieve his or her ends. This attitude then provokes mutual wounding and hampers the partners' freedom. Each partner feels trapped, and life becomes intolerable. They suffocate, they even become ill. Counsellors, and sometimes even priests, feel justified in recommending separation.

The counsellors are right when they state that the situation is untenable, but where they go wrong is when they recommend separation as a solution where there is another way: that of recognizing faults, asking forgiveness of one another, giving all the forgiveness and accepting completely one's difference in respect for one's interior freedom.

At the same time, most of all, it is incumbent on each person to place all his or her confidence in God with a total and sincere "yes" so that He will come, not to change the other person, but to change me, so that I am the spouse that he wants me to be.

In other words, the attitude to take is to put everything in the Hands of God, expect everything from Him and Him alone, expect nothing from the partner, knowing full well that God alone has the power to transform everything. And He will begin to effect the change in my partner when that transformation will have progressed in me to the level that God desires.

The remedy is to make a "marriage of three", by placing God at the centre and above the two, as soon as the situation becomes difficult or that the other does not seem to understand what I would like to communicate. Forcing the door is not a solution: one must address God so that He can touch the heart of the other.

You are entering a New Civilization, that of Love. You must therefore learn to put all your confidence in the Love of God and forget the solutions which are the evil fruit of a civilization which wants to build itself without God, putting all confidence in the power of humanity, leading it to self-destruction.

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Forget what you have been taught so as to discover the Total Power and Love of God, for, from all eternity, you are loved. I would like to say to each person who is suffering in their relationship as a couple: “Come throw yourself into My arms; you will find Peace, Joy and Happiness, for, tenderly, wildly and divinely, I love you.”

“My very little one, let us pursue together this teaching on the life of the couple. When one of the two partners accepts to put his or her confidence in the Love of God to put things back in order, it is not necessary that both of them have the same confidence; just as it is not indispensable, although preferable, that both of them want and accept allowing themselves to be transformed by God. However, it is mandatory that one of them give his or her “yes” to allow God to transform him or her. This transformation begins to happen as soon as one person really opens his or her heart to God!

- The graces of the Sacrament of Marriage become dynamic;
- The suffering of the couple unites itself to Mine and is transformed into grace and blessings;
- Pride is changed into humility;
- Recognition of faults overcomes the wish to be right;
- Requests for forgiveness replace accusations against the partner;
- Welcoming the great Compassion of the Father and His Love replaces feelings of guilt within the couple;
- Welcoming the partner, as he or she is, overcomes the desire to change that person;
- Gestures of appreciation replace reproaches;
- Development and growing happiness of being replace anguish.

Putting all one’s confidence in the Love of God, when a couple meets a problem, is to place one’s self on the road to happiness, the road to Heaven.

To try by your own means, or by means put forward by the world to solve the problem, is to continue on the road of suffering and, often, to take the one that descends into Hell.

In these difficult circumstances, the attitude of persevering in the “yes” to God and putting all your confidence in Him, is to accept reaching beyond yourself in Love and is what contributes to becoming beings of Love and building a New Civilization, that of Love.

Happy are those who take this road for they will be fulfilled more rapidly. Pouring out My Love into hearts is the grace that I work as soon as an opening is made to welcome it.

My Heart is so consumed with Love that it is able to transform, in a single instant, all the suffering hearts on this Earth.

Divinely, I love you all. Divinely, I love you personally.”

Our faith is supported by the principle that: ***Man must not separate what God has united!*** No Christian, much less a priest, can advise a couple married in the Church to separate, except in extreme cases. Marriage is holy.

2.2 - COUPLES DIVIDED BY SEPARATION OR DIVORCE

*Lord Jesus, I present you R.'s request to know what You want of him and of C. At the same time, I present You all the couples that You have united by the Sacrament of Marriage and who are divided. Thank you for hearing and answering his request and mine. I love You.*⁴

4 Cf. volume 3, message 69

“My very little one, it is with joy that I answer this request and, at the same time, I want to give a teaching to all the people who find themselves in similar situations.

When an alliance is broken, the results are deep ruptures and wounds. It is impossible to think of rebuilding if the past remains present in the mind.

One must therefore begin by erasing or cleaning up that past. For that, there is only one unique means, that is total forgiveness, as much of one’s self as of the partner. And, in order that forgiveness be total, it must be given in the Spirit, carried to the Sacrament of Reconciliation, be present in the heart and spoken clearly, without equivocation and without condition.

It is only after having gone through this process that one can affirm that forgiveness is complete and we can begin to think of rebuilding on foundations that are completely different. The fundamental foundations are:

- It is God who unites us in the Sacrament of Marriage, and this union remains forever, except in certain cases where the Church has the authority to act.
- The partners must recognize that in the future, God will take first place in their life, even before that of the partner.
- Consider that God, and He alone, can unify the couple in peace, joy and love.
- Each partner must accept themselves as they are, offering to God their imperfections, their errors and their follies to that He will transform them into graces and blessings, once they have given their total “yes” to God.
- Each partner must accept the other as they are, without wanting to change them.

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- Each partner must be convinced that they have no power over the behaviour of the other. If this partner can act according to the Will of God - even if the behaviour of the other is sometimes reprehensible - and allow God to act through him or her, this attitude is enough to save the couple.

In other words; expect everything from God, ask Him everything, be disposed to welcome the answer and be thankful to Him for everything.

Now, I want to address C. and R. directly, telling them this:

“Cherished little children of My Heart, you whom I have chosen for a beautiful great mission, you whom I have united in the Sacrament of Marriage, you who have suffered much, come throw yourselves into My arms. Give Me your burden, you will find My yoke light.

Your first pledge, you made it to one another, asking Me to help you. I, today, ask you to pledge yourselves totally to Me. That is why I ask you to come together again as a couple placing your confidence in Me to establish this unity of love between you.

You cannot base your relationship on what your partner was yesterday in order to know what his behaviour will be today, for between “yesterday” and “today”, I have visited his heart and he is no longer the same. Neither can you know tomorrow’s behaviour based on today’s for, between the two, I will visit him.

If you put your complete and total confidence in Me, I promise you a happy future, where you will be able to live in peace, joy and love. More than that, I tell you that I need both of you, and you as a united couple, to help a multitude of couples who live in suffering following their separation or divorce.

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My Heart burns with Love for both of you. Come warm yourselves at the Fire of My Burning Love. You will be filled and transformed.

From all eternity, I chose you and I love you. Divinely, I love you.

R. divinely, I love you. C., divinely, I love you.”

2.3 - IMPORTANCE OF LIFE IN GOD

Lord Jesus, I present You the difficult situation of B. and R. as well as all the couple who are living in similar situations.

Come to their aid; send Your Spirit in abundance on them; make the power of their Sacrament of Marriage burst forth; heal their wounds; open their eyes so that they discover the power of Your Love.

Thank you for hearing and answering my prayer. I place myself in Your hearing, and I love You.⁵

“My very little one, life without Me is nonsense. I am the centre of Love. I am Love. It is to Me that the Father has given the mission to spread His Love on the Earth. During these times which are the last, all must discover this truth and reality.

Many people believe that, by themselves, or by using means other than those that I have given to My Apostles and transmit by My Church, they can find happiness. They are mistaken, they drop the prize to snatch at shadows. They take the path of suffering and darkness. As they are not on the path of light, the darkness stops them from seeing their waywardness and they tend to wallow

5 Cf. volume 2, message 91

deeper and deeper into it, hoping to manage to build their happiness by themselves.

Suffering is there to make them discover that they are not on the right road. Certain people, as soon as they start to live this suffering, come to throw themselves into My arms to find that I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. Others, influenced by thoughts of the world, persist on this wrong road and it is only after numerous sufferings that they agree to come to Me.

To the individual alone, as a free being, belongs the power to decide on his orientation. I want, however, to use you to say this to B. and R.:

«Little children of My Heart,

- You whom I have chosen before your conception to receive the outpouring of My Love;
- You whom I have united in the Sacrament of Marriage to receive and give this Love;
- You whom I have filled in many ways;
- You whom I pursue continually in order to give you this Love;
- You who suffer at this time because of the distance that you have placed between you and Me:

Do not try, by your own means, or by the means of the world, to build your happiness together; you will not manage it. Come immediately to throw yourselves into My arms.

Recognize your powerlessness and your limits.

Realize that I, Jesus, I am your Saviour and there is no other.

Realize that I love you with a much greater Love than that which you can welcome at this time.

B., welcome this situation without understanding. Give Me all and you will witness My action in you, around you and through you.

R., without your knowing it, it is I, your God, that you are looking for. I am in you in the depths of your being. The love that you desire can come only from Me, and the person that I have chosen to transmit it to you, is B. Do not look elsewhere.

If both of you knew how I love you, you would come throw yourselves into My arms and your life would be changed. Besides living a new happiness, you would be witnesses of My Love.

Receive My Kiss of Tenderness, Mercy and Love. You, B., I love you as you are. You, R. I love you as you are. Both of you, I love you.”

2.4 - GIVING GOD THE GIFT OF OUR PARTNER AND CHILDREN

Lord Jesus, I present You the preoccupations of M.C., faced with the education of her children and their father who does not share her beliefs. I ask You to come to be the light and fill this home with Your Love and Your Lights. Thank you for hearing and answering my prayer. I love You.⁶

“My very little one, I welcome your request and I make it Mine before the Father. I am already very present in that home. My passage through you will allow Me to occupy an even greater place in the house, but especially in the heart of M.C. whom I have chosen for a beautiful and great mission.

6 Cf. volume 3, message 92

The more I will be present in her, the more I will guide her in her thoughts, words and action in every instant, and I will correct the situation. I would like to tell her this:

M.C., little pearl of My Heart, you see very well that alone you will not achieve the ideal situation. Recognize your smallness, your powerlessness and your limits. Give Me this situation totally. Give Me your husband and your children, and you will witness My Action. Your confidence must not be placed in your religious convictions but in Me, your God, for what your children will become. Come and rest on My Heart, ask Me before you make a decision. If you think you have made a mistake, place that in the Mercy of the Father and it will be transformed into graces and blessings for you and your family. Give Me your burden; you will find that My yoke is light. My Heart burns with Love for you and yours.

Tenderly, wildly and divinely, I love you.”

2.5 - DIVIDED FAMILIES

A good praying lady, one who spends time in adoration before the Blessed Sacrament, wrote to tell me of her situation. Being a widow, she lives alone. Her only son, a homosexual, communicates rarely with her, as does her older brother who lives with a partner out of wedlock. Much the same, in a partnership out of wedlock, her younger sister with whom she had always had a very close relationship, had just written her a five page letter of abuse. At the end of the letter, she concluded with: “I hope that you have understood, I do not want to hear anything from you again.”⁷

7 Cf. volume 3, message 104 - letter to a correspondent

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Here is my answer:

[...] I acknowledge receipt of your letter of last February 24. I offer the Lord your agreeable words about the mission that he has given me. I give Him thanks for what you are and for your pledge to live within the Divine Will.

I join you in associating your suffering with that of Christ and offering it to the Father so that it may have redemptive value for those whom you carry in your heart.

I know a lot of people who, after a walk in faith, find themselves in a family situation similar to yours. Each time I see this, I am sharply saddened. I present these situations to God and I pray for each one of them.

I feel the need to ask Jesus to come and give us a teaching on these painful trials of division.

Thank you, Lord Jesus, for hearing and answering this prayer.

“My very little one, it is always a very great joy to answer your requests. The teaching that I am going to give you will be addressed to all and not to one person in particular. Yes, the pledge to God or the conversion of one of the members of a family sometimes raises divisions at the heart of this family and is the cause of great suffering.

Some of this suffering is necessary to prove the authenticity of the pledge. Others are necessary for the conversion of certain other members of the family. However, much of this suffering could be avoided:

- If the converted person had greater faith and put all his confidence in Me and not in his means of evangelization!
- If he respected the total freedom of the person as I respect it!

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- If he accepted asking forgiveness for having impeded the liberty of the other when he realizes that he wanted to impose his faith!
- If he was capable of deeply loving the sinner, while rejecting the sin!

You, little L. of My Heart, do not fear. I am with you, yours are Mine.

Divinely and wildly, I love them. Divinely and wildly, I love you.”

(The following year: She phoned me, completely happy, to tell me that she had just reconciled with her sister.)

She told me: *“It took me a year before I could send her a letter. I wrote a great quantity of them that I tore up and threw out because there was always a bit of moralizing in them. Rereading it, I told myself that it still was not “that”... and I would throw my letter out. The one I sent her, since it was my birthday, said this:*

Today I am 65 years old... how time flies!

My only regret is not having been the sister that you would have wanted me to be.

I organized my life the way I thought it should be. I forgot that you had the same freedom as I do. For all the times when I interfered with your freedom, I ask you to forgive me. Your little sister who loves you.

As soon as my letter reached her, the phone rang and we were reconciled.”

2.6 - SOLUTION TO THE DRUG PROBLEM

Lord Jesus, I present you the request of this grandmother who wrote: "Please, speak to us of this plague of drugs among our grand children. Tell us, how can we help them, accompany them... when this situation has lasted ten years and more? To listen does not seem enough. We are so many praying... without apparent changes. Your books are the living proof of the Love of the Father for His children."

I present You as well, Lord, all the parents, the grandparents who are living this same suffering and, in a special way, those who will read these lines as well as the young people who are in the grip of drugs."

Thank you for hearing and answering my poor prayer. I place myself within Your hearing. I love you.⁸

“My very little one, the sufferings caused by consuming drugs are enormous and many, today. Not one person, no group of people living now on this Earth can stem this plague without divine intervention.

So that there may be a divine intervention, God must have complete freedom of action. And that happens when people and situations are completely abandoned to Him.

The first question that parents and grandparents must ask themselves is this: Have I completely given and abandoned this child to the Lord? Have I completely abandoned this situation to the Lord, or do I continue to carry it?

The second is this: Have I given all my “yeses” to the Lord? Does He have the freedom to act in me? Around me? Through me?

8 Cf. volume 3, message 90 - response to a distressed grandmother

To pray for our children and our grandchildren, is necessary and beneficial... but to let ourselves be transformed by Him so that His Love passes through us is much better.

The key to the solution to all your problems is love and transformation by love. This process starts with you then reaches others.

Divinely, I love you.”

2.7 – TRANSFORMATION OF OUR BEING BY LOVE

I present You, Lord, M.'s request. I also want to thank You, praise You, bless You and be grateful to You for the great joy that this letter brought me, on discovering the Love that You have manifested to this couple, in allowing them such a beautiful walk in faith. I praise You as well for their generosity in answering Your request to live as a couple, in chastity, for three years now.

You can only bless and fill these people, even if the present situation seems difficult.

I place myself within Your hearing and thank You for the Love, the Peace and the Joy that You would care to give them through the poor instrument that I am. I love You.⁹

“My very little one, I have clearly heard the request of each and I present it to the Father so that it will be granted. I want to tell M. this: Little M., you whom I have chosen from all eternity for a beautiful and great mission, you for whom I burn with Love, you have nothing to fear. I am always with you.

9 Cf. volume 3, message 86 - advice to a couple

The difficulties that you are presently having are there to produce greater beauty in your soul. You only have to give Me all these situations and you will witness My Action. To your partner, I say this:

You, little N. of My Heart, come even closer to Me; I want to fill you with My Love. Together, we have come a long way, but the most beautiful is to come. Your past, having been given to the great Mercy of the Father, must be erased from your thoughts.

I ask you both to live fully the present moment and to welcome the Love that I pour into you both, even today. Your happiness is not in what you have been. It is in what you are now, and tomorrow, it will be in what you will be. You will be what you allow Love to make of you both.

Contrary to what you believe, your happiness does not depend on the attitude of others. You will be happy by allowing My Love to act in you and, after that, around you and through you, for... divinely, tenderly and wildly, I love you.”

2.8 - ABOUT COMMUNION FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE LIVING IN CONCUBINAGE

“This question of Communion for people who are living in concubinage creates much confusion in My Church and with many of My priests.”

Lord Jesus, this morning, You place in my heart the question of Father D. concerning the Eucharist for people remarried civilly. I feel that this is a delicate question. If You want to use me to answer this question, I give You a “total yes”; I am Your very little servant. I love You.¹⁰

10 Cf. volume 1, message 109

“My very little one, I told you and retold you that the Love which originated in the Father for His children on Earth is without limit. I also told you that He gave to each a very great freedom of choice. To those who entered into the People of God by Baptism, and who continually desire to do His Will, He permitted My Body and My Blood to become a spiritual Food.

To let each person have a pure heart to receive this Food for the soul, He allowed Me to institute the Sacrament of Reconciliation which erases all faults for those who regret them and have a firm intention of no longer repeating them.

This question of Communion for people living in concubinage creates much confusion in My Church and with many of my priests.

If it creates so much confusion it is that they are not asking themselves the right question, for it is not a matter of knowing if the person remarried civilly can receive communion, but in rightly knowing is the person has decided to do the Will of the Father or their own. Does the person wish to do good or does he want to act according to his own pleasure? Is the person ready to place his life in the hands of God or does he want to organize it himself, according to his way of conceiving it? The real question that the spiritual adviser must ask the person is to know if he says “yes” to God or to himself.

If he says “yes” to God, the priest will advise him so that he remains faithful to the Will of God, or that is, at least, what he should do.

The problem in many of these cases is that the person has decided to act according to his own will, either to do like many others or out of ignorance of the law of God, and often for both reasons at once. After that, it is he who asks the priest, saying: “I want to continue to act according to my will and satisfy my passions... could I go to communion?” In this case, the answer is “no”.

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On the other hand, the answer is “yes” with open arms if the person recognizes his fault, asks forgiveness for it and accepts taking the necessary means to live according to God’s plan, affirming that he has made the choice for God who came to help him in his weakness. He closely examines events in order to live in harmony with God. This attitude requires a lot of faith to take this plunge after having deviated from the right path for a long time; a lot of faith as well for the spiritual counsellor.

Pray therefore that faith may return and everything get back into order. Never pass judgement for you do not know what is happening in the heart of the person; maybe they have just recognized their fault and decided to live according to the plan of God, appearances being to the contrary. No matter what, this person does not need your judgement but has a great need of your prayers and your Love to also become Love. Tenderly, I love you.

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PART THREE

APPLICATIONS

3.1 - DIFFERENCE AND COMPLEMENTARITY

The great beauty and richness of God's Creation is diversity. We are all amazed to realize the diversity that a rose garden offers to our eyes. It is the same thing when we look at the human race. This quality of difference attracts us to one another... and, at the same time, is seen as being the cause of many quarrels and divisions.

Why must that which unites us tend to become the cause of our divisions? With time, our different ways of thinking, analyzing, speaking and behaving are liable to irritate us or tire us out. Then, instead of accepting that we need to question ourselves and benefiting from the advantages of complementarity, we want to change the other person... Since we cannot manage it, we become frustrated, anguished, sometimes angry and even violent or wounding with our words, our attitudes and our gestures.

What helps us very much to welcome the differences in people who are close to us, is to accept that in God's eyes, each one is precious, no matter what his temperament, his character, his breeding, his possessions, his fulfilments or his responsibilities. These differences make us into complementary beings to accomplish our mission in the Church and society.

In the same way, in a couple's life, this complementarity is necessary for the proper functioning of the home, but especially the well-being of the children and the fulfilment of each person.

Working for unity in diversity constitutes one of the most enthralling and valuable objectives.

3.2 - SELF-ACCEPTANCE

Self-acceptance favours accepting others. Once I realize that I have been created by Love and that God loves me as I am, I thereby manage to accept myself and to accept others.

3.3 – CONFIDENCE IN EVERY TRIAL

In marriage, the confidence that we develop in each other is the foundation of happiness. The vow that we take at the moment of Marriage establishes a climate of confidence. It is important to be confident and to remain worthy of the confidence that the other has in us. Isn't confidence the cure for fear, jealousy and even rancor?

3.4 – GROWING PAINS

All through our lives, we go through stages of growth. What assures this growth is our continued effort to transform our way of thinking, being and acting that are not free of suffering. The latter produce a lot of fruit once we consent to question ourselves again.

The difficulties in the life of a couple are opportunities for extraordinary growth. After a problem, we believe that our relationship will never be the same again. It is true, but it may be much better.

Too often, we believe that it is a destructive crisis when it is only a growing pain and a consolidation of our love.

3.5 - FORGIVENESS

In order to restore the balance in our lives, after a crisis, we must begin again by turning the page on this past which broke some bonds. There is the importance of mutual and complete forgiveness, of one's self as well as of the other. In order to rebuild the bonds, one must consent to forgive one's self before the Lord who will act with the power of His Grace.

➤ ***Forgiveness is not human, it is divine!***

I quote this prayer that does marvels when it is accompanied by the Sacrament of Reconciliation:

“In Your Name, Lord JESUS, by the power of your Holy Spirit, I forgive (...) all the wrong that he (or she) has done to me, consciously or not.

Liberation: In Your Name, Lord JESUS, by the power of your Holy Spirit, I free him (her) of all indebtedness to me, without any conditions and for ever.

Blessing the other: I pray You, Lord JESUS, by the power of your Holy Spirit, to fill him (her) with Your Love and Your Blessings.

Forgiveness of self: In Your Name, Lord Jesus, by the power of your Holy Spirit, I forgive myself all my sins that You have already forgiven, and I accept myself as I am, with all my weaknesses, all my limits, all my faults, all my qualities, and I love myself as I am, since You, first, Lord, have always loved me and You always love me this way.

Liberation of self: In Your Name, Lord Jesus, by the power of your Holy Spirit, I free myself of all fear, all terror, anguish, anxiety. I free myself of all hatred, vanity, aggressiveness, bitterness, desire for vengeance. I free myself of all feelings of guilt, of all feelings of insecurity, all feelings of inferiority, etc.

Blessing: And I pray You, Lord Jesus, to bless me and fill me with Your Love.”

3.6 - CONCEPTION OF LOVE

We often have a false concept of love. We want to receive and possess, and we hesitate to give. If the partners develop this same attitude, no one receives and no one gives. And from this egotism practised to extreme, the result is an insupportable relationship... whereas forgetting our self more and more opens us to happiness for the other.

Yes, each must first be preoccupied with the happiness of the other. Thus, days are sprinkled with little gestures of tenderness that feed love. “*To love is to give all and to give one’s self!*”¹¹ Just as Christ did for His Church!

3.7 - SEXUALITY

We know that sexuality plays an important role in the life of a couple. Unfortunately, many believe that sexuality can produce love when, on the contrary, it is true love which gives sense to sexuality.

11 Sainte Thérèse de l’Enfant-Jésus

God want us to be fruitful and multiply. Pleasure is associated with the needs of the human being: pleasure accompanies eating, work, rest, intellectual development... and so on. In the function of procreation, there is pleasure in the union of man and woman.

All these pleasures must be lived in order and under control of your will, your intelligence and your spirit. The values which move us influence our attitudes and our behaviour in the area of sexuality as in all areas. In order not to lose our way, it is important to know the teachings of God transmitted by His Word and given to His Church. In applying them, we enter into the happy way that God foresaw for man and woman.

Pleasures desired and lived without control lead the human person to slavery and go so far as to destroy it and produce much suffering. Alas, this suffering has repercussions on those we love.

Contrary to general beliefs, our experience of over fifty years of marriage allows us to observe that periods of chastity made our love grow:

- Chastity and abstinence before marriage incited us to faithfulness;
- Chastity, during periods of fertility, so as to plan births, invited us to discover other ways of showing our mutual love;
- Voluntary chastity, during a given time, got us used to self-denial and, we are sure, God gave us particular grace to strengthen our life as a couple. In order to live voluntary chastity, the man and the woman must want it and be in complete accord. We are conscious, my wife and I, that these periods of abnegation contribute to repairing the evil done in the world, and God, in His Mercy and His Tenderness, does not cease to rain grace and blessings on these small gestures that we make in our lives. By offering our chastity, we believe that God works to heal broken hearts, people wounded by life, especially in their sexuality. These are the riches of the

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communion of saints, that is to say that the love that is sown can touch the heart of other people elsewhere in the world, always in regard to the Goodness of God.

The Lord never lets himself be outdone in generosity. The more we renounce ourselves to please Him, the more He fills us with a true loving relationship of which He is the Source. All love comes from God, but our partner contributes also to filling us with love. The Love of God passes through the other and also through our children and our grandchildren who are our joy. This is marvellous and this is already living in a little corner of paradise on Earth.

This loving relationship with the Lord is lived by many single people. Regularly, I receive testimony to this effect. These people have points in common:

- They have totally accepted their situation in life, even if it wasn't what they had chosen or desired.
- They have given all their "yeses" to the Lord.
- They set aside special time for daily prayer and the practice of the sacraments.

Let us ask Mary and Joseph, Models par excellence of the virtue of Chastity lived in true Love, to intercede for all the couples who suffer at this time in their conjugal relationship. That this suffering associated with those of Christ may be transformed into grace and blessings for all couples in difficulty! That our youth be capable of discernment in order to prepare well their future life according to God's plan and not follow the ways of this world!

I would like to say to all the young people who will read these lines: You have all been marked, either in a positive or a negative way by your parents' lives during your childhood. This life was influenced by the choices that your parents made well before your birth. It will be the same, eventually, for your children. Today's choices prepare the happiness of tomorrow!

3.8 - FIDELITY

This virtue is necessary to the blossoming of a couple. Infidelity is a great cause of suffering. Remember that it begins in thought, and that, already there, it raises obstacles to love. Moreover, even if this behaviour is unknown to the other, it rebounds indirectly and casts a shadow on the relationship of the couple. And, even more importantly when this infidelity persists, it kills love. In the world we live in, one must really count on the help of God in order to remain faithful.

3.9 - TRUTH, CHARITY, FREEDOM

For a good interpersonal relationship, the three virtues to practice are truth, charity and freedom. If one of them is weaker than the other two, the level of the relationship is reduced to the lowest of the three. Which means that in a couple, even if the degree of ‘charity’ is 100%, ‘truth’ is 100%, and ‘freedom’ is 30%, this relationship is reduced to 30% of what it should be.

It is easy to respect the freedom of those who are far from us. But when it is a matter of our near ones - those that we love and mainly our spouse, it is much more difficult to respect this freedom. I believe that in the life of a couple the virtue that is the most badly handled is freedom. It is important to question yourself personally, to know how you practice these three virtues with your spouse.

“Not manipulate my partner, not control him, but seek to know him. Not take him, but receive him from the hands of God to espouse him every day. (Cardinal Danneels)”

3.10 - FINANCES

We all know that money is often a point of discussion and division for many couples and families.

Here's how my wife and I have functioned for fifty years: It seemed unfair and humiliating to me that Elisabeth had to ask me for money for her needs and for household costs... I therefore proposed to give her a certain amount each week. After a certain time, I found it tiresome to make sure that I always had cash to give her each week: we agreed that we should organize twelve cheques. So, our "financial" conversation was limited to a few minutes a year, to decide on the amount and write out the twelve cheques.

Later, a new reality arose when the children reached the age of adolescence. Being in a holiday period, Elisabeth told me of her preoccupation with answering to the needs of the children and being fair in her purchases for each of them.

We then agreed to give them their budget for school expenses, their clothes and their outings. If they wanted more, it was up to them to provide it themselves.

We established this system which continued afterwards. When a child reached secondary school age, we would write him twelve cheques, covering the school year. This practice made each child much more autonomous and responsible.

A young woman (I'll call her Martine) consulted me on this question of money. She was living through a great disagreement with her husband. Martine, a well behaved young woman, thinks she is responsible for everything, and wants security on the financial level. She thinks she is very rational in her purchases; she likes to take time to think it over, to know if

it's a necessary or desirable purchase. Serge is a man full of talent, very active, entrepreneurial; he throws himself completely into everything he does. His stumbling stone is the love of instant gratification.

When she consulted me, Serge had just started in business. He was having a hard time fulfilling his obligations and he was not sure if he would succeed in keeping his business afloat. On the other hand, two weeks earlier, he had traded in his car, which was still good, for another more expensive one. He had also just bought one of the most expensive sound systems on the market. Martine asked me, helplessly:

M.: What must I do in such a situation for, if he keeps this up, we are going to go broke?

L.: If you object, will that change anything?

M.: Not much, for, when he wants something, he wants it so much... I think he'll buy it anyway.

L.: What is most important to you: your financial situation or your love?

M.: Our love! said Martine without hesitation.

L.: Then that is the essential! You are completely right. If, one day, he went broke, more than ever at that moment, he would need your love. It is therefore important that you not have broken it because of dollars. You can give him your opinion but no more than that. And I continue with this proposition: Why wouldn't you behave like a wise woman, by saving some money yourself and, if one day, this bankruptcy should happen, you could tell him: "One thing is more important than your business, it is that I love you, Serge, and you don't have to worry because, with my economies, we will be able to live until you have the time to readjust your financial life."

Five or six years later, Martine was telling me that this advice had been very precious to her, that she had decided to accept Serge with his limitations.

I saw their love as a couple grow. What she expected never happened, on the contrary, Serge's business became very flourishing. He discovered spiritual values; material goods became less important in his eyes, and he became more rational in his spending.

3.11 - PRIORITIES

Work, social life, sports, recreation and obligations eat away so much of our time that there is a risk that real priorities be put aside. Most of all, when we are, as I am, of an active and passionate temperament, it is easy to become enthused about carrying out a project or a job and no longer have time for what is essential. Also, I have noticed that we always have time for what is most important to us, and we have very little, and often none, for what is secondary to us. I had to establish priorities in my life. So as to avoid mistakes that can have grave consequences, I chose to pray and meditate before the Blessed Sacrament so as to put my priorities into good order.

Here is the order of values which crystallized in my mind:

1. **God:** every day put aside some time for prayer, the Eucharist, spiritual reading and meditation;
2. **My wife, Elisabeth:** take time together to share the totality of our daily life be it joys, sorrows, work or preoccupations;
3. **The children:** be available to listen to them, accompany them and go out or do activities with them, according to their age.
4. **Others:** take time to listen to them and help them to a reasonable extent;
5. **Work and management of material goods;**
6. **Relaxation and physical conditioning;**
7. **Basic needs.**

This order of priorities was very beneficial to me!

3.12 - QUALITY TIME

When the children were young and I was very absorbed by long hours of work, I compensated by giving them quality time. As I left work in the evening, I would count on the distance I was driving to close the door of my working mind and open the door to my family. The same process would work in reverse in the morning as I went back to the office.

I often heard Elisabeth say: *I prefer quality time to quantity.* At another time, I had the joy of hearing my eldest answer the question: Your father has always been an active man, did you suffer from his absence? *No, because when he was home, he was really present.*

3.13 - BATTLE AGAINST DEPENDENCIES

The main dependencies that make the life of a couple very difficult are: alcohol, drugs, gambling addiction, sexual perversions, workaholism, television, internet, unnatural attachment to things, to power and even to knowledge. These are behaviours which isolate. These dependencies are often brought on by a great interior emptiness that needs to be filled. The absence of God creates this emptiness. By being reconciled with Him, His Presence and His Help come to give us strength against the dangers of dependencies.

3.14 - TRUE LIFE EXAMPLES

One day, I met a person who was openly presenting solutions outside of the Word of God and the doctrinal teachings of the Church, concerning divorced couples and those living in concubinage. He ended his exposé by bringing up this question: *“Do you have other solutions?”* I quickly answered him:

“Yes, it is clear to me that there is another solution than those you preconceive: It is Faith! Faith in an All-powerful God of Love, a God capable of making possible what appears impossible to the wise and intelligent of this world.”

Here are a few true life examples, which I witnessed, and which confirm what faith produces when we decide to say a total, unconditional and irrevocable “yes” to God, and to live according to His teachings, without trying to justify ourselves living in sin or ignoring Him:

- Ronald had been living in concubinage for eight years when he converted. In order to live in faith, he left his mistress and returned to live with his wife. For over fifteen years they have been very happy together and are the joy of their children. They became part of the Church and are living witnesses of the Power of the Love of God when we put our confidence in Him.
- Henri was living in concubinage at the moment of his conversion. He gave the situation over to the Lord. They lived in chastity for one year and both had their marriages annulled. They have been married in the Church for about twenty years and, by their commitment, they do a lot of good around them.
- Danielle is the mother of two children. She was living in concubinage with the father of her children at the moment of her conversion. She has only one wish: to do the Will of God. This couple received the grace to live in chastity, bring up their children together and have a beautiful mission among divorcees to help them live in conformity with the teachings of the Church.
- Marie-Pierre lives in France. She had been married for 25 years and was the mother of four children; she had the great suffering of living with a man that she said she had never loved. Well inspired to give this situation to the Lord... she fell in love with her husband, after 26 years of marriage, and has been living a veritable honeymoon for six months. I know hundreds of cases where faith made possible what seemed to be impossible.

3.15 - MINISTRY OF THE HOLY ANGELS

The Holy Angels can help us solve a multitude of problems. God, in His Providence, gave us at least one who is there only for us. He is always happy to serve us. Here is one way to use them which has done marvels in many circumstances. I love to go through our good Mother of Heaven, Mary, who is at the same time Queen of Angels, asking her to order my Guardian Angel to go meet the Guardian Angel of the other person or people that I had to meet, to put unity in our hearts and spirits before the meeting. This prayer made a very great number of meetings easier for me.

3.16 - ROLE OF THE COUPLE AS PARENTS

Since the true fruits of the love of a couple are the children, I would like to pursue with you a reflection on our role as parents.

When we have children, we love them and we want to give them what is best. The best gift that we can offer them is parents who are together, who love each other and who are capable of expressing it.

Our children need a lot of love and a lot of firmness. I would say that they need to grow in firmness of love and love of firmness. We tend to believe that love means laxity and that firmness means being harsh. That is a mistake.

The theory of the *child-king* is surely a drag. Letting a child jump on the living room couch with muddy boots on is not loving him. It is the same for all our way of life, there are consequences for actions that we take and the child must learn this from an early age.

If there are so many problems with our young people, we, as parents, would benefit from asking ourselves the following questions:

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- Who is primarily responsible for the education of our children: society or us?
- How can our children be better than the totality of society, if we follow all the currents of worldly thought?
- Is it proof of love to expose to danger the soul of our children by permitting activities with doubtful outcomes, under the pretext that everyone does it?

I give glory to God to have given me parents who never accepted this argument: “Other people do it or others are going there.” My mother used to say: “*If other people go drown themselves, will you go too?*” For her, it was a lack of character to let yourself be influenced by the behaviour of others. We had to learn to make our choices based on our values and not as a function of those of other people. If she refused permission, she explained the reason for her decision.

We learned to adapt our behaviour based on the needs of our children, and not on what goes around in society. Here are the needs that we identified:

At every age, a child needs to get a lot of love from his parents. During infancy, he needs attention, tenderness and firmness.

Growing up, he must begin to exercise choices which have consequences for his future. Our role is to accompany him so that he can learn discernment and, so, make good choices.

In adolescence, he needs a bit more freedom. It is good to be tolerant in matters which have no serious consequences, to close our eyes sometimes to small details. It is also good to remain firm in matters which could have grave consequences for his future.

When he becomes an adult, we must respect his choices, even if some of them appear to be very different from ours, while continuing to be available to accompany him and, sometimes, advise him.

It is good to remember that the child is much more affected by what his parents are than what they say.

The passages from childhood to adolescence, from adolescence to adulthood are often very difficult periods for the parents. What helped us, Elisabeth and me, get through the rough passages is to have given them to the Lord and to have prayed for them. We put our confidence in Him to inspire and guide them.

Confident in the Action of the Lord to guide them in the choice of their partners, we have always abstained from all negative comments about their loves. Life experience teaches us that, even if the parents oppose their choices, they will more often than not persevere in them. Once committed to marriage, all negative words heard from their parents, return to the surface.

Besides, it is not what we are at the moment of marriage which assures success, but what we will become. Welcome and love received from the parents in law can encourage a harmonious life for a couple.

As we grow older, we often discover our omissions toward our children... What can we do?

- Ask their forgiveness.
- Take these omissions to the Sacrament of Reconciliation to receive the forgiveness of God.
- Give these omissions to the Lord, knowing that He can transform them into grace and blessings for all.
- Accept our smallness, our vulnerability, our weakness, our limits and our omissions.

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PART FOUR

FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

4.1 - THE IMPORTANCE OF GOOD COMPANIONS

To choose the right partner, it is necessary to socialize. We learn to know ourselves, to know others, to love ourselves and to respect ourselves. Unfortunately, today, we skip these primordial stages. Rapidly, we fall into the trap of sexual experiences, thinking that they will answer our quest for happiness. That is a mistake. Happiness is built over time. When I was young, we were taught:

During our youth, we sow... later, we harvest what we have sown.

I believe that this lesson is still valuable. There are always consequences to the choices that we make and the actions we take. That is why it is important to prepare well for the future.

4.2 - COMMITMENT

Many couples are afraid of commitment and get together on a moment's impulse. They go along from day to day, without investing themselves totally, since the commitment was contracted on a temporary and indefinite basis. To survive a crisis, it is necessary to have a firm and definite commitment, more than that, we must count on God's help and the grace of the Sacrament of Marriage.

His Holiness John-Paul II used to tell us: *“Do not be afraid of risks! There is no difficult situation that we cannot face in an adequate way once we cultivate a climate of coherent christian life.”*

Many people commit themselves to marriage with the idea of going 50% of the way, when a difficulty comes along. On the contrary, in the eyes of the other, this effort represents only 10%. If each does only 10%, they never get together. They must therefore be disposed to put out much more than 50%.

On the wedding day, the spouses are generally very beautiful. I would like to tell the spouses this: If your spouse is very beautiful it is because she feels loved. If, one fine morning, you find her less beautiful, ask yourself if you have not neglected loving her or telling her that you love her.

4.3 - DIALOGUE WITH ONE OF MY GRANDSONS WHO IS 21

In a friendly one-on-one conversation, he begins by expressing his admiration for the beautiful family he is part of. He says he is particularly happy to have parents who are together as opposed to his friends who live, more often than not, in a divided family situation. He observes that this situation brings much suffering.

Then, he tells me: “I know that it bothers you to see one of your grandsons living with his girl friend when they are not married, and to see one of your granddaughters behaving the same way with her boyfriend. You owe it to yourself to accept that life is not longer the way it was when you were young. There are a lot of failures in marriages. It is therefore important that we be able to live together before committing ourselves definitely, to know each other better and know if we are able to unite for life. Now, society accepts that we can live together without being married. You should accept that.”

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With God's help, my answer was this: "You are right when you say that morals have changed a great deal... I must admit very frankly that I do ask myself what my own behaviour would have been if, at your age, I had been put in a similar context. I really don't know. But, today, I recognize that this moral decay can only lead to an impasse.

I love you and I would so much like you to be happy; to avoid the great suffering that lives in our world. There are always consequences to our actions. You said that we have a beautiful family though there is much suffering in society. If we orient our lives on what goes around in society, we will live the same suffering as society. If there is less suffering in our family it is because we have oriented our lives according to some values and beliefs and not on what society accepts. It is a choice that we must make every day.

You are now 21, you are an adult. It is up to you to make your choices and we will respect them and keep loving you. It is certain that we would like you to avoid the great suffering of a lost world. The choices for your own life are up to you to make and not up to us.

With my fifty years of conjugal life, I think that it is false to pretend that an experience of "common law life", even if it has lasted five or ten years, will be a guarantee of success for the future, since love grows and builds itself every day. You are right when you say there are many failures and that it is difficult today for the life of a couple to succeed; that is what makes it so important to get all the odds on our side. As for me, getting the odds on our side means committing to God, partnering with Him. It is so good to know that true and abundant grace flows from the Sacrament of Marriage for those who believe and accept to live according to the law of Love of the Lord.

I am branded by my thirty years as a professional. During this long period, I hired, trained and accompanied people in life insurance sales. A very difficult career where failure rate is about 90%. At the beginning, I thought the person wise who said to me: *“I know that it is a difficult career; I want to try and later, if possible, I will decide if I will commit myself completely to it.”*

After several years of experience, I realized that everyone who came to “try” had failed. Those who had succeeded were those who, in the beginning, were determined to succeed. During the last years of my career, I refused to hire anyone who came to “try” because it was a waste of time and energy . If commitment and determination are fundamental criteria for success in a career, all the more reason when it’s a matter of the life of a couple.

As for me, it is clear that the society in which we live and which wants to build itself without God, pedals a lot of lies. We must continually ask God’s help to have His lights of wisdom and discernment so as to recognize what is good and what is evil, what can be fruitful and what can bring serious troubles. We must ask for courage to organize our lives according to Gospel values and not the current thoughts of this world while respecting the freedom of others.”

PART FIVE

THE SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE

by Fr. Guy Giroux

The story of Creation reveals to us that in the evening of every day, God marvelled and saw that it was good. On arriving at the sixth day, He considered that *it was not good that the man be alone*. He created Eve. God blessed the conjugal life which was beginning.

THE COUPLE: SIGN OF LOVE

The Catechism of the catholic Church presents us the Sacrament of Marriage as a great event and it is! Those who believe in God see in Marriage the union of God and Humanity They also recognize the Love that Christ has for his Church. In getting married, the christian couple wants to be a visible SIGN of this Love. God created man for love; he also called him to Love. The man and the woman who commit themselves to one another before God and before men thereby become signs of the Love of God. Our world needs blatant signs of fidelity. We often hear the expression: “Love means forever”. By getting married, couples want this love to never die... On the contrary, they want it to last forever.

THE COUPLE CALLED TO BE FRUITFUL

God, who is Love, created man in his image. Man and Woman he created them, he blessed them so that they would be fruitful. The fruitfulness desired by God is not only of a biological order (to have children) but also of a spiritual nature (their love brings the world a desire to live better). In the Sacrament of Marriage, God acts in a particular way for the happiness of the couple, the happiness of the family, but also of the society.

MARRIAGE: A SACRAMENT

First, what is a Sacrament? It is a visible sign in which God manifests himself to give a particular grace. But what is a grace? A grace is a supernatural gift that God gives us for our Salvation. And, what is the visible sign of Marriage? It is the mutual consent, the “yes” of each of them, as well as the physical union of a man and woman who consecrate their love to God.

In the Sacrament of Marriage, the husband and wife help each other to get to Heaven together and also to lead their children there. It is as a family that we walk toward God. When a family keeps its eyes on Jesus Christ and does His Will, the whole of society benefits from it.

MARRIAGE: A GIFT

The Sacrament of Marriage is therefore a precious gift from God. In it we recognize the presence of God Love who acts in the hearts of the spouses so that their love does not stop growing. God always manifests himself to fill His children with happiness, even if, sometimes, there are obstacles to overcome, trials in the way, God, by His presence, incites the man and woman to go farther in self-giving. In the framework of christian marriage, God gives very particular graces so that the love of this new couple will not stagnate but will blossom and bear fruit in abundance.

GOD'S PLAN OF LOVE

Let us remember this saying of Jesus': *Just as the Father loved me, I also have loved you... love one another.*¹² Therefore Jesus wants men and women to love each other with the same Love that Jesus received from the Father, the same Love that wants to be poured into the hearts of the spouses. The grace of God is therefore indispensable to encouraging the opening of their hearts so that they can live together in an intimate communion of love and life.

If, in the Sacrament of Marriage, the man and woman are called to be happy and fruitful, they must not forget that for the grace of the Sacrament of Marriage to bear its fruit of salvation, the spouses must live according to the Gospel. The Word of God must always be their guiding light.

Even when the couple receives the Sacrament of Marriage if, after the celebration, the spouses do not focus on adjusting their married life to God's plan, grace will not be able to blossom. They must not be surprised if their love stops growing. It will be like the parable of the sower who sows good grain. It falls on the edge of the path or among thorns... It cannot mature. The good grain of the Sacrament must fall on the good soil of the hearts of the new spouses to ever reach maturity.

THE INDISSOLUBILITY OF MARRIAGE

The Church teaches that christian Marriage is indissoluble. Why? The model par excellence of the married couple is that of Christ and the Church. Saint Paul proclaims: "Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the Church: He gave himself up for her." (Eph 5, 25) Christ will always be faithful to the Church, and the Church to Christ. In contemplating Christ and the Church, men and women find their roots and their inspiration.

12 Jn 15, 9.12; Cf. 17, 26.

In stormy times, this model invites us to go beyond ourselves: Christ gave His Life for the Church. He died out of love for her. Does the husband agree to do the same thing for his wife? If, in times of trial, the husband remains preoccupied with the well-being of his wife, this situation will become a catapult for going farther. Thus, love will deepen. It is the same when all is going well: each wants the happiness of the other; here again, life together becomes a source of growth.

FEAR OF COMMITMENT

Many, nowadays, are cool towards the Sacrament of Marriage. They decide to live together, they will see if it works... and, later, they will see what they'll do about it. This way of thinking is widespread. On the other hand, the Sacrament of Marriage truly consolidates mutual love. It averts discord and infidelity. United by this Sacrament, we come to present our love to God. We want Him to be at the heart of our life as a couple. It is a meeting with God which brings very particular grace so that love does not stagnate but blossoms and fills us with happiness.

Life together is not always easy. But, God, in the Sacrament of Marriage, gives the husband and wife the grace to realize their union according to His design from its origins. (cf. Compendium, no 339) He wants them to be happy together. When we count on the graces of this Sacrament and we refer to it, great healing happens. Many are those who can witness to this. When they thought that it was all finished, that there was nothing left to do, by praying together sincerely, asking God for the graces of their Sacrament of Marriage, special lights came to them and they began again more beautifully than the first time.

For the Happiness of Couples and Families

THE SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE: A GIFT FROM GOD

The Sacrament of Marriage is a marvellous gift that God gives to a couple. This constant presence of God at the heart of the couple brings veritable light for the path of each of them. So that God will manifest himself, we must know how to be nourished by Him. The Eucharist, Sacrament par excellence of the Presence of God, is the food that strengthens us. Listening to the Word of God, receiving communion of the Body of Christ, this is the Life of God which flows in each person. When the Life of God is there we feel the fullness of Love.

THE FAMILY, THE DOMESTIC CHURCH

Husband and wife, united by God, make up the domestic Church. The Catechism of the catholic Church says: “The Christian home is the place where children receive the first proclamation of the faith. For this reason the family home is rightly called ‘the domestic church,’ a community of grace and prayer, a school of human virtues and of Christian charity.”¹³ Thus the Church has great respect for Marriage and the Family.

May the God of love live at the heart of your lives and fill you with his Spirit of Love. I bless
you.

Fr. Guy Giroux, priest

13 Catechism of the Catholic Church, no 1666.

For the Happiness of Couples and Families

TESTIMONIES OF FAITH

➤ **Liberation of a couple**

For about two weeks, I have been praying the liberation prayer on page 217 of volume 3, given by Fr. Guy Giroux (see below). Oh! Marvel! On the morning of last August 6, on the day commemorating the Transfiguration of Our Lord Jesus Christ, my husband and I were freed from a kind of demon, as he told me. This demon amused himself by making us disagreeable to each other and even insufferable. This happened three days after having received your letter and the number of the message that Jesus had for me. On reading this message, I made the following admission to Jesus:

Yes, Jesus, it is true, I do not know how to accept all Your Will for me. So, God made me understand that “that” was the main obstacle to our union. Then, enlightened and freed by Him, we have a more harmonious life; and, it is delicious! Glory to You, Lord!

L. D.

“Lord Jesus, I believe that You are the Son of God made Man, born of the Virgin Mary.

I believe that You died to redeem the world. I believe that You rose from the dead to give me true Life. I believe that you rose to Heaven to prepare a place for me in Your Kingdom of Love.

I admit that You are the God of Goodness, of Tenderness, of Mercy, of Forgiveness.

I ask You to forgive all my sins. I regret them with all my heart.

I know that You are waiting for me with open arms to welcome me into Your Mercy.

Blessed Father, by the power of the Name of Jesus, of His redeeming Blood, by the merits of His Passion, Death and Resurrection, by the power of Your Spirit, by the intercession of the Immaculate Virgin and of Saint Michael the Archangel, and, covered by the great Mantle of the Holy Family, Jesus, Mary and Joseph, I ask you to free me from all that is not from You.

Free me in the depths of my being, to the very roots of the evil that is in me.

Free my unconscious and subconscious mind, my consciousness of everything which may have wounded Your Love, voluntarily or not.

Free my mind of all return to egotism, backpedalling, pride, self-sufficiency, rash judgements.

Free my memory of thoughts of painful events in my past life which trouble my soul. All that is not from You, Blessed Father, I lay at the feet of the Glorious Cross of Christ, so that all may be crushed by His Precious Blood and fall to the bottom of the abysses, never to return.

In their place, Lord, my God, I ask You to fill me with Your Holy Spirit, Your Spirit of Light, Truth, Humility, Strength, Piety, Tenderness, and Purity, so that, seeing Your Will I may have the courage to do it.

Last of all, Lord, I ask You to bless all the people who have hurt me by word, gesture or action.

Fill them with Your blessings and Your Spirit.

Blessed Father, I thank You for this freedom that you give me now, for, I am certain that You answer my prayer.

I believe in Your Love. Amen! Alleluia. (Guy Giroux, priest)

➤ **The fruit of a C.L.S. (COMMUNITY OF LOVE AND SHARING)**

The book *For the happiness of Mine, my chosen ones, JESUS* healed couples in their family and conjugal relationships. That was first of all a very formidable good for the husband who can no longer support his wife, and from the moment that his wife had the book in her hands, she was transformed. They found again an area of communion and took the time to speak to each other and make up in their own way a small C.L.S. Beautiful, isn't it? Alleluia!

A reader on the Island of Reunion

➤ **Our Sacrament of Marriage...**

After 27 years of marriage, we are convinced that there is grace attached to the Sacrament of Marriage. Over all those years, there were periods when we had the impression of no longer understanding each other, when we no longer felt our complicity, when we had the impression that we no longer loved each other as much as before, and each time we prayed to God to intervene by the grace of our Sacrament of Marriage, we felt a difference in our hearts. It is as if our perspective on things changed instantly. We

also called on this grace in our role as parents. How often we felt humanly powerless and we asked God, by the grace of our Sacrament of Marriage, to come speak to the hearts of our children.

If all young couples could know this force which comes from the Sacrament, they would have no fear of committing themselves to the path of marriage.

Sylvie and Jean-Louis

➤ **Spiritual differences between spouses**

With different ancestries and different life styles, it is normal that religious motivation and spiritual exercises would be different for each of the spouses. All sorts of possibilities can appear. In our couple, the spiritual attraction on my wife's part resembles that of Quebec ladies in general, that is to say pretty weak, while for me the gift of piety, thanks to God, is rather higher and this situation has existed from our first encounters. And with the recent beginning of my retired life, this division in interest in spiritual matters is growing between the spouses since I consecrate most of my time to the Lord.

How can such a situation be viable over the long term between two people who are pretty independent having raised three children? Here is what I learned over the forty years of marriage which had its ups and downs, joys and suffering, harmony and conflicts, like that of most couples...:

- If at least one of the spouses prays to the Lord, the grace of marriage blesses them equally according to their needs.
- Basically, respect of differences was established between the partners while avoiding abusing extreme situations or exacerbating oppositions.

- By seeing where conflicts lay I learned to avoid escalating them; it is a matter of one partner showing self-denial so that the internal dynamic of the couple can become more positive.
- I often noticed that the Lord works through my wife to speak to me, to call me, for example so that I may live a more authentic christian life...
- Also, I believe that there are people who want to be less engaged and demonstrative on the spiritual level but who walk faithfully in their duty under the kind supervision of the Most High.
- Finally, when we allow conjugal love to grow with good will in spite of inevitable lapses, the Lord perfects his masterpiece of growth in each spouse, bringing a new and deeper enrichment to the marriage...

Marcel

➤ **The sacramentality of Marriage...**

If I hesitated to give my testimony here, it is that I think that true testimony is sometimes difficult to express in words, but is rather in that we *live transparently in Him...* and that the fruits that come from it are often hidden to the eyes of the world, by the grace of the considerateness and wisdom of God.

I admit, however, that this little exercise helps me reread our progress, after a rupture of the bond with the spouse, and this, several months ago.

I risk opening an old wound, hidden in the Wound of the Resurrected.

I contemplate with amazement the foreshadowing which appeared at the moment of our engagement made on the hill overshadowed by a majestic cross of the Saviour. At the foot of this cross, my future spouse asked me in marriage.

I was giving my “yes” to a man who was assuredly destined for me... Without my knowing it, I was giving my “yes” to a project sealed on the Cross.

This marriage permitted the birth of two marvellous children... But, later, a large reef was sinking it. I had to learn that nothing can keep God’s plan from pursuing its course... “*The grain of wheat which falls to the ground must die in order to bear fruit.*” In every fibre of my being, I turned again to the Cross. In contemplating it, I became conscious that God had prepared me for this rupture, several years before, by the grace of a dazzling encounter with Him: meeting His great Mercy.

‘Recipient of Mercy,’ He called me to become ‘Merciful’... that is why He did not stop attracting me, assiduously, to his feet in ‘Adoration,’ to have me taste the better part... and, I dare add, in the prolonging of the grace of our Sacrament of Marriage, always working - although oriented from then on towards an unsuspected life: that of a new alliance with Him in Mary, of whom He will teach me the luminous wisdom much later!

In error as in virtue, the spouses are united... and, in the depth of our misery, God answers with the depth of His Mercy. The problem is that the two spouses are not necessarily ready, at the same time, to seek refuge in the arms of the Good Shepherd who asks only to collect his most pitiful sheep...

The Holy Spirit, through the Sacraments, accomplishes his work of restoration. And, when Christ is incarnate in us, He makes us his dwelling forever: remorse is calmed... accusations give way to humble reparative silence, before Him... being self-absorbed is transformed into self giving... faith is strengthened... wounds heal in His Heart wounded by our refusals to love!

For the glory of God, allow me to continue: It is true that when the Lord closes one door, He opens a window!

Five years ago, a wind of the Spirit blew on the window of my soul... bringing me an ineffable light centred on Christ hidden in the Very Smallness of Mary.

The opening up of this unexplored path came to me as a result of my providential meeting with a priest whose heart was full of the Heart of Jesus, whose life, buried in Mary, is the Perfume of Jesus, the Mirror of Mary...

Thus, the Spirit, in him, introduced me to the school of Mary... the school of the very small... the school of disappearing into Her... the school of all schools! I was, and remain, fascinated as a child who discovers a marvel long hidden... and whose desire to enter into His Mystery is a burning desire!

I'm letting you know briefly of the role that our Blessed Mother plays in everyone who opens themselves to Her... This was taught to me by this favourite son: "Her role is to shape the Son in us, to help us prolong his "Here I am" of Love to the Father, to enter into the movement of his prayer of intercession and in the manifestation of his Merciful Love made real in his surrendered Body, his shed Blood and his pierced Heart.

We are baptized in the Spirit; He continues his work of sanctification, according to the measure of our deep commitment in the Baptism Death-Resurrection. My Baptism therefore draws me onto this narrow path so that what is lacking in the Passion of Christ may be completed in my flesh to engender grace, in Mary, for those whom God has given to me: a family according to the flesh, on which is grafted a family born of Mary, by the Spirit, in the invisible. The mystery of my life as a baptized person no longer belongs to this world, but to God... We receive Love, we live Love, we spread Love!

For the Happiness of Couples and Families

Strong with this truth taught by Jesus Himself and transmitted by His Church -- to know that by virtue of the sacramentality of Marriage, the spouses are bound one to another by an indissoluble character -- I feel that there flows from it a mystery of complicity that binds the spouses, even after a rupture. Are they not committed 'for better and for worse'? That is why, by virtue of this complicity, we dive into the Mystery of the Death-Resurrection of Christ so that He will join us on our straying pathways and lead us to the other side.

Paradoxically, 'the worst' thrust me on unexpected paths of spiritual motherhood that grow from peeling away the layers of attachment to this world and my 'self', becoming smaller and smaller, forgiving again and again... until Love is born, in Mary...to attain the fulness of the age of Christ, in Her... to serve the building up of the Kingdom of God!

The Virgin Mary knew joy because She opened her heart to the mysterious project of God... It is a beatitude called to continue across the ages...

Lord, may my heart shudder with joy at the call of Your voice to go farther and farther down this path of abasement where You went before us in common measure!

All my life, I will glorify Your Holy Mercy and I will adore It before the Very Blessed Sacrament of the Altar!

M.R.

IN CONCLUSION

It is important to remember that the very Source of Love is God! If we want to live in Love, we must be connected to the Source.

When love flows poorly in a couple, it is not really recommended to blame the other. It is better to look at our personal relationship with the Source of Love: God Himself.

A question arises: Are there certain obstructions in me which impede the free flow of His Love... through me?

And this freedom is truly exercised when we renounce our own will to welcome His, by a “total, unconditional and irrevocable yes”.

Not only is God Love, but He is the All-Mighty. It is up to us to put our confidence in Him and give everything to Him.

Already, we can praise Him, give Him thanks and bless Him for the marvels that he accomplishes in couples who abandon themselves to Him.

By the intercession of Mother Mary, we ask JESUS a very particular favour for the person or the couple who will have read, meditated and prayed with the help of this part of the book.

Léandre Lachance

For the Happiness of Couples and Families

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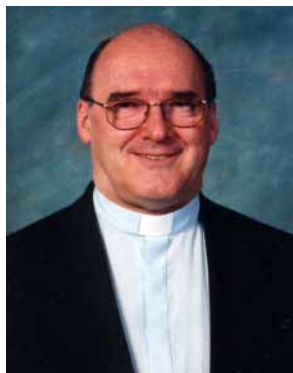
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The little booklet that you have in your hands is the product of a lived experience. Léandre Lachance, preoccupied with the happiness of people and particularly of children, took the time to write down his experiences as a husband, father and grandfather. In it we will also recognize the teachings of the Lord and of His Church. Yes, marriage is a beautiful challenge and it is possible to succeed in it.

Fr. Guy Giroux, priest

Growing pains

The difficulties in the life of a couple are opportunities for extraordinary growth. After a problem, we believe that our relationship will never be the same again. It is true, but it may be much better. Too often, we believe that it is a destructive crisis when it is only a growing pain and a consolidation of our love.



We are at the dawn of the most beautiful story in the world.

A new civilization is rising and is happening thanks to the transformation of hearts. It is the "Civilization of Love", as taught by John-Paul II and by Benedict XVI. The time has come for it to be built, notably beginning with couples.

Léandre Lachance

LA FONDATION DES CHOISIS DE JÉSUS

PO Box 22019, Sherbrooke, QC, Canada J1E 4B4

T. +1 819.565.9621 F. +1 819.565.0608

E. equipe@choisisdejesus.org

W. www.choisisdejesus.org



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