

DOCTRINE FOR THE YOUNG

PREPARING TO RECEIVE CONJUGIAL LOVE

Third in a series of Chapel Talks on Conjugal Love

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Conjugal love is a spiritual love that is given by the Lord according to the state of regeneration, or, what is the same, according to the state of genuine wisdom. It is the Lord who conjoins. But how does one prepare to receive conjugal love from Him?

If we are not yet married, we are to pray to the Lord for a suitable partner. But for our prayer or wish to be something more than a prayer of the lips, certain actions are necessary. The first of these is to look to the Lord and shun evils as sins against Him. There is no other way by which the Lord may be present in our minds and lives.

The evils that are to be shunned as sins are, of course, those that work against and destroy conjugal love: the love of dominion or striving for pre-eminence; apathy towards the things of religion; the desire to live one's own life rather than sharing a common life with one's partner; the desire to *get* from marriage, rather than to give. And it is of no use to pray to the Lord for a suitable partner unless we shun wandering lusts as an offence to the nostrils (*Conjugal Love* 49). Wandering lusts are forms of lasciviousness, which involve blotting out everything spiritual and concentrating upon the body alone. This lust is plainly from the sphere of adultery, the direct opposite of love truly conjugal.

But, in addition to these things, *all* the evils forbidden in the Decalogue are to be shunned as sins, as being contrary to the Lord and His will. In the proportion that this is done, in the same proportion we can do good things freely from the Lord.

These good actions done from a good motive enter into every area of our life. As a result we do the work of our occupation sincerely, justly, and faithfully. We are inspired to voluntarily do good, kind deeds for the benefit of others—beyond the call of duty. We cheerfully meet all obligations and duties imposed upon us; we rejoice in all forms of external worship as a means of giving thanks and praise to the Lord from the heart. We look upon our social life as a means of being refreshed and re-created for the sake of returning to our uses with renewed vigor.

To do all this is nothing else than to live a life of charity from the Lord. And this is the greatest preparation for conjugal love, because it is given according to our state of regeneration. This is easy to understand when we remember that a regenerate mind is one in which there is a marriage of good and truth, a marriage of the will and understanding, a marriage of deed and creed. This is the heavenly marriage. In order for us to enter into heaven (here or hereafter), heaven must enter into us. So, also, with marriage between one man and one woman. If we would enter into a genuine marriage—a marriage of love truly conjugal—the heavenly marriage must first enter into us, into both partners.

As a practical matter, saying “heavenly marriage” or “the life of charity” comes to the same thing. It is charity received from the Lord that joins people together, and a lack of charity that puts them asunder. This is a general principle applying to *all* human relationships, but it has a special relevance in the most intimate of all relationships—the marriage covenant. Those who enter into marriage after some years of striving individually for a heavenly marriage or the life of charity are well prepared. They are in the habit of looking to the Lord and shunning evils as sins—which is not only the first thing of charity but also the first thing of conjugal love. The closer each partner individually draws to the Lord, the closer they will draw to each other, for it is the Lord who joins together. “Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate” (Matthew 19:6).

Text: Matthew 19:1-12