



## THE CHURCH SAYS “YES” TO LOVE

### Message on the Occasion of the 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Encyclical Letter of His Holiness Pope Paul VI *Humanae Vitae*

*“Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.” (1 John 4.7)*

On the occasion of the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the encyclical letter *Humanae Vitae*, the Catholic Organization for Life and Family wishes to recall the path laid out by Pope Paul VI for human love and the regulation of births. This letter defended the inherent sacredness of a married couple’s expression of its love. The Church, like Paul VI, calls today’s men and women to love through the total gift of themselves. It is convinced that married couples find love and grow in love when they live out the various dimensions of their Christian vocation. In this way they become fruitful in all aspects of their lives.

Paul VI’s prophetic outlook and the anthropological facts that led him to describe what characterizes marital love provide guideposts enabling us to uncover the real meaning of married love. Such love is relational at heart; it produces openness, communion and creativity. The sexual dimension of the love of a man and a woman is a mutual gift that overflows and is designed to bear fruit. The ultimate fruit is a child. “Conjugal love involves a totality in which all the elements of the person enter - appeal of the body and instinct, power of feeling and affectivity, aspiration of the spirit and of will. It aims at a deeply personal unity, the unity that, beyond union in one flesh, leads to forming one heart and soul; it demands indissolubility and faithfulness in definitive mutual giving; and it is open to fertility.”

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Through their union, the spouses achieve the full meaning of marriage: the good of the spouses themselves and the transmission of life, which in turn are for the good of society.<sup>2</sup> By respecting both these essential aspects, the unitive and the procreative, the conjugal act preserves in its fullness the sense of true mutual love and its orientation to parenthood.<sup>3</sup> It is their very love that enables the couple to set up and develop, day after day, the most favourable environment in which to welcome a child. Love begets love and, within their marriage, the couple generates a wellspring of love that nourishes children and family before bursting out into the wider world.

Natural family planning methods respect the indivisible link between a loving union and the procreative potential of intercourse in the context of married love. In the Church’s view, Christian couples while remaining open to life, plan the timing and the number of their children. They are responsible for managing this procreative

potential. They must critically examine, in all generosity, the quality of the conjugal and family environment they can provide and their capacity to be open to new life.

The Church believes that because men and women are created in the image of God, they are inherently called to love, fashioned by love, and oriented towards love.<sup>4</sup>

**June 30, 2003**

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<sup>1</sup> John Paul II. *Familiaris Consortio*, 1981, no. 13.

<sup>2</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1997, no. 2363.

<sup>3</sup> Paul VI, *Humanae Vitae*, no. 12.

<sup>4</sup> Catholic Organization for Life and family, *In the name of Love – The Natural Approach to Family Planning*, (Leaflet 1998) Copies may be ordered from the COLF office at 2500 Don Reid Drive, Ottawa Ontario K1H 2J2; Tel: (613) 241-9461 (Ext. 161); Fax: (613) 241-9048; E-mail: [ocvfcolf@cccb.ca](mailto:ocvfcolf@cccb.ca)