

IF MARRIAGE IS NATURAL, WHY IS DEFENDING
IT SO HARD? TAKING UP THE CHALLENGE
TO MARRIAGE IN THE PEWS AND
THE PUBLIC SQUARE

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INTRODUCTION

Alfonso Cardinal López Trujillo presents a rich and deep vision of marriage as “a natural institution which precedes the sacrament.”¹ The essence of marriage, so understood, is unity and indissolubility. Marriage does not ratify or celebrate a preexisting relationship. It transforms the relation between man and woman because it comes into existence only from the moment a man and woman decide, via a free act of the will, to give themselves to each other in this unique way.²

Unity implies a community in the whole of life, including the gift and acceptance of the whole sexual self, and therefore an openness to giving and accepting from one another the gift of motherhood and fatherhood.³ A woman who gives herself to a man at the altar as a wife, but secretly reserves the right to have sex or children with another man, is not really giving herself at all. A ceremony in which a man promises to stay with a woman until someone better comes along is not really making a marriage promise at all, whatever his legal certificate says.

The task is to explain the obstacles to achieving this vision of marriage and also the ways to overcome such obstacles. Practically speaking, the strongest resistance to this vision of marriage as a natural institution clusters around three areas: contraception, divorce,

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1. Alfonso Cardinal López Trujillo, *The Nature of Marriage and Its Various Aspects*, 4 AVE MARIA L. REV. 297, 298 (2006).

2. *Id.* at 303-04.

3. *Id.* at 311-13.

and gender.⁴ What is the deep source of these obstacles to marriage? There are many possible answers, many of which Cardinal Trujillo touches upon: legal positivism, individualism, false anthropologies, self-created spiritualities, and the accompanying decline in religious and/or moral authority.⁵ Most intriguing is that Cardinal Trujillo identifies ideology itself as the enemy of the family:

[T]he various historical attempts to eliminate the family as a natural institution have perhaps contributed to the decline, apparent now more than ever before, of the proper understanding of the “natural character” of the family. Such attempts have been produced particularly in countries following a Marxist ideology, in a world pursued by various totalitarianisms, and by the post-modern version of secularization, as well as the enormous transformations that the family has suffered in the West.⁶

Under Communism or Nazism, the rise of an antifamily ideology is readily understandable as one of many grotesque distortions of humanity made possible by a tiny minority’s will to power. The family, as the generator of human and religious values, stands in the way of the totalitarian state’s project to create a new man. As such, the natural family must be targeted and broken.

But today there is a new puzzle: how to explain the ongoing, rising antifamily ideologies in democratic societies, where power is both more broadly distributed and more responsive to ordinary people’s wishes.

If the Catholic Church’s teachings are based on natural law, available to rational people of good will, how is it that the Church finds it so difficult to defend its vision of marriage, not only in the public square, but even to church-going Catholics in free, democratic, developed nations? If marriage is natural, as the Catholic Church has always taught, why is it becoming so hard to defend marriage both in the pews and in the public square?

Take this question seriously. Something fundamental has changed in the social ecology of the family in all developed nations. This fundamental change makes the defense of the natural family *both* more urgently necessary and also far more challenging. The

4. Within the category of “gender” I also include “orientation,” which these days increasingly targets as a form of bigotry any expression of the idea that humanity’s two halves, male and female, are in some way naturally ordered toward each other.

5. Trujillo, *supra* note 1, at 332-38.

6. *Id.* at 299.

marriage crisis is not, or is not only, a crisis in moral values or philosophical ideas; it is an institutional crisis, arising from the way that modernity really does change relations between adults and children, as well as between husbands and wives, in novel ways that make not only sustaining the family much more difficult, but *perceiving the need to do so* as well.

I. IS MARRIAGE NECESSARY?

The first thing to notice is how recently, and how swiftly, propositions that were once obvious to most reasonable people are now generally perceived as almost impossible to believe, except by faith alone.

Take contraception, for example. Most who work in the area of marriage are aware of how challenging it is to make the case that contraception is morally wrong, not only in the public square but to the majority of Catholics.⁷ What is less often recognized is how radically new this situation is. For centuries, the idea that marital contraception is morally wrong was almost universally accepted among Christian societies and had obvious, intuitive moral appeal outside of religious groups as well.⁸ In 1930, the Lambeth Conference made the Episcopal Church the first major Christian denomination to accept birth control for married couples.⁹ Within forty years, a thousand-year-old consensus had shattered. What was once more or less obvious to educated people became, to most Americans and Europeans, an obscure and apparently indefensible position, obviously grounded in blind faith, not reason.¹⁰ Contraception moved out of the category of clear moral wrongs, like murder, and moved more into the category of obscure theological reasoning.

One must pause a moment and digest the significance of this shift. What was once obvious to ordinary human reason has become all but impossible to believe, except through intense faith. This indicates that something very profound has shifted in the underlying ecology in which a formerly obvious moral insight is, or was, embedded.

7. See GERMAIN G. GRISEZ, *CONTRACEPTION AND THE NATURAL LAW* 19-42 (1964) (analyzing the inadequacy of some of the common arguments against contraception).

8. See JOHN MARSHALL, *CATHOLICS, MARRIAGE AND CONTRACEPTION* 46-47 (1965).

9. WILLIAM REDMOND CURTIS, *THE LAMBETH CONFERENCES* 327-28 (AMS Press 1968) (1942).

10. See MARSHALL, *supra* note 8, at 186.

II. WHAT HAS CHANGED?

For most of human history, marriage and kin were obvious, urgent, *personal* necessities. People lived on farms or ran small family businesses. The family provided most of the goods that members lived on. Butter was made from cows that the family had milked, and these cows were fed by grain that the family had grown. The farm family produced its own clothes; cloth from flax the family had grown or lambs the family had sheared together was spun by wives, daughters, and mothers, and then cut and sewn. Providing the basics was extremely difficult, and such self-sufficiency required that the family cooperate together industriously. The family also provided almost all social insurance against disaster.¹¹ If a family member became sick, disabled, or grew old, the family would nurse and feed the stricken family member.

In such circumstances, it is very clear that family loyalty, including marital loyalty, was a paramount virtue. Socially, it was obvious that the task of getting young people to join in marriage and make the next generation of kin was not just a private, personal taste, but an urgent necessity for the family and community.

Think of *Fiddler on the Roof*.¹² In small tribal communities, it is perfectly obvious to everyone that if the butcher does not get himself a wife, then a few years down the road, the village will not have a butcher anymore. For most of human history, procreation was much, much harder than it is today—from the physical toll, risks to the mother, and high rates of infant mortality, to the economic burden of caring for dependents, which posed a far greater threat to survival than today.¹³ And yet, for most of human history, making kin was an obvious necessity, both for the individual and the community. Marriage is the lynchpin of this system of kin; the tie that binds biological strangers and their joint children into a single family unit and the place where kin are made. When the need for kin-making is obvious and pressing, the need for a socially-supported sexual code holding families together is also obvious and pressing. Adherence to moral codes is always strongest when it is intuitively obvious to people that they do well by doing good.

11. LINDA J. WAITE & MAGGIE GALLAGHER, *THE CASE FOR MARRIAGE: WHY MARRIED PEOPLE ARE HAPPIER, HEALTHIER, AND BETTER OFF FINANCIALLY* 115 (Paperback ed., Broadway Books 2000).

12. *FIDDLER ON THE ROOF* (MGM 1971).

13. MARSHALL, *supra* note 8, at 73.

Today, government and the market have taken over the family's once-undisputed roles as the prime source of key goods, i.e., wealth production and social insurance. If sick, one goes to the hospital and wants professional doctors and nurses to provide care. Social Security, pensions, and/or savings support the elderly, as opposed to their children's wages or farming capacity. When clothes are needed, they are purchased at Wal-Mart or Nordstrom. The market not only grows the cows; it slaughters, packages, and cooks them, and then serves them up at McDonald's.

Why has the family lost so many of these functions? It is important to note that the key reason the family has lost so many practical functions is that *the government and the market do them much, much more efficiently*. The genius of market capitalism is that it allows biological strangers to pool their economic energies in ways that unleash a flood of human creativity, ingenuity, and productivity.¹⁴ People prefer to have an independent source of income, such as government Social Security, than to become dependent on their children in old age. Hospitals really are better at caring for the urgently ill than sisters, aunts, or mothers at home. The market and government bureaucracies are both forms of systematizing, rationalizing institutions that produce and distribute wealth better—more abundantly and more fairly, with fewer felt emotional burdens—than the old kinship system did.

Of course, rationalizing systems like these are also lonelier than the older, personal ones. The pervasive facelessness of government and market relations also heightens the emotional importance of family relations, which leads perversely to a greater willingness to jump ship when emotional needs are not being met. If the function of the family is to meet personal needs for belonging, identity, and intimacy, why stick around if these needs are not being met?

Today, the family's importance to the larger society, as well as to the individual, has radically changed. The family is still a wealth-creating institution,¹⁵ but it is far less important than market relations in producing needed and wanted goods. The family still provides important social insurance goods—care for the young, sick, disabled, unemployed, and elderly—but its relative importance as a provider of these goods has clearly, objectively dwindled.

14. If you doubt these market advantages, imagine doing whatever job you do while relying only on the talents and skills of your closest kin as colleagues, employees, or bosses.

15. WAITE & GALLAGHER, *supra* note 11, at 111-18.

Along with this decline in practical functions, the one remaining obvious market niche the family fulfills—a source of emotional support and identity—looms ever larger in shared thought and personal experience, even as the family must compete with an array of other relations and institutions for the loyalty and identity of its members. The increasingly visible importance of marriage—as well as the family as providers of emotional goods—leads paradoxically to a profound temptation to defect from family loyalty when emotional needs are not met. Given the nature of human beings, both in their capacity for utopian expectations and in their frequent failures to act lovingly and faithfully, this defection is bound to happen fairly often.

Driving many contemporary divorces, both inside and outside the Church, is the woman's pursuit of a deeper, more intimate relationship than her current husband is ever likely to provide.¹⁶ Mothers sometimes even express a moral duty to divorce in empty marriages, lest they provide a bad role model that will injure their daughters' future well-being.¹⁷ *The Theology of the Body*,¹⁸ with its potent appeal to the erotic aspirations of young men and women before marriage, offers far fewer practical resources to these older, sadder, and more tired men and women who, in their own eyes at least, appear trapped for life in a marital union in which they will be deprived of any possibility of the total interpersonal union to which they, too, once aspired. (Or, as the poet Philip Larkin put it, "A joyous shot at how things ought to be, [l]ong fallen wide.")¹⁹

As the family loses its primacy in society, a socially-supported sexual morality becomes less visibly, obviously necessary. As more family functions are turned over to government and the market,

16. See Katharine B. Silbaugh, *Gender and Nonfinancial Matters in the ALI Principles of the Law and Family Dissolution*, 8 DUKE J. GENDER L. & POL'Y 203, 207 (2001).

17. See WAITE & GALLAGHER, *supra* note 11, at 141.

18. JOHN PAUL II, *THE THEOLOGY OF THE BODY* (1997) [hereinafter *THEOLOGY OF THE BODY*].

19. PHILIP LARKIN, *Home Is So Sad*, in *THE WHITSUN WEDDINGS* 17, 17 (1964).

Home is so sad. It stays as it was left,
 Shaped to the comfort of the last to go
 As if to win them back. Instead, bereft
 Of anyone to please, it withers so,
 Having no heart to put aside the theft
 And turn again to what it started as,
 A joyous shot at how things ought to be,
 Long fallen wide. You can see how it was:
 Look at the pictures and the cutlery.
 The music in the piano stool. That vase.

people begin to indulge a variety of passions, including sexual ones, with far fewer immediate or visible costs to self or others. As families become smaller, the relative value of any individual child to the parents also increases—making the older tradition of family enforcement of social stigmas against sexual misbehavior far too expensive to enforce. Who can afford to lose their only daughter, just because she has sex, or even a child, outside of marriage? The natural protectiveness of parents becomes directed toward protecting their children from the consequences of social codes, rather than supporting them.

Meanwhile, as social roles surrounding marriage and the family cease to be well defined and supported by society, the individual's experience of these roles as personally rewarding becomes less universal and more dependent on individual experience. Formerly, just being a wife provided a social status—that is, a sense of accomplishment and identity that were experienced as rewarding by the individual who successfully performed the role.²⁰ Now when the role of wife or husband is largely drained of its shared social meaning, the capacity to draw satisfaction from performing the duties of wife or husband depends more and more on the particular qualities of the individual relationship.²¹ Even as people become more dependent on emotional quality to hold family relations together, the intrinsic emotional rewards of the status become less universal and therefore become a less reliable means of holding individuals to the performance of that role.

When, in the midst of this earthquake in the social ecology of the family, technology offers the seeming promise of perfect fertility control, social structures containing and directing human sexual behavior collapse.²² When contraception fails to deliver on its promise of perfect fertility control, as it frequently does in the hands of young people who are locked in erotic dramas, abortion is quickly licensed as a backup measure that, like ancient infanticide, does indeed allow young people to engage in sex without any risk of

20. See, e.g., Marcus Felson & David Knoke, *Social Status and the Married Woman*, 36 J. MARRIAGE & FAM. 516, 516 (1974).

21. Cf. Stacy J. Rogers & Paul R. Amato, *Have Changes in Gender Relations Affected Marital Quality?*, 79 SOC. FORCES 731, 751 (2000) (reporting that increase in marital discord can be explained more by increases in work-family demands than by changes in gender relations).

22. See Janet Smith, Father Michael J. McGivney Chair of Life Ethics, Sacred Heart Major Seminary, Address to the Catholic Physicians Guild Meeting at the Pontifical College Josephinum: Contraception: Why Not? (May 1994) (transcript available at <http://catholiceducation.org/articles/sexuality/se0002.html>).

assuming parenting responsibilities. These scientific and political developments make channeling the erotic energies of young people toward marriage and children—always a Herculean task for any society—begin to seem hardly worth the bother.

So why worry? Why not let marriage become more personalized and privatized and centered on adult emotional needs? Perhaps accepting that marriage is a natural institution is no longer all that necessary. The Catholic sacramental vision might remain, as the way God calls spouses to make sexual love incarnate. But Catholics might begin to separate marriage and state, perhaps even as a way to protect the Catholic understanding of marriage from the increasingly incoherent and fragmenting legal and secular understanding of marriage.²³

There is just one obvious hitch to this interlocking, self-reinforcing system of self-indulgence or personal liberation—or, as Philip Larkin put it, “everyone young going down the long slide [t]o happiness, endlessly.”²⁴ The problem is babies. This problem, called babies, has

23. This argument is gaining force in Catholic circles; for evidence of this shift, see Paul J. Griffiths, *Legalize Same-Sex Marriage: Why Law & Morality Can Part Company*, COMMONWEAL, Oct. 24, 2003, at 10.

24. PHILIP LARKIN, *High Windows*, in HIGH WINDOWS, 17, 17 (1974).

When I see a couple of kids
And guess he's [expletive] her and she's
Taking pills or wearing a diaphragm,
I know this is paradise

Everyone old has dreamed of all their lives—
Bonds and gestures pushed to one side
Like an outdated combine harvester,
And everyone young going down the long slide

To happiness, endlessly. I wonder if
Anyone looked at me, forty years back,
And thought, *That'll be the life;*
No God any more, or sweating in the dark

About hell and that, or having to hide
What you think of the priest. He
And his lot will all go down the long slide
Like free bloody birds. And immediately

Rather than words comes the thought of high windows:
The sun-comprehending glass,
And beyond it, the deep blue air, that shows
Nothing, and is nowhere, and is endless.

three dimensions: irregular reproduction, depopulation, and family fragmentation.

III. THE PROBLEM IS BABIES

Marriage as a natural institution that exists in some form in every known society²⁵ rests on three core facts of human nature: men and women are powerfully attracted to a sexual act that makes new life; making babies is optional for individuals, but not for societies; and babies need a father as well as a mother. Sex makes babies, society needs babies, and babies need their mothers and fathers. These three ideas together form the heart of the marriage idea as a virtually universal social institution.

The proposition that marriage is no longer necessary rests on the idea that one or more of these core pillars of marriage is no longer true. What does the evidence suggest? In spite of all the powerful trends deconstructing marriage, the experience of the last forty years has affirmed marriage's central importance in this irreplaceable role.²⁶

A. *Sex Makes Babies*

According to the 1995 National Survey of Family Growth, forty-nine percent of pregnancies in the United States are unintended.²⁷ Among unmarried couples, over two-thirds are unintended by at least one parent.²⁸ By their late thirties, sixty percent of American women have had at least one unintended pregnancy.²⁹ Almost four in ten women between the ages of forty and forty-four have had at least one unplanned birth.³⁰

25. Robert P. George, *What's Sex Got to Do with It? Marriage, Morality, and Rationality*, 49 AM. J. JURIS. 63, 63 (2004).

26. See Lynn D. Wardle, *Children and the Future of Marriage*, 17 REGENT U. L. REV. 279, 309-10 (2004).

27. Stanley K. Henshaw, *Unintended Pregnancy in the United States*, 30 FAM. PLAN. PERSP. 24, 26 (1998).

28. CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION, NATIONAL VITAL STATISTICS REPORT, Series 23, No. 19, *Fertility, Family Planning, and Women's Health: New Data from the 1995 National Survey of Family Growth*, at 25 tbl.14, 28 tbl.17 (May 1997), http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/series/sr_23/sr23_019.pdf. Twenty-eight percent of births to unmarried mothers were intended, compared to 70.4% of marital births that were intended by both parents. *Id.* at 28 tbl.17.

29. Henshaw, *supra* note 27, at 28 tbl.3.

30. *Id.*

One analysis of the 1995 survey concluded: “The typical woman who uses reversible methods of contraception continuously from her 15th to her 45th birthday will experience 1.8 contraceptive failures.”³¹ *The typical woman who uses contraceptives continuously will experience almost two pregnancies.*³² The existence of contraceptives thus does not eliminate the state’s or the society’s interest in preferring voluntary marital sexual unions between men and women over other kinds of sexual unions.

Virtually every child born to a married couple will have a mother and a father already committed to caring for him or her. Most children conceived in sexual unions outside of marriage will not.³³

B. *Society Needs Babies*

Why do almost all the societies that are considered in other ways best for human flourishing—stable, democratic, developed nations—appear to be headed for extinction via depopulation? Of course, trends may change. But Europe’s total fertility rate from 1995 to 2000, for example, was only 1.42 children per woman,³⁴ sufficiently below the 2.1 replacement level; demographers label this “very low fertility.”³⁵ In 2004, a U.N. demographer warned:

A growing number of countries view their low birth rates with the resulting population decline and ageing to be a serious crisis, jeopardizing the basic foundations of the nation and threatening its survival. Economic growth and vitality, defense, and pensions and

31. James Trussell & Barbara Vaughan, *Contraceptive Failure, Method-Related Discontinuation and Resumption of Use: Results from the 1995 National Survey of Family Growth*, 31 FAM. PLAN. PERSP. 64, 71 (1999).

32. *Id.* (emphasis added).

33. See, e.g., ELAINE SORENSEN & CHAVA ZIBMAN, THE URBAN INST., TO WHAT EXTENT DO CHILDREN BENEFIT FROM CHILD SUPPORT? 3 (2000) (finding only thirty-four percent of children with a nonresident parent see that parent on a weekly basis); Valerie King, *Variation in the Consequences of Nonresident Father Involvement for Children’s Well-Being*, 56 J. MARRIAGE & FAM. 963, 966 tbl.1 (1994) (finding half of children with nonresident fathers see their fathers only once a year, if at all).

34. U.N. Dep’t of Econ. & Soc. Affairs, Population Div., *World Population Prospects: The 2002 Revision: Highlights*, 4 tbl.2, U.N. Doc. ESA/P/WP.180 (Feb. 26, 2003).

35. John C. Caldwell & Thomas Schindlmayr, *Explanations of the Fertility Crisis in Modern Societies: A Search for Commonalities*, 57 POPULATION STUD. 241, 241 (2003); see also Hans-Peter Kohler et al., *The Emergence of Lowest-Low Fertility in Europe During the 1990’s*, 28 POPULATION & DEV. REV. 641, 641 (2002) (describing “lowest-low fertility” as a total fertility rate of 1.3 or below).

health care for the elderly, for example, are all areas of major concern.³⁶

There is no agreement on the causes of low fertility, which are likely to be complex.³⁷ But the move away from preferences for marriage, as well as a decline in the extent to which marriage is seen as a childbearing institution, play a clear role:

Low fertility can also be linked to the movement away from marriage, which many western European countries have experienced for the recent decades. Of course, marriage is no longer a pre-condition for childbearing in most of these populations, but it remains true that married couples have a higher fertility than non-married people, even those who live in a “marriage-like” cohabitation.³⁸

This massive failure of the family’s most basic function—reproducing the society—exposes the natural need for an institution like marriage. For the individual, babies may be optional; for the society, they are not.

The United States is one of the few developed nations that currently has near-replacement level birth rates, for reasons that are not clear.³⁹ Nonetheless, in the United States as in other nations, the increasingly optional nature of childbearing increases, rather than

36. Joseph Chamie, *Low Fertility: Can Governments Make a Difference?* 2 (Apr. 2, 2004) (unpublished paper, presented at the Annual Meeting of the Population Association of America), <http://paa2004.princeton.edu/download.asp?submissionId=42278>.

37. See BEN J. WATTENBERG, *THE BIRTH DEARTH* 116-30 (1987).

38. Patrick Festy, *Looking for European Demography, Desperately?* 4 (Oct. 16-18, 2000) (unpublished paper, presented at the Expert Group Meeting on Policy Responses to Population Ageing and Population Decline in New York), <http://www.un.org/esa/population/publications/popdecline/festy.pdf>; see also *Partnership and Reproductive Behaviour in Low-Fertility Countries*, POPULATION NEWSL. (U.N. Dep’t of Econ. & Soc. Affairs, Population Div.), Dec. 2002, at 4-6, available at <http://www.un.org/esa/population/publications/popnews/News74.pdf>.

39. See POPULATION REFERENCE BUREAU, *2006 WORLD POPULATION DATA SHEET* 6-10 (2006), <http://www.prb.org/pdf06/06WorldDataSheet.pdf>. Immigration levels cannot be the whole explanation. Even native-born, white Americans have high birthrates compared to European nations, compare *id.* at 9-10 with CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION, NATIONAL VITAL STATISTICS REPORTS, Vol. 54, No. 8, *Births: Preliminary Data for 2004*, at 5 tbl. E (Dec. 29, 2005), http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr54/nvsr54_08.pdf, and European nations now have many immigrants with unusually high birth rates. See *Demography and the West: Half a Billion Americans?*, THE ECONOMIST, Aug. 22, 2002.

diminishes, the compelling nature of the state's and the society's interest in marriage as a family-making institution.

C. *Babies Want Mothers and Fathers*

The third dimension of the postmodern baby problem is that children really do need fathers and mothers. That is, when mothers and fathers fail to make reasonably decent marriages in which to raise their children, most children suffer, and many children are damaged.

Child Trends, a leading and respected child research organization, sums up the current social science consensus on common family structures that have been well-studied:

[R]esearch clearly demonstrates that family structure matters for children, and the family structure that helps children the most is a family headed by two biological parents in a low-conflict marriage. Children in single-parent families, children born to unmarried mothers, and children in stepfamilies or cohabiting relationships face higher risks of poor outcomes There is thus value for children in promoting strong, stable marriages between biological parents.⁴⁰

The risks to children associated with mothers and fathers who do not marry and stay unmarried include: poverty,⁴¹ suicide,⁴² mental illness,⁴³ physical illness,⁴⁴ infant mortality,⁴⁵ lower educational

40. KRISTIN ANDERSON MOORE ET AL., MARRIAGE FROM A CHILD'S PERSPECTIVE: HOW DOES FAMILY STRUCTURE AFFECT CHILDREN, AND WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT IT? 6 (2002). This research brief on family structure does not compare outcomes for children raised by same-sex couples to children in other types of families.

41. See, e.g., Sara McLanahan, *Family, State, and Child Well-Being*, 26 ANN. REV. SOC. 703, 703-05 (2000); Mark R. Rank & Thomas A. Hirschl, *The Economic Risk of Childhood in America: Estimating the Probability of Poverty Across the Formative Years*, 61 J. MARRIAGE & FAM. 1058, 1059 (1999).

42. See, e.g., David M. Cutler et al., *Explaining the Rise in Youth Suicide* 23 (Harvard Inst. of Econ. Research, Working Paper No. 1917, 2001); Gregory R. Johnson et al., *Suicide Among Adolescents and Young Adults: A Cross-National Comparison of 34 Countries*, 30 SUICIDE & LIFE-THREATENING BEHAV. 74, 74 (2000).

43. See, e.g., Paul R. Amato, *Children of Divorce in the 1990s: An Update of the Amato and Keith (1991) Meta-Analysis*, 15 J. FAM. PSYCHOL. 355 (2001); E. MAVIS HETHERINGTON & JOHN KELLY, FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE: DIVORCE RECONSIDERED (2002); Ronald L. Simons et al., *Explaining the Higher Incidence of Adjustment Problems Among Children of Divorce Compared with Those in Two-Parent Families*, 61 J. MARRIAGE & FAM. 1020 (1999).

44. See, e.g., Ronald Angel & Jacqueline Worobey, *Single Motherhood and Children's Health*, 29 J. HEALTH & SOC. BEHAV. 38 (1988); Olle Lundberg, *The Impact of Childhood Living Conditions on Illness and Mortality in Adulthood*, 36 SOC. SCI. & MED. 1047 (1993).

attainment,⁴⁶ juvenile delinquency and conduct disorder,⁴⁷ adult criminality,⁴⁸ early unwed parenthood,⁴⁹ lower life expectancy,⁵⁰ and distant relations with both mothers and fathers.⁵¹

Thirteen leading family scholars recently concluded, "Marriage is an important social good, associated with an impressively broad array of positive outcomes for children and adults alike. . . . [W]hether American society succeeds or fails in building a healthy marriage culture is clearly a matter of legitimate public concern."⁵²

The benefits of marriage for children described by this social science literature do not appear to be direct legal incidents of marriage, of the kind that the state can therefore transfer at will to other family forms. As the Child Trends research brief suggests, children whose parents remarry do not approach the well-being of children in intact married families.⁵³ Similarly, children in many

45. See, e.g., Trude Bennett et al., *Maternal Marital Status as a Risk Factor for Infant Mortality*, 26 FAM. PLAN. PERSP. 252 (1994).

46. See, e.g., Amato, *supra* note 43; Timothy J. Biblarz & Greg Gottainer, *Family Structure and Children's Success: A Comparison of Widowed and Divorced Single-Mother Families*, 62 J. MARRIAGE & FAM. 533 (2000); William H. Jeynes, *The Effects of Several of the Most Common Family Structures on the Academic Achievement of Eighth Graders*, 30 MARRIAGE & FAM. REV. 73 (2000).

47. See, e.g., Chris Coughlin & Samuel Vuchinich, *Family Experience in Preadolescence and the Development of Male Delinquency*, 58 J. MARRIAGE & FAM. 491 (1996); Ross L. Matsueda & Karen Heimer, *Race, Family Structure, and Delinquency: A Test of Differential Association and Social Control Theories*, 52 AM. SOC. REV. 826 (1987).

48. See, e.g., Cynthia C. Harper & Sara S. McLanahan, *Father Absence and Youth Incarceration*, (Ctr. for Research on Child Wellbeing, Working Paper No. 99-03, 2004), http://www.aboutdads.org/reports/Father_Absence_and_Youth_Incarceration.pdf.

49. See, e.g., HETHERINGTON & KELLY, *supra* note 43; Andrew J. Cherlin et al., *Parental Divorce in Childhood and Demographic Outcomes in Young Adulthood*, 32 DEMOGRAPHY 299 (1995); Catherine E. Ross & John Mirowsky, *Parental Divorce, Life-Course Disruption, and Adult Depression*, 61 J. MARRIAGE & FAM. 1034 (1999).

50. See, e.g., Joseph E. Schwartz et al., *Sociodemographic and Psychosocial Factors in Childhood as Predictors of Adult Mortality?*, 85 AM. J. PUB. HEALTH 1237 (1995); Joan S. Tucker et al., *Parental Divorce: Effects on Individual Behavior and Longevity*, 73 J. PERSONALITY & SOC. PSYCHOL. 381 (1997).

51. See, e.g., ALAN C. ACOCK & DAVID H. DEMO, *FAMILY DIVERSITY AND WELL-BEING* (1994); PAUL R. AMATO & ALAN BOOTH, *A GENERATION AT RISK* (1997); William S. Aquilino, *Impact of Childhood Family Disruption on Young Adults' Relationships with Parents*, 56 J. MARRIAGE & FAM. 295 (1994); Nicholas Zill et al., *Long-Term Effects of Parental Divorce on Parent-Child Relationships, Adjustment, and Achievement in Young Adulthood*, 7 J. FAM. PSYCHOL. 91 (1993).

52. WILLIAM J. DOHERTY ET AL., *WHY MARRIAGE MATTERS* 6 (2002) (emphasis omitted).

53. Marilyn Coleman et al., *Reinvestigating Remarriage: Another Decade of Progress*, 62 J. MARRIAGE & FAM. 1288, 1292 (2000). There is research showing that children in stepfamilies report higher rates of dropouts, lower grades and scores on achievement tests, more depression, higher risk of emotional problems, more drug and alcohol use, higher rates of sexual activity,

forms of two-parent families—for example, remarried or cohabiting parents—do no better than children in single-parent homes.⁵⁴ Any two adults raising children together are not the functional equivalent of the child's own mother and father united in marriage. The law of marriage appears to protect children primarily to the extent that it increases the likelihood that children will be born to, and raised by, their own mother and father in a reasonably harmonious union.

IV. THE MARRIAGE CRISIS WE FACE

Here is the current marriage crisis: contemporary societies still need marriage and family, but this need is no longer intuitively obvious to the individual or the community. Traditional informal sanctions, like social stigma, are far too expensive to enforce, and may interfere with other important moral and religious values, such as protecting all children and/or discouraging abortion.

What should be clear by now is that confronting and conquering this deep, structural marriage crisis, however difficult, is not optional. Societies that fail to sustain a reasonably well-functioning marriage culture, that fail to channel the erotic energies of the young toward marriage and family, are destined to dwindle away.⁵⁵ The set of ideas that modern economic and political structures help to generate—that sex is just a personal concern, marriage is optional, sex is separate from babies, babies separate from marriage, and therefore marriage separate from sex—appears to contain the seeds of the destruction of any society that adopts them.⁵⁶

and higher arrest rates compared to children in intact first marriages: "Although the findings ranged widely, most researchers reported that stepchildren were similar to children living with single mothers on the preponderance of outcome measures and that stepchildren generally were at greater risk for problems than were children living with both of their parents." *Id.*

54. *See, e.g.*, DOHERTY ET AL., *supra* note 52, at 5 ("Research does not generally support the idea that remarriage is better for children than living with a single mother."); SARA McLANAHAN & GARY SANDEFUR, *GROWING UP WITH A SINGLE PARENT* 77 (1994) ("In general, compared with children living with both their parents, young people from disrupted families are more likely to drop out of high school, and young women from one-parent families are more likely to become teen mothers, irrespective of the conditions under which they began to live with single mothers and irrespective of whether their mothers remarry or experience subsequent disruptions."); MOORE ET AL., *supra* note 40.

55. WAITE & GALLAGHER, *supra* note 11, at 186.

56. This is one reason I personally am highly confident that gay marriage is not the inevitable wave of the future, as the deeply embedded myth of progress in America suggests. Societies that cannot sustain something so basic to the marriage idea are not going to recommit to the difficult task of sustaining generativity in general.

The leaders of the Catholic Church, lay and clerical, must resist the temptation to view these latest ideological assaults on marriage as just one more sad chapter in the very long, sorry history of sexual sin. There has always been a lot of sexual sin in the world, and, until the Second Coming, there will likely always be a lot of sexual sin. As John Allen, Jr., a Vatican correspondent for the *National Catholic Reporter*, recently put it in the *New York Times*:

Policymakers in the Vatican tend not to get as worked up as many Americans by the large numbers of Catholics in the developed world who flout church regulations on birth control It's not that Vatican officials don't believe in the regulations. Rather, they believe the very nature of an ideal is that many people will fail to realize it.⁵⁷

But to understand the current contemporary attack on marriage and family as merely a values issue—the inevitable failure of individuals to attain an ideal—is to underestimate its power. This latest iteration of a culture of death represents an institutional attack on the capacity of the Catholic Church to transmit faith into the future.

It is not just nations or societies that depend on a reasonably well-functioning marriage system. The family is the prime evangelizer, the most powerful incubator of Catholic faith and identity.⁵⁸ Christianity grew from a tiny club in Jerusalem to the faith of the broad Roman Empire in just 300 years, thanks in no small part to Christian sexual ethics, which, unlike secular Roman ethics, forbade infanticide, contraception, and non-marital sexuality, and discouraged family disruption and desertion.⁵⁹

To put it in the positive, if the Church community succeeded in finding the energy and means to transmit a Catholic vision of marriage and family only to Catholics in the pews and their children—such that Catholics in the pews became ten percent more likely than they are now to marry, stay married, and to have children who grew up with a similar commitment to marriage and babies—both the Church and the public square would be transformed in thirty years. Given the radical changes in the social ecology of the family, the condition that prevailed as recently as the 1950s may not be

57. John L. Allen, Jr., *At the Vatican, Exceptions Make the Rule*, N.Y. TIMES, Sept. 27, 2005, at A25.

58. See CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH ¶ 2225 (2d ed. 1997).

59. See RODNEY STARK, *THE RISE OF CHRISTIANITY* (HarperCollins 1997) (1996).

recaptured. The good news is that this is not necessary to move forward.

V. CAN WE SAVE CATHOLIC MARRIAGE?

This daunting question can be translated along operational lines: can we do a better job of transmitting a Catholic marriage culture to Catholics and their children?

Yes. We can take hope and inspiration, and perhaps a measure of shame, from the demonstrated capacity of certain other religious groups who are fighting the same deconstructing forces in the public culture, but far more successfully than the Catholic Church at this point.

In the United States, for example, recent estimates show that, on average, modern Orthodox Jewish women have 3.3 children, the ultra-Orthodox have 6.6 children, and the Hasidim have 7.9 children.⁶⁰ At an academically oriented modern-Orthodox day school in Manhattan, fifteen-year-old boys and girls were asked how many children they would like to have.

Only two gave two as their ideal number, and none wanted fewer than that. A large majority named four. . . . Orthodox communal culture encourages child-bearing, and has more thoroughly insulated itself from the “substantial downward pressures” that . . . are currently depressing the overall size of the Jewish population—and that may themselves be the results of a rather different value system.⁶¹

The key is not to focus on solving problems but to pursue opportunities. It is likely difficult to change the minds of those Catholics and other Americans now committed to postmodern sexual ideas, which lead to a culture of death. Those Catholics who want to recommit to a Catholic vision of marriage and family can and must be inspired, re-moralized, served, and protected.

The two most urgent tasks are:

- a. to develop ministries and programs that help distressed couples avoid divorce and rebuild loving marriages; and

60. Hillel Goldberg, *The Soaring Orthodox Jewish Birth Rate*, INTERMOUNTAIN JEWISH NEWS, Dec. 3, 2004, available at <http://www.ijn.com/archive/2004%20arch/120304.htm> (citing UNITED JEWISH COMMUNITIES ET AL., THE NATIONAL JEWISH POPULATION SURVEY 2000-01 (2003)).

61. Jack Wertheimer, *Jews and the Jewish Birthrate*, COMMENTARY, Oct. 2005, at 39, 41.

- b. to help Catholic parents transmit their own marriage vision to their own children in the face of a hostile public square.

Coming up with a comprehensive practical strategy for renewing marriage within the Catholic Church and the larger American culture is beyond the scope of this article. But there are three approaches to removing the three conceptual obstacles to marriage.

VI. CONCEPTUAL OBSTACLES: MAKING PROGRESS

A. *Contraception*

In the public square, more good Catholics I know are flummoxed by this issue than by any other. They believe that it all goes back to contraception, that the divorce rate cannot be reduced, and that marriage cannot be strengthened unless people are first persuaded that contraception is morally wrong. Then, since they do not see any way to do that, they are tempted to despair, and retreat, or then are silenced by the knowledge that their own moral views, honestly expressed, would make them seem like wackos to their neighbors and fellow citizens.

Better Catholics often conclude that renewing marriage will have to wait until a deeper religious revival brings people closer to God, which not only implicitly abandons the idea that this teaching is reasonable, but misses the important connection between strengthening Catholic-marriage culture and transmitting the Catholic faith.

This is the essence of a deadly self-reinforcing process of demoralization that tends to make ordinary Catholics distrust the tradition itself and that tends to make advocates of the tradition mistrust their ability to make themselves heard, even sometimes to their own children. How can this process be reversed? How can the social energies around marriage be unleashed in a way that is consistent with Catholic understandings of marriage, sex, and love?

One way to move forward, especially in the public square, is to sidestep the question of whether or not sex ought to produce babies and to insist merely on the simple fact that *it does*. Sex makes babies. The entire relation between men and women relies on the fact that there is a powerful attraction to a sexual act that can, and does, create new life. A large social and moral advance can be realized by merely calling attention to the facts of life.

Prohibitions exist to sustain and create goods. The prohibition on contraception would be more intelligible to ordinary Catholics if it existed in a richer context in which babies, family loyalty, marital love, and human erotic desires were more closely connected.⁶² The fact that Mormons and Orthodox Jews each now do a better job of holding marriages together and connecting marriage to fertility, despite the fact that neither prohibits contraception, demonstrates there is more than one way to skin a cat. Persuading people of the sin of contraception may be important, but it is even more important to persuade them that babies, families, sex, love, and marriage are good.

I have been struck again and again, for example, by how little social support women get these days for the desire to have children. When women ask me whether they should have another child, I always say, if they are married: sure, go ahead. Often, I am the only person they personally know who gives them the least bit of encouragement to do so. For the first ten years or so of adult single life, the female capacity to create life is consistently described to women as a social problem that threatens their education, economic existence, and social status as coequals with males.⁶³ Once married, families worry that one more baby may leave mothers dependent on an unrelated male—for example, the son-in-law—in a culture in which the marriage tie is no longer firm. Mothers even fret about whether they will deprive an existing child by indulging in another baby. Then there is the reality that mothers with babies need a lot of help from others. Maybe it is just plain selfish to have another baby instead of getting a job to help out a hardworking husband.⁶⁴

In upscale American mores today, there are lots of wrong reasons to have children, and there is no excuse for failing to control bodily functions in such a way as to produce one accidentally. Women with larger families report that strangers feel free to come up and chastise them for their lack of self-control in baby-making. When it comes to procreation, it is a scary world.

This represents another dramatic shift in social ecology. In a sense, in the “old days,” women in general faced the same problem that very beautiful women still face today. Their sexual value was so high, it typically swamped their other attributes. The urgent necessity of procreation to family and community survival once made

62. Enriching these connections is of course the great contribution of the theology of the body, so ably advanced by Pope John Paul II. See THEOLOGY OF THE BODY, *supra* note 18.

63. See MAGGIE GALLAGHER, ENEMIES OF EROS 57-59 (1989).

64. See *id.* at 44.

women's capacity to produce new life their dominant socially valued trait. Today, by contrast, generativity is a problem standing in the way of women's valued participation in other activities and institutions.⁶⁵

What makes a difference is not thundering condemnations but gentle affirmation of the value of women's unique capacity to make new life. In the twenty-first century, Catholic communities should strive to become not just pro-life, but pro-baby.

B. *Gender*

Current gender norms are powerful testimony to the way social institutions work; they affect human behavior by guiding human thought. In spite of powerful evidence that men and women are indeed different, female elites remain powerfully committed to suppressing this idea in ordinary life, rejecting and stigmatizing those who would point to gender realities.⁶⁶ Many women in influential social classes see femininity as a threat to their human dignity.⁶⁷

The principle task of cultural renewal around gender is not to reclaim a word, for example, "authentic feminism,"⁶⁸ but to sustain a story of gender—of masculinity and femininity—that resonates with women.⁶⁹ This will be work for women and by women, and will consist of challenging the idea that women's deepest drives and aspirations somehow make them subordinate to men. Human beings come in two models, male and female, each of whom is fully human.⁷⁰

Reconnecting marriage and generativity offers a pathway. The asymmetrical biological sexual realities of generativity give rise to social meanings for gender. Women get pregnant; men get women pregnant. Men have unique responsibilities toward women. Marriage, far from being a way to subordinate women, becomes the means of creating equality between parents that nature alone fails to

65. *See id.*

66. *Id.* at 4-5, 9-10.

67. *See id.* at 130-53.

68. Pontifical Council for the Family, *Children: Springtime of the Family and Society* (Oct. 11-13, 2000), http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/family/documents/rc_pc_family_doc_20010329_jub-fam-conclusion_en.html; *see also* Pope John Paul II, *Evangelium Vitae* [*Encyclical Letter on the Value and Inviolability of Human Life*] ¶ 99 (St. Paul ed. 1995) (referring to this type of feminism as a "new feminism").

69. *See, e.g.*, Pope John Paul II, *Mulieris Dignitatem* [*Apostolic Letter on the Dignity and Vocation of Women*] ¶ 24 (St. Paul ed. 1988).

70. *Id.* ¶ 6.

sustain. When a baby is born, there is bound to be a mother somewhere close by. Marriage is the way that virtually every known society attaches a father to the mother-child unit.

The urgently missing piece is to renew a woman's status as wife as a social identity, a character in a moral drama that women want to play. In spite of the sexual revolution, the outlines of the identity men assume in becoming husbands remain clear: husbands are men who have sworn to protect and provide for their wives and children, to place their masculine drives in the service of their wives rather than engaging in sexual opportunism toward them. By gaining a woman's love and by becoming a husband trusted to be a father to children, he becomes more of a man.⁷¹ Although support for this role may be weakening,⁷² in part because of women's ambivalence about gender, the basic outlines are still there: men still know something about whom they become in becoming husbands.

I do not think the same is true for women. When I recently asked women in focus groups what a good wife does, they generally responded that it was whatever good husbands do. Good spouses listen, support, comfort, and share. But, these women insisted, there is nothing distinctive or special that women bring to the marriage table. So long as women continue to perceive being a wife in this way, women's commitment to marriage remains provisional—based on the satisfactions of a good relationship—or secondary, to their primary commitment as good mothers, which is to give their children a father.

Strengthening marital permanence will require strengthening the ideal of "wife" as an identity—as a story in which women want to live their lives.

C. *Indissolubility*

Unlike gender or contraception, the Church's teaching on indissolubility does not generate resistance in principle, only in practice. That is, the vast majority of Americans believe that marriage

71. Pope John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio* [*Apostolic Exhortation on the Family*] ¶ 25 (St. Paul ed. 1981).

72. See, e.g., Tom W. Smith, *The Emerging 21st Century American Family* (Nov. 24, 1999) (unpublished report) <http://www.norc.uchicago.edu/online/emerge.pdf>.

should be for life.⁷³ When they marry, they imagine their marriages as permanent. The idea of lasting love remains a powerful attraction.

Marriage involves not just the expression of emotions but the assumption of identity; becoming a wife or a husband represents a transformation of who a person is, in the same way as parenthood. Having a baby turns a woman into a mother. This is not the performance of a new set of tasks; it is a permanent transformation of the self. The possibility of a new identity based on lasting love is what the Catholic vision of marriage offers that the lower-commitment models simply cannot offer.⁷⁴ Just as a child is always a child of his or her parent no matter what happens to the relationship, a husband will be a husband to his wife until death. People will know who they are through the voluntary assumption of these important roles.

Every Catholic couple who stays married testifies that love is real and that people can count on love. Every Catholic couple who divorces, by contrast, reinforces deep fears that the only person on whom one can really rely is oneself.

Promising to give oneself to another human being for life is the most extraordinary thing most people will ever do. Heightening the drama and the significance of the vow, deepening the understanding of the vast difference between marriage and other relations such as cohabitation, and pointing to the reality that with children in marriage two become one flesh—all are part of the task ahead. Marriage is the promise to love just one other human being in the way that God loves everyone.⁷⁵ Capturing the moral imagination of the next generation—as well as providing new tools for parents, parishes, and schools that inspire as well as inform—is key.

The practical part is doing a much better job of supporting Catholics in distressed marriages. New lay ministries are needed.⁷⁶ Ministries aimed at meeting the needs of newlyweds, new parents, and of “blended” families can teach Catholic spouses how to love one another better in marriage.

73. Cf. Kathryn Edin & Maria Kefalas, *Unmarried Because They Value Marriage*, WASH. POST, May 1, 2005, at B4 (reporting that many poor, young mothers hold conviction “that marriage should last forever”).

74. See Pope Pius XI, *Casti Connubii* [*Encyclical Letter on Christian Marriage*] (St. Paul ed. 1930).

75. See *id.*

76. These new ministries should be developed similar to the Marriage Savers model, which is described in more detail at <http://www.marriagesavers.org>.

The task of renewing marriage is no less than to renew faith in love for this generation. Many so-called “marriage advocates” today speak in the name of love, but in truth they advocate disposable human relations, disconnected from any larger purpose. And human beings desperately want to believe that their deepest drives and longings have a purpose, that these longings are directing them toward love, goodness, and renewal.⁷⁷ In marriage, men and women come together in faith to make the future happen. These are not private and personal matters, but the shared urgent business of the entire Catholic community.

CONCLUSION

If we simply find some ways to make things a little bit better in the years ahead—to reduce divorce, encourage married couples to have children, help parents find ways to transmit their Catholic faith to their children—an enormous amount of social energy will be unleashed. For what we have already discovered is that there are no good alternatives to faith, hope, and love.⁷⁸ Our opponents’ last refuge lies in the arguments from despair: there is nothing much you can do, so you might as well stop trying.

Smash through those, and they will have nothing left to say.

APPENDIX: STRENGTHENING MARRIAGE IN THE PEWS AND PUBLIC SQUARE—GENERATING POSSIBILITIES

- Identify priests who are successful at ministering to distressed married couples and at preventing divorce and separation. Have them tell their stories, so as to provide new models and new hope.
- Distribute the booklet *Why Marriage Matters: 21 Conclusions from the Social Sciences*⁷⁹ to every parish, family life office, seminarian, and Catholic school in the diocese.
- Create a network of referrals to marriage counselors who commit to marital permanence. Make local priests aware of these referral networks.
- Offer marriage education courses to lay ministers to provide support groups for newlyweds, stepfamilies, and distressed

77. See, e.g., Pope Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum* [Encyclical Letter on Capital and Labor] (St. Paul ed. 1891).

78. See 1 *Corinthians* 13:13.

79. WHY MARRIAGE MATTERS: 21 CONCLUSIONS FROM THE SOCIAL SCIENCES (2002).

couples. (See <http://www.smartmarriages.com> and <http://www.marriagesavers.com> for resources.)

- Help immigrants transmit their family values. Many Mexican immigrants arrive in this country with strong Catholic faith and marriage values, and deep, realistic fears that the surrounding culture may co-opt their children. Develop ministries and support groups aimed at helping Mexican and other Latino immigrants protect their children from youth culture and to transmit their family values intact.
- Offer a contest for lay people to nominate the best sermon on marriage and babies they have heard. Publish a collection of the sermons as a reference book for priests and seminaries.
- Attach a powerful marriage message to all teen pregnancy prevention programs in Catholic schools and communities. Ask the local public schools to do the same.
- Have a lay marriage education ministry that supports parents of newborns, especially first births. Informal support groups help normalize the stresses and strains of the transition to parenthood and can identify more seriously distressed couples before they divorce.
- Consider legal alternatives more supportive of marital permanence, for example, prenuptials based on canon law that designate Church courts, or some alternative arbitration mechanism, for couples who seek a more binding marriage covenant. (Professor Stephen Safranek of Ave Maria School of Law has launched such an initiative at <http://www.truemarriage.net>).
- Get a digital camera. Take baptism photos. Put them in the church bulletin. Make a big deal over the baptized child's brothers and sisters too.
- Make public policy that supports and promotes larger families (like the child tax credit) a higher priority for Catholics.
- Create a parish list-serve or chat room for mothers with children. Offer features on larger families, tips for protecting one's children from the culture, and positive suggestions for passing on the faith.
- Invite homeschoolers to participate in Catholic school life (for example, by joining sports teams or doing other extracurriculars). This will ensure that more of our children are exposed to some of our most committed Catholic families.
- Ask Catholics parents (married or single) to make raising happily married children as important a goal as raising well-educated

children. Develop a guide for parents, for example, one called *Raising Happily Married Kids: A Guide for Single and Other Mothers*.

- Develop brief, simple educational materials for parents to use with their children. Integrate these materials into Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (CCD) and other religious education classes. Ask parents to share their hopes and dreams of marriage with children. Develop materials single parents can use to overcome their fears that past sins or misfortunes prevent them from passing on moral ideals and rules to their children.
- Create a “Can this Marriage Be Saved?” marriage counseling column for diocesan newspapers. Feature local marriage counselors who are knowledgeable and pro-marriage.
- Use surveys to identify couples in the pews who are experiencing marital problems, and invite them to a local “marriage tune-up,” using Practical Applications of Intimate Relations (PAIRS) or similar techniques.
- Move beyond the written word. Identify or develop brief CDs and DVDs that can be shown not only to children, but to parents contemplating divorce, and integrate these materials into Catholic education, CCD, and pre-Cana programs.
- Nurture a new generation of Catholic artists. A small group of philanthropists could pick a Catholic college, develop a filmmaking program, buy digital cameras, get them in the hands of students, sponsor a “short” film festival or screenplay contest for Catholic students nationwide, and/or develop relationships with Christians in Hollywood. Do not be small-minded about what you are looking for. Let genuine artists develop telling stories in ways that reflect (rather than propagandize about) their lives as Catholics in twenty-first-century America. People live by stories, and serious Catholics almost never see the actual drama of their lives reflected on the screen. The Catholic imagination has always expressed itself in a powerful artistic tradition. Technology makes creating and disseminating films cheaper than ever. Take advantage of these developments.
- Launch a qualitative research project to identify parents and parishes that are successfully transmitting Catholic marriage culture to determine “best practices” that could be replicated elsewhere.
- Commission a Catholics and Marriage Next Generation Research Project to determine what Catholic young adults have learned and

believe about marriage, and to identify the factors affecting the successful transmission of Catholic marriage values.

- Use new technologies to identify and communicate with core supporters of the Catholic Church. This will become increasingly essential to protecting the Church from profound conflicts with the state over issues such as mandatory contraception, gay marriage, and abortion. It will also be useful in moralizing the Church faithful, who know they are minorities and often feel unwelcome within their own parishes. Identify one hundred people in every parish who support the Church's teaching on contraception. Get their e-mail addresses and start communicating with them on a regular basis.
- Create a national, Catholic organization to support public policies that benefit larger families, like the child tax credit.