Marriage is a divine path

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The publication of Pope Benedict XVI's book-length interview *The Light of the World* has sparked a large number of incorrect explanations of the Catholic Church's teaching on morals and marriage.
Read the Note by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith On the Trivialization of Sexuality: Regarding Certain Interpretations of *Light of the World*.

Below are some passages from St Josemaria's writings about Christian marriage.

"Facing up to the future with hope, with supernatural faith, is something very different from pretending problems don't exist. Faith spurs us on anew every day to find solutions. Faith gives us the conviction that neither science, nor the consciences of honest scientists, can accept superficially logical solutions whose apparent effectiveness is belied by their basic dishonesty. Such things contradict the true meaning of human love, block the sources of life, lead to disguised hedonism or the coarsest kind of materialism, stifle human dignity, and leave people enslaved to sadness.

This world of ours will not be saved – if I may be forgiven the repetition – by people who aim to drug the life of the spirit by reducing everything to questions of economics or material well-being. It will be saved when people have faith in God and in man's eternal destiny, and when we learn to receive Christ's truth as the guiding light for our actions. Because 'the God of our faith is not a distant being who contemplates the fate of men indifferently.' He is a Father who passionately loves his children; a Creator God who is overflowing with love for those he has created. And he grants us human beings the great privilege of being able to love in our turn, so that we can transcend what is ephemeral and transitory.

Human lives, which are holy, because they come from God, cannot be treated like mere objects or statistics. Contemplating the profound reality of life calls forth the noblest affections of the human heart. How lovingly, how tenderly, with what infinite patience, parents look at their children, even before they are born! And just

as much untiring generosity, attention to detail, and serenity of judgement, is employed by a theologian carefully unpacking the divine teaching of Scripture about human life. Just as much joyful anticipation, intuition and keenness of intellect are called for in a doctor applying the latest remedies to prevent the risk of a congenital illness that threatens the life of an unborn child."
Josemaria Escriva, *Discursos sobre la Universidad*, "El Compromiso de la verdad", 8 ("Discourses on the University – The Commitment of Truth")

"In this field I can speak from the experience of many years of priestly activity in many countries. (...) Human love and marriage duties are part of one's divine vocation. I have spent almost forty years preaching the vocational meaning of marriage. More than once I have had occasion to see faces light up as men and women, who had thought that in their lives a dedication to God was incompatible with a noble and pure human love, heard me say that marriage is a divine path on earth!

The purpose of marriage is to help married people sanctify themselves and others. For this reason they receive a special grace in the sacrament which Jesus Christ instituted. Those who are called to the married state will, with the grace of God, find within their state everything they need to be holy, to identify themselves each day more with Jesus Christ, and to lead those with whom they live to God.

That is why I always look upon Christian homes with hope and affection, upon all the families which are the fruit of the Sacrament of Matrimony. They are a shining witness of the great divine mystery of Christ's loving union with His Church which St. Paul calls *sacramentum magnum*, a great sacrament (Eph 5:32). We must strive so that these cells of Christianity may be born and may develop with a desire for holiness, conscious of the fact that the Sacrament of Initiation – Baptism – confers on all Christians a divine mission that each must fulfil in his own walk of life."
Conversations with Monsignor Escriva de Balaguer, "Women in Social Life and in the Life of the Church", 91,

Everything they need for holiness
"Christian couples should be aware that they are called to sanctity themselves and to sanctify others, that they are called to be apostles and that their first apostolate is in the home. They should understand that founding a family, educating their children, and exercising a Christian influence in society, are supernatural tasks. The effectiveness and the success of their life – their happiness – depends to a great extent on their awareness of their specific mission.

But they mustn't forget that the secret of married happiness lies in everyday things, not in daydreams. It lies in finding the hidden joy of coming home in the evening, in affectionate relations with their children, in the everyday work in which the whole family cooperates; in good humour in the face of difficulties that should be met with a sporting spirit; in making the best use of all the advantages that civilisation offers to help us rear children, to make the house pleasant and life more simple.

I constantly tell those who have been called by God to form a home to love one another always, to love each other with the love of their youth. Any one who thinks that love ends when the worries and difficulties that life brings with it begin, has a poor idea of marriage, which is a sacrament and an ideal and a vocation. It is precisely then that love grows strong. Torrents of worries and difficulties are incapable of drowning true love because people who sacrifice themselves generously together are brought closer by their sacrifice. As Scripture says, *aquae multae*, a host of difficulties, physical and moral, *non potuerunt extinguere caritatem*, cannot extinguish love (Cant 8:7)."
Conversations with Monsignor Escriva de Balaguer, 91

Don't debase the gift of charity
"Ask God boldly for this treasure, for the supernatural virtue of charity, so that you may practise it even in the smallest details.
Too often we Christians have not known how to correspond to this gift. At times we have debased it, as if it could be confined to a soulless and cold almsgiving; or we have reduced it to more or less stereotyped good works.

In order that you might grasp this truth very clearly, I have preached on countless occasions that we do not have one heart to love God with and another with which to love men. This poor heart of ours, made of flesh, loves with an affection which is human and which, if it is united to Christ's love, is also supernatural. This, and no other, is the charity we have to cultivate in our souls, a charity which will lead us to discover in others the image of Our Lord."Josemaria Escriva, Friends of God, "The Strength of Love" , 229

DOCUMENTATION
- Josemaria Escriva, Christ is Passing By, "Marriage, a Christian vocation"
- Catechism of the Catholic Church, "The Sacrament of Matrimony"
- Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, "Note On the Trivialization of Sexuality: Regarding Certain Interpretations of Light of the World."

- Josemaria Escriva, Conversations with Monsignor Escriva de Balaguer, “Women in Social Life and in the Life of the Church”
- Josemaria Escriva, Friends of God, “The Strength of Love” (chapter 14)