

Children, the Precious Gift of Marriage

An excerpt from *Familiaris consortio*, Pope St John Paul II, 1981

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According to the plan of God, marriage is the foundation of the wider community of the family, since the very institution of marriage and conjugal love are ordained to the procreation and education of children, in whom they find their crowning.^[34]

In its most profound reality, love is essentially a gift; and conjugal love, while leading the spouses to the reciprocal “knowledge” which makes them “one flesh,”^[35] does not end with the couple, because it makes them capable of the greatest possible gift, the gift by which they become cooperators with God for

giving life to a new human person. Thus the couple, while giving themselves to one another, give not just themselves but also the reality of children, who are a living reflection of their love, a permanent sign of conjugal unity and a living and inseparable synthesis of their being a father and a mother.

When they become parents, spouses receive from God the gift of a new responsibility. Their parental love is called to become for the children the visible sign of the very love of God, “from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named.”^[36]



^[34] Cf. Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et spes*, 50.

^[35] Cf. *Gn* 2, 24.

^[36] *Eph* 3, 15.