THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA

“Be Fruitful and Multiply:” Catholic Teaching on the Ends of Marriage with reference to Questions posed by Igbo Culture

A DISSERTATION

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The institution of marriage is as old as the human race itself. While almost every society engages in marrying, opinions are divided among scholars, cultures, and religions with regard to the purposes of marriage. One of the reasons for this divergence is because each scholar, culture or religion defines marriage by paying particular attention to the values and purposes it attaches to it. The Igbo Ethnic group of Nigeria and the Catholic Church are examples of a culture and a religion that define the purposes of marriage by paying special attention to their cultural values and religious heritage. Thus, while the Igbo culture sees children (particularly male children) as the primary purpose of marriage, scholars debate whether the Catholic Church which held this primacy of children for more than twenty centuries (even if not specifically male children as the Igbo do) currently sees procreation as the primary purpose of marriage. The reason for the lack of consensus among current scholars (such as William E. May and Theodore Mackin) can be attributed to the silence of Gaudium et Spes over the hierarchical terminology of the primary and secondary ends of marriage that was used in the 1917 Code of Canon Law.

Given the silence of Gaudium et Spes over the language of primary and secondary ends of marriage, the ongoing debate among theologians, and the Igbo understanding of the purposes
of marriage as exclusively ordered to the procreation of male children, this study offers a condensed but critical analyses of the history of the Catholic teaching concerning the ends of marriage from the biblical tradition to the twenty first century. In analyzing this history, this study demonstrates that although Catholic teaching concerning the purposes of marriage has undergone significant development in the course of history from seeing the good of proles as the primary purpose of marriage to an ‘inseparable connection’ between the procreative and unitive meanings of the conjugal act,' the current Igbo cultural practice which understands the male child(ren) as the primary purpose of marriage is in conflict with much of this tradition as well as the current magisterial position on the ends of marriage. It also shows that there has been significant development in the magisterial understanding of the purposes of marriage from the beginning of the twentieth century to the present.
This dissertation by Casmir C. Onyegwara fulfills the dissertation requirement for the doctoral degree in Moral Theology and Ethics approved by John Grabowski, Ph. D., as Director, and by William Barbieri, Ph.D and William Mattison, Ph.D as readers.

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William Mattison, Ph.D., Reader
DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the honor of my parents, late Goeffery Onyegwara and my surviving mother Ezinne Stella Akuagwo Onyegwara who gave me birth.
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The close association of progeny with marriage and the conjugal act has a long history which is as old as humanity itself. In the first account of the creation of humanity, God instructed *h’adam* “to increase and multiply,” while in the second account, God built up into a woman the rib he had taken from the man for “it is not good for man to be alone.”¹ Consequently, different cultures and religions have based their understanding of the purposes of marriage and the significance of the conjugal act on their reading and interpretation of the first and the second accounts of the creation of humanity. The Igbo ethnic group of Nigeria is an example of a culture and a people that sees the purpose of marriage and of the conjugal act strictly through the lens of progeny.² Similarly, the Catholic tradition for more than nineteen centuries understood procreation as the primary purpose of marriage.³

The emphasis on (male) children as the primary purpose of marriage is upheld by Igbo Christians (Catholics) and non-Christians to the extent that culturally the Igbo have a zero tolerance for infertility. In fact, there have been occasions where some Igbo Catholic men who were married to infertile women have denied them the conjugal act because such would not lead

¹ Genesis, 1: 28; and 2:18-22. This view is elaborated in chapter three that treats the biblical account of the creation of humanity. The biblical citation throughout this study will be taken from *The New American Bible* unless otherwise noted.

² This assertion is developed in chapter two that treats the Igbo understanding of marriage.

³ This claim is asserted in chapters’ three to seven of this study that treats the history of the Catholic teaching concerning the purposes of marriage and the arguments of William E. May and Theodore Mackin in reference to the magisterial teaching concerning the purposes of marriage.
to the begetting of a child. This practice further demonstrates the Igbo’s strict association of the usefulness of the conjugal act with progeny. Consequently, the culture regards marriages which have no (male) children as failures and incomplete marriages. To address the problem of infertility or the inability of couples to beget a male child, the Igbo culture tolerates adulterous activities and approves polygamous marriages. Similarly, since the advent of the new scientific reproductive technologies such as artificial insemination or In Vitro Fertilization (IVF), and sex selective procedures, like MicroSort, some Igbo infertile Catholic couples and those who have no male children have embraced these scientific methods as medical solutions to their problems and the culture is at peace with their use.

But the emphasis on children as the primary purpose of marriage and the seeing of children as the only justification for engaging in the conjugal act within marriage is not limited to the Igbo culture or people alone. Rather, following Augustine, the Catholic tradition had for centuries regarded progeny as the primary purpose of marriage as well as the justification for the performance of the conjugal act within marriage. Thus, while Augustine taught that marriage

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4 I have on many occasions encountered this moral and pastoral problem in my ministry and have counselled Catholic couples who found themselves in such unfortunate situations. Some potential or engaged couples, who want to avoid this problem, engage in pre-marital sex to make sure that their union would be fruitful before they cement their relations with either the traditional or a church wedding.

5 The MicroSort procedure is a reproductive method that sorts the male sperm prior to fertilization to determine the sex of the child. Because of the scope of this study, I intend to analyze only the sex selective procedure MicroSort since it directly deals with pre-determining the sex of the child and in this case the male child which is the purpose for which Igbo use it as chapter eight of this study shows. For more information concerning the divergence between Catholic teaching and social attitudes toward reproductive technologies, see John, G. Deedy, “Five Medical Dilemmas that Might Scare You to Death,” *U.S. Catholic* 53 (April 1988): 6-14. For a succinct explanation of a variety of these new reproductive technologies excluding MicroSort procedure, see John Grabowski, *Sex and Virtue: An Introduction to Sexual Ethics* (Washington D. C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2003), 133-140.

has three distinct goods: *proles, fides* and *sacramentum*, he understood the good of *proles* as the primary and legitimate purpose of marriage.⁷ He not only gave the conjugal act only an instrumental value since it was not regarded as good in itself but only good as a means to children, he also gave limited explication of the role of love and marital friendship. The scholastics (such as Aquinas and Bonaventure) maintained Augustine’s primacy of the procreative good, but unlike Augustine, they recognized the importance of love, especially love as friendship in marriage. In doing so, Aquinas referred to the purposes of marriage in the language of ends, rather than the goods of marriage as Augustine did.⁸

Subsequent to Aquinas’s designation of the purposes of marriage in the language of ends, the *1917 Code of Canon Law* defined the purposes of marriage in a hierarchical terminology of the primary and secondary ends of marriage.⁹ The subordination of the secondary ends, mutual help and the allaying of concupiscence to procreation was explicitly taught by the *1917 Code*. Following the *1917 Code’s* teaching, the personalist scholars such as Dietrich von Hildebrand

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⁸ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, vol.iv Supple trans., Fathers of the English Dominican Province (Notre Dame IN: Ave Maria Books, 1981), q.65, a.1. This claim is developed in chapter four of this study.

and Herbert Doms described the purposes of marriage in phrases such as ‘primary meaning and primary ends of marriage’ as well as ‘immanent meaning and the proximate and remote ends.’ In Hildebrand’s new axiology, love was seen as the primary meaning of marriage and procreation as the primary end of marriage. According to Doms, the realization of ‘two-in-oneness’ Zweieinigkeit, is the immanent meaning of marriage, and procreation and mutual help are the proximate and remote ends of marriage. Today, the magisterium no longer speaks of the ends of marriage in these hierarchical terms. This new approach started with, and has continued beyond the Second Vatican Council Fathers’ treatment of marriage and its ends in the “Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World,” Gaudium et Spes (1965).

However, Gaudium et Spes’s silence on a hierarchy of ends continues to spark significant debate among theologians concerning the actual teaching of the magisterium on this issue. Some scholars such as William E. May, capitalizes on the silence of the Second Vatican Council’s delegates over the terminology of the primary and secondary ends, to argue that the tradition still maintains procreation as the primary end of marriage while, the mutual help and the allaying of

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10 Dietrich, Von Hildebrand, Marriage: The Mystery of Faithful Love, translated by Emmanuel Chapman and Daniel Sullivan (London: Longmans Green 1942), v, vi, 4. This view is expounded in chapter five that analysis the twentieth century personalism.

11 See Herbert Doms, The Meaning and End of Marriage translated by George Sayer (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1939), 106. This claim is elaborated in chapter five that treats twentieth century personalism.

concupiscence are the secondary ends of marriage. On the contrary, some other scholars like Theodore Mackin argue that the silence of *Gaudium et Spes* over the terminology of the primary and secondary ends of marriage marks a significant departure from the traditional hierarchy of the ends of marriage. Neither the statements of Paul VI’s 1968 encyclical letter on *Human Life*, who speaks of “the inseparable connection that exists between the procreative and unitive meanings of the conjugal act,” nor those of Pope John Paul II’s 1981 Apostolic Exhortation, *On the Christian Family*, who speaks of fecundity as the “fruit and sign conjugal love,” have been able to bring theologians into consensus on this matter. Similarly, the insights from the 1983 *Code of Canon Law*, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1992), and the Congregation of the Doctrine of Faith’s documents *Instruction on the Respect for Human Life* (1987), and *The Dignity of a Person* (2008), have not been able to settle this matter among scholars.

But the mere fact that this ambiguity exists concerning the current teaching of the magisterium in reference to the purposes of marriage is not a trivial issue especially for Igbo Catholics who look to the magisterium for an explicit direct ion in matters of faith and morals. Therefore, bringing clarity to the current teaching of the magisterium in reference to the purposes of marriage will settle the ambiguity that *Gaudium et Spes*’s silence creates. Also it will also

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14 See Theodore Mackin, *What is Marriage?* (New York: Paulist Press, 1982), 235-237. A detailed analysis of the arguments of Mackin on this question is provided in chapter seven of this study.


16 The analysis of the relevant sections of each of these Post *Gaudium et Spes* magisterial documents is provided in chapter seven of the study.
help Igbo Catholics and in fact, all others who have used or who may want to use the lacuna that is created by this doubt to justify any position that is contrary to what the magisterium currently teaches as the purposes of marriage.

The relevance of this particular study lies in the fact that although there have been scholarly works which have examined *Gaudium et Spes*’s treatment of marriage and its ends, none have addressed *Gaudium et Spes*’s silence over the traditional terminology of the primary and secondary ends of marriage in light of previous and subsequent magisterial documents, the current theological debate it produces among theologians, and the problems it poses to any culture that sees the value of marriage strictly as an avenue to produce male children. Thus, given the silence of *Gaudium et Spes* over the language of primary and secondary ends of marriage, the ongoing debate concerning the current teaching of the magisterium with regard to the purposes of marriage among theologians, and the Igbo understanding of the purposes of marriage as exclusively ordered to the procreation of male children, this study offers a condensed but critical analysis of the history of the Catholic teaching concerning the purposes of marriage from the biblical tradition to the twentieth first century.

In doing so, this study demonstrates that although Catholic teaching concerning the purposes of marriage has undergone significant developments in the course of history from seeing the good of *proles* as the primary purpose of marriage to an “inseparable connection between the procreative and unitive meanings of the conjugal act,” the current Igbo cultural practice which understands male children as the primary purpose of marriage is in conflict with much of this tradition as well as the current magisterial position concerning the ends of marriage.
It also shows that there has been significant development in the magisterial understanding of the purposes of marriage from the beginning of the twentieth century to the present.

In order to develop this thesis, the present study is divided into five sections, comprising of eight chapters. The first section examines the Igbo understanding of marriage as an avenue of begetting male children in particular as an example of a culture that sees procreation as the only reason for marriage. It does so by drawing on the insights that are provided by African theological reflection and social scientific research. It is neither a full blown account of the history of the Igbo nor is it an ethnological and anthropological-sociological study. On the contrary, it is a succinct description of the relevant aspects or characteristics of the origin of the Igbo and their cultural practices that are necessary to contextualize the analysis of their understanding of the purposes of marriage. Consequently, chapter one presents a brief exposition of who the Igbo people are and the theories about their origin by examining the location, social, religion, family life, and the governance of the Igbo ethnic group. As a proposal that launches the study into the analysis of marriage as practiced by the Igbo, this chapter observes that culturally the governance of Igbo people both at family, village, and town levels is entrenched around their male children but particularly their first born male child (the Diokpala).

But since the Diopkala must be the fruit of a culturally approved marriage or arrangement, chapter two discusses the Igbo understanding of marriage through a focus on the definition of marriage by the Igbo; the place of children in Igbo marriage; the reasons for the Igbo emphasis on male children as the primary purpose of marriage; and the Igbo altitude toward childless marriages. I propose in this chapter that the amaechila mentality, which is best
translated as “May one’s ancestral lineage not end or close during one’s time,” is the main reason for the Igbo emphasis on male children as the purpose of marriage.

Given that part of the reasons for the Igbo understanding of the male child as the primary purpose of marriage is associated with the first account of creation in which God mandated humanity ‘to increase and multiply’ the third chapter traces the history of the Catholic teaching concerning the purposes of marriage by analyzing the biblical accounts of the origin of humanity and by association the establishment of the ideal marriage. It also examines how the Patristic authors interpreted the biblical story concerning the creation of humanity and Augustine’s teaching with regard to the goodness of marriage. I propose that, while Augustine’s sexual ethic provided the fertile soil for subsequent discussions on sexuality and marriage in the West, he can be criticized for allocating only an instrumental value to the conjugal act as well as for his limited treatment of the significance of love especially love as friendship in marriage.

Hence chapter four analyzes how subsequent scholars responded or reacted to Augustine’s triad of the goods of marriage. Of special interest here is the teaching of Aquinas and Bonaventure—especially their views concerning the role of love and friendship as they relate to marriage, the conjugal act and procreation. The same is also true of Aquinas’s transformation of Augustine’s goods of marriage into the ends of marriage. While Aquinas follows Aristotle in seeing humanity’s ability to reason as the specific distinction between irrational and rational animals, and speaks of the purposes of marriage in the language of ends, he nonetheless, maintains with Augustine the primacy of the procreative good/end of marriage.
As a continuation of tracing the history of the Catholic teaching concerning the purposes of marriage, chapter five analyzes the *1917 Code of Canon Law*’s teaching concerning the purposes of marriage. I propose that because of the focus on law during the modern era, the *1917 Code of Canon Law* maintained the primacy of the procreative end to the detriment of mutual help and the allaying of concupiscence partly in order to assist canon lawyers to establish what is and what is not a marriage for the purpose of Church courts. However, this moral reasoning that focused on law and obligation in the area of sexual morality was challenged by some scholars, especially the personalist thinkers of the twentieth century. Thus, this chapter also examines the views of Dietrich Von Hildebrand and Herbert Doms concerning the purposes of marriage. I propose that Hildebrand and Doms’s personalist’s leanings were indeed significant in shaping subsequent magisterial teaching concerning the purposes of marriage. However, they were neither the official spokes-persons of the magisterium nor were they able to propound a teaching which departed from the hierarchical structure that subordinated one end or meaning of marriage by the other.

Chapter six analyzes the teaching of the Second Vatican Council Fathers in reference to the ends of marriage by a brief focus on the historical backdrop leading to the convocation of the Second Vatican Council. It also presents a critical analysis of the deliberations of the Council Fathers prior to and leading to the approved text of *Gaudium et Spes* numbers 47 to 52 by examining relevant sections of the *Acta Synodalalia* and secondary literature. It also analyzes the approved text of *Gaudium et Spes* numbers 47 to 52 which embody the teaching concerning the purposes of marriage with the aid of some relevant secondary literature with the aim of finding
how best to interpret the silence of the Council fathers over the hierarchical terminology of the primary and secondary ends of marriage.

As an added effort to better understand the import of the silence of the Council delegates, chapter seven treats relevant sections of six subsequent magisterial documents that touched on the question of marriage and its ends. The particular documents of interest here are: Pope Paul VI’s encyclical letter “On Human Life,” *Humanae Vitae* (1968), Pope John Paul II’s Apostolic Exhortation “On the Christian Family,” *Familiaris Consortio* (1981), the *1983 Code of Canon Law*, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1992), and the Congregation of the Doctrine of Faith’s documents Instruction on the Respect for Human Life, *Donum Vitae* (1987), and the CDF instruction, The Dignity of a Person, *Dignitas Personae* (2008). It also analyzes the arguments of May and Mackin as representative of the scholars who clearly hold opposite sides of the debate. It is my hope that by the end of this chapter, that this study would have collected enough evidence that is necessary to make an informed judgment concerning the correct interpretation of *Gaudium et Spes*’s silence over the language of primary and secondary ends that better reflects the current teaching of the magisterium in reference to marriage and its purposes.

Presuming that this clear and definitive position concerning the current teaching of the magisterium with regard to the purposes of marriage is reached at this stage in this historical analysis, chapter eight concludes the study by analyzing the central tensions and questions posed for and by Igbo culture and other cultures which similarly view the exclusive purpose of marriage in terms of male progeny. It also investigates whether the position(s) reached as the current teaching of the Catholic Church in reference to the purposes of marriage, supports or
departs from the Igbo understanding of the purposes of marriage and on how such position interfaces with the Igbo cultural methods of addressing infertility problems. Thus, it evaluates critically: adultery, polygamy and MicroSort, which Igbo culture tolerates and approves as means of addressing infertility problems.

Also, given that the Church presently, encourages missionaries to embrace the values of cultures in the mission lands that are not in conflict with faith in Judeo–Christian God in order to foster and preserve not only each culture’s characteristics and core values, but also to enrich itself, this concluding chapter also integrates the Igbo understanding of the purposes of marriage into the Christian ideal of marriage. The aim is to blend the values in both traditions in such a way that simultaneously protects the current magisterial position concerning the purposes of marriage and the Igbo values that are instrumental for their strict association of the significance of marriage with male children but also to ameliorate the effects of the Igbo focus on male children as the primary purpose of marriage. Finally, it evaluates and concludes the whole study with emphasis on the contributions of this present study and proposes areas and topics for further study.

\^[17] Gaudium et Spes, 58.
CHAPTER ONE

ABOUT THE IGBO PEOPLE.

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria as a country has three major ethnic groups; the Igbo, the Hausa and the Yoruba. Each of these ethnic groups has a distinct language, culture, and significant differences in the areas of religion and social life that distinguishes them from the other tribes. Geographically, each ethnic group occupies most or part of some of the States which make up Nigeria which they call their homeland.¹ Since the amalgamation of these three major ethnic groups under the auspices of Frederick Dealtry Lugard to form one political unit in 1914, each ethnic group has maintained its autonomy on how marriage ceremonies, rites and forms are organized and celebrated.²

Consequently, the Nigerian society guards and recognizes the fundamental right of every citizen to marry according to the prescribed and approved norms of his or her ethnicity. To ensure compliance to this rule or right, it was incorporated into the Constitution of the country,

¹ Unlike most people from Europe and America who take pride in identifying themselves with their country of origin i.e. as an American or as an European, and can easily move from one State to another, build a home, and establish full domicile at their new locations with or without reference to their former state/country of origin, Nigerians are very conscious of their ethnicity. Nigerians identify themselves more with their ethnic groups—the Hausa, Igbo or Yoruba as the case maybe. When a Nigerian speaks of his or her homeland, he or she is referring to the geographical location of his or her tribe of origin.

and forms part of the fundamental rights of privacy and family lives of every citizen.\(^3\) This study is in part aimed at an examination of marriage as practiced and understood by the Igbo-speaking part of Nigeria. But before examining the Igbo’s understanding of marriage, this first chapter will present a brief exposition of who the Igbo people are and the theories about their origin. However, it is pertinent to note that this is neither a full blown account of the history of the Igbo nor is it an ethnological and anthropological-sociological study. On the contrary, it will be a succinct description of those relevant aspects or characteristics of the origin of the Igbo and their cultural practices that are necessary to contextualize the analysis of marriage which follows.

1.1. A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE ORIGIN OF THE IGBO PEOPLE OF NIGERIA

The Igbo tribe is part of the Negroid race of Africa. There are various accounts concerning the origin of the Igbo people who are located in the South-East of Nigeria in West Africa. According to Emmanuel Nwabude the main factor that historians and ethnographers point to as the reason for the variations in the different accounts regarding the origin of the Igbo, is the “lack of written records of the remote past and early history of the Igbo people.”\(^4\) One major problem that some Igbo scholars associate with the lack of written records is a

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proliferation of stories which these scholars find very difficult to authenticate. Today most historians’-accounts (oral or written) converge on two nonparallel lines: stories of migration or the creation of the Igbo people at their present location. Between these two, creation of the Igbo people at their present location is the most widely accepted account of the origin of the Igbo.

According to one account, the present Igbo tribe migrated from Israel. M. C. M. Idigo, describes the Igbo as “the lost tribe of Israel, who during the Exodus, fled southwards across the desert and settled first in the area referred today as Igbo heartland.” Idigo and other scholars that favor this view do so on the strength of some comparative studies of the Igbo and Jewish cultures. According to their findings, there are many similarities between the Igbo and the Jewish cultures especially in the areas like marriage and family, religion, and social life. These scholars find it difficult to view these similarities as a product of chance and accident. These findings are further supported by a national radio interview aired on July 13, 1963 in which Chief Enemmuo of Nri ancient kingdom testified that a team of Israelis who made a tour in some

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6 See Nwabude, Preparation for Marriage and Family Life, xii.

7 M. C. M. Idigo, Agueri: History and Culture (Isolo, Lagos: Bantam Press Ltd., 1990), 3; See also Nwabude, Preparation for Marriage and Family Life, xiii. Idigo’s claim above could be read to mean an additional tribe to the already existing and known twelve tribes of Israel if his position is accepted. However, it can also mean that people from different or other parts of the already existing twelve tribes of Israel migrated to another part of the world to form a community. For instance, people from the existing Igbo States in Nigerian could migrate to the U.S.A. to form a recognized and independent State. I think Idigo meant the latter and not the former interpretation.


9 See Equiano, The interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano or Gustavus Vassa the African, 12-13.
parts of Igboland told him that “they found overwhelming and reliable evidence which show that the Igbo might share a common ancestry with Jews.”\textsuperscript{10} On the other hand, Clifford Aniefuna referenced M.D.W Jeffery who argues that “some scholars thought that because of certain structures in the Igbo social and religious life, the Igbo have their origin in Egypt.”\textsuperscript{11}

The \textit{Umueri} clan’s “Creationist theory” of the Igbo origin includes the ancient State of \textit{Nri, Igala} and \textit{Nri} towns. According to this theory, these towns descended from a still more ancient community in \textit{Anambra} valley.\textsuperscript{12} This same tradition claims that \textit{Igala, Agukwu, Amanuke, Nteje, Igboariam} towns descended from \textit{Eri} town.\textsuperscript{13} According to this source, \textit{Eri} is located around the \textit{Anambra} river valley, possibly the present-day \textit{Agueri} and \textit{Umuleri} towns.\textsuperscript{14} A similar account of the origin of the Igbo named “The \textit{Onitsha} Tradition” claims that some part of \textit{Onitsha} people came from Benin in the West and another from \textit{Igala} in the North and occupied the part of \textit{Anambra} State that is referred to today as \textit{Onitsha} and \textit{Ogbahu}.\textsuperscript{15} Later the proto-Igbo population spread to other places that are referred to as the \textit{Imo} and \textit{Abia} States of...


\textsuperscript{11} Aniefuna, “The Christian Family as the Path to a Culture of Life,” 153; see also M.D.W Jeffreys, “Dual Organization in Africa,” \textit{African Studies}, vol.5, no. 2 (June 1946), 57.

\textsuperscript{12} The phrase “Creationist Theory” was used by Onwuejeogwu to designate stories of the Igbo origins in the form of oral myths and folklores.

\textsuperscript{13} See Elizabeth Isichei, \textit{A History of the Igbo People}, 3; and Nwabude, \textit{Preparation for Marriage and Family Life}, xiii.

\textsuperscript{14} See Isichei, \textit{A History of the Igbo People}, 3.

\textsuperscript{15} See Idigo, \textit{Agueri: History and Culture}, 4.
today. M. C. M Idigo and Elizabeth Isichei refer to the present Abia, Anambra, and Imo States as the heartland of Igbo tribe. When they do this, they are specifically referring to the Awka, Okigwe, Orlu, and Owerri divisions of the east central States of Nigeria.\textsuperscript{16}

Clifford Aniefuna notes that according to one phase of the language divergence theory, which accounts for the origin of the Negro race of whom the Igbo are a part, “the findings of the remains of the earliest representatives of this race around Timbuku and Khartoun definitively established that the Negro race came into existence in those places.”\textsuperscript{17} He continues to point out that with regards to the second phase, “the Igbo is one of the languages designated kwa, a sub-group of the Niger-Congo group of Negro languages. Based on the glotto-chronological evidence, scholars agree that the languages in the Kwa, sub-group must have started diverging or assuming their distinctive and individual forms about 6,000 B.C.”\textsuperscript{18}

From these varied accounts of the origin of the Igbo tribe, it is clear that no one tradition or story can claim to have presented an unequivocal account of the origin of the Igbo. Each of the accounts or stories is subject to different interpretations, as each of them is capable of being a partly true or false, and/or a true or false account of the origin of the Igbo ethnic group. Nevertheless, even amidst all this plethora of accounts of the Igbo’s origin, the Igbo have a distinct culture and a language. It is the Igbo’s unique language and culture that set them apart from the other ethnic groups in the world. Consequently, in my judgment, Nwabude has spoken

\textsuperscript{16} See Idigo, Agueri: History and Culture, 4; and Isichei, A History of the Igbo People, 4.


\textsuperscript{18} Aniefuna, “The Christian Family as the Path to a Culture of Life,” 154.
prematurely by arguing that the multifaceted stories concerning the Igbo’s origin is an indication that the Igbo, have no common origin.\textsuperscript{19} On the contrary, it might be fair to say that the proliferation of stories suggests that the account of the origin of the Igbo is still evolving. This evolution notwithstanding, one can still say with some conviction and authenticity that the communities or towns that make up the Igbo-speaking part of Nigeria of today have a common origin, for if it were not so, how could they speak the same language or have the same cultural values? The commonality of language is probably the strongest points in support of unified Igbo origin.\textsuperscript{20}

Having briefly discussed the origin of the Igbo ethnic group, in the next sub-section, this study will present the geographical location of the Igbo States in Nigeria to which, the Igbo person calls his or her homeland.

1.2. GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION OF THE IGBO ETHNIC GROUP IN NIGERIA

The Igbo ethnic group is located in the South-Eastern part of Nigeria. The Igbo territory stretches from the River Niger inland towards Benin, \textit{Edo} State on the West and to the Cross River State on the East. On the south, it stretches to Rivers State and the Atlantic Ocean, and

\textsuperscript{19} See Nwabude, \textit{Preparation for Marriage and Family}, xv.

towards Benue State in the Northern States of Nigeria. Among the 36 States that make up Nigeria as a country, the Igbo ethnic group occupies five of them in its entirety: Abia, Anambra, Ebony, Enugu and Imo. There are also some significant number of Igbo people in the Delta and Rivers States of Nigeria. These States speak the same Igbo language though with some nuances.

The Igbo people also live and own landed properties in other parts or States of Nigeria and beyond, but not as part of their homeland in the Igbo perspective. When an Igbo person says that he or she is a true son or daughter of the soil, he or she is referring to the town of his or her father and not necessarily his or her place of birth. This is because every Igbo child whether alive or dead, is identified with the village of his father irrespective of where he or she was born or lived, and their male children own and inherit landed properties there. Igbo male children can

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21 See Nwabude, *Preparation for Marriage and Family Life*, xii.

22 Aniefuna, “The Christian Family as the Path to a Culture of Life,” 147. For the map of the geographical location and the population of these states, consult the official websites of these states’ governments at www.dawodu.com. (Assessed on 01/04/2013).


24 This is because any child born to an Igbo person takes his or her origin from the village/town of his father. In the past, the umbilical cords of every Igbo child irrespective of where he or she was born were buried in the village compound of his father. When this act was still in practice, Igbo children took pride in showing to their friends and neighbors the spots where their umbilical cords were buried as a testimony that they are true children of the town. Normally a significant economic tree is planted where each umbilical cord is buried to differentiate it from other economic and non-economic trees. An economic tree is a tree that produces edible fruits or leaves that could be sold or exchanged for material goods. In other words, economic trees have material or monetary value. For instance, *ugha* and kola-nut trees are common economic trees. Since this practice is no more invoked, at the birth of a child whether at home or abroad, parents of the newly born baby is expected to buy different gift items for the married women of the town both as way to thank God for the gift of the newly born baby, and also as an official information to them that an addition has been made to the family. Based on this information, the child will be known among his or her kin and be recognized as such whenever he or she returns home. These gifts are normally given to the grandmother and/or mother-in-law at the end of her three-month visit to her daughter or daughter-in-law at the birth of a child. For more information concerning all these practices and their symbolism consult, Cyril Akalonu, *Procreation in Igbo Marriage: Inculturation of the Christian Ideal* (Owerri, Nigeria: Assumpta Press, 1987), 16.
freely sell their landed properties that they purchased outside of their home towns to foreigners and to strangers, but they may not freely sell the ones in their villages. Should there be a need for them to sell such landed properties, they are sold and bought by close relatives in order to make sure that the property still belongs to a person of the same great grandparents. The male children are expected to be buried in their villages irrespective of where they lived or died. It is a sign of disrespect to bury an Igbo man or any woman that is married to an Igbo man away from his father’s land or her husband’s village. Now that this study has shown briefly where the Igbo could be found on the map of Nigeria and what it means for an Igbo person to say that he or she is from this part of the country rather that the other, in the next sub-section the study will examine their religious beliefs.

1.3. RELIGION

The Igbo is a very religious ethnic group. The Igbo believe that the Supreme Being — Chineke or Chukwu is the Creator and sustainer of the world. The Igbo’s Supreme Being Chukwu or Chineke is similar to the Judeo-Christian God the Almighty and Creator.

25 The Igbo practice of refusing to sell or exchange their inherited landed properties that are situated in their family compound to people from other places is similar to the Old Testament practice that encouraged the Israelites to abide by the same kind of rule. Cf. 1 kings Chapter 21 verse 1-3, of The New American Bible, (Indiana: World, 1970), 317.

26 See Akalonu, Procreation in Igbo Marriage, 17.


28 For more information concerning other names which the Igbo assign to the Supreme Being before and after their encounter with the early missionaries consult: Emefie Ikenga-Metuh, Comparative Studies of African Traditional Religious (Onitsha, Nigeria: IMICO Publishers, 1987), 76-91. It suffices to note that each of the names used by the
people also believe that *Ekwensu* – the Devil, is the cause of all evil and that the devil is in constant battle with *Chukwu* - the Supreme Being – over His Creatures, but that the power of the Supreme Being surpasses that of the devil." Nonetheless, it is yet an unsettled debate among scholars of African Traditional Religion (ATR) of the “nature of this God — *Chukwu* and how much he is a feature of the African religious consciousness.” While some scholars of ATR argue that the African Supreme Being whom the Igbo’s call *Chukwu* or *Chineke* is a “withdrawn God,” others without totally accepting the designation that *Chukwu* is a “withdrawn God” concede to the notion that *Chukwu* is not as engaged in the day to day activities of the Igbo people as do the other small gods, such as but not limited to *Ala,* *Anyanwu,* *Chi-Omumu,* *Amadioha.*

Contrary to the concession of a “withdrawn God” R. S. Rattray argues that the African God is very engaged in the day to day activities of the African people. He claims that “every

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30 Ebelebe, *Africa and the New Face of Mission,* 2. From henceforth an abridged form of African Tradition Religion ATR will be used.

compound in Ashanti contains an altar to the sky God.”32 Rattray’s views are congruent with those of Nwabude who also made the same assertion concerning Igbo families. According to him, in the olden days, and before the advent of Christianity, did they not only believe in and worship many gods, but each person’s compound or house had an altar situated in front of its entrance.33 The distinction between Rattray’s and Nwabude’s positions could be made by arguing that since the Igbo have other small gods who are easily accessible to them for a particular need, they only refer to *Chukwu* – the Supreme God on major issues and/or when the particular small deity or god who is responsible for the granting of the need appears to be unable to do so. Seen through this lens, the seemingly distance of the Supreme Being in the day to day activities should not be construed as lack of interest or passive altitude on his part, but rather as a way of empowering the small gods. Similarly, on the part of the Igbo worshippers, such a distance between them and *Chukwu* represent a recognition of *Chukwu*’s greatness and power since he will be sought as a last resort.34

Understood in this way, one can argue that the altars that are located in the entrances of the Igbo house are those dedicated to the Supreme Being *Chukwu*, while the images or objects in the houses and rooms are those of the smaller gods. This is because the Igbo people believe that there are different small gods which are responsible for different events and activities. Consequently, although each house may contain many sacred objects or images like *Ofo* or


*Ikenga*, these objects do not have equal significance, for among the gods, there are higher and lower degrees of importance. For instance, the *Chi-Omumu* who is believed by the Igbo to be responsible for the fruit of the womb serves and is accountable to the one Supreme God *Chukwu* or *Chineke* - the Almighty God or the Creator. Therefore, in a situation where *Chi-Omumu* is unable to grant a request for the fruit of the womb, it is the responsibility of the *Chi-Omumu* to seek for the approval from the Supreme and the Almighty God – *Chukwu*.

The sacred place or altar that is situated in each family’s dwelling is managed by the first male child of the family who is called the *Diokpala*. It is the responsibility of the *Diokpala* to pour libations each morning on behalf of his family. In the olden days, and before the advent of Christianity the Igbo did not take up any venture without seeking the assistance of the god who was believed to be responsible for that particular venture. This practice is done not only to ask for the gods’ permission, but also to secure his support and blessing. For instance, before an Igbo pagan man gets married, the god of fertility – *Chi-Omumu*, who is believed to be responsible for the fruit of the womb, is consulted. During such visits, libations and sacrifices are made with appropriate sacrificial lambs by the chief priest on behalf of the bachelor. No marriage is allowed to continue if the families involved have doubts about the support of *Chi-Omumu*. The consultation with *Chi-Omumu* is done at a very early stage so as to avoid any waste of time, resources, and energy. It is the responsibility of the *Diokpala* to consult the chief priest

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when any member of his family is in need of such consultation. It may happen that the particular family member who is getting married is not present during the sacrifice, but the presence of the first male child or the Diokpara as the head of the family suffices.\(^{37}\)

The objects or images that represent the family gods are kept in close proximity within each house and compound, and it is believed that these family gods have a much closer connection with the individual than the public and general gods. However, no object in itself is worshipped by the Igbo; they are sacred only as the habitations of a spirit. In other words, “each object has only the relative sanctity to which it is entitled as the shrine or home of a certain spirit.”\(^{38}\) Very seldom are these objects themselves called by their names, the petitions that are being offered to them either for asking for a favor or for atoning of a wrong doing are invariably addressed to the spirit.\(^{39}\)

There are also village gods and goddess and each village has a chief priest and priestess that consult the village god or goddess on behalf of the village. He or she takes care of the village shrine and all the sacrifices that are offered to the gods or to the goddess are made with his or her approval.\(^{40}\) The priests are said to have come from the priestly lineage (agburu ndi ukochukwu)


\(^{38}\) Nwabude, *Preparation for Marriage and Family Life*, xvii.


\(^{40}\) See Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, 67-75. A designated family is in charge of *Eziama* Village deity called Ngwaku. Growing up in my village *Eziama-Ogheruru*, I still remember seeing a cow that was dedicated to Ngwaku—the village deity. This sacred cow goes about freely in the village without being harmed or harassed even when it damages people farms. His roaming about in all the corners of the village is construed as protection to the village dwellers. In fact everything about the cow and other animals that were dedicated to Ngwaku including the eating of peoples’ crops are meant for the good of the people. One wonders about the kind of protection a cow gives to the owner of a farm when it eats its food crops, and if the farmer sees it as a blessing.
and are expected to be men of impeccable character. The village high priests are respected by all and their wives are carefully chosen to avoid adulteration of the priestly family.\textsuperscript{41} The village chief priest is consulted when a particular family head feels that he needs his assistance which happens very often. Reflecting on the deep religious consciousness that the Igbo exhibit in their daily activities, some scholars argue that every aspect of the life of an Igbo person has a religious connotation.\textsuperscript{42}

Both Ottenberg and Meek can be construed as agreeing with the above assertion as they differentiate between political, religious and ordinary daily activities of the Igbo. According to them, both the religious and all other aspects of the Igbo live and governance are interwoven so much so that most often the authority of a supreme being is invoked or used to drive home a point be it from a family, village, town or religious leader.\textsuperscript{43} “Human and supernatural organization follow closely similar lines and the supernatural helps to validate and support the human.”\textsuperscript{44} Similarly, a German missionary who served in the middle of the nineteenth century echoes the same thought. “The Igbos are religious people. “The word Tshuke [wrong spelling of

\textsuperscript{41} Since the Igbo high priests are the mouthpiece of Chukwu – the Supreme Being and other lesser gods, they are regarded as very honored and respected people. Consequently, a thorough inquiry and investigation is made concerning the moral, social health and conditions of not only the potential bride but also on her family and her extended families. For instance, it is unacceptable for any Igbo man to marry a girl whose family has a history of mental illness or an illegitimate child, but it will be worse if such a girl is married to a priest who represents God. If such marriage exists, it will be taken that the priestly family has been polluted and needs cleansing rites and rituals.

\textsuperscript{42} See Nwabude, \textit{Preparation for Marriage and Family Life}, xvii; and Umeh, \textit{After God is Dibia: Igbo Cosmology}, 129.


\textsuperscript{44} M. M Green, \textit{Ibo Village Affairs}, 26; Ottenberg, \textit{Leadership and Authority in an African Society}, 187.
Chukwu] God, is continually heard. Tshuku is supposed to do everything …[Tshuku] is continually on their lips. Some of their parables are descriptive of the perfections of God.”45 If family life, daily work, prayers, playing et cetera are all part and parcel of the Igbo’s religious experience and if Chukwu is called upon to validate and authenticate the Igbo’s daily activities, then it is plausible to argue that every activity of the Igbo person is theo-centric.46

The same religious inclination is also evident among the Igbo who have been converted to Christianity and/or Catholicism. Today, the world sees Africa and in particular Nigeria as having a vocation boom, but the reality is, at present about 75% of the priests, religious, and lay Catholic faithful that Nigeria produces and shares with the universal Church are from the Igbo States.47 In a way, they are exhibiting a religious consciousness that is innate or in-born in them. Succinctly put, the Igbo have very strong inclination and attachment to their religious obligations whether as believers in the African traditional religion or believers in the Judeo-Christian God. Charles Ebelebe’s study of the indigenous priests from some countries in the African continent supports this claim. According to his findings, “the average number of indigenous diocesan priests in Africa for 1995, 2000, and 2004 was 17,884. The five countries of Nigeria, The Democratic Republic of Congo, Tanzania, Uganda, and Kenya accounted for 10,086 or 56% of these, with Nigeria contributing 3,443 or 34%. Of the Nigerian figure, Igboland contributed


46 See Anthony Onyoeocha, Family Apostolate in Igboland, 22; and Aniefuna, “The Christian Family as the Path to a Culture of Life,” 150.

47 See Ebelebe, Africa and the New Face of Mission, 199-203.
1,443 or 42%.”^48 It suffices to mention that one can easily count within few minutes the number of the Igbo’s who are still practicing African Traditional Religion.

With the number of Igbo Christians or Catholics (lay and ordained) rising at a rapid pace, those Igbo who have embraced the Christian faith have replaced the homage they pay to these ATR gods, as well as the significance and worship associated with them, with the Christian God and His angels. Ordinarily, Igbo Christians do not consult or worship these pagan gods anymore, but they are still regarded by them as both present and powerful.^49 When an Igbo Christian is hit by the contingencies of life, his or her first reaction is normally to seek help from God as prescribed by Christian doctrine such as, but not limited to, prayers, adorations, as well as asking both their pastors and their fellow Christians to pray for them.

If the problem still remains, and especially if it is a problem of infertility, most Igbo Christians look for an extra layer of help by turning to these pagan gods for assistance. The consultations with the gods are associated with making animal sacrifices and the pouring of libations in order to appease the gods or god as the case may be. In the event that a particular Christian is unable to consult the gods by him or herself, they are consulted on his or her behalf by those who still practice African Traditional Religion or by some non-practicing and/or

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^49 While describing polygamy and monogamy as the most common form of marriage that are allowed and approved in Nigeria [and by Igbo culture], Emeka Iwuji makes an important claim which for me should not be limited to the Igbo Christians’ attitude toward marriage, but should extend to all the other aspects of Igbo Christians’ attitude concerning their beliefs and relationship to the heathen gods (*Chukwu*), especially when things are not moving as they had expected. According to him, “Despite the fact the Christianity is widely practiced in Nigeria [and especially in Igbo land] by both educated and uneducated alike ….. While [Igbo] Christians may enter the monogamous form of marriage, it is not uncommon that a large number thereafter, resort to polygamy …..even during the subsistence of their Christian or statutory marriage.” See Iwuji, *Marriage form in Nigeria*, 3.
lukewarm Christians while he or she pays the bill. This turn to the pagan god is based on a fundamental belief among the Igbo: that infertility is either caused by promiscuous living or as a result of an evil deed that oneself or one’s family member may have committed against the gods and/or the land even up to the fourth generation.\(^{50}\)

This belief is partially a result of lack of proper catechesis by the early missionaries to Igboland who without understanding the Igbo’s cultural practices and customs condemned them as evil and diabolic.\(^{51}\) An eminent early missionary to Igboland once told his colleagues: “There is nothing in this world like the vision of a great group of adults being baptized out in the open in the midst of a country where the Devil has such a grip of everything. In Ireland he owns nothing….in Africa nearly everything.”\(^ {52}\) Having briefly discussed the religious inclinations and the attitudes of the Igbo pagans or Christians toward their gods or God, in the next sub-section, this study will briefly examine the social life of the Igbo.

### 1.4. SOCIAL LIFE

The Igbo ethnic group is a very social and community-oriented people. M. T. Hata’s description of the communitarian nature of the African societies is also true for the Igbo’s:

According to the authentic African Tradition, the human person is not an isolated, wandering atom, with no constitutive link with other persons or institutions. “Muntu,” which is defined as the human person, a being at once personal and communitarian is also anthropologically thought of as essentially a member and

\(^{50}\) See Nwabude, *Preparation for Marriage and Family Life*, 113; and Aniefuna, “The Christian Family as the Path to a Culture of Life,” 152.


not a fragment, and is defined by membership of such and such a lineage or extended family.\(^53\)

As a community-oriented people the Igbo have well organized and elaborate social festivals and activities the year round in which they celebrate and enjoy. There are festivals to mark the harvest season such as that called the New Yam festival - *Iri Ji Ohuru*. Every town beginning from June through November has a specific day or days in which the town celebrates the feast of the New Yam. During this celebration, they invite their friends from across the Niger to come and celebrate with them. The New Yam festival is decorated with many social events and activities such as but not limited to, masquerade dances like *Mmuonwu, Okunko, Okorosha*, wrestling, *Ebuebu*, et cetera.\(^54\) In addition to these cultural dances, some communities also organize inter-village football (soccer) competitions to grace the festival.\(^55\) Some also use this


\(^{55}\) The description above represents how my maternal town *Mgbee* celebrates their New Yam festival on August 1\(^{st}\) and 2\(^{nd}\) of each year. It is an occasion for family re-unions especially for all the *Nwadiala*. *Nwadiala* which refers to all children that were born by the daughters of the village in their respective matrimonial homes. New Yam festival is a special occasion for all these *nwadiala* to familiarize with each other. The *Nwadiala* are treated with greater love and affection in their maternal homes by their maternal uncles, aunts, and villagers. They are the pride of village. The following saying captures the kind of protection one receives at one’s maternal home. “*Oso chuwa nwata na be mma ya, ogbalaa umere nne ya.*” This can be translated as, “if a child is been maltreated in his or her father’s house, he or she takes refuge at his or her maternal home.” Achebe in his book *Things Fall Apart*, described how the main actor—*Okonkwo* had to run to his maternal home (*Mbanta*) with his family after his gun exploded and accidentally killed a sixteen-year old boy during the funeral ceremony of one of the titled men in Okonkwo’s village *Umuofia*. Because of this incident, or “woman murder” as it was called, Okonkwo was exiled for seven years as the Earth goddess had decreed to be the appropriate punishment for a person who committed such a crime. It was a crime against the earth goddess to kill a clansman, and a man who committed it must flee from the land. This crime was of two kinds, male and female. It is a male murder if it was intentional done. It is a female murder when the killing is accidental. Consequently, Okonkwo had committed the female murder (*ochu nwanyi*) because it was inadvertent, so his punishment is light—seven years of exile. The people of *Mbanta*—Okonkwo’s maternal village, received Okonkwo very well and treated him and his family with great affection. As a tribute to his maternal home, Okonkwo named this daughter which one of his wives bore to him while they were still in exile “Nneka.” This is best translated as, “mother is Supreme.” Consequently, it is fair to say that the Igbo are treated with great affection, compassion, and love in their maternal homes not only during festive occasions, but also during the periods of tribulation and grief. See Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, 84-124.
occasion to honor their industrious and philanthropic sons and daughters by conferring on them honorary chieftaincy titles.\textsuperscript{56} Both births and deaths are occasions for big celebrations except in the case of an untimely death.\textsuperscript{57}

The Igbo culture extols teamwork and team success. Onuorah Nzekwu puts it thus, “lift yourself and lift your relation.”\textsuperscript{58} He continues, “Tradition established communal living which brought unity to the children of the same ancestor.”\textsuperscript{59} Thus, it is a common slogan or adage among the Igbo, “Igwe bu ike.” This can be translated as, “the community or group is strength.” This is not to say that they do not appreciate or encourage individual effort, but they abhor and scorn individualism and have the tendency of assisting their siblings first. Nwabude notes that some critics of the communitarian spirit or nature of the Igbo refer to the Igbo’s communitarian attitude of helping their siblings first as tribalism, while its supporters see it as a robust family-tight, motivated, and energized by the belief that they have the same ancestral lineage.\textsuperscript{60}

Although some scholars chide the Igbo’s political system for its lack of a centralized leadership like that of their Hausa-Fulani and Yoruba counterparts, yet, for some others, it is the animating force that tailors the Igbo to act as one family when faced by adversaries.\textsuperscript{61} The Igbo

\textsuperscript{56} There are also other social occasions at different times of the year in which the Igbo reward success and hard work by bestowing different chieftaincy titles on their industrious and philanthropic sons and daughters.

\textsuperscript{57} See Akanolu, \textit{Procreation in Igbo Marriage}, 17-18; and Basden, \textit{Among the Ibos of Nigeria}, 117-126.


\textsuperscript{59} Nzekwu, \textit{Wand of Noble}, 36.

\textsuperscript{60} See Nwabude, \textit{Preparation for Marriage and Family Life}, 101.

do not consider themselves as dis-integrated or fragmented sets of people. Rather they consider themselves as a unified body that share the same ancestral lineage. Consequently, they prefer to participate in the decision-making that affects them. Thus, when a decision is collectively made, they would then appoint from their members, any person whom they deemed fit to best represent their interest on a particular issue.

It can be said that the saying that “two heads are better than one,” is the brain behind their all-inclusive form of government. The Igbo do not only want to get the best of each and everyone of their members, they want each person to feel obligated to whatever decision that they would make. So much so that once a decision had been collectively and unanimously made, the Igbo generally follow-through on collective decisions and dissenters are severely punished. Charles Meek describes the non-centralized form of government of the Igbo correctly by calling it “the most characteristic feature of Ibo society.”

According to him, “almost complete absence of any higher political or social unit than the commune or small group of contiguous villages, whose customs and cults are identical, who in former times took common action against an external enemy….and whose sense of solidarity is so strong that they regard themselves as descendant of a common ancestor, could be said to be the most characteristic feature of Ibo society.”

Furthermore, in defense of the Igbo’s communitarian spirit, Nwabude argues that the Igbo developed their communitarian altitude many years ago for the improvement of self and

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62 See Onwuejeogwu, Igbo Civilization: Nri Kingdom and Hegemony, 39.

63 Meek, Law and Authority in a Nigerian Tribe, 3.
community before they came in contact with other tribes. Consequently, those attitudes and practices which express it could not have been for the purposes of tribalism and segregation. Bishop Njenga, in support of such mutual assistance that is practiced by the Igbo as well as by other societies with similar cultural practice calls it a “Christian value and virtue.”

The Igbo culture encourages generosity and filial support of family and friends. As a people, they love to share their gifts with others. There is a popular saying among the Igbo that reads; “Oji ezughioke bu na impisi aka adaghi.” This can be translated as, “one cannot say that a kola nut is not enough where there are finger tips to share it.” A corollary statement also reads: “Onuru ube nwanne agbala oso.” This can be translated as, “he who hears the cry of his

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66 Oji – the kola nut is a very symbolic fruit in Nigeria but mostly among the Igbo. It is used in the gathering of the Igbo people of all degrees. The symbolism associated with *oji* is more than words can truly express, but one of its most cherished symbolisms is that of peace. It is used to welcome people in any ceremony in which it is presented by the Igbo. If an Igbo person comes to a fellow Igbo person’s house, the person may present to him or her with a lot of highly expensive drinks and/or food as a way of welcoming him or her, but if the person did not present the kola nut, it is taken that the person did not welcome his or her guest. This explains why an Igbo person is expected to tell his or her guest that kola nuts are everywhere in the house when he or she is short of kola nuts. In other words, one needs to show that one is open to the presentation of a kola nut to one’s guest when he or she has no kola nut to present. In that case, other things can be used in place of the actual kola nut.

67 This term *Nwanne* when used among the Igbo in a very strict sense, refers to one’s blood siblings. However, it is one of those words that can be stretched to represent not only family members but also people from the same village and even those from other villages and towns. It can sometimes be used to include people from the main States of the Igbo heartland especially if they find themselves in totally foreign land or environment. It is a term that finds its specific meaning on the circumstance in which it is used. There is no Igbo word for cousins, nieces and nephews as there is in English or some other languages. When the need for such distinctions arises among the Igbo, they say *nwa nwanne papam mu bu nwa nwanne mمام*, for my cousin either from my father’s or mother’s sides. Though this explanation may sound strange to none Igbo-speaking people, it is not as complicated as it looks among the Igbo. The usage is very much understood when used among them. However, in its present usage, it refers to all, including foreigners whom an Igbo person has come to know and whom he or she has a soft hearts toward. Although I have made effort to explain and simplify these designations for my none Igbo-speaking readers, I agree with Agbasiere that it is difficult to “describe the Igbo community [and the names that siblings use to identify or distinguish each other] in a language of another culture and to represent what is translatable into English, while at
siblings should not run further away but should help out.” When people celebrate and eat together both as a nuclear as well as extended families, the chances of planning evil against one another are drastically reduced—if not eliminated. What these Igbo slogans instill in the hearts of the Igbo is a sense of indebtedness and obligation to the needs of others. Thus, through these elaborate social festivals in which families, villages and towns exchange invitations, peace and cordiality are maintained among them so that little room is left for tribal wars and acrimony. Should there be a misunderstanding among siblings, villages or towns, as can be expected in every human society, it is settled by the family, village and town leaders. In other words, it is the responsibility of these different leaders to see that justice and peace are maintained.

From the arguments presented so far, one can say that the Igbo family setting and governance have been mentioned in passing but without adequate treatment. But if as I have claimed, that it is the responsibility of the family, village and town leaders to maintain peace and harmony at family, village and town levels, it is necessary to examine not only the Igbo’s understanding of a family, but also how it is constituted. On a similar note, it is appropriate to examine not only the system of government that is operational in Igboland, but also on how the Igbo elect or appoint their leaders. These and other related issues will be the focus of the next sub-section of this study.

1.5. IGBO FAMILY SETTING AND GOVERNANCE

the same time giving a fair description of what actually exists” (Agbasiere Joseph Therese, Women in Igbo Life and Thought, London: Rutledge, 2000), 76.

68 Akalonu, Procreation in Igbo Marriages, 18.
The Igbo word for family is a phrase *Ezi na Ulo*, this literally means “in and out.” But in reference to people, it means people from the outside relations and those in the house. Both as a concept and as a practical reality, *ezi na ulo* for the Igbo is not restricted to a family of one parent or a couple and their children. Rather it includes extended families which comprise of all the children of the same great grandparents of both vertical and horizontal lines.\(^69\) Therefore, contrary to the Western or European understanding of one’s family to comprise a household that consists of a couple and their children, F. C. Ogbalu notes that “*Ezi na ulo* for the Igbo includes other relations as in-laws, uncles, cousins, nephews, or even maids and servants.”\(^70\)

Within this macro family which the phrase *Ezi na ulo* represents, other designations such as *Nwannem*, which means a sibling from the same parents, and *nwannam*, which means siblings from the same great grandparents are included. Also comprised in the big umbrella of *ezi na ulo* are *nwanne papam ma obu nwanne mamam*, which means my father’s or my mother’s siblings. All these are included when the Igbo’s use the phrase *ezi na ulo* in a very loose sense. However, when the Igbo’s want their audience to understand that they are talking about a fellow village or town member they will say: “*onye uzo ulo anyi,*” *ma obu,* “*onye obodo anyi,*” Both expressions can be translated as, “people from the same village or town.”\(^71\) These later categories are used to


\(^70\) Ogbalu, *Igbo Institutions and Customs*, 7. Also see, Anameze, *Marriage Among the Igbos*, 16.

\(^71\) Again, the observation of Agbasiere concerning the difficulty in explaining or translating some Igbo words or phrases in such a way that, while they (Igbo words) maintain their originality, they also adequately convene the
distinguish between one’s blood relatives and one’s town people. These distinctions are made in order to create clear boundaries on how one is expected to relate with another. “The Igbo person is very much attached to his family [which he calls his ancestral home], his place of birth or (better said) the place of birth of his father, that is, the home of his great grand-fathers.”

The Igbo is fond of saying; *abum nwa afo alaa*, which means, “I am the true child of this community,” when referring to his place of birth or the place of the birth of his father as the case may be. He or she cannot say the same thing in other places where he or she may have lived since he or she will always see himself or herself as a stranger there, because his or her “*alo*” was not buried there. He or she expresses his or her opinion and worth in his or her family and village whenever there is need for him or her to express his or her opinions. He or she also receives titles of honor among his or her brethren at the appropriate family and village gatherings as would be determined by the family and village heads. He or she exchanges his or her ancestral home for nothing, not even for the lure of wealth, better living or recognition.

When it comes to marriage negotiations, inquiries, and rituals, they are performed at the village houses of their parents irrespective of where they live except for a Christian wedding.

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*intended meaning in the foreign language in which they are translated comes to mind here. See Agbasiere, *Women in Igbo Life and Thought*, 76.*

72 Akalonu, *Procreation in Igbo marriages*, 16.

73 See Akalonu, *Procreation in Igbo marriages*, 16.

74 See Akalonu *Procreation in Igbo marriages*, 16; and Aniefuna, “The Christian Family as the Path to a Culture of Life,” 159.
ceremony which is done after one is considered to be fully married by the Igbo.\textsuperscript{75} Without prejudice to the people of other ethnic groups and cultures, the Igbo mostly marry people from their ethnic group and who have the same cultural upbringing. If for any reason, an Igbo person is taken away from his or her village when he is a child, upon reaching adulthood, the Igbo instinct is expected to drive him or her to search for his or her true home and when he or she finds it, he/she is happy to go back to that village and he or she will be well-received and absorbed into his or her biological and true family. Such returns call for jubilation and celebration.\textsuperscript{76}

The children born in the cities or who live with their parents abroad are sent home periodically to become familiar with their relatives and to learn not only the Igbo language but


\textsuperscript{76} In my Village \textit{Eziama Ogberuru}, children who were fathered by \textit{Eziama} sons, but who lived with their mothers until their adult age have returned back to \textit{Eziama} to request their parental rights and to perform their marriage ceremonies in the company and with the support of their true blood relatives. Upon their return, their father or the head of their family will invite the villagers both to inform them of their return as well as ask them to rejoice with them for their return. In the case of a girl, it mostly happens when she wants to marry which in itself is an occasion for celebration. There have also been occasions when children who lived and were trained in our village have gone back to the villages of their biological fathers’ to demand for their paternal rights. Marriage negotiations and ceremonies of Igbo children are not done outside of their biological father’s villages. This is true even for those who live and met their respective spouses’ over-seas. They still need to go back to their or have the marriage rituals be performed for them by proxy before they can consider themselves as married couples in Igboland. Because of the way the family system and marriage ceremonies are set-up and arranged in Igboland, it is easy to identity and to differentiate those who are the sons and daughters of the soil from those who live there as a place of refuge. I still recall an incident in my village involving the return of a man to our village that most people did not know that his father had fathered him during the Nigeria-Biafra war. The man grew up with his mother’s siblings and owned business with them. However, when it was time for him to marry and to build a house, the elders from her mother’s village, in collaboration with his maternal siblings told him that he could not build or perform the traditional marriage ceremony in their village. Rather, he was told to come to our village and look for his father. His father, a promising business man had already married and has eight children four boys and four girls. However, by the virtue of his birth, he is the first son of his father. So upon his return his half-brothers as well as his father were reluctant to accept him in their family since he would now assume the privileges, responsibilities and rights of all first male children in Igboland, which include but are not limited to, being the head of the family and representing them in the meeting of the council of the elders. But because of Igbo culture, the elders of my village who decided on the case ruled in his favor. Upon assuming his role in the family, he brought back his mother.
also the customs and traditions of the Igbo people.\footnote{See Onyecha, \textit{Family Apostolate in Igboland}, 16. It suffices to note that the practice of sending children who were born in foreign lands (e.g. the U. S. A), back home to their villages to learn the language, culture and tradition of the Igbo people which was mostly neglected by the early Igbo migrants to the United States has picked up momentum. Today most Igbo parents who live in the United States and other Western and European countries have resumed the practice of sending their children back home for some period of time to not only go to school there, but also to get them acquainted with both the people and culture before coming back to their respective countries to further their education. This wake-up call is in part necessitated by the treatments that these aging couples get from their children and in part because of the amaechina mentality. For instance, there has been an increase in the number of Igbo ageing couples who were dumped into nursing homes and/or assisted living facilities by their children with little or no attention given to them by their children. Although as a family and community-oriented ethnic group, one may condemn these actions by these children, but the reality is, they are the product of the society and system in which they were raised. One Igbo elder who took care of his parents in their old age here in the United States told me that he thought that his children would have learned from him on how he took care of his parents. He wonders what will become of his house and other valued properties at home when he dies since none of his children is thinking of going back. Unfortunately, what he did not realize was that he came to the States as an adult and had already received basic family and moral training from home. In other words, he was able to be part of a culture that did not know or have any other means of taking care of its family members. But the same cannot be said of his children. Based on this and other related reasons, younger couples are now learning from the mistakes of these first migrants and are now sending their children back home to get familiarized with the people, language, culture, and traditions of the Igbo people. These couples do not want their children to be referred to as “a lost generation.”} In fact, it is a common practice that the first male child (the \textit{Diokpara}) of each family does not live too far away from the village. His siblings can easily move around, but he has to stay very close to his father so as to be inculcated with the family norms, mores, and values. In a situation where the \textit{Diopkara} lives outside of his village, he frequents home more than his younger siblings to take care of family business and to represent his family at the village and town meetings. Aniefuna was correct to note that “upon the death of his father, he inherits his father’s \textit{obi} (lounge), which in reality stands for his father’s authority and responsibility to lead his family and to take active care of all the family assets… and to defend the family interest against external threats.”\footnote{Aniefuna, “The Christian Family as the Path to a Culture of Life,” 158-159.} Similarly, the last male son inherits
his mother’s *Mkpuke*.\(^{79}\) Under normal circumstances, it is the responsibility of the first son to bury his father and that of the last son to bury his mother.\(^{80}\)

The Igbo kinship system promotes loyalty to the family and acts of filial piety. Thus parents depend on their children to take care of them during their old age. This is possible because sons after marriage do not abandon their parents to live on their own. The Igbo generally move around with their parents. In fact, there is a popular idiomatic expression among the Igbo that reads: *ugu mikata oyi oyi amiwa ugu*. This idiomatic expression is interpreted as, *Nne zukata nwa, nwa azuwa nne*. This can be translated as, “after a mother must have finished nursing her children, her children will in turn nurse her.” Children (particularly sons) look forward to the fulfillment of this obligation.\(^{81}\) Reflecting on this practice Akalonu opines, “the Igbo wish that their aged parents live and die with them.”\(^{82}\) It is regarded as a sign of good luck and God’s blessing to have grey-haired old people as members of one’s family. It is a sign of good genes, health, and good living. These outward signs are cherished among the Igbo and people from

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\(^{79}\) *Mkpuke* is a little house that each husband builds for his wife. The house is located inside his compound. *Mkpuke* is mostly prevalent in polygamous families. The wives stay in their respective houses and only go to the man’s house for sexual intercourse during her turn. In monogamous marriages, *Mkpuke* serves the same purpose. However, in a situation where the man is unable to build a separate *Mkpuke* for the wife, the last male child is compensated with other valuable items at the death of his mother. For more information concerning a typical Igbo polygamous family where each wife has her own *Mkpuke* see the description in: Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, 10.

\(^{80}\) Without prejudice to this rule, the Igbo’s are aware that there could be situations when these designated persons may not be financially equal to the task of paying for the cost of their parents’ burial ceremonies. So they have a popular saying that takes care of such situations. “*Onye jinu kwa nna ya ma obu nne ya n’oburu Diapkala ma obu odu nwa gbaru.*” This can be translated as; “let the most affluent person in the family take care of the burial expenses of his parents because it is neither the first son nor the last son that killed their father or mother.” In practice, the burial expenses for both parents and/or other family members are collectively shared among siblings. Cf. Anaemeze *Marriage Among the Igbos*, 17.

\(^{81}\) See Akalonu, *Procreation in Igbo Marriage*, 18.

\(^{82}\) Akalonu, *Procreation in Igbo Marriage*, 18-19.
other families will always long to associate with families blessed with such characteristics and qualities. When it comes to looking for a person to marry, their youngsters are the first to be approached. The Igbo rarely marry from families whose members are known to be sickly or who suffer early death.  

The Igbo kinship system also makes it possible and easier for every member of the family to be supported. It is usual and normal that the older sons and daughters assist their parents in the education and maintenance of their younger siblings. Other family members are equally provided for by the extended family and kinship systems. With the strong extended family and kinship systems operating among the Igbo, institutions like the old peoples’ homes do not exist among them. Also orphanages and/or motherless babies’ homes are of recent introduction due to influence of western cultures. And although the Igbo’s have many poor people, they have relatively no street beggars. According to Akalonu, the extended family network was and is still responsible for “the scarcity of beggars among the Igbo even during and immediately after

83 See Nzekwu, *Wand of Noble*, 91-44.


85 See Akalonu, *Procreation in Igbo Marriage*, 19-20. In Nigeria, most orphanages are facilities designed to take care of children and teenagers whose parents died prematurely, and who had no close blood relatives to raise or nurse them. After being raised in the orphanages, they would be sent back to the families of their parents where they would inherit their parents’ properties. Under normal circumstances, they would not be available for adoption. On the other hand, the motherless babies’ homes are facilities designed to nurse the children who were picked-up on the streets, children whose mothers died at childbirth, and those whose mothers left them with their biological fathers or at the hospitals after their birth for whatsoever reason(s). The children who were picked-up on the streets or those who were abandoned by the mothers at the hospitals would later be available for adoption. While those whose mothers either died at childbirth or those who were abandoned by their mothers with their biological fathers for other reasons would go back to their biological father/family after being nursed in a motherless babies’ homes. Under normal circumstances, these groups of children are not available for adoption.

86 A beggar in this context is defined and understood by Oliver Onwubiko as “someone who is not accommodated in the elastic means of the community’s life and resources.” Cf. Oliver Onwubiko, *African Thought and Culture*, (Enugu, Nigeria: SNAAP Press, 1991), 17.
the civil war.” Off course Akalonu is not saying that there were no poor people after the war.

As should be expected, there were and will continue to be plethora of poor people in Igboland. The point here is that their immediate and extended families provided for their needs and spared them the risk and humiliation that are associated with going out to the streets to beg.

From what has been said, and as a community-oriented people, it is clear that a typical Igbo village can be construed as one where people live in pocket of small families which stretch into villages and towns. Based on what has been presented so far, the Igbo do not only take care of each other, they mostly live peacefully both at village and town levels. Before this chapter is concluded, it will be pertinent to briefly but carefully examine how the Igbo’s maintain such an orderly structure of government that claims to accommodate all.

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87 Akalonu, *Procreation in Igbo Marriage*, 19. Also see, Aniefuna “The Christian Family as the Path to a Culture of Life,” 162-165.

88 Regrettably, this is one aspect of the Igbo cultural heritages that are eroding too fast from the consciousness of most Igbo’s that live in the western world particularly in the United States of America. It is a common cry among their siblings living in Nigeria that they do not respond to the needs of their siblings that are living in Nigeria as expected. Even worse is the fact that some American Igbo’s extend the same altitude of “I alonenism” and individualism even to their siblings that live in the United States of America with them. Occasionally, one hears that an Igbo person has expelled his or her sibling from his or her home. Or one hears that a son or daughter did not allow his or her parents or parents’-in-law to visit him or her and/or to live with him or her in his or her house in the United States. This kind of altitude is totally contrary to the Igbo culture as a very family-oriented ethnic group. On the contrary, such behavior suggests that some Igbo indigenes that live in the United States of America are becoming more Americanized than the Americans.

89 The Igbo society just like other societies experiences frictions that exist wherever people are living together. Thus, there are occasional quarrels between siblings that may arise in the sharing of their parents’ properties, and in other interpersonal and intrapersonal interactions. However, such quarrels between the Igbo and his or her siblings are not expected by the Igbo’s to last for a long period of time. The Igbo have two slogans that not only testify to this claim but they also mitigate the damage that would have been caused if a quarrel is prolonged for unnecessary length of time: First the Igbo say, “*iwe nwanne anaghi eru n’okpukpu*.” This can be translated as, “being angry with one’s sibling is superficial and does not touch the bone.” Second they say, “*Ozu chenwe usi, enyi ka nwanee alaa.*” This can be translated as, “a friend that is greater than a sibling runs away when his or her friend’s dead body begins to smell.”
As mentioned before, the first and the oldest male child known as the *Diokpara* of each family is the head of that family. The oldest son among the children of the same great grandparents is the head of the extended family (*onye isi umunna*). The amalgamation of these families makes up a village or the macro *umunna*. Each village has a village head. People from different villages but from the same great grandfather make up a town. There are also some towns that are made up of a combination of villages that are from the same great grandfather and those that have no such traceable blood relationship.

Legend has it that each town is a descendant of a man whose children are said to belong to one great *umunna*. According to E. Ilogu, “each *umunna* is named after its ancestor and it is known by that name in the whole community.” Pius Okigbo echoes the same thought, “villages have some common blood line which makes everyone somewhat attached to everyone else.” For example, the oral tradition of the origin and history of *Ogberuru* has it that *Ogberuru*, which has ten villages, is said to be the descendants of one man named *Ogberuru*. The names of his ten sons represent the ten villages in *Ogberuru*: *Umuamuiji, Umuezala, Ubaha, Eziama, Isiakpu, Aboh, umuelele, Umuegbe, Umuenwerem, Uhuala*. This unwritten history of

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91 See Uchendu, *Igbo of Southeast Nigeria*, 40; and Aniefuna, “The Christian Family as the Path to a Culture of Life,” 159-160.

92 See Ilogue, *Christianity and Igbo Culture*, 12; and Nwabude, *Preparation for Marriage and Family Life*, 89.


94 There is growing practice among many towns in Igboland who for political reasons and gains have upgraded some of their villages to the status of autonomous communities. An autonomous community or town is an independent community or town with its own traditional ruler and cabinet members, and is recognized as such by the
Ogberuru town is true of many other towns in Igboland as well as across the African continent. According to Marie Andre, “everywhere in Africa it is common to find a whole village…in which all the inhabitants are related and therefore subject to the same head.”

F. C. Ogbalu commenting on the continuous expansion but yet a unified body of the umunna opines, “the growth of umunna is limitless. As they grow, more umunna may branch off from the original one. And as the umunna becomes very extensive and the ancestry more and more remote, more umu-nnas’ crystalize.” However, Nwabude is correct to note that in some communities, “such growth and crystallization of one umunna from another has ceased since the umunna as an extended family structure has fixated.”

government. Every autonomous community is represented at the State level and gets government allocations. In some cases, a village might be big enough to qualify for an autonomous community of its own, while in other cases, two or three villages may merge to become an independent autonomous community. This practice has and will continue to introduce a system of choosing the traditional ruler that is foreign to most Igbo towns. This is because, contrary to the tradition of allowing the village head to be the traditional ruler, some of these newly created autonomous communities choose a person who does not belong to the-kingly lineage as their traditional ruler. In situations where different villages merged, they may decide to have a rotational traditional ruler to give every village an opportunity to provide the traditional ruler at the end of a specific tenure that may be decided by either a number of years or by the death of the Eze. One of the main problems associated with the creation of these new autonomous communities (especially in places where it was not properly discussed) is that it breeds a kind of enmity and animosity among the communities and/or candidates who may be interested in providing or becoming the traditional ruler. Worse still, there have been instances where people have lost their lives and properties during the process of looking for these autonomous communities. A pertinent saying has it that “anaghi azo eze azo, ana amu eze amu.” This is best translated as, “traditional rulers are born, they are not being contested, or one does not contest for them.” Regrettably, this saying has lost its meaning and significance in some of these newly created autonomous communities where things were not done accordingly. On the contrary, where the seeking and the creation of these autonomous communities were well arranged, the new autonomous communities may still combine their names and the names of their mother town to produce a new name. They may also maintain allegiance to their former traditional ruler and still hold meetings together for the progress and maintenance of both their individual autonomous communities and that of their mother town.


Ogbalu, *Igbo Institutions and Customs*, 12.

Nwbude, *Preparation for Marriage and Family Life*, 89.
Since the first and the oldest male child of each domestic family is the head of that family, consequently, the first male child (the Diokpala) of Ogberuru (Umuamuji) village has the prerogative of providing the head of the entire town, called the traditional ruler Eze/Obi of Ogberuru. Consequently, the Obi/Eze of Ogberuru that is, the traditional ruler of Ogberuru is the Diokpara of Umuamuji. The Eze/Obi’s cabinet is made up of the village heads. The village heads are the first male children (the Diokpara) of the villages. However, in the event that this male child is lacking for any reason, this responsibility falls on to the next person in line in the chorological order. The Eze/Obi’s cabinet assists the Eze/Obi in decision-making that affects the whole town. Seen through this lens, the governance of the Igbo society is not only entrenched among and for the people, it revolves around the first male children and in some cases the male children of each family.\(^98\) Reflecting on this system of government among the Igbo, Nwabude notes that some authors referred to it as “viricentric (man centered) patrilocal (located on the father’s place), patrifocal (focused on the father).”\(^99\)

Consequently, the Igbo who live outside of their villages are in constant communication with their siblings who live at home and they update them on the happenings in the village. However, they occasionally visit home to participate in the meetings and other related family, village and town activities. For non-Igbo persons, this system of living and government may be confusing, but for the Igbo it is very easy to trace since everybody knows each other by maintaining permanently their places of birth. Commenting on this, Akalonu is right to note that

\(^{98}\) See Ebelebe, *Africa and the New Face of Mission*: 17; and Aniefuna, “The Christian Family as the Path to a Culture of Life,” 159-162.

“migration is not common among the Igbo.” He continues to argue that “the Igbo can live in a foreign land for many years, marry and raise children there, but he never gives up the desire to return to his ancestral home. Those who live in cities are primarily there to earn money for the development of their ancestral homes and their villages.”

As I noted earlier, the Igbo return to the village/town for festivals and for important ceremonies, such as New Yam festivals, town union meetings, elections, traditional marriage ceremonies, Christmas, Easter, funerals, *et cetera.* Uka Ngwobi speaking about Nigeria as a whole expresses this ancestry attachment to one’s family and village thus: “Family sentiment is a passion in the Nigerian [Igbo] society. There is a strong loyalty to family and village which brings the city dwellers to his home village for feast, elections, marriage, and funerals.” Consequently, the Igbo may have lived in a country outside of the father’s village and may have naturalized there, but they still do not consider such a place as their home in the Nigerian perspective. Both Akalonu and Ngwobi’s positions suggest that there are moral and financial obligations owned by every Igbo man to his place of birth or rather, to the place of the birth of his father whether he lives there or not. Why is this so?

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100 Akalonu, *Procreation in Igbo Marriage,* 16.

101 Akalonu, *Procreation in Igbo Marriage,* 16; See also Aniefuna, “The Christian Family as the Path to a Culture of Life,” 159; and Nwabude, *Preparation for Marriage and Family Life,* 90.

102 See Anameze, *Marriage Among Igbos,* 17; and Achebe, *Things Fall Apart,* 77-83.


104 See Onyeocha, *Family Apostolate,* 6
Every Igbo man irrespective of his profession or where he lives belongs to his village meeting (*nzuko umunna*) and contributes morally and financially for the up-keep of the village. If he chooses not to belong to such a meeting, he is considered to have voluntarily ostracized himself from his family and village members. No one from the village is allowed to associate with such a person whether alive or dead. The same moral and financial obligations are also expected of the Igbo at both town and parish levels for Igbo Christians in comparable amounts. However, if one is incapable of meeting with these financial obligations but shows willingness to do so, one’s family is expected to help out. One can also be exempted from such financial obligations if one and one’s family met the requirements for exemption. In addition to these obligatory financial contributions, individuals or groups who are financially balanced also do volunteer to complete a project like a community hospital or the awarding of scholarship grants to their children for the good of their community.

From what has been said so far, one can see that the first male child of each family (the *Diokpara*) has immense governing responsibilities both within and outside of his nuclear and extended Igbo families. He is the mouthpiece of his siblings. In whichever level or category he

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105 People who have attempted to distance themselves from the community activities and financial obligations have paid heavily both emotionally and materially. In fact, the way the Igbo family system is set up, one is at a disadvantaged position if one tries to ignore the community.

106 As a pastor in two different parishes before moving down to the United States for my advanced studies, I have occasionally exempted people and their families who showed interest but were unable to pay for their contributions towards the up-keep of the parish and the diocese.

107 The married women from my Village – *Eziama Ojberuru* are currently building a cottage hospital which is hoped to serve the community and other neighboring villages. In another neighboring town, one of the persons that was sent abroad for advanced studies by community contributions single-handedly built their parish rectory. There are various instances where different age grades have undertaken and completed other similar projects for the community to alleviate the suffering of the poor in their midst.
finds himself, he commands respect and has enormous duties. Recall that he, the Diokpara represents his family in kindred meetings—*Nzuko Umunna*. The Diokpoara of each kindred represents his kindred during village meetings. The Diokpala of each village represents his village during a town meeting. The *Diokpara* of the town in most cases is the *Eze*/*Obi* or *Igwe* of the town and he represents his town in meetings with other neighboring towns that make up a local government area within a State.

One might ask, if the governing or ruling privileges are not democratically determined but are conferred upon the *Diokpara* simply by chance of his birth position, how much involvement do his siblings have in determining their fate and how their village or town is governed? To this concern, one can say with some certainty that although both the *Diokpara* and his adjoining governing powers are neither democratically elected nor contested, but simply conferred by virtue of his being the first male child, no *Diokpara* presumes the consent of the group he represents without due consultation with them. Elizabeth Isichei expresses the same view thusly:

Democracy as it exists today in the western world, is full of limitations. Governments take decisions that citizens disapprove of even among those that elected them. Minorities, even large ones, have little hope of having their political ideals put into practice. The average citizen has effectively no power to alter the network of regulations that govern his life. One of the things that struck the first western visitors to Igboland, was the extent to which democracy was truly practiced. An early visitor to a Niger Igbo town said that he felt he was in free land, among free people. Another visitor, Frenchman said, true liberty assisted in Igboland, though its name is not inscribed on any monument.  

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108 *Isichei, A history of the Igbo People*, 21. It is pertinent to note that the system of government that is operational in Igboland has not always worked to its advantage especially in its interactions with the other parts or ethnic groups that make up Nigeria as a country. In fact, for the most part, it has worked against the Igbo people. It has resulted to the marginalization of the Igbo by their fellow citizens from other parts of Nigeria who refer to the Igbo as an ethnic group with no central leader. This derogatory statement is traceable to the colonial periods. During this period, it
Since the governing power revolves around the first male or the subsequent male children in chorological order in the event of an early death of the first male child, it then follows that for a family, kindred, village or town to be represented in the gatherings of the Igbo people, such an entity must be able to produce a male child. This male child must be the fruit of a culturally approved union between a man and a woman because for the Igbo, *Mbarambia anaghi abu eze.* This is best translated as, “a stranger or a foreigner does not become a king.” Consequently, Igbo parents strive hard not only to have male children born to them, but they also make sure that their first male children are educated in the norms and the traditions of their land. Rarely, do Igbo parents allow their *Diokpara* to travel to a far distant country in search of greener pastures for

was easy for the colonial masters to win-over to their sides the other tribes in Nigeria who had a centralized tribal monarchy by getting their tribal rulers or heads on their side. But, when they came to the Igbo, they met a different kind of people with a different kind of government. The colonial masters who did not understand the governing system that operates among the Igbo concluded not only that the Igbo cannot be ruled but that they have no king (*Igbo ewe eze*). Consequently, because it was not easy for the colonial masters to take advantage of the whole Igbo people by taking advantage of their leaders, and because they came to conquer and control, the Igbo people became the stumbling block that needed to be pushed aside in order for them to accomplish their mission. This they did by setting up a system of government in Nigeria that perpetually placed the Igbo in a disadvantaged position. This claim is supported by the historical fact that since Nigeria gained independence in 1960 (52 years as an independent country), an Igbo indigene has been the president of Nigeria once, in the person of Nnamdi Azikiwe, from January 1, 1963 to January 16, 1966. During this period, Abubakar Tafawa Balewa an (Hausa indigene), was the prime Minister of Nigeria from October 1, 1960 to January 15, 1966. In other words, from the time of Nigerian independence in 1960 to December 2010, Nigeria has been ruled by a Northern tribe (Hausa) for an approximate total of 37 years and 5 months. The Southern tribe (Yoruba) has ruled Nigeria for 11 years and 11 months. The Eastern tribe (Igbo) has ruled Nigeria for approximately 2 years and 9 months. Based on these statistics, one can say that the Igbo’s have not had an appropriate representation in the governance of Nigeria. It may not be an over-statement to say that they have been marginalized by their fellow Nigerians and castigated and nicknamed as ungovernable people. The good news is that, the Igbo have not given up on their own form of government—a democratic government for the people and by the people, not only because of its internal benefits, but because they believe that it is the right thing to do. The Igbo’s democratically minded spirit has been and will continue to be the firewall that protects the robust affinity and filial bond among the Igbo irrespective of where they find themselves. For the most part, the Igbo can be said to be their brothers’ keepers. For more information concerning the views shared in this footnote consult: Nwabude, *Preparation for marriage and family Life*, xiv-xvii; Ngwobia, *Growing Up in Nigeria*, 25-29; Akalonu, *Procreation in Igbo Marriage*, 12-26 and

fear of being contaminated by outside influence. No Igbo man wants his ancestral lineage to end with him. Consequently, the Igbo marry to beget not only children but male children who will perpetuate their names. For this and other related reasons, it is regarded as not only a big sacrifice on the part of the parents if they allow their first male child to become a priest or a religious, but also on the candidates themselves who choose to live a celibate life in such a very highly procreative and family-oriented culture.

1.6. SUMMARY

As this first chapter that has examined the origin, location, family, social, religious life, and the system of government that is operational among the Igbo comes to an end, it is very obvious; that every Igbo male child especially the first born (the Diokpala) has an unprecedented responsibilities that is bestowed on him both at the family and village levels. However, not much has been said concerning the institution by which a man and a woman come together as husband and wife. But, as it is the case in many human societies, so it is for the Igbo society that talk about family necessitates talk about marriage. This is truer for the Igbo because traditionally every family originates from a union between a man and a woman. In other words, marriage is and will continue to be the bedrock upon which Igbo family and society is built. Our investigation so far justifies this claim because if people are not marrying and giving birth to children (especially male children), not only will the maintenance of the Igbo’s ancestral lineage, be impossible, but also the communitarian character which is part and parcel of the Igbo life will be jeopardized. Therefore, in the next chapter, I will analyze the Igbo’s understanding of
marriage as a crystallization of a culture that sees procreation—particularly of male children—as the primary purpose of marriage.
CHAPTER TWO

MARRIAGE AMONG THE IGBO OF NIGERIA.

INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, I examined the origin, location, social, religion, family life, and the governance of the Igbo ethnic group. I concluded by arguing that culturally the governance of Igbo people both at family, village, and town levels is entrenched around their male children but particularly their first born male children (the Diokpala). The study also showed that the male children or child must be born from a culturally approved form of marriage or sexual interaction between a man and woman. However, not much was said in reference to the Igbo’s understanding of marriage or their purpose for marrying. But it is obvious that without people marrying each other and being open to procreation it would be difficult to establish, sustain and maintain a family lineage. Consequently, since marriage is the bedrock upon which a family is built, discussions about family necessitate discussions about marriage. And for the Igbo, marriage is part and parcel of their cultural life and existence.

The previous chapter also presented the Igbo as a very religious ethnic group. Consequently, they wholeheartedly embraced the Catholic faith when it was introduced to them by the Irish missionaries in the late 1800’s and early 1900’s.¹ It is fair to say that the Catholic Church had not always exhibited the spirit of accommodation and tolerance toward the cultures and traditions of the people it had gone to evangelize prior to the Second Vatican Council

documents—*Dignitatis Humanae* and *Gaudium et Spes*. However, through *Dignitatis Humanae* and *Gaudium et Spes* the Council Fathers encouraged missionaries not only to respect the cultures and the values of the mission-lands that are not contrary to the Catholic doctrine but also to foster and preserve each culture’s characteristics and core values. In doing so, the Church hopes to enrich both itself and the new culture with its teachings.²

Congruent with the spirit of *Gaudium et Spes* but prior to it, when the early missionaries brought the Catholic faith to Igboland in the late 1800’s and early 1900’s, they did not condemn all the cultural practices of the Igbo people. Rather the early missionaries condemned some of the Igbo cultural practices that were contrary to the Catholic faith. For instance, the killing of twin babies, and the labeling and the ostracizing of a group of people as an *Osu* to mention but a few examples of the Igbo culturally approved practices that the missionaries condemned as evil.³ But, when it came to marriage and its purpose, they met a culture and a people whose concept of marriage leaned towards viewing procreation (particularly of male children) as the primary, if not the only reason for marriage. This cultural understanding was congruent with the then undisputed magisterial teaching that categorized the purpose of marriage into primary and secondary ends, with procreation understood as the primary end of marriage, while mutual assistance and the remedy for concupiscence are understood as the secondary ends

² Vatican Council II, “*Gaudium et Spes.*” 53-62; and “*Dignitatis Humanae,*” 1-15.

³ The Igbo held that it was a taboo for a woman to give birth to twin babies at the same time. Consequently, to show their disapproval of this omen, the babies were thrown into the evil forest for them to die. The Igbo also have a group of people that they refer to as the *Osu*. These are men and women who were dedicated to the village deities and/ or gods. They are treated as outcasts, and they do not participate in the taking of titles in Igboland. In the past, they marry themselves and are not allowed to intermingle freely with the true sons and daughters of the soil of every town in Igboland, but recently most towns have started to marry them. For more information concerning these practices and how the early missionaries combated them consult: Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, 43, 104-107, 110-114.
of marriage. This classification of the purpose of marriage into primary and secondary ends is traceable to St. Augustine’s three goods of marriage. 

At present, opinions are divided among scholars with regard to the current teaching of the magisterium concerning the ends of marriage due to the avoidance of The 1917 Code of Canon Law’s hierarchical language of the primary and the secondary ends of marriage in Gaudium et Spes. For instance, Theodore Mackin argues that the magisterium has dropped the old terminology of the hierarchy of the ends of marriage, thereby suggesting a repudiation of the subordination of conjugal love to procreation. While on the contrary, William E. May contends that the magisterium has not changed its teaching which sees procreation as the primary end, while naming mutual assistance and marriage serving as a remedy for concupiscence as the secondary ends. But, if in fact that the magisterium has shifted its teaching from the old

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4 According to The 1917 Code of Canon Law no. 1013: “The Primary end of marriage is the procreation and education of children; the secondary [end] is mutual support and the remedy for concupiscence.” The 1917 Code of Canon Law, 352; Acta Apostolicae Sedis 9 (1917), IIa 3-512. From henceforth citations from this document will read The 1917 Code of Canon Law plus the text number. In the future the abbreviated form Acta Apostolicae Sedis ASS will be used.

5 In his work De Bono Conjugali—“the Good of Marriage,” St. Augustine teaches that marriage involves a triad of goods; the good of offspring (proles), fidelity (fides), and the sacramental bond (sacramentum). However, for Augustine, the good of offspring, which is not limited to the physical begetting of children, but to their education and nurturing in a Christian manner, is the primary good. Although, Augustine did not call the goods of fides and sacramentum the secondary goods in De Bono Conjugali, one could categorize fides and sacramentum as secondary goods of marriage by inference. Further discussion concerning the teaching of St. Augustine vis-à-vis marriage and its goods and its later classification into primary and secondary ends, will be treated in chapter three of this study. Cf. Augustine, “De Bono Conjugali,” 32;

6 Cf. Gaudium et Spes, 47-52. A detailed analysis of the Second Vatican Council Fathers’ silence over the categorization of the ends of marriage into primary and secondary ends will be examined in chapter six of this study.

7 See Mackin, What is marriage?, 235-237. A detailed analysis of the arguments of this theologian and his supporters will be undertaken in chapter seven of this study.

8 Cf. May, Marriage: The Rock on Which the Family is Built, 98-99. A detailed analysis of the arguments of this theologian and his supporters will be provided in chapter seven of this study.
hierarchical structure concerning marriage and its ends, this shift needs to be explicitly made and the Igbo Catholics’ need to be re-catechized. This is because as it stands, this divergence in opinion among scholars concerning the teaching of the magisterium on this issue breeds confusion among the Igbo Catholics who hold the procreation of (particularly male) children as the primary end of marriage as this chapter will show.

To develop the above claim or position, I will begin first by defining and describing marriage as understood and practiced by the Igbo. Second, I will examine the purpose or the reason why the Igbo marry. I will show that although the Igbo may have other reasons for which they marry, they marry fundamentally for the begetting of male children. Furthermore, I will also show that the other reasons such as, the begetting of female children, fidelity, and the sacramental bond are the secondary reasons for which the Igbo engage in the act of marrying and giving in marriage. In other words, like the Catholic tradition before the teaching in Gaudium et Spes, it is not debated that procreation and education of children as the primary end of marriage subordinates the ends of mutual help and the allaying of concupiscence for the Igbo. But, unlike St. Augustine, it is specifically the procreation of male children that the Igbo see as the primary end of marriage.

Thus, when a marriage among Igbo couples accomplishes the secondary reasons, without satisfying the primary reason; it is regarded not only as a failure, but also as an incomplete marriage among the Igbo. Third, I will carefully investigate, and analyze the reason or reasons for this categorization and subordination under cosmological, religious, social, and economic

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9 See Nzekwu, *Wand of the Noble Wood*, 34.
factors. Fourth, if the Igbo regard non-procreative marriages and/or procreative marriages of only female children as an incomplete marriage, I will examine the attitude of the Igbo toward those couples who are childless and/or those who have given birth to only female children. Finally, I will evaluate and conclude this chapter.

2.1. THE DEFINITION/DESCRIPTION OF MARRIAGE AS PRACTICED BY THE IGBO

The institution of marriage is as old as the human race itself. People of every age have engaged in the act of marrying and giving in marriage. While almost every society engages in the act of marrying, the specification of that which constitutes a valid marriage ritual and practice lack universal acceptance among various cultures and societies. On a similar note, marriage also does not enjoy unanimous definition among scholars. This is because each scholar, society, culture or discipline defines marriage by paying particular attention to the values and purposes it attaches to it. For instance, anthropologist George Murdock stresses the interpersonal aspects of marriage, “marriage exists only when the economic and sexual are united into one relationship.”10 While on the other hand, Ward H. Goodenough, another anthropologist, highlights its contractual aspects and its benefits: “Marriage is a contractual union of a man and a woman that involves sexual privilege, economic cooperation, cohabitation, the production of

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children and responsibility for the children’s care, socialization, and education.” What these multifaceted definitions from different anthropologists suggest is that even among scholars of the same discipline, marriage does not enjoy a unanimous definition.

The charge of lack of unanimous definition of marriage among scholars is also true among scholars that have attempted to give a definition of marriage that will align with the Igbo’s understanding of it. The word marriage is derived from a combination of two Igbo phrases; *Ilu Nwunye* for the man and *Ilu Di* for the woman. Thus for the Igbo, marriage is called *ilu di na Nwunye*. This sentence simply refers to the act of marrying a wife or a husband without strictly defining what it is. In a broader and general sense the customary law of Nigeria defines marriage as that “institution that constitutes a man and a woman as husband and wife.”

Although this definition touches on one significant element; the fact that marriage is primarily between a man and a woman, nonetheless, it sounds too legalistic and neglects two essential reasons why the Igbo marry. First, it describes marriage from the perspective of law, that is, as a creation of human law. Second, the customary law’s definition neither mentions the purposes or the reasons for the coming together of the man and the woman nor describes the duration of such a union.

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Phillips-Morris acknowledges this deficiency in the customary law’s definition and notes; “marriage in the customary law may be defined as the union of a man and a woman for the duration of the woman’s life. Customary law permits polygyny; nevertheless, marriage is still a union between a man and a woman.”15 Phillips-Morris’ explication among other things points to the duration of the union. Nevertheless, his definition is not an adequate description of the life-span of Igbo marriages. This is because strictly speaking, Igbo marriages also end with the death of the man. But on a more serious note, his definition did not say anything concerning the purpose or the reason why the Igbo marry. Marriage for the Igbo has a purpose or end which is peculiar to them. Nonetheless, he should be credited for pointing out the polygynous character of Igbo marriages.

A definition of marriage that comes close to the Igbo’s understanding of marriage is the one given by social anthropologist Lucy Mair: “Marriage has been defined as a union between a man and woman such that the children born to the woman are recognized legitimate offspring of both parents.”16 Mair’s definition addresses a key feature (begetting of children) of what an Igbo man has in mind as he begins to look for a woman to marry, but it also fails to mention the communitarian nature of Igbo marriages. According to Cyracus Mba, “in customary law, marriage is more than a contract or covenant or pact between two individuals of the opposite sex. It implies a social and legal bond or alliance between two families as between the couple

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themselves.” Although Mba’s definition brings out the communitarian character of Igbo marriages, it did not say anything concerning the reason why the Igbo marry. Emmanuel Nwabude’s definition brings out both elements: “Marriage (inu di na nwunye) is defined as a sacred institution by which a man and a woman voluntarily accept to become husband and wife, with the approval of their parents’ families and after performing the marriage ceremonies. The union that resulted therefrom, though potentially polygynous, is expected to be stable, permanent and for life and has as its main purposes as the procreation of offspring and companionship.”

Nwabude’s definition underscores various important characteristics and some significant reasons why the Igbo enter marriage: the begetting of children, its communitarian nature, its duration, and the vulnerable nature of Igbo marriages. Although R.C. Anochie and others align with Nwabude and see procreation as the major reason why the Igbo marry, there is still an important distinction that is lacking in their definitions. Onuora Nzekwu’s definition of Igbo marriages addresses this concern and adequately represents the main reason why the Igbo’s engage in the act of marrying and giving in marriage. “To us [the Igbo], the primary aim of

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18 Nwabude, Preparation for Marriage and Family Life, 5-6.

19 Igbo marriages are vulnerable because they are potentially polygynous for the sake of the amaechila mentality. As this study will further show, the primary reason why the Igbo marry is to beget male children who will keep their lineage active. Because of their obsession with male children, one of the main reasons that many Igbo men marry more than one wife is for their second or third wives to beget male children. On a similar note, immoral acts such as adultery are also prevalent among Igbo couples who have no male children. These and other anomalies which are perpetrated for the sake of wanting to beget an heir make Igbo marriages very vulnerable to abuses of all kinds, and turn what would have been happy marriages into war zones.

marriage is to have children, particularly boys, who will perpetuate our names.”

It is based on this understanding that the Igbo say, “Ka m nua nwanyi ka omutaram nwa nwoke.” This can be translated as, “let me marry a wife so that she will beget a male child for me.”

The Igbo marry to beget a male child (the Diokpara) who will perpetuate his name and keep his family lineage open and active. Nwabude refers to this altitude as the mentality of “ka obi m ghalu echina.” This can be translated as “may my ancestral home not be closed or end.”

The emphasis on male children is not a trivial matter among the Igbo. It is the center and summit of all other reasons that are associated with marriage in Igboland. It is also significant to note that because of the passion to beget a male child, marriage for the Igbo is not necessarily exclusive. Therefore, for any definition/description of marriage as practiced and known by the Igbo to be true to its name, it must include the begetting of male children as its primary purpose as well as indicate that it is not necessarily exclusive. To simply say that procreation is the primary reason for marriage among the Igbo is not only incomplete, but it also neglects an essential characteristic of why the Igbo marry. For if it was for the purposes of procreation of either of the genders alone, anomalies such as infidelity, polygamy and adultery, to mention but a few, which are prevalent among Igbo married couples who have only female children, would have been condemned by Igbo culture. But as it stands, the passion for a male child is the

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21 Nzekwu, *Wand of the Noble Wood*, 34.

22 Nzekwu, *Wand of the Noble*, 34-35; see also Nwabude, *Preparation for Marriage and Family Life*, 7; and Akalonu, *Procreation in Igbo Marriage*, 9. I will try as much as possible to document subsequent Igbo sayings or idiomatic expressions. However, lack of future documentation of any of them should not be construed as a point against their authenticity and originality. Rather, it simply shows that these saying are so commonly used among the Igbo’s that scholars have not taken time to write them down in a book. Rather one might say that they are written in the hearts of the Igbo people.

primary reason that is responsible for these actions and behaviors as well as the cultural silence concerning them.

Therefore, a comprehensive definition of marriage that addresses these concerns and more accurately reflect Igbo practice should read: marriage is a sacred and natural institution whereby a male adult and a female adult freely choose to marry each other having being approved by both families and after performing the traditional marriage rites, whose primary purpose is the begetting of male children and for companionship which is potentially permanent and stable but not necessarily exclusive.

In collaboration with Nwabude’s definition, the above definition also brings out at once both the sacred and the natural aspects of Igbo marriages as well as their communitarian nature. Marriage for the Igbo is a divine, natural and a practical phenomenon. It is divine because it is a creation of the divine Being God (Chineke) who created all creatures and empowered them to procreate. It is natural because the Igbo belief that every created Igbo human being has a natural instinct to procreate, thus the saying among the Igbo: “Onye amuru, ya amuta ibeya.” This is best translated as, “he who is begotten begets another.” It is practical because it is a way that a man and a woman keep alive their tradition and values. And although it is freely chosen by the male and female that is marrying, it must be approved by both parents of the marrying parties.

24 Genesis 1:28.
25 See Akalonu, Procreation in Igbo Marriage, 9.
26 See Nwabude, Preparation for Marriage and Family Life, 1.
27 See Iwuji, Marriage Form in Nigeria, 19; and Mba, “Trial-Marriage –in – Nigeria,” 34.
Because parental consent is not a trivial issue, securing it is very fundamental for the continuation of Igbo marriage rites without which no further marriage negotiations can be made.\textsuperscript{28} The person’s community is also involved since no man is expected to marry from a village that his community does not approve because he will need them during the marriage negotiations and ceremonies. All these statements validate the claim that marriage for the Igbo is not a one person’s affair.\textsuperscript{29} For these and other related reasons the Igbo say, “\textit{otu onye anaghi alu nwanyi}.” This can be translated as, “one man does not marry a wife.”\textsuperscript{30} Emeka Iwuji supports this claim; “Marriage in Nigeria [Igbo] is so important and central to the life of the people that the preparation and ceremonies leading into its entry can hardly be called a one man, one woman affair.”\textsuperscript{31}

Among the Igbo, ability to marry is a major sign of adulthood, maturity, responsibility and resourcefulness.\textsuperscript{32} Bachelors are regarded as irresponsible people and are consequently nicknamed “\textit{akaliogeli}” (worthless persons or “\textit{Oke okporo}” (Male woman).\textsuperscript{33} Akalonu supports this claim, “Marriage is essentially necessary for the life [of the Igbo]. It is not only that human

\textsuperscript{28} See Mba, “Trial-Marriage –in – Nigeria,” 35.


\textsuperscript{31} Iwuji, \textit{Marriage Form In Nigeria}, 1.


\textsuperscript{33} Nwubude, \textit{Preparation for Marriage}, 13.
nature demands it, it is a duty he owes to his family and to society at large….The Igbo look on one who has married as mature and responsible. He or she has passed from boyhood or girlhood into motherhood or womanhood." Consequently, the Igbo not only frown on any one who refuses to marry, they see him or her as an enemy of the ethnic group and his action as a threat to the continued existence of the group. It is for these and other similar reasons that one can truly say that among the Igbo, every event and activity of one’s adult life revolves around and is regulated by marriage. It is a way for one to tell one’s kinsmen that one is of age and has arrived.

Thus far, I have defined and described marriage as known by the Igbo by showing that it is not just for the purpose of procreation of children that the Igbo marry, but more importantly for the purpose of begetting male children. I also pointed out that many Igbo marriages lack exclusivity because of the same reason of wanting to beget a male child. In the next sub-section, I will examine the Igbo’s attitude toward procreation of children in general.

2.2. THE PROCREATION OF CHILDREN AS THE REASON WHY THE IGBO MARRY.


Many scholars both foreign and local who have studied this aspect of the Igbo life and culture are in agreement concerning the importance that the Igbo attach to marriage and procreation in general. According to Basden, “The primeval instinct to exercise and multiply is in overwhelming evidence amongst the Ibo people, it is really the controlling factor of their lives, the motif of their existence.”37 Because of the procreative character of Igbo marriages, Basden argues that the Igbo adult male suffers most if he chooses to remain permanently unmarried. “Marriage looms upon the horizon of every maid and youth as an indispensable function to be fulfilled with as little delay as possible after reaching the age of puberty. The idea of a celibate life finds no favour whatsoever: To the Ibo, it is ranked foolishness as well as being utterly contrary to the laws of nature. Men and women, particularly the latter, are scorned and mocked if they remain unmarried.”38

Akalonu could not be more explicit in his support of the argument that Igbo adults are expected to marry: “Every Igbo boy or girl therefore looks forward with expectation and as a matter of course to the day he or she will get married. Remaining single permanently, is not a feature of the Igbo culture. To remain permanently unmarried means that one is abnormal, sick or is economically unable to meet the requirement.”39 Because every adult is expected to marry in Igboland, the Igbo have two popular slogans which epitomize this expectation: “Nwanyi na esi na onye mu roue na onye lu.” This can be translated as, “a girl transcends from whose child she

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37 Basden, Among the Ibos of Nigeria, 100.
38 Basden, Niger-Ibos, 213; See also Uchendu, The Igbo of Southeast Nigeria, 86.
39 Akalonu, Procreation in Igbo Marriage, 19.
is to whose wife she is.” Likewise, “Nwoke na ese na obu nwa onye fere na obu nna onye.” This can be translated as, “a boy transcends from whose child he is to whose father he is.” Akalonu calls it, “a rite of passage from being a boy or girl to being a father or a mother.”

It can be said with some certainty that marriage is one of the few events in which every Igbo adult can truly say that he or she is not only in full control of but one that he or she chooses by him or herself. Alluding to this claim, Akalonu rightly observed: “Among the Igbo, birth and death are significant events in a person’s life, but he/she plays no active part in them. Title-taking enhances his prestige and gives him or her high social position- but he/she is free to take it or not. Marriage for every Igbo man is essentially necessary for its life. It is not only that human nature demands it, it is a duty he or she owes to his family and society at large.”

Akalonu’s elucidation is further supported by these Igbo slogans; “Onye amuru ji ugwo omumu.” This can be translated as “one who is born owes a debt to the procreation of children.” And “Onye amuru ya amuta ibe ya.” This is best translated as “one who has been born has to beget other children.”

From what has been said, it is evident that the Igbo marry to beget children, but nothing has been said about the preparations or the forms of marriage that are approved by Igbo culture. This study does not intend to elaborate on them since it is neither a full blown study of Igbo marriage ceremonies nor is it a study on the preparations leading to them. However, it suffices to

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40 Akalonu, *Procreation in Igbo Marriage*, 9. It is interesting to note that even after marriage, the Igbo identify the mothers with their husbands while the fathers are identified as men. Thus, in the slogan the girl was identified as a wife rather than as a mother. While in the case of the boy, he was referred to as the man.


mention that the Igbo’s have several approved forms of marriages but monogamy and polygamy are the most common ones. Monogamy is presently the most favored form of marriage among the Igbo. On a similar note, the Igbo have elaborate marriage rites and rituals ceremonies. But since this study is not dedicated to an analysis of Igbo marriage rites and rituals, I will give a very condensed exposition here to help to explain how this emphasis on male children is instilled on the minds of those marrying right from the get go.

From the time a young boy sees a girl he wants to marry—whether he discovers the bride himself or she was introduced to him by his family or his friends—he knows that he is in for a serious undertaking. He then informs his parents that he has found somebody to marry. His parents then undertake an initial inquiry which aims to investigate a number of things: to rule out any possible blood relationship; to see if there is a history of infertility in other family; to ascertain the moral character of the girl and her family, and to learn about the kind of sickness that runs in her family. If his parents are satisfied by the results of this inquiry and give their approval, the boy’s father will inform the prospective father-in-law about the intention and desire of his son to marry his daughter. Commenting on the need to find out what kind of sickness that is prevalent in her family, Onuora Nzekwu notes; “my people [Igbo people] will not tolerate marriage with a girl in whose ancestral line could be traced a lingering disease for example, leprosy, epilepsy paralysis, and insanity.”

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43 For a more detailed study concerning the different forms of marriages, consult: Nwabude, *Preparation for Marriage and Family Life*, 1-80; and Iwuji, *Marriage Form In Nigeria*, 12-21.


45 Nzekwu, *Wood of the Noble Wood*, 98.
concerning the moral character of both the potential bride and her family, Clifford Aniefuna agrees with Chibuko, who argues: “Family reputation is regarded as an important factor in determining the suitability of the marriage partner, for no prospective parents-in-law would accept the introduction of undesirable qualities into their family kinship group through the marriage of their children, male or female.”

When the father of the girl has been informed, it is his responsibility to inform his wife that somebody is proposing to marry their daughter. The formal and initial contact with both families is normally done with some gallons of palm wine and kola nuts. Each locality has a different name for this initial visit that initiates marriage negotiations, but the meaning and what it signifies is the same for all Igbo communities. Some communities call it “Iku aka n’uzo,” or “Mmanyा ajuju,” or “Iju ese.” These sayings have the same signification and are translated as either “the knocking at the door” or “the wine for inquiry.”

When the parents of the girl have been notified, they will ask their daughter if she consents to the proposal by their potential son-in-law and his family. If she consents, they will then do their own initial investigations not only about the moral character of their potential son-in-law and family, but also concerning whether he/they will be able to take care of their daughter. At the end of their investigations, if they were satisfied with their findings, they will

46 Chibuko, *Igbo Christian Rite of Marriage* 48-49; See also Aniefuna, “The Christian Family as the Path to a Culture of Life,” 191.
47 See Nwabude, *Preparation for Marriage and Family Life*, 60.
then send words to their potential in-laws to tell them that they have accepted their proposal. In some cases the groom’s family may have already chosen and employed the services of “onye aka ebe” (the witness or the go-in-between). However, in a situation where the “onye aka ebe” has not been chosen, the groom’s family is expected to choose one before further marriage negotiations and ceremonies can be allowed to continue. This person is normally chosen from the village of the bride and/or is a close friend of the bridal family. Basden, defines it as “an [intermediary] in dowry transaction.” For F. C. Ogbalu, “onye aka ebe,” is a “witness who generally serves as liaison between the parties [that are marrying].”

From this time moving forward, all preparation and scheduling of the dates for different marriage rites and celebrations are done in direct liaison with the “onye aka ebe.” The “onye aka ebe” schedules all subsequent meetings involving both families and he does this, by paying close attention to various days in which marriage ceremonies are not performed in the villages of the marrying parties. It suffices to mention that different communities have different Igbo weekdays in which marriage rites are not celebrated. For instance, the people of Ogberuru do not fix any cultural marriage rituals on Eke day. It is pertinent to note that the Igbo have four-day calendar week: Eke, Orie, Afor, Nkwo as opposed to the English and the Jewish seven day calendar week.

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50 The term *onye aka ebe* literally means messenger. He is a very important person as far as Igbo marriage negotiations and ceremonies are concerned. His role does not end with the completion of the marriage ceremonies; rather he performs this role until death. Consequently, the choosing of “*onye aka ebe*” is as important as choosing the person to marry and in most cases the person chosen is a very responsible and respected male adult.

51 See Anaemeze, *Marriage Among the Igbos*, 54.


There are basic items that the potential husband is required to bring along with him during each visit. Some of these items are given to the parents of the bride while others are given to the community and to the age-grade (otu ogbo, or otu ebiri) of the girl in her village. An age-grade is a group of age-sets of a certain age range. These age-sets—are groups of Igbo children who were born between two-to-three year brackets. There might be as many as fifteen to twenty age-sets in the village, but there might be only three to four age-grades. C. Ifemesia defines age-sets as comprising of [all children] within the same age brackets — strictly those born with the two-to-three year age range; but [could] sometimes be extended to include those born with the five-to-six year period." Most age-grades have names and each age-grade usually picks a project to complete for the common good of their village like sinking a bore-hole for the community. The Igbo age-grade and the kinds of services they provide are analogous to those provided by some social clubs and non-government organization in the western world like The Rotary Club or the Lion Clubs to mention but a few.


56 Ifemesia, *Traditional Humanae Living Among the Igbo*, 82.

57 A bore-hole is a hole made by draining into the ground by which water is assessed. From the bore-hole water is drawn for daily use or for storage in a surface tank.

58 These services include but not limited to scholarship awards, free or subsidized medical treatments, sinking of bore-holes, *et cetera*. The difference between the Igbo age-grades and a non-government organization like the Rotary Club is that while the latter comprises of people from different countries who willingly choose to join such organizations and without any reference to their places of birth or age, membership into the former is determined by age limits as well as by their places of birth. For more information concerning the different kinds of Igbo age-grades, how each is inaugurated, and the different roles they play among the Igbo’s consult; Ifemesia, *Traditional Humanae Living among the Igbo*, 80-89; Nwabude, *Preparation for Marriage and Family Life*, 190-195; Ogbalu, *Igbo Institutions and Customs*, 29-35; and Basden, *Among the Ibos of Nigeria*, 73-75.
On their next visit, the potential bride is expected to go home with her potential husband’s family for a period of eight days that is, two Igbo weeks. During this time, while her potential husband and his family pay closer attention and carefully watch her character, she also does the same. At the end of her eight day stay, she is sent home with different gifts among which are a coco nut. If she feels that she cannot cope with her potential husband or his family dynamics, she gives the onye aka ebe the coco nut to return back to them the next day. This single act indicates that she is no longer interested in marrying the man. On the other hand, if it is her potential husband and/or his family that were not pleased with her behavior or character, they also send words through the go-in-between (onye aka ebe) that they are no longer interested.59

In the event that there were no such contrary messaging through the “onye ake ebe” and after all of the initial inquiries, visitations and negotiations have been completed, a special day is set aside for the traditional wedding (Igba nkwu nwanyi) to take place. It is the traditional wedding that concludes the Igbo marriage ceremonies. The traditional wedding – Igba nkwu nwanyi is performed at the bride father’s house with both families/communities and friends in attendance. In some cases, the bridal price or dowry (ego isi nwannyi) is paid during the traditional wedding ceremony. However, where the bridal price was not paid during the traditional wedding celebration, it must have been determined and agreed upon before the traditional wedding can validly take place. It is the paying of bridal price that validates and

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cements Igbo customary marriages. Alluding to the significance of the dowry as an essential ritual that validates Igbo traditional marriages, Monsignor Cyrus Mba defines the bridal price as, “a just institution and a sacred one, which affects the legality of the marriage and the legitimacy of filiation.” He continues, “Today there can be no serious discussion of marriage without the bridal price.” F. C. Ogbalu echoes the same thought, “the bulk of money paid by the husband to the parents [or male relatives of the bride] and it is refunded at whatever stage the marriage fails and the woman has another husband.”

During the Igba Nkwu Nwanyi celebration, the father or the oldest male child of the extended family (Umunna) will give a cup of palm wine to her daughter to give to her potential husband. By accepting this wine from her father, she publically consents that she still wants to be

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60 The bridal price or the dowry is the actual money or material goods paid to the parents of the bride by the groom or his willingness and ability to pay it to the bride’s parents for giving their consent for their daughter to marry him. Although some communities set a limit to how much a family may request, cases differ from one family to another. It is mostly left for the two parties to agree on the amount or no amount to be paid or received respectively. For most families, this can be as small as one U. S. cent since families do not want to give the impression that they are selling their daughter. Bridal price legitimizes the union and the children to be born. On the other hand, without paying the bridal price, it suggests that a girl ran away from her family to marry an irresponsible man. In other words, the bridal price represents on the part of the groom; resourcefulness, a sense of duty and responsibility and an ability to take care of his family. On the part of the bride, it shows that her parents valued her, and that she respects her parents. Succinctly put, bridal price ritual symbolizes more than what money or material goods can adequately express or convey. And it is this symbolism that makes it still a very strong part of Igbo traditional marriage ceremonies. The bridal price is the only thing that is paid or given back in the unfortunate case of divorce between married couples. The bridal money or its equivalent is given back only when the bride in question is re-married to another man. It should be noted that although the bridal price could have a connotation of a monetary purchase as some have assumed, for the Igbo, it is not a purchase money paid for the bride. For more information concerning the significance and symbolism of the bridal price in Igbo marriages consult: Atado, African Marriage Customs: A Case-Study of the Igbos (Kano, Nigeria: Modern Printers Limited, 1988), 39; Mba, “The Significance of Dowry or Bride-price in the Igbo Traditional Marriage and its Implication for Christianity in Africa Today,” 14-15; and Ogbalu, Igbo Institutions and Customs, 14.


63 Ogbalu, Igbo Institutions and Customs, 14.
married to her potential husband. But if she gives the wine back to her father, it means that she has not given her consent and further marriage rituals ceases. However, if she gives the wine to her potential husband and he receives and drinks the wine he received from her, he also publicly consents that he still wants to be her husband. After the drinking of the wine from her, he pulls his potential wife by her hand and both of them will then walk to her father/oldest man of the extended family and kneel down before him for his instructions and blessings.

During the blessing, he reminds them of the significance of what they are undertaking and warns them of the challenges that are associated with getting married. One of the important responsibilities that he does not forget to bring to their notice during this blessing is to point out to the newly married couple what is expected of them by their families and friends who have gathered to celebrate with them. In the olden days, the elders who gave this blessing and instructions used to be blunt in telling the couples the number of male children that would be expected from them by their families and communities. But, in this modern era, many of the elders who give these blessings and the instructions speak in generic terms. For instance, in a ceremony that I attended recently, the father of the bride who gave the blessing said: “Bido taa ruoe onwa itolu anyi choro inu ube nwa na ulo unu.” This can be translated as, “we expect to

64 See Akalonu, Procreation in Igbo Marriages, 21; and Uchendu, Igbo of Southeast Nigeria, 53.

65 See Nwubude, Preparation for Marriage and Family Life, 75-76; and Chibuko, Igbo Christian Rite of Marriage, 51-52.

66 In his book Things Fall Apart, Achebe described how Obierika’s eldest brother, after breaking the kola nuts that were presented to their in-laws by Obierika during the traditional wedding ceremony of her daughter opined: “We are giving you our daughter today. She will be a good wife to you. She will bear you nine sons like the mother of our town.” And all who gathered for the ceremony in affirmation responded “Ee-e-e!” This is best translated as “amen.” Achebe, Things Fall Apart, 82.
hear the cry of a baby in your home within nine months from today.” Despite this all-inclusive modern way of giving this blessing, with no mention of the specific gender of the children, it is presumed by the Igbo that he meant male children.67 This is because after nine months, if the cry of the baby is not heard or if the couple continues to beget female children, then comes the pressure from family and friends who will advise them to do something about the situation and beget male child before it is too late.68

It is based on this injunction and mandate that Cardinal Francis Arinze calls children the main reason why the Igbo marry. “The main energies of the Igbo were and are devoted to raising as many children as possible.”69 He continues, “If parties knew from the outset that their union will not be blessed with the fruit of marriage [that is particularly male children], it is unlikely that they would embrace it.”70 For Akalonu, “A marriage therefore that cannot produce children has lost its meaning and has completely failed. The generality of Igbo men and women may not

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67 There have been numerous instances where parents have forced their sons to marry another wife because their wives had only given birth to female children. One of these occasions was brought to my attention in one of the parishes I pastored before coming to U.S for my advanced studies. The father-in-law, who blessed them during their traditional wedding, told me that when he prayed for them, what he had in mind was for them to give birth to male children who will maintain his lineage. He was frustrated that his son and his daughter-in-law have filled his house with only (six) female children. According to him, these female children will soon get married outside of his family and/or town. He vowed that he would not allow such an omen to happen during his life time. Unfortunately, this man did not realize that, biologically; it is the man who determines the gender of the child and not the woman. That being said, I have to acknowledge that what has mitigated the acceptance of this biological reality, and the necessary lessons that would have learned from it, is the fact that in most instances, where the first wife has only female children, and her husband yields to the family pressures and marries a second or third wives, he begets male children through these wives.

68 See Nwabude, Preparation for Marriage and Family Life, 13; and Akalonu, Procreation in Igbo Marriage, 27-46.


support such a situation for a long time.” In other words, no parents in Igbo land will bless or consent to the marriage of their children if they know from the onset that their marriage will not be blessed with the fruit of womb. Seen through this lens, legal unions like gay and lesbian couples that are prevalent in western societies have no place in Igbo culture.

At the end of this blessing, he officially pronounces them as husband and wife with full rights and privileges. This simple but very symbolic act tells everybody – both those in attendance and those who were not able to attend – that the marriage requirements have been completed and cemented. What follows after this is sexual intercourse to consummate their union. Gregory Okorobia notes: “With this drinking from the same cup and the parental blessing, they are wedded as husband and wife.” Thus, at the end of the traditional wedding ceremony – *Igba ngwu nwanyi*, the groom takes his bride to his home to begin their new married life

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71 See Akalonu, *Procreation in Igbo Marriage*, 27.

72 A caveat to be made here is that when a woman marries another woman in Igboland, she does so solely for the purpose of begetting a male child for her parents who had only female children. Such a woman is assigned to a particular man to have intercourse with her in order to get the desired result. The “woman-husband” may live in the same house with the wife that she paid her bridal price, but the “woman-husband” does not have any sexual interaction or intercourse with her. The “woman husband” takes care of her financial needs as well as those of her children as a man would take care of his wife and her children. In other words, they are not lesbians. In this special circumstance, the children that would be born through this relationship would be identified by the surname of the “woman-husband’s” father and not the surname of their actual biological father. This is because it was the “woman-husband” that performed all the traditional marriage rites and paid for her bridal price. The said biological father would have no legal claim or right over the children, he was simply a surrogate father. On the hand, it is culturally a taboo for a man to marry a fellow man. In fact, there are no Igbo words for lesbian or homosexual. The idea is simply foreign to Igbo culture. However, this is not to say that they may not be active lesbians and homosexuals among the Igbo. It is simply that the culture does not encourage it. One possible reason for the Igbo culture’s total rejection of both the abstract and actual homosexual and lesbian’s acts could be because of the fact that such behaviors are in sharp contradiction to its understanding of the purpose of marriage. The Igbo marry for the purpose of begetting male children. Congruent with the Igbo culture’s altitude towards homosexual practices, the Nigerian-Law-Makers on May 30th 2013 passed an anti–gay—Marriage bill which would make offenders to be liable to up to 14 years in imprisonment, and their witnesses and/or supporters would be liable to up to 10 years behind bars. Cf. www.cbsnews.com, “Nigeria Law-Makers Pass An Anti Gay Marriage Bill,” accessed 08/28/2013.

together. Before they leave, the family of the bride will present to their daughter different symbolic and valuable items which are meant to help the newly married couple to start their new home in a much more comfortable manner.\(^74\) One of the most symbolic items given to her by her parents is a virgin hen that is expected to begin to lay eggs.\(^75\)

In most cases, the monetary equivalent of the items that a daughter receives from her family is beyond what could be bought with the bridal money. Families who collected nothing or as little as one US dollar still present valuable items to their daughters on their wedding day. This further buttresses the fact that the Igbo do not sell their daughters to their husbands.\(^76\) What is most important with regard to bridal price is what it signifies; an appreciation of the groom to the parents of the bride for training their child as well as an avenue for the groom to show that he is manly enough to begin a family and to take care of his wife.

Should the newly married couples be interested in a Church wedding, they can then begin to plan for it from henceforth. But with or without the Church wedding they are culturally married and they have full sexual privileges. The perplexing issue here is that the Igbo Christians perform two separate marriage ceremonies which do not only have the same effects but which

\(^{74}\) The parents of the bride use this opportunity to show the love they have for their daughter by giving her different valuable gift items. There are neither specific items expected nor any quantity of items that must be given. If one’s parents were unable or do not want to give their daughter anything, it does not invalidate the marriage. However, since the female daughters have no right of inheritance in Igboland, parents use this occasion to give to their daughters some of the things which they would have inherited from them if Igbo culture allowed its females to inherit their parents’ properties as some western cultures do. It suffices to note that where appropriate, but with the permission of their male siblings, the female daughters would share their mother’s clothes and other personal items at her death.

\(^{75}\) See Joe Chuks Atado, *African Christian Marriage*, 39; and Chinua Achebe, *Arrow of God* (New York: Anchor Books, 1969), 130. As this virgin hen is expected to begin to lay eggs as soon as its reaches her new home, so it is the expectation of her parents that the bride begins to procreate without any waste of time.

are both capital intensive and time consuming. Seen through this lens, it would seem legitimate to question the significance of a Church wedding after the traditional one. Or better put, why do the Igbo still have two wedding ceremonies after more than a century of the reception of Christian faith? It would seem more appropriate to inculcate or integrate the two to produce one mutual rite whereby the two realities of both the Christian values and cultural values are intertwined to enrich and complement each other. It is pertinent to note that some newly married couples who want to mitigate the financial burden that are associated with both celebrations arrange to have the Church wedding in the morning and the traditional wedding in the evening of the same day at the bride’s house.

It is an open question of what the status of a couple will be if for any reason the traditional wedding could not take place after the church wedding has taken place. However, what is explicit is that if for any reason either the girl refuses to give the wine to her potential husband or he refuses to drink the wine from her even after the Church wedding, in view of the culture the marriage is tragically over. Whatever, remains of the eating and drinking is done in

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77 See Chibuko, Igbo Christian Rite of Marriage, 57.
78 See Chibuko, Igbo Christian Rite of Marriage, 57.
79 See Chibuko, Igbo Christian Rite of Marriage, 57; and Akalonu, Procreation in Igbo Marriages, 21.
80 To the best of my knowledge, such an incident has neither happened, nor will it be supported by the Church in Igboland, if it happens. However, a scenario such as this draws attention to both a cultural and a pastoral problem that needs to be addressed. As a proactive measure, I suggest that the Church hierarchy in Igboland should create what Chibuko called an “Igbo Christian marriage rite” that will respect the values in both the Christian as well as the Igbo traditions. Allowing these two marriage ceremonies that produce the same result to continue as they are currently being done is to my judgment insensitive to the pastoral and cultural needs of many Igbo Christians. This is because the Igbo custom demands the traditional wedding and the Christian tradition demands the solemnization of their wedding for its validity. In drawing up such an “Igbo Christian marriage rites” to fix this problem, the Igbo Catholic hierarchy could allow priests to act as an official church witnesses during a traditional wedding ceremony which they attend instead of being there just to say the opening and closing prayers and/or serve as dignitaries to
a sorrowful mood. But one can argue that if the public declaration of their consent, the drinking of the wine and the blessing from the bridal’s father concludes the marriage ceremony, then inability to complete it for whatsoever reason tantamount to an incomplete Igbo marriage ceremony.

From this brief exposition of the Igbo marriage rituals and rites, it is evident that marriage among the Igbo involves multiple ceremonies which are capital intensive. The Igbo marriage rituals and ceremonies also consume much time and they are never rushed. One of the advantages of these elaborate ceremonies and the time that elapses from one stage of the ceremony to the other is that they give both parties opportunities to examine and re-examine themselves concerning the task they are about to undertake. The very expensive and sometimes rigorous ceremonies are expressions of the love the young man and his family have for his fiancée. The Igbo are not known for expressing their romantic love and attraction publically or externally as would be expected of them from their western counterparts. Ngwobi expresses the Igbo expression of love thusly, “Love is neither publically demonstrated nor never advertised

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grace the occasion. Combining these two ceremonies will save many Igbo Christian couples who cohabit today after their traditional wedding but before their Christian wedding ceremony from the sin of cohabitation because the Church does not recognize the validity of civil and/or traditional marriages by the baptized and/or other later devastations that cohabiting couples who marry experience—divorce, sexual promiscuity, abuse and fights to mention but a few. It will also save them from the double monetary expenses and improper use of time that are involved in both ceremonies. For balanced and detailed information concerning this proposal consult: Chibuko, Igbo Christian Rite of Marriage, 63-152. For the sin of cohabitation see: The Catechism of the Catholic, no. 2390 2nd edition, revised in accordance with the Official Latin Text by United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, USCCB (New York: An Image Book Doubleday, 1995), 634. For the harm done to marriages by cohabitation consult the following: Cassandra Hough, “The Fullness of Sexuality: Church Teaching On Premarital Sex,” in Women, Sex and the A Church: A Case For Catholic Teaching edited by Erika Bachiochi (Boston, Pauline Books and Media, 2010), 70-72; Jay Teachman, “Premarital Sex, Premarital Cohabitation, and the Risk of Subsequent Marital Dissolution Among Women,” Journal of Marriage and Family 65 no. 2, May (2003), 444-455; and Renata Forste and Koray Tanfer, “Sexual Exclusivity Among Dating, Cohabiting and Married Women,” Journal of Marriage and Family 58, no. 1 (1996), 33-47.
with kisses and verbal romantic expressions. You never tell your spouse that you love her. She soon finds out from your attitudes towards her and how helpful you are to her people.**81**

But if on the traditional wedding ceremony the newly married couple is reminded of the expectation to hear the cry of a baby, especially a male child, within the first nine months, one can argue that the yardstick for measuring a successful marriage among the Igbo is the ability to beget children and particularly male children. What are the factors or elements that are behind the Igbo’s emphasis on male children? This study will attempt an answer to this question in the next sub-section by paying particular attention to the following: cosmological, religious, social and economic factors.

2.3. **REASONS FOR THE EMPHASIS ON MALE CHILDREN AS THE PRIMARY PURPOSE WHY THE IGBO’S MARRY**

2.3A. **COSMOLOGICAL REASONS FOR THE IGBO’S EMPHASIS ON MALE CHILDREN.**

For the Igbo, the cosmos is a product of the popular intuition of space-time events.**82** Charles Ebelebe notes that for the Igbo’s “the space is three-tiered, comprising of the sky (elu), the earth (ala), and the underworld (ime ala), while time is conceived to be cyclical rather than

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linear.” Since the Igbo worldview consists of the sacred and the profane both of which exist in an organic unity abhorring any sharp distinction, and because the centerpiece of the Igbo’s worldview is the human being, all other events revolve around and are determined by man whether in this world or in the spirit world.

According to the Igbo worldview, both life and death serve the same purpose; physical existence. The former serves as the entrance into this world and the later serves as the exit to the spirit world. Consequently, both the terminus a quo and the terminus ad quem are protected by elaborate ceremonies among the Igbo. Even after death, the Igbo believe that a man is not really dead if he has children who will remember him and perpetuate his name long after he has died, and also those who would give him a fitting burial which is necessary to initiate him into the rank of ancestorhood. Accordingly, one passes away from this life only to be integrated into the spirit world as an ancestor who continues to take interest in the affairs of one’s children through whom one also re-incarnates. The two worlds constitute the same continuous process of life and maintain an uninterrupted relationship between the living and the dead.

Therefore if the Igbo man is happy with himself in his present life, he prays consistently to have the same experience when he re-incarnates through his grandchildren. If the contrary is

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the case, he prays for a better life when he re-incarnates. But one cannot re-incarnate in his family if he had no male children. And since the Igbo who are living believe in the communion with their dead relatives, such communion is not possible without male children to sustain and maintain it. What determines whether a person will arrive at the fullness of life is the kind of burial he was given at his death. In other words, a sumptuous burial ceremony is believed to be possible only through the provision of male children. Seen through this lens, if a person has no male child or children, he contemplates death with great fear and anxiety. Death for such a person means total annihilation from the face of the earth. He sees himself as a wandering spirit who will never find rest. But if he has male children, he is assured that they will give him a fitting burial that is necessary for him to be initiated into the rank of ancestorhood. Thus for the Igbo, alive or dead, life is a continuum. It is either that one is living on this material world or one is living in the spirit world. People who live in both worlds are in continuous relationship with each other as an organic unity with no sharp distinction.

2.3B. RELIGIOUS REASONS FOR THE EMPHASIS ON MALE CHILDREN

Although the outward manifestations of the belief in re-incarnation are not as pronounced as it used to be both because of the advent and impact of Christianity but more so because of the absence of traditional medicine men who were being consulted at the birth of a new child, most Igbo elders still give names of their dead loved relatives to their children.


See Uchendu, The Igbo of Southeast 57; and Akalonu, Procreation in Igbo Marriage, 31-32.


According to African [Igbo] traditional religion, ancestors are objects of worship who receive sacrifices and libations. But one does not become an ancestor if one has no child or children to perform the elaborate funeral ceremonies which will initiate one into the rank and company of the ancestors.\footnote{See Uzukwu, “Igbo World and Ultimate Reality and Meaning,” 9-10.} Therefore, the Igbo believe that if a person has no offspring, he neither receives sacrifices, re-incarnates, nor becomes an ancestor. In the absence of all this, he becomes a wandering spirit who has not found rest with his forefathers. Such restless wandering spirits are regarded among the Igbo as really dead.\footnote{See Uzukwu, “Igbo World and Ultimate Reality and Meaning,” 9.} This answer which was given by an Igbo man when he was asked what he understood the meaning of life everlasting to be summarizes this belief: “Everlasting life is when a man begets a son and his son begets another son and so continues the lineage ad infinitum, and so perpetuates his name.”\footnote{Nwabude, \textit{Preparation for Marriage and Family Life}, 9.}

Bishop Emmanuel Uzukwu refers to such unfortunate person(s) while describing the emphasis on life and progeny among the Igbo:

The emphasis on the long life and progeny is logical with Igbo perception of the universe and the finality of life. The finality of life is spiritualization (fullness of life). One is completely spiritualized when one becomes an ancestor. A childless man might have lived a good life (one of the conditions for being an ancestor), might be rich, but he does not have a child to perform the mortuary rites necessary for his induction into the land of the ancestors. This means that those who die untimely deaths (i.e. before getting children)… And those who live long and yet are childless never arrive at the fullness of life (ancestorhood).\footnote{Uzukwu, “Igbo World and Ultimate Reality and Meaning,” 9-23. Among the Igbo the death of a young person is received with scorn and his funeral is not regarded as a celebration because he or she has failed to perform his duty here on earth. Such a person is easily forgotten with no regrets among the Igbo.}
Since the Igbo abhor not being able to arrive at the fullness of life, what ensures that a person will arrive at the fullness of life is a marriage that is blessed with as many male children as possible who will give a sumptuous burial ceremony for him at his death.

The Igbo who have embraced the Christian faith, have Christianized this belief. For them too, ability to procreate is the outward manifestation that God is happy with such a person. Igbo Christians take seriously the biblical injunction to “increase and multiply” (Gen. 2:28). Thus, by procreating they believe that they are cooperating with God. Again, since children are seen not only as gifts but also as blessings from God, families who have more children are seen as highly blessed by God. So for both the Igbo Christians and for the pagans, the belief that each person has been blessed or vested with the ability to procreate is solidly enshrined in their hearts. Therefore emphasis on male children is based on both the traditional and religious belief of the Igbo—whether pagans or Christians—that god or God has mandated them to “increase and multiply and fill the earth” (Gen. 2:28).

For the pagan Igbo who do not believe in the Judeo-Christian God, they believe that Chi-Omumu – the god of fertility has empowered every Igbo man with the ability to procreate. This accounts for the consultation they make to Chi-Omumu before getting married as well as sacrifices made either in thanksgiving to Chi-Omumu when a child is born or as atonement in case of childlessness. Paul Jewett notes, “The Igbo mentality about marriage and responsibility of continuing the Igbo race is similar to the Old Testament Jewish preparatory form, that the kingdom did imply for the Jewish male a responsibility to propagate the seed of Abraham

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through marriage and paternity.” 97 For this, and other related reasons, the Igbo culture has no regard for celibacy. “The idea of a celibate life finds no favour whatsoever: to the Ibos, it is ranked foolishness as well as being utterly contrary to the laws of nature. Men and women, particularly the latter, are scorned and mocked if they remain unmarried” 98 Consequently every adult is expected to marry and to beget male children in accordance with God’s command and for the preservation and continuation of Igbo traditions and customs.

2.3C. SOCIAl REAsOnS FOR tHE EMPHASiS ON MALE CHILDREN

As a family and community-oriented people, marriage is seen by the Igbo as the instrument by which families and communities are not only instituted but also a means by which unrelated people are brought together to form a chain of friendly relationships. 99 M. M Green, supports this view thusly: “Interruption [among the Igbo] creates a network of ties by which the cell of Ibo society though not united by any governmental authority nor arranged on any political hierarchy, are nonetheless interlinked horizontally, each with its neighbors by the social bond of intermarriage.” 100


100 M. M. Green, *Igbo Village Affairs*, 8; see also Uchendu, *The Igbo of Southeastern Nigeria*, 54.
Having formed these nuclear and macro family ties, the Igbo live in small villages and have both family and village heads. These family and village heads are responsible for maintaining peace and tranquility among the siblings and families that make up a village or town. This governing body, as noted above, is made up of male children particularly the first at birth (the Diokpara). Also, it is pertinent to note that only the male children can belong to the council of the elders. But on a more serious note because culturally inheritance is patrilineal in character, it is only the male children who have the right to succeed and inherit their fathers’ properties. However, it is not any kind of male children or child that can do this; rather the male children or child must be legitimate. He must be born out of a properly and validly celebrated marriage between a man and a woman or a product of a socially and culturally recognized father. Lucy Mair’s reflection concerning most patrilineal societies is also true for the Igbo’s.

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101 This statement alludes to the three kinds of culturally approved marriages in Igboland: Monogamy, polygamy, and “woman marriage.” While the first two are the most common forms of marriage in Igboland, monogamy is not only widely practiced among the Igbo, but it is the only form of marriage that is approved and supported by the Catholic Church. While the Church in Igboland frowns at Polygamous marriages and no way supports it, the Church is empathic to the circumstances of Igbo couples who choose polygamy as an avenue to address their infertility problems and/or fertile marriages that lack male children. Third form happens on rare occasions. In both monogamous and polygamous marriages, for a man to be considered to have married his wife or wives he must have performed all the traditionally approved marriage rituals and have paid the bridal price. The children that would be born out of such unions are viewed as legitimate children of their parents. When such a man dies without leaving a male or enough children to inherit his properties, his brother would be expected to have sexual intercourse with his late brother’s wife or wives to beget children for his late brother. On the contrary, and as the name suggests, the “woman marrying a woman” form of marriage normally happens where another woman marries a fellow woman to ensure the maintenance of her father’s lineage. A daughter, whose parents died without leaving any surviving male child, could marry a woman on behalf her parents. The primary aim for this marriage would be for the girl to beget male children who would not only inherit the marrying woman’s parents properties, but also her children will answer the marrying woman’s father’s name. It is the said “woman-husband” that performs the marriage rituals and pays the bridal price. In such a situation, a surrogate father may be is culturally appointed or chosen by the “woman-husband,” whose job would be to impregnate the woman.
“In most patrilineal societies a child cannot belong to its father’s lineage unless its parents have been married in the appropriate way.”

Based on the patrilineal character of inheritance that exists among the Igbo, a wife who has no male child does not inherit her husband’s landed properties. She keeps only what she was able to get when her husband was alive and/or her “mgbuke”—a little hut that was built for her by the husband. Landed properties are not given to female children. But no Igbo woman would want her husband’s properties to be inherited by her brother-in-laws and every Igbo man would want his blood male children and not his male relatives to inherit his landed properties if he could get his own children. If a couple does not want their relatives to inherit their properties, they must do everything they can to beget a male child. The idea that a person can ‘Will’ or donate his property to other peoples’ children or to different organizations is injurious to Igbo ears. Therefore, male children provide to their parents a clear and distinct economic security assurance that their female siblings are not able to provide.

On a similar note, if a family wants to be represented in the affairs of the village or town, the family must have a male child. Likewise, a woman who wants to be fully protected and secured in her husband’s house must beget a male child who will provide such security and

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Blum speaks for Igbo women when writing about the dependence of African females on their male siblings, husbands or both:

It means that generally the women were dependent upon men for overall protection including that of their rights. When wronged, women could do little by themselves to seek redress for their grievances: they had to look for a man or men, such as a husband, father, brothers, sons, and other close male kins, for help and protection.

From all this, it is evident that Igbo male children have unprecedented responsibilities in Igbo society.

2.3D. ECONOMIC REASONS FOR THE EMPHASIS ON MALE CHILDREN

In the past the Igbo were mainly agrarian people with little mechanization. Therefore, the more the children, the greater the likelihood of better agricultural productivity since these children mainly worked in the farms. However, even now that the Igbo compete with the rest of the world in areas of education and commerce (and do not need these children to work in their farms as they did in the past), they have not lost their desire for or obsession with male children. Rather, it is believed among them that the more male children a family has, the more that family is stable and in balance.

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The Igbo do not have the institutional nursing or assisted living homes that are prevalent in the western world. Also legal welfare social system or entitlement programs like social security benefit, retirement programs, life insurance programs, Medicaid and Medi-aid, et cetera, do not exist in Igboland. In the countries where these services exist such as in the United States, they are designed to assist and to support elderly people during their old age. But since these services do not exist in Igboland, children become these social systems and institutions for their parents. It is a responsibility which every Igbo male child looks forward to accomplishing. In fact, people are honored because of the way they took care of their parents and relatives.

The Igbo has an idiomatic expression that reads; “Ugu mmikata ohi, ohi amiwa uju.” This can be interpreted as “Nne zukata nwa, nwa azuwa nne.” The logical sequence then is – the more children one has, the more benefits he or she is able draw. Akalonu could not be more explicit on the meaning of this saying: “Apart from providing their basic needs at this stage of their lives, the male children also keep them company and provide necessary human companionship, thus sparing them the agony of loneliness.” It is considered as an act of disrespect for the first male child to find an independent compound during the lifetime of his father. The other male children could do so but with the understanding, blessing and permission of their father and or the family head who will give them one of the family lands for such re-location.

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In fact, the love and company that Igbo parents receive from their children when they take care of them in their homes are very much appreciated by Igbo parents. This assertion is supported by Igbo parents’ favorite song which represents their feeling of satisfaction after being cared for or when they are receiving care from their children. It states, “oga abu ma nwa, onye ga enyem.” This can be translated as “were it not for a child, who would have given or done this for me or us?”\textsuperscript{111} This is because it is done out of the love a child has for his or her parents as opposed to doing it for the sake of earning wages. In other words, a combination of love and a sense of responsibility produce excellent loving care. Although, the Igbo couples who had no children of their own may be absorbed and taken care of by their extended families and/or their communities, it is the dream of every Igbo person to have his or her own blood child or children to take care of him or her when the need arises. Consequently, parents who have no male children of their own contemplate old age with great fear and anxiety.\textsuperscript{112}

Older male siblings also assist their parents in taking care of their younger ones. In a situation where one child decides to be irresponsible, parents who have many male children are consoled because there are others to manage the family when they are no longer alive. For this reason, it is a prayer of every Igbo person that he or she gets more than one share of anything he or she aspires to—especially male children. It is in this connection that the Igbo say, “oke mu adila otu.” This can be translated as, “let my share or portion not be only one.” To decry or bemoan the unfortunate situation of having only one child, the Igbo idiomatically opine; “Otu

\textsuperscript{111} Cf. Akalonu, Procreation in Igbo Marriage, 40.

\textsuperscript{112} See Uchendu,, The Igbo of Southeast Nigeria, 57; and Akalonu, Procreation in Igbo Marriage, 31-32.
mkporo anya ji ishi ukwo.” This is best interpreted as, “a person with only one good eye is a debtor to blindness.” – or “is in debt to blindness.”

One can say that for this and other related reasons, the Igbo place such unprecedented emphasis on the procreation of male children as the primary reason or end for marriage. By the Igbo cultural standard, every other end or good that is associated with marriage is determined by and subordinated to by the procreative end without which a marriage is considered to have failed.113 Cardinal Francis Arinze echoes this claim: “efforts should be made to aid couples who find themselves in the sad situation of childless marriages in a society which places a high premium on the procreation and upbringing of [male] offspring.”114 If non-procreative marriages are considered to be a failure among the Igbo, it will be pertinent to examine how the Igbo’s treat childless couples in their midst before an evaluation and conclusion of this chapter is made.

2.4. ALTITUDE OF THE IGBO TOWARD CHILDLESS MARRIAGES

As this study has shown the Igbo marry in order to beget children. Therefore when a marriage fails to produce a child, it is considered to be a failed marriage both by many Igbo couples and their families. In most cases childlessness worries the woman more than it worries the man, or better put, the woman manifests her frustrations of not being able to conceive and


bear a child more than the man.\textsuperscript{115} “To be childless is the greatest calamity that can befall a woman.”\textsuperscript{116} This is because she can easily be abandoned by her husband to marry another woman and/or be abandoned by nature since biologically a woman has “an expiration date” for when she can conceive while a man does not have a comparable expiration date.\textsuperscript{117}

Based on these natural and man-made factors that are not in her favor, she bears the pain and humiliation that are associated with childlessness among the Igbo more than her husband.\textsuperscript{118} She sees herself not only as a failure to the society, but her infertility problem makes her very vulnerable to a plethora of maltreatments by her husband and/or her husband’s family. For instance, her husband could marry another wife and abandon her. At the death of her husband, she would not be able to inherit her husband’s properties (even if she had worked with him to establish them), if she had no male child. But, if she has male children, her children will fight on her behalf, and protect her from not only any injustice from her husband, but also those from other people.\textsuperscript{119} She will also be eligible to inherit her husband’s properties through her male children. Celestine Obi agrees with this view as he writes “The position of a wife in her husband’s family remains shaky and unpredictable until she begets a child. She becomes really

\textsuperscript{115} See Nwabude, \textit{Preparation for Marriage and Family Life}, 113.

\textsuperscript{116} Basden, \textit{Among the Igbos of Nigeria}, 78.

\textsuperscript{117} It suffices to mention that biologically male fertility declines somewhat with age but does not show the same kind or radical drop marked by female menopause.

\textsuperscript{118} By natural factors here I mean, the woman’s birth-circle. On the other hand, by man-made, I mean the maltreatments and/or insults she might receive from her husband and/or her husband’s family and friends.

\textsuperscript{119} See Anochie, \textit{The Impact of Igbo Women on the Church in Nigeria}, 33-50; and Nwabude, \textit{Preparation for Marriage and family Life}, 138.
secure after the birth of a male child….In fact the birth of the child gives her the title of wife, before this time she may be said to be a wife only in anticipation. 

Nevertheless, the claim above is not meant to imply that men are free from the insults or blame from either one’s family or one’s spouse. Like the women, men exhibit some frustrations and disappointments in the event of an infertility problem although they have better ways of dealing with the misery, deprivation and taunting that are associated with infertility problems than the women, especially if the women were infertile. Basden notes the frustrations and disappointments of Igbo childless couples thus;

If in due course, no children are forthcoming as a result of the union, serious differences arise between husband and wife, each mutually accusing the other of being responsible for this state of affairs. Should matters continue so, the wife is at liberty to cohabit with another man in order, if possible, to secure the desired result. Should any children be born in this way, they are recognized as the property of the husband, just as if he were the actual father.

Basden’s correct read of the situation further reinforces the fact that Igbo marriages lack exclusivity. He reads and analyzes the practice correctly by noting that extra-marital relations do not only happen when one’s husband dies without begetting children. Rather, extra-marital intercourse also happens when both of them are still alive, but have no male child. It is pertinent to note that according to Igbo culture, if a man dies without giving birth to a male child, by default, it falls on to his brother to have sexual intercourse with his brother’s wife in order to

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120 Celestine Obi, “Marriage Among the Igbo of Nigeria,” 50.

121 Basden, Among the Ibos of Nigeria, 76.
beget children for his brother. This practice is similar to the Old Testament legislation concerning levirate marriages.  

In the event that no such brother exists, a very close relative and/or a friend of the family is assigned to do the job. The wife does not play a strong role in deciding who this surrogate father is except where there are no direct blood brothers of her late husband. In that case, she can choose among their friends, but this friend must be identified and approved by her husband’s kinsman. It is therefore logical to argue that if Igbo culture does not frown at such extra-marital relations but sometimes arranges for it, culturally marriage for the Igbo’s is successful only when there are children but particularly male children to show for it irrespective of how they were begotten. The Igbo have a slogan that bespeaks this: “Ebelebe nwa esila lo uwa ya hiri kwa.” This is translated as, “Wherever and however a child comes into being let him or her stay.”

Archbishop Albert Obiefuna after a careful examination of this practice painfully notes:

In the Igbo moral and social life the question of offspring is of paramount importance. Its priority is such that it tends to tune down other moral demands. No matter what happened or what event surrounds the bearing of a child – was it through adultery, was it by concubinage, was it by one whose husband has died – all these may and are sometimes reprehensible but in the face of the fact that a child is forthcoming or is already born we must tune down our moral sensitiveness, because nothing is like offspring.

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122 Cf. Deuteronomy chapter 25; 5-6. A slight distinction here is that the brother of the deceased husband is free to have as many male and female children as possible for his brother, but he is also expected to marry another woman if he had not done so before acting as a surrogate father.

123 See Nwabude, Preparation for Marriage and Family Life, 40.

124 Cf. Akalonu, Procreation in Igbo Marriage, 45; and Basden, Among the Ibos of Nigeria, 76.

Succinctly put, Igbo culture allows sexual laxity because the begetting of a male child who will perpetuate one’s name is viewed as the *terminus ad quem* of marriage.

The blame for infertility in general and in particular for the lack of a male child is always put on the woman. Strictly speaking, a couple who has several female children is considered to have failed in their marital obligations and the wife is culturally blamed for this. This blame on woman for inability to beget a male child contradicts a biological reality. This is because, biologically, it is the male sperm that determines the sex of the child. This biological reality notwithstanding, there have been instances were some men have abandoned their wives and babies in the hospital because they had given birth to another baby girl. Men also have threatened such wives with either marrying another wife or of intentionally impregnating a woman to see whether she will bear a male child for them. In cases where the latter happened, the man may end up marrying the girl and if marriage is not possible due to other factors, he takes the child to his home. Most women who find themselves in this unfortunate situation, and who may not want their husband to marry another wife do resort to extra-marital intercourse.\(^{126}\) These instances of extra-marital intercourse are sometimes done with the permission of one’s husband but most of the times without his permission.

However, with or without the permission the husband, the child born via such intercourse bears the name of her husband. It may not be an exaggeration to say that, many Igbo children may be unknowingly calling someone their father who may not actually be their biological father.

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\(^{126}\) See Basden, *Among the Ibos of Nigeria*, 76.
in the strict and true sense of the word. Basden also alludes to this; “in the majority of cases the polygamous [and even monogamous] husbands is not the actual father of many of the children who call him father.” Basden, *Among the Ibos of Nigeria*, 103.

Bemoaning the practice he continues, “the inevitable outcome of the system is unrestricted adultery; condemned unreservedly in theory, but condoned and often deliberately fostered in practice.” Basden, *Among the Ibos of Nigeria*, 103.

The Igbo culture allows this practice not only for the sake of the continuation of one’s ancestry lineage, but because its people pay an unprecedented attention or significance to the type of burial one receives at the time of death. Basden puts is correctly, “For his [Igbo man] last solemn wish is that the funeral rites shall be on such a scale that he may be spared all feelings of shame when he meets his former companions.” Basden, *Among the Ibos of Nigeria*, 87.

The plight of childless couples in Igbo land is a situation that continues to draw the attention of most Igbo writers and dramatists who represent the actual Igbo life in fiction novels and dramas. John Munonye, in his novel *Obi* underscores the ordeal and agony of an Igbo childless couple in his characters Joe and Anna. Though fictional, their stories represent realistic day to day life situations and experiences of childless couples in any Igbo village. Munonye tells the story of Joe and his wife who had returned to the village with plenty of property and clothes for their parents. Joe’s mother after surveying the gifts contemptuously exclaimed “I know what I want. It isn’t cloth.” When her son Joe asked for an explanation, she responded angrily, “you ought to have known what I would demand of you. Where are my grand-children? … I am

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not a dead body which wants cloth for its burial… I am a living body and therefore want to see my own blood. Spirits of the righteous dead move about looking for where to get re-incarnated, and yet two of you stay like that. Perhaps you don’t want me to be called Big mother [Nnukwu mama] before I die.”

It was not only his mother who was troubled by their childless condition and wanted something to be done to remedy the situation. Joe’s sister Adaku, his female relatives, that is, the daughters of the lineage known as the Umuada, were also worried concerning Joe and Anna’s seemingly unperturbed altitudes concerning their infertility problems. Consequently, Adaku in company with other female daughters’ of the village also pressured Joe to do something while the sun still shines. Their anxiety was that their ancestral lineage was on the verge of being ended in their lifetime if nothing is done to remedy the situation for according to them, “this obi must not be allowed to disappear.” They described how happy they were for the magnificent house that Joe was building, but wondered who will inherit it when Joe and Anna have died. In their stupefaction, they could not conceive “[how] a man should undertake to build such a house for rats and lizards, and snakes [to live]!”

Turning to Joe’s wife Anna, they commented on her beauty and recounted all her good qualities but noted that something was still lacking. “We’ve seen the wife you brought home. We were angry with you at the beginning for marrying a stranger, we no longer are. We think she’s

131 Munoye, Obi, 32.
132 Munoye, Obi, 98.
133 See Munoye, Obi, 98.
134 Munoye, Obi, 142.
well-bred. And she’s beautiful too. But then, what use is a kola nut tree if it fails to bears fruits? …. Of course we can’t call her our wife yet… Not until she’s produced for us.™ They even suggested that they would not mind if Anna brought her own sisters for Joe to marry “provided they bear for them [male children.]”™ Being worried about the cultural stigma that is associated with childlessness, Adaku broke out in tears and begged her brother Joe to do something soon to save their family from being the topic of ridicule in the village. According to her, if nothing is done “people will soon begin to say there’s a curse in this family.”™

When Joe reminded them if they had forgotten that he is a Christian, Ugoada, their spokeswoman gave him examples of other Christians who married many wives to solve their problem of childlessness. “Church indeed! She repeated with bitter scorn, Daniel who is chief of Ujiji, isn’t he a church man? Yet he married two wives when he found that his first wife was not going to bear children… let me repeat, we don’t regard her as a wife. How can we allow Okafor’s Obi to disappear when the gods were kind enough to bring you home.”™ In their frustration they lamented and shouted, “if that is what going to church means I would rather cut off my son’s head with a blunt knife than allow him to join them.”™

Upon hearing all this, Anna ran into her room, deeply saddened, she not only cursed the day the news of her birth was given to her father, she also prayed to God to bless her with a

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135 Munonye, Obi, 99-100.
136 Munonye, Obi, 144.
137 Munonye, Obi, 102.
138 Munonye, Obi, 101-102.
139 Munonye, Obi, 143.
child. She was so desperate to have this child that she did not mind even if the birth of this child should result in her death as long as the child lived. “God, why not give me just one, even if its birth would mean my own death? …Let me die immediately it’s been delivered….Let me die even while it’s coming out…Provided it lives. But please, Please, please, don’t leave me in my present state!”

On the basis of these extracts from Munonye’s novel, one does not need to go too far to feel the pain of Igbo childless couples. In fact, the Igbo can and do accommodate poverty or other forms of human limitations, but they have zero tolerance for childlessness. I say this because, if Joe and Anna had come home with nothing but children, the village would have hailed them as very successful and productive. They would have assisted them in their training and education. If they had come home sick, they would have been cared and nursed for by all. Joe could have been given his share of the patrimony (land and other properties) between him and his brother Obieke, but he was denied his birth right because he had no son who would inherit his own share.

From what has been said so far, it is evident that childless couples are regarded with pity and contempt. Such couples are regarded with pity, because they have no children to keep their lineage alive. They are regarded with contempt because they are seen as being punished by the gods/God for their evil deeds which have not only brought curse on them but also on their

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140 Munonye, Obi, 103.

141 See Munonye, Obi, 129.
If childlessness is seen as a curse or a punishment by the gods for an evil one has committed, it is logical that childless Igbo couples who have not committed such an evil, would want to prove to their relatives that they are not being punished by god/God. Thus, if it is through the means of religious sacrifices, very expensive traditional and medical treatments, polygamy and/or adultery that can help them to prove this, they are willing to attempt one or even all of them. On the basis of Munonye’s story, it is evident that Joe could not free himself from the pressures that were being brought to bear on him from his family by arguing that he was a Christian. One would think that childless Igbo Christian couples would not be pressured by their families and friends to use the same culturally allowed practices such as adultery and polygamy, to solve their problem of childlessness. But, it appears that the contrary is the case.

In theory, there are no formal exceptions or different treatments given to Igbo Christian couples who are childless by Igbo culture. Rather, they are culturally expected to follow the same route to beget a child. However, the Igbo respect one’s beliefs and if a person’s belief is so strong that it helps him or her to handle the humiliations and the agony that childlessness brings, it is totally his or her choice. In other words, one is not ostracized because one refuses to do something that is contrary to one’s faith. But the problem is that a childless couple is constantly reminded either directly or indirectly of the consequences of choosing to remain childless. \(^{143}\)

What it then means is that the way Igbo Christian childless couples choose to address their infertility problem depends solely on their level of faith. Joe and Anna were good examples of

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\(^{142}\) See Nwabude, *Preparation for Marriage and Family Life*, 23.

the very few Igbo Christian childless couples who exhibited a strong resilience to family and community pressure, abuse, and humiliation in defense of their marriage vows.

Nevertheless, I admit that it is a very difficult work to move Igbo childless couples beyond the agony and reality of their very frustrating situation. Their pain and despair are intensified by the fact that the Igbo believe that children are both a gift and a blessing from God to those whom He loves. Thus, it is very difficult to convince an Igbo man that one is loved by God while one is lacking in the most fundamental blessing and gift that an Igbo man believes that God bestows on those whom He loves. Consequently, some Igbo Christians fall prey to immoral actions which are contrary to the demands of their faith as well as to the magisterial teaching concerning the ends of marriage, in order to beget a child without minding the material or the spiritual cost. Most Igbo childless Christian couples, especially those who see infertility as a health problem, resort to medical treatments, such as but not limited to, fertility treatments, in vitro fertilization, and sex selection technologies before either using their cultural alternatives or before risking adopting a child.\textsuperscript{144} I will address the moral dilemmas and the pastoral implications and challenges that these questions pose to Igbo Christians and culture in the eighth chapter of this study.

\textsuperscript{144} See Sylvanus Okechukwu, \textit{Christian Marriage & Genetic Engineering: A Dialogue} (Naze, Owerri: St. John’s Printing Press, 2001), 73-83. I use the phrase “risking adopting a child” because adoption as it is practiced and known in the western world is not common among the Igbo. In other words, Igbo culture does not encourage adoption as a procedure to solve the problem of infertility. Rather, culturally one can adopt a child for the purpose of providing for his or her material needs on behalf of his or her parents. The adopted child may live with his or her adopted parents. A family member and/or a friend may adopt a child from his or her family member or friend who is not able to financially provide for the needs of all his or her child. Throughout the period, he or she answers the surname of his or her biological father and not the surname of his or her adopted father. The adopted child is expected to return to his or her parents at an appropriate time. The Igbo’s reasons for being hesitant to use adoption as solution to the problem of childlessness will be examined in chapter eight of this study.
Being aware of the pain and humiliation that childless couples go through in Igboland, Pope John Paul II during his pastoral visit to Nigeria in 1982 both encouraged and reminded childless couples to find solace in truly loving each other and in being open to the needs of others and those of the apostolate. He also reminded them that being childless does not preclude them from the love of God: “I know that in your country the childless couple bears a heavy cross, one that has to be born with courage all through life. To couples who cannot have children of their own I say you are no less loved by God; your love for each other is complete and fruitful when it is open to others, to the needs of the apostolate, to the needs of the world.”

Although His Holiness made this appeal more than three decades ago, it is difficult for an Igbo married Christian couple to consider themselves as truly blessed and loved by God if they have no child of their own. Consequently, most childless Igbo couples easily buy into the illusion that they are being punished by the gods or God.

The belief that every child is a gift from god or God is one that resonates with all Igbo of different faith beliefs. The Igbo have a folklore song that echoes the same feeling; “Anaghi azu nwa n’agha, oburu na ana azu nwa agha, mmaka ndi ogaraya azuruchila ya. Mana O bu Chukwu n’enye nwa.” This can be translated as: “You do not buy children from the market, for if it were so, the most affluent would have bought all the children to themselves. On the contrary, it is God that gives a child.” Seen as a direct gift from God, He gives a child to whomever He wishes, and as much as He wants.

146 See Nwabude, Preparation for Marriage and Family Life, 8.
To further underscore the belief that fertility is regarded as both a gift and a blessing from Chineke—God the Creator or Chukwu the Supreme Being, the Igbo’s give names such as: Chinyenwa (“God gives a child,”) or Nkechinyere (“a gift that was given by God”). The Igbo’s conviction that a child is not only a gift from God but that God has mandated them to procreate in order to perpetuate their community norms is buttressed also in the names they give to their children. This can be seen in names such as: “Obiefuna,” (“may the ancestral home not be lost”), or “Ahamfule,” (“may my name not be lost”). Commenting on the significance of the names the Igbo give to their children H. Wieschhoff states: “Names are not merely considered as tags by means of which individuals may be distinguished, but are intimately associated with events in the life of the individual as well as those of the family and the larger social groups.” Based on all this, it is fair to say that the Igbo’s speak volumes by the names they give to their children.

The Igbo also have a fertility story which demonstrates their religious conviction that each and every creature has been blessed by god/God with the power and the ability to procreate. According to them, this freely given gift can be lost in two ways. First, by a promiscuous living and second, by an abomination or grave evil that is committed by the infertile person either directly or through his or her parents, grandparents, or great grandparents. According to this

147 Naming a child is a very important ceremony among the Igbo. The Igbo use names to express their feelings in the advent of a child and the circumstances that may surround the child’s birth. Consequently, an Igbo person can easily read the social, religious or economic circumstances that surrounded or prevailed at the time of his or her birth. Succinctly put, the Igbo speak volumes by the names they give to their children. In other words, there is more to the Igbo names than the eye can see. For more information concerning the significance of Igbo names consult the following: Akalonu, Procreation in Igbo Marriage, 40-46; H. Wieschoff, “The Social Significance of Names Among the Ibo of Nigeria” American Anthropologist 43 (1941), 212-222; Basden, Niger Ibos, 174; Francis Arinze, Sacrifice in Igbo Religion, 4; Ifemesia, Traditional Humanae Living Among the Igbo, 96; and John Mbiti, African Religions and Philosophy (London: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd., 1969), 118.

story, every woman has a specific number of eggs that she has been blessed with which corresponds to the number of lives or children she is destined to beget. They also believe that an egg is lost each time a girl has sexual intercourse. Consequently, if a girl is unable to conceive, the assumption is that she must have been living promiscuously, and because of her promiscuous living, she has lost all the eggs with which she had been bestowed by God. Thus, childlessness is seen and believed to be a punishment from God to those who live promiscuous lives.

Another reason which is wedded and intertwined to the first is that the Igbo see a childless person as a person who is being punished by the gods for committing one atrocity or another against the land. This is because children are seen not only as a blessing to their parents but also a blessing to their communities. Therefore, inability to have children is construed as an outward manifestation of gods’ anger at the culprits. It means that the god of the land is not

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149 It suffices to mention that although this story about the loss of an egg in every act of sexual intercourse is contrary to the modern biological discoveries about women’s reproductive system, some Igbo are still influenced by such a story. Consequently, they refuse to go to the hospital for a medical examination to check the root-cause of their infertility problem and to learn whether their infertility problem could be medically treated. Nonetheless, scientific arguments have been made in support of the Igbo conclusion that promiscuous living is one of the main causes of infertility in women. These arguments were not based on the loss of egg or eggs, but rather on a clinically proven data that women with multiply sexual partners prior to marriage are more susceptible to develop an immunological reaction to their husband’s sperm from so many men that they attack the sperm as a foreign and potentially infectious substance. There are also a lot of clinical data on higher rates of infertility in women coming off of oral contraception or from the use of Intrauterine Devices (IUDs), or as a result of sexually transmitted diseases such as, Syphilis, Gonorrhea, and the Human Papillomavirus (HPV) to mention but a few. Seen through this lens, their infertility problem may have been caused by their reproductive systems becoming used to anti-conception medications. In other words, at worst these medications have damaged their reproductive organs and made them infertile or, at best, their reproductive organs have been weakened so much so that it became very difficult for them to conceive. For more information on these points see: Cassandra Hough, “The Fullness of Sexuality: Church Teaching on Premarital Sex,” in Women, Sex, and the Church, edited by Erika Bachiochi (Boston, MA: Pauline Books and Media, 2010), 64-65; and Katie Elrod and Paul Carpenter, “The Church’s Best Kept Secret: Church teaching on infertility Treatment” in Women, Sex, and the Church, 122-129.

150 See Nwabude, Preparation for Marriage and Family Life, 8.

151 See Nwabude, Preparation for Marriage and Family Life, 23.
happy with him or her and that is why he or she is being punished by denying him/her the ability to participate in the perpetuation of the community traditions and values. By this punishment, his/her name will not be remembered after his death. What McGrath and Gregoire said about Africa as a whole is true for the Igbo: “Here in Africa, children have always been seen as the seed of our people, in their birth, we see a guarantee that our people will continue to grow [and our customs and values maintained].”\textsuperscript{152} Nwabude calls the passion for the propagation of the Igbo ethnic group “the fulfillment of the unwritten but powerful law of the society which the Igbo race has developed over the years in its cultural evolution.”\textsuperscript{153}

Based on this, and other related reasons, the Igbo also do not want to do anything that will give the impression that they are supporting promiscuous living or that they are supporting a person or aggregate of persons who have been rejected by the gods for committing an abomination -\textit{ nso ala}.\textsuperscript{154} They fear that they might attract the wrath of the gods/God. For according them, who can befriend a person whom the gods/God have rejected? So as a culture and as a people, their hostility towards childless couples can be construed as a way of aligning with the gods of the land. It is only recently that the Igbo have begun to accept that childlessness is a medical problem. And as noted earlier, those who accept it as a health problem use some

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\textsuperscript{152} McGrath & Gregorie, \textit{Africa Our Way to Love and Marriage}, 78.

\textsuperscript{153} Nwubude, \textit{Preparation for Marriage and Family Life}, 14.

\textsuperscript{154} The exception to this rule is when a married adult engages in extra marital intercourse for the purposes of begetting a male child for oneself or for one’s brother. In this special circumstance it is allowed by Igbo culture, but on every other occasion, adultery, or fornication is strongly condemned by Igbo culture for the reasons mentioned above and other similar reasons.
\end{flushright}
procedures which include, but are not limited to, *in vitro* fertilization and sex selection technologies.¹⁵⁵

2.5. SUMMARY

This chapter has presented a condensed analysis of marriage as known and practiced by the Igbo-speaking ethnic group of Nigeria. According to its findings, the Igbo marry primarily for the begetting of male children. There were four factors or ideologies that stood out as the main reasons for the Igbo emphasis on male children. First the concept of *amaechila*, that is, “May my ancestral line not be lost or closed.” The second is the belief in the interaction of the dead and the living. The third is their religious conviction and belief that God has mandated them to “increase and multiply” for the good and maintenance of the ethnic group, values and customs (cf. Gen. 2:28). This belief is wedded to their belief that a child is both a blessing and a gift from God. The fourth is the security and tranquility that male children provide to their parents whether alive or dead. Of these four, the concept of *amaechila* is the *primus inter pares*. This belief in *amaechila* is further buttressed by the fact that the Igbo culture is naturally patrilineal. Thus, the concept of *amaechila* is strongly enshrined in the hearts of every Igbo man irrespective of where he lives or his economic, religious, or academic status.

However, these four factors are connected to one another. As a result of their interconnectedness, the belief in the *amaechila* mentality is linked to the second factor, the belief

in the interaction of the dead and the living. This is because the belief in the interaction of the dead and the living allows every Igbo person alive or dead to be regarded as in communion with his or her deceased family members. However, although the male and the female Igbo persons participate in this communion with their ancestors, the actions and/or responsibilities that guarantee full participation are limited only to the Igbo male children. For instance, the right to inherit one’s property is linked in Igboland with the responsibility to give one a befitting burial. These two functions are believed by the Igbo to be the designated right and/or duty of the male children. Therefore, every Igbo man wants his properties to be inherited by his male children, for alive or dead the Igbo fear the loss of ancestral property as much as they fear hell. The Igbo man also longs to be given a befitting burial at his death.156

Similarly, the first and the second factors are connected with the third factor which accounts for the economic security that male children provide for their parents are valued by the Igbo because God has mandated them to increase and multiply, the fourth factor. As it stands, it is only the fourth factor—the Igbo religious belief that Chineke (God) has mandated them to “increase and multiply and fill the earth” – that implicitly included both the begetting of the male and the female children as one of the purposes for which the Igbo marry.157 In other words, marriage provided for the Igbo an avenue to fulfill God’s injunction and to guarantee the continuity of the Igbo tribe.

156 See Uzoukwu, “Igbo World and Ultimate Reality and Meaning,” 1-23; Ogbalu, Igbo Institutes and Customs, 9; and Nwabude, Preparation for Marriage and family Life, 7-15.

Thus the Igbo, just like every other nation, know that the sustenance and maintenance of their culture and existence depend on their ability to beget children. However, since their female children may marry outside of Igboland, it then follows that it is only their male children who can provide this assurance.\footnote{158}{This does not suggest that Igbo women lose their identity when they marry outside of Igboland or to the other Igbo communities. Far from this being the case; they are fully respected and honored in the father’s houses. They are a powerful and organized body called \textit{Umuada}. This literally means, “The daughters of the land.” The \textit{Umuada} is a very powerful disciplinary group. They are very powerful in melting disciplinary sections to any of their sisters-in-law for any ill-treatment given to their parents and/or their male siblings. In most cases, the Igbo sister-in-laws fear the \textit{Umuada} group more than they fear their husbands. However, when it comes to the rights of inheritance and of providing security, Igbo females receive these from their marital homes through their husbands and/or male children. In other words, culturally once an Igbo woman is married whether in Igboland or not, she becomes a visitor in her father’s house and has full rights in the family of her husband. If she receives anything from her parents or siblings, it is considered as a privilege and not a right. In the discussion above, the Igbo do not blame their married daughters for not taking care of their parents, the blame is laid upon the male children.}

Consequently, if the Igbo society or any society for that matter has no male children born to it, such a society will soon be wiped out from the face of the earth.\footnote{159}{Although the same claim could be made concerning the female children, however, in a highly patrilineal society like that of the Igbo, the impact of such a situation would be so devastating that it would be equal to annihilation. This is because; there would be neither male children to marry the female children from the other ethnic groups to procreate and keep their lineage active nor would there be males to impregnate the women in the case of a “woman marrying another woman”—form of marriage.}

So for the Igbo, the emphasis on male children is construed as the fulfillment of both their religious and their civic duty and responsibility. However, this implicit inclusion of the female children as a purpose of marriage appears to be over-shadowed due to the Igbo emphasis on the male children. Seen in this perspective, it is permissible to say that the Igbo have twisted this injunction to accommodate their obsession for male children as the primary purpose of marriage.

Congruent with these and other related assumptions that were associated with the Igbo emphasis on (male) children as the primary purpose of marriage, the rituals and the rites for the celebration of marriages in Igboland are predominately male-oriented.\footnote{160}{See, subsection two of chapter two of this study.} Thus, a successful
marriage for a typical Igbo man is not necessarily one that is blessed with an abundance of female children, but rather one that has male children or at least one male child to show for it. Understood as such, it is not surprising that infertility and/or barrenness are seen as deserved punishments from the God of fertility—‘*Chine omumu*’ for an evil committed by either a spouse (usually the woman) and/or the couple’s families.\textsuperscript{161} It might not be an overstatement to say that the female children in Igboland are important to the Igbo culture to the extent that they carry out their primary marital responsibility—the begetting of male children.

With such an obsession for male children as the primary purpose of marriage, some scholars chide the Igbo for their emphasis on male children and argue that the Igbo’s desire and love for male children is because of their lack of civilization and education.\textsuperscript{162} I reject such a position. This is because the Igbo’s emphasis on male children cannot be simply reduced to a value system that is a result of lack of education or civilization. If we go by these scholars’ analyses, the logical consequence would be that the Igbo’s emphasis on male children will be a thing of the past if they become educated and enlightened. What can be said is that probably with better education and information on the causes of childlessness, the Igbo may reduce their hostility toward childless couples, but it is not likely that their obsession with male children will cease. This is because the daily experiences and practices of most Igbo childless couples who are

\textsuperscript{161} See particularly subsection four of the second chapter of this study.

\textsuperscript{162} See Ifemesia, *Traditional Humanae Living Among the Igbo*, 95.
well-educated and who live both at home and in most civilized nations prove the contrary. They too are engrossed in the “amaechila mentality.”

As this study has shown, the maintenance of one’s linage and family name is so valued in Igboland that no Igbo man would want his lineage to end during his time. Consequently, if an Igbo married man finds himself in the unfortunate situation of infertility or in a situation of having only female children, he is typically willing to do anything that is available through both traditional and advanced medical treatments such as, in vitro fertilization and sex selection procedures to solve it. He is willing to cohabit, or marry a second or third wife. His wife is willing to commit adultery with or without his permission. One major problem associated with the Igbo’s obsession with male children as the primary purpose of marriage is that it left the culture with a double standard of sexual morality.

This double standard of morality on one hand is exemplified in the extra-marital intercourse which the culture allows for childless couples or a couple in search of a male child, while on the other hand, the culture condemns extra-marital intercourse or promiscuous living among adults and youths who have sex only for hedonistic purposes. In other words, the same extra-marital intercourse which is condemned and punished by Igbo culture if performed by married men and women who have male children, is excused, tolerated and approved if it was

163 Nwabude, Preparation for Marriage and Family Life, 9.

164 See Okuchukwu, Christian Marriage & Genetic Engineering 58-59.

done for the purposes of begetting a male child by childless couples, or couples with only female children.

However, sexual intercourse that is performed by non-married male and female adults which is technically called fornication is condemned by the Igbo culture. The reason for this condemnation is that the purpose of fornication is (1) mainly to enjoy sex (recreational sex) without the responsibility of begetting children and (2) to avoid filling the whole village with illegitimate children. This is because the Igbo culture abhors both illegitimate children and irresponsible fathers.\footnote{The Igbo value for responsible fatherhood made them to condemn fornication while at the same time allow adultery in some cases.} It remains an open moral question for the Igbo Christian couples whether the good associated with the maintenance of one’s ancestral lineage is commensurate to the damage done to the other ends of marriage by these avenues that Igbo culture allows and encourages. But from the perspective of Catholic tradition, adultery, fornication and polygamy are intrinsically evil acts.\footnote{For more information concerning the magisterial teaching on intrinsically evil acts consult: John Paul II, Veritatis Splendor- The Splendor of Truth (Boston: Pauline Books and Media, 1993), nos. 71-83, pp. 90-104; AAS 85 (1993), 1132-1228. (From henceforth any citation from document will read Veritatis Splendor plus the text no). I leave the attempt to adjudicate the moral tension posed by this question to the eighth chapter of this study.}

Based on all this, it is obvious that one needs to go beyond mere literacy and civilization in order to properly judge the reasons for the Igbo’s emphasis on male children. In contrasting the situation in the developing nations and the occidental world, Bernard Häring notes that “fecundity is an intrinsic part of sexual language.”\footnote{Bernard Häring, Free and Faithful in Christ. Moral Theology for Priest and Laity (Slough: St. Paul Publications, 1979), 519.} He continues, “The situation in the so-
called third world is again different. The large family unit is still operative; the transmission of life has still a transcendental right. Life beyond the grave and the desire to be always honored by the offspring still form a synthesis. And although mortality is already reduced, there is no system of social security; hence only offspring can give security.\textsuperscript{169} Though he was not writing specifically about the Igbo or about their culture, he points to some of the main reasons why the Igbo see procreation of male children as the primary reason for marriage.

These arguments notwithstanding, if the Igbo’s emphasis on male children hinge on the reasons of maintaining one’s lineage and family property, economic security, assurance of a fitting burial and in keeping with God’s injunction to “increase and multiply,” these ends and/or values will still be maintained if childless Igbo couples choose to adopt male children. As this study has shown, rather than adopt a child to address their infertility problems most childless Igbo couples who want to maintain their lineage, indulge in immoral behaviors such as, adultery, in vitro fertilization, and sex selection technologies.\textsuperscript{170} However, it is important to note that all these means by which many Igbo Catholics choose to address their infertility problems are condemned by the magisterium as immoral acts.\textsuperscript{171} I will address the pastoral challenges and the moral problems that are associated with the Igbo’s emphasis on male children as the primary

\textsuperscript{169} Häring, \textit{Free and Faithful in Christ}, 519.

\textsuperscript{170} See Okechukwu, \textit{Christian Marriage & Genetic Engineering}, 28-46, 61-63. One might wonder what the reason(s) might be for the Igbo’s reluctance to adopt a baby boy as a way to solve their infertility problem. I will address this matter in the eighth chapter of this study.

\textsuperscript{171} Congregation of the Doctrine of Faith, \textit{Dignitas Personae: Instruction on the Certain Bioethical Questions}, (Washington, D.C.: USCCB, 2008), nos. 11-37, pages 14-45; AAS 100 (2008), 858-887. (From henceforth any citation from this document will read \textit{Dignitas Personae} plus the text no except in cases of direct citations, then, the page number(s) will be added).
reason for marriage in the sixth section of this study, especially when the Igbo’s position is juxtaposed with the magisterial teaching concerning marriage and its ends.

For now, it is sufficient to note that for any proposal or suggestion that will be made to assist the Igbo to stop or modify their emphasis on male children as the primary reason for marriage and/or to reject the use of adultery, polygamy, and sex selection technologies (such as MicroSort), as means to solve their infertility problems to be productive, the elephant in the room needs to be addressed. By that I mean that the teaching of the magisterium concerning the ends of marriage needs to be clarified. As noted in the introduction of this chapter, when the missionaries brought the Catholic faith in Igboland in the late 1800’s and early 1900’s, they met a culture and a people whose cultural understanding for the purposes of marriage was the procreation of (male) children, which was similar to the then undisputed Catholic Church position concerning the ends of marriage.

It is debatable today among theologians whether the magisterium still speaks of the ends of marriage in the language of primary and secondary ends because of the Gaudium et Spes’s silence over The 1917 Code of Canon Law’s hierarchical language that categorized the ends of marriage into primary and secondary ends. As it stands, it is probable to say that this debate and the implications of the Gaudium et Spes’s silence on this matter, breed confusion among the Igbo Catholics who look to the Church for guidance on issues concerning faith and morals. This claim of confusion is further supported not only by the evidence of this study so far—that the

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172 For more information concerning Gaudium et Spes’ avoidance of the hierarchical language of primary and secondary ends of marriage consult: Gaudium et Spes, nos. 47-52. For more information concerning the theologians’ debate over the silence of Gaudium et Spes on this matter See: Mackin, What is marriage? 235-237; and May, Marriage: The Rock on Which the Family is Built, 98-99.
Igbo of the 21st century still see procreation of male children as the primary end of marriage because of their *amaechila* mentality, but more so because some Igbo Catholics have advocated that “sterility [should] be made an impediment to Christian marriage.”

Therefore, a better understanding of what the magisterium actually teaches concerning the ends of marriage would have enormous implications for Igbo Catholics. On one hand, it might help the Igbo Catholics to re-examine their position on the procreation of (male) children as the primary reason for marriage, and/or a rejection of the culturally approved means to solve their infertility problems. On the other hand, it might assist the Igbo Catholics to hold tenaciously on their present positions concerning the ends of marriage, as well as re-enforce the efforts of some Igbo who want the Church hierarchy in Igboland to make “sterility an impediment to Christian marriage.” In order to properly address these problems, a critical study of *Gaudium et Spes* concerning its teaching on the ends of marriage will be undertaken in chapter six of this study. But before the treatment of *Gaudium et Spes*, the analysis, and the debate among theologians who followed it, the next section will examine briefly the history of the magisterial teaching concerning the ends of marriage before the teaching of the Second Vatican Council Father’s in *Gaudium et Spes*.\(^{175}\)

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\(^{173}\) Okechukwu, *Christian Marriage & Genetic Engineering*, 68.

\(^{174}\) Okechukwu, *Christian Marriage & Genetic Engineering*, 68.

\(^{175}\) I have to observe that the history of the Catholic Church’s teaching concerning the goods or ends of marriage is long and complicated. Thus, a comprehensive and thorough analysis of this history is beyond both the scope of this study and the scope of this next section. So what I will do is to give a condensed version of this history by drawing on the writings and teachings that would assist in arguing if a change or shift was actually made or not with the teaching of the ends of marriage in *Gaudium et Spes*, 47-52.
CHAPTER THREE

THE GOODS/ENDS OF MARRIAGE: A HISTORICAL SURVEY

INTRODUCTION

As the first section of this study has shown, the Igbo tribe of Nigeria culturally sees the procreation of (male) children as the primary, if not the only, purpose of marriage.\(^1\) To make this judgment the study critically examined and analyzed some of the opinions of both African and non-African scholars and theologians on this subject. Consequently, the study pinpointed four factors or elements that were instrumental for the Igbo emphasis on male children as the primary purpose of marriage.\(^2\) These factors are: the *amaecila* mentality (i.e., the Igbo aspiration “may my ancestral lineage not be closed during my time”), the patrilineal nature of Igbo tribe, the belief in the communion of the living and the dead, and the religious belief that *Chineke* (God) has mandated the Igbo to “increase and multiply.”\(^3\) Although these four factors are intertwined or connected with one another, the *amaechila* mentality was highlighted as the primary animating force that was behind this cultural/religious belief and practice.\(^4\)

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1 On this see subsection one of chapter two of this study. See also Nzekwu, *Wand of the Noble Wood*, 34.

2 See subsection three of the second chapter for a detailed analysis of the reasons for the Igbo emphasis concerning the male children as the primary purpose of marriage.

3 Genesis, 1:28.

The study also showed that although the majority of the Igbo people are currently Christians and/or predominately Catholics, their faith in the Judeo-Christian God has not fully translated to a change in their cultural/religious understanding of the purposes of marriage. Rather, because of the Igbo obsession for male children as the primary purpose of marriage, the Igbo resort to polygamy as a way to address their infertility problems. For the same reason, some Igbo Catholics have requested for sterility to be made an impediment to Christian marriage. While a case can be made that the Catholic tradition understood procreation of children as the primary purpose of marriage when the Catholic faith was brought to Igboland in the late 1800s and early 1900s, it remains an open question whether the magisterium currently holds such view. Furthermore, it is theologically debatable if the interpretation of the injunction to “be fruitful” is strictly limited to the physical begetting of children. It is also doubtful whether the Church ever restricted this emphasis to the begetting and nurture of male children.

Therefore, based on these and other related hypotheses or claims that needed to be substantiated, and for a clearer understanding of the traditional teaching with regard to the purposes of marriage, this present chapter will trace the history of the traditional teaching concerning marriage and its goods or ends. To do this, a consideration of whether the insistence

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5 See Okechuckwu, *Christian Marriage and Genetic Engineering*, 61, 58-59, 73-83. Since the last chapter of this study will analyze the Igbo understanding of the purposes of marriage as primarily for the begetting of male children and what the magisterium currently teaches with regard to the ends or purposes of marriage, I leave further comments concerning any moral problem that might be associated with the Igbo approval of polygamy and the request to make sterility an impediment to Christian marriage until then.

6 The view of the scholars that argue either for a change or consistency with regard to the traditional teaching concerning the goods or ends of marriage will be examined in the fifth major section of this study.

7 I have to admit that the history of the Catholic Church’s teaching concerning the ends of marriage is long and complicated. Consequently, a comprehensive and thorough analysis of this history is beyond both the scope of this
by the Igbo concerning the primacy of male children over their female counterparts and the assumptions embedded in this position can truly be attributed to the Igbo reading of the scripture, the teaching of Augustine and/or the tradition which built upon their teaching will be one of the main tasks of this present chapter.  

To achieve this goal, the first part of chapter three will briefly examine the biblical teaching concerning marriage and its purposes. It will do this by not only focusing on the God’s command to “increase and multiply,” but also by exploring other sections of the Bible that embody its teaching on marriage and procreation. The second part will analyze early Christian writers’ appraisal of the biblical understanding of the purposes of marriage. Since a case could be made that when the missionaries brought the Catholic faith to the Igboland in the late 1800s and early 1900s the then magisterial teaching which understood the procreation of children as the primary purpose of marriage was predominantly Augustine’s position, the third part of this chapter will analyze St. Augustine’s sexual ethic. It will do so by paying particular attention to Augustine’s teaching concerning the goods of marriage to see how much of the Igbo emphasis on male children as the primary purpose of marriage can truly be attributed to Augustine’s thought.

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8 See chapter two of the present study, sections II and III for the Igbo arguments to support this claim.
3.1. SCRPTRUAL BACKGROUND CONCERING THE MAGISTERIAL TEACHING ON THE GOODS/ENDS OF MARRIAGE

It is not an exaggeration to say on one hand, that all the philosophizing and the theologizing of the early Christian writers or Fathers of the Church concerning human sexuality and marriage, in particular, is traceable not only to the creation narratives as recorded in the scriptural book of Genesis, but also to the entire Bible. On the other hand, it is an exercise that was influenced by the culture, religion, social structure, history and/or the events that were prevalent during the periods of their writings. Summarizing the thoughts of May, Lawler, and Boyle on how the culture and the social circumstances impacted the early Christian writers, John Grabowski noted: “Confronted by an immoral society that trivialized human sexuality through the bawdy entertainment of the theater, the tolerance of prostitution and concubinage, and the acceptance of a double standard of sexual morality for men, early Christian preachers and writers

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9 The book of Genesis presents two seemingly contradictory accounts of the creation of humanity popularly known as the Yahwistic and the Priestly traditions. While Genesis 1:27-28 gave the impression that God created male and female simultaneously and empowered them to “increase and multiply,” Genesis 2: 21-24 suggested that God created man first and later formed a woman from the rib He took out from man. The later account supports its claim by observing that for this reason a man leaves his parents in search of the rib that was taken away from him—the woman and the two become one body. For centuries, biblical exegetes and scholars from various disciplines have interpreted the implications of these two creation accounts. While some have used the former to prove the equality of men and women, others have used the later to support the superiority of men over their female counterparts. However, for the purpose of this study, the interest here is to examine how both accounts relate to or affect one’s understanding of human sexuality (especially the procreative purpose of marriage) and subsequently the act of giving and of receiving each other in marriage.

often approached matters of sex rather narrowly and in largely negative terms.”¹¹ In what follows, this study will examine the biblical accounts concerning the origin of human sexuality and marriage.

### 3.1A. THE GENESIS’ CREATION ACCOUNT OF HUMANITY

In the first creation account, God the Creator, after he had created every other thing on the face of earth and found them to be good, decided to create a being who would not only resemble him, but who would also have dominion over the other creatures.¹² Thus, “God created man in his image in the divine image he created him; male and female he created them. God blessed them saying; ‘be fertile and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it.”¹³ Deducing from the first creation account, it is obvious that male and female were created simultaneously without any subordination of one gender to another; rather, they were created equal in the image and likeness of God.¹⁴

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Secondly, this first creation account also indicated that *h’adam* (the generic term for male and female) was created by God after every other creature was created, and God found man to be good. Thus, man as male and female is not only good, but complete, lacking nothing in his/her fullness including his/her sexuality. Therefore, both male and female are equal both as creatures of God and in their role and responsibilities as co-creators with God. And God blessed them “be fertile and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it.”

As will be shown below, it will seem that this explicit equality of persons was conspicuously lacking in the second Yahwistic account of the creation of humanity.

This is because in the Yahwistic account God was depicted as a potter who formed man out of clay of the ground and placed man in the east side of the Garden of Eden that He had planted. Man was given instruction to look after the garden and to enjoy the fruits that come from the trees in the garden, but with the exception of the fruits from “the tree of knowledge of good and bad.” God instructed man, “the moment you eat from it you are surely doomed to die.” As the evidence of scripture showed, even in the abundance of food, fruits and limited freedom, man was not satisfied or fulfilled. Thus, in continuation of His creative work, God empowered man to give names of man’s choice to the other creatures. Man performed this function which suggested authority and control, but man was still not satisfied because none of them resembled him or brought him completeness.

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15 Genesis 1:28.

16 See Genesis, 2: 7-8.

17 Genesis 2: 15-17a.

18 Genesis 2: 17b.
As a consequence of this, man’s stay in the garden was anything but delightful for he lacked human companionship and/or relationship which God acknowledged thusly: “It is not good for man to be alone [and God promised to make man] a suitable partner—ezer.” In fulfilment of His promise, God made man to fall into a deep sleep and, while he was asleep, God took out one of his ribs and closed it up with flesh. The Lord God then built up a man-like creature from the rib that he had taken from the man and brought this creature to man. Upon seeing this creature, man happily exclaimed: “This one, at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; this one shall be called woman, for out of ‘her man’ this one has been taken.”

Reflecting on this verse, Elliot argues that “man is not Adam, however, until man is ‘ish’ and ‘ishshah,’ …since there is no complete Adam until the human person is gendered, as ‘ish’ and ‘ishshah,’ for only in losing his loneliness is man properly a ‘likeness’ and ‘image’ of the Creator.”

It is in this sense that this poetic description of the scene by Gerhard Von Rad needs

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19 Genesis, 2: 18b. If all that God created was good—(Cf. Gen. 1:31)—it would seem contradictory for the same God to note latter that “it is not good for man to be alone.” Such seemingly contradictory note has led scholars like Grabowski to note that “The author of the first citation account, who did the final redaction of this material, presumably allowed the dissonance created by this statement to remain precisely because of the importance of what it introduces—[the search for a suitable partner--woman].” Grabowski, Sex and Virtue, 32 at footnote 32. It suffices to note that different versions of the Bible have different translations of the Hebrew word ‘ezer.’ For instance, while NAB translates ‘ezer’—as suitable partner—, the NIV translates ‘ezer’—as a helper suitable. Although the NIV version translation of the Hebrew word “ezer” as—“helper suitable”—more fittingly corresponds to its usage in Hebrew, however, the word “helper” in contemporary English usage carries a connotation of subordination.

20 Genesis, 2: 23. According to the commentary on the footnote of this verse, “There is a play on the similar-sounding Hebrew words ‘ishsha’ (woman) and ‘ishah’ (her man, her husband). Grabowski and others have argued that this play on words further supports the claim that man and woman are of the same stuff or are the same kind of entity.” Grabowski, Sex and Virtue, 33; and Elliot, What God Has Joined, 8-9.

21 Elliot, What God Has Joined, 8.
to be understood as he noted thusly: “God himself, like a father of the bride, leads the woman to the man [to begin a new family.]”\textsuperscript{22}

Therefore, contrary to the derogatory connotation that the term ‘\textit{ezer}’ suggested in its Hebrew original, some scholars like Lisa Sowle Cahill have strongly argued that in the Old Testament, the term ‘\textit{ezer}’ is used to refer to God as the one who gives aid to Israel (cf. Ex. 18:4; Dt. 33:7, 29; Ps. 203, 121:2, 124:8).\textsuperscript{23} Grabowski agrees with Cahill and noted that when ‘\textit{ezer}’ is stripped of its connotation of male domination over the female, the naming of Eve by Adam “underscores the equal dignity of women and men since the so called domination of Adam over Eve that first manifested in Adam naming Eve was a consequence of the Fall (Gen: 3:16, 20).”\textsuperscript{24}

Seen through this lens, the naming of Eve by Adam in Genesis 2:23, is arguably of a different kind, because “Adam recognizes not only her but himself in a new way precisely through their mutual relation.”\textsuperscript{25} Therefore, what these events suggest is that perhaps the promise made by God and its fulfillment in the creation of a suitable partner (\textit{ezer}) for Adam by God, was the way God chose to address Adam’s loneliness. They can also be construed as a way to emphasis and/or reiterate the equality of persons that the first creation account explicitly stated.\textsuperscript{26}


\textsuperscript{24} Grabowski, \textit{Sex and Virtue}, 99.

\textsuperscript{25} Grabowski, \textit{Sex and Virtue}, 99.

\textsuperscript{26} Genesis 1:27-28.
This claim is supported by the historical facts that, “both man and woman were made directly by God, man from the adama—clay or dirt—and woman from the body of the man (Gen 2:7, 22). Woman may be made for man as a partner and complement, but she is not made by him.”

Seen then as a relationship that was entered by two equal persons whose natures are made in such a way as to seek to be bound together they are constantly in need to fulfill this task.

Thus, it is plausible to say that the consequence of these correlated actions of God and man is the first recorded explanation of the institution of marriage. Thus, from henceforth, “[a man is expected to leave] his father and mother and clings to his wife, and the two of them become one body.”

By clinging to each other to become one body, they complement each other in many ways than one. More especially, in complementing each other in their humanity and sexuality, they form a covenantal relationship between themselves as embodied persons. It is on the basis of this equality that marriage be rightly described as a covenant, since “covenant is entered by parties who are basically equal in dignity even if not equal in legal standing in Israel’s law.”

Understood as a covenant that was entered by two equal persons, Grabowski hits the nail on the head when he argues that “the net effect of [the] wealth of covenant terminology used by the

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27 Grabowski, Sex and Virtue, 100. Emphasis in the original. See also Elliot, What God Has Joined, 8.


29 Genesis, 2:24. See also Luke Timothy Johnson, “The Biblical Foundations of Matrimony,” in Marriage Reading in Moral Theology No. 15 , edited by Charles Curran and Julie Hanlon Rubio (New York: Paulist Press, 2009), 4. Since it is the Jewish tradition that women leave their house to form a new family with their husbands, it has been pointed out that the text of Gen 2:24 was a reversal of Israel’s law to underscore the situation of things in the pre-lapsarian existence of Adam and Eve. Consequently, this reversal “indicates that women’s legally subordinated status was not part of God’s original creative intent.” See Grabowski, Sex and Virtue, 100; Cahill, Between the Sexes, 55; Paul Jewett, Man as Male and Female (Grand Rapids Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 1975), 124-228.

30 Grabowski, Sex and Virtue, 100.
second creation account is to describe the relationship of male and female as a covenantal character [which presupposes] communion that includes and is expressed by sexual intimacy.\textsuperscript{31}

However, judging by the text of the second creation’s account of humanity, a case can be made that the coming together of a man and a woman was not necessitated by their desire to have children, nor did it originate because of the desire to express an explicit love that existed between the two of them. Rather, it was initiated by God to quench the loneliness of man in the Garden of Eden, and man seemed to be happy with their coming together. The association of this incident with the marital act, love, and/or with procreation can only be inferred since companionship could be provided without the engagement of the marital act and/or for the desire to beget children.

Rather such inference could be made by probably arguing that the happiness and the excitement that man felt upon seeing another creature that resembled him was an expression of his love, affection, and desire for her. Understood as such, the expression “this at last is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh” can be construed as suggesting the ability of Adam to engage in a relationship of love. But even if this claim is accepted, it does not adequately represent the reciprocal relationship that is part and parcel of marriage, for nothing was explicitly said as to whether the woman loved man back or if she showed any affection for man. Rather an implicit connection can be inferred perhaps by her actions. In other words, if Eve lived with Adam in the garden and provided the companionship that Adam lacked, that in itself was an expression of

\textsuperscript{31} Grabowski, \textit{Sex and Virtue}, 36.
love and affection for him. Thus, Eve may not have expressed her affection and love for Adam verbally, but she did so by her actions that followed Adams’ intimate expression and invitation.

But the second account of the creation of humanity also noted that “the man and his wife were both naked, yet they felt no shame.” 32 This cautionary note is suggestive that the feeling of shame is a consequence of the Fall of Adam and Eve since their immediate reaction after the “Fall” was to cover their genital parts or organs with figs. 33 One can argue that the covering of their genital parts is indicative that Adam and Eve’s sexual relationship from henceforth has been disordered. Seen as a disordered relationship, their equality has not only been lost, but their

32 Genesis 2:25. In many cultures, including the Old Testament, there are different meanings that each culture attaches to nudity. For instance, in Igbo culture, it is not offensive for breast-feeding mothers to breast-feed their babies in public without covering their breasts, or even for toddlers to move around in the villages without putting on any clothes on their bodies. Those who are not well-informed about this culture have mistakenly misinterpreted it as a poverty driven act. While in some other cultures, these practices could be seen as inappropriate and abusive to teenagers in Igboland they are not seen as such. For an overview of nudity and its association in various cultures, including those of the Old Testament, see Mario Perniola, “Between Clothing and Nudity,” in Fragment for a History of the Human body part 2, edited by Michel Feher with Ramona Naddaff and Nadia Tazi (New York; Zone, 1989), 237-265. Also, what Grabowski noted in reference to the culture of the ancient Israel is also true of Igbo culture with regard to how the Igbo couples see nakedness. According to him, “nakedness” of the couples is a circumlocution that bespeaks sexual intimacy [without the association of shame.]” Grabowski, Sex and Virtue, 37. This is true of humanity’s prelapsarian state (2:25) not its postlapsarian state (3:7).

33 See Genesis 3: 7, 10. Some scholars have not only associated the feeling of shame with deceit, they have also understood the advent of the feeling of shame as a boundary that demarcated pre-lapsarian existence from the post-lapsarian existence of humanity. See John Paul II’s weekly general audience of April 30, May 14 and May 28, 1980 in Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body, translated by Michael Waldstein (Boston: Pauline Books & Media, 2006), 234-246; and Karol Wojtyla, Love and Responsibility, translated by H.T. Willetts (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1981), 186-193. Also cf. Grabowski, Sex and Virtue, 37-39, 103. Some scholars ranging from the Patristic era and beyond have shown some difficulties in arriving at a unified interpretation of the text of Gen 2.25. The lack of unanimous interpretation has resulted in equivocation due to, but is not limited to, the various forms of dualistic thinking that associated sex in some way with sin or with the Fall. Such association of sex with sin accounts for some scholars’ rejection of the possibility of pre-lapsarian sexual desire. I will say more concerning this claim in the section that treats Augustine’s sexual ethic. See Brown, The Body and Society, 86, 93-96, 175, 186, 268, 294-298. Also different exegetes and theologians (Augustine being one of them) have interpreted both Adam and Eve’s feeling of shame and the covering of their genital organs equivocally. Augustine had argued that their action indicated that sexual concupiscence was not part of the original nature or solitude of man, but rather was a consequence of the Fall of Adam—the Sin of Disobedience—Original sin. This study will say more on this subject in the section that examines Augustine’s sexual ethic.
sexual activity has become a weapon that breathes discord and domination. Consequently, their sexual difference which was explicit in the Yahwistic account no longer depicts unity and equality in the sharing of their intimacy with one another as it was in the beginning. Rather, as Grabowski points out, their sexual difference connotes domination, blame, regret, pain, subordination; all of which has led to the sexual activity’s diminished status irrespective of its covenantal character.\(^{34}\) Therefore, the ‘Fall’ resulted in the Fall of marriage just as creation included the institution of the ideal marriage in both creation accounts.

However, if scholars use the first creation account to justify the position that procreation of children is the main purpose of marriage, the second account falls short of such justification. Similarly, if the second account is used to promote the view that the main purpose of marriage is to provide companionship, the first account falls short of such claim. But if the procreation of children is not part and parcel of God’s original plan in His creation of humanity as the second account may suggest, of what significance is their sex or gender difference. This is because companionship can be provided by people of the same sex or gender and, depending on whom one’s interlocutor is, by irrational animals.\(^{35}\) As it stands, neither of the two Genesis accounts

\(^{34}\) See Grabowski, _Sex and Virtue_, 39; and Elliot, _What God Has Joined_ 9-10.

\(^{35}\) I am aware of the scholarship especially among feminist scholars that distinguishes between “sex,” “gender,” and “sexuality.” See Judith Van Herik, _Freud on Femininity and Faith_ (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press 1982), 112-119; and John Archer and Barbara Lloyd, _Sex and Gender_ (Cambridge U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1985). However, in the text above, sex or gender is used specifically in its physicality, connoting embodied persons. I also recognize the fact that these distinctions have not come without costs to the proper understanding of the role that each of the above terms play or occupy in the fields of the humanities and the sciences. Also, the debate over the impact of biology versus environment (nature vs nurture) in shaping human sexuality is still unfolding. However, as Grabowski rightly observed “a balance account of sexuality has to account for the impact of both biology and culture.” Grabowski, _Sex and Virtue_, 97. For more information and differing points of view concerning this debate, see: Yves Christen, _Sex Difference: Modern Biology and the Unisex Fallacy_, translated by Nicholas Davidson (New Jersey: Transaction Books. 1991); James Nelson, _Body Theology_ (Louisville, KY: Westminster and John Knox Press, 1992), 41-54; Rosalyn Diprose, _The Bodies of Women Ethics Embodiment_
concerning the origin of humanity and, by association, the origin of marriage, have provided a robust explication that enjoyed unanimous acceptance among scholars concerning the main purpose of marriage. Therefore, subsequent Christian writers and exegeses sought for other relevant sources either from other scriptural texts and/or from their culture’s/traditions to explain the purpose(s) of marriage.

As a result of this, one finds in the Old Testament various instances that testify to the significance of marriage and to the bearing of children as a necessary consequence of being married, so much so that infertility was seen as a curse or punishment from God while fecundity was taken as a blessing from God. Among the problems that are associated with the Old Testament emphasis on the procreation of children as the purpose of marriage was that it led to the acceptance of a double standard of sexual morality, and a zero tolerance for the life of celibacy or virginity.

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37 It is in this context that Luke Timothy Johnson noted that virginity is regarded as tragic in the Old Testament. Similarly, while men were allowed to marry more than one wife, women were restricted to one man at a given time, and while Proverbs describes the ideal wife (Prov 31: 10-31), nothing was said about the ideal husband. See Johnson, “The Biblical Foundations of Matrimony,” 4. In the same vein, it was legal for a man to give a letter of divorce to his wife for charges of adultery but his wife was not allowed to give him a similar letter for the same or other related offense of infidelity. For more information concerning the arguments in support of these practices by the patriarchs and for the reasons why these practices are no longer allowed in the present time see: Augustine, De Bono Conjugali, 17-22; and John Chrysostom, On Marriage and Family Life translated by Catherine P. Roth & David Anderson (Crestwood, New York: St Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1986), 81-88.
Additionally, the laws written for the people of Israel to observe focused on the issues of descendant through the male seed and the preservation of the chosen people through marriage and child bearing within approved modalities. Johnson suggests that perhaps one of the main reasons for which the Old Testament patriarchs pre-occupied themselves with the issue of procreation was God’s promise to Abraham that one’s family (Abraham’s seed) was the means by which all humans would be blessed.\textsuperscript{38} Seen in this perspective, a case can be made that the Igbo emphasis on the male children as the primary reason for marriage and their practice of polygamy to maintain such primacy were the products of the Old Testament patriarch’s focus on male offspring.\textsuperscript{39}

A corollary problem that is associated with the approval of polygamy in the Old Testament and the expectation of the Patriarchs to fill the earth with children was that many marriages were not necessarily motivated by love between the marrying partners. Rather, they married because of the constraints to fulfill their family and/or societal obligations.\textsuperscript{40} That being


\textsuperscript{39} Although there are various instances in the Old Testament that supported the practice of polygamy, there was a gradual evolution to monogamous practice as the imagery of covenant was used in the discussion of marriage. Seen through this lens, marriage became an image for the covenantal relationship that existed between God and the people of Israel. In other words, when biblical writers use the imagery of covenant to describe the relationship that exist between God and the people Israel, this covenantal relationship carries with it the demand of exclusivity and fidelity on the part of the people of Israel. As will be shown later in the section that treats Augustine, fidelity, exclusivity—sacramentum and progeny are the three purposes for which marriage is good. For a succinct analysis of marriage as covenant, see Grabowski, \textit{Sex and Virtue}, 23-48.

\textsuperscript{40} The claim above does not suggest a total absence of love in the marriages of the Patriarchs, for that would have been contrary to the prophetic use of marriage as a symbol of covenant between Yahweh and Israel. For a detailed analysis concerning the significance of love in the Old Testament and the discussion on the prophetic use of marriage as a covenant symbol between Yahweh and Israel, Cf. Edward Schillebeeckx, OP. \textit{Marriage: Human Reality and Saving Mystery}, translated by N. D. Smith. 2 vols. (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1965). 7-97.
said, there are scattered references in the Old Testament that suggested that marriage had another value different from the value of the procreation of children.\textsuperscript{41} These exceptions notwithstanding, Noonan was right to note that “in polygamous society, love is neither exclusive nor more important than procreation.”\textsuperscript{42} But it might be asked, if the Old Testament account concerning the origin and purpose of marriage and the patriarchs’ culture were guilty of depicting marriage as predominantly a child-bearing institution rather than for providing companionship, how much of this emphasis was maintained by the New Testament writers and cultures?

Both Noonan and Johnson argue that although the New Testament writers recognized the procreation of children as a purpose of marriage, they were more inclined to emphasize the life of celibacy.\textsuperscript{43} This is based on a number of considerations. First, Noonan points out that “the words ‘increase and multiply’ were not repeated when Genesis was quoted by both [Mark and Matthew].”\textsuperscript{44} Second, Paul stresses virginity as a superior vocation.\textsuperscript{45} Third, the first letter to the Corinthians noted that “it is a good thing for a man not to touch a woman.”\textsuperscript{46} Consequently Noonan argues that the only direct text enjoining marriage for the sake of the procreation of

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{41 See Song of Songs, 2:16; “All mine is my true love and I his” Human sexual love here has a value independent of fertility as Noonan rightly observed. Cf. Prov., 31:11; 28. See Noonan, \textit{Contraception}, 32.}

\footnote{42 Noonan, \textit{Contraception}, 32.}

\footnote{43 Cf. Matt.19: 11-12; and 1Cor 7: 25-40.}

\footnote{44 Noonan, \textit{Contraception}, 41.}

\footnote{45 See I Cor., 7-10.}

\footnote{46 I Cor., 7:1. See also Noonan, \textit{Contraception}, 46.}
\end{footnotes}
children is Paul’s advice to the widows. “So I would like younger widows to marry, have children, and manage a home, so as to give the adversary no pretext for maligning us.”

Johnson gave three reasons for the seemingly lack of interest among biblical authors with regard to marriage or better said marriages blessed with children in favor of the life of celibacy. First, he noted that Christ neither married nor begot children. Second, he pointed out that because Christians understood Christ’s resurrection as constituting him as a “life giving spirit” (I Cor.15:45), the reception of God’s blessing which was dependent on the progeny in the Old Testament became possible in the New Testament by the power of the Spirit. Third, he stated that because people understood “this world to be passing away” (I John 2:17), the early Christians focused on the world that is yet to come. And in that eschatological life there will be no marrying or giving in marriage.

With regard to the role of love in marriage one notices that the love spoken of in the Gospels is better understood as charity. Seen in the perspective of charity which also refers to a chaste friendship even among celibates, it is not limited to married love. Consequently, charity is slightly different from marital love, though, it can be argued that such love especially as it is epitomized or exemplified in the love of Christ for His Church enhances marital love in its fullness. Based on all this, both Johnson and Noonan favor the view that New Testament writers

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47 I Tim 5:14. This one specific account is insufficient to be used as a rebuttal to the other instances in which the New Testament writers emphasized the life of celibacy over that of marriage. See Noonan, Contraception, 73.


50 Mt. 22:30; Mk.12:35; Lk 20: 35-36. See also Elliot, What God Has Joined, 22.
developed a sexual ethic that extolled the life of celibacy or virginity in which married life was understood as a secondary vocation that was left for those who were not able to accept the challenge of celibacy.\textsuperscript{51} And even for this later group, it is not very clear in the New Testament as it was in the Old Testament that progeny holds a prime purpose within marriage.

In fact, for Noonan, the teaching concerning the superiority of virginity/celibacy over marriage constitutes a sharp difference between the Old and the New Testaments teachings concerning marriage and human sexuality.\textsuperscript{52} However, Noonan’s claim above needs to the qualified because, if left as it is, it does not adequately represent the whole scriptural truth concerning the treatment of marriage in the New Testament. This is because there are various texts in the New Testament that suggest a contrary reading, or at least, which call for a distinction to be made between marriage and blessed with children. True, marriages are designed to be procreative, but there were infertile marriages in both the Old and New Testaments.

So rather than being repugnance regarding marriage \textit{per se}, it might be fair to say that perhaps the New Testament writers and cultures appear to be less interested in advocating for both love-centered and procreative marriages. By love-centered I mean, love in the specifically sexual sense. It is important to make this distinction because some scholars tend to immediately assume that because the New Testament writers did not emphasize with the same alacrity the significance of progeny as the Old Testament did, it is automatically tantamount to a rejection of marriage. It does not necessarily mean so, since marriage does not always imply procreation as

\textsuperscript{51} See Mt 19:12; Lk., 14: 26; 18: 29; 20: 34-36. See also Noonan, \textit{Contraception}, 37.

\textsuperscript{52} Noonan, \textit{Contraception}, 37.
far as nothing is done to hinder or frustrate procreation. Besides, a case can be made that progeny is assumed as a purpose of marriage because during the time of their writing, the culture understood non-procreative marriages as deficient. The same attitude is evidenced in Igbo culture as the previous chapter of this study has shown.

This claim is supported by the fact that even as the teaching on the significance of the celibate life for the sake of the Kingdom of God continued to gain momentum and tended to overshadow the Old Testament emphasis on progeny, marriage as an institution was still regarded as something good and procreation of children still served as an important avenue for the sustenance of society during the time of the Apostles. The Gospels also re-affirmed the goodness of marriage and Jesus graced the wedding in Cana with not only His presence, but with the greatest wedding gift—His first recorded miracle of changing water into wines. Christ referenced Genesis 1 to emphasize the commitment of marriage that excludes divorce (Mk. 10: 2-12).

Similarly the epistles supported this claim. Most significantly, Ephesians epitomizes the significance of love even as it reverses the order of instruction concerning how couples should behave in their families to ensure a happy married life. The letter to the Ephesians also perfectly assimilated the ecclesiological significance of Christian marriages. Christ is the


bridegroom of his people Israel. This is because in this text, the author portrayed Christian marriage not only as good, but also as a sanctifying and edifying life of shared love, which is a participation in the love that exists between Christ and His Church.\textsuperscript{57}

In the same vein, 1 Corinthians 7: 3-6 bespeaks of the equality of rights which couples owe and share between each other. Thus, the husband is reminded that he has no right over his body but his wife has a right over her husband’s body and vice-versa. Not even for the reason(s) of piety is a husband or wife allowed to deny the other the conjugal debt. According to Paul, if such denial is done without the permission of one’s partner that requested for sexual intercourse, the partner that refused to submit his or her body committed an offence against God. One of the primary reasons for this requirement is to help the couples to avoid the sins of adultery, fornication, quarrels and bickering that can result from non-consensual sexual abstinence.\textsuperscript{58} Seen through this lens, 1 Corinthians 7: 3-6 on one hand, speaks of equality of the couples in the exercise of their conjugal act as what is achieved in marriage. On the other hand, one can argue that implicitly progeny as a purpose of marriage is solidly wedded in the teaching that demands every marital act of the couples to be open to procreation.

As I come to the close of this brief account that traced the biblical origin of humanity and what it sees as the purposes of marriage, I can say that there is an ambiguity with regard to the post-exilic Priestly and the Yahwistic accounts of the origin of humanity. The equivocation stems from the imprecision concerning the purposes of marriage in both accounts. As a result of


this, the early Christian writers had to formulate principles that were based on their understanding of scripture and their culture to regulate and guide human sexuality in general and marriage in particular. While a case can be made to substantiate the claim that marriage is an avenue principally for the propagation of children by a strict interpretation of the injunction, ‘increase and multiply,’ the same cannot be said on the basis of the evidence provided by the second creation account. Rather, the second account suggests that the main reason for which people marry each other is to provide companionship among the couples—“it is not good for the man to be alone” (Gen 2:18).

As the analysis has shown so far, the tension that was created by the omission of the injunction to procreate as a purpose of marriage in the Yahwistic account is not a trivial matter. However, by describing marriage as a covenant that is entered by two persons who are created in the image of God, one can begin to see the unity in diversity of the two accounts of creation as they relate to the purposes of marriage. The unity consists in the fact that both accounts support the couple’s equality, as beings created in the image of God who are capable of entering into a loving relationship as embodied persons. The diversity consists in the lack of an explicit injunction “to increase and multiply” in the second account. But neither of the accounts can be used to support the Igbo understanding of the primary purpose of marriage as an avenue to procreate male children who will maintain their lineage.

59 However, it is pertinent to note that this account is very condensed and brief to have accounted for everything that could have been said with regard to this topic. I have pinpointed some of the areas that I deemed pertinent for the overall investigation or study.
This is because the first creation account’s congruity with the Igbo emphasis on progeny as the main reason for marriage does not necessarily mean or suggest any superiority or importance of the male over the female child in their sexual functions and family roles. Rather, both male and female are equal both as creatures of God and in their role and responsibilities as co-creators with God. Therefore, the Igbo may not rely on the provisions of the first account of creation as a yardstick for their emphasis on the procreation of male children as the primary reason for marriage.

But neither of the accounts had an explicit statement with regard to the role or place of the marital act in marriage as an avenue to procreate children. Also, the whole biblical tradition seemed to be less interested in apportioning a significant or specific role to conjugal love in marriage which is more than the ability to engage in marital intercourse. Such specification at best can only be inferred by arguing that the biblical authors used expressions and signs that are different from the ones’ which the twenty-first century society uses.\(^60\) It is then not surprising that the Catholic magisterium did not limit its teaching concerning the purposes of marriage strictly to the scriptural accounts. Rather, it had formulated, developed and continues to develop its teaching concerning the purposes of marriage based on its interpretation and understanding of the two Genesis’ accounts as well as from the tradition of the Church that dates back to the Apostolic era.\(^61\)

\(^{60}\) As will be shown as this study advances, the allocation of a distinct and intrinsic role to conjugal love in marriage among other things resulted from cultural developments in the West, beginning in the Middle Ages. These cultural developments were a reflection of the theological developments which saw marriage as one of the seven sacraments, which later influenced the teachings of subsequent scholars especially the personalist scholars in the twentieth century and beyond.

However, before examining the post biblical theologians’ teaching concerning the purposes of marriage, it is pertinent to point out one of the underlying concepts that I think shaped subsequent scholars’ theological development with regard to the purposes of marriage—the reality of sexual concupiscence and/or the association of sex with sin following the “Fall of Adam and Eve.” This incident and its inclusion towards the end of the second account of creation are susceptible to a plethora of interpretations. One interpretation could be that perhaps, sexual concupiscence in its truncated and disordered nature as humanity experiences it today was not the same as it was in man’s original solitude or state, especially since the first recorded experience of disordered concupiscence happened after the Fall of Adam and Eve. Or could it be that humanity might have engaged in sexual intercourse, felt sexual desire and validly sought and enjoyed sexual pleasure without its accompanying sexual lust understood as a passion that does not obey reason’s command?² Making sense of these and other related issues especially as they relate and affect humanity’s understanding of the purpose of marriage was the task of subsequent post-apostolic scholarship and beyond, which this study will now examine.³

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² Lust in the specifically sexual sense is a passion. Passions are human emotions although human emotions are not equivalent to passions and cannot be reversed on their own because they are “bad fruits of a bad tree.” Cavadini, “Feeling Right: Augustine on the Passions and Sexual Desire,” Augustinian Studies 36:1 (2005): 199. Understood as such, passions are always bad, while emotions can be good or bad depending on the condition of the will. This was the view of St. Augustine as will be shown below.

³ Following the biblical accounts scholars have developed, and will continue to develop and/or refine, those aspects of the biblical teachings concerning human sexuality and marriage that were not fully developed by the biblical authors. For instance, the place of procreation in marriage, the function of the marital act, the role of conjugal love within marriage, the lawfulness of marriage by sterile couples, and the role of pleasure in marriage were further developed by subsequent scholars. As will be shown later in this study each epoch or scholar paid particular attention to those aspects of the biblical teaching regarding marriage and/or human sexuality that spoke mostly to his or her audience. This, they did either in the form of a new teaching and/or in order to correct a misleading position that was held by a person or by an aggregate of persons before them.
3.2.  THE EARLY CHRISTIANS’ TEACHING CONCERNING THE PURPOSES OF MARRIAGE

During the early periods that immediately followed the apostolic era, Stoicism was a powerful and renowned school of moral teachings. The Stoics are generally known for taken the performance of the marital act as a moral duty which should take place only to produce children.\(^{64}\) However, their high regard for procreation did not stop them from being very skeptical about emotions of all kind and sexual desire in particular. Consequently, not only did they regard the seeking of sexual pleasure within the limits of marriage as reprehensible, but they also instructed couples to “use only the position that will enable the ‘seed’ to be ‘sown’ to the best effect [while engaging in the marital act].”\(^{65}\) Therefore, when a Stoic speaks of love or marital intercourse, even among married couples, he or she is presumed to be advocating for a dry, emotionless and affectionless expression of love or of sexual intercourse. Thus according to the Stoic standard, couples are free to engage in sexual intercourse for the sake of progeny as long as their action is devoid of any expression or entertainment of sexual feelings. In the same vein *apathēia* for the Stoics means that the virtuous person is not under the control of passion, seen as an enemy of reason.\(^{66}\)

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\(^{64}\) See Brown, *The Body & Society*, 21.

\(^{65}\) Brown, *The Body & Society*, 21; and also Musonius Rufus, *Reliquiae*, sec. 63 as used by Noonan, *Contraception*, 47.

\(^{66}\) As I will show later in the section that treats Augustine’s teaching on the goods of marriage, Augustine criticized the Stoics for holding that certain kinds of emotion, e.g., grief does not exist in the mind of the wise person.
It is based on these general principles that Musonius Rufus in the first century taught that marital intercourse was morally right only if its purpose was procreative.\(^{67}\) Seneca also noted that the love between couples should be determined by judgment and not by affection. Similarly the Neo-Pythagoreans held that the sexual organs are given to man not for the sake of pleasure but rather for the maintenance of species. Understood as such, sexual intercourse should be engaged for the purpose of procreation and not for the purpose of sexual gratification.\(^{68}\)

Like the Stoics, some early Christian writers of the first four centuries also leaned toward the view that saw procreation as the reason for both marriage and sexual intercourse. For instance, Clement of Alexandria wrote, “The man who has taken a wife in order to have children should also practice continence, not even seeking pleasure from his own wife, whom he ought to love, but with honorable and moderate desire, having but one intention, children.”\(^{69}\) Clement also condemned excessive sexual intercourse and positions that are purely chosen for the purposes of enhancing sexual gratification. According to him, “the maximization of pleasure in the sexual act, through the choice of differing positions [while engaging in sexual activity [and/or having intercourse] beyond the periods that are strictly necessary for the conception of a child, were vulgar and plebeian.”\(^{70}\) In his repugnance to such behavior(s), he insisted that “The

\(^{67}\) See Musonius Rufus, *Reliquiae*, ed.O. Hense (Leipzig, 1905), sec.63 as used and quoted by Noonan, *Contraception*, 47.

\(^{68}\) See Noonan, *Contraception*, 47.


Christian law is for husbands to use their wives moderately and only for the raising of children.  

According to St. Justin, “Either [Christians] marry, in the first place, in order to raise children, or, refusing to marry, [they] live in continence for the rest of [their] lives.” However, he warned that “a man who marries for the sake of begetting children must practice continence so that it is not desire [that] he feels for his wife, whom he ought to love, and so that he may beget children with a chaste and controlled will.” On a similar note, although Origen held that married intercourse coarsened the spirit, yet for the sake of procreation, Origen taught that what determines a lawful intercourse with one’s lawful wife is posterity. Due to the resemblance of these early Christian writers’ positions with those of the Stoics, some theologians argue that the early Christian writers were influenced in varying degrees by the Stoic notion of *apatheia* and Neoplatonism. It is fair to say that the combination of Neoplatonism and the Stoic focus on

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71 Clement, *Stromamta*, 3.11; See Noonan, *Contraception*, 76.

72 Justine Martyr, *Apologetics to Pro Christianus* “First Apology for Christians,” 29 PG 6; see also May, Lawler, and Boyle, *Catholic Sexual Ethics*, 79; and Grabowski, *Sex and Virtue*, 76.

73 Justine, “First Apology for Christians” 29. See also Grabowski, *Sex and Virtue*, 76; and Noonan, *Contraception*, 76.

74 See Origen, “Third Homily on Genesis,” no. 6, in *The Fathers of the Church*, vol. 71, translated by Ronald E. Heine, (Washington, D. C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1981); *Griechische Christliche Schriftsteller* vol. vi 29 (1920) 1-144. See also Brown, *The Body and Society*, 172; and Noonan, *Contraception*, 77. From henceforth the abbreviated form of *Griechische Christliche Schriftsteller* GCS will be used.

75 For more information concerning the argument that supports the Stoic influence on the patristic and early monastic thoughts, consult: Noonan, *Contraception*, 75-77, 144; Colish Marcia, *The Stoic Tradition from Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages*. The claim that Stoicism had great influence on the views of the early Christian writers is not shared by all the scholars. Some argue that despite the similarities of the early Christians’ suspicious altitude with regard to the seeking of sexual pleasure and/or an expression of emotions with those of the Stoics, early Christian writers’ views represented a unique development of New Testament themes. See Richard Price, “The Distinctiveness of the Early Christian Sexual Ethics.” *Heythrop Journal* 31 (1990):257-276; May, Lawler, and Boyle, *Catholic Sexual Ethics*, 79. However, some others contend that there are so many similarities between the
reason were instrumental to the early Christian writers’ suspicious attitude toward the body and sexuality.

Thus, marriage was understood by some early Christian writers as an avenue to live a chaste life and to become parents. For instance, Lactantius, in the East, explicitly dissented from the Stoic’s procreative purposefulness of marriage and marital intercourse and gave value to the Pauline purpose of intercourse as remedy for incontinence. Similarly, in the fourth century, John Chrysostom defended the Pauline view that encouraged couples to engage in intercourse to avoid immorality and/or to promote chastity and ignored the Stoic distrust of emotions. Seen in this perspective, married couples are capable of being as holy as any monk. Therefore, Lactantius and Chrysostom are good examples of the early Christian writers whose teaching concerning the purposes of marriage differed from those of the Stoics.

Stoic procreative purposefulness of marriage and sexual intercourse with the early Christian writers’ designation of progeny as the purpose of marriage and/or marital intercourse that it is very difficult not to see their influence. For instance, Noonan concedes that Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and Jerome have a teaching on the purposefulness of marital intercourse that were largely rooted in Stoicism with its idea of apatheia. See Noonan, Contraception, 48-49; 75-77, 144. However, though without totally exonerating Clement’s views from Stoic influence, Brown notes that scholars should take caution in the way they interpret Clement’s ideal of apatheia. According to Brown, “what Clement envisioned, in the ideal of apatheia was a state of final serenity of purpose, no longer held back by the fears and uncertainties engendered by passions.” Brown, The Body and Society, 130-131. Though I am inclined to align with those scholars who hold that the teaching of the early Christian writers concerning procreation as a purpose of marriage were influenced by their reading of the scripture, I do so with an addendum—they were also influenced by their culture which emphasized fecundity as the primary purpose of marriage. For more information concerning the influence of culture on the early Christian writers’ teaching on marriage and sexuality, see Brown, The Body and Society; Mahoney, Making of Moral Theology, 37-38; Bottomley, Attitudes to the Body, 44-97; and Grabowski, Sex and Virtue, 76.

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76 See Lactantius, “Divinarum Institutionum,”—“Divine Institutes,” book 6, Chapter 23, in The Fathers of the Church, vol. 49, translated by Sister Mary Francis McDonald, Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum CSEL (1975): 1-761. “Whoever cannot control his affections, let him keep them within the confines of the marriage bed.” From henceforth, the abbreviated form of Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum CSEL will be used. See also Noonan, Contraception, 77; and Grabowski, Sex and Virtue, 76.

77 See Chrysostom, “De Verbis Illis Apostoli, Propter Fornicationes Autem Unisquisque Suam Uxorem Habeat”—“On Those words of the Apostles On Account of Fornication” PG 51 (1859): 207-217; and Noonan, Contraception, 78. There are two reasons why marriage was instituted, that we may live chastely and that we may become parents.”
In addition to Stoicism, Gnosticism was another powerful religious sect that dominated discussions about social life during this period.\textsuperscript{78} Central to the Gnostic teaching was a rejection of the view that understood marriage and sexual intercourse as a vehicle for the procreation of children.\textsuperscript{79} The Gnostics emphasized a kind of ascetic life in which they forbade their members from engaging in the act of marrying and giving in marriage. Thus, they encouraged their members to live a celibate life since those who engage in sexual intercourse represent the unredeemed persons.\textsuperscript{80} Their exaggerated emphasis on the significance of celibacy as a higher way of life perhaps influenced the views of some desert fathers who saw married life as a second class vocation and gave precedence to celibate life. For instance, Chrysostom in his earlier life as a monk once equated marriage to a “nest for birds who cannot fly.”\textsuperscript{81} The emphasis on the life of celibacy over married life even made Origen to castrate himself so as to be freed from the lure of sexual desire.\textsuperscript{82}

As a continuation of the practice that denigrated marriage in favor celibacy, both St. Ambrose and St. Jerome argued that marriage affects couples’ relationship with God and thus

\textsuperscript{78} One can argue that the Gnostics aversion for procreative intercourse and their encouragement for a form of asceticism or spiritual life could be associated with the early Christian fathers’ stress on the life of virginity to the detriment of married life. The stress on virginity was in response to the idea of the invitation of Christ to his followers to imitate his way of life by the writers of the Fourth Century, especially as Christianity was established as the state religion. See Mahoney, \textit{The Making of Moral Theology}, 39; and Noonan, \textit{Contraception}, 69-70.

\textsuperscript{79} See Noonan, \textit{Contraception}, 57.

\textsuperscript{80} See Brown, \textit{The Body and Society}, 116.

\textsuperscript{81} Noonan, \textit{Contraception}, 70. Later in life, Chrysostom corrected the negative connotation that this comment could have on marriage. Chrysostom, “On Marriage and Family Life,” 8.

should be shunned. According to Brown, Jerome asserted that “first marriages were regrettable, and second marriages were only one step away from the brothel.” In the days when priests married, Jerome described married clergy as “mere raw recruits in the army of the Church, brought in because of a temporary shortage of battle-hardened veterans of lifelong celibacy.”

Similarly, Tertullian, though married, reduced marriage to “nothing but a kind of legitimized debauchery, inspired by lust.” Tatian interpreted the willful decision of Adam or any man to leave his parents and cleave to his wife as a loss of the spirit of God. Thus, to regain it, one has to abandon married intercourse, “the most clear symptom of Adam’s frailty and the most decisive obstacle to the indwelling of the Spirit.”

Seen in this perspective, Grabowski rightly observed that “marriage was regarded as the ‘ordinary’ way of life, which required a certain moderation. But complete continence or virginity was an ‘angelic’ way of life that far surpassed [married life].” The life of celibacy was given

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86 Grabowski, *Sex and Virtue*, 77; Cf. Tertullian, *De exhortatione castitas* (Exhortation to Charity), 9 PL 2:924-925. Nevertheless, Grabowski noted that tension existed between these views and Tertullian’s earlier treatise *Ad Uxorem* (To My Wife), PL 1:1237-1304 in which he had applauded the blessings of a Christian Marriage. Grabowski, *Sex and Virtue*, 77.


88 Grabowski, *Sex and Virtue*, 76; cf. Athanasius, *Epistula ad Amunen monachem* (Letter to Amun), PG 26:1169-170. According to Peter Brown, the abstinence that the Desert Fathers expected the married couples to keep was to avoid the sin of adultery. Thus, as long as they keep the traditional periods of sexual abstinence—Saturday, Sunday, Wednesday, Friday, in the forty days of Lent and before the Feasts at which they might take the Eucharist they had no problem. See Brown, *Body & Society*, 256.
an unprecedented exaltation and it became the summit of all Christian life and practices during this period. Consequently, people were discouraged from marrying, and those who were married were encouraged to take the vow of continence at some point in their married lives to make their marriage a spiritual one. As a result of this, many propounded a spiritualized form of marriage which had little or nothing to do with the material or carnal world. The young Augustine was also a victim of this highly spiritualized form of marriage.

It was John Chrysostom who associated love with marriage. In Homily 20 he wrote:

The love of husband and wife is the force that welds society together. Men will take up arms and even sacrifice their lives for the sake of this love…. When harmony prevails, the children are raised well, the household is kept in order and neighbors, friends and relatives praise the result. Great benefits, both for families and states, are thus produced.

Drawing from the same letter of St. Paul to the Ephesians verse 25, Chrysostom enjoins husbands to love their wives as Christ loves His Church. Going further, he expects their love to be real and powerful to the point of one accepting to die for the other just as Christ died for His


91 Jerome in the West, Chrysostom, and Gregory Nazianzen in the East encouraged the youths to prefer the life of celibacy. They argued that those who choose the life of celibacy have rightly fixed their concern on the heavenly matters. See Brown, *The Body and Society*, 376-377, 306-308, 264-267; and L. Godefroy, *Le Mariage au Temps des peres*, *Dictionnaire de Theologie Catholique*, 9.2, 2077-2123 as referenced by May, Lawler, Boyle, Catholic *Sexual Ethics*, 80. I will say more about this on the next section that will treat Augustine’s position.


Church.\textsupERS{94} Such sacrifice is made more possible because husband and wife are one body. In his tweaking of Ephesian 5: 22-23, he noted “a man leaves his parents, who gave him life, and is joined to his wife, and one flesh—father, mother, and child—results from the commingling of the two. The child is born from the union of their seed, so the three are one flesh.”\textsupERS{95} Therefore, Chrysostom stands as a good example of an early Christian writer whose teaching recognized the centrality of love in marriage as well as the importance of progeny as a purpose of marriage more than his contemporaries.

But because of the emphasis on the life of celibacy by the early Christian writers, the temptation which scholars such as Noonan have fallen into was to consider procreation as a purpose of marriage as an unavoidable outcome of couples’ marital acts. Consequently, Noonan argues that although some early Christian writers will occasionally refer to 1Timothy 2:15 which encouraged marriage for the purpose of procreation, “this one single text that favored fertility is nothing to compare with the New Testament passages extolling virginity.”\textsupERS{96} Noonan continues to point out that although Ephesians 5 provided a basis for seeing marital intercourse in terms of the demand of marital love, this option was not taken by most of these Christian writers.\textsupERS{97} Thus the disassociation of the demand of marital love with intercourse was blamed by Noonan on these three related factors: “the Christians’ emphasis on virginity; by a yielding to the Gnostic distrust of sexuality, and by a social structure in which marriages were


\textsupERS{95} Chrysostom, “Homily 20 on Ephesians 5: 22-23,” in On Marriage and Family Life, 51,137, 141, 140.

\textsupERS{96} See Noonan, Contraception, 73.

\textsupERS{97} See Noonan, Contraception, 73.
not often made from love. Nevertheless, Catholic tradition maintained its position that understood progeny as the primary and legitimate purpose of marriage.

From this condensed account of how human sexuality in general and the purposes of marriage, in particular were understood during the first three centuries of the Church’s life, one can draw the following conclusions. First, that a majority of the early Christian writers saw celibacy as superior to marriage though marriage itself was still in some sense good. Second, it was obvious that Stoicism and Gnosticism were powerful social and religious sects whose views about marriage impacted or affected the teachings of the early Christian writers’ on the question of the purposes of marriage. Third, despite this Gnostic influence, the Catholic Church’s views on the goodness of marriage and of procreation were diametrically opposed to those of the Gnostics. Therefore, it would not be an adequate representation of the traditional position with regard to the purposes of marriage to accuse the traditional teaching as endorsing either the Stoics’ or the Gnostics’ positions irrespective of the similarities that existed with its positions and those of the Stoics.

Therefore, Noonan’s assessment of the history to this effect is not always nuanced enough and does not represent a complete analysis of the historical facts. This is because, while a strict interpretation of the Gnostic position favors the life of celibacy, on the other hand, a faithful adherence to the Stoic teaching leans more on the procreative purposefulness of marriage. But neither the teaching of the Stoics nor those of Gnostics fully represented the

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98 See Noonan, *Contraception*, 73.
position of the Catholic teaching with regard to the purposes of marriage in particular nor human sexuality in general.

Noonan also neither accounted for 1Corinthians chapter seven that supported marital intercourse for the purpose of the paying of the marital debt, nor Chrysostom, who not only understood the purposes of marriage as an avenue to beget children, but also as a remedy to eliminate fornication or adultery. On the contrary, May, Lawler, and Boyle seemed to have judged the tradition more accurately and have given a more nuanced assessment of history in this regard. According to them, “[The early Christian writers] were unable to articulate a balanced sexual morality within the context provided by the twin evils of sexual licentiousness and Gnostic hatred of matter and marriage.”

This study has demonstrated so far that the early Christian writers encountered different problems as a result of a one-sided emphasis on one particular way of life or vocation to the detriment of the other: The emphasis of many on virginity constituted a problem in their defense of the goodness of marriage. The over-emphasis on the goodness of marriage constituted a problem and a negation of the teaching concerning the sinfulness of the seeking of unrestricted sexual pleasure. Similarly, the expectation that every conjugal act of the couples must be procreative made nonsense of the conjugal acts performed by infertile couples and/or elderly couples. But because of the early Christian writers distrust or skepticism with regard to the role of sexual concupiscence, the marital act was not regarded as an essential constituent of marriage.


100 May, Lawler, and Boyle, Catholic Sexual Ethics, 82. See also Grabowski, Sex and Virtue, 75-77.
by many early Christian writers; rather it was accommodated because of the good of procreation. Similarly, most of the early Christian writers failed to recognize the importance of love in marriage with the exception of Chrysostom.

This was the state of the question in the early part of the fourth century. Perhaps, it is plausible to say that these hypotheses were instrumental to St. Augustine’s treatise on the goods of marriage. However, by the time of St. Augustine’s writing, the Manichean doctrine that opposed the procreative purposefulness of the marital act and the goodness of marriage dominated the teaching concerning marriage and human sexuality in the Church. Therefore having examined the early Christian writers’ interpretation of the scripture as reflected in their teaching concerning human sexuality and the purposes of marriage, in the next section, this study will continue to trace the history of the traditional position with regard to the goods or ends of marriage by focusing on Augustine’s sexual ethic and his treatise on the goodness of marriage.

3.3. ST. AUGUSTINE’S SEXUAL ETHICS

BACKGROUND

St. Augustine of Hippo was born in the town of Thagaste in what is known today as Algeria around 354 AD to a pagan father and a devout Christian mother.\textsuperscript{101} St. Augustine

received his formal education in a nearby city of Carthage.\textsuperscript{102} As a young adult, and for a period of nine years, John Mahoney noted that St. Augustine neither found the puerilities of the Bible nor the conservative Christianity of the local Donatist sect persuasive or edifying, but rather, he “was captivated by the intellectual satisfaction he found with the Manichean thoughts.”\textsuperscript{103} Because he was delighted by the teaching of the Manicheans, he joined them and became one of their auditors.\textsuperscript{104} The decision to become a Manichean not only surprised his devout Christian mother (St. Monica), but it outraged her so much so that she thought of expelling him from the house.\textsuperscript{105}

As an ambitious person, St. Augustine’s intellectual motivation took him to Italy, where at the age of thirty he became a professor of rhetoric in Milan. His travel to Milan was marked with significant events that later not only quelled his academic ambition but more significantly

\textsuperscript{102} See Mahoney, The Making of Moral Theology, 39.

\textsuperscript{103} Manichaeism is a religious sect (a specie of Gnosticism) that flourished during the time of Augustine. One of the significant positions of the Manicheans as it relates to the analysis of this present study is their belief in a constant battle between the agent of Light (good), which the Spirit represents, and the agent of Darkness (evil), which the body and materiality generally represent. Embedded in this constant battle between the light and the darkness is the notion that the body is a product of an evil power. Understood as such, reproduction further entraps the particles of light that had been dispersed into the world after the initial defeat of the power of light by the power of darkness. In order to ensure that this bondage does not continue, higher level or ranked Manicheans (The Elect) were neither allowed to marry nor to beget children. The lower-ranked members (The Auditors to which Augustine once belonged) who were allowed to marry and/or to have concubines but had to avoid conception through different contraceptive techniques and sexual practices. For more detailed information concerning the Manicheans and their doctrine consult; Samuel N.C. Lieu, Manichaeism in the Later Roman Empire and Medieval China. 2nd ed. (Tubingen: J.C.B. Mohr 1992). see also Elizabeth Clark, ed., St. Augustine on Marriage and Sexuality (Washington, D. C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1996), 32; Mahoney, The Making of Moral Theology, 39; and Bonner, St Augustine of Hippo, 61-64.

\textsuperscript{104} Brown, Body and Society, 202-203; 391-392.

\textsuperscript{105} See Bonner, St Augustine of Hippo, 62. In his Confessions, Augustine tells the story of how his mother had had a vision in which she was told to dis Own Augustine and how God in the same vision had dissuaded her from doing it. Cf. Augustine, Confession III, x 19, xi 20, xii, 21.
shaped his spiritual life.\textsuperscript{106} Mahoney has this to say concerning Augustine’s experience in Milan: “Augustine’s experience in Milan is the famous garden scene of his exhausted moral conversion to Christianity and chastity, followed by his baptism by Ambrose and [his] return to Africa with his illegitimate son and friend to form a Christian commune near his home town.”\textsuperscript{107} However, it is pertinent to note that it was back home in Africa that he was ordained a priest and later, in 395, was elected as the bishop of Hippo.\textsuperscript{108} As the bishop of Hippo, he fought relentlessly through his writings and teaching to correct the misleading positions and the practices of the various kinds of Gnosticisms of his day, but most importantly to this study, those of his former colleagues—the Manicheans.\textsuperscript{109}

However, St. Augustine was neither the first scholar to combat the heretical teachings of these religious sects nor was he the first to develop a sexual ethic that dealt with marriage. Nevertheless, his treatise on sexual ethics as well as on the goodness of marriage left an indelible mark that shaped all other subsequent teachings on the topic especially in the West.\textsuperscript{110}

\begin{frenchquotation}
Before St. Augustine developed his teaching on human sexuality in general and on the goods of marriage in particular, different Church fathers and Councils had at different occasions taken a stand on the subject. For instance, at the meeting of the college of Bishops in 340 AD at Gangra (in Asia Minor in what is referred today as modern Turkey), the Council Fathers’ opined: “If anyone disparages marriage, shuns a faithful and God-fearing wife who sleeps with her husband, and speaks as though she cannot enter the Kingdom of God, let him be anathema.” May, Lawler, and Boyle, Catholic Sexual Ethics, 29. However, in the East though the Christians honor Augustine as a Saint, they have largely ignored his theology. For more information regarding Augustine’s influence on Western
\end{frenchquotation}

\textsuperscript{106} It was in Milan that Augustine came in contact with Ambrose, the local bishop, who later baptized him. It was also in Milan that he familiarized himself with the Neoplatonist writings of Plotinus in Latin.

\textsuperscript{107} Mahoney, The Making of Moral Theology, 39.

\textsuperscript{108} Mahoney, The Making of Moral Theology, 39.


\textsuperscript{110} Before St. Augustine developed his teaching on human sexuality in general and on the goods of marriage in particular, different Church fathers and Councils had at different occasions taken a stand on the subject. For instance, at the meeting of the college of Bishops in 340 AD at Gangra (in Asia Minor in what is referred today as modern Turkey), the Council Fathers’ opined: “If anyone disparages marriage, shuns a faithful and God-fearing wife who sleeps with her husband, and speaks as though she cannot enter the Kingdom of God, let him be anathema.” May, Lawler, and Boyle, Catholic Sexual Ethics, 29. However, in the East though the Christians honor Augustine as a Saint, they have largely ignored his theology. For more information regarding Augustine’s influence on Western
words, St. Augustine’s sexual ethic became, in the West, the bedrock from which other subsequent theological discussions and formulations on sexuality and on the goods or ends of marriage drew their strength.\textsuperscript{111} Noonan summarized what Augustine assumed his task was in developing this sexual ethic nicely: “Marriage was to be shown as good, concupiscence as evil, and marital intercourse as a mixture of good and evil.”\textsuperscript{112} Therefore, this study will now analyze St. Augustine’s sexual ethic by paying attention to his teaching concerning marriage and its goods.

3.4. AUGUSTINE AND THE GOODS OF MARRIAGE

In Augustine’s treatise of the goodness of marriage, he articulated a sexual ethic that struck a balance between Jerome’s exaggerated emphasis on the superiority of the life of celibacy and Jovinian’s unprecedented exultation of married life.\textsuperscript{113} One can say that this latter taught on morality consult Brown, \textit{The Body and Society}; E. Gibson, \textit{The Christian Philosophy of St Augustine} (London: 1961); H. De Lubac, \textit{Augustinisme et Theologie Moderne} (Aubier, 1965); and Mahoney, \textit{The Making of Moral Theology}, 37-70.


\textsuperscript{112} Noonan, \textit{Contraception}, 133.

\textsuperscript{113} The crux of the matter between St. Jerome and Jovinian which Augustine sets out to settle was to construct a treatise or synthesis that would extol Christian virginity without a simultaneous denigration of marriage. To do this, Augustine rejected Jerome’s view that marital intercourse impedes prayer as well as Jerome’s interpretation of the parable of the sower in Matthew 13:1-9. According to Jerome, the seed that fell on the rich soil and produced fruits in a hundredfold meant virginity, the seeds that bore fruits in sixtyfold stood for the widowed without remarriage, and the seeds that produced fruits in thirtyfold represented marriage. Against Jovinian, Augustine taught that any sin that accompanied sexual intercourse was venial because of the three goods of marriage—offspring, fidelity, and sacrament. With such a balanced position, Augustine was able to simultaneously respond to both the extreme positions of Jerome and Jovinian as well as to the Manichean distrust and aversion for procreative marriage as the
nuanced position forced Augustine to revise his former excessively spiritualized and figurative interpretation of Genesis 1-3, and to recognize that marriage has three distinct goods.\textsuperscript{114}

In “\textit{De Bono Conjugali},” Augustine writes: “These are all the goods on account of which marriage is good: offspring \textit{[proles]}, fidelity \textit{[fides]}, and the sacrament \textit{[sacramentum]}.”\textsuperscript{115}

\textsuperscript{114}The young St. Augustine gave a highly figurative, spiritualized and allegorical interpretation of the creation account in Genesis chapters 1-3. Augustine, earlier in life, interpreted the injunction to ‘increase and multiply,’ as a spiritual union devoid of carnality. This is because, according to him, carnal fecundity was a consequence of the Fall of Adam and Eve. The Fall (Original Sin) resulted in a fundamental disorder of the will. Seen through this lens, Augustine taught that had righteousness prevailed, Adam and Eve would not have had sexual intercourse. However, in his mature works especially in the \textit{Good of Marriage}, \textit{On the Holy Virginity}, and \textit{De Genesi ad litteram}—The Literal Commentary on Genesis, he rejected this highly spiritualized and allegorized interpretation of the injunction: “Increase and multiply.” This significant departure was necessitated by the debate between Jovinian and Jerome. While Jovinian gave marriage an unprecedented exultation, Jerome preached the life of virginity to the detriment of married life. Augustine’s response to this debate struck a balance between these two extreme positions. For a detailed account of this debate between Jerome and Jovinian consult: Jerome, \textit{Adversus Iovianum} (Against Jovinian), \textit{PL} 23:211-338; “The Dialogue Against the Pelagians,” in \textit{The Fathers of the Church} vol.53, translated by John N. Hritzu (Washington, D. C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1965), 223-378. On the Holy Virginity, see Augustine “Holy Virginity,” in \textit{The Fathers of the Church}, vol.15, translated by John McQuade (New York: Fathers of the Church INC, 1955), 135-212. \textit{PL} 40 (1845) 395-428. I will say more on this bellow which examines Augustine and the goods of marriage. For more information concerning the claims that were advanced in this footnote See Clark, \textit{Ascetic Piety and Women’s Faith}, 354-373; and Reynolds, \textit{Marriage in The Western Church}, 241-246. Nonetheless, it is pertinent to note that in Augustine’s acceptance of the possibility of sexual intercourse/sexual desire before the Fall, he conceded that it would have been possible for the seed to be sown without the sickness of lust. Rather Adam and Eve would have commanded their organs of reproduction the same way they commanded their hands and feet. See, Augustine, \textit{City of God book xiv}, 26; and Augustine, \textit{Marriage and Concupiscence}. For the theologians whose assessment of Augustine’s City of God xiv supported the possibility of pre-lapsarian sexual desire see, Cavadini, “Feeling Right: Augustine on the Passions and Sexual Desire” 205-206; D. H. Hunter, “On the Sin of Adam and Eve.” \textit{Harvard Theological Review} 82 (1989), 283-299; and Jeremy Cohen, “Be Fertile and Increase, Fill the Earth and Master it,” \textit{The Ancient and Medieval Career of a Biblical Text} (London: Cornell University Press, 1989).

\textsuperscript{115}Augustine, \textit{De Bono Conjugali}, 32 ; and \textit{De Nuptiis Concupisentia}. In \textit{De Bono Conjugali}, Augustine only referred to the procreation of children as a primary good of marriage. With regard to the goods of fidelity and \textit{sacramentum}, he did not call them secondary goods or ends of marriage but rather he referred to them as simply the goods of marriage. As will be shown later as this study advances, the hierarchical classification of Augustine’s triad of the goods of marriage into primary and secondary ends of marriage was an indirect formulation of Aquinas which
Among these goods, the good of offspring is referred to as the primary good of marriage or better said the “primary and legitimate purpose of marriage,” while the goods of fidelity and 

\textit{sacramentum} were simply regarded by him as the goods of marriage.\textsuperscript{116}

Both in his “Commentary on the Literal Meaning of \textit{Genesis}” and in his treatise “On Original Sin,” Augustine gave further elucidations of these goods.

Now this good is threefold: fidelity, offspring and sacrament. Fidelity means that there must be no relations with any other person outside the marriage bond. Offspring means that children are to be lovingly received, brought up with tender care, and given a religious education. Sacrament means that the marriage bond is not to be broken, and that if one partner in a marriage should be abandoned by the other, neither may enter a new marriage even for the sake of having children. This is what may be called the rule of marriage; by it the fertility of nature is made honorable and the disorder of concupiscence is regulated.\textsuperscript{117}

In his treatise “On Original Sin,” Augustine continues to argue:

Marriage, therefore, is a good in all the things which are proper to the married state. And there are three: It is the ordained means of procreation, it is the guarantee of chastity, it is the bond of union. In respect of its ordination for

\textsuperscript{116} Augustine, “On Adulterous Marriages”—\textit{De Adulterinis Conjugiis},” book 2, chapter 12, 117. His actual words are: “Therefore the procreation of children is itself the primary, natural, and the legitimate purpose of marriage.” See also Essay Against Faustus the Manichee—\textit{Contra Faustum Manichaeum} chapter 19 no. 26. “\textit{Matrimonium quipped ex hoc appellatum est, quod non ob aliud debeat femina nubere quam ut mater fiat}”—For marriage is indeed called matrimony from the fact that a woman ought to marry for no other reason than to become a mother.”

generation the scriptures says, “I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house;” as regards its guaranteeing chastity, it is said of it, “The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband; and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body but his wife: and considered as the bond of union: “What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.”

From these three extracts drawn from his different works, it is obvious that the significance of the good of progeny does not lie only in one’s ability to physically beget children to fill the earth, rather, Augustine points out that the good of offspring—*Bonum proles*, demands also their education and nurturing in the most Christian manner. He writes: “To have children who would people the kingdom of God is the primary purpose of marriage.” Seen through this lens, “carnal or youthful incontinence, even if it is bad, is turned to the honorable task of begetting children, so that marital intercourse makes something good out of the evil of lust.”

In his work, *Marriage and Concupiscence* Augustine interprets the Manicheans’ as saying that marriage is sinful because man born from it is a child of devil, stained by original sin. He also interprets the Pelagians as saying that marriage is not only lawful, but children born within marriage do not inherit the sin of Adam. In contrast to Pelagius, Augustine argues that concupiscence is not good since, if Adam had not fallen, “there would not have been any of this

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120 Augustine, *De Bono Conjugali*, 32.

121 Augustine, *De Bono Conjugali*, 9. As this study will show later, both Thomas Aquinas and Peter Lombard supported Augustine in arguing for the necessity of the father for the proper education of both the physical and spiritual growth of the child.
shame-producing concupiscence.”¹²² However, marriage would still have existed, even if no man had sinned; “for procreation of children would have been effected without this disease in the body of that chaste life, although without it this cannot be done in the body of this death.”¹²³ For lust or concupiscence in the specifically sexual sense, “is of the devil and not of the Father since the generative act is hidden even from the children that it begets.”¹²⁴

With regards to the role of concupiscence, it is fair to say that Augustine upheld the goodness of marriage per se, he taught that marriage was corrupted because of the presence of sexual concupiscence which does not obey reason as the effect of original sin.¹²⁵ Thus, children born within marriage inherit the sin of Adam and Eve or original sin.¹²⁶ Nevertheless, Augustine insisted that “marriage was not instituted for the purpose of sinning, but of producing children….The sin which is derived to children from marriage does not belong to marriage but to the evil which accrues to human agents from whose union marriage might have been without it.”¹²⁷ Using an analogy of limping, Augustine argues that if one reaches a goal limping, the

¹²² Augustine, Marriage and Concupiscence, book II, Chapter 6, 284. The distinction made above by the phrase shame-producing concupiscence suggests a hierarchy of concupiscence, the highest of them being lust in the specifically sexual sense. This is because although sexual lust is an act of the will, it is an act of the will that is corrupted and warped by the primal sin of superbia or pride. See Augustine, City of God xiv, 13; and Cavadini, “Feeling Right: Augustine on the Passions and Sexual Desire,” 200-205.

¹²³ Augustine, Marriage and Concupiscence, book II, Chapter 6, 20, 284, 290

¹²⁴ Augustine, Marriage and Concupiscence, book II, Chapter 14, 21, 288, 291.

¹²⁵ Augustine, Marriage and Concupiscence, book II, Chapter 9, 41, 286, 299. Subsequent citations from this work will be taken from the translations in the Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers; See also Noonan, Contraception, 133.

¹²⁶ Augustine, The City of God, chapter xiv.1, 3, 582

attainment of the goal is good, the limp is not.\textsuperscript{128} Thus, it is procreation that makes a lustful generative act which is per se sinful tolerable because the end result of such marital intercourse for this purpose is without fault.\textsuperscript{129} Therefore, in contrast to the Manichean position that procreation is evil, Augustine argues that procreation is good, because “conjugal copulation to generate offspring is not in itself a sin [although] in the use of the generative act the wound of sin is justly present.”\textsuperscript{130}

But because he was determined to maintain his position on the supremacy of the good of procreation as the primary and legitimate reason for marriage, he concluded that “a child is good and a creature of God irrespective of how he or she was born.”\textsuperscript{131} This is because the evil of the illegitimacy rests on the man or woman and not on the child that was conceived and born through illegal intercourse: “Just as the good children of adulterers are no defense for adultery, so the bad children of married people do not constitute an accusation against marriage.”\textsuperscript{132}
Therefore, marriage is good because of the good of procreation.

\textsuperscript{128} See Augustine, “Marriage and Concupiscence,” 1.7.8, \textit{CSEL} 42.220.; and Noonan, \textit{Contraception}, 134.

\textsuperscript{129} \textit{De Bono Conjugali}, 32, 12.

\textsuperscript{130} Augustine, “Marriage and Concupiscence,” 1.12.13 \textit{CSEL} 42.226; and Noonan, \textit{Contraception}, 133.

\textsuperscript{131} Augustine, “\textit{De Bono Conjugali},” 32. As the first sectio showed, the Igbo have a similar feeling about the presence or the reality of a child, which make them to welcome any child irrespective on how he or she was born.

\textsuperscript{132} Augustine, “\textit{De Bono Conjugali},” 32. See also “Marriage and Concupiscence,” book II, chapters 35 and 43, 297, 300. If Augustine was to hold this position now, he would be accused of approving the use of IVF and other means of artificial reproductive technology to promote the good of proles. One wonders if Augustine would have arrived at or even tolerated such a conclusion or position if he was to live in this our present age.
In order to promote the good of procreation, not only did Augustine not consider the significance of friendship and love in marriage, he gave the marital act an instrumental value. For him, the conjugal act has no value in itself apart from the value of progeny. In other words, when Augustine speaks of the good of friendship, he is not referring to the mutual assistance the a spouse provides to the other or to conjugal love, but rather, the good of friendship is determined by its capacity to unite a man and a woman to beget children for the continuation of the human race among which friendship exists. Therefore, friendship for Augustine serves the human race or society and not for the purposes of fostering or promoting the well-being of the couples who marry. With regard to the significance or the role of women within marriage, he attributes to them no other value in the marriage other than the value of procreation. This claim is supported by his response to, ‘it is not good for man to be alone,’ in which he opined: “I do not see what other help a woman would be to a man if the purpose of generating [children] was eliminated.”

133 See Augustine, De Bono Conjugali, 9; and Mackin, What is Marriage?, 140.

134 Augustine, De Bono Conjugali, 5.

135 Augustine, De Bono Conjugali, 1. Augustine’s understanding of the role of friendship in marriage is different from what Aquinas and the scholastics taught as I hope to show later as this study advances.

136 Augustine, De Bono Conjugali, 3.

137 Augustine, On Genesis according to the letter 9.7, CSEL 28, 275; See Mackin, What is Marriage?, 139. Although one can argue that this assertion does not necessarily mean that Eve was nothing more than a means of procreation. For it can be interpreted equivocally. One interpretation could be that “Augustine finds in procreation not the reason for Eve’s existence but the reason why she was female.” Reynolds, Marriage in The Western Church, 249. In other words, one’s essence is more than one’s usefulness. However, as Augustine progressed in his teaching, the procreation of children which he held once as a duty later became a remedy for concupiscence that justified marriage and marital intercourse. Augustine developed this teaching to respond to the Jovinian heresy and the Manichean denigration of the goodness of marriage. See Augustine, De Sancta Virginian—“Holy Virginity”135-220; and Clark, Asectic Pity and Women Faith, 353-373
But Augustine did not limit himself with saying that procreation is the only good of marriage, rather, the good of offspring—*bonum proles* is only the *primus inter paribus* among the goods of marriage. There is also a good whose job, is to check the excesses of sexual drive or sexual desire—*fides.*\(^{138}\) According to Augustine, the good of fidelity—*fides* demands from the couples not just the avoidance of adultery or fornication, but also the paying of marital debt. The significance of the paying of the marital debt is not only to accommodate each other’s weaknesses, but also to spare each other from the sin of illicit intercourse.\(^{139}\) Augustine argues that this demand has the support of St. Paul who while writing to the Corinthians enjoined “a husband [to] fulfill his duty toward his wife, and likewise [for the wife to fulfill her duty] toward her husband.”\(^{140}\)

To solidify his position, Augustine distinguishes between intercourse that exists among couples for the purpose of propagation which belongs to marriage *per se*, and intercourse that goes beyond this necessity. According to him, while the former obeys reason, the later obeys passion.\(^{141}\) Therefore, it is pardonable if one of the couples consents to marital intercourse at the request of his or her partner in order to assist one’s partner in avoiding committing adultery or fornication (though it is a venial sin for the person that made the request). However, it is not

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\(^{138}\) It seems to me that Augustine’s teaching concerning the goodness of marriage would have fallen short of an essential component if he had not allocated a good—the good of *fides* to control the excesses of sexual drive or sexual concupiscence among married couples. Nevertheless, Augustine did not explicitly allocate the good of *fides* as being responsible for curtailing excessive sexual drive himself. As I will show later in this study, it was Aquinas who later capitalized on Augustine’s good of fidelity to construct a more nuanced argument in which Aquinas taught that the virtue of chastity has the ability to control and moderate sexual impulse. Cf. Aquinas, *ST.* II-II, q.151, a. 3.

\(^{139}\) See Augustine, *De Bono Conjugali*, 6, 25.

\(^{140}\) 1Cor. 7:3.

\(^{141}\) See Augustine, *De Bono Conjugali*, 11.
tolerable if the couples themselves are enslaved to sexual desire, since in being or doing so “they
do something that manifestly does not belong to marriage.”\textsuperscript{142}

By holding this position, Augustine accords married couples the special privilege to
engage in sexual intercourse with or without the explicit intention (in the special case of
preserving the good of fidelity) to procreate as far as nothing is done to frustrate fecundity,
before, during and after intercourse. Consequently, he condemned intercourse by married
couples that was against nature such as, but not limited to, anal intercourse.\textsuperscript{143} He contends that
the “crown of marriage is the chastity of procreation and the faithfulness in rendering the carnal
debt.”\textsuperscript{144} Thus, the good of fidelity allows husbands and their wives to “surrender to human
[desire] passion, but only between themselves and not with another person.”\textsuperscript{145}

\textsuperscript{142} Augustine, \textit{De Bono Conjugali}, 12.

\textsuperscript{143} See Augustine, \textit{De Bono Conjugali}, 12. As I will show later in the course of this study, the manuals of moral
theology attached too much emphasis on the issue of “nature” or “the natural” in their moral evaluation of human
acts, but more especially as ‘nature’ or ‘the natural’ relate to human sexuality. It has been an odious task for scholars
to properly situate and assimilate the “givens” of nature in their development of a sexual ethic. In other words, by
reducing the inclinations of human nature to biological function, as the manuals did, it led to the production of a
physicalist account of natural law. However, as this study will show later, the focus on nature does not always entail
such biological reductionism as Aquinas’ demonstrates during the scholastic period. In the course of the analysis, in
chapter four, this study will show that this paradigm shift was the work of the manuals of moral theology which was
influenced by the nominalism of William of Ockham among others.

\textsuperscript{144} Augustine, \textit{De Bono Conjugali}. 12.

\textsuperscript{145} Orville Griese, \textit{The Marriage Contract and the Procreation of Offspring} (Washington D.C.: The Catholic
University of America Press, 1946), 2. For Augustine, to request sex only for the sake of preserving fidelity is a
venial sin. The person who is free of sin is the one that granted the request. Augustine was probably thinking that if
the paying of marital debt is left to stand on its own without being linked to an openness to procreation, and
commitment to lasting union, the controlling power of sexual concupiscence since after the Fall, will soon consume
married couples so much so that they would choose to have sex just for the sake of deriving sexual pleasure without
the intention to procreate. Using sex as a recreational activity is unacceptable to Augustine and to the Catholic
tradition that Augustine represents. On another note, for Augustine, baptism removes the guilt of sin (including the
original sin), but not the disorder created by it—the various forms of concupiscence. This is only healed
progressively over the course of one’s life.
As this analysis has shown so far, St. Augustine’s commitment to his teaching that regarded *proles* as the primary and legitimate purpose of marriage needed the good of fidelity to control any excessive use of sexual intercourse. Augustine was also committed to a teaching that encouraged limited or even total sexual abstinence among married couples especially those who have past the age of bearing children. But the goods of procreation and fidelity do not necessarily guarantee stability in marriage. Therefore, it is logical to say that for a marital relationship to be stable, Augustine is right to include the good of *sacramentum* in his list of the goods by which marriage is good.

Augustine used the word *sacramentum* to describe the sacred bond that exists between a husband and his wife which is permanent and indissoluble. For Augustine, any act of adultery or faithlessness violated the good of fidelity, but such an act could not rupture the indissoluble unity between spouses. Understood as such, May, Lawler, and Boyle explained the relationship that exists between the goods thusly: “The good of fidelity requires the spouses to be faithful to each other and to abstain from any form of sexual immorality; the good of the *sacramentum* excludes that adultery which would be involved in an invalid marriage after separation.”

As it stands, Augustine placed an unprecedented significance on the good of *proles* in relation to the goods of *fides* and *sacramentum* and referred to it as the primary and legitimate purpose of marriage. But he also accommodated marriages that may be lacking progeny because of no choice or unforeseen fault of the couples involved. In such a situation he argues, “the bond of marriage remains, even if offspring, for which the marriage was entered upon, should not

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follow because of a clear case of sterility, so that it is not lawful for married people who know they will not have any children to separate and to unite with others even for the sake of having children.”

Augustine allowed this exception because for him, “in marriage of our women the sanctity of the sacrament is of more importance than the fecundity of the womb.” Understood as such, Augustine’s explication concerning the good of _sacramentum_ does not support the good of procreation within marriage at all costs as the Igbo people do. But, it will be contrary to Augustine’s teaching for one to refuse to procreate in the name of maintaining the good of _sacramentum_. Rather, for the sake of the goods of _fides_ and _sacramentum_, “concubinage for the purpose of procreation is never to be preferred to the marriage of those who take advantage of that which is pardonable.”

I also think that Augustine’s commitment to the procreative purposefulness of every act of marital intercourse, his pessimism in reference to sexual concupiscence, and his conscientious effort to avoid being identified or associated with Manichaeism also contributed to his teaching which understood progeny as the primary and legitimate purpose of marriage.

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147 Augustine, _De Bono Conjugali_, 17.


149 Augustine, _De Bono Conjugali_, 16.

150 Noonan noted that “Commitment to procreation is the central moral tenet which marks off Augustine from the Manichean doctrine [concerning marriage].” One can say that since Augustine’s association with Manichaeism continued to hurt him even after he left them, it took another eloquent thinker (Aquinas), who had no _a priori_ association with Manichaeism to develop a more nuanced teaching that freed the seeking of sexual pleasure within the boundaries of marital relationship from sin, though Aquinas’ did not go far enough in this regard. I will substantiate this claim in chapter four of this chapter. See Aquinas, _Sentences iv_, 32. 1.2: 4.32.4.
3.4. SUMMARY

The study has shown that while progeny was regarded as the primary purpose of marriage in the Old Testament, the New Testament was less enthusiastic about marriage and its purposes. Rather, the New Testament writers shifted the emphasis from a consideration of the purpose of marriage to a debate over what state of life was of optimum importance for Christians. Nevertheless, the contention over what vocation was of superior importance reached its apex with the debate that arose between Jovinian and Jerome.

As a result of this, it took Augustine in the fourth century to construct a sexual ethic that struck a balance between Jerome’s exaggerated emphasis on the superiority of celibacy and Jovinian’s unprecedented exultation of married life by apportioning marriage with a triad of goods—proles, fides, and sacramentum.¹⁵¹ In developing this synthesis, Augustine appealed to different scriptural texts to support his teaching concerning the goods of marriage. For instance, to support the primacy he gives to the bonum proles, he refers to God’s injunction in the book of Genesis where God instructed humanity through Adam and Eve to ‘increase and multiply and subdue the earth,’ and to Paul’s instruction to Timothy.¹⁵² To defend the goods of fides and sacramentum, he quoted not only the Gospel of Matthew where God condemned divorce and remarriage, and the Gospel of John where Jesus Christ attended a wedding feast with his

¹⁵¹ Augustine, De Bono Conjugali, 32. Though Augustine continues to hold that virginity is superior to marriage as Mary is to Martha in Luke 10, one is good, the other is better. See De Bono Conjugali,

¹⁵² See Genesis 1.28; I Tim., 5:14; and Augustine, De Bono Conjugali, 3, 32.
disciples and performed his first recorded miracle, but also he quoted the letters of St. Paul where Paul speaks of the marriage debt which couples owed to one another.\textsuperscript{153}

Augustine also taught that the goods of marriage is not limited to \textit{proles} and to \textit{fides} but also “the good is also in the sanctity of the sacrament.”\textsuperscript{154} As a consequence of this sanctity, it is wrong for a divorced woman to marry another man while her husband still lives even if she does this for the sake of having children. Augustine can be construed as saying that although the good of procreation is why marriage is instituted, and the good of fidelity prohibits infidelity, but the good of \textit{sacramentum} is needed to stabilize the bond that the couples establish between themselves so as to allow for a lasting peace and a stronger security in marriage.\textsuperscript{155} Understood as such, Augustine’s triad of goods of marriage can better be described as a unity in diversity. That is, each of the goods has something specific that not only differentiates it from the other goods, but also something that shows how they are interrelated with each other.

A case can be made that Augustine in \textit{De Bono Conjugali} somehow linked the three goods of marriage to one another despite his referring to the good of procreation as the primary and legitimate purpose of marriage. Also, without an explicit use of the language of a hierarchy that could suggest a subordination of one good over the other, Augustine treated the three goods as simply goods of marriage.\textsuperscript{156} So marriage is good because of the three goods taken together.

\textsuperscript{153} See Augustine, \textit{De Bono Conjugali}, 12 ; and 1 Cor.,7: 4-10.

\textsuperscript{154} Augustine, \textit{“De Bono Conjugali,”} 32.

\textsuperscript{155} Augustine, \textit{“De Bono Conjugali,”} 32.

\textsuperscript{156} Based on these claims, I wonder if the secondary connotation that the goods of fidelity and \textit{sacramentum} acquired with The 1917 Code of Canon Law could be justifiably attributed to St. Augustine’s three goods especially since it is doubtful if Augustine’s goods of fidelity and \textit{sacramentum} have the same meaning as mutual help and the
and can be said to lose its goodness if any of the goods are faulted or disregarded in order to promote the other goods. These distinct values which each of these goods have and their interconnectedness among each other, I contend, can easily be brushed off or lost if Augustine’s teaching on the goods of marriage is strictly read through the lens of his referring to the good of procreation as the primary and legitimate purpose of marriage.

The analysis so far has accentuated numerous differences between Augustine’s teaching concerning the purposes of marriage and the Igbo understanding of the purposes for marriage. While Augustine’s teaching that understood progeny as the primary and legitimate purpose of marriage leans toward the Igbo understanding of the purpose of marriage, the cultural attitude in which the male child is seen to hold this primacy of purpose departs from Augustine. Similarly, if the good of offspring does not necessarily depend on the ability of couples to beget children, then the desire for male children for the purpose of maintaining one’s lineage as the Igbo do, will not be to seek the good of offspring according to Augustine. In the same vein, Augustine’s explication concerning the good of sacramentum which does not support fecundity within marriage at all costs cannot be used to justify the Igbo cultural approval for either polygamy or the begetting of (male) children through illicit intercourse as a way to solve an infertility problem. This is because bonum proles for Augustine, is not just for the physical begetting, but also for the nurturing and educating of children humanly and Christianly.

This chapter has also demonstrated that with his triad of goods, Augustine was able to rebut the Manichean’s errors and developed a synthesis that extolled Christian virginity without allying of concupiscence. As this study intends to show in chapter five, the hierarchical structure of Augustine’s goods into the primary and secondary ends though implicit in Aquinas, was an explicit teaching of The 1917 Code of Canon Law.
a simultaneous denigration of marriage. To his credit, Augustine has provided a robust and formidable teaching in defense of the goodness of marriage more than the early Christian writers before him did. Augustine’s triad of the goods of marriage continues to be very influential in shaping subsequent theological development on marriage and sexuality, especially in the West.

Nevertheless, Augustine’s apportioning of marriage with three distinct goods is not without flaws. The teaching that procreation makes the evil of sexual concupiscence tolerable, but does not justify the seeking of sexual pleasure left much to be desired. It gives the impression that the only thing that matters in couple’s marital act is fecundity and not their joy or pleasure. Similarly, his apportioning the good of fidelity the singular role of ensuring that couples pay their conjugal debt to each other, without exonerating the spouse that requested sexual intercourse from committing venial sin is problematic. It was based on Augustine’s close association of sexual intercourse with sin and as such, he was unable to go beyond this to see sexual intercourse as something good in itself. Also, neither love nor marital friendship was explicitly tied to the promotion of the goods of offspring, fidelity, and/or sacramentum, his speaking of marriage as a form friendship notwithstanding.157

Rather, it was Chrysostom who recognized the centrality of love in marriage while acknowledging the importance of progeny. Unlike Chrysostom, Augustine followed the culture and the practice that were prevalent during the time of his writings which did not associate love

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157 Cf. Augustine, De Bono Conjugali, 1. As I hope to show later during the concluding chapter of this study, the claim that love is not a juridical requirement for marriage is flawed. This is because, in the nuptial rites of Catholic marriage, the love that exists between the marrying partners is enshrined in the rite itself.
Based on Augustine’s reluctance to directly apportion the marital act any intrinsic value, it is fair to say that the conjugal act has no significance in Augustine’s sexual ethic except as a means to procreation. For the same reason, his treatment of love and marital friendship was not nuanced enough because he tied them to the good of having more children among whom friendship exists and nothing was said in reference to the well-being of the couples themselves. These weaknesses in Augustine’s sexual ethic in which he apportioned marriage with three distinct goods notwithstanding, his view that understood procreation as the primary and legitimate purpose of marriage was endorsed by the Catholic tradition moving forward.

Having examined the biblical witness, the early Christian writers and St. Augustine’s teaching concerning marriage and its purposes, the next chapter will continue to trace the history of the traditional teaching concerning the purposes of marriage by focusing on how Augustine’s triad of goods (as representative of the previous tradition) was received by subsequent scholars. One of the primary tasks of the next chapter will be to see whether there was continuity or discontinuity of thoughts between Augustine’s position and the later traditional views concerning the goods of marriage.

Augustine wrote within a culture which promoted fecundity as the reason for marriage so much so that couples who past the age of childbearing were expected to practice continence. With such a high focus on fecundity, it is not uncommon to find couples who married simply to fulfil their obligation to produce children for their families and societies and/or to effect an alliance between families for political gains. Consequently, love which is a necessary factor that initiates marital life is missing in Augustine’s sexual ethic.

This teaching reflects the culture and the time he wrote. However, it does not excuse Augustine for there were things that the society and culture allowed during his time which he criticized vehemently.
CHAPTER FOUR

THE RECEPTION OF ST. AUGUSTINE’S THREE GOODS OF MARRIAGE BY LATER SCHOLARS

INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, the study demonstrated how Augustine’s synthesis in which he apportioned marriage with a triad of goods, *proles, fides*, and *sacramentum* struck a balance between Jerome’s exaggerated emphasis on the superiority of celibacy and Jovinian’s unprecedented exultation of married life.¹ In formulating this robust and formidable sexual ethic that rebutted the Manicheans errors, Augustine extolled Christian virginity without a simultaneous denigration of marriage. The analysis so far also has shown that among these three goods of marriage, procreation and the nurturing of children was understood by Augustine as the primary and legitimate purpose of marriage. Based on this designation, Augustine insisted that every act of marital intercourse must be open to procreation because marriage is naturally ordained for the procreation of children.

The legacy of Augustine concerning the procreative purposefulness of every conjugal act formed the bedrock from which subsequent theological formulations of Catholic teaching on marriage and sexuality were developed. Commenting on the influence of Augustine in the development of morality in the western world, Portalie echoes the view of Harnack and Eucken

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¹ Augustine, *De Bono Conjugali*, 32.
thusly: “Augustine collects and condenses in his writings the intellectual treasures of the old world and transmits them to the new.”

Nevertheless, Augustine left behind him a teaching which defended the goodness of marriage, but which also failed in more ways than one. For instance, by teaching that procreation is the primary and legitimate purpose of marriage for which couples’ acts of sexual intercourse is justified, he gave the conjugal act only an instrumental value. Similarly, he said nothing about the significance of love in marriage. Likewise, his discussion concerning the role of friendship in marriage is not nuanced enough. Augustine also taught that the spouse who requested sexual intercourse for the good of fidelity was guilty of venial sin.

In order to continue to trace the traditional teaching concerning the goods of marriage, this present chapter will focus on how subsequent scholars responded to Augustine’s designation of marriage with three distinct goods. In doing so, special attention will be given to areas of continuity and/or discontinuity with Augustine’s thought in reference to the subject under investigation.

### 4.1. THE RECEPTION OF ST. AUGUSTINE’S THREE GOODS OF MARRIAGE BY LATER SCHOLARS

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3 See chapter three of this study.
Augustine’s procreative purposefulness of every conjugal act was upheld by some scholars that followed Augustine. For instance St. Gregory, in condemning the seeking of sexual pleasure by married couples, admonished married couples to copulate only to produce children. According to him, “not only is pleasure an unlawful purpose of intercourse, but if any pleasure is mixed with the act of intercourse, the married have transgressed the law of marriage.”

Reflecting on St. Gregory’s support of Augustine’s requirement that every conjugal act much be open to procreation, and his condemnation of the seeking of sexual pleasure while performing the conjugal act, Noonan noted thusly:

The Stoic distrust of pleasure was pushed to the limit. A barrier was set against the consideration of marital values other than procreation; consideration of a value such as love was blocked. By this rigid doctrine that only the procreative purpose was pure, interference with procreation was, in a formidable a fortiori way, excluded.

During the early centuries, marriage was predominately seen as a religious celebration among Christians. Consequently, a need arose for the nations and cultures who had accepted faith in Judeo-Christian God to have a uniform practice or set of regulation for the celebration of marriage. This is because before the Christianization of marriage as a religious celebration under the leadership of Rome, Germanic States had a different requirement of what creates a marriage.

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6 Noonan, *Contraception*, 151. Emphasis is as in the work cited.

7 Although in the West it was not yet celebrated in a Church (whereas the East was doing this from about the 7th century). For more information regarding this events see May, Lawler, and Boyle, *Catholic Sexual Ethics*, 88. See also Brown, *The Body and Society*, 214-338.
from those of the Romans which the Catholic Church adopted. To arrive at a consensus concerning what creates a marriage was not an easy task. Rather, the question of what creates a marriage generated a furious debate and conflict between two camps with each camp defending either the Germanic view of what creates marriage or that of Roman law.

The debate over what creates a marriage was finally resolved by Gregory IX in his book IV of Decretals which appeared around 1234 in which he taught that “it is consent that creates the marriage and not intercourse.” This conflict shifted the attention of scholars away from the discussion of the procreative purposefulness of marital intercourse to the subject of what creates or constitutes a marriage. However, in the midst of this debate over what creates a marriage, Augustine’s triad of the goods of marriage was upheld by the scholars of this period. For instance, when Bogomil, a Bulgarian priest and a member of the Gnostic sect known as the

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8 The debate which started around the sixth century over what act or sequence of acts is (or are) needed to create a marriage lingered into the twelfth century. The bone of contention here on one hand, is whether the consent of the marrying parties, which they express either in public or in private, constitutes a marriage, as the Romans insisted. Or on the other hand, whether it is a conglomeration of acts such as: linking of betrothal, handing over of the mundium, exchange of marital consent, taking of the bride into a new home, and first intercourse—all of these or a selection of them—are needed to create a marriage, as the Germanic law claimed. For more information concerning this conflict see, George Hayward Joyce, Christian Marriage: An Historical and Doctrine Study, 2nd (London: Sheed and Ward, 1948), 37-146; and Mackin, What is Marriage?, 146-156.

9 The question of what creates a marriage became a major problem not only because marriage became increasingly understood as a religious celebration, but more so in a situation where the couples were considered old enough to give consent, but too young to live a married life in which the nuptial mass would have to be delayed.

10 This dispute over what creates a marriage resulted into two different camps among scholars. The Bolognese camp spearheaded by Gratian in the twelfth century supported the Germanic practices and argued that it was a sequenced combination of consent and intercourse that created a complete marriage. While the theologians from Paris insisted that it was consent that created a marriage. See Mackin, What is Marriage?, 145-164; and Joyce, Christian Marriage, 40.

11 Gregory, Liber Decretalium, book 4. Cf. Mackin, What is marriage?, 170; and Joyce, Christian Marriage: 37-146. However, it took three Popes (Alexander III, Urban II, Innocent III and Gregory IX) whose pronouncements spanned for about eight hundred years to pull the canonists together to agree on the matter.
Cathars, “articulated a form of Gnostic doctrine whose dualist opposition to the material world entailed an opposition to procreation,” his teaching was condemned during the Council of Rheims by the Council Fathers in 1049.12

Similarly, in the thirteenth century, Catholic scholars condemned the teaching of another Gnostic group—the Albigensians—because their views on marriage and procreation was contrary to Augustine’s position. Central to Albigensian doctrine is the position that marriage and sexuality degrades a person. Unlike Augustine, the Albigensians argued that because of the permanent nature of the carnal bond that is associated with marriage, marriage is a kind of systematic debauchery.13 While Augustine held that the good of procreation is the legitimate and primary purpose of marriage, the Albigensians taught that those who marry and beget children contribute to the perpetuation of the misery of the flesh.14 This is because they viewed the body and sexual reproduction as evil.

In defense of the goodness of marriage against the attack from these Gnostic groups the theologians of medieval era continued to uphold Augustine’s sexual ethic and his triad of the goods of marriage. In doing this, Peter Lombard linked original sin and concupiscence in the specifically sexual sense, with Augustine’s requirement that all couple’s conjugal act must be open to procreation. To affect this merger, he noted that “original sin [was] transmitted by an act


13 Mackin, *What is marriage?*, 177.

14 Mackin, *What is marriage?*, 177.
of generation, an act which [was] preceded by concupiscence. Adam’s descendants are in turn infected with concupiscence.”¹⁵ To further buttress his traditional position, Lombard listed the Augustinian triad of goods—proles, fides, and sacramentum and, like Augustine, argued that among them “it is only the intent to procreate that is sufficient to vindicate intercourse within marriage.”¹⁶ Understood as such, intercourse for this purpose is without fault for Augustine. Similarly, Albert the Great notes that among the three goods that Augustine allocates to marriage, procreation is the most important of them.¹⁷

Based on all this, it is permissible to say on one hand that the insistence of Lombard and Albert the Great concerning the procreative purposefulness of sexual intercourse within marriage was itself a reaction to and a rejection of Catharism and Albigensianism. On the other hand, it was a continuation of the teaching of Augustine and the reading of scripture which he represented. Similarly, their condemnation of the seeking of sexual pleasure as an independent purpose of intercourse, which dates back to the time of Augustine was also a rejection of both Cathars and Albigensians’ positions. Therefore, in the face of the force with which these Gnostic groups condemned marriage or procreative intercourse, the Catholic theologians during these centuries maintained Augustine’s sexual ethic and upheld Augustine’s teaching that every

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¹⁵ Lombard, *Sententiarum* iv, 2.25.7; 2.30.8. 2.31.4., 7; 2.32.2.


conjugal act must be open to procreation and his apportioning of marriage with three distinct goods, *proles*, *fides* and *sacramentum*.  

On the specific question concerning the purposes of marriage, unlike Augustine who spoke of the triad of the goods of marriage, Aquinas referred to the purposes of marriage in the language of the ends of marriage. Aquinas’s designation of the purposes of marriage in terms of ends rather than goods, was based on his reading and interpretation of Aristotle’s distinction between irrational animals and the animals endowed with reason—human beings. Accordingly Aquinas elucidated:

Marriage has for its principal end (*finis*) the begetting and rearing of children, and this end is competent to man according to his generic nature, wherefore it is common to other animals (Ethic. VIII.12), and thus it is that the offspring is assigned as a marriage good. But for its secondary end, as the philosophy says (ibid), it has among men alone, the community of works that are a necessity of life, as stated above (Q. 41 A.1). And in reference to this way they owe each other fidelity which is one of the goods of marriage. Furthermore it has another end, as regards marriage between believers, namely the significance of Christ and the Church; and thus the sacrament is said to be a marriage good. Wherefore the first end corresponds to the marriage of man inasmuch as he is an animal; the second, inasmuch as he is a man; the third inasmuch as he is a believer.

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18 See May, Lawler, and Boyle, *Catholic Sexual Ethics*, 89; and Noonan, *Contraception*, 179. For detailed treatment of these groups and their doctrine see Noonan, *Contraception*, 179-199. See also May, Lawler, and Boyle, *Catholic Sexual Ethics*, 89; and Runciman, *The Medieval Manichee*, 117-120.

19 See Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, III, 12; and Aquinas, *ST*, II-II, q. 151, a. 1.

20 Aquinas, *ST*, vol. iv Suppl. q. 65,a. 1. It appears that while Augustine based his apportioning of the good of *proles* as the primary and legitimate purpose of marriage in order to justify the accommodation of the conjugal act within marriage, Aquinas was more interested in justifying not only that marriage has this good but also in providing more theological gist of the difference between the conjugal act which is performed by couples and those engaged by irrational animals even though both of them are open to fecundity because of the former’s possession of reason. I will examine Aquinas’s transformation of Augustine’s three goods of marriage into three ends to determine whether this change in terminology reflects a change in meaning in chapter five of this study which will examine the 1917 Code of Canon Law’s treatment of the purposes of marriage. This is because the 1917 Code also used the terminology of ends rather than goods of marriage in his treatment of the purposes of marriage.
Based on the quotation above, it is permissible to say that like Aristotle, Aquinas argued that human beings are different from other animals because they are endowed with reason. Understood as such, human reason empowers and enables humans to apprehend the ends proper to them according to the dictates of natural law designed by God the Creator. Consequently, Aquinas argues that human beings have a natural inclination toward marriage for the primary end of procreation and nurturing of children. Also Aquinas spoke of "a secondary and conjoined end of marriage, mutual help and friendship which the father and mother provide to one another in order to do the work of educating and nurturing of their children." Commenting on Aquinas’s transformation of Augustine’s goods into ends, Lawler observed that “what were for Neo-Platonic Augustine goods of marriage became for Aristotelian-Aquinas ends of marriage, and ends established in a natural priority.”

Reflecting the views of Parmisano concerning the teaching of the medieval theologians concerning marriage and its goods, May, Lawler, and Boyle noted that the other goods of marriage—fidelity and progeny—“were held to be the goods that marriage intends. In other words, ‘they are goods which the spouses promise to give and honor in their shared lives as they make

21 Cf. Aquinas, ST. II-II q. 94, a. 1-16; ST, Suppl. q. 65, a. 1.


24 Lawler, Secular Marriage, Christian, 34. From henceforth, theologians began to refer to Augustine’s goods as ends of marriage. As will be shown later, although Aquinas used the terms primary and secondary ends of marriage, Aquinas’ did not necessarily suggests a subordination of one end to the other. Aquinas also identifies the good of sacrament as the most excellent of the three goods. Rather, such subordination was explicitly suggested by the judicial tone of the 1917 Code of Canon Law’s designation of the purposes of marriage into primary and secondary ends.
the free consent that constitutes them as husband and wife and brings into being their indissoluble unity.” Consequently, “Adultery and contraceptive intercourse violate the goods of fidelity and progeny and undermining and wounding them. Such deeds violate the good of the indissoluble bond of marriage as well, but since this bond is the very reality of marriage itself, it cannot be broken by them. Marriage itself cannot be dissolved by these or any other sins.”

With regard to Augustine’s requirement that every conjugal act must be open to procreation for it to be justified within marriage, May, Lawler, and Boyle summarized the position of the medieval theologians thusly:

The medieval theologians, with Augustine and the other Fathers held that marital intercourse for the sake of having children—that is, with the intention of begetting progeny is completely justifiable. Indeed, they commonly taught that the conjugal act ordered to this good was an act of the virtue of religion, insofar as its end was the generation of life that was to be brought up in the love and worship of God. Likewise the medieval Fathers followed Augustine in teaching that it was a venial sin for a spouse to seek sexual union merely as a way to avoid fornication, while the spouse who consented to marital union for this purpose was free of all sin.

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26 May, Lawler, and Boyle, Catholic Sexual Ethics, 94. In addition to responding to the attack on marriage and on procreation, medieval theologians also were faced with the task of resolving the debate over the effects of sacramental marriage. That is, they had to explain whether the grace which the sacrament of marriage confers on couples is ‘remedial’ or ‘sanctifying.’ In response to this, Lombard held that the grace that the sacrament of marriage confers was only remedial. In his earliest writings on marriage, Aquinas taught that it was more probable that the sacrament confers sanctifying grace. But in his Supplement to the Summa Theologiae, q. 41, a. 3, he became very convinced and optimistic that the sacrament confers sanctifying grace since such a position adequately represented the traditional teaching that marriage between two Christians is a true sacrament of the Church. See Aquinas, Summa Contra Gentes, Bk.4.ch.78.

27 May, Lawler, and Boyle, Catholic Sexual Ethics, 94-95. See Lombard, Libri IV Sententiarum, IV d. 31, c. 5; Bonaventure, in IV Sententiarum, d. 31, a. 2 q. 2; Aquinas, in IV Sententiarum, d. 31, q. 2. a 3 (= Summa Theologiae, Supplement, q. 49, a.60.
May, Lawler, and Boyle concede to the view that because of the medieval theologians’ commitment to Augustine, they did to apportion an intrinsic value to the marital act. They were also unable to develop a teaching that understood the marital act as an avenue for the remedy of concupiscence. Rather, such a nuanced explication can only be implicitly drawn from their teaching since couples can engage in the marital act to promote the good of fidelity. This is because to choose to engage in the conjugal act for this purpose for Aquinas as well as for Bonaventure “is a truly virtuous act, an act of the virtue of justice.”

To further buttress this argument May, Lawler, and Boyle noted that “Aquinas argued that a husband ought to anticipate his wife’s desire in this matter and offer to give himself to her in sexual union in order to cherish this good.” However, May, Lawler, and Boyle pointed out that although Aquinas, Bonaventure and other medieval theologians that justified the having of sexual intercourse that is open to procreation but does not specifically intend it to foster the good of fidelity did so by calling it an act of justice and not as an act of conjugal love. Nevertheless, “their thought was clearly open to fuller development [in the direction of conjugal love].” This is especially true of Aquinas in light of his doctrine of friendship and marriage as friendship.

28 May, Lawler, and Boyle, Catholic Sexual Ethics, 94-95; see Aquinas, in IV Sententiarum, d. 26, q.aa.3.4 (= Summa theologiae, Supplement, q. 41, aa. 3, 4); Bonaventure, in Sententiarum, d.26, q. 1, a. 3; d.31, a. .2,q. 1. It is an act of justice because couples own their bodies to one another. See also Marie LeBlance, O.S.B., “Amour et procreation dans la theologie de saint Thomas,” Revue Thomiste 92 (1992) 433-459.

29 Aquinas, Sententiarum iv, d. 32, q. 1, a. 1 (Summa Theologiae Supplement, q.64, a. 2). Therefore, because of the good of fidelity, “a procreative intent is not necessary for marital acts to be virtuous, holy and meritorious [as far as nothing is done to frustrate the good of procreation.” Aquinas, Sententiarum iv, d. 26, q. 1, a. 4 (= Summa Theologiae, Supplement, q. 64, a 2.); and May, Lawler, and Boyle, Catholic Sexual Ethics, 95. Why must the man anticipate his wife’s desire as Aquinas insinuates, why can’t the wife anticipate her husband’s desire? Or is Aquinas suggesting that women’s sexual needs are higher than those of the Men? See also May, Lawler, and Boyle, Catholic Sexual Ethics, 95.

30 May, Lawer, and Boyle, Catholic Sexual Ethics, 95.
With regard to the role of love and friendship in marriage, Aquinas and Bonaventure acknowledged their significance more than Augustine. According to Aquinas “friendship is born between husband and wife based on the delight in the act of generation; and useful in the building of a household; and virtuous in the response of one virtuous person to another. Such a friendship with its threefold base renders both spouses joyful.”

In the same vein, Aquinas argues that “a man loves his wife principally by reason of the carnal meeting and in the order of charity this love for his wife founded on the union of the flesh, is lawfully more intense than his love of his father or mother.” Nevertheless, faithfulness to Augustine lured Aquinas to add that both the delight and the act of generation are to be pursued for the building of the family. Aquinas refers to love as "maximum friendship since it makes couples capable of friendship with God." In other words, Aquinas could also be construed as saying that sexual intercourse is not the whole of marital life; there is more to it than sexual intercourse.

31 See Aquinas, ST, II-II, q. 26, a 11. ; Summa Contra Gentiles, bk.3, ch. 123. For a detailed account of Aquinas discussion concerning the various kinds of friendship and the particular form that is found in marriage, See Guy Durand, Anthropologie Sexuelle et Marriage Chez Thomas d’Aquin (Lyon; Unversite de Lyon, 1966-1967), 150-172.

32 Aquinas, Omnia Opera, 8.3.8; Aquinas ST, II-II, q. 26, a. 11; Summa Contra Gentiles, bk. 3, chapter. 123; May, Lawler and Boyle, 96-97; and Noonan, Contraception, 255- 256. In the quote Aquinas was commenting on Aristotle’s understanding of friendship.

33 Aquinas, ST, II-II, q. 26, a.11. See also Noonan, Contraception, 255.

34 Aquinas, Summa Against Gentiles, 3: 123; Noonan, Contraception, 256; and Grabowski, Sex and Virtue, 83. See also Paul Wadell, Friends of God: Virtues and Gifts in Aquinas, American University Studies, Series 7, vol. 76 (New York: Peter Lang, 1991).

35 See Aquinas, ST, II-II, q. 26, a 11. In Summa Contra Gentiles, bk.3 chapter 123. See also Durand, Anthropologie Sexuelle et mariage Chez Thomas d’Aquin, 150-172. By insisting that marriage is more than intercourse, Aquinas reflects the debate with the canon lawyers over what causes a marriage.
Like Aquinas, St. Bonaventure speaks of “the singular love that is meant to exist between husband and wife, a love expressed in that act, namely the marital act.” In this passage Bonaventure contends: “Love is explicitly related to marital union.” Bonaventure also noted that “in marriage there is a certain singleness of love in which an outsider does not share… there is mutual love and therefore mutual zeal and therefore singleness.” He did not stop at this appreciation of love; he even elevated the love that a man has for a woman or vice versa to the status of a miracle. “For there is something miraculous in a man finding in one woman a pleasingness which he can never find in another, as say the experienced.”

As can be inferred from the analysis so far, both Aquinas and Bonaventure gave more positive recognition of the relationship or connection between love and married life. With their explicit recognition of the significance of love and marital friendship in marriage that promotes both the good of progeny and the well-being of the couples, and enhances married life, they departed from Augustine who although treated marriage as a form of friendship, did not relate sex to it. Thus, in relating sex with marital friendship, they have also developed Augustine’s position on friendship. Similarly, while Augustine understood friendship in connection with

36 May, Lawler, and Boyle, Catholic Sexual Ethics, 95.

37 May, Lawler, and Boyle, Catholic Sexual Ethics, 95-96. In the related discussion concerning the role of conjugal love in marriage, under the title Summa of Fratris Alexanderi, the group of theologians at the school of theology of the university of Paris who compiled this work distinguished between three kinds of love—carnal love, natural love, and spiritual love. According to them, “natural love is canal love that has been purged out of lust and it is no obstacle to spiritual love. On the contrary, spiritual love comes through natural love, and natural love is in turn perfected by the spiritual love toward which it disposes” (Alexander of Hales, Summa Theologica, Summa Fratris Alexendri), II, 1, Inq. IV, Tr.II, Sect.II, q. 2). See also Etienne Gilson, A History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages (New York: Random House, 1955);327; and May, Lawler, and Boyle, Catholic Sexual Ethics, 96.

38 Bonaventure, Sententiarum, iv .33.1.2.

39 Bonaventure, Sententiarum, iv.36.2.2. See also Noonan, Contraception, 256.
procreation and the sustenance of human race, Aquinas referred to friendship as a unifying element that includes all the activities of the married life, which makes couples capable of friendship with God.

One would have thought that by not seeing the significance of love and friendship strictly through the lens of the good of procreation, that Aquinas and Bonaventure would have developed a more robust theory to free the conjugal act from the instrumental value that Augustine apportioned to it. However, rather than elaborate on this ideal love or conjugal love and friendship that seek the total well-being of the person both in his or her sexuality and humanity, Aquinas formulated his argument on sexual sin in terms of an offense against nature. Aquinas’s reference to the sin against nature further supported Augustine’s skeptical attitude with regard to the seeking of sexual pleasure by couples who engage in the marital act.

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40 Aquinas’s treatment of sins against nature is better understood within his broader framework of moral theology—a morality that is based on natural law which assumes that both human beings and human actions have a natural end that is bestowed to it by God. Thus for Aquinas, the final end of human existence is happiness. Similarly, Aquinas argues that by virtue of human reason every person has a natural inclination to seek his or her ultimate end—happiness. However, Aquinas does not see human reason as only a power that enables one to exercise judgment and engage in good actions; rather reason is also what distinguishes humanity from other irrational creatures. Aquinas also taught that if human beings are aided by right reason, they have a natural inclination to reproduce themselves. See Aquinas, *ST,* II-II, q.194, a.1-6. The ability to function as a rational being as well as the natural inclination to procreate and educate offspring is key in differentiating Aquinas’ teaching concerning the natural ordination of sexual intercourse toward procreation from the physicalism of the casuist tradition. This is because nature for Aquinas is not limited to physical realm, but is also ontological. Seen in this perspective, Aquinas notes that since sexual intercourse is naturally ordained for procreation or for the begetting of offspring, it is against the nature of sexual intercourse for one to engage in sexual activity that is not aimed at fulfilling or at accomplishing its natural end. One of the primary reasons that made Aquinas to blame the sins against nature on lust in the specifically sexual sense is because sexual lust does not obey reason. According to Aquinas, the sins against nature are masturbation, homosexuality, bestiality and acts that do not respect the natural manner of copulation. For more information with regard to Aquinas’ treatment concerning sexual lust and its vices see, Aquinas, *ST,* II-II, q. 153, a. 1-5, q. 154 a.1. Similarly, the sins against nature were condemned by Aquinas as the worst forms of lust because their ends were not and could not be procreative. This is because in all that is designated as unnatural intercourse, insemination of penis into the vagina is not possible.

41 However, Aquinas following Aristotle holds that the pleasure of a virtuous sexual act can be good. As the study will show later, it was the twentieth century personalist thinkers whose synthesis of the traditional position with
Aquinas condemned the sins against nature, even as he defended the natural end of intercourse. In his defense of the natural end of intercourse, Aquinas insists:

The end, however, which nature intends in copulation is offspring to be procreated and educated and that this good might be sought it has put delight in copulation as Augustine says in “Marriage and Concupiscence” 1.8. Whoever, therefore, uses copulation for the delight which is in it, not referring the intention to the end intended by nature, acts against nature; and this is also true unless such copulation is had as can be appropriately ordered to that end.

According to him, the vice against nature is one of the several species of lust. However, because of his loyalty to the Augustinian procreative purposefulness of sexual intercourse, and his teleological conception of morality he condemned and labeled sexual intercourse for the sake of health as a sin against nature because sexual intercourse is naturally ordained to the end (finis) of procreation. Commenting on Aquinas’s teaching, Noonan noted that Aquinas’s view regard to the ends of marriage clearly acknowledged both the significance of conjugal love and the morality of the seeking of sexual pleasure while engaging in the marital act, though not as an independent end.

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42 See Aquinas, ST, II-II, q.154 a. 11, 12.

43 Aquinas, Sententiarum, iv.33.1.3; see also Noonan, Contraception, 241-242.

44 See Aquinas, ST, II-II, q.154 a. 11, 12. For Aquinas, the criteria for measuring the sexual sins against nature are dependent upon the proximity of that particular sexual act to the realization of fecundity. Seen in this perspective, Aquinas taught that rape is of a lesser evil than masturbation because the act of rape obeys the natural end of sexual intercourse, while the natural end of masturbation cannot lead to conception. Granted that Aquinas’s hierarchical structure of the sexual sins against nature in which masturbation is regarded as a more serious offense than rape does not make sense to a modern reader, but for Aquinas it simply made sense because of his view that understood procreation as the natural end of marital intercourse. It might be fair to say that Aquinas’s limited explication here is necessitated by his lack of awareness of the personal(ist) values at stake in sexual activity. For more information with regard to Aquinas treatment of lust and its vices, consult: ST, II-II, q. 153, a. 1-5; q. 154 a. 1-11.

45 Aquinas’ reason for teaching that sexual intercourse for the sake of one’s health is a sin against nature is: “Although it is not evil in itself to intend to keep oneself in good health, this intention becomes evil if one intends health by something that is not naturally ordained for that purpose; for instance, if one sought only bodily health by the sacrament of baptism; and the same applies to the act of coitus.” Aquinas, Sententiarum, iv. 31.2.2. It is pertinent to note that later in his “Summa Against the Gentiles” he gave a more moderate explication of this position and argues that: “If per assidens, generation cannot follow from emission of the seed, this is not against nature, nor a sin, as if it happens that the woman is sterile.” St. Thomas, Liber de veritate Catholcae fidae Contra Errores Infidelium
“identifies the objective and subjective requirement of lawful coitus as naturally ordained for procreation, and nothing else.”

Like Augustine, Aquinas maintained the instrumental connotation that understood the value of sexual intercourse as naturally ordained for the good of the human race. But unlike Augustine, Aquinas rejected the position that all sexual intercourse is tainted by lust in the specifically sexual sense.

Commenting on Aquinas’s teaching that maintained Augustine’s apportioning of an instrumental value to the marital act, Noonan noted: “The failure to incorporate love into the purposes of marital intercourse was largely a failure of theological analysis. It occurred in a society [which is similar to the biblical and early Christian cultures] whose mating custom made procreation, not love, the most prominent value of marriage.” In defense of Aquinas and the scholastic theologians, May, Lawler, and Boyle argue that “these developments [the recognition of love and friendship within marriage] quite naturally led to a more positive evaluation of the status of sexual pleasure than Christian tradition had accepted, but the medieval theologians did not, for the most part, articulate these implications.

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47 See Aquinas, *ST*, II-II, q. 153, a. 2.

48 Noonan, *Contraception*, 256-257.

49 May, Lawler, and Boyle, *Catholic Sexual Ethics*, 96. They were unable to do this because of their faithfulness to Augustine in maintaining that the couple that requested for sexual intercourse was guilty of venial sin.
Nonetheless, a case can be made that a more balanced and positive appreciation and articulation of the justification of the seeking of sexual pleasure by performing the conjugal act is evidenced in the writings of St. Thomas Aquinas as he referenced Aristotle:

Like Aristotle, Aquinas held that pleasure is a natural accompaniment and perfection of a human action. [Seen in this perspective], the moral character [of pleasure] depends on the moral status of the action it accompanies. Thus, the pleasure of a morally good act is itself morally good and worthy of pursuit as part of a good activity. The pursuit of pleasure becomes morally suspect only if it inclines one to act in ways that are somehow unreasonable or disordered.  

Aquinas’s understanding of pleasure as a natural accompaniment and perfection of all human action, paved the way for a more positive acknowledgement of the validity of the seeking of sexual pleasure in subsequent theological discussion on the subject. This is because the goodness or the badness of the sexual pleasure that a person derives from performing the sexual act is not dependent on the kind of act it is per se because pleasure of a virtuous sexual act can be good. Rather, the goodness or badness of the seeking of sexual pleasure is determined by the moral quality of the act which produced it.

Reflecting on the teaching of Aquinas that pleasure is a natural accompaniment and perfection of all human action May, Lawler, and Boyle contend:

50 See Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics, 8.12, 1162a; Aquinas, ST, I-II, q. 31 aa. 1, 2; q. 33, a. 4; See also Durand, Anthropologie Sexuelle, 176-183; and May, Lawler, and Boyle, Catholic Sexual Ethics, 96-97. But sexual union between couples for the purpose of procreation and/or to preserve mutual fidelity is not just tolerable, but virtuous. The previous chapter has shown that a critical and careful analysis of chapter 14 of St. Augustine’s book—The City of God where he discussed emotion, supports this conclusion that Aquinas made. However, neither Aquinas nor May, Lawler, and Boyle referenced Augustine’s work, rather both of them referred to Aristotle.

51 See Noonan, Contraception, 292-295, 305-312, 321-330, 395, 491-504; and Grabowski, Sex and Virtue, 79.

52 See Aquinas, Sententiarum iv, (Commentary on the Sentences) 4.31.2.3 and 4.49.3.4.3.
Aquinas affirmed the common teaching of the Church that sexual intercourse solely for the sake of pleasure was sinful. He maintained that it would be mortally sinful if one’s sexual interest in one’s wife would be so exclusively aimed at finding pleasure that he viewed her really as only a sex object or object of lust, not as a wife, as one with whom he was lovingly committed to honoring the great goods of marriage. [But unlike his predecessors Aquinas] rejected as absurd the more rigorous position that it is better to repudiate or merely tolerate the pleasure of marital intercourse.  

I agree with May, Lawler, and Boyle that “Aquinas’ analysis of pleasure provides the ground for a more realistic appreciation of sexual pleasure.”

Therefore, it is fair to say that Aquinas in his *Sentences* adopted a more moderate position in his treatment of marriage and sexuality, although he still accepted Augustine’s view that intercourse for the purpose of fidelity was still a venial sin for the spouse who requests for it. However, the spouse who grants the request acts virtuously. Thus, his commitment to Augustine’s sexual ethic served as a stumbling block to his insightful contribution to this teaching, for he judged that arriving at such would necessarily result in a repudiation of the Augustinian teaching that understood procreation as the primary and legitimate purpose of marriage.

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54 May, Lawler, and Boyle, *Catholic Sexual Ethics*, 97; See ST, I-II q. 31, a. 1, 2; q. 33, a. 4; q.34, a. 4; see also Durand, *Anthropologies Sexuelles*, 176-183. Aquinas’s acknowledgement of the seeking of pleasure as good was a development of the traditional teaching than Augustine acknowledged in the fourth century. However, it is a bit anachronistic on the part of May, Lawler, and Boyle to read Aquinas through the lens of the 20th century personalism.

55 See Aquinas, *Sententiarum iv*.32. 1.2; 4.32.4; see also Noonan, *Contraception*, 285.
This limitation notwithstanding, Aquinas’s recognition of the paying of the marital debt as an act of the virtue of justice as well as a lawful purpose for marital intercourse is a step in the right direction towards the total exoneration of intercourse by a married couple from venial sin. This is because a person does not commit any sin in giving another person his or her due. \(^{56}\) In support of these claims, some theologians especially in the nineteenth, twentieth and twenty-first centuries have made the case for Aquinas. For instance, Grabowski notes that by giving chastity a singular role of enabling one’s sexual powers to be exercised intelligently and freely in accord with goods of human nature—particularly the inclination to procreate, educate, and to nurture offspring—sexual union expresses the unique form of friendship that exist only in marriage. \(^{57}\) Seen in this perspective, Aquinas’s teaching that understood the payment of marital debt as an act of the virtue of justice was a departure from Augustine’s position on this subject.

Based on the analysis so far, one might be tempted to conclude that both Augustine’s and Aquinas’s teaching which understood procreation as the principal good/end of marriage was mostly based on the natural finality of the sexual act. In other words, that, it is the physical finality of the sexual act which constitutes the foundational pillar upon which the traditional teaching on the purposes of marriage was formulated. There might be good reason to think so especially in reference to Augustine whose teaching on the goods of marriage have been

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\(^{56}\) But Aquinas and the Scholastic theologians did not draw this conclusion because of the authority of Augustine. As I hope to show later, it was Cajetan in the sixteenth century who freed the spouse who requested for intercourse to preserve fidelity from the charge of committing a venial sin or of any sin at all.

\(^{57}\) Grabowski, *Sex and Virtue*, 83. As I mentioned earlier, Aquinas’ morality was developed on the presupposition that human acts are naturally ordained toward a specific end. It is based on this claim that Pinckaers statement that “the notion of finality was the basic element of voluntary action for Aquinas which he defined as the properly human power to act in view of an end—[happiness]” (Servais Pinckaers, *The Sources of Christian Ethics*, translated by Sr. Mary Thomas Noble (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1995), 243.
predominately seen by his interpreters through the lens of his apportioning of the good of proles as the primary and legitimate purpose of marriage and little attention was paid that the interconnectedness of the three goods. That is, Augustine’s position promotes unity in diversity of his three goods of marriage as chapter three has argued. Nevertheless, with Aquinas’s position, a clear distinction could be made.

This is because, although Aquinas’s designation of the purposes of marriage in the terminology of ends (finis) also follows the trend of thoughts of the natural ordination of the marital act toward procreation, a careful reading of his teaching suggests something different. When Aquinas speaks of the nature in reference to the marital act as being ordained for procreation, he does not limit his teaching only to the physicality or the functional end of the sexual act. Rather, nature for Aquinas is more of an ontological reality, and the spiritual nature of these goods is apprehended by reason. Seen through this lens, Aquinas speaks in terms of the nature of human beings whose actions have an ultimate goal in view. Consequently, guided by reason, human beings have the natural inclination to both seek their ultimate end as well as to reproduce themselves. Aquinas’s view that understood the conjugal act as naturally ordained for the procreation of children transcends the functional end of the sexual act, procreation.

Therefore, if one focuses on the natural finality or function of the marital act as a yardstick to measure Aquinas’s teaching on the ends or purposes of marriage, such a position is bound to be an inadequate representation of Aquinas’s position. This is because for Aquinas, the conjugal act and indeed the other activities of the married couples can be said to have one final goal in view, happiness with God. Seen in this perspective, the view by which procreation is
taken as the primary purpose of marriage strictly because of the physical and teleological finality of the marital act in the sixteenth through the twentieth centuries which culminated in the pre-
*Humanae vitae* debate was not Aquinas’s position. Rather, such physicalism was based on the Manuals of moral theology in the area of human sexuality mediated by the nominalism of William of Ockham (1285-1347).\(^{58}\) That is, by seeing the inclinations of human nature principally through the lens of biological function, the manuals created an unprecedentedly physicalist account of natural law. In such account, the evaluation of the value of the conjugal act was strictly seen through the lens of the biological end of sex. It was based on this physicality that the sins against nature were understood by subsequent theologians.\(^{59}\)

But the natural law thesis which the manuals promoted under the influence of nominalism that evaluated the value of the marital act based on its ability to end in progeny or the sins against the marital act based on its frustration to the natural and biological end of sex was different from Aquinas’s understanding of the conjugal act’s natural ordination to procreation. As this study demonstrated Aquinas’s teaching on the natural end of marriage to

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procreation was based on the following important principles. First, a thesis which understood nature not only as a physical reality, but also as an ontological reality which promotes the view that all human actions have but one ultimate end in view. Second, that the spiritual ends or goods of these acts are apprehended by reason and therefore, transcend their functional and physical benefits. Third, that marriage is by nature ordained for proles because human beings when aided by right reason have a natural inclination to reproduce themselves. Fourth, that Aquinas’s understanding of marriage as friendship opposes such physicalism. Thus this ability to function as a rational being because he or she is capable of engaging in a loving relationship supports one’s natural inclination to procreate and education offspring are key in differentiating Aquinas’s teaching concerning the natural ordination of the sexual act from the physicalism of both the casuist tradition in reference to the ends of marriage.

Nevertheless, despite the tension that nominalism and the manuals of moral theology created, the lawfulness of non-procreative intercourse to avoid fornication gained more recognition in the writings of some Dominican theologians such as Sylvester da prierio (1460-1523); and Dominic Soto (1494-1560). However, of special significance to this study is the teaching of Cardinal Cajetan (1469-1534). Like Aquinas, Cajetan taught that it was legitimate for couples to engage in an unintentional non-procreative intercourse. Cajetan also agreed with

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60 See Noonan, *Contraception*, 322.

the Aristotelian-Thomastic view which understood the seeking of sexual pleasure as a natural accompaniment of sexual intercourse.

In addition to upholding these views, Cajetan enhanced the teaching by adding that spouses ought to give thanks for the pleasure that marital union brings, thus, suggesting that couples could validly seek sexual pleasure while engaging in their marital act. Nevertheless, he noted that “an explicit or actual intent to foster one or any of the goods of marriage such as the aim of nourishing faithful love, also had to be present for the act to be morally good.” By this teaching, Cajetan departed from Augustine and Aquinas, though the good of proles was still regarded as the primary purpose of marriage by all three of them. However, rather than credit this development to Cajetan, Noonan credited it to the fathers of the Council of Trent and to Martin Le Maistre. According to Noonan, Le Maistre “swept away the Augustinian distinctions of the purpose of marital intercourse and established the general lawfulness of the marital act.” In other words, unlike the other scholars who had criticized Augustine’s sexual ethic before him, Noonan argued that Le Maistre followed the line of Aristotle and framed the question as a


63 May, Lawler and Boyle, *Catholic Sexual Ethics*, 100.


problem of virtue, and of finding the virtuous mean between excesses. Thus, with this framework, Le Maistre according to Noonan coined the phrase “conjugal chastity” which he defined as “a mean between immodesty and insensibility.” Although both Augustine and Aquinas allowed the rendering of debt to preserve conjugal chastity as sinless for the consenting spouse, Noonan argued that Le Maistre’s rejected the traditional teaching that understood procreation as the only purpose for which sexual intercourse within marriage is justified. According to Noonan:

Appeal to the dilemma of married couples during the pregnancy of their wives, joined with the most open, penetrating, and comprehensive application of Aristotelian reasoning to marriage, has led to a sweeping legitimation of the non-procreative purposes of intercourse. On strictly rational grounds, Le Maistre has ended the tie between procreative purpose and lawful intercourse. His work is the beginning of a new stage in the Catholic approach to marriage.

Noonan seems to have overstated the novelty of Le Maistre’s contributions to the discussion with regard to marriage and its ends in the above claims. On the contrary, the medieval theologians, as well as Aquinas and Bonaventure, had previously approached the traditional teaching concerning marriage and its ends from a slightly different lens. The scholastic theologians not only conceded to the view that non-procreative intercourse (though

66 Noonan, Contraception, 307. Noonan seemed to have attributed to Le Maistre too much weight here by making this claim. It is difficult to substantiate this claim by the findings of this study so far that Le Maistre was the first to treat human sexuality and marriage in the concept of virtue. Aquinas, Chrysostom, and many other Fathers did so long before Le Maistre’s treatment.


68 Noonan, Contraception, 309. Noonan’s claim here is very difficult to substantiate.

69 Granted that Le Maistre’s teaching may have opened the door for other theologians during his period to discuss the subject, it is questionable whether his teaching actually was the beginning of a new stage in the Catholic approach to marriage or its purposes as Noonan claimed.
still open to fecundity) could be engaged to foster the good of fidelity, but they also accepted sexual intercourse by married couples in order to pay the marital debt and/or to avoid fornication (though as a venial sin for the spouse that requested for it) as an act of the virtue of justice. Similarly, Cajetan explicitly taught that couples can seek sexual pleasure thereby freeing the spouse who requested sexual intercourse to avoid fornication from committing a venial sin.

In reference to the Council of Trent Fathers, Noonan observed that “the extent of the shift from Augustinianism in the sixteenth century may be measured in the formulations of a document—the Roman *Catechism* of 1556.” Noonan noted that the Roman *Catechism* focused on the purposes of marriage with the effect of merging the discussion to the purposes of the marital intercourse thusly:

> The causes for which a man and a woman ought to marry should be explained. The first of these, then, is the very partnership of diverse sexes—sought by natural instinct, and compacted in the hope of mutual help so that one aided by the other may more easily bear the discomforts of life and sustain the weakness of old age. Another is the appetite of procreation, not so much indeed that heirs of property and riches be left, but that worshippers of the true faith and religion be educated; this indeed was the chief intention of the holy patriarchs when they married as evidently appears from Holy writ.[Tobit 6:16, 17, and 22 are quoted]. And this is the one cause why God instituted marriage in the beginning…. The third is one which after the Fall of the first parents was added to the other causes, when because of the loss of justice in which man had been established, his appetite began to fight reason; so indeed he who is conscious of his weakness and does not wish to bear the battle of the flesh may use the remedy of marriage to

70 Lombard, *Sententiarum* iv, d. 31, c. 5; Bonaventure, *Sententiarum* iv, d.31, a.2, q. 2; Aquinas, *Sententiarum* iv, d..31, q. 2, a. 3 (=Summa Theologiae, Supplement q.49, a.6.); May, Lawler and Boyle, *Catholic Sexual Ethics*, 94-95

71 Noonan, *Contraception*, 313. The Roman *Catechism* of 1566 was one of the major efforts of the Tridentine Fathers to strengthen Catholic doctrines in the face of the challenge of the Reformation and by extension the teaching on sexuality and marriage.
avoid sins of lust. About this the Apostle thus writes, “On account of fornication each man may have his own wife and each woman her own husband.”

Commenting on the above quotation, Noonan noted that the causes of marriage are both the reasons for its establishment by God, and the reasons why a Christian should marry. In reference to the marital intercourse, the faithful are to be especially taught two things: First, not to have intercourse for the sake of seeking sexual pleasure or lust, and second, to abstain from intercourse occasionally in order to devote time to pray (2.8.33-34). He continues, “by failing to reprove intercourse to avoid fornication, the *Catechism* tacitly abandons Augustine; and in its phrasing of the causes on marriage it speaks of ‘use of the remedy of marriage,’ a phrase almost positively endorsing intercourse to avoid fornication.” Although the *Catechism* did not go so far as to say that the three principal causes of marriage are all legitimate purposes of intercourse, Noonan argues that this *Catechism was the first time a document of the Church, with [such] great authority, in which a doctrine on marital intercourse was taught without mention of the Augustinian insistence on procreative purpose.”

Noonan was not the first to refer to this *Catechism* to support a position that suggested a significant departure from the traditional teaching that understood procreation as the primary good or end of marriage. However, it is surprising that he arrived at this conclusion by his

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72 The Roman *Catechism* 2.8.13 and 14 as cited by Noonan, *Contraception*, 313.

73 See Noonan, *Contraception*, 314.

74 Noonan, *Contraception*, 314.

75 Noonan, *Contraception*, 314.
This is because his analysis of the teaching of the Council Fathers is not an adequate representation of what the Council actually taught. It is true that the Catechism did not directly insist on the requirement that every conjugal act must be open to procreation, but the Catechism’s contention that procreation is the chief intention for which the Patriarchs married was purely Augustinian. Besides, the Catechism’s three reasons for which a man and a woman marry represents Augustine’s three goods of marriage—proles, fides, and sacramentum.

Thus, the good of fidelity is represented by the Catechism’s first distinction; the good of offspring is represented in its second distinction, while the good of the sacramental bond is represented in its third distinction. There might be a change in restructuring and/or in the terminology that the Catechism used to describe the three goods for which marriage is good but there was no change in the Church’s basic teaching. Therefore, instead of departing from Augustine, the 1556 Catechism supported both Augustine’s sexual ethic and his triadic goods of marriage without using his exact words. This claim is supported by The Summa of Christian

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As will be shown later in this study, Herbert Doms referenced this 1556 Catechism to defend his teaching on the ends of marriage that subordinated procreation to the value of the couples. Cf. Du sens et de la fin du mariage, 10-11; and Arjonillo, Conjugal Love and the Ends of Marriage, 197.

Doctrine of Peter Canisius which was published nine years after the Council of Trent’s Catechism.

Following the Catechism, The Summa of Christian Doctrine was completed around 1565 by Canisius (1521-1597). In response to its question of “what is marriage”? He answered: “The ends of marriage were the propagation of the human race for the glory of God; close and faithful association of the spouses with each other; and, moreover, the avoidance of fornication in the weakness of the corrupted nature.” Therefore, the transition from Augustine’s goods of marriage to ends of marriage which started with Aquinas, and was implicit in the Catechism of Trent, was also used in this Catechism of Cansius. Contrary to this reading, Noonan blamed the decline of “Augustinian pessimism during this period [as a consequence of] the broader controversies concerning Grace, Original Sin, and Concupiscence.”

78 See Noonan, Contraception, 314. This summa was prepared by the Dutch Jesuit who later became the leader of the Counter Reformation in Germany and Austria.

79 See Peter Canisius, Catechismus Major seu Summa Doctrinae Christianae Post Tridentina, ed. Grederich Streicher, (Roma: Societatis Jesus Selecti Scriptore 1933). On the influence of the Catechism of Canisius on the development of theological discussion on marriage, see X Le Bachelet, Canisius DTC 2; 1526; and Summa: The Sacrament of Marriage, as cited by Noonan, Contraception, 314.

80 See Noonan, Contraception, 315. However, in his analysis of this Catechism, Noonan argues that “there is a subtle shift of emphasis from medieval theology here, where procreation is said to be ‘for the glory of God,’ rather than being treated as a rationalization of intercourse. Nothing is said of the purposes of intercourse taken as distinct from the purposes of marriage” (Noonan, Contraception, 315). Noonan is quite wrong in thinking that because the Catechism stated the “the ends of marriage were the propagation of the human race for the glory of God,” in his teaching with regards to the ends of marriage, that it suggested a departure from traditional position. On the contrary, the Catechism’s teaching reflected a consistent teaching of the Church that dates back to Augustine.

81 Noonan, Contraception, 315. The controversy concerning grace, original sin and concupiscence was necessitated by the teachings of Martin Luther and John Calvin. This teaching was replicated in a Catholic context by bishop Jansen of Ypres. These theologians used Augustine’s teaching with regard to original sin and redeemed grace, to support their “exaggerated view of the power of concupiscence and of man’s depravity after the Fall.” Consequently, Noonan noted that for the Catholic theologians to correct these heretical thoughts, they “relied heavily on the rationalism of Aquinas to the detriment of a tight and formidable Augustinian doctrinal synthesis on sexual acts, concupiscence, and original Sin.” Put differently, since theologians during this period faced a different
But in addition to the controversy of the Protestant Reformation there was another issue which the theologians of the period had to address, particularly those in the formation houses for the priesthood. At the recommendation of the Council of Trent, theologians who were in-charge of the training of seminarians were instructed to formulate their syllabi for courses for the training of priests to focus on the designated priestly functions or duties particularly as they relate to the sacrament of Christian reconciliation. This request led to the separation of moral theology from other disciplines. This separation as Pinckaers pointed out did not come without costs.  

Nevertheless, neither the Reformation controversy nor the request to separate moral theology from the other disciplines precluded theologians of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries from upholding the traditional teaching which understood progeny as the primary problem from those which Augustine and the early Christian scholars faced (to combat the different forms of Gnosticism that hated marriage and procreation), they did pay not much attention to defend the goodness of marriage. For a detailed account with regard to the teaching of the reformers and the orthodox reactions concerning their teaching consult: Noonan, Contraception, 315-321; and Robert Bellarmine, Controversiarum de amissione gratiae et statu peccati libre sex in Opera Omina, ed. Justine Fevre (Paris: 1873), Vol. iv. For more information concerning the teachings of Martin Luther and John Calvin consult: 315-321. See A. Gaudet, Peche “Original,” DTC 121:511-523 as quoted by Noonan, Contraception, 315.

In response to this request, theologians of both diocesan bishops and religious orders who were in-charge of the formation of their seminarians formulated their syllabi for the teaching of theology and seminary training to accommodate the following related needs—the requirement of theology, the specific pastoral work of each religious order (such as spiritual direction for the Jesuits), and the handling of cases of conscience. With this framework, text books on moral theology in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were referred to as the text books for the cases of conscience and the theologians of this period devoted much time and energy in propounding cases of conscience according to their stand on the issue of probabilism. For as Pinckaers pointed out; “it was probabilism that divided ethicists into different systems of morality [during these centuries].” Pinckaers, Sources of Christian Ethics, 273-277. For more inform on the separation of moral theology from other theological disciplines see Pinckaers, Sources of Christian Ethics, 254-297. For a succinct analysis of the history of the dispute over probabilism, see T. Deman, “Probabilism,” in Dictionnaire de Theologie Catholique, vol. 13 (1936): 417-619. This theory was first propounded by a Spanish Dominican theologian Batholomew of Medina in 1580 who wrote, “It seems to me that if an opinion is probable, it is lawful to follow it, even if the opposite opinion is more probable.” Pinckaers, Sources of Christian Ethics, 275; and Mahoney, The Making of Moral Theology, 136-137.
purpose of marriage. Most notable among them are in the representative leaders of the theological faculty of Douai: William Estius (1663), Francis Sylvius (d. 1649), and the Carmelite, Henry de St. Ignace (1630-1719).\textsuperscript{83} According to Noonan, “the hard line, permitting only intercourse with a procreative purpose, was similarly taken by a number of French and Belgian theologians who had much influence on the diocesan seminaries.”\textsuperscript{84} Similarly, the Douai and the Louvain theologians of the seventeenth centuries leaned toward Augustine’s teaching with regard to the procreative purposefulness of every act of marital intercourse.

Augustine’s teaching suffered some set-back with the teaching of Thomas Sanchez (1550-1610) and Alphonsus Liguori (1697-1787). This is because Sanchez and Liguori felt that Cajetan’s teaching requiring that an explicit or actual intent to foster one or other goods of marriage to be present for the marital intercourse to be morally good was too stringent.\textsuperscript{85} Consequently, on the specific question of the purpose of intercourse, Sanchez noted:

If one is in the state of grace and does not intend an evil end, one virtually, although not explicitly, refers what one does to God. A married person in this state of mind seeking intercourse acts virtuously. There is then no need to fit the intention of married persons in coitus to one of the categories of purposes. There is no sin in spouses who intend only to copulate as spouses.\textsuperscript{86}

\textsuperscript{83} See Noonan, \textit{Contraception}, 318. This text is part of a rigorist reaction to “laxist” Jesuit moral teaching that was spearheaded by Janseism. Cf, Mahoney, \textit{The Making of Moral Theology}, 138-143.

\textsuperscript{84} Noonan, \textit{Contraception}, 318. Among them were Laurence Neesen (1612-1779), who taught at the seminary of Malines; Louis Hubert (1633-1718), a teacher at the Verdun seminary; Francis Genet (1640-1703), the bishop of Vaisson; and Natale Alexander (1639-1724), a Dominican who was a prominent member of the Paris faculty of theology.

\textsuperscript{85} See May, Lawler, and Boyle, \textit{Catholic Sexual Ethics}, 101; and Noonan, \textit{Contraception}, 323. Noonan described Sanchez’s work \textit{The Holy Sacrament of Matrimony} which was published in 1602 as the most comprehensive treatment yet given to all moral and canonical aspects of marriage.

\textsuperscript{86} See \textit{The Holy Sacrament of Matrimony},” 9.8, as quoted by Noonan, \textit{Contraception}, 324. See also Vereecke, “L’éthique Sexuelle,” 182-185; and May, Lawler, and Boyle, \textit{Catholic Sexual Ethics}, 101.
Liguori sided with Sanchez’s teaching which does not congruent with Augustine who connected the intention of marital intercourse to the natural end of intercourse. Commenting on the view of a German Jesuit scholar Herman Busenbaum (1600-1668), Liguori congruent with Sanchez and argued that “there is no sin in intercourse to avoid danger of incontinence in oneself or one’s partner.” In support of his position, Noonan noted that “Liguori gave a cross-reference to his treatment of the purpose of marriage; and [argued] that ever since I Corinthians 7, it had been established that one of the purposes of marriage was to provide an outlet for sexual impulse.”

Commenting on Liguori’s position Noonan notes the consequences of combining the purposes of intercourse with the purposes of marriage. According to him, “If the purposes of intercourse were merged with the purposes of marriage the controversy over the lawfulness of seeking intercourse to avoid fornication was terminated by the authority of St. Paul.” However, “Liguori expanded the approach of the Roman Catechism by identifying the purposes of intercourse with the purposes of marriage.” Thus, for Liguori, “marriage for the remedy for concupiscence is lawful, if the spouses in contracting did not exclude the end of procreation.”

87 Noonan, Contraception, 320.
88 May, Lawler, and Boyle, Catholic Sexual Ethics, 101; Vereecke, “L’éthique Sexuelle,” 182-185. See Moral Theology 6, as cited by Noonan, Contraception, 320.
89 Noonan, Contraception, 320-321.
90 Noonan, Contraception, 321.
91 Noonan, Contraception, 321.
92 Noonan, Contraception, 328.
Therefore, intercourse undertaken for decent, non-procreative ends is lawful, even with the positive wish not to have more children, provided there is a purpose to avoid “the risk of incontinence.”\(^3\) With regard to chaste touching between married persons, with risk of ejaculation, Liguori follows Sanchez and says that such acts are lawful provided "there is urgent need for showing signs of affection to foster mutual love."\(^4\)

During the nineteenth century the Augustinian teaching concerning the procreative purpose of marriage suffered another blow at the hands of an international movement that promoted contraception to the extent that many countries enacted a law against both the movement and contraception.\(^5\) In the midst of the havoc done to the teaching concerning the procreative purposefulness of marriage by this group, the failing birthrates in countries with substantial numbers of Catholic believers (France), Pope Leo XIII in 1880 wrote his encyclical letter on marriage—*Arcanum Divinae Sapientiae*. In this encyclical letter, Leo XIII defended the

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\(^3\) Noonan, *Contraception*, 329. For further information concerning the teaching of Liguori on this subject, see 317-330.

\(^4\) May, Lawler, and Boyle, *Catholic Sexual Ethics*, 101. Liquori and Sanchez approved chaste touching between married persons, with risk of ejaculation. This is a shift from Aquinas’s position because by his logic, the act of chaste touching with the risk of ejaculation qualifies as a sin against nature because the end of chaste touching is not procreation.

Augustinian teaching concerning the procreative purposefulness of the marital act as well as Augustine’s triad of the goods of marriage.\textsuperscript{96}

Another attempt to address the rapid growth of non-procreative marriages among Christian couples was made in 1886 by an anonymous French bishop. The focus of his letter was not to rebut the seeking of sexual pleasure within marriage as a way to remedy concupiscence, nor the use of the different forms of contraceptives to avoid conception as the Manicheans had encouraged their auditors to do, but his attention was on a different kind of sexual aberration in which the possibility of conception is totally ruled out—Onanism.\textsuperscript{97} What disturbed this anonymous writer was not only the rate at which this sin of Onanism by which he meant both \textit{coitus interruptus} and masturbation had gained acceptance among the people but also the approval and/or the accommodation of this sin by confessors.\textsuperscript{98} In his denunciation of this evil, Noonan noted that this anonymous French writer wrote to the Penitentiary thusly:

“The wicked crime of Onan” was widespread in France, that almost no province was immune, that whereas in earlier times couples tried to prevent too many children, now their practice might exclude “almost any acceptance of children.” The matter was made worse by the divergent practice of confessors. “The nub of the difficulty,” the bishop said bluntly, “is the necessity of interrogating and warning penitents.” Some confessors believed that among “such a number of the faithful” who practice Onanism there must be good faith.\textsuperscript{99}

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\textsuperscript{96} See Leo XIII, \textit{Arcanum Divinae Sapientiae}, ASS 12: 385-402.
\textsuperscript{97} See Noonan, \textit{Contraception}, 416.
\textsuperscript{98} See \textit{Contraception}, 416. Although it is true that the sin of “Onanism” is as old as humanity, it has always been condemned by the Catholic tradition as a very serious sin against God. Thus, one can understand the tension, and the anxiety it could create among pious ears if priests were seen to be encouraging the faithful to practice “Onanism” let alone while administering the sacrament of Christian reconciliation as this French anonymous writer claimed.
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As the debate over penitents acting or not acting in good faith and the extent to which confessors are expected to interrogate penitents continued to gain momentum, Noonan noted that the Penitentiary responded to the anonymous French writer. In both their 1842 and November 13, 1903 responses to the question concerning the practice of Onanism and the role of confessors with regard to it, the Penitentiary instructed confessors to be prudent and firm in bringing to the attention of their penitents its evilness.  

Although many articles and practices during this period supported the position that couples could avoid conception in good faith, however, the practice of Onanism and/or other forms of contraception “in good faith” were not accepted by the Church’s hierarchy.

Apart from the religious reasons that supported this rejection, there was also a social or civil reason—the depopulation of the society and the bad example of such acts to society at large. It was not only in France, but also in Belgium, that the Church hierarchies were forthright in condemning the practice of Onanism calling it “a violation of the primary purpose of marital intercourse, a vice against nature and a sin crying to heaven.” In order to encourage

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100 According to the Penitentiary first, confessors should not abstain from prudent and discreet interrogation in cases where there is a founded suspicion that the penitent was addicted to the crime of Onanism. Second, if the confessor knows that the penitent was an Onanist, he must warn him of the gravity of this sin just as other mortal sins and rebuke him, with paternal charity. The confessor ought to confer absolution on the penitent only when it is clear from adequate signs that he is sorry about the past and firmly resolves not to do it again. See Noonan, *Contraception*, 417.

101 Onanism was condemned by the tradition because all the acts designated as the sins against it are opposed to the good of procreation which the tradition had consistently maintained as the primary end of the sexual act.

102 See Noonan, *Contraception*, 418-419.

103 Noonan, *Contraception*, 420.
procreative marriages, families with large number of children were blessed in the Church by their priests.\textsuperscript{104}

By 1913, the German bishops came on board and condemned all forms of none-procreative marriages or sexual acts. In their pastoral letter, they abhorred the sexual immorality threatening the sanctity of the home, and they “specifically decried the spread of contraception.”\textsuperscript{105} The bishops did not hesitate to reject the view which was spreading that suggested that people were choosing contraception because of poverty. On the contrary, they argued that contraception was the product of couples seeking to derive sexual pleasure without the responsibility of becoming parents.\textsuperscript{106}

The German bishops also blamed the growing use of contraceptives on luxury and condemned various industries that had devoted themselves to making artificial contraceptives available. “It is serious sin to will to prevent the increase of the number of children, so that marriage is abused for pleasure alone and its principal purpose knowingly and willingly frustrated. It is serious sin, very serious sin, with whatever means and in whatever way it occurs.”\textsuperscript{107} Noonan noted that the Bishops ended with a slightly different amendment to the purpose of marriage proclaimed by the Roman \textit{Catechism}. According to the Bishops, “The chief

\textsuperscript{104} See Noonan, \textit{Contraception}, 420.

\textsuperscript{105} Noonan, \textit{Contraception}, 421.

\textsuperscript{106} See Noonan, Contraception, 421.

\textsuperscript{107} Noonan, \textit{Contraception}, 421.
end of marriage was procreation in order to secure the continuation of the Church and the State.\textsuperscript{108}

Noonan noted that on May 7, 1919, as World War I drew to a close, the French bishops finally reacted, and, like the Germans, they mixed the appeal of religion with patriotism:

The principal end of marriage is the procreation of children; for this God honors the spouses by associating them in his creative power and paternity. It is a sin seriously against nature and against the will of God to frustrate marriage of its ends by an egoistic or sensual calculation. The theories and practices which teach or encourage the restriction of birth are as disastrous as they are criminal. The war has forcefully impressed upon us the danger to which they expose our country. Let the lesson not be lost. It is necessary to fill the spaces made by death, if we want France to belong to Frenchmen and to be strong enough to defend herself and prosper.\textsuperscript{109}

In 1916, John Ryan wrote an article titled “Family Limitation” which appeared in \textit{Ecclesiastical Review} in which he showed that based on the evidence of his research that many Catholics in America were using contraceptives.\textsuperscript{110} Consequently, it will seem that the American bishops, motivated by the analysis and the result embedded in Ryan’s 1916 article, issued a pastoral letter in 1919 and condemned all forms of contraceptive practices.\textsuperscript{111} One can say that

\textsuperscript{108} Noonan, \textit{Contraception}, 421. See also the analysis of the letter by Joseph Laurentius, S. J., “Das Bischofswort zum Schutze der Familie,” \textit{Theologisch-praktische Quartalschrift} 67 (1914), 517-528. The connection between procreation and the sustenance of either the State or the Church was not a novelty of the German bishops as Noonan claimed. Rather, this connection is as old as the human race as the analysis of this study has shown so far. If anything, the aftermath of the war resuscitated this old reality for the German bishops.

\textsuperscript{109} Noonan, \textit{Contraception}, 422. See also, \textit{Documentation Catholique} 1 (1919) 578-579. My comment on footnote 106 above also applies here.

\textsuperscript{110} In this article, Ryan critically analyzed the practice of the day among the Catholic faithfuls in the United States and concluded that contraception and birth control methods were being practiced by most American Catholics. For more information concerning this analysis consult, John A. Ryan, “Family Limitation,” \textit{Ecclesiastical Review} 54 (1916), 684-696.

\textsuperscript{111} For a synopsis of the content of the American bishop’s pastoral letter see: “Pastoral Letter of the Archbishops and Bishops of the United States” dated 26, 1919 in Guilday, ed., \textit{The National Pastoral} 312-313.
the series of actions in support of contraception as evidenced by these and other activities reached its climax or apex in 1930 with the Anglican Lambeth Conference’s approval of its use by married couples to control the size of their families, a view which they had previously rejected entirely in both their 1908 and 1920 Conferences.112

Although the approval and the use of contraception is currently an acceptable practice in the Anglican Church, the Catholic Church still condemns contraception but maybe with a slightly different argument or reasoning as she did before the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council.113 However, before the Lambeth Conference’s approval of contraception in 1930, in 1917, the Catholic Church promulgated *The 1917 Code of Canon Law*. In this Code, a section was devoted to the treatment of marriage and a particular canon was assigned to the treatment of the ends of marriage.114

### 4.2. SUMMARY


113 I will substantiate on this claim in chapter seven of this study that treats the debate that followed *Humanae vitae*.

114 Cf. *The 1917 Code of Canon Law*, canon 1013. This study will analyze *the 1917 Code of Canon Law*’s treatment concerning marriage and its ends in the next chapter of this work.
From the analysis of this history so far, it is evident that the Catholic tradition has consistently maintained not only Augustine’s triad of goods—proles, fides, and sacramentum, but also his teaching that understood procreation as the primary and legitimate purpose of marriage.¹¹⁵ In doing this the Scholastic scholars spearheaded by Aquinas referred to the purposes of marriage in the terminology of the ends rather than goods of marriage. Nevertheless, whether as goods or ends, the Catholic tradition has at various councils and through other writings condemned any teaching either from a person or aggregate of persons that attacked procreation as the primary purpose of marriage.

While it is true that neither Aquinas nor Bonaventure explicitly approved the seeking of sexual pleasure, the analysis above suggests that probably an implicit approval of the seeking of sexual pleasure by couples, who engage in the marital act, could be found in Aquinas’ reading of Aristotle. This is because, following Aristotle, Aquinas taught that pleasure is a natural accompaniment and perfection of human acts whose goodness or badness does not depend on the act per se, but on the moral status of the action it accompanies.¹¹⁶ Seen in this perspective, sexual pleasure that was properly sought within the bond of marriage and in respect to the goods/ends of marriage would not be bad. Since this would be seeking sexual pleasure not as an end itself. On the contrary, sexual pleasure sought outside of the bond of marriage or that which was sought by

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¹¹⁵ Cf. Augustine, De Bono Conjugali, 32. See also Adulterous Marriages. 24

¹¹⁶ See Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics, 8.12, 1162a; and Aquinas, ST, I-II, q. 31 aa. 1, 2; q. 33, a. 4.
engaging in sexual activities that do not have fecundity as their end would involve the seeking of sexual pleasure wrongly.

However, even if it is debatable whether the scholastic theologians especially Aquinas and Bonaventure were largely congruent with Augustine’s disapproval of the seeking of sexual pleasure _per se_, the same claim cannot be made in reference to their position on the sinfulness of the spouse that requested intercourse to avoid fornication. Rather, like Augustine, they maintained that the spouse who requested sexual intercourse to avoid fornication or adultery committed a venial sin. But, unlike Augustine, Aquinas understood the spouse who granted intercourse to preserve his or her marriage acts in accord with justice.\(^{117}\) Seen as an act of justice, a procreative intent is no longer necessary for the marital act to be virtuous and/or meritorious as long as nothing is done to frustrate the good of procreation since no one commits sin by giving the other person his or her due.

Also while Augustine, Aquinas, Bonaventure held that the spouse who requested for sexual intercourse to avoid fornication is guilty of venial sin, Cajetan explicitly rejected this teaching that tied the paying of the conjugal debt to a venial sin.\(^{118}\) In a similar vein, both Aquinas and Bonaventure accentuated the importance of friendship and its relationship to sexual intercourse as a fortifying force in marriage. However, as the study has shown also, their positive acknowledgment of love and friendship or better said marital friendship did not translate into

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\(^{117}\) See Aquinas, _Sententiarum_, iv, d 26, q. 1. a (Summa Theologiae Supplement, q. 64. a. 2.

\(^{118}\) See Cajetan, _Commentarium in_ II-II q. 153, a.2. Chrysostom, Lactantius, and John Damascene in East also rejected teaching that tied the paying og conjugal debt to a venial sin.
their apportioning of an intrinsic value to the marital act. Rather, the marital act maintained the instrumental value that Augustine apportioned to it in the teaching of the scholastic scholars.

However, contrary to Aquinas and Bonaventure whose positive appreciation of love in marriage did not lead to the approval of other sexual activities that are not open to fecundity, Sanchez and Liquori approved chaste touching with the possibility of, or the risk of ejaculation, aimed at promoting affection and mutual love. Furthermore, while a case can be made that both Augustine and Aquinas arrived at their apportioning of marriage with distinct goods or ends by looking at the natural finality of the sexual act, Aquinas’s explication is more nuanced than Augustine’s. As this study has shown, Aquinas did not limit his teaching concerning procreation as the principal end of marriage only by insisting on the natural ordination of the sexual act to fecundity.119

Rather, nature for Aquinas is more of an ontological reality than a physical reality. Consequently, reason empowers and enables humans to apprehend the ends proper to them as ontological beings. In other words, human beings do only have an inclination to reproduce themselves, but human actions collectively lead to their ultimate end, happiness. Understood as such, it the ability of humans to rationally perform human acts including the marital act that differentiates human actions from those of the irrational animals whose reproductive capability is neither guided by reason nor has spiritual finality in view.120 Also, one can say that for Aquinas,

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119 I will develop this claim in the next chapter, after the examination of the 1917 Code of Canon Law which also treated the purposes of marriage in the language of ends.

120 See Aquinas, ST, I-II, q. 94, a.2.
the end of *sacramentum* is the chief end of marriage for Christians, at least in terms excellence since it resembles the relationship that exists between Christ and His Church.

Finally, as way to conclude this chapter, it is pertinent to reiterate that there has been both continuity and development in reference to the traditional position concerning the purposes of marriage that dates back to Augustine. There has been continuity because the theologians have with slight modifications insisted that the tradition was clear that procreative purpose alone was without sin. They have also maintained both Augustine’s triad of the goods of marriage and Augustine’s apportioning of the good of *proles* as the primary purpose of marriage.

There has been also development in reference to Augustine’s teaching on the subject under discussion. Couples may seek sexual pleasure while engaging in the marital act though, not as an end in itself, but as an accompaniment of the marital act in so far as the act does not oppose any of the goods/ends of marriage. Similarly, both the spouse who requests sexual intercourse to avoid fornication and the spouse that grants the intercourse did not commit any sin. There is also a better appreciation of the role of love and friendship in marriage, although the marital act has not yet been recognized as having an intrinsic value of itself apart from the value of procreation. And although, the language of the ends of marriage was introduced by Aquinas, implicit in the *Catechism* of Trent, employed in the *Catechism* of Canisisus, and sustained by subsequent theologians, these theologians did not necessarily describe the ends of marriage to connote a subordination of one end to the other. Rather the designation of Augustine’s three goods and Aquinas’ ends of marriage into the primary and secondary ends that suggested the

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121 Though this was qualified and relaxed over time.
subordination of the primary end over the secondary ends was arguably made explicit in the 1917 Code of Canon Law.\textsuperscript{122}

Therefore, as a continuation of tracing this history concerning the Catholic position with regard to the goods/ends of marriage, in the next chapter, this study will examine The 1917 Code of Canon Law’s categorization of the ends of marriage into the primary and secondary ends. It will also analyze the scholarship that followed such categorization by paying special attention to the writings of Von Hildebrand and Herbert Doms that bear on the subject under discussion.

\textsuperscript{122} See The 1917 Code of Canon Law. no. 1013:1. As I hope to show in chapter five of this study, the hierarchical structure of subordination in which procreation as the primary end subordinates mutual help and the allying of concupiscence as the secondary ends is very explicit in the The 1917 Code of Cannon Law.
CHAPTER FIVE

THE 1917 CODE OF CANON LAW AND TWENTIETH CENTURY’S PERSONALISM TEACHING CONCERNING THE ENDS OF MARRIAGE

INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, I traced the teaching of the Catholic Church concerning the ends of marriage by examining how subsequent scholars received St. Augustine’s apportioning of marriage with three distinct goods. In doing this, the scholastic scholars like Aquinas, maintained Augustine’s triad of the goods of marriage, the primacy of the good of proles, as well as his apportioning of an instrumental value to the marital act. However, in maintaining Augustine’s teaching, the preceding analysis has shown that instead of treating the purposes of marriage in the terminology of “goods” as Augustine did, Aquinas referred to the purposes of marriage in the language of ‘ends.’ The study has also shown that though Aquinas like Augustine regarded procreation as the principal purpose of marriage because sexual intercourse is naturally ordained for the procreation of children, nature for Aquinas goes beyond the physicality of the sexual act.1

Nevertheless, following Aquinas, subsequent scholars began to refer to Augustine’s three ‘goods’ of marriage as the ‘ends’ of marriage. What then is the implication of this change of terminology? In other words, does Aquinas’s treatment of the purposes of marriage in the language of ‘ends’ rather than ‘goods’ suggest a departure from or continuity with Augustine’s

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1 See Aquinas, ST, Suppl. q. 65, a. 1. This is also true for Augustine as bonum proles referred to the nurture and education of children.
position? Also, since one of the main weaknesses of Augustine’s sexual ethic was his apportioning of only an instrumental value to the marital act, does Aquinas’s treatment of the purposes of marriage in terms ‘ends,’ rather than ‘goods,’ avert this weakness? Simply put, determining what is gained or lost by treating the purposes of marriage in the terminology of ‘ends’ rather than ‘goods’ will be one of the primary tasks of this next chapter that examines the 1917 Code of Canon Law’s treatment of the purposes of marriage. This is because the 1917 Code of Canon Law also speaks of the purposes of marriage in the language of ‘ends,’ rather than ‘goods’ of marriage. Therefore, this chapter will also focus on the extent to which the teachings that understood progeny as the principal end of marriage, as well as the apportioning of only an instrumental value to the marital act, were fostered, developed or rejected by The 1917 Code of Canon Law’s treatment of the ends of marriage and the teaching of some personalist thinkers of the twentieth century.

To do this, the chapter is divided into two parts. Part one will continue to trace the history of the Catholic tradition concerning the purposes of marriage by examining The 1917 Code of Canon Law’s position. Part two will analyze the teachings of some thinkers in reference to The 1917 Code of Canon Law’s categorization of the purposes of marriage into primary and secondary ends, by paying special attention to the writings of Dietrich von Hildebrand and Herbert Doms which pertain to the subject under discussion. In doing this, the study will aim to identify areas of continuity and/or development in the traditional position concerning the ends of marriage.
5.1. **THE 1917 CODE OF CANON LAW’S TEACHING ON THE ENDS OF MARRIAGE**

The Augustinian teaching that understood progeny as the primary and legitimate purpose of marriage and Aquinas’ categorization of procreation as the principal end of marriage were supported by prominent scholars and upheld at different Church ecumenical Councils. However, it was not until 1917 that the teaching concerning the ends of marriage was codified as a rule of law. Theologians agree that some of the reasons behind the practice of the Catholic tradition, in which it collects, edits and codifies its doctrines and religious practices into laws are to maintain orthodoxy and to correct dangerous teachings and practices that took the form of abuses and/or heresies.²

With regard to the purposes of marriage, the Latin version of the 1917 Code states:

*matrimonii finis primarius est procreation atque education prolis; secundarius mutum adiutorum et remedium concupisentiae.*³ For the purpose of this inquiry, the key words here are *finis*, end or the finality of a thing and *primarius*, the primary or first. Thus, in this citation the word ‘*finis*’ is understood as the finality or the essence of a thing, in this case of marriage. That is, that which is embedded in the nature of the thing (marriage) itself (*finis operis*) without which the thing (marriage) has no other usefulness or significance. In other words, procreation is the finality or

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² For instance, the practice of clandestine marriages which had been previously condemned by the Catholic tradition was finally invalidated in 1556, by the doctrinal decree that was embedded in the decree Tametsi. Tametsi required that a Catholic pastor or his delegate be the official witness of Catholic marriages. One of the things that was gained by this requirement was the transformation of a simple contractual marriage to a solemn contract. While the former does not need any external legal requirements, the latter requires certain external legal procedures to be met for its validity. See Mackin, What is Marriage?, 194-197; Lawler, *Secular Marriage*, 40; and Joseph Martos, “Marriage: A Historical Survey,” in *Perspectives On Marriage A Reader*, 49, 58.

the essence of marriage. Similarly, the word *primarius* is understood as the primary or the first, the main reason of a thing. *finis primarius* refers to the primary finality of a thing or the first and the main purpose of a thing.

When the *1917 Code* refers to procreation as the *finis primarius* of marriage, it simply means that procreation is the main purpose or essence of marriage without which marriage will not have any significance. In other words, marriage is by its nature ordained for the procreation of children irrespective of the intention or will of the spouses. Therefore, whatever intention(s) the couples may have in engaging in marriage is superseded by the end of procreation. In other words, this end (*finis*) is different from, and is independent of, the will or intention of the spouses for which they marry each other (*finis operantis*).

Seen through this lens, this end (*finis*) can be said to be identical with marriage without which marriage cannot truly exist. That is, one cannot truly be said to be married if one does not intend to respect the *finis primarius* or the natural end of marriage itself since the other goods/ends of marriage subsist in marriage being ordained for the procreation of children. This reading is supported by the fact that the *1917 Code* also apportioned secondary ends (*finis*) to marriage—*mutum adiutorum et remedium concupisentiae*. These secondary ends are not the main purpose for which marriage is instituted and if the two ends of marriage cannot be simultaneously met the good of proles as the *finis primarius* of marriage takes precedence.

Paragraph two of Canon 1013.1 gives the two essential characteristics of marriage, which, strictly speaking will seem to suggest that the ends of marriage are different from the essential characteristics of marriage. It reads: “The essential properties of marriage are unity and indissolubility, which acquire a unique firmness in Christian marriage by reason of its
sacramental character.”

David Fellhauer observes that a comprehensive and better understanding of the elements of Canon Law’s definition of marriage and its teaching on the ends of marriage requires a simultaneous study of canon; 1081, 1082, and 1086.2. This is because Canon 1013.1 falls short of some essential elements that are needed for the juridical regulation of marriage. For example, “Canon 1013.1 neither says anything concerning the relationship that should exist between the primary and the secondary ends of marriage, nor does it state the place in which the secondary end of marriage occupies.”

Therefore, the significance of a simultaneous study of these four canons is beautifully and comprehensively articulated by Fellhauer who explained the relationship that exists between them thusly:

The element which is dominant in all four of these formulations is the procreation and the right to its physical prerequisite, acts which are suitable for generation. It seems fair to say that in the Code of Canon Law the juridical essence of marriage is therefore the right to carnal copula which is ordered to procreation. This right has the qualities of permanence and exclusivity, as succinctly stated in Canon 1081, n. 2, the canon which stipulates the object of consent and which likewise is the Code’s most concise statement of the canonical nature of marriage. Canon

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4 The 1917 Code of Canon Law, 352.

5 First, “Marriage is created by the consent of the parties lawfully expressed between persons who are capable according to law and for this consent no human authority can substitute. Second, marital consent is an act of the will by which each party gives and accepts a perpetual and exclusive right over the body for acts which are of themselves suitable for the generation of children.” The 1917 Code of Canon Law, 372

6 “In order that marital consent be possible it is necessary that the contracting parties be at least not ignorant that marriage is a permanent society between a man and woman for the procreation of children. 2. This ignorance is not presumed after puberty.” The 1917 Code of Canon Law, 373.

7 David Fellhauer, “The Consortium Ominis Viate as a Juridical Element,” in Studia Canonica Vol 13, 1 (1979) as quoted by Mackin, What is marriage, 211-212. “But if one or the other party, by positive act of the will, excludes marriage itself, or all rights to the conjugal act, or an essential property of marriage, he contracts invalidly.” The 1917 Code of Canon Law, 374. For more information on the importance of the juxtaposition of these three Canons for a better understanding of the ends of marriage as taught in Canon 1013 consult, Mackin, What is Marriage?, 207-214; and Griese, The Marriage Contract and the Procreation of Offspring, 5-17, 36-68.

8 Mackin, What is Marriage?, 219.
1013, n.1, stating that procreation and education are together the *finis primarius*, is a parallel declaration to Canon 1081, n. 2 and partially explains it, although it is not identical; rather it looks at the same object from a different viewpoint and within a different schema. Together these two legal statements determine what *essentially specifies* marriage, distinguishes it from all other societies and they determine the *essential formal* object of matrimonial consent.\(^9\)

Furthermore, Fellhauer notes that “where 1081.2 names as the object of marital consent only the perpetual and exclusive right to the parties’ sexual acts, canon 1086.2 specifies that if a person excludes sexual exclusivity or indissolubility from the consent, the latter is invalid.“\(^{10}\)

Similarly, “with reference to the procreation of offspring, canon 1081.2 points to the primary end of marriage as stated in canon 1013.1, and in as much as the same canon refers to the perpetuity and exclusiveness of the right over the body, and indicated the essential properties of marriage as mentioned in canon 1013.2.”\(^{11}\)

As this study has shown above, canon 1013.1 refers to the procreation and education of children as the primary end (*finis primarius*) of marriage while the secondary end of marriage was understood to be mutual support and a remedy for concupiscence. But there was no mention of mutual love or conjugal love as an end of marriage. Such omission has led to divided opinions among theologians. While it is probably right to question whether the *Code*’s designation of mutual support as a secondary end of marriage is synonymous with saying that mutual love is a secondary end of marriage, so as to implicitly, or by association link, it to a secondary ends of marriage, John Gallagher has argued against such a supposition. According to him, *The 1917 Code* did not speak of mutual love as an end of marriage either as the primary or as the

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\(^{10}\) Mackin, *What is Marriage?*, 211.

secondary end. Rather canon 1113 taught that “Parents are bound by a most serious obligation to provide the best of their power for the religious and the moral, as well as for the physical and civil education of their children, and also to provide for their temporal welfare.”

Against the opinion of some scholars that The 1917 Code taught some new views with regard to marriage, Gallagher insisted that, without being interested in settling theological disputes or in teaching something new, “the Code provided some theological background for law those principles which have been already taught authoritatively by Popes and Councils.”

Therefore, rather than attach the significance of marriage to the propagation of children, Gallagher argues that the 1917 Code sees marriage as an institution whose principal end is the total human good of the next generation.

Nevertheless, with regard to the insightful contribution of Pope Pius XI’s encyclical letter Casti Connubii—On Christian Marriage—concerning the ends of marriage, Gallagher notes that “Pius XI quotes Canon 1013 and elsewhere re-emphasized the primacy of procreation, that among the blessings of marriage, the child holds the first place.” Among the secondary ends, he

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13 Gallagher, “Marriage and Sexuality,” 228.

14 Gallagher, “Marriage and Sexuality,” 228. Unfortunately, Gallagher neither mentioned those that he accused of holding the view that The 1917 Code taught something new nor was he very clear by what he said above.

15 See Gallagher, “Marriage and Sexuality,” 228. It is debatable whether the Code actually sees marriage as an institution whose principal end is the total human good of the next generation. But even if this claim is accepted, the Code still falls short of seeing marriage as principally an avenue for the procreation of children for the sustenance of the future generation as Gallagher argued. This is because the Code did not say much about the well-being of the couples (themselves) who marry with or without the blessings of fertility.

points out how Pius XI not only included the two mentioned by Canon law, mutual aid and the quieting of concupiscence, but he added a third one—the cultivation of mutual love.\textsuperscript{17}

Understood as such, the demand of the cultivation of mutual love entails a “generous surrender of his-own person made to another for the whole span of life.”\textsuperscript{18}

According to Joseph Selling’s reading of The 1917 Code’s designation of the primary and the secondary ends of marriage, “marriage is defined functionally as having a primary and a secondary end [which he argued] apply to marriage alone and are not said to be realized through the marriage act.”\textsuperscript{19} Selling even contends that the 1917 Code did not ascribe a distinct right to the procreative act “since at the time [of the writing of the Code] distinguishing between fertile and infertile acts of sexual intercourse was virtually impossible.”\textsuperscript{20} While he agrees that the teaching of Casti Connubii could be traced to St. Augustine’s triad of goods, he notes that “there is an ambiguity with respect to whether these bona should be interpreted in a hierarchical fashion.”\textsuperscript{21} Because of such ambiguity, he concedes that “overall, Pius XI’s teaching resembles that of Leo XIII, especially in understanding the domestic life.”\textsuperscript{22}

\begin{itemize}
\item[17] See Pius Xi, Casti Connubii, 59; See Gallagher, “Marriage and Sexuality,” 230. As this study will show later, this addition of the cultivation of mutual love as a secondary end of marriage reflects Von Hildebrand’s position. Therefore, it was neither the novelty of The 1917 Code, nor that of the Pius XI, as Gallagher claimed.
\item[18] Pius XI, Casti Connubii, 9; Gallagher, “Marriage and Sexuality, 230.
\item[20] Selling, “Magisterial Teaching on Marriage,” 249.
\item[21] Selling, “Magisterial Teaching on Marriage,” 249.
\item[22] Selling, “Magisterial Teaching on Marriage,” 250. Although Selling said that Pope Leo XIII’s teaching has resemblance to that of Augustine, such resemblance is difficult to substantiate. This is because, while apportioning the propagating of human race and the raising of progeny for the Church as an end of marriage, Pope Leo III referred to love, the unfailing fidelity, the adroit and resourceful help of one spouse to the other as the rights and duties of married life, not as secondary ends of marriage.
\end{itemize}
Furthermore, Selling observed that in responding to the known fact of the infertile period, Pius XI taught: “The couple could engage in sexual intercourse known to be infertile because doing so would have significance for the secondary ends of marriage which the couple could intend in their activity.” However, Selling noted that people should be careful not to read too much meaning into this provision because “Pius XI was careful to avoid the notion that these secondary ends alone could function as a sufficient justification, leaving the hierarchy of the ends intact and applying them exclusively to marriage, not to the performance of the marital act as such.”

Bernhardin Krempel also chides The 1917 Code of Canon Law for categorizing the purposes of marriage into primary and secondary ends. According to him “what canon 1013 called the end of marriage would properly be described as an effect or result of marriage.” He also rejected the plurality of ends because philosophically there cannot be several ends of marriage. Marriage like any other thing can have only one essential, specifying end. And this end for him “is the perpetual union of the lives of two persons who are, and inasmuch as they are, of opposite sex.”

From this brief examination of The 1917 Code of Canon Law’s treatment concerning the purposes of marriage, it seems clear that The 1917 Code categorized Augustine’s triad of goods

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23 Selling, “Magisterial Teaching on Marriage,” 250. This is the beginning of the Magisterial approval of the use of natural means to avoid conception. See: Grabowski, Sex and Virtue. 143-154.

24 Selling, “Magisterial Teaching on Marriage,” 250.

25 Krempel, Die Zweckfrage der ehe in neuer Beleuchtung (Zurich and Koln: Verlagsanstalt Beniziger, 1941), 52; Hieronymus Whilms, review of Krempel, in Divus Thomas, 20 (1942, 92-97; and John C. Ford and Gerald Kelly, Contemporary Moral Theology Volume II: Marriage Questions (Maryland: The Newman Press, 1964), 26. Krempel’s position here parallels that of Herbert Doms as this study will show in the next section of this chapter.

26 Krempel, Die Zweckfrage der ehe in neuer Beleuchtung, 52.
into a hierarchical structure of primary and secondary ends of marriage.²⁷ And as I have observed earlier, although St. Augustine spoke of procreation as the primary, legitimate, and natural purpose of marriage and sexual intercourse, he never explicitly referred to the goods of fidelity or the good of *sacramentum* as secondary goods.²⁸ Hence the *1917 Code* joins Aquinas in turning Augustine’s goods of marriage into the ends of marriage. But unlike Aquinas, the *1917 Code*’s classification suggested a subordination of the secondary end to the primary end of marriage. This is because, as the previous section has shown, Aquinas uses the term secondary and conjoined end to refer to the fact that both the mother and father needed the support of each other to do the job of educating and nurturing of their children and not to connote a hierarchy of ends as *The 1917 Code* did or as a justification to engage in the conjugal act within marriage.

On another note, one can argue that the change in terminology might suggest something significant, since goods and ends are not synonyms, especially because a thing can have either a good or a bad end. However, in philosophical and theological analysis, the words ‘good’ and/or ‘end’ sometimes are used interchangeably to refer to the ultimate goal or to the finality of man

²⁷ As I hope to show in chapter seven of this study, the *1983 Code of Canon Law* did not describe the ends of marriage in the hierarchical language of primary and secondary ends. See *The 1983 Code of Canon Law*, Latin and English edition prepared under the auspices of the Canon Law Society of America (Washington D. C.: Canon Law Society of America, 1999), 1056.

²⁸ However, it is doubtful that one could substantiate an argument that Augustine held the three goods as having equal status to one another. This is because his calling procreation the primary purpose of marriage presupposes that perhaps the others are of less significance, as chapter three of this study has helped to elucidate. Nevertheless, some theologians have argued that the saying that procreation is the primary end of marriage does not suggest that procreation is of more importance or significance than the secondary ends, but rather more fundamental, I argue that such claim is difficulty to substantiate based on the evidence of this study so far. Cf. John Ford, “Marriage: Its Meaning and Purpose” in *Theological Studies* 3 (1942): 333-74. Some other theologians have also offered different ways in which the use of the term primary end (*Fines operis* and *fines operantis*) should be understood in an effort to justify consistency of *Gaudium et Spes* and previous centuries as it relates to the magisterial position that understood procreation and nurturing of children as the primary ends of marriage. Cf. Smith, *Humanae Vitae*, 48-50. Since I intend to examine this question in chapter seven of this study I will reserve further comment till then.
and/or of human actions. Therefore, in teaching that the good of procreation is the primary purpose of marriage because the sexual act is naturally ordained for the procreation of children, Augustine used the word good in the same sense that both Aquinas and the 1917 Code used the word end. Based on this reading, I disagree with Mark Pilon who argued that ends of marriage are the “objective intentions of God in his plan for marriage, while the goods of marriage refer to the objective fruits intended by God for instituting marriage.”

Thus, it is evident from the analysis so far that Augustine used the term ‘good’ (bonum) to refer to the natural end or the finality of the marital intercourse—procreation, in the same manner in which Aquinas and The 1917 Code used the word ‘end’ (finis) to refer to it though Aquinas’s understanding of nature is more nuanced. This is because the whole framework of the traditional teaching that understood procreation as the primary and legitimate good or purpose of marriage was enshrined in the assumption that marriage is naturally ordained for the procreation of children. For this same reason, it is morally unacceptable for Augustine, Aquinas, and The 1917 Code of Canon Law for one to marry with an ab initio intention or will to avoid the (finis primarius) primary good/end for which marriage is naturally ordained to achieve—procreation. Therefore, it is permissible to say that the meaning or significance which Augustine apportioned to the good of procreation is not different from that of Aquinas’s and The 1917 Code, since both Aquinas and The 1917 Code based their conclusions on the hypotheses that procreation is the principal and primary end (finis) of marriage because the conjugal act is ordained for the

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31 This is also in the 1983 Code of Canon Law as this study will show later.
procreation of children. However, the explicit subordination of the secondary ends by the primary end is the teaching of the *1917 Code of Canon Law*.

Furthermore, while a case can be made that both Augustine and Aquinas arrived at their apportioning of marriage with distinct goods or ends by looking at the natural finality of the sexual act, Aquinas’s explication is more nuanced than Augustine and the *1917 Code’s* position. As this study has shown, Aquinas did not limit his teaching concerning procreation as the principal end of marriage only by insisting on the natural ordination of the sexual act to fecundity. Rather, nature for Aquinas is more of an ontological reality than a physical reality. Consequently, reason empowers and enables humans to apprehend the ends proper to them as ontological beings. In other words, human beings do only have an inclination to reproduce themselves, but human actions collectively lead to their ultimate end, happiness. Understood as such, it the ability of humans to rationally perform human acts including the marital act that differentiates human actions from those of the irrational animals whose reproductive capability is neither guided by reason nor has an spiritual finality in view. However, whether as ‘goods’ (*bona*) or ‘ends’ (*finis*) of marriage, none of the three positions were able to free the conjugal act from the instrumental value that Augustine gave to it.

Against this backdrop, it makes sense to say that though different terminologies were employed by Augustine and Aquinas, the central message that each conveyed was still the same in its essence. Succinctly put, the teaching concerning the primacy of procreation is based on the natural ordination of marriage for the procreation of children for Augustine, Aquinas and *The*

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32 See Aquinas, *ST*, I-II, q. 94, a.2.
1917 Code of Canon Law. In what then does the significance or the contribution of The 1917 Code to this history or debate lie?

The significance of the codification of the purposes of marriage into primary and secondary ends as the Code did was to allow judicial judges to refer to it while making legal marital judgments. In other words, by arranging the ends of marriage in the order of values, it follows that should a situation arise in which the two ends cannot be simultaneously achieved, the primary end—the procreation and the nurturing of children—would automatically subordinate the secondary end—the mutual support and providing a remedy for concupiscence.33

In defense of the juridical tone of Canon 1013.1, Ford argues that “unfortunately it is the broken marriages that hit the court and that the judges have to look for matrimonial pathology; that is with the external provable factors to which are decisive in determining the validity of marriage.”34 However, he conceded that “an exclusively canonical viewpoint (even though marriage is essentially a being of the juridical order) is likely to be incomplete and one-sided and tends to depreciate the other essential, but less tangible, elements of Christian marriage.”35

While the categorization of the purposes of marriage into primary and secondary ends has helped, and will continue to help, juries to make judicial judgments in situations where, for a just and prudent reason, the two ends of marriage could not simultaneously be met, it did so to the detriment of the secondary ends of marriage. Hence, in its longing for the empirical, practical and biological end of sexual intercourse, the 1917 Code reduced marriage to an act whose value

33 See Mackin, What is Marriage?, 209.

34 See Ford and Kelly, Contemporary Moral Theology, 34.

35 Ford and Kelly, Contemporary Moral Theology, 34.
is predominately determined by its functionality and practicability, that is, to provable and empirical values that are outside of the couples’ mutual good. It also neglected the deep affection that conjugal love brings to marriage which may not meet the requirements of the biological end of sexual intercourse, but which nonetheless is necessary for the life and sustenance of married life.  

This is the state of the matter with regard to the teaching concerning the ends of marriage in the Catholic tradition that dominated subsequent traditional teaching concerning marriage and its ends during the early part of the twentieth century. As this study indicated in the previous chapter, in the midst of the challenges and the problems that the hierarchical structure of the ends of marriage created or caused in the Catholic tradition, in 1930, the Anglican Lambeth Conference approved the use of contraception for married couples; a view which they had previously rejected entirely in both the 1908 and 1920 Conferences.

Thus, it is more probable that The Lambeth Conference’s approval of contraception spurred some theologians from within and outside the Catholic tradition to propose views concerning the purposes of marriage that leaned toward the promotion of companionship as an

36 Although it is probably true that if a couple’s relationship deteriorates to the point of needing the help of the judicial court to adjudicate between them that their love may have died, however, it is not always the case and even if their love has died, it can still be resuscitated. And even in the most extreme case that their love for each other has completely died, it is debatable whether it tantamount to the death of the bond of marriage that requires a very deficient understanding of the bond. I will comment more on the claim that the death of couple’s love for one another is enough to establish a divorce in the concluding section of this study that will examine the pastoral implications of the findings or questions raised during the course of this inquiry.

end of marriage which can be chosen without the intention to procreate. Nevertheless, neither the approval of contraception by The Lambeth Conference nor the implications of such approval were enough to deter the Catholic hierarchy from maintaining their position that emphasized the primacy of procreation over mutual help and the allaying of concupiscence. In the same vein, the Catholic archbishop of Westminster condemned the Anglican position and noted that by their approval of contraception “they have lost the right of being the authorized organs of Christian morality.”

In the midst of the confusion created by the Anglican approval of contraception, and the overwhelming evidence that showed that most Catholics were engaging in contraceptive intercourse, some scholars began to do more in-depth study concerning this question. Consequently, some personalist-minded scholars decided to re-examine the tradition’s teaching concerning the ends of marriage. On a similar note, in order to quell the confusion that was created by these events in December 31, 1930, Pius XI issued his encyclical Casti Connubii which condemned (though not by name) the Lambeth Conference vote of August 15, 1930, that approved contraception. Similarly, Pius XI robustly defended St. Augustine’s teaching on the goodness of marriage and on the primacy of procreation as well as The 1917 Code of Canon Law’s classification of the primary and secondary ends of marriage.

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40 The teaching of Hildebrand and Doms as representatives of the group of scholars will be examined in this next sub-section.

41 See Pius XI, Casti Connubii, 44-55.
According to Pius XI, “among the blessings of marriage offspring holds the first place.”

Pius XI specifically referred to contraception as a grave sin and a violation of the natural law.

As a way to continue to trace this history before the Second Vatican Council, in the next section, this study will briefly analyze the scholarship that followed *The 1917 Code of Canon Law*’s categorization of the ends of marriage into primary and secondary ends by paying special attention to the contributions of Dietrich Von Hildebrand and Herbert Doms to this discussion.

### 5.2. THE TWENTIETH CENTURY’S PERSONALIST SCHOLARS’ REACTION TO THE 1917 CODE OF CANON LAW’S TEACHING CONCERNING THE ENDS OF MARRIAGE

**BACKGROUND**

The codification of the ends of marriage into the primary and the secondary ends raised, and continues to raise, contentious debates among scholars. Prominent among them are those that are referred to or who see themselves as personalist scholars. Some of the personalist

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43 Although personalism is a wider philosophical and theological impulse than in simply marriage and sexuality, as it relates to the subject under inquiry, the personalist scholars can be described as those scholars who through their writings and teachings have emphasized the personal aspects of married life, such as but not limited to mutual fulfillment, mutual satisfaction, mutual perfection, mutual love and mutual self-gift. In other words, the personalist scholars emphasized the positive aspects of what the Catholic tradition referred to as the secondary ends of marriage, especially with the addition of Pope Pius XI’s cultivation of mutual love in *Casti Connubii* as a secondary end of marriage. Although both the primary and the secondary ends could be simultaneously achieved by couples as they engaged in the marital act, most personalists argue that their importance should not be linked with either the sexual act or with fecundity. But rather that the secondary ends such as conjugal love should be taken as an independent end that promotes and sustains life-companionship and partnership of couples with or without fecundity, as long as there was no intentional action to frustrate fecundity. While some personalists rejected the traditional position that understood the procreation of children as the primary end of marriage, there are some whose
scholars (especially Hildebrand) neither conceded to the view that the use of contraceptive is a morally good act, nor rejected the traditional teaching that understood procreation of children as the primary end of marriage.\(^{44}\) On the other hand, although some did not approve the use of contraceptives as a morally good act, especially Doms and Krempel, they rejected the traditional teaching that understood procreation as the primary end of marriage. However, both Hildebrand and Doms constructed a robust analysis in which they gave more value and/or recognition to the significance of conjugal love within marriage.

It might be fair to say that both those who defended and worked within the framework of the traditional hierarchical structure and those who rejected it have something in common. Both Hildebrand and Doms agree that there is a need to develop a teaching concerning marriage and human sexuality that will strike a balance between the highly physicalist account of human nature of the Manualist’s tradition in the area of sexuality and the overtly contraceptive mentality that had enveloped the late nineteenth and early twentieth century’s society, in which marital intercourse was predominately seen as an avenue for sexual gratification. In such a balanced personalistic leaning did not prevent them from upholding the traditional teaching concerning the ends of marriage in which procreation was understood as the primary end of marriage. For the example of those theologians whose personalistic leaning departed from the traditional position consult: Doms, *The Meaning of Marriage*; Krempel, *Die Zweckfrage der Ehe in neuer Beleuchtung*; and Hieronymus Wilms, “Review of Krempel” *Divus Thomas* 20 (1942), 92-97. For the example of the theologians whose personalistic analyses of marriage and its ends were congruent with the traditional teaching see, Hildebrand, *Marriage*, and Karol Wojtyla, *Amor y Responsabilidad* (Madrid: Razon y fe 1978)—*Love and Responsibility*. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1993). This book was first published in its Polish version by Krakow, Wydawnicto, Znak in 1960 and was first translated in English 1981 and published by William Collins Sons & Co. Ltd., London and Farrar, Straus and Giroux, Inc., New York. I will use mainly the English translations of these authors’ writings and refer to either their German or French versions when referencing an author that used them. I will develop the analyses of Hildebrand and Doms as representatives of the personalist positions in the next subsection that follows.

analysis, the emphasis will shift from nature to a discussion on the human person in his or her entirety.\footnote{Mahoney, \textit{The making of Moral Theology}, 310; Charles Curran, “Official Catholic Social and Sexual Teachings: A Methodological Comparison,” in \textit{Tensions in Moral Theology} (South Bend: Notre Dame, 1988), 93-96; Johnstone, “From Physicalism to Personalism, 71-96; and Grabowski, “Person and Nature?” 283.}

This reading is supported by Hildebrand who in his criticism of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century devaluation of the nature and dignity of the human person especially in the area of human sexuality, beautifully articulated the central tenets that motivated, and continue to motivate, most personalist theologians thusly:

Our epoch is characterized by a terrible anti-personalism, a progressive blindness toward the nature and dignity of the spiritual person. This anti-personalism expresses itself mainly in a radical collectivism and in the different kinds of materialism. Of these biological materialism is perhaps the most dangerous, for it considers man as more highly developed animal, his whole personality determined by mere physiological elements. Human life is considered exclusively from a biological point of view and biological principles are the measure by which all human activities are judged. In such an ideological situation, it seems very important to stress again the spiritual significance of marriage—and to explain not only the primary end of procreation, but its primary meaning as the intimate union of two persons in mutual love… An understanding of this is beginning to grow in different countries and moral theologians are emphasizing the role of love in marriage, a role which was previously under-estimated by some. In stressing the primary end of marriage—procreation—certain theological treatises have overlooked the primary meaning of marriage which is love.\footnote{Hildebrand, \textit{Marriage}, v-vi. Hildebrand not only maintained the traditional teaching that regarded procreation as the primary end of marriage and mutual help and the allying of concupiscence as the secondary ends of marriage, his differentiation of the purpose of marriage from the meaning of marriage was one of the earliest teachings that gave conjugal love a positive recognition in marriage. Thus, his novelty rests on the fact that he was able to spur other theologians with his teaching to begin to recognize conjugal love as a unique love that is central to the life and sustenance of marriage and to question the actual role or place of procreation within marriage. His position leans toward a unification of procreation and conjugal love rather than creating a dichotomy between the two ends of marriage. Some of his important works through which he developed his thesis are: \textit{Die Ehe—Marriage: The Mystery of Faithful Love, Reinheit und Jungfraulickheit—In Defense of Purity}, Though the teaching of Hildebrand got a cold reception among his fellow Germans then, the significance of his writings to the debate concerning the relationship between procreation and conjugal love in marriage has been acknowledged by most recent scholars. Noonan referred to him as “the first married layman to make a substantial contribution to Catholic doctrine on marriage….The first time a Catholic writer taught that love was a requirement of lawful, marital coition.” Noonan, \textit{Contraception}, 494-495. Geoffrey Grubb “The Anthropology of Marriage in Significant Roman Catholic Documents from \textit{Casti Connubii} to \textit{Gaudium et Spe}s (Doms, Hildebrand),” PH.D Dissertation (Saint Louis University 1986), especially pages 128-134 detailed his contribution to this discussion. In these pages, Grubb listed}
Therefore, in the pages that follow, I will analyze the arguments of Hildebrand and Doms in reference to the ends of marriage. One of the main reasons for the choice of these two scholars was because, although both of them used a similar terminology or phrases, ‘the primary meaning’ and the ‘primary end’ in developing a theology of marriage, they arrived at a different conclusion.

5.2A. DIETRICH VON HILDEBRAND

Dietrich Von Hildebrand’s analysis of the ends of marriage was based on his distinction between the primary meaning and the primary end of marriage. In his distinction procreation is understood as the primary end of marriage while conjugal love is taken as its primary meaning.47

Many reviews that gave Hildebrand’s teaching a positive rating and lauded its contribution to the development of theological discussion concerning the ends of marriage. Also Arjonillo, *Conjugal Love and the Ends of Marriage*, and most recently Kevin Schemenauer, “Dietrich Von Hildebrand on Procreation: The Primary and Superabundant End of Marriage,” PH.D dissertation, (The Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C.: 2009) joined a host of scholars in appreciating the contribution of Hildebrand to the discussion on the ends of marriage. Schemenauer noted that although Hildebrand’s works have such richness in recognizing the role of conjugal love in marriage, in prompting honest questions about the role of procreation, he was shocked that his teachings had “received little systematic treatment.” Consequently, he traced and analyzed Hildebrand’s various writings in both their original German and in their translated languages to buttress the importance of this erudite scholar’s works in the discussion of the ends of marriage. He diligently showcased the contribution of Hildebrand’s astute distinction between the purpose and the meaning of marriage. At the end he concluded that Hildebrand’s treatment of conjugal love as the primary motivation for marriage, far from jeopardizing the significance of procreation in marriage, enhances its role by encouraging reverence for procreation as a gift of love. For more information and for a beautiful synthesis of Hildebrand’s works in both their original languages and translations that have bearing on this discussion see Schemenauer’s dissertation cited above. Similarly, even Herbert Doms, whose emphasis on the role of conjugal love departed from the traditional teaching, not only gave a positive recognition and appreciation to Hildebrand’s novelty in according a significant role to conjugal love, he noted a similarity between his work and that of Hildebrand’s teaching. He, however, accused Hildebrand’s works of not going far enough since according to him Hildebrand gave limited role to the significance of conjugal love in marriage. Doms, *The Meaning of Marriage*, xvi.

47 Hildebrand, *Marriage*, v, vi, 4, and 21; *Purity*, 12, Noonan, *Contraception*, 495. According to Arjonillo, although Hildebrand was the first to use the distinction between “meaning” and “end” in his theological appraisal with regards to the purpose of marriage, the distinction *per se* did not originate with him. Rather, Hildebrand borrowed it from Max Scheler. See Arjonillo, *Conjugal Love*, 22, 46. It is pertinent to note that Hildebrand did not systematically define or clarify what he meant by the ‘primary meaning’ of marriage. Such a lack is not a trivial issue considering the fact that his understanding of conjugal love as the primary meaning of marriage is very central to his discussion concerning the ends of marriage. Based on this weakness, he has been criticized by various reviewers. In a generous defense of Hildebrand’s lack of clarity regarding the use of the “primary meaning,”
In his lectures delivered to the Federation of Catholic Students at Innsbruck in 1923, Von Hildebrand rejected the purely biological approach and argued that “the intention to propagate could not, by itself, organically unite physical sex with the heart and spirit.” He distanced himself from the old Augustinian close association of the marital act to only the function of generation. “The marital act has not only the function, the generation of children; it also possess a significance for man as a human being (in quantum homo)—namely to be the expression and fulfillment of wedded love and community of life—and, moreover, it participates after a certain fashion in the sacramental meaning of matrimony.” For him, fidelity in Augustine’s sense required that person meet person in a giving of self.

Hildebrand continues to point out that “in eating it made no difference if one paid attention to the process of eating. But, in the performance of the marital act, a fully deliberate, conscious attention is demanded [since] the act of wedded communion has indeed the end (Zweck) of propagation, but in addition, the significance of a unique union of love.”

Schemenauer observed that “one seeking to understand his use of the phrase ‘primary meaning’ does well to explain his positive affirmations in relation to what he does not mean by the phrase, namely, that conjugal love is arbitrarily related to marriage, a synonym for marriage, or the primary end of marriage.” Schumenauer “Dietrich Von Hildebrand on Procreation,” 83. For a detailed explanation of his defense see: “Dietrich Von Hildebrand on Procreation,” 83-98. For the reviewers who criticized Hildebrand for his lack of explication consult: Robert A. Hewitt, “Review of Marriage,” by Dietrich von Hildebrand, America 67 (6 June) 1942 244-245; G.L.D., “review of Marriage,” by Dietrich von Hildebrand, Orate Fratres 16 (14 June 1941): 382; and Bernard Lonergan, “review of Marriage,” by Dietrich von Hildebrand, in Shorter Papers, vol. 20 of collected Works of Bernard Lonergan, ed. Frederick Crows and Robert Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 155; and Arjonillo Conjugal Love, 292-304.

48 However, while Noonan reported that this lecture was given in 1925, Schemenauer’s study showed that it was given in 1923. I am inclined to align with Schemenauer’s account because he referenced Hildebrand who noted that Die Ehe—Marriage was based on his 1923 lecture to the Catholic Academic Association Conference. See Schemenauer, “Dietrich Von Hildebrand on Procreation,” 3.

49 Hildebrand, Defense of Purity 10. See also Noonan, Contraception, 495; and Grabowski, “Person and Nature?,” 285.

50 Hildebrand, Defense of Purity, 20, 22.
on Hildebrand’s teaching above, Noonan argues that by holding this position “the old and long-used Augustinian comparison of intercourse to eating was rejected since the significance of eating was exhausted by its objective end.” And hence sexual intercourse is here given an intrinsic value contrary to the purely instrumental value that Augustine apportioned to it.

In 1929, in his book *Marriage*, Hildebrand continued to distinguish between the primary meaning of marriage—conjugal love—from the primary purpose of marriage—procreation. Seen in this perspective, the essential meaning of marriage is the mutual love, the’ becoming one in love,’ and the reciprocal raising to eternal destiny; while the essential end is the generation of a new man. “In marriage the center and core is love, no other earthly community is constituted so exclusively in its very substance by mutual love…. In marriage the fundamental subjective attitude and the objective raison d’etre of the relationship, a relationship which also mysteriously serves to procreate new human beings, is mutual love…. Love is the primary meaning of marriage, just as the birth of new human beings is its primary end.” He calls love “the essence of the relationship [that is embedded in marriage].”

Against those who would juxtapose Hildebrand’s positive promotion of conjugal love to refer to only the sexual intercourse between married persons, Schemenauer offers an important clarification. According to him, “at the foundation of Hildebrand’s remarks on conjugal love is his affirmation that the one who has conjugal love is concerned not merely with particular

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51 Noonan, *Contraception*, 495.

52 See Hildebrand, *Marriage*, 4, and 20-21; *Purity*, 12.


features of the beloved, such as her social status or physical appearances, but with her complete personality." In other words, conjugal love is neither a shallow infatuation nor a blind love, rather it is a love that appreciates the value and the totality of the person loved even when it occurred rapidly and/or at the first sight of the beloved without premeditation. This is because, “conjugal love can arise quite suddenly, and even develop to maturity at the first encounter of two persons.” According to Hildebrand conjugal love has the following characteristics which differentiate it from the other forms of love—it seeks the totality of the beloved, it is unitive, and durable.

By maintaining that this love can only exit between a man and a woman—since they represent two different sexes of mankind, Hildebrand showed how this metaphysical difference gave couples a unique capacity to complement each other in ways in which homosexual couples would be unable to do. Similarly, he also underscored the procreative purposefulness of their union. He argues “Only in conjugal [act], where the man and woman are united in a unique communion, where they give themselves to one another in the deepest sense of the word, and

56. Schemenauer, “Dietrich Von Hildebrand on Procreation,” 18; see also Dietrich Hildebrand, Christian Ethics (New York: David McKay, 1953); and Hildebrand, Marriage, 5.

57. See Hildebrand, Marriage, 9-14; and Schemenauer, “Dietrich Von Hildebrand on Procreation,” 19. In Ford’s review, although he correctly noted that central to Hildebrand’s discussion to the significance of conjugal love is the ability for love to arise suddenly, he neglected to point out that according to Hildebrand’s proposal, in conjugal love, the lover sees the beloved’s complete personality. Such an omission led to his erroneous conclusion that “Hildebrand did not offer any criteria by which real love is to be distinguished ahead of time from infatuation.” For Ford’s review consult: Review of Marriage, by Dietrich Von Hildebrand, Thought 17 [September 1945]: 544-545; see also Schemenauer, “Dietrich Von Hildebrand on Procreation,” 20.

58. Hildebrand, Marriage, 8. See Chapters One and Two; pages 17-77, of Schemenauer’s, “Dietrich Von Hildebrand on Procreation,” for an overview of Hildebrand’s works in which Hildebrand explained what he meant by conjugal love and how conjugal love positively shapes and promotes the life experiences of married couples.

59. Hildebrand’s teaching concerning the distinctive character of the conjugal love is better understood within his framework of moral philosophy—a realist ethics of value response. See Schemenauer 18-31; and Hildebrand, Man and Woman, 16; Marriage, 5-7, 12-15, 60.
belong to each other in an ultimate interpenetration of their souls, does this relation to the sensual sphere become intelligible [and procreative].” In treating the relationship that exists between marriage and conjugal love, Hildebrand insists that the couple, who intend to marry must have the seeds of conjugal love, namely respect for each other’s personality and unique differences.

Seen through this lens, if couples contract marriage without the recognition of each other’s personality and unique metaphysical difference they would have contracted marriage invalidly. Although he recognized the difficulties in making sure that the totality and unique difference of the beloved is always respected, he concluded that the status of marriage demands that spouses promote the love they promise even in the midst of difficulties in doing so.

To maintain conjugal love in its entire grandeur and purity, in its glow, its depth and its vital plentitude is a task that arises for both partners with the conclusion of their marriage. It is difficult always to keep before us in all its same clarity and splendor the image of the other person so wonderfully revealed by love; because our laziness, our dullness, our constant falling back into periphery stultifies our vision. We should and must fight against this, for it constitutes a sin against the temple which we erected in our marriage.

In developing this thought, Hildebrand referenced St. Augustine’s teaching concerning the three goods of marriage in which Augustine taught that procreation was the primary and legitimate good of marriage. But unlike Augustine, he contends that procreation is not the only end (Zweck) that makes marriage legitimate:

> It is quite impossible to regard the union of love and sex in marriage as due exclusively to its aim of propagation. We should not forget that the Church assigns three ends to marriage, which St. Augustine sums up by the words proles,

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60 Hildebrand, *Marriage*, 15.


fides, and sacramentum—offspring, fidelity, and sacrament. There exists, however, a profound relation of quality between the bodily union and that psychological and spiritual factor of specifically matrimonial love formulated under the terms mutuum adjutorium (mutual assistance), and fides (fidelity) as one of these three ends.  

Although Hildebrand identified conjugal love with fides which suggested a secondary signification within the framework of the Code’s hierarchical structure, he did not call conjugal love a secondary end of marriage but rather the primary meaning of marriage. Reflecting on Hildebrand’s distinction between the “end” and the “meaning” of marriage Arjonillo elucidates:

Love was not identified with mutual help, nor was there a subtle desire to justify a separation between the unitive and procreative aspects of the conjugal act, which he categorically affirmed as a grave sin. On the contrary, von Hildebrand intended to insist on the proper manner by which marriage and procreation be understood. The distinction between meaning and end (and the difference between instrumental finality and finality of superabundance) was necessary in order to avoid identifying marriage as a mere means of procreation.

Hildebrand in his works especially in The Encyclical “Humanae Vitae,” gives the synopsis account of the role of procreation in marriage by distinguishing between superabundance and instrumental finalities. According to him, “in instrumental finality the being

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64 Hildebrand, In Defense of Purity, 7; See also Noonan, Contraception, 495; and Schemenauer, “Dietrich Von Hildebrand on Procreation,” 91-92.

65 Both Noonan and Schemenauer highlight Hildebrand’s link between conjugal love and fides. Cf. Noonan, Contraception, 495; and Schemenauer, “Dietrich Von Hildebrand on Procreation,” 92. Hildebrand also refers to the ends of marriage as discussed by Aquinas: “The threefold purpose of marriage, proles, fides, sacramentum (offspring, fidelity, the sacrament), of which Aquinas says: ‘Primus finis respondet matrimonio hominis, in quantum est animal; secundus est homo, tertius in quantum est fidelis’ (the first end of marriage belongs to man as an animal, the second as a human being, the third as a Christian), extends also to the act of marriage. That act has not only a function, the generation of children; it also possess a signification for man as a human being (in Quantum homo)—namely, to be the expression and fulfillment of wedded love and community of life—and, moreover, it participates after a certain fashion o the sacramental meaning of matrimony. That is to say, the significance of physical sex in relation to man in quantum homo cannot be purely utilitarian, functional in the narrowest sense, like its significance in relation to man in quantum homo animal, in which its function is to produce offspring. On the contrary, in this connection we should rather speak of the meaning of sex than of its function. Speaking generally, we can only talk of a purely functional relation when the content of anything is exhausted by its wholly objective finality, its actual production of a particular result.” Purity, 10-11.

66 Arjonillo, Conjugal Love and the Ends of Marriage, 343.
which is considered as means is in its meaning and value completely dependent upon the end, whereas in the superabundant finality, it has a meaning and value independently of the end to which it leads.\(^{67}\) I concur with both Arjonillo and Schemenauer that Hildebrand’s preoccupation was to show how “procreation is not the only good of marriage and not to argue that conjugal love is one of the ends of marriage [that is subordinated] to procreation.”\(^{68}\) This is because as both Arjonillo and Schemenauer rightly pointed out “the term ‘meaning’ is that which is constitutive of a thing, or that which is necessary to render a thing intelligible.”\(^{69}\)

Congruent with this claim, Albert Schmit observed that Hildebrand’s classification of ‘primary end,’ and ‘primary meaning’ allowed him to maintain the centrality of conjugal love within marriage as well as uphold the traditional teaching that sees procreation as the primary end of marriage. He writes: “One finds in many books of this kind, changes and expressions which are, only with difficulty, compatible with Church teaching. Von Hildebrand knows to avoid incompatibility with Church teaching by distinguishing between the meaning and end of marriage so that the life and love community are placed at the summit not as \textit{finis primaries} but as the meaning of marriage.”\(^{70}\)

In order to ensure that neither conjugal love nor procreation suffers because of his emphasis on the centrality of conjugal love, Hildebrand epitomizes the significance and the role

\(^{67}\) Hildebrand, \textit{Man and Woman}, 93-94.

\(^{68}\) Schemenauer “Dietrich Von Hildebrand on Procreation,” 92; and Arjonillo, \textit{Conjugal Love and the Ends of Marriage}, 345.


\(^{70}\) Albert Schmitt, review of \textit{Die Ehe}, by Dietrich von Hildebrand, \textit{Zeitschrift fur katholische Theologie} 54 (1930); 309. The quotation is as translated by Schemenauer, “Dietrich Von Hildebrand on Procreation,” 93.
of procreation within marriage by showing how God connected the three goods of marriage. He argues that his teaching, far from causing a dichotomy between procreation and conjugal love, enhances, facilitates, and unites the two together since through the marital act and in the birth of a new person, “its finality is understood as an instance of the principle of superabundance and not as an instrumental finality.”

Understood as such, conjugal love promotes, rather than jeopardizes the role of procreation in marriage. Hildebrand’s words deserve to be quoted at length here:

To this sublime love union God has confided the coming into being of a new man, a cooperation with His divine creativity. Could we think of anything more beautiful than this connection between the deepest love communion, the ultimate self-donation out of love, and the creation of a new human being? A deep mystery is here offered to us, which calls for reverence and awe. But we can grasp the grandeur and depth of this connection only if we first understand marital act as the consummation of this ultimate union to which spousal love aspires. We can appreciate the mysterious character of the link between marital act and the birth of a new person only if we have understood its finality as an instance of the principle of superabundance and not as an instrumental finality in which the conjugal act is looked as a mere means of procreation. And it must be most emphatically stated that understanding the meaning and value of marriage as a love union does not minimize but rather enhances the link between marriage and procreation.

He devoted his later writings, especially *Man and Woman, The Encyclical: “Humanae Vitae,” Purity,* and *Liturgy and Personality,* to expounding his views on how procreation should be understood as a superabundant end for one to fully appreciate the mysterious link between marriage, procreation and conjugal love. Therefore by linking the finality of conjugal love and the birth of a new baby in his framework of the principle of superabundance, he departed from

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71 Hildebrand, *The Encyclical “Humanae Vitae,”* 29,

72 Hildebrand, *The Encyclical “Humanae Vitae,”* 29, emphasis in original.

the traditional view that understood the conjugal act as having only an instrumental value as a means to an end. He writes, “in instrumental finality the being which is considered as means is in its meaning and value completely dependent upon the end, whereas in the superabundant finality, it has a meaning and value independently of the end to which it leads.”\textsuperscript{74}

Hildebrand continued to defend his teaching concerning the difference between instrumental finality and the superabundant finality. “In instrumental finality, the end is the exclusive raison d’etre of the means; in superabundant finality, the good serving the end has also a raison d’etre in itself.”\textsuperscript{75} Reflecting on Hildebrand’s distinction between instrumental finality and superabundant finality Schemenauer rightly observed, “Superabundant finality is unique in that the means have significance beyond the ends they serve.”\textsuperscript{76} Thus, unlike Augustine who gave the conjugal act an instrumental value, Hildebrand maintained that the conjugal act is intrinsically valuable, and something which demanded conscious attention. Understood as such, procreative intent alone is no longer sufficient to account for the full and personal quality of intercourse.\textsuperscript{77}

However, to maintain his alliance to both Augustine and the traditional position, Hildebrand accepted Augustine’s teaching that procreation is the primary good and by association the primary end of marriage. Thus, the insight of his teaching does not lie only in his giving conjugal love a central place, nor in his appreciation of the value of the marital act as

\textsuperscript{74} Hildebrand, \textit{Man and Woman}, 93-94.


\textsuperscript{76} Schemenauer, “Dietrich Von Hildebrand on Procreation,” 105.

\textsuperscript{77} Grabowski, “Person and Nature?” 285.
having intrinsic value, with its accompanying sexual pleasure in the context of love within
marriage, but most importantly, his position did not obscure for him the natural ordination of
marriage to procreation. Thus, he upheld Augustine’s apportioning of the good of procreation as
the primary good and The 1917 Code of Canon Law’s classification of the primary and
secondary ends of marriage that referred to mutual help and the allying for concupiscence as the
secondary ends of marriage. However, to arrive at this judgment, he avoided the terminology of
the primary and secondary ends, and distinguished between the ‘primary ends’ and the ‘primary
meaning’ of marriage. With this teaching, he was able to articulate a positive relationship
between procreation and conjugal love in ways that were profusely lacking in the teachings of St.
Augustine, the Patristic writers, the scholastic theologians, and the 1917 Code of Canon Law. 78

However, the juxtaposition of the “primary meaning” and the “primary end” of marriage
with its appreciation and recognition of both the good of procreation and conjugal love did not
come without a cost. Many scholars either chide him for paying more attention to the importance
of conjugal love to the detriment of procreation’s significance, or argue that he did not do
enough to advance the significance of conjugal love because of his unwillingness to depart fully
from the traditional position (that regarded procreation as the primary end of marriage and
conjugal love as an instrumental end of marriage). 79

Some even argue that he did not explain what he meant by the terms ‘primary meaning’
and ‘primary end.’ In their bafflement, they question the possibility of a thing having two

78 However, a case can be made that the seed of what flowers in twentieth century personalism was sown in
scholastic reflection on marital friendship and love. See Arjonillio, Conjugal Love, 23.

79 Albert Schmitt, review of Die Ehe, by Dietrich von Hildebrand, Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie 54 (1930);
309. Quotation is as translated by Schemenauer in “Dietrich Von Hildebrand on Procreation,” 93.
primaries at the same time, that is, “primary meaning” and “primary end.” According to C. Bruehl it sounded tautological for a thing to have two primary attributes at the same time. Thus for him, “it seems to be of questionable validity because a society receives its meanings, nature or essence from the end.” Similarly, Ford argues that marriage is essentially a juridical bond consisting of rights and duties. One cannot tell what the essential meaning of that bond is until one knows the ends for which it was instituted.

Granted that Hildebrand did not give a clear explanation concerning his teaching in which he categorized conjugal love as the primary meaning of marriage while procreation was referred to as the primary end of marriage, recent scholars such as Schemenauer and Arjonillo who have studied his writings extensively, have provided reasonable explanations for this lack in Hildebrand’s writings. According to Arjonillo, Hildebrand uses the term meaning to identify a constitutive element of a thing or that which is necessary to render a thing intelligible. Similarly, Schemenauer on numerous occasions pointed out that “Hildebrand repeatedly affirms that the fundamental relation of conjugal love to marriage is one of meaning and not of end.” However, both scholars acknowledged that Hildebrand could have done more to explain the meaning of this concept himself. Consequently, in his careful analysis of Hildebrand’s writings, Schemenauer also joined a number of other scholars in acknowledging that Hildebrand neither

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83 See Arjonillo Conjugal Love, 236, 343; and Schemenauer, “Dietrich Von Hildebrand on Procreation,” 92-93.
84 Schemenauer “Dietrich Von Hildebrand on Procreation,” 92.
explicitly defined his use of the term “end” nor described clearly his meaning in affirming that procreation is the primary end of marriage.  

Similarly, Schemenauer observed that Hildebrand’s dropping of the phrases—“primary meaning” and “primary end”—with its corresponding significations in his later writings did not help matters either. Nevertheless, Schemenauer’s critical study of Hildebrand’s other writings led him to suggest a reason for the ambiguity in the English translation of Hildebrand’s work. According to him in the original German “the German phrase that stands behind the phrase ‘primary end’ is primatrer Zweck. This term Zweck is commonly translated to English as ‘function,’ ‘purpose,’ or ‘end’, and that each of these three possible meanings has relevance for von Hildebrand’s use of the term.”

Against those critics who chide Hildebrand for his lack of proper explanation of a phrase that is central to his discussion of marriage—the “primary meaning” of marriage, Schemenauer noted that the German original of Die Ehe, has a crucial qualification to the phrase that the English translation omitted. According to his findings, the German original reads “Die Liebe ist der primare Schopfungssinn der Ehe—Love is the primary, created meaning of marriage.” He continues, “Unfortunately, Schopfung is dropped in the English translation so that the proposal is

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86 Hildebrand dropped his usage of the phrase primary meaning and primary end in both his Man and Woman, and The Encyclical: Humanae Vitae. In these works, Hildebrand was more concerned about showing how conjugal love related to marriage. This relationship is embedded in the fact that conjugal love serves as the motivating force and the bedrock which cements the marriage. However, he insisted that an adequate treatment of conjugal love far from diminishing or jeopardizing the role procreation in marriage, enhances and solidifies procreation’s primary character.

87 Schemenauer, “Dietrich Von Hildebrand on Procreation,” 131. For more information on these three interpretations of Zweck and on how each meaning bear on Hildebrand’s position see 131-135.

translated not as “the primary, created meaning of marriage but as the ‘primary meaning’ of marriage.”

The omission here is schopfungssinn—created which Schmemauer argued was a significant omission that affected the sense of Hildebrand’s use of the word. Rather than use the word meaning in a merely subjective sense, he roots the concepts of meaning in God’s intention for marriage.” According to Schmemauer, the significance of seeing both conjugal love and procreation as the created meaning or end of marriage lies in the need for human beings to acknowledge the gift of their sexuality to correspond with the intention of God. Such recognition of the source of their sexuality would in turn lead to a diligent exercise of their sexual rights. He argues, “the ordered relationship between the conjugal act and procreation is established by God who alone is Creator. Failure to show reverence in this domain is to deny that one is a creature and that God is Creator.”

In other words, there is an objective meaning of marriage that God has bestowed on it and this meaning defies any subjective or individual meaning that a person may want to attach or attribute to marriage. However, although one is not expected to give an added meaning to marriage, one is expected to respect and to live out this God-given meaning in one’s married life. According to Schmemauer:

89 Schumenauer, “Dietrich Von Hildebrand on Procreation,” 84.


92 Schemenauer, “Dietrich Von Hildebrand on Procreation,” 134. For more information concerning Hildebrand’s discussion on how reverence for conjugal love leads to reverence for procreation and on how such reverences leads to an appreciation of God’s gift of human sexuality see: Marriage, 9-64; Purity, 10-75; Man and Woman, 23, 88-91.

conjugal love has an objective character in marriage in the sense that meaning refers to a constitutive aspect of marriage as determined by God…Conjugal love is necessary to marriage because God always demands this love from spouses. One who enters marriage without manifesting the seeds of conjugal love and respect for the spouse’s value concludes marriage in a manner offensive to God. Similarly, one offends God who lives the married life in a manner that does not foster conjugal love with his [or her] spouse. This is true even in the case of marriage of renunciation.  

Schemenauer has here done an excellent job in identifying the ambiguity which the omission of the word Schopfung, created in the English translation of Hildebrand work, Marriage. In his very generous interpretation of Ford’s treatment of this question, he blamed Ford’s limited explanation of Hildebrand’s teaching on this omission.

Schemenauer also chides some scholars who alleged that Hildebrand equated conjugal love with marriage and particularly criticized Ford for making the same mistake he sets out to correct. This is because Ford held that procreation, rearing of children, mutual help, the remedy for concupiscence and the fostering of conjugal love are “the essential ends of marriage.” But it seems contradictory for Ford to say that that which is essential for marriage is not necessary for the realization of marriage:

[It] does not mean that the actual realization of any of them is essential to any given marriage. A marriage which produces no children is still a marriage. A marriage which is never sexually consummated is a real marriage. Even a marriage in which there is no mutual help, no life in communion, in which concupiscence is not remedied but reigns, where there is hatred instead of love, and complete separation both bodily and spiritually, remains a true marriage in

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96 Ford and Kelly, Contemporary Moral Theology, 49.
the sense that the essence of marriage is still there; that is the partners are still married.\textsuperscript{97}

I agree with Schemenauer that “since Ford identifies conjugal love as an essential end of marriage, he argued the same thing he criticized Hildebrand of asserting namely, “that conjugal love is essential to marriage even though conjugal love need not be present in every marriage.”\textsuperscript{98}

I also concur with Schemenauer that “Ford’s explanation of how conjugal love is essential to marriage differs from Hildebrand’s analysis. For according to Hildebrand “the moral requirement to cultivate conjugal love is not merely a judicial right rooted in a legal contract, but a requirement rooted in the personal value of the beloved and the lover’s personal relationship with God.”\textsuperscript{99}

As this study has shown, in developing his teaching concerning the primary meaning and the primary ends of marriage, Hildebrand alluded to some of the weaknesses of the traditional hierarchical structure concerning the ends of marriage. Hildebrand found that because of the traditional emphasis on procreation as the primary end of marriage and the close association of sexual concupiscence with the marital act, the traditional teaching (which is traceable to Augustine), reduced the value of the conjugal act to the good of procreation. To bridge this gap, Hildebrand proposed a teaching that recognized the inherent meaning, the significance of conjugal love, the legitimacy of sexual activity, in the context of love. Hildebrand’s synthesis also supports the seeking of pleasure while performing the marital act in the context of love though not as an independent end.

\textsuperscript{97} Ford and Kelly, \textit{Contemporary Moral Theology}, 49.


For Hildebrand, sexual activity, sexual desire and the seeking of sexual pleasure within marriage are essential characteristics and values that accompany the sexual act, and, in the words of Aquinas, they make the sexual act delightful even when procreation is unlikely, or impossible. Hildebrand also recognized as legitimate and complete sterile marriages even though the primary end—procreation—may not be realized and the acceptance as well as the legitimacy of the systematic use of the sterile period to avoid conception within marriage to promote conjugal love. In other words, procreation is no longer necessary to justify or excuse the direct and indirect seeking of sexual pleasure nor is sexual desire appropriately channeled to one’s spouse and properly kept within the bond of marriage reprehensible, as far as no foreign agent or means was introduced to avoid fecundity.

Finally, Hildebrand in his work, *Marriage*, speaks of conjugal love in the context of a primary meaning and not as an end of marriage. As this study has shown, several reviewers of his book, *Marriage*, tend to impose this reading on him. According to these reviewers, procreation only is the primary end of marriage. These criticisms notwithstanding, Hildebrand’s immense contributions to the discussion of marriage in which conjugal love is apportioned a significant role is unquestionable. Both those scholars who agree with Hildebrand’s position and those who oppose his alliance with the traditional view, all agree that Hildebrand is one of the first twentieth century scholars whose teaching on marriage and human sexuality spurred a more balanced teaching concerning the ends or meanings of marriage. In his teaching, conjugal love and the marital act were recognized and appreciated along with the procreation and nurturing of

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100 See Ford and Kelly, *Contemporary Moral Theology*, 32.
children more than his predecessors.\footnote{Those who chide him for a limited explication and/or lack of distinction between his primary meaning and primary end, or those who saw this explanation in what he did not say, and those who accuse him of not doing enough did not deny his immense contribution on this subject. For more information concerning those who accused him of limited or no distinction between his use of primary meaning and primary end, consult: Hewitt, “review of Marriage.”; G.L.D., “review of Marriage.”; M.P.B., “review of Marriage,” by Dietrich von Hildebrand, \textit{Dominicana} 27 (October 1942): 190; Lonergan, “review of Marriage,”; Ford, “Review of Marriage,”; Ford and Kelly, \textit{Marriage Questions}; \; Edgar Schiedeler, “Review of Marriage, by Dietrich von Hildebrand,” \textit{The Catholic Educational Review} 40 (October 1942); and Bruehl, “Review of Marriage.” For more information concerning those scholars who argued that his lack of explicit explanation notwithstanding, it did not debar them from seeing the positive contribution that Hildebrand’s works made to the twentieth century discussion on marriage and its ends see: Arjonillo, \textit{Conjugal Love and the Ends of Marriage}; Schemenauer, “Dietrich Von Hildebrand on Procreation;” and Noonan, \textit{Contraception}. For those who say that his teaching on conjugal love did not go far enough because he did not depart from the traditional teaching that understood procreation as the primary end of meaning, see Doms, \textit{Marriage}.} Having presented Hildebrand’s thoughts, I will now examine Doms’s contributions to the subject under inquiry.


\textbf{5.2B. HERBERT DOMS}

Following Hildebrand’s teaching in his work \textit{Marriage} six years later, Herbert Doms in his book \textit{Vom Sinn und Zweck der Ehe, The Meaning of Marriage}, like Hildebrand distinguished between the meaning—\textit{(Sinn, sens)} of a thing and its purpose or end, \textit{(Zweck, fin)}.\footnote{See Doms, \textit{The Meaning and the End of Marriage}, 113.} According to him, “the meaning of a thing is the ontological content or inherent value, which is present merely because the thing exists, and independently of the purposes for which the thing may exist.”\footnote{Doms, \textit{The Meaning and the End of Marriage}, 108. See also Ford and Kelly, \textit{Contemporary Moral Theology}, 22; and Arjonillo, \textit{Conjugal love}, 161.} In other words, marriage has a meaning or inherent value, which is present independently of the purposes to which marriage is naturally oriented. He listed the purposes as procreation, mutual help and the remedy for concupiscence and argued that they need not be
brought into the picture in order to know the primary meaning of marriage.\textsuperscript{104} He writes: “We must say that marriage in itself possesses an immanent meaning. But it is not love, as it has been falsely thought, but rather the community of life of two persons, a community of life which embraces the whole human being from the spiritual sphere, passing through the sensible until it reaches the physical sphere, a community which men cannot dissolve, which by being moral must be impregnated by love, vivified by a specifically conjugal love.”\textsuperscript{105}

To further buttress his position Doms argues that, “First of all, marriage is, in itself, a reality of profound meaning before being for something else which [marriage] is not itself.”\textsuperscript{106} Using this description as a yardstick, he did not deny that marriage has procreation and education of children as an end. However, he insisted that marriage has a meaning in itself apart from the procreative and educative ends. According to Doms, “the constitution of marriage, the union of two persons does not consist in their subservience to a purpose outside themselves for which they marry. It consists in the constant vital ordination of husband and wife to each other.”\textsuperscript{107}

Seen through this lens, every other end or good of marriage, be it mutual help, procreation and education of children, mutual physical and spiritual development of the couples is cemented by conjugal love as its living force:

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\textsuperscript{105} Doms, \textit{The Meaning and the End of Marriage}, 107. For Doms, “conjugal love is one of the ontological, spiritual and moral foundations of every marriage.” Arjonillo, \textit{Conjugal Love}, 148. Conjugal love draws its strength from God who is love personified. It exists only in human beings who are created in the image of God and are destined for eternal life. Conjugal love reaches its apex when it reflects or mirrors the love that exists between Christ and his Church. Cf. Doms, \textit{The Meaning and the End of Marriage} 18-19, 103-104, 123.
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\textsuperscript{107} Doms, \textit{The Meaning and the End of Marriage}, 107; and Arjonillo, \textit{Conjugal love}, 162.
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The judicial, moral, effective two-in-oneness is marriage. Its living force is *conjugal love*. This love becomes by itself fecund. The living experience of love places man and woman primarily beneath the great law of love, a law which embraces the whole human community and which attains its supreme meaning in marriage and plays a constitutive role, in reason of the totality and intimacy of the community of life between man and woman.\(^\text{108}\)

By arguing that this meaning is neither love nor procreation, nor the mutual help of the partners, but the realization of “two-in-oneness” or the community of life of the spouses—*Zweieinigkeit*, or *I’unite a deux*—Doms’s analysis differs from that of Hildebrand.\(^\text{109}\) This is because marriage considered as the “two-in-oneness” of the spouses “is not constituted by their ordination to an end outside of themselves to be obtained by their union, but rather the living and perpetual ordination of a man and woman to one another until they are one.”\(^\text{110}\) Although the “two-in-oneness” of the couple exists at the celebration of marriage, it is the marital act—the conjugal act that consummates or perfects marriage which he refers to as the specific *actus secundus* of marriage.\(^\text{111}\) Doms can be construed as saying that conjugal love is strengthened and enriched by the conjugal act of the spouses, the conjugal act gives birth to a child who fosters or necessitates parental love. Although conjugal love precedes parental love for the child, the two types of love are, by nature, one and the same love, since “parental love gives rise to two

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\(^{110}\) Doms, *The Meaning and the End of Marriage*, 107; See also and Arjonillo, *Conjugal Love*, 162.

elements of conjugal love: a love full of respect for the person and incorporation to the highest form of unity: the family.”

With regard to the marital act, Doms observed that its inherent meaning is the proximate objective purpose, while procreation and mutual help are the remote ends. Seen in this perspective, “the meaning immanent in the living act of ‘two-in-oneness’ is always objectively realized in every conjugal act which is performed normally, whereas the two ends resulting from it are not always attained.” This conjugal act is possible because of marriage, and it is through the conjugal act that the spouses are completed and perfected in a lasting bond. Therefore, for the conjugal act to be true to its name, it must be expressed within an indissoluble marriage between two persons of the opposite sex who love each other. For according to Doms “if love does not exist, the matrimonial act would never be fully human.”

Thus, according to Doms’s logic, the significance of the marital act lies in its ability to unite the couples in an irrevocable sacramental bond irrespective of whether conception took place or not. This is because since the conjugal act can be performed several times before conception can take place, it is not possible to determine the particular act of intercourse and/or the particular semen that will travel and fertilize the female ovum. Therefore, the importance of

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the sexual act is not to be found in its ordination towards procreation. Based on this, and in connection to marriage, he finds it pertinent to distinguish between the meaning and the ends of marriage “in order to show that [marriage] is, in the first place, a being in itself before being for something [else].” That is, marriage has a meaning, inherent to itself which is beyond the end of procreation; marriage should not be reduced to something which is exterior to it.

Doms is very critical of the position that links the indissolubility of marriage to the procreation of children as Aquinas did. According to Doms, “in order to establish that marriage must last through life, it is necessary to start with (1) the conjugal dignity of men which situates them above the animal world; (2) the plenitude of the divine idea according to relationships; (3) in view of a work of formation and of reciprocal complement within intimate love; (4) the ontological profundity proper to the conjugal act itself by reason of the grandeur and dignity of the human person.” Accordingly Doms states:

Marriage aims at, as its proximate end, the realization of its meaning; the conjugal love two-in-oneness…The concept of marriage indicates a lasting and loving relationship of two adult persons of different sexes by which they complete themselves and reciprocally help each other in a community of intimate, indivisible and indissoluble life until becoming active in the conjugal act. The two-in-oneness of the spouses, as a living reality, is the proximate end of the conclusion of marriage and of the conjugal bond, as a juridical bond.

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120 However, in Doms’ explication of the distinction between the ‘meaning’ and the ‘ends’ of marriage; he occasionally used the phrase ‘immanent meaning’ as if it were synonymous with immediate or proximate end. And in order to describe a meaning that is immanent to a thing, he made use of different adjectives such as: ontological, objective, interior, first, profound, and personal. See 105, 114-115, 175, 207, 214.


Therefore, rather than locate the essential properties of marriage in goods that are extrinsic to it, Doms argues that the essential properties of marriage are the intrinsic goods of unity and indissolubility. Thus as Doms says, “If marriage as a unity of two spouses is not constituted by their common ordination towards an end extrinsic to them but rather to the living and perpetual ordination of the man and woman towards each other until they become one, there is no longer any sufficient reason to call procreation as its primary end, according to the meaning intended by St. Aquinas, nor to oppose it to the other secondary ends.”¹²³

This is even truer in the act of sexual intercourse among couples since, “In the perfect act, worthy of human beings, the two partners grasp each other reciprocally in intimate love, that is, spiritually they reciprocally give themselves in an act which contains the abandonment and enjoyment of the whole person and is not simply an isolated activity of organs.”¹²⁴ In other words, the conjugal act by nature has two effects which he calls the ends of marriage—the personal end—the perfection and complementarity of the spouses, and the biological end—the procreation of children. He writes:

The conjugal act has an objective proximate end: the realization through the fusion of bodies, of the two-in-oneness of the spouse in the real order, therein we have a profound meaning. This unity in its completion is naturally oriented towards two remote ends, whereof one is situated in the personal level and the other in the biological level. The personal end is the accomplishment of the spouses as persons in the diverse planes of their being. The ulterior biological end is procreation. The meaning is really distinct from the personal end. It is a true, not symbolic abandonment of oneself; realized in the actuation and completion of the spouses.¹²⁵


Although Doms recognizes the traditional teaching that held procreation as the primary end of marriage, he nonetheless viewed procreation in two different ways: as a primary end and as a mere biological effect of the conjugal act. That is to say that procreation is the primary end of the sexual act but from a strictly biological lens. He understood the word ‘end’ as a natural phenomenon that occurs even without being willed: “The sexual organs are designed and function in a manner that the production of the germinal cells which when they are united give rise to the fertilization of the ovum and consequently its development to a mature fetus.”¹²⁶ He continues: “The mechanism of all these biological process is as its form shows oriented towards procreation. In this sense, the generation of the infant as the primary end is incontestable.”¹²⁷

Doms claimed that his position has the support of two orthodox writings—the Roman Catechism published in 1556 under the auspices of Pope Pius V and Pope Pius XI’s encyclical letter Casti Connubii. He argued that the Catechism had designated the community of sexes as the primary motive for which man and woman must contract marriage and not procreation.¹²⁸ He also quoted Casti Connubii’s reference to the Catechism thusly:

“This mutual inward molding of husband and wife; this determined effort to perfect each other can, in a very real sense, as the Roman Catechism teaches, be said to be the chief reason and purpose of matrimony provided that the matrimony be looked at not in the restricted sense as instituted for the proper conception and education of the child, but more wisely as the blending of life as a whole and the mutual interchange and sharing thereof.”¹²⁹

¹²⁶ Doms, The Meaning and the End of Marriage, 22; and Arjonillo, Conjugal Love, 174.
¹²⁷ Doms, The Meaning and the End of Marriage, 76-77; and Arjonillo, Conjugal love, 174.
¹²⁸ See Doms, The Meaning and the End of Marriage, 10-11,13-14; and Arjonillo, Conjugal love, 197.
Seen in this perspective, Arjonillo was right to observe: “Doms thinks that it would be
improper to subordinate the meaning of the conjugal act (personal union and gift) to its end
(procreation).”\(^{130}\) Hence Doms advised thusly:

> It would be better for the future to give up the terms primary and secondary ends of marriage and speak in a purely realistic and descriptive manner, of the personal ends inherent in marriage and of procreation, distinguishing both of these from the meaning of marriage. Thus there is no longer sufficient reason to call procreation the primary end in the sense intended by St. Thomas, nor to oppose the other ends to it as secondary. Since the child represents for the spouses themselves a supremely important means of natural and supernatural perfection, we are able supported by the encyclical *Casti Connubii*, to designate as the principal and primary purpose, not the child, but the mutual formation and perfection of the partners in the natural ontological order and above all on the supernatural order.\(^{131}\)

However, while a handful of theologians chided him in articles, pronouncements, reviews, and books for rejecting the traditional position, some others accepted, defended or at least incorporated his apportioning the personal fulfillment of the couples as the immediate end of the couple’s conjugal act and the “two-in-oneness” as the primary meaning of marriage as a better analysis than the traditional position.\(^{132}\) And yet some others made attempts to modify his

\(^{130}\) See Arjonillo, *Conjugal Love*, 175.

\(^{131}\) Doms, *The Meaning and the End of Marriage*, 108. Cf. Arjonillo, *Conjugal Love*, 199; and Ford and Kelly *Contemporary Moral Theology*, 25; As I will latter show in this study, Pope Paul VI’s encyclical letter *Humanae Vitae* did not use the designations of primary and secondary ends but rather meanings in its discussion of the ends of marriage. However, his conclusion was significantly different from Doms’s.

position to make it congruent with the Augustinian-Thomistic framework. However, as this study has shown, for Doms, the immediate end of the couples’ conjugal act is not so much procreation as the personal fulfillment and the “two-in-oneness” that it creates between the couples. Thus, by holding that this primacy is true only in the subjective sphere, he leaves open the objective primacy of procreation—at least biologically.

I agree with Arjonillo who rightly noted that “although Doms admits on several occasions that The 1917 Code of Cannon Law is justified when it calls procreation the primary end of marriage, the entire framework of his systematic treatise contradicts such justification.” One may ask, if the Code is justified in its hierarchical classification of the ends of marriage why advocate for its abandonment? It is either that Doms does not seem to be totally convinced that the language of the hierarchy needs to be dropped or at least that it was not yet the right time to drop such a classification. Consequently, he failed to adequately account for the relationship that should exist between the primary meaning—the “two-in-oneness” and the primary end of marriage—procreation—without a subordination of the primary ends by the primary meaning.

Based on the analysis so far, it is fair to say that Doms’s treatise is similar to Hildebrand’s, especially since both scholars share one thing in common—they described the ends of marriage through the lens of the primary meaning and the primary end. Both scholars were also interested in giving conjugal love and the marital act their deserved significance and

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133 For those who attempted a unification of Doms’s teaching with the traditional views see J. Nicolas, Remargues sur le sens et la fin de mariage, RThom 45 (1939) 774-793. See Arjonillo, Conjugal Love, 210, particularly footnote 7 and 8 of his chapter four lists scholars that attempted to unify Doms’s teaching with the traditional position.

134 Arjonillo, Conjugal Love, 199.

importance in marriage. Thus, by saying that marriage has a primary meaning which is independent of that to which it is naturally ordained, Doms did not say anything new from what Hildebrand taught six years before. For both scholars conjugal love is the animating force of marriage, and the marital act is the physical expression that cements the union of two opposite sexes.

But unlike Hildebrand, Doms’s position suggested a subordination of procreation to conjugal love.136 Seen in this perspective, his account can be interpreted as a reversal of the Catholic traditional teaching concerning the hierarchy of the ends of marriage in which case marital union—the “two-in-oneness”—become the primary end while the procreation and nurturing of children become the secondary ends of marriage. Thus, rather than abandon the hierarchical language as he suggested, he fully embraced it in his treatise by reversing it.137 And if the hierarchical language is used to adjudicate his teaching, the logical sequence would be that procreation would serve as a means and not an end of marriage since according to Doms the child is a means for the fulfillment of the “two-in-oneness” of the couples.138

Therefore, Doms did not succeed in avoiding the same mistake he accused the traditional teaching of making. Rather, he contradicted himself by making conjugal love the primary end of

136See Doms, The Meaning and the End of Marriage, 83, 87-88. Cf. Grabowski, “Person and Nature?” 288. Arjonillo gave four similarities which Doms and Hildebrand’s treatises shared in common “The description of marriage as a community founded on love; (a) the characteristic of conjugal love as a mutual self-gift, benevolent faithful and unique; (c) the basis of the essential properties of marriage as inherent to the nature of conjugal love; and (d) the personal value of sexuality.” Arjonillo, Conjugal Love, 205.

137 Cf. Doms’s psychological argument against the traditional hierarchical structure of the ends of marriage in which he noted that “The union of love between man and woman is tied, implying by its own nature, an intention of perpetual duration. In this fundamental situation, a child is born, hence parental love is established. Thus, it is integrated in the good of the love of parents.” Doms, The Meaning and the End of Marriage, 20-21, 38; See also Arjonillo, Conjugal Love, 200-201.

138 Cf. Doms, The Meaning and the End of Marriage, 85 ; and Arjonillo, Conjugal Love, 196
marriage. Noonan had neglected this weakness in his exaltation of Doms’s teaching in arguing that “Doms had discarded the classical terminology of primary and secondary ends of marriage.”\textsuperscript{139} It is difficult to substantiate this claim based on the evidence of this analysis so far, especially if what Noonan meant was a unification of the two and/or an avoidance of the subordination of one end to another which the terms suggested in the traditional hierarchical schema. Based on all this, I agree with Arjonillo’s observation: “the entire framework of [Doms’s] systematic treatise contradicts such justification.”\textsuperscript{140}

Also by seeing the gift of a child as extraneous in the married life of the couples, Doms’s explication of the personal value of sexuality—a personal gift which finds its profound expression in the sexual act—does not support such views.\textsuperscript{141} Granted that he is committed to promoting his idea—the “two-in-oneness,” of the community of the sexes as the primary meaning of marriage. However, he left himself open to the charge of not apportioning a personal value to the fruit of that “two-in-oneness”—the child. Rather, the value of procreation is dependent upon the willingness of the spouses. It is not surprising then that he would make statements such as “I want to be a mother [does not necessarily mean] that the species be conserved.”\textsuperscript{142} But does being a mother preclude a child? I would argue that motherhood

\textsuperscript{139} Noonan, \textit{Contraception}, 497.

\textsuperscript{140} Arjonillo, \textit{Conjugal Love}, 199.


presupposes the birth and the nurturing of a child and the primary and secondary ends or meanings of marriage should protect it.\textsuperscript{143}

Commenting on Doms’s statement that “I want to be mother does not mean that the species be conserved,” Arjonillo’s interprets Doms as saying that “rarely can one find somebody who wishes to get married because of the desire of having children.”\textsuperscript{144} Both Doms and Arjonillo have presumed much by holding this position. However, they can be excused or exonerated because they simply reflected their culture and/or a general western conception or attitude about marriage. But, as the first section of this study has shown, the Igbo people predominantly marry for the purpose of begetting (male) children. Statements such as this made by Doms and supported by Arjonillo serve as a good example of the danger enshrined in using one’s practice or culture to judge every other one. This altitude reflects a one size fits it all mentality.\textsuperscript{145}

Based on all of these pitfalls in his analysis, it is not surprising that Doms’s theory neither won ecclesiastical approval nor brought clarity to the already complicated theories concerning marriage and its goods/ends in the early part of the twentieth century society. Therefore, in the midst of the tension, challenges and threats that Doms’s theory posed to the magisterial teaching as well as the confusion that was created by the 1930 Anglican Lambeth Conference’s approval of contraception, the magisterium judged it wise to speak, and it did

\textsuperscript{143} For a contemporary reader, Doms’ position here could be construed as encouraging child-free marriages which is currently being promoted mostly in the West. Cf. Jean Safer, “The Childfree Life: The Latest Version of Having It All,” In \textit{Time Magazine}, August 14 2013, \url{www.huffingtonpost.com/.../the assessed 10/31/2013}.

\textsuperscript{144} Doms, \textit{The Meaning and the End of Marriage} 48; and Arjonillo, \textit{Conjugal love}, 203.

\textsuperscript{145} This brings me to a secondary concern of this study. It seems to me that the Catholic position with regard to the ends of marriage is predominately influenced by western cultures and values and vice versa. This western culture was largely shaped by Christianity—especially Catholicism. Further discussion concerning this claim will be undertaken in the last section of this study.
speak. Accordingly, the Holy See, without mentioning Doms by name rejected his theory. In its April 1, 1944, reply to the question “Can the opinion of certain modern writers be admitted, who either deny that the primary end of marriage is the generation and education of children or teach that the secondary ends are not essentially subordinate to the primary end, but are equally principal and independent?” The Holy See’s answer was “no.”

Noonan observed that in 1950 Bernard Häring rejected Doms’s position that conjugal love was the first end of marriage only to combine a modified version of Doms’s theory with the old teaching on procreation. In this modified version, love was seen as the fundamental, although not the final value, in every act of the spouses. But, it was not any kind of love; rather, such love must be sacramentally established and vivified—conjugal love. He described conjugal love as “the accomplishment of a sacramental mission in virtue of a sacramental grace.”

Following Häring’s line of thought, Noonan noted that “Joseph Fuchs found the expression of love to be an objective purpose of the marital act: Sexual actuation is in itself ordered to the generation of offspring: [It is also] in itself ordered to the intimate expression of love between joined persons of different sexes.” Congruent with Fuchs, Noonan noted that, “at

146 See Pius XII, *Allocation to the Roman Rota* (1941) AAS 33 (1941) 423; Tribunal Sententia S.R. Rotae, Coram Wynen (1944) AAS 36 (1944) 179-200.


last the neglected thought of St. Thomas that fidelity (fides) was an objective end of intercourse was revived, with ‘love’ substituted for fidelity, [since] to have intercourse without love was declared to violate the objective order or purpose of the marital act.”

Like Häring, Fuchs did not formally abandon the teaching that offspring was understood as the primary end of marriage. But he added a new note in his analysis of this purpose in documents such as Casti Connubii:

“This love, together with all the consequences of common life, entirely (although not solely or as a mere means) serves and is subordinated to the education of offspring, to whose generation such an act expressive of love is evidently ordered.”

In 1951, in his “Address to the Midwives,” Pius XII addressed the difficult question of periodic continence and the liceity of a procreation-excluding intention. In doing so, he shifted the question away from the meaning or purpose of the marital act onto the “duty of the married couple to contribute to the propagation of human race when they engage in the conjugal act.”

He, however, “characterized this as a positive duty from which the couple could be excused because of ‘serious reasons’ (indications). Thus neither the willingness of the couple to accept a child, should their efforts fail, nor the mere integrity of the sexual act were considered to be a sufficient reason to justify this practice.”

Similarly, “no vague openness to procreation provided any moral justification.”

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152 Noonan, Contraception, 501.


Both Noonan and Selling agree that Pius XII was more forceful in reiterating the old teaching that subordinated the conjugal love to procreation than his immediate predecessor.

Selling observes:

The concern of Pius XII to counteract the setting forth of personal values in marriage as primary for the relationship caused him to withdraw from the possible opening that had been suggested by his predecessor for transferring the ends of marriage onto the purposes or meanings of marriage act. [Rather than do this], he in fact, became more explicit about the absolute subordination of these secondary ends and understood sexual intercourse in marriage to have only one purpose: “the great and unique law, generatio et education prolis.”

Reflecting on the significance as well as the weakness of Pius XII’s address, Selling noted: “while Pius XII solved the problem of the relationship between the practice of periodic continence and the realization of the primary end of marriage, his teaching eventually opened new questions about the meaning of marriage itself and eventually about the possibility of inducing infertility while maintaining the integrity of the sexual act.” Selling observed that “before these questions entered into public debate, the second Vatican Council took place and substantially changed the entire understanding of marriage and conjugal life.”

5. 3. SUMMARY

From the analysis so far, I can say that the personalist thinkers (especially Hildebrand) with their distinction between the ‘primary meaning’ and the ‘primary end’ of marriage have

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157 Selling, “Magisterial Teaching on Marriage 1880-1986,” 250; Noonan, Contraception, 533; and Pius XII, “Address to Italian midwives” AAS 43 (1951), 848.

158 Selling, “Magisterial Teaching on Marriage,” 250.

159 Selling, “Magisterial Teaching on Marriage,” 250.
contributed to the development of a more nuanced teaching in the Catholic tradition with regard to the ends of marriage. This is because while maintaining the traditional position that regarded progeny as the primary end of marriage, Hildebrand also gave an intrinsic value to the conjugal act. However, both Hildebrand and Doms did not concede to the overtly contraceptive mentality that had enveloped the late nineteenth and early twentieth century’s society in which marital intercourse was predominately seen as an avenue for sexual gratification. With their balanced analysis the emphasis shifted from a focus on the natural finality of the sexual act to a discussion that focused on the human person in his or her entirety. 160

As a way of summarizing what the study has done so far, I can say that I have traced this long and complicated history of the Magisterial teaching concerning the goods/ends of marriage from the biblical era down to the twentieth century—to see to what extent, if any, this teaching has evolved, changed, or developed. In view of this, it is fair to say that the traditional position which understood procreation of children as the primary purpose of marriage had undergone a thorough scrutiny in the hands of theologians and personalist thinkers and has maintained an authentic development in reference to the teaching concerning the ends of marriage. Put differently, there has been authentic progress concerning the traditional position on the ends of marriage especially from the nineteenth to the twentieth centuries.

This progress was possible because these scholars adapted knowledge they gained from biological and behavioral sciences as well as the changing dynamics with regard to the role of men and women to arrive at their more refined teaching which Augustine and the scholastic

theologians of the previous centuries did not have, and as such, it affected their thoughts with regard to the purposes of marriage. The study has also demonstrated that Aquinas’s classification of the purposes of marriage in the terminology of ‘ends’ was not strictly limited to the natural finality of sexual act, but also because of the spiritual nature of the human person who both marries and engages in the sexual act.

It is permissible to say that Aquinas’s designation of the purposes of marriage in the terminology of ‘ends’ was instrumental to The 1917 Code of Cannon Law’s designation of the purposes of marriage in the hierarchical structure of the primary and secondary ends of marriage in which procreation was regarded to the primary end of marriage. Consequently, the study has shown that by basing the primacy of procreation over the other ends of marriage simply by focusing on the natural end of the marital intercourse, The 1917 Code neglected the significance of conjugal love that exists or should exist between married couples. If anything, it reduced marriage to an act whose value is predominately determined by its functionality, practicability and the biologically predetermined natural end of sexual intercourse. In other words, the 1917 Code neglected the deep affection and communion that conjugal love brings to marriage, but which nonetheless, are necessary for the life and sustenance of married life.161

A case can made that by linking the primary purpose of marriage to the biological finality of the sexual act, The 1917 Code like Augustine and Aquinas maintained the primacy of the good or end of proles and the apportioning of only an instrumental value to the conjugal act, since its value is dependent on the good/end of procreation. But unlike Augustine, the 1917 Code

161 As I will later show in chapter seven of this study, Grabowski was right to note that “this physicalist account of sexuality, made it difficult, [if not impossible] to construct an effective [and robust] argument against the pill in the debate prior to Humanae vitae since the pill did not interfere with the natural ordination of the procreative act [toward fecundity].”See Grabowski, “Person and Nature,” Studia Moralia 35, 283-312, see especially 292-293.
did not consider the good of *proles* as being interdependent with the goods of *fides* and *sacramentum* as chapter three of this study chronicled. On the similar note, although both Aquinas and the *1917 Code* spoke of the purposes of marriage in the terminologies of the primary and secondary ends and the marital act as naturally ordained for the procreation of children, the way that Aquinas understood nature was different from the *1917 Code*’s understanding it. In other words, while the *1917 Code*’s teaching on the primacy of *proles* over the other ends of marriage was based on the functional benefits and/or the finality of the marital act, in Aquinas’s explication, the natural ordination of the marital act was not limited to the good of procreation because the spiritual nature of these goods are apprehended by reason and therefore, transcends such physicality.

In the same vein, *The 1917 Code*’s designation of the purposes of marriage into the primary and secondary ends explicitly suggested a subordination of one end to the other.\(^{162}\) Similarly, both Pius XI in his encyclical letter *Casti Connubii* and Pius XII in his address to the midwives maintained the traditional position that understood procreation as the primary end of marriage. However, Pius XI included conjugal love as an end of marriage, though still as a subordinated end to the primary end—procreation. As the study has shown, what was gained in Canon 1013.1 of *The 1917 Code*’s definition of the purposes of marriage into primary and secondary ends of marriage was that it helped, and will continue to help, juries to make judicial judgments in situations where, for a just and prudent reason, the two ends of marriage could not simultaneously be met. With this focus on the finality of the sexual act, it is questionable whether *The 1917 Code* even regarded conjugal love as having any significance or role in marriage.

\(^{162}\) See *The 1917 Code of Canon Law* no. 1013.1.
In developing these weaknesses of *The 1917 Code*, Hildebrand and Doms drew attention to the significance of conjugal love in marriage.\(^{163}\) In doing this, they treated the purposes of marriage by distinguishing between the ‘primary meaning’ and the ‘primary ends’ of marriage.\(^{164}\) However, while Hildebrand regarded conjugal love as the primary meaning, he also held procreation to be the primary end of marriage.\(^{165}\) Seen through this lens, Hildebrand’s personalist leaning did not obscure for him the teaching that understood procreation as the primary end of marriage as the tradition had consistently taught.

Also with Hildebrand’s teaching, the marital act was no longer seen as having only the instrumental value that Augustine apportioned to it because its value was more dependent on fecundity, but rather, the conjugal act became an expression of couples’ shared love. What was gained with his teaching was a further recognition and appreciation of conjugal love as the animating force that fosters married life. Hildebrand’s position is further buttressed by his distinction between instrumental and superabundant finality. But he was not able to successfully distinguish between meaning and end in his treatment of love as the primary meaning of marriage while procreation was considered as the primary end. However, as Grubbs rightly noted “In this juxtaposition of meaning and end, Von Hildebrand has set the groundwork for a new discussion of marriage and sexuality, lasting into Vatican II and beyond.”\(^{166}\)

\(^{163}\) However, the difference between the criticisms which Augustine’s teaching received from those of *The 1917 Code* was that the Code was chided by some scholars whose ideas were congruent with the traditional-Augustinian position as well as those who were against it.

\(^{164}\) See Hildebrand Marriage, 4, 20-21; and Purity 12.

\(^{165}\) See chapter four subsection one of this study for more detailed information concerning this claim especially 18-36.

\(^{166}\) Grubb, 73. Grubbs’ observation is supported by what *Gaudium et Spes* taught in reference to the ends of marriage as this study hopes to show in the next chapter.
The study has also demonstrated that although Hildebrand and Doms apportioned an intrinsic value to the marital act and regarded conjugal love as the animating force of marriage, Doms’s conclusion departed from Hildebrand’s and the tradition. This is because for Doms the meaning of marriage is neither love nor procreation, nor the mutual help of the partners, but the realization of “two-in-oneness” or the community of life of the spouses—Zweieinigkeit, or I’unite a deux. At best, Doms’s position can be construed as a reversal of both the magisterial and Hildebrand’s positions, in that, the ‘two-in-oneness’ as the primary meaning of marriage subordinates procreation, the primary end of marriage.

With all the insightful contributions of the personalist thinkers (Hildebrand and Doms) in apportioning an intrinsic value to the marital act while acknowledging the significance of conjugal love in marriage, neither of them was able to coin or develop a teaching that freed the subordination of one end of marriage to the other which The 1917 Code explicitly stated. While it is permissible to say that Hildebrand attempted to reconcile this tension by developing the separate axiology of ‘meaning’ vices ‘end’, his effort was unsuccessful because of the ambiguities in his explication of his use of these terms as the analysis so far can testify. Finally, although a case can be made that both the traditional position and Doms’s teaching promote a subordination of one end of marriage to other, neither of them can be used to support or justify the primacy of the male children over their female counterparts as the main purpose of marriage as the Igbo people do.


Having examined the *1917 Code* and the personalism of the twentieth century teachings with regard to the purposes of marriage, the next chapter will continue to explore and analyze this history concerning the ends of marriage. It will do so by examining the Second Vatican Council’s document—“The Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the Modern World”—section numbers 47-52.” In doing this, the study will pay special attention to see whether *Gaudium et Spes*’s teaching is congruent with or departs from previous magisterial positions concerning the goods/ends of marriage.
CHAPTER SIX

GAUDIUM ET SPES AND THE ENDS OF MARRIAGE

INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter demonstrated how The 1917 Code of Canon Law’s teaching that understood the procreation and the education and nurturing of children as the primary end of marriage, while mutual help and the allaying of concupiscence as the secondary ends of marriage was challenged and developed by some personalist thinkers. Part of the reasons for the dissatisfaction with this position, it seemed, was because the traditional teaching concerning the ends of marriage was based on the manulist’s limited explication of nature or “the natural” to mean the physical which thereby promoted the primacy of *proles* by focusing on the biological teleology of the sexual act.\(^1\) Also, *the 1917 Code* apportioned only an instrumental value to the marital act since its value is dependent on the good/end of procreation and explicitly accentuated the subordination of the secondary ends of marriage, mutual help and the allaying of concupiscence, to the primary end—procreation.

Similarly, Aquinas’s understanding of friendship as a unifying element that includes all the activities of married life, which makes couples capable of friendship with God was submerged or clouded by the *1917 Code*’s over-emphasis on law in its section that treated the

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\(^1\) As I will later show in chapter seven of this study, Grabowski was right to note that “this physicalist account of sexuality, made it difficult, [if not impossible] to construct an effective [and robust] argument against the pill in the debate prior to *Humanae vitae* since the pill did not interfere with the natural ordination of the procreative act [toward fecundity] See Grabowski, “Person and Nature,” 292-293; and Grabowski, *Sex and Virtue*, 13.
sacrament of marriage and nothing was said concerning the role or significance of conjugal love in marriage. In developing the traditional position, Hildebrand and Doms, rather than speak in the language of primary and secondary ends of marriage, spoke of the ‘primary meaning’ and the ‘primary ends’ of marriage. Thus, by distinguishing between the ‘meaning of marriage’ and the ‘ends of marriage,’ Hildebrand and Doms freed the conjugal act from the instrumental value which the traditional teaching had apportioned to it. They also accounted for the indispensable role that conjugal love has within marriage. In doing this, Hildebrand developed new axiology in which love was understood as the primary meaning of marriage while for Doms, the inherent meaning of the sexual act is the ‘two-in-oneness.’

Nevertheless, the preceding chapter concluded by noting that even with Hildebrand’s and Doms’s more nuanced teaching that emphasized the significance of love in marriage, neither of them were able to develop a teaching that freed the subordination of one end or meaning of marriage to the other. Rather, the teaching that regarded proles as the primary end of marriage and the subordination of one end of marriage to the other was the standard position of the magisterium at the time of the convocation of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council by Pope John XXIII.

While a case can be made that the Second Vatican Council was not primarily convoked to discuss marriage and its ends, but in treating the ‘Dignity of Marriage and Family Life’ in Gaudium et Spes, the Council delegates also weighed in on the question of the ends of marriage. What actually was the teaching of the Second Vatican Council Fathers concerning the ends of marriage?

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2 See Hildebrand, Marriage, 6-7, 19-27.

3 As I mentioned earlier, it is debated whether the magisterium still holds such a view. Since a chapter of this study deals with this debate, I leave further comments on this subject until then.
marriage? And how does Gaudium et Spes’s teaching concerning the ends of marriage support or depart from the previous magisterial teaching concerning the ends of marriage? To attempt an answer to these and other related questions, this present chapter will continue to trace the history of the traditional teaching concerning the ends of marriage by analyzing the Second Vatican Council’s document, Gaudium et Spes—The Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the Modern World part II, numbers 47-52.

To do this, part one will briefly study the historical backdrop leading to the convocation of the Second Vatican Council. Part two will examine the deliberations of the Council Fathers prior to and leading to the approval of Gaudium et Spes, by paying particular attention to section numbers 47-52. I do this with the hope that having a clear knowledge of the background and the deliberations that occurred before the approval of the final draft of Gaudium et Spes might shed light on a better understanding of some salient views that are embedded in the promulgated text. These salient views, it seemed, tended to be sidetracked, clouded and/or over-blown by theologians after the Council, especially in reference to the doctrinal and pastoral implications of Gaudium et Spes.\(^4\) Part three will analyze the promulgated text of Gaudium et Spes numbers 47-52, by paying particular attention to what it actually teaches concerning the ends of marriage. It will be the goal of this chapter to see, to what extent, if any, Gaudium et Spes is congruity with or departs from the previous magisterial teachings that promoted the primacy of the end of proles over the mutual help and the allaying of concupiscence, the secondary ends of marriage.

\(^4\) Since chapter seven of this study deals with this question, I reserve further comments concerning it until then.
6.1. THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO GAUDIUM ET SPES

The work of the personlist thinkers whose approach to the question of the ends of marriage focused more on emphasizing the significance of conjugal love and the dignity of the human person was not the only factor that directly or indirectly challenged the teaching of the magisterium concerning the ends of marriage before the convocation of the Second Vatican Council. There were also other scientific and social factors that made the magisterial teaching which understood procreation as the primary purpose of marriage unpopular especially in Europe and America. Also, it is perhaps fair to say that the Church’s teaching concerning the ends of marriage and human sexuality in general before the twentieth century was based on a limited knowledge of biology and the behavioral sciences.

Unlike previous centuries, the twentieth century was bombarded with an unprecedented number of new discoveries in the areas of biology, medicine, and psychology which contradicted previous knowledge of biology and behavioral sciences. These new developments to some extent influenced the magisterial teaching on marriage and human sexuality in general prior to the Second Vatican Council. They also resulted in a better understanding of both male and female organs of reproduction.

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5 See, Hildebrand, Defense of Purity, 10-22; Dom, The Meaning of Marriage; 109-113; and Wojtyla, Love and Responsibility, 143-244.

6 For example Aquinas’s position that regarded women as only playing a secondary and receptive role in the act of marital intercourse was based on such limited knowledge of human biology.

7 See Noonan, Contraception, 438-481. On the effectiveness of calendar rhythm see R. Kambic and V. Lamprecht, “Calendar Method Efficacy: A review,” Advances in Contraception 12, no. 2 (1996): 123-128. These more scientifically refined natural approaches to fertility awareness were not regarded as contraceptives by the magisterium. However, these sciences were also limited in their scope and knowledge when compared to contemporary standards.
In addition to these advances in medical sciences and human biology, there were other social and economic factors which were created by the industrial revolution of the twentieth century, especially in Europe and America. Thus, the advent of factory jobs boosted the economic posterity and the empowerment of women to the extent that the roles of women were no longer limited to domestic duties around their homes. Rather, women began to compete with men in professional jobs, and in some cases, became the primary bread-winners of their families. Similarly, the perceived value of a woman was no longer limited to her ability to conceive and bear children or any other stereotyping associated with gender differentiations. Consequently, this period encouraged the spinster’s life style and some who married became less interested in giving birth to children.

If the earlier agrarian culture promoted the emphasis on children as the purposes of marriage because of the economic security that children provided in such a society or culture, the industrial revolution produced the opposite effect. It devalued the significance of children as one of the purposes of marriage because of the different economic situation which it produced.

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8 This claim is supported among other things by the many allocutiones which Pius XII gave that are based on the insights from human biology and medicine in the 1950s. These allocutiones have as their audience, different group of specialties on the human body—military surgeons and physicians, biologists, anesthetists, urologists, gynecologists, et cetera. For instance, it was Pope Pius XII who in his allocutio to the midwives on October 29, 1951, first spoke of human sexuality in the context of partnership in marriage. For more information concerning the discovering of rhythm method of family planning, the discovery of the female ovum (1817) and the union of ovum with sperm (1875). However, if the advancements in biological and the behavioral sciences are credited for providing more nuanced information on how to regulate periodic abstinence or natural methods, it also led to a massive production of different forms of artificial contraceptives aimed at manipulating the systems of reproduction. See, Mary Ann Glendon, Abortion and Divorce in Western Law: American Failures, European Challenges (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987), 11; and Steven Rhoads, Taking Sex Differences Seriously (San Francisco: Encounter Books, 2004), 96-110.

Instead children were often regarded as a burden and a hindrance toward the realization of their parents’ professional ambitions.\textsuperscript{10} In light of these developments one can understand why children and/or large families were increasingly neither seen as a blessing nor a boost to the economic posterity of their families as they were understood within pre-modern agrarian society.\textsuperscript{11} Compounding this shift in the view children, as Brian J. Bransfield rightly noted, due to the economic opportunities or potentialities that the factory jobs brought with them, the number of hours that parents used to spend with their families during pre-modern agrarian society to nurture and care for their children was significantly reduced.\textsuperscript{12}

With all its blessings, the industrial revolution to some extent resulted in the dysfunction and disability of family values and parental responsibilities. It took away substantial amount of time that parents, especially mothers spent at home to nurture and care for their children.\textsuperscript{13} Similarly, because the home was no longer a means of production, children required greater degrees of education to become employable, making the cost of having children far higher. David McCarthy was right to observe that “bearing children and raising children [during this period was] no longer considered a productive venture, but a practice of consumption that drains rather than accrues resources.”\textsuperscript{14}

\textsuperscript{10} See Bransfield, \textit{The Human Person}, 22. See also Lionel Tiger, \textit{The Decline of Males: The First Look at an Unexpected New World for Men and Women} (New York: St. Martin’s Griffin, 2000), 97-105.

\textsuperscript{11} See Bransfield, \textit{The Human Person}, 23; and McCarthy, “Procreation and the Development of Peoples,” 708.

\textsuperscript{12} For more information concerning the impact of the industrial revolution to a broader understanding of the human person, see Bransfield, \textit{The Human Person}, 20-47.

\textsuperscript{13} See McCarthy, “Procreation and the Development of Peoples,” 698-721, especially 706-709.

\textsuperscript{14} McCarthy, “Procreation and the Development of Peoples,” 704.
But, if parents were spending more hours in the factories and less at home to care and educate their children, the easy way out for most couples would be to marry with an *ab initio* decision not to beget children or to reduce the number of children they would want to have by a resort to contraception. Also popular in America and Europe and instrumental to the sexual laxity of the twentieth century was the pansexuality of Sigmund Freud. According to Freud’s pansexuality “sex [is] the highest of human experiences, orgasm [is] a form of spiritual ecstasy, and redemption [is] an aspect of sexual experience—apart from any connection to Christianity.”15 Seen in this perspective, marital intercourse became more and more as a means of expressing intimacy between couples and even among lovers solely for recreational purposes and not for the purpose of the procreation of children.16 Therefore, one can say that the massive production of contraceptives and the economic potentialities that the industrial revolution offered led to a kind of sexual revolution during this period which promoted having sex without the responsibility of becoming parents.17

Thus, the sexual revolution and the Freud’s pansexuality promoted sexual freedom which was contrary to what the tradition had consistently understood as the primary purpose of marriage and/or the marital act—the procreation of children.18 On a related note, this hedonistic ideology or attitude towards sex further supported the subordination of the procreative end to the

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17 See Bransfield, *The Human Person*, 24. See also Grabowski, *Sex and Virtue*, 4-9; and McCarthy, “Procreation and the Development of Peoples,” 709-710. This would later be taken to a new level by the development of oral contraception.

18 See, Grabowski, *Sex and Virtue*, 4-5; and Rhoads, *Taking Sex Differences Seriously*, 96-110.
unitive end of marriage or its abandonment altogether. Nevertheless, in the midst of these developments, the magisterium continued to maintain its moral teaching that understood the procreation and the education and nurturing of children as the primary end of marriage, while the mutual help and the allaying of concupiscence were referred to as the secondary ends of marriage.

However, it seemed that in defending its moral (and dogmatic) teachings from these ideologies and practices which grew up in the wake of the industrial revolution, the sexual revolution, and the new discoveries in the areas of biological and behavioral sciences the magisterial may have over-reacted. In other words, the magisterium may have regarded these developments as neither compatible with the Catholic faith nor her moral teachings on the ends of marriage and may have regarded the modern world as her enemy. This reading is supported by the insights from the inaugural speech of Pope John XXIII who convoked the Second Vatican Council. Accordingly, he elucidated:

Divine providence is leading us to a new order of human relations, [therefore] the Church needs to bring herself up to date where required, in order to spread her message to all men throughout the world. While the Church must never depart from the sacred patrimony of truth received from the Fathers, she must ever look to the present, to new conditions and new forms of life introduced into the modern world, which have opened new avenues to the Catholic apostolate. [To do this], the world does not need no [new] dogmas, but the world expects a step forward toward doctrinal penetration with authentic doctrine which should be studied and

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19 These practices and ideologies were forcefully condemned by the magisterium. Cf. Pius XII, Allocution to the Roman Rota (1941) AAS 33 (1941) 423, and DECR. S. OFFICI. De finibus matrimonii, AAS 36 (1944) 103. See also Wojtyla, Love and Responsibility, 87-140.

20 Although the Second Vatican Council was neither a Council convoked to discuss marriage and its ends nor to respond to the challenges of these developments in biological and behavior sciences, some connection can be made from what Pope John XXIII saw as his mission or vision for convoking the Second Vatican Council as his inaugural speech chronicled.
expounded according to the methods of research and literary forms of modern thought.  

Similarly, in his June 5, 1960 sermon, Pope John XXIII opines: “Each believer… as far as he is Catholic, is a citizen of the whole world, just as Christ is the adored redeemer of the whole world.” Likewise, in his allocutio of January 6, 1962, he referred to the Council as a new epiphany. As a new epiphany the Church which is presenting itself to the world must do so in a friendly manner which opens itself to learn and to advance its teaching based on the insights from these new developments. Succinctly put, the Church must not see the world as its enemy. Therefore, for the teaching of the Second Vatican Council Fathers concerning marriage and its ends to reflect Pope John XXIII’s vision, they had to focus on being pastoral rather than dogmatic, preferring the medicine of compassion, rather than the weapon of strictness. This is to say that John XXIII challenged the Council Fathers to “find new ways in expressing the old.”

21 Xavier Rynne, The Fourth Session, The Debates and Decrees of Vatican Council II September 14 to December 8, 1965 (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1966) 47. Some theologians argue that even before his inaugural address, Pope John XXIII made it clear that the Council he intended to convocate would be free from unnecessary dogmatism of the past, but rather, be open to the world and reach out to the churches that were separated from Rome. See Raymond F. Bulman, “Introduction: The Historical Context,” From Trent to Vatican II, Historical and Theological Investigations, ed. Raymond F. Bulman and Frederick J. Parrella (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 11.


24 John XXIII used this phrase “medicine of compassion, rather than the weapon of strictness” in his opening address: “Misericordiae medicina, potius quam severitatis arma.” The citation is from Michael Walsh “The History of the Council” in Modern Catholicism: Vatican II and After, ed. Adrian Hastings (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 36.

From this brief historical overview of the developments leading up to the deliberations of the Second Vatican Council, this study has pinpointed how the development in biological and behavioral sciences, the economic security that industrial revolution provided as well as the sexual freedom that are associated with the pansexuality of Freud led to lifestyles that opposed what the magisterium had consistently taught as the primary purpose of marriage—procreation and the education and nurturing of children. Consequently, this section noted that the Council whose aim was “to bring the Church up to date where required…, by looking to new conditions and new forms of life introduced into the modern world,” would need to pastorally address the implications of these new developments to her teaching concerning the ends of marriage without losing sight of their doctrinal correctness.

Such a pastorally open-minded approach would have the onus of ‘bringing up to date’ the teachings of the Church concerning the ends of marriage by appropriately incorporating the insights from biological and behavioral sciences. In doing this, they would have to doctrinally maintain the principles from which the teaching that understood procreation as the primary end of marriage was built or developed, while being sensitive to its pastoral underpinnings or implications. Succinctly put, they would need to update, develop and, where necessary, lift any unnecessary burden that the past teaching may have inflicted or might inflict in the future. This claim aligns with the literal meaning of the famous Second Vatican Council slogan, *aggiornamento*. How did the Council delegates respond to the vision of John XXIII in their

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26 For more information on the description of the term ‘aggiornamento’ see Christopher Butler, “The Aggiornamento of Vatican II” in Vatican II: An Interfaith Appraisal, ed., John Miller (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1966), 1-13; Xavier Rynne, Letters from Vatican City, Vatican Council II (First Session) Background and Debates (New York: Farrar, Straus & Company 1963), 46. Some scholars argue that the diplomatic career of Pope John XXIII and his life as the patriarch of Venice were instrumental in his decision to convocate, as well as his vision for, the Second Vatican Council. According to them, John XXIII had the interest of Christian unity at heart in
treatment of the dignity of marriage and the family life in *Gaudium et Spes*? How much of Pope John XXIII’s vision in convoking the Council impacted the deliberations and the conclusions of the Council Fathers’ with regard to ends of marriage? In order to address these and other related questions, in the next section, this study will analyze the deliberations of the Second Vatican Council delegates, especially as they relate to the magisterial teaching concerning the ends of marriage in *Gaudium et Spes*.

### 6.2. The Deliberations of the Second Vatican Council Delegates

The convocation of the Second Vatican Council was announced on January 25, 1959, but the actual work of gathering suggestions from individuals, groups, the aggregate of persons from the entire Catholic world, and the planning of its agenda did not begin until the early part of the 1960s. The *modus operandi* was for the bishops and other prelates to submit suggestions (*consilia*) and to make their recommendations (*vota*), the Catholic universities and faculties their studies (*studia*) and recommendations. The Congregation of the Roman Curia was also required to submit their recommendations (*monita*). The duration of the Second Vatican Council was from October 11, 1962 to December 8, 1965. The Council Fathers met in four approximately ten-week sessions.

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his vision for the Second Vatican Council, which they argue was contrary to his predecessors’ intention to continue in the line of Vatican I. According to Moeller, “His diplomatic career had produced this sensitive awareness of the world-wide horizons, especially of Eastern Europe, where he had seen problems of unity take concrete shape. Msgr, Roncali understood what Rome looked like from Istanbul, the former Constantinople, and what Istanbul looks like from Rome.” Moeller, “Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World,” 1; and Bulman, “Introduction: The Historical Context.” 9.

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There were different Commissions and Sub-commissions that were assigned with topics and subjects to discuss during the preparatory stages of the Second Vatican Council. In reference to marriage, a Mixed Commission and a Sub-Commission were appointed to write a chapter on marriage. Schema 17 which was produced by both the Sub-Commission and the Mixed Commission under the auspices of Cardinal Suenens met first during the spring of 1963 between the Council’s first and second sessions. During the proceedings of the Council, there were four schemas (which included the final text of *Gaudium et Spes*) dealing with marriage and family that were discussed, approved with recommendations during the Council sessions before the final text was voted and approved by the Council Fathers on December 3, 1965.28

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28 The first conciliar schema, schema *De Ecclesia in mundo huius temporis* also known as the Zurich text was approved for discussion by Pope Paul VI on July 3, 1964, and was discussed during the third session that was held from October 29th through 30th 1964. Cf. *Acta Synodalia*, Vol. III, pars V, 116. See also the introductory or general *Relatio*, 142; and the *Adnexa* 147-200. The second conciliar schema that was discussed on the Council’s floor was *Constitutio Pastoralis de Ecclesia in mundo huius temporis*, also known as the text of *Aricea* or *receptus* was discussed on May 28, 1965. Cf. The *Acta Synodalia*, vol., iv, pars 1, 435-516 and the *Relatio* at 517. The third schema, *Constitutio Pastoralis de Ecclesia in mundo huius temporis*, also known as *textus recognitus* was presented to the Fathers on Nov. 13, 1965, not for debate but to be voted upon after being re-worked twice. See *Acta Synodalia*, vol., iv, pars, vi 421-499; and the corresponding *Relationes*, 500-568. The Fourth schema, *Constitutio Pastoralis de Ecclesia in mundo huius temporis*, also referred to as *textus denuo recognitus* was discussed during the fourth session. Cf. *Acta Synodalia*, vol., iv, pars vii, 234-314, with the *relatio generalis*, 646, and modi 347-464, as well as the corrections made on 315-346. See also Haro, *Marriage and the Family: In the Documents of the Magisterium*, translated by William E. May (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1993), 211-214; and Arjonillio, *Conjugal Love*, 275-276. While the session on marriage was voted on December 3, 1965, the whole document of *Gaudium et Spes* was voted on December 7, 1965. What I intend to present here is a condensed account of the deliberations of the Council delegates as they relate to the teaching concerning the ends of marriage. For comprehensive information concerning the deliberations and the amendments and votes during the different sessions of the Council members, see Moeller, “Pastoral Constitution on The Church in the Modern World,” 1-76; Rynne, *The Fourth Session*. See also M. G. McGrath, “Note storiche sulla Constituzione,” in *La Chiesa nel mondo di oggi* 141-156; S. D. Kozul, *Evolution della doctrina circa l’essenza del matrimonio dal C.I.C al Vaticano II* (Vicenza: Ed, Lief, 1980), 213-255; Francisco Gil Hellin, *Constitutionis Pastoralis “Gaudium et Spes,” Synopsis historica: De Dignitate Matrimonii et Familiae Fovenda* (Pamplona: Eunsa, 1982); and Hellin, “*De Ecclesia et vocazione hominis,*” ed. Francisco Gil Hellin, A. Sariento, J. Ferrer, and J. M Yanguas (Pamplona: Eunsa, 1985). However, there were three schemas that did not make it to the Council floor for either a debate or for a vote. The first schema that did not make it to the Council floor was, *De Castitate, Virginitate, Matrimonio, Familia*. This schema was prepared by the Theological Commission and was presented to the Central Commission on May 7, 1962. See *Acta Synodalia, Seris II*, vol., II Pars., III, 893-937; and Mackin, *What is Marriage?*, 258. The second was *De Castitate Matrimonio, virginitate*. See *Acta Synodalia*, vol., I Pars iv, 718-771. The third was *De Praesentia efficacy Ecclesiae in mundo hodierno*. This schema was prepared by the Mixed Commission which was formed by the members of the Theological Commission and the Commission for the Apostolate of the Laity. This particular schema was sent to the Coordinating Commission on May 25, 1963, for approval but was judged by
Due to the tension within the members of the Sub-Commission and Mixed Commission, schema 17 was not ready for distribution by the summer of 1963. Consequently, it was not discussed during the second session in the fall of that year. Rather, it was reworked during the winter and spring of 1964. However, from the drafts that the Commission for the Discipline and the Sacraments received, it presented to the Central Commission a *Decretum de Matrimonii Sacramento* which was made available to the Council bishops in 1963.\(^{29}\) This document was similar to *De Castitate, Virginitate, Matrimonio, Familia* of the previous year that did not make it to the Council floor. But, the *Decretum de Matrimonii Sacramento* was examined and discussed by the bishops who later submitted their reactions at the end of their deliberations.\(^{30}\)

One of the recommendations that was shared by almost every member of the Commission was the size of the document. Accordingly, the reduced document was given to the bishops at home between the second and third sessions. These bishops considered this reduced version to be too brief and it was further expanded by the same Central Preparatory Commission.\(^{31}\) This was the second time a text on marriage was brought up, discussed, revised, and discussed again without a majority approval by the Council Fathers.\(^{32}\) Therefore, it is fair to say that from the start, the

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\(^{29}\) See *Acta Synodalium*, vol. 3, periodus 3, pars 8, 1068-1083 and 1147-1149; and Mackin, *What is Marriage?*, 258.

\(^{30}\) See *Acta Synodalium Apparando*, Series I (*antepraeparatoria*), vol. 3, 947-948. These Cardinals were: Julius Dopfner, Emile Leger, Bernhard Jan Alfrink, and Leo Joseph Suenens. Among these four Cardinals, Cardinal Dopfner levelled the most comprehensive attack against this schema when it was presented to Ottaviani and the Theological Commission. See also Häring, “Some Problems of Special Urgency,” in *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, 225; and Mackin, *What is Marriage?*, 252.

\(^{31}\) Mackin, *What is Marriage?*, 258-259.

\(^{32}\) However, on each of these occasions, the lack of consensus among the Council members hinges on the teaching concerning the ends of marriage, the role of marital love, and the object of the marital act.
Commission members experienced numerous challenges and opposition from within its members.\textsuperscript{33}

At the end of a very long series of meetings, deliberations, revisions and amendments Cardinal Cento, who, with Cardinal Ottaviani was co-president of the Mixed Commission, sought and received the consent of the Mixed Commission members before sending the text to the coordinating Commission.\textsuperscript{34} After hearing the report of Cardinal Urbani in June 1964, the Coordinating Commission decided that the text was sufficiently ripe to be sent to the Fathers as a whole. When the text was brought to Pope Paul VI, he gave his approval on July 3, 1964, and the text was distributed to Council members. From this point on, this schema 17, bore the name schema 13.\textsuperscript{35}

Schema 13 among other things rejected the limitation of the goods or ends of marriage to procreation and nurturing of children, mutual help and the allaying of concupiscence that the \textit{1917 Code of Cannon Law} assigned to it. Rather, it included the couples’ mutual assistance and shared glorification.\textsuperscript{36} Schema 13 also recognized the centrality of love in marriage and encouraged Christian couples to show the world the true nature of this marital love. According to this document, “true marital love is a mutual and free gift of the self, made by each spouse to the

\textsuperscript{33} Rynne, \textit{The Third Session}, 117.

\textsuperscript{34} See Moeller, “Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World,” 37.

\textsuperscript{35} This first conciliar schema that made it to the Council floor was titled \textit{De Ecclesia in mudo huius temporis}. Cf. \textit{Acta Synodalia}, Vol. III, pars V, 116, 142; 147-200. See also Arjonillio, \textit{Conjugal love}, 275.

\textsuperscript{36} See Rynne, \textit{The Third Session}, 157.
other into one spirit and one flesh…. It is proved by tender affection; it far exceeds mere passing infatuation.”

Having expressed in a lucid form what this true marital love is, the Council delegates in scheme 13 connected marital love to procreation.

Marriage is not a mere instrument of procreation. But its nature of an indissoluble bond between the persons and especially the good of offspring demands that the spouses truly love one another; and if there are no offspring, marriage is not deprived of its fundamental value or its indissolubility. Nevertheless, the nature of the conjugal love is such that marriage is by its nature ordained to procreation and education [of children]. Therefore true conjugal love and the whole pattern of family life arising from it are meant to dispose the spouses to cooperate generously with the love of the Creator and Savior, who by means of them enlarges and endows His family.

One need not go too far to notice the sharp difference between schema 13 and the traditional position that understood progeny as the primary purpose of marriage. While the previous tradition had little to say about the significance of love in marriage, schema 13 explicitly spoke of the centrality of conjugal love in marriage. Similarly, schema 13 avoided the use of The 1917 Code of Canon Law’s hierarchical language of primary and secondary ends of marriage in which the mutual help and the allaying of concupiscence were referred to as the secondary ends of marriage. Schema 13 also averted the subordination of one end of marriage to the other which both the tradition and the personalist thinkers’ (Hildebrand and Doms) teaching

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On a different but related note, schema 13 “avoided the specific question of the use of progesterone (birth control) pills.”

Based on these aforementioned differences between schema 13 and The 1917 Code of Law’s teaching in reference to the ends of marriage, schema 13 was brutally criticized by many traditionalist members of the Council especially for being silent on the hierarchical terminology of the primary and secondary ends of marriage. However, schema 13 was not totally abandoned like the previous schemas. Rather, after contentious debate among the Council members during the third session of the Council in the fall of 1964, it was approved in principle and returned to its formulators for substantial revision.

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39 The 1917 Code of Canon Law, 1013.1.

40 Rynne, The Third Session, 157. The question of progesterone pills was a burning issue that surrounded any discussion on marriage and family during the time of the Second Vatican Council sessions. The reason for this omission was because the Pope had reserved any comment on it for himself after the commission he appointed had examined it. So the question of birth control was not open for the Council Fathers to deliberate upon. Nevertheless, this schema noted that “Nothing can be permitted which is opposed to the natural orientation of the marital act or which destroys the conjugal act’s expressiveness of personal and marital love.” Rynne, The Third Session, 157. Whether or not oral contraceptives opposed the natural orientation of the marital act or destroyed the conjugal act’s expression of conjugal love was not explicitly stated. This will be treated further in chapter seven which deals with the pre and post Humanae vitae debates.

41 Among the commission members who were prominent commentators on this schema were, Archbishop John F Dearden of Detroit who presented the relatio; Cardinal Leger of Montreal who challenged the document for not stating clearly that conjugal love is an end of marriage, but rather avoided the most difficult question, the primary and the secondary ends of marriage. Rynne, The Third Session, 157. Others were Cardinal Suenens who called for the commission members to truly open themselves to the guidance of the Holy Spirit in order to give a balanced account of both the injunction to procreate and the command to provide companionship among couples. He beckoned the Commission members to carefully reflect on whether they have expressively stressed the first end, procreation, at the expense of another equally important end—growth in conjugal unity. See Rynne, The Third Session, 159-162. Another was an 87 year old Patriarch Maximos IV Saigh, who focused on the “agonizing burdensome problem of birth control.” He requested that the official teaching on the issue of birth control be revised to reflect the insights from modern theological, medical, psychological and sociological sciences. Rynne, The Third Session, 162-163. Cardinal Rufini was very skeptical about the schema making it to the floor of the general Council of bishops. He specifically pointed out that the affirmation that it was left for the spouses to decide on the number of children to have is obscure and ambiguous. He warned that the fact the document was addressed to the whole world should not be used as an excuse for overlooking this doctrinal idea or being obscure about Catholic teaching. See Rynne, The Third Session, 165-167. Another was Cardinal Ottaviani who rejected the schema while introducing Dominican Cardinal Brown of the Holy Office as the official spokes-person of the traditionalist’s wing of the Commission members who insisted on the doctrinal implications of the document. Rynne, The Third Session, 168-170. Before concluding his opening remarks, Cardinal Ottaviani warned the commission members against
This revision took place between winter and spring of 1965, at sessions three and four of the Council. At the end, the Commission members refused to explicitly state that procreation and the nurturing of children was the primary end of marriage as the tradition had consistently taught, a shift they attributed to the pastoral nature of *Gaudium et Spes* as well as to respect the vision of Pope John XXIII who convoked the Council. Reflecting on the choice of the title, “Pastoral Constitution,” Archbishop Garrone who introduced it to the Council members said, “it was chosen because conciliar pronouncements nowadays were either constitutions or decrees depending upon whether they dealt primarily with matters of faith or practice.” But, “….this designation and the fact that it was addressed to all mankind made the schema a document in accordance with the supreme intention and purpose of the Council, as defined by Pope John XXIII.”

When the revised version of schema 13 was introduced by Archbishop Garrone to the Council Fathers on September 21, 1965, the traditionalists once again bitterly criticized it for ignoring the traditional hierarchical terminology of the primary and secondary ends of marriage. They insisted that this hierarchy of ends was “the accepted and unchangeable
Catholic doctrine concerning the purposes or ends of marriage."45 This draft also maintained that it was left for parents to determine the number of children they want to have, thereby contradicting the assertion of Cardinal Ottaviani at the third session that “freedom granted to couples to determine for themselves the number of their children cannot possibly be approved.”46

The debate on the entire text of Gaudium et Spes continued until October 8 1965. At the end, several Sub-Commissions were given different parts of the document with recommendations.47 Sub-commission 5 was the largest and it was assigned to revise the part that treated ‘Marriage and Family’ under the auspices of Bishop Charles Dearden of Detroit in collaboration with numerous experts.48 After re-working this draft based on the recommendations of the Council Fathers, it was submitted to the Mixed Commission. The Mixed Communion brought it and the other revised sections of Gaudium et Spes to the Council Fathers on November 13, 1965.49 The Council Fathers voted for the different parts of the document over the course of three days (November 15th through 17).50 Although, there were many criticisms and

46 Rynne, Fourth Session, 83.
48 See Rynne, Fourth Session, 122. The sub-committee was assisted by theological experts or periti that came with individual bishops to the Council. This sub-commitment also worked under the supervision of the Mixed Commission which was presided over by Cardinals Ottaviani and Canto, presidents of the Theological and the Apostolate of the Laity Commissions respectively.
49 This was the sixth version of the full document.
amendments by the Council Fathers, it was approved by the majority of the Council Fathers. Nevertheless, the traditionalist members of the Council continued to attack and to criticize what they considered as a shift from the traditional teaching concerning the nature of marriage and the hierarchy of the ends of marriage. Similarly, they were also disappointed that the document did not follow the vehemence at which both Popes Pius XI and Pius XII condemned contraceptive practices in the former’s *Casti Connubii* and in the latter’s address to the Union of Italian Midwives.

It is perhaps fair to say that due to the tension that this approved schema 13 created among the minority members of the Council, the period for the bishops to submit their *modi* in writing was extended beyond the deadline set by the rule of the Council, to midnight of that Wednesday, November 17, the last day of the voting in full conciliar session. Despite the extension of this deadline and the stipulated rules shielding any approved document from manipulation, on November 24, while the Mixed Commission was working on the final revision of schema 13 on the section that discussed ‘Marriage and Family’ in response to the written recommendations from the Council Fathers, Cardinal Ottaviani asked Fr. Tromp to read to the Commission two communiqués. The first was from Archbishop Pericle Felici, Secretary General of the Council. This letter reminded the Commission members that the completed


52 See Rynne, *Fourth Session*, 211.

53 See Rynne, *The Fourth Session*, 214. According to the rule, if a text has been approved by a majority, no substantial change or changes could afterward be made to it. Canon Heylen reminded the Council members of the rule.

54 See Rynne, *The Fourth Session*, 211. Judging from these deliberations so far, one can say that this was the last attempt made by the minority members of the Council Fathers to re-insert the language of the hierarchy in reference to the ends of marriage.
version must be ready for the printer by Monday, November, 29.\textsuperscript{55} The second letter is of great interest to this inquiry.

This letter was from the Papal Secretary of State requesting the Commission, “in the name of a higher authority,” to make explicit mention of the text on marriage of Pius XI’s \textit{Casti Connubii} and Pius XII’s “Allocutio to Italian Midwives [in 1951].”\textsuperscript{56} Secondly, there were four recommendations attached with the letter, but the second and the fourth are the most pertinent to this study.\textsuperscript{57} Thus, the second recommendation was with regard to the definition of marriage.

\textsuperscript{55} See Rynne, \textit{The Fourth Session}, 211.

\textsuperscript{56} Rynne, \textit{The Fourth Session}, 211, 214; see also Mackin, \textit{What is marriage?}, 262-263. From the tone of this letter, it was unclear to whom the reference to the higher authority represented. Although Mackin agreed with Rynne that since Pope Paul VI was the only authority in the Vatican State that was higher than the Papal Secretary of State, the letter was presented as an expression of Pope Paul VI’s will or position. Nevertheless, I contend that their interpretation is just one out of other possible interpretations of this text. For instance, it is possible that the reference “in the name of a higher authority” was referring to God, especially since Cardinal Brown, after listening to the letter, “was alleged to have said that Christ Himself has spoken— \textit{‘Christus ipse locutus est.’}” See Rynne, \textit{The Fourth Session}, 211.

\textsuperscript{57} The first and third referred to the morality of contraception. At the end of the reading of the letter with its recommendations, the traditionalist members of the Mixed Commission insisted that the group had no choice but to act as the letter had requested as an act of holy obedience. No doubt, this created uneasiness and confusion among the Commission members, so much so that the meeting had to be adjourned for a coffee break, which hastened the news of what happened to be leaked to the Italian publication \textit{L’Avvenire d’Italia}. However, the chairman of the Commission, Archbishop Dearden, was skeptical about the authenticity of the letter. But what he considered as the bigger problem was not whether Pope Paul VI actually wrote the letter. Rather, he was much concerned about how to treat the letter and its recommendations. That is, if Pope Paul VI actually wrote the letter, was he expecting them to insert the two older papal condemnations of contraception, or were they to treat his letter as a recommendation according to the rules of the Council—which allowed the bishops to deal with the recommendations according to their best discretion. This clarification was important since according to the rules guiding the Council no substantial change was to be made to any schema that has been overwhelmingly approved by the Council delegates. To this effect, Cardinal Emile Leger went the following day, November, 25, to Pope Paul to get a clarification of his will on the matter. Instead of an oral reply, the Commission received a second letter from the Secretary of State with four specifications: (1) “Pope Paul VI considered the modi attached to the first letter to be of great importance; (2) the method of formulation was not obligatory; (3) certain things could be added to the modi provided the latter’s meaning were retained; (4) the Pope himself would decide subsequently whether the commission’s decision was acceptable.” Mackin, \textit{What is Marriage?}, 264. As Heylen observed, the direct insertion of the supposed papal \textit{modi} would have involved a substantial change to schema 13 as approved. However, judging from the promulgated text of \textit{Gaudium et Spes}, it appears that the Commission capitalized on the provision of the third point and decided that the \textit{modi} were to be treated according to the rules of the Council. For more information concerning these claims consult: Rynne, \textit{The Fourth Session}, 213-216. For more information concerning how the Commission members responded to all the supposed papal \textit{modi} consult: \textit{The Fourth Session}, 216-225. See also \textit{Acta Synodalit\'a}, vol IV, \textit{periodus} 4, pars 7.
This modus required that a one-word modification be made in the following passage from paragraph 50 of the text on the chapter dealing with marriage and family:

Marriage and conjugal love are by their nature ordained toward the begetting and educating of children. The God Himself who said “it is not good for man to be alone,” wishing to share with man a certain participation in his own creative work, blessed the male and female, saying, “increase and multiply.” Hence the true practice of conjugal love and the whole meaning of family life which results from it, also (etiam) have this aim: that the couple be ready with stout hearts to cooperate with the love of the Creator and Savior, who through them will enlarge and enrich his own family day by day.58

The Sub-Commission adhered to this request and deleted the word ‘also’, but it also added something new to the text which perhaps indicated what the majority of the Commission members wished to propose to the full Council and the amended text read:

Marriage and conjugal love are by their nature ordained toward the begetting and educating of children. Children are really the supreme gift of marriage and contribute very substantially to the welfare of the parents. The God Himself who said [“it is not good for man to be alone,” wishing to share with man a certain participation in his own creative work, blessed the male and female, saying, increase] and multiply.” Hence, while not making the other purposes of matrimony of less account, the true practice of conjugal love and the whole meaning of family life which results from it, have this aim: that the couple… day by day.59

58 Rynne, The Fourth Session, 219-220. Responding to this request, Heylen noted that the use of the word ‘etiam’ does not mean or suggest that procreation was of a secondary nature if juxtaposed to conjugal love. Rather, it was intended to clarify that procreation was not the only end of marriage. He nonetheless supported the proposal to delete it. see Rynne, The Fourth Session 220; and Peter Hunermann, “The Final Weeks of the Council,” in History of Vatican II vol, v, ed. Joseph A. Komonchak, trans. Matthew J. O’Connell (New York: Orbis Books, 2006), 415.

59 Rynne, The Fourth Session, 219-220. Emphasis is as in the work cited. I agree with Rynne who observed that “the insertion of the clause while not making the other purposes of matrimony of less account” not only robbed the papal modus of its force, but made the text much clearer than it was before regarding their stand on the ends of marriage.” See The Fourth Session, 220. For more information concerning the reasons for deleting the word also—etiam and for adding the clauses—while not making the other ends of marriage of less account consult: Acta Synodalia, vol. IV periodus 4 pars 7; and Congregationes Generales CLXV-CLXVIII, sessions Publicae IX-X as cited by Mackin, What is marriage? 264-265. See also Häring, “Some Problems of Special Urgency,” 240.
The fourth request required the insertion of the words “but if spouses are to overcome their difficulties, it is altogether necessary for them to practice the virtue of conjugal chastity sincerely” (sed ad difficultates superandus omnino reguiri ut conuges castitaten coniugalem sincere animo coolant) at the end of the sentence which says that there cannot be a contradiction between the divine laws pertaining to the transmission of life and those pertaining to authentic conjugal love, in paragraph 51. After series of suggestions and amendments by the Commission members, as a compromise, the majority of the members leaned toward putting the reference to Augustine De Bono Conjugali’s position concerning the goods of marriage and those of the papal documents in the footnote, and provided two reasons for maintaining their compromised decision. The first reason was that the inclusion of the hierarchical terminology of the primary and secondary ends would jeopardize the pastoral nature of Gaudium et Spes. The second reason was that the Constitution, whose aim was to initiate dialogue with the rest of the world, does not need such highly judicial and technical language.

Accordingly, the revised and approved text read:

(Conjugal love)…. Hence when there is question of harmonizing conjugal love with the responsible transmission of life, the moral aspect of any procedure does not depend solely on sincere intentions or on the evaluation of motives, but must be determined by objective standards. These, based on the nature of the human person and his acts, preserve the full sense of mutual self-giving and human procreation in the context of true love. Such a goal cannot be achieved unless the virtue of conjugal is sincerely practiced. Relying on these principles, sons [and daughters] of the Church may not undertake methods of birth control which are found blameworthy by the teaching authority of the Church in its unfolding of the divine law.

60 Rynne, The Fourth Session, 221.


62 Rynne, The Fourth Session, 222-223. Emphasis is as in the work cited and represents the additions to the text. As agreed by the Council members footnote 14 that was attached to this text reads; “Cf. Pius XI, encyclical letter Casti Connubii: AAS 22 1930; Denz-Schoen. 3716-1718; Pius XII, Allocutio Conventui Unionis Italicae inter Obstetrices,
When this revised text was submitted to Pope Paul VI the next day, he approved it. However, because this last minute amendment to this text of *Gaudium et Spes* did not include the terminology of the primary and secondary ends of marriage but only referenced it in the footnote, some Council members requested for it to be recognized as a simple declaration rather than a Constitution. The duration of the Second Vatican Council was from October 11, 1962 to December 8, 1965. The Council Fathers met in four approximately ten-week sessions.

From this brief overview regarding the deliberations of the Council members before the approval of *Gaudium et Spes*, it was obvious that the Council delegates were divided on whether to maintain the traditional hierarchical structure which understood the end of *proles* as the primary purpose of marriage. Due to this lack of consensus, while the traditionalist members of the Council wanted to maintain the traditional primacy of progeny, the progressive members opposed such categorization. Consequently, the Council delegates avoided the use of the hierarchical terminology of primary and secondary ends of marriage in the treatment of the purposes of marriage.

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64 See Moeller, “Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, 40, 69.

65 Technically, one can say that the Council which John XXIII inaugurated ended with his death, but was re-opened by Paul VI.
However, as this study has demonstrated the minority members’ effort through different channels to persuade the majority members to add the terminology of the primary and the secondary ends of marriage resulted to some amendments to schema 13. First, the word (etiam), also was deleted from the text that discussed the ends of marriage. Second, the Council members added that “children are really the supreme gift of marriage and contribute very substantially to the welfare of their parents.”

Third, the phrase ‘while not making the other purposes of matrimony of less account’ was also added to the text. Fourth, the Council Fathers put the previous teachings that supported the primacy of proles over the mutual help and the allaying of concupiscence on the footnote of Gaudium et Spes’s number 50 which embodies the teaching in reference to the ends of marriage.

Although these subtractions and additions could be construed as the product of a last minute maneuver from the minority members of the Council, they, perhaps better expressed the position of the majority members of the Council concerning the ends of marriage more than the word etiam did in the text that accentuated for their position on the ends of marriage.

In reference to the teaching on contraceptive and the power given to parents to determine the size of

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67 This reference to Augustine, Pius XI and Pius XII’s teaching concerning the ends of marriage in this text has continued to create confusion among scholars on the actually position of Gaudium et Spes with regard to the ends of marriage. In other words, without a clear and definite statement in support of or in repudiation of the hierarchical terminology of the primary and secondary ends of marriage, schema 13 was susceptible to a plethora of interpretations among scholars.

68 I will elaborate on the claim at the concluding section of this present chapter as well as in chapter eight that deals specifically with how some scholars have interpreted the silence of Gaudium et Spes over the hierarchical terminology of the primary and secondary ends of marriage.
their families, the Council Fathers also added that responsible parenting cannot be achieved “unless the virtue of conjugal chastity is sincerely practiced.”

Nevertheless, the major objection to the schema 13 by the minority members of the Council that led to these minor amendments or changes was left unattended, the insertion of the primary and the secondary ends of marriage to the text. Rather, the Council Fathers were silent over it. In other words, there was no explicit statement by the Council Fathers either in repudiation of or in support of the traditional hierarchical language of primary and secondary ends of marriage. The silence of Gaudium et Spes over the hierarchical terminology of the primary and secondary ends of marriage has led to equivocal interpretations by scholars.

However, before this study embarks on an analytical appraisal of the implications of and on how different scholars have interpreted the silence of Gaudium et Spes over the hierarchical terminology of the primary and secondary ends of marriage, the next section of this chapter will analyze the promulgated text of Gaudium et Spes, part two, section numbers 47-52. It is my hope that a thorough analysis of the whole section of Gaudium et Spes that treated the dignity of marriage and family, might perhaps, shed some needed insight on not only what influenced the Council Fathers’ teaching concerning the ends of marriage, but also on how best to interpret and understand the silence of Gaudium et Spes over the hierarchical terminology of the primary and the secondary ends of marriage.

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70 As I intend to show in chapter eight of this study, subsequent theologians and scholars have capitalized on this silence to argue either in favor of congruity with the traditional position or for a departure from the traditional teaching in reference to the ends of marriage.
6.3. Gaudium et Spes Numbers 47-52: The Dignity of Marriage and the Family

The Council Fathers began their discussion concerning the ‘Dignity of Marriage and Family Life’ in number 47 of Gaudium et Spes by speaking of marriage and family in terms of a partnership of love. In doing so, the Council Fathers understood conjugal love as the animating force that fosters the well-being of individual person and sustains the health of married life as a community of persons. Since the Council delegates understood the human person as a composite of body and soul who is destined for eternity, in number 47 they also alluded to some existential and moral realities that threaten the dignity of the persons who share this partnership of love, and by extension jeopardize the realization of their eternal destiny and shared glorification.

The Council Fathers classified these problems into moral problems and existential factors. With regard to the moral problems they noted “Polygamy, the plague of divorce, so-called free love,…selfishness, hedonism and unlawful contraceptive practices [as contradictory]

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71 Gaudium et Spes, 47. The document of the Second Vatican Council Gaudium et Spes is not only one of the four great conciliar Constitutions, it is also a product of the other conciliar documents: Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation—Dei Verbum; Dogmatic Constitution on the Church—Lumen Gentium; The Constitution on Liturgy—Sacrosanctum Concilium. To this claim Moeller observed: “Lumen Gentium is founded in Dei Verbum; Gaudium et Spes is rooted in Lumen Gentium and in addition is directed ad extra, [that is beyond the confines of the Church].” See Moeller, “Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World” in Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II, 70. See also Brian J. Benestad, “Doctrinal Perspectives on the Church in the Modern World,” in Vatican II Renewal Within Tradition, edited by Matthew Lamb and Matthew Levering (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 147; and Haro, Marriage and the Family, 216. Gaudium et Spes was also the only document that was written in a modern language—French and the only one that was circulated to the bishops in other modern languages—English, German, Spanish and Italian. See Rynne, The Fourth Session, 56.

72 Prior to the treatment of marriage and family in part two of Gaudium et Spes, the Council Fathers, in part one discussed major topics that were key to their understanding of the human person. Some of the major themes covered in part one include: the perennial human quest for meaning; the challenge of contemporary atheism; the human person revealed by Christ; human dignity; human community; human activity in the world; economic and social life; the problem of poverty; political life and ethics. Gaudium et Spes, 1-46. See also Arjonillo, Conjugal Love, 255-266.
to what true conjugal love represents.” In reference to the existential factors, the Council Fathers made reference to psychological, economic, sociological, demographic and civil factors as constituting a nuisance to the joy and peace of married life. These factors contradict what true conjugal love represents. Being aware of these problems, and their impact on society, but without allowing them to discourage their ambition, the Council delegates postulated a teaching which brought hope and encouragement to the couples who marry by clarifying the true nature of marriage. “For despite the hardship flowing from the profoundly changing conditions of society today, the true nature of marriage and of the family is revealed in one way or another [by true love that exists among the couples].” By referring to love as what constitute the true nature of marriage they highlighted the concept that formed the bedrock from which their teaching on the ends of marriage was developed.

Commenting on this statement of purpose, Robert William argues that “the Council intends to present certain key points of the Church’s teaching in a clearer light; and it hopes to guide and encourage Christians and all others who are trying to preserve and to foster the dignity and the supremely sacred value of the married state.” In comparing the Second Vatican Council with the Council of Trent he continued to note that “while Trent’s purpose was to refute and

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73 *Gaudium et Spes*, 47.

74 *Gaudium et Spes*, 47. This true love when expressed through the conjugal act becomes a singular expression and perfection of conjugal love. Understood as such, the conjugal act truly becomes a means of expressing, realizing, fomenting and perfecting the free and mutual donation of persons demanded by authentic conjugal love which does not exclude fecundity.

anathematize errors and reform practice in marriage, Vatican II is interested in shedding new theological light on the meaning of this sacrament.”

Judging by the provision of this statement of purpose in *Gaudium et Spes* number 47 one notices a stark difference between it and the previous magisterial teaching concerning marriage and its ends. While the *1917 Code of Canon Law* started by emphasizing the primacy of the end of *proles*, *Gaudium et Spes* number 47, began by describing the true nature of marriage as a partnership of love. This difference in approach draws attention to three essential characteristics which probably were present in different forms in the tradition from the biblical writers through the scholastic scholars. However, these characteristics were lost with the modern focus on law, but which nonetheless, are necessary for an understanding of marriage as a partnership of love. First, it recognizes the centrality of love in marriage. Second, it alludes to the fact that marriage is entered by a kind of being that is capable of engaging in a loving relationship. Third, that the love which the couples share in marriage is not only unique and complimentary, but it is a love that does not see any of the participants as playing an inferior or subsidiary role.

Interestingly, the only animal that meets the above requirements is a human person who is created in the image of God. Such a person is not only capable of loving and of receiving love, but true marital love is neither selfish nor limited to physical goods. In other words, in a marital relationship a person’s love ideally becomes sacrificial, focuses and seeks the good of the other in a manner that corresponds to his or her spiritual nature. The spiritual nature of a person

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77 Although the first and the second characteristics reflect the teaching of Aquinas and Bonaventure concerning the role of love in marriage, especially marriage as friendship, Aquinas’s and Bonaventure’s teaching was not nuanced enough. Thus, *Gaudium et Spes*’s teaching that understood marriage as a partnership of love better reflected the teaching of Hildebrand’s new axiology in which love was regarded as the primary meaning of marriage.
supports the divine origin of marriage and the possibility of marriage being a part of the life of holiness.\footnote{78 Both Haro and Arjonillio agree that by “affirming that [authentic conjugal love seeks the spiritual and physical well-being of the couples], \textit{Gaudium et Spes} \{no. 48\} does nothing else than to place the very beginning of marriage in harmony with what has been proclaimed by \textit{Lumen Gentium} regarding the universal call to holiness.” \textit{Lumen Gentium}, 41, 399. See Haro, \textit{Marriage and the Family}, 217-218; and Arjonillio, \textit{Conjugal Love}, 287-288.}

Thus in number 48, the Council Fathers continued their description of marriage and family life by calling it a partnership of love and life that is rooted in a “conjugal covenant of irrevocable personal consent and mutual gift of two persons.”\footnote{79 \textit{Gaudium et Spes}, 48. The use of the word covenant was rejected by 190 minority members of the Council who argued and feared that to describe marriage as a covenant contradicted previous pronouncements of the Church with regard to the ends of marriage. Cf. Häring, “Some Problems of Special Urgency,” 225-232. What is gained by treating marriage as a covenant and not as a contract are the following: It clearly showed that marriage is not something whose content can be determined or revoked by mutual consent of the contracting parties themselves. Similarly, a contract concerns things and services and can be separated from the person. Marriage is a covenant between persons and serves to underscore the fact that marital intercourse is a mutual self-giving action. See Häring, “Some Problems of Special Urgency,” 232-233. However, the Council Fathers’ description of the nature of marriage as “conjugal covenant of irrevocable personal consent” does two things. First, it re-affirms the traditional western position that understood consent as what creates a marriage. However, in the Eastern Churches, it is the nuptial blessing that is conferred by the priest or the bishop that creates a marriage. Second, it is a reflection of the covenantal language that is traceable to the biblical era and thereby restores this heritage that was lost during the centuries that described marriage as a contractual relationship that was entered by two adult persons of the opposite sex.} In his interpretation of the difference between referring to marriage as a covenantal relationship rather than as a contract, William argued that \textit{The 1917 Code}’s designation of marriage as a contract strongly suggested that the two opposite adults who sign the contract to marry each other do so solely for the primary reason to beget children.\footnote{80 Cf. \textit{The 1917 Code of Canon Law}, c. 1081.2 See also William, “Christian Marriage,” 215. While I tend to agree with William that by not using the language of the primary and secondary ends to describe the purposes of marriage that the Second Vatican Council Fathers departed from previous magisterial position on the ends of marriage, I do not consent to his suggestion that “it ought to be clearly stated that the primary purpose of their marriage, and hence of their sexual intimacy is to grow in this sacramental union.” William, “Christian Marriage,” 222. His position that “the having of children is subordinate to the relationship and the quality of the parenting is in so many ways dependent on the strength of their marital love” is problematic for the same reason that the subordination of conjugal love by procreation is. Similarly, he also missed the mark, and in fact, the mission of the Council Fathers by suggesting that the “equal footing that the Second Vatican Council attributed to both conjugal love and sexual intercourse does not support the post Second Vatican Council’s documents, \textit{Humanae Vitae} and John Paul II that each and every marriage … must be open to procreation is not nuanced enough.” 223. Since chapter seven of this}
reasons, but if William’s interpretation is accepted, a case can be made that when a child who is the object of the contract is not forthcoming; marriage loses its binding force or obligation and therefore, disintegrates. This would contradict what mutual self-giving and receiving of each other bodies represent and which the covenantal nature of marriage promotes.

Similarly, in a covenantal relationship that resembles that of Christ and His Church, the couple gives and receives each other’s body unreservedly with no strings attached either in terms of progeny, economic, political or other related ends or goods. However, the placing of conditions such as children in a marital relationship is motivated by a description of the purposes of marriage by a focus on the finality of the conjugal act. But in Gaudium et Spes’s explication, the goods of proles, fidelity, and indissolubility become much more than a focus on fecundity or on not engaging in adultery, polygamy or divorce. Rather, as William rightly noted, “[they] mean accepting the other in the deepest identity of his or her being.”

Marriage as covenantal relationship supports and accepts the other for who he or she is and not for what he or she has or is able to produce.

The Council Fathers were right to note that the love that establishes this covenantal relationship and the community of persons who marry is beyond individual discretion and different from mere emotional or erotic love that tends to objectify the other. Consequently, the Council Fathers draw attention to its divine nature thusly:

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study will analyze some of these post Second Vatican documents, I reserve further comments on this claim until then.


82 Therefore, marriage as a covenantal relationship neither supports the primacy of procreation nor justifies the Igbo position that understood the male child as the primary purpose of marriage.
This sacred bond no longer depends on human decision alone. For God himself is the author of marriage and has endowed it with various benefits and with various ends in view. [Thus, it continues to state]: By its very nature the institution of marriage and married love is ordered to the procreation and education of the offspring and it is in them that it finds its crowning glory. Thus the man and woman, who “are no longer two but one” (Mt19:6), help and serve each other by their marriage partnership; they become conscious of their unity and experience it more deeply from day to day. The intimate union of marriage, as a mutual giving of two persons and the good of children demand total fidelity from the spouses and require an unbreakable unity between them.83

By stating that the sacred bond that exists between the spouses which marriage establishes does not depend on human decision alone; Gaudium et Spes is congruity with the traditional teaching concerning the indissoluble character of Christian marriage. Also the teaching that maintains the significance of children as well as their education and nurturing within marriage reflects the traditional position. But number 48 was careful not to limit the primary purpose of marriage to proles. On the contrary, Gaudium et Spes number 48, while acknowledging the importance of children points to the unifying character of marriage as what is achieved by the mutual self-giving and receiving of each other’s body, irrespective of whether fecundity is present or not as far as nothing is done to frustrate it.

This reading is furthermore supported by the Council Fathers’ description of the love that couples share in marriage as springing from the love of Christ for His Church. Thus, married couples are expected to express their mutual self-giving love and fidelity in a total self-giving and receiving of each other’s body without any string attached. In other words, their love for each other should resemble and/or participate in the love of Christ for His Church who loved the Church unconditionally. However, to say that marital love springs from the love of Christ does

83 Gaudium et Spes, 48. With this teaching the Council Fathers recovered both the post exilic and the Yahwistic accounts of the creation of humanity and by extension the origin of marriage which was lost during the centuries that defined marriage purely from a judicial leaning.
not divinize or make married love a perfect love. Rather, marital love is still human and in need of God’s grace. The significance of the grace of God in a marital relationship among other things is that it shapes and guides a spouse away from using the conjugal act as an instrument to objectify the other for hedonistic purposes.  

Therefore, in acknowledgment of couples’ constant need of God’s grace, the Council Fathers in number 48 also describes the relationship that exists between true human love and divine love. According to the Council Fathers, “when authentic conjugal love is caught up into divine love and is directed and enriched by the redemptive power of Christ and the salvific actions of the Church … married couples are fortified to fulfill their lofty role as fathers and mothers [whether a child is present or not].” In light of this, their marital act truly becomes a human act that promotes the self-giving and the total surrender of the lover to the beloved as embodied persons. This partnership of love that is expressed and finds its intimate expression in the conjugal act differentiates the marital act from the irrational animals’ sexual acts, since the latter is solely engaged for the reproduction of their species and on the basis of instinct. But

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84 Cf. Gaudium et Spes, 49; and Acta Synodalia, vol. IV, pars vii, 498. For a detailed account of the danger of seeing one’s spouse as an object of sexual gratification see Wojtyla, Love and Responsibility, 21-140.

85 Gaudium et Spes, 48. This reflects Hildebrand’s position. See Hildebrand, Man and Woman, 13, 63, 72; Marriage, 74-75; and Purity, 213.

86 This differentiates human sexuality from animal sexuality. This is because the marital act of the couples does not only see to the bringing forth of a new life, but it has a psychological finality—“that of the communication of the persons in love. A human person is a creature created by God in His image and likeness and by this very fact, is gifted with a sublime dignity that no other creature possesses. P. Delhaye, Dignidad del Matrimonio y de la Famillia, in Y. M. J, Congar and M Peuchmard (dir.), La Iglesia en el Mundo de Hoy, II (Madrid: Taurus Ed., 1970), 525 as cited in Arjonillio, Conjugal Love, 273. Understood as such, human sexuality should not be seen only from the lens of its biological functions like animal sexuality. That is, “human sexuality or specifically the marital act does not simply deal with generation …but of a value which can be sought for itself.” P. Delhaye, Dignidad del Matrimonio y de la Famillia, in Y. M. J, Congar and M Peuchmard (dir.), La Iglesia en el Mundo de Hoy, II, 525 as cited in Arjonillio, Conjugal Love, 273. However, the treatment of the marital act within the broader framework of conjugal love was the novelty of the personalist scholars as chapter five of this study has shown. Chapter five demonstrated how Hildebrand argued that the true nature of sexuality as both constitutive of the person and its procreative significance can only be revealed by its connection with conjugal love. See Hildebrand, Marriage, 25.
true conjugal love seeks the total well-being of the couples as opposed to the language of utilitarianism which true love does not speak.\textsuperscript{87}

The Council Fathers in number 49 continued to recognize the danger that may arise if this partnership of love that is rooted in the will is not freed from arbitrariness via God’s grace.

Married love is an eminently human love because it is an affection between two persons rooted in the will and it embraces the good of the whole person; it can enrich the sentiments of the spirit and their physical expression with a unique dignity and ennoble them as the special elements and signs of the friendship proper to marriage. The Lord… has restored, perfected and elevated it. A love like that, bringing together the human and the divine leads the partners to a free and mutual giving of self, experienced in tenderness and action, and permeates their whole lives; besides, this love is actually developed and increased by the exercise of it. This is a far cry from mere erotic attraction, which is pursued in selfishness and soon fades away in wretchedness.\textsuperscript{88}

\textit{Gaudium et Spes} number 49 can be construed as saying that by God’s grace human love assumes the quality of an authentic love and is different from mere erotic attraction that is pursued for selfish purposes. If the Lord has restored and perfected human love, the reciprocity which authentic married love demands from couples is impaired when one of the parties or both of them enter into marriage with a selfish purpose to use the other as a tool for sexual gratification or as a child-bearing machine. Rather as Wojtyla rightly argued “it is only

\textsuperscript{87} See Wojtyla, \textit{Love and Responsibility}, 28-44. Although Wojtyla argues that one can use the other in a utilitarian sense for the purpose of procreation, nonetheless, this language is also falsified when the primary purpose of marriage is strictly seen or evaluated through the lens of the conjugal act’s natural ordination to fecundity by a focus on the teleology of sexual intercourse that supported the supremacy of the end of \textit{proles} as the \textit{1917 Code} did.

\textsuperscript{88} \textit{Gaudium et Spes}, 49, 952.
[authentic] love that can preclude the use of one person by the other."\textsuperscript{89} Therefore, when couples give and receive the gift of each other’s bodies via a love that is human, but guided by God’s grace, their marital acts foster and enhance conjugal friendship and the ability to share their joys and sorrows as married couples.

Consequently, the couple’s conjugal acts rather than become acts that are performed solely for the purposes of procreation of children or for providing companionship, are rightly understood as acts which are expressed and perfected by the exercise of all other acts that are proper to married life. These acts collectively promote the equal dignity and unity of the couples and exclude immoral behaviors and/or all forms of stereotyping that are based on gender, cultural practices, reproductive differences and/or preferences. These claims are supported by the statement of the Council Fathers who in referring to the unifying quality of marital love elucidated: “This love abides faithfully in mind and body in prosperity and adversity and hence excludes both adultery and divorce. The unity of marriage, distinctly recognized by our Lord is made clear in the equal personal dignity which must be accorded to man and wife in mutual and unreserved affection.”\textsuperscript{90}

\textsuperscript{89} Wojtyla, Love and Responsibility, 30.

\textsuperscript{90} Gaudium et Spes, 49. This also reflected the covenant terminology used in the second creation account that depicted the equality of male and female that was supported by both accounts of the creation of humanity and the positions of Hildebrand and Doms. To this end, Arjonillio was right to note: “Where von Hildebrand shows how the differences between two typifications of the human nature, which are coordinated to one another and complementary, constitute the foundation of the possibility of marriage and the love which is characteristic to it. “It forms the specific foundation for the ‘I-thou relationship,’ for the ultimate interpenetration of two persons, for spiritual union. It is precisely the general dissimilarity in the nature of both which enables this deeper penetration into the soul of the other, a stronger seeing-from-the-inside, an ultimate openness toward the other, a real complementary relationship.” Hildebrand, Man and Woman, 91-92. On the other hand, Doms affirmed that the “diversity of types of the two spouses, as an element of two living persons who are absolutely unique in their individuality, is within God’s intention, the most powerful means of learning how to love the person in his own value and to carry out the love in an utterly individual manner.” Doms, Marriage, 69, see also 25-27, 39; and Arjonillio Conjugal Love, 269-270. Doms recognizes sexuality in its personal dimension as something which is both inseparable to the human person as well as something that contributes to his or her perfection. Thus, human
Furthermore, the statement which calls attention to “the couple’s physical expression with a unique dignity and signs of the friendship proper to marriage” is neither opposed to, nor promotes fecundity at all costs.\(^1\) Rather, it demands an openness to fecundity in every conjugal act. Also the exclusivity and the indissolubility that are part and parcel of the traditional position is jeopardized by infidelity or divorce for whatsoever reason once Christian marriage is established. Therefore, marriage as a partnership of love demands fidelity and indissolubility on the part of the couples even in the extreme situation where couples’ love for one another has disintegrated or if they are not blessed with children. For although it can be argued that the emphasis that the Council Fathers placed on married love parallels that of Hildebrand who understood conjugal love as the unifying principle of marriage, it does not mean that marriage can be dissolved without love as some scholars have claimed.\(^2\) Rather, one can say that without love married life breathes fury than shared joy.\(^3\)

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\(^1\) *Gaudium et Spes*, 49.


\(^3\) In his reflection of this text, Arjonillio rightly noted the criticisms which William May levelled against Richard McCormick and Theodore Mackin among others who argued that without love marriage can be disintegrated and dissolved. See William May, “Christian Marriage and Married Love,” in *Anthropos* 2 (1986): 101-102. See also
Nevertheless, the descriptions of marriage as a partnership of love that is wedded in the love of Christ for His Church, and conjugal love as a fortifying force that promotes the well-being of the couples were not meant to trivialize the importance of children in marriage. Far from being the case, the Council Fathers in *Gaudium et Spes* number 50, treated the role of conjugal love and its relationship to procreation vis-a-vis marriage and its ends.

Marriage and married love are by nature ordered to procreation and education of children. Indeed children are the supreme gift of marriage and greatly contribute to the good of the parents themselves. God himself said: “It is not good that man should be alone” (Gen. 2:18), and “from the beginning (he) made them male and female” (Mt. 19:4); wishing to associate them in a special way with his own creative work, God blessed man and woman with this words: Be fruitful and multiply” (Gen. 1:28). Without intending to underestimate the other ends of marriage, it must be said that true married love and the whole structure of family life which results from it is directed to disposing the spouses to cooperate valiantly with the love of the Creator and Saviour, who through them will increase and enrich his family from day to day.94

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94 *Gaudium et Spes*, 50. « Matrimonium et amor coniugalis indole sua ad prolem procreandum et educandum oridnatur. Fili sane sunt praestantissimum matrimonii donum et ad ipsorum parentum bonum maxume conferunt. Ipse Deus qui dixit: “non est bonum esse himinem solum” (Gen.2, 18) et qui “homnem ab initio masculum et feminam… fecit » (Mt. 19, 4), volens ei participationem speciale quamdam in suiipsius opere creativo communicare, viro et mulieri benedixit docens : « crescite et multiplicamini » (Gen. 1, 28). Unde verus amoris coniugalis cultus totaque vitae familiaris ratio inde oriens, non posthabitis ceteris matrimonii finibus, eo tendunt ut coniuges forti animo dispositi sint ad cooperandum cum amore Creatoris atque salvatoris, qui per eos suam familiariam in dies dilatat et ditat. » *Gaudium et Spes*, 50, 759-760. Sacrosantum Oecumenicum Concilium Vaticanum II : Constitutiones Decreta Declarationes (Roma : Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, MCMLXVI): The theologians who argued that *Gaudium et Spes*’ position on the ends or purposes of marriage did not depart from the traditional position that understood procreation and nurturing of children as the primary end of marriage also, refer to this text to support their claim. They argue that the Council Fathers judged that a highly technical and judicial language which the primary and secondary ends suggest will undermine the pastoral nature of the Constitution as evidenced in *Acta Synodalia*, vol., iv, pars., vi. 487. This they argue was the response that was given to the request or petition of 190 Council members who wanted the language of the hierarchy to be inserted, they noted: “in textu pastorali qui dialogum cum mundo institutere intendit elementa iuridica non requirundutur.. Insuper in textu, qui stylo directo et pastorali mundum alloquitor, verba nimis technical [hierarchia]vitanda apparent » To those who wanted the Conciliar Fathers to add ‘voluntatis legitime manifesto to Ita actu humano’, also were responded by the Council Fathers thusly” «Intextu pastorali prae cisio illa iuridica non requiritur.” *Acta Synodalia*, vol. iv, pars vi. 478. Since chapter seven of this study will carefully examine this claim, I reserve further comments concerning it until then.
Like *Gaudium et Spes* number 48, the statement that marriage is by nature ordained for the procreation of children is not a new teaching. It echoed the traditional position that linked the primary purpose of marriage to fecundity. But the teaching that married love understood as the culmination of all the other activities that are proper to married life “is by nature ordered to the procreation and nurturing of children” is a shift from, or a development of the traditional teaching.\(^95\) In the traditional framework, the primacy of children was linked to the biological finality of the sexual act and nothing was said concerning the role of love. Also, in the traditional structure, the primacy of *proles* was not associated with all the other activities that married couples perform which are distinct from the marital act, but which nonetheless, promote and foster the well-being of the couples and that of their children.

But in *Gaudium et Spes* number 50, it is not only the conjugal act, but all the activities that are proper to married life (of which the conjugal act is one), simultaneously promote all the ends or goods that are proper to married life. In other words, these activities foster the good or end of *proles, fides* and *sacramentum*. Therefore, when couples pray, bathe each other, share stories, go to Church; including their decision to, or not to engage in sexual intercourse for the good of their marriage, all these activities are acts performed under the auspices of conjugal love. It is in this sense that John Paul II’s statement needs to be understood when he argued that “fecundity is the fruit and sign of conjugal love, the living testimony of the reciprocal self-giving of the spouses.”\(^96\) Mark Pilon also rightly noted that conjugal love begins with the couple’s

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\(^95\) *Gaudium et Spes*, 50.

vows, with solemn promises by means of which a total gift of self is made intentionally by the spouse."  

Therefore, unlike the traditional teaching that did not connect the ends of marriage with love, the Council Fathers’ accentuation of love in marriage can be construed as an influence of Hildebrand’s teaching that understood love as the primary meaning of marriage. However, unlike Hildebrand authentic married love for Gaudium et Spes, is the center that holds and unifies all the other activities that are proper to marriage but not as an independent end itself. Rather, conjugal love fosters and promotes the goods/ends of proles, fides and sacramentum but neither as the primary nor as the secondary ends of marriage. Also Gaudium et Spes number 50 does not support the subordination of one end of marriage to the other as both the traditional and personalist thinkers’ positions did. On the contrary, conjugal love as the culmination of all the activities that are proper to married life, “disposes the spouses to unite body and soul and to cooperate valiantly with the love of the Creator and Savior, who through them increases and enriches God’s family from day to day with children.”  

Gaudium et Spes also refrained from placing a dichotomy between the ends of marriage either for the promotion of fecundity or for the fostering of mutual love. Therefore, Gaudium et Spes numbers 47 through 50 can be construed as a recovery of the unity in diversity that exists between the first post-exilic and the Yahwistic accounts of creation as chapter three of this study.

97 Pilon, Magnum Mysterium, 48.
98 Gaudium et Spes, 50. This is because the act of sexual intercourse for human beings does not only unite body to body; it also unites soul to soul of the couples who engage in the marital act. Gaudium et Spes like Hildebrand and Doms, rejected any view that reduced the significance of human sexuality wholly to its procreative end for such would be to identify human sexuality with animal sexuality. Cf. Hildebrand, Purity and Virginity, 26; Doms, The Meaning of Marriage, 21, 23-24.
chronicles and the scholastic understanding of marriage as friendship between a male and a female. But Gaudium et Spes did not explicitly teach ‘an inseparable connection’ between the unitive and the procreative meanings of the conjugal act. Therefore, I disagree with Levering who in interpreting Gaudium et Spes’s position on the ends of marriage argues that, “mutual self-bestowal’ flows into the gifting that is procreation; understood in this way, the unitive and procreative are inseparable because both belong to the dynamism of mutual self-bestowal.”

On the contrary, it is fair to say that Gaudium et Spes number 50 while maintaining the significance of procreation in marriage, refrained from seeing this significance in terms of the primacy or supremacy of the end of proles as the tradition had consistently taught. But it simply alludes to the fact that children contribute to or add value to the good of their parents. However, the well-being of their parents and the value of marriage are not dependent on marriage being blessed with children. In other words, to say that children are the supreme gift of marriage and greatly contribute to the good of the parents themselves presupposes that parents already share a good that is independent of the good that children would add to them, but the value or purpose of marriage neither subsists in this good nor does marriage disintegrates because there were no children to add to this good.

Rather, Robert William was right to note that “the bishops were careful…to keep the mission of procreation and education of children in the context of the total meaning of

\[100\] Levering, “Pastoral Perspective on the Church in the Modern World,” 167. This is because while this might be implicitly drawn especially through the insight from the other magisterial teachings that followed Gaudium et Spes, however, Gaudium et Spes neither explicitly employed the terminology of the procreative and unitive meaning, nor taught that both of them were inseparable. As I hope to show as this study advances, the designation of the purposes of marriage within the framework of an inseparable connection between the procreative and unitive meaning of marriage was the novelty of Humanae Vitae.
Also his interpretation of this text better represented the whole framework that formed the bedrock from which *Gaudium et Spes*’s position concerning the role of procreation and the relationship between procreation and the ends of marriage were developed. According to him:

Marriage was not instituted solely for the procreation of children: Its nature as an indissoluble covenant between two people and the good of the children demand that mutual love of the partners be properly expressed, that it should grow and mature. Even in cases where despite the intense desire of the spouses there are no children, marriage still retains its character of being a whole manner and communion of life and preserves its value and indissolubility.\(^{102}\)

From the analysis so far, it is fair to say that the Council Fathers were not shy in insisting that marriage is not merely for the procreation of children. Thus, the fidelity and indissolubility of marriage as stated above are dependent on the intrinsic value of the community of love itself and not necessarily in the good of *proles* as was previously taught by the magisterium. Seen through this lens, conjugal love as the culmination of all the activities proper to married life demands fidelity and indissolubility and is not subordinated to the end of procreation or the end of providing companionship. It is based on this that both infertile marriages and those of the adults that have past the age of child-bearing can truly be said to be complete in their nature and sacramentality.

However, it seemed to me that William may have fallen into a hasty generalization in maintaining that in *Gaudium et Spes* number 50, procreation and the marital relationship are placed on equal standing by the Council Fathers. His reason for holding this position was because *Gaudium et Spes* did not employ the judicial language that supported the supremacy of


procreation over the mutual help and the allaying of concupiscence in its description of the ends of marriage.\textsuperscript{103} Rather than say this, it is perhaps better to note that the centrality of conjugal love which one sees in Second Vatican Council’s description of the purposes of marriage in its existential meaning—‘an intimate partnership of life and love,’ is both an influence and a development of the personalist teaching that was associated with Hildebrand who understood love as the primary meaning and procreation as the primary end of marriage and the scholastic theologians treatment of marriage as friendship as the previous chapters accentuated.

Nevertheless, in his interpretation of \textit{Gaudium et Spes} number 50, Arjonillio’s noted that the redactional itinerary of the document reveals two important tendencies which the conciliar Fathers confronted and which he argued influenced \textit{Gaudium et Spes}’s teaching on the ends of marriage.\textsuperscript{104} “The first tendency is one which underlies the value or role of conjugal love but which depreciated the importance of procreation as the principal end of marriage. The second tendency is the one which fears placing emphasis or developing the theme of conjugal love because of the danger of obscuring the primordial importance of procreation in marriage.”\textsuperscript{105} Arjonillio further interprets several scholars as conceding that, “both tendencies coincide in

\textsuperscript{103} See \textit{The 1917 Code of Canon Law}, c. 1013.1. See also William, “Christian Marriage,” 215, 217-218. While a case could be made that the silence of \textit{Gaudium et Spes} over the use of the hierarchical terminology of primary and secondary ends perhaps, suggested a departure from the previous magisterial positions, it is doubtful whether an argument can be made and sustained that the Second Vatican Council Fathers understood the ends of marriage as equal to one another as William claimed.

\textsuperscript{104} Arjonillio, \textit{Conjugal Love}, 294.

\textsuperscript{105} Arjonillio, \textit{Conjugal Love}, 294. See also \textit{Acta Synodalita}, vol iv pars., vi, 485.
situating conjugal love in the structure of ends, even if they differ in the grade of importance, co-
principal or secondary.”

According to Arjonillio the position which the Council Fathers took was a middle
position between the two tendencies which he argued was “neither eclectic nor syncretistic of the
two previous positions.” This is because according to him, the Council delegates did not
“conceive conjugal love as an end of marriage which is juxtaposed or in contraposition to the
other ends of marriage. [Rather], conjugal love, not only marriage, is ordained towards the other
ends of marriage.” He argued that the Council Fathers did not provide an answer when it
comes to the ends of marriage because “it is a very specialized theme which would demand a
technical-juridical language, which is not appropriate to the style of a pastoral constitution.”
Consequently, Arjonillio argued that the silence of the Council Fathers over the use of the
hierarchical language of primary and secondary ends should not be construed as a departure from

106 Arjonillio, Conjugal Love, 294. For the authors he was referencing see F. Gil Hellin, El Matrimonio: Amor e
Institution, 231; A Favale, “Fini del matrimonio nel magistero del concilio Vaticano II,” in A.M Triacca and G.
Planazzi (directors), Realta e valori del Sacramento del Matrimonio (Roma: Las, 1976), 200; S. Lener, “Martimionio
e amore conjugal nella “Gaudium et Spes” et nella “Humanae vitae,” in Viv Catt II (1969) 22-33 at 29; P. Delhaye,
“Dignidad del Matrimonio y de la Familia” in Y. M. J. Congar and M. Peuchmard (dir.), 535. On the contrary, Haro
argues that Gaudium et Spes did not accept either of the tendencies but rather took a complementary tone. Rather ,
the Council members understood conjugal love not as an end of marriage, or a property of marriage but rather “they
predicate of love the same ends and the same properties that they predicate of the whole institution of marriage.”
Haro, Marriage and the Family, 235. See also Gil Hellin “El lugar propio del amor conyugal en la estructura del
matrimonio segun la” « Gaudium et Spes » in Anales Valentinos 6 no.11 (1980), 2 as cited by Arjonillio, Conjugal
Love, 295. 2.

107 Arjonillio, Conjugal Love, 295. See also Gil Hellin, Los “bona matrimonii” en la Constitution Pastoral
Gaudium et Spes” in ScrTh 11 (1979) 128-129 ; and « El lugar propio del amor conyugal en la estructura del
matrimonio segun la « Gaudium et Spes » in Anales Valentinos 6 no. 1-2 as cited by Arjonillio, Conjugal Love, 295.
See also Acta Synodolia vol.iv, pars vi, 485.

108 Arjonillio, Conjugal Love, 295; and Haro, Marriage and the Family, 246. See also Acta synodalit vol. iv. pars vi,
485.

109 Arjonillio, Conjugal Love, 295. See also Acta Synodolia, vol iv, pars vi, 487.
[but is congruity with] the previous teaching concerning the primacy of procreation over mutual help and the allaying of concupiscence, the secondary ends of marriage.\footnote{Arjonillio, *Conjugal Love*, 296-299. However, Arjonillio is not alone in holding this position I will say more on this in chapter eight of this study. See also Hellin, Los “bona matrimonii” en la Constitucion Pastoral *Gaudium et Spes*” in ScruTh 11 (1979) : 156 ; M Zalba, Num Concilium Vaticanum II hierarchiam finium matrimonii ignoraverit, immo et transmutaverit in Periodica 69 (1979): 635; Zalba, “Dignidad del matrimonio y de la familia,” in *Commentarios a la Constitucion Gaudium et Spes sobre la Iglesia en el mundo actual*, edited by Card. A Herrera Oria (Madrid : BAC, 1968), 418; A Miralles, *Amor y matrimonio en la Gaudium et Spes,* in *Lateranum* 48 (1982): 324-325 ; A Favale, “Fini del matrimonio nel magisterio del concilio Vaticano II,” 192; Haro, *Marriage and the Family*, 272; Smith, *Humanae Vitae: A Generation Later*, 47-48; William May, *Marriage: The Rock on Which the Family is Built* 2nd edition (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2009) 97-98. For the theologians who hold contrary opinion and argue that the *Gaudium et Spes* marks a significant departure from the previous teaching regarding the ends of marriage see, Sevilla De Segovia, “El Pensamiento de Herbert Doms. Sobre algunos aspectos ignorados del matrimonio » (Tesis doctoral . Universidad Pontificia de Comillas, Madrid, 1985), 334; V. Heylen, “La promozione della dignitas del matrimonio e della famiglia,” in la *Chiesa nel mondo di oggi, Studi e commenti intorno alla Costituzione pastorale Gaudium et Spes* (Florencia: Vallechi, 1966), 358; Mackin, *What is Marriage?*, 235-235; and Lawler, *Secular Marriage*, 53 As I indicated earlier, I reserved further comment on this claim until chapter eight of this study analysis the arguments of one representative from each camp—Mackin and May.}

Arjonillio’s interpretation of this text is one of a kind. Arjonillio argues that *Gaudium et Spes* did not provide an answer with regard to the ends of marriage. I agree with Arjonillio’s assessment that conjugal love was not principally considered as an independent end of marriage if he meant by conjugal love as a single act in marriage.\footnote{Mark Pilon shares this view too. See Pilon, *Magnum Mysterium*, 21.} This is because the phrase conjugal love as it was used in *Gaudium et Spes* included all the activities that are proper to married life. The purposes or ends of these activities are not limited to one particular end, but collectively, they foster and enhance all the ends or purposes that are proper to marriage.

But I do not consent to the view that the Council delegates did not provide an answer in reference to the ends of marriage. This is because being silent over something is itself a response of its kind. Therefore, Arjonillio had jumped to a hasty generalization in observing that the Council Fathers did not provide an answer with regard to the ends of marriage in his failure to read the silence of *Gaudium et Spes* over the hierarchical terminology of the primary and
secondary ends of marriage as an answer, though not a very good one. Such a hasty
generalization I contend, also resulted to his position that *Gaudium et Spes* did not constitute a
departure from the *1917 Code of Canon Law*’s designation of procreation and the education and
nurturing of children as the primary end of marriage. If the Council Fathers did not provide an
answer to the question of the primary and secondary ends of marriage, it seemed contradictory to
say that they did not depart from the traditional view in reference to the ends of marriage.
Therefore, it is fair to say that there was no explicit statement either directly repudiating the
traditional position or in support of it.\[112\]

On a related note, Levering avoided commenting on the silence of *Gaudium et Spes* over the
language of the primary and the secondary ends of marriage in his interpretation of number
50. Rather, he argued that “the priority of children is placed carefully within the whole
framework of married love and therefore no longer risks appearing as an extrinsic priority.”\[113\] It
is difficult to see how any analysis of the section of *Gaudium et Spes* that treated the ‘Dignity of
Marriage and the Family Life,’ and/or specifically, number 50 in comparison with the previous
magisterial position concerning the ends of marriage could fail to comment upon or at least
acknowledge the silence of the hierarchical terminology of the primary and secondary ends of
marriage by the Council delegates.

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\[112\] Since I intend to study this silence more carefully later, I simply note for now that *Gaudium et Spes*’s silence over the hierarchical terminology of primary and secondary ends of marriage is open to equivocal interpretations. Therefore, I reserve further comments on this question until chapter eight of this study that deals with the arguments of May and Mackin on this question.

\[113\] Levering, “Pastoral Perspectives,” 178. This argument is in rejection of Norman Tanner who observed thusly: Regarding the two ends of marriage—the procreation and the bringing up of children and, second, the mutual help that spouses give to each other and the remedy for concupiscence—which had provoked sharp debate in 1964, both are mentioned in a discreet way and without entering into the thorny issue of the priority of one over the other.” Norman Tanner, *The Church and the World: Gaudium et Spes. Inter Mirifica* (New York: Paulist Press, 2005), 51. Cf. Norman Tanner “The Church in the World,” *History of Vatican II* vol, II, ed. Joseph A. Komonchak, trans. Matthew J. O’Connell (New York: Orbis Books, 2006), 306-313.
As the study demonstrated in the section that examined the deliberations of the Second Vatican delegates, the omission of the language of the primary and the secondary ends of marriage was a calculated action on the part of the Council Fathers and too significant to have been ignored as Levering did. Rather, the Council Fathers’ silence over the hierarchical language of the primary and the secondary ends of marriage spurred contentious debate among Council delegates which was resolved by a kind of compromise to appease the minority members of the Council delegates who wanted the hierarchical language to be inserted.\footnote{As this study indicated earlier, this compromise was achieved by doing two things. They Council members resolved to put in the footnote reference to Augustine’s \textit{De Bono Conjugali} and Pope Pius XI’s \textit{Casti Connubii} that were associated with the traditional hierarchical structure. The second was the removal of the word (\textit{etiam}) ‘also’ from the approved text of November 13, 1965.}

However, since \textit{Gaudium et Spes} number 50 neither trivialized the importance of children, nor the companionship that couples share together, the Council Fathers further treated the difficulties that may arise in trying to balance the demand of the conjugal act and the respect for a new human life. Thus, in number 51, the Council Fathers acknowledged on one hand, certain contingencies of life which may not support the begetting of a new life as a necessary accompaniment or companion to a couples’ sexual act.\footnote{For instance, when for a just and prudent reason the couple cannot provide for the needs of their children or when the life of the mother or that of the child to be conceived is in danger. However, even in this situation, they are not allowed to frustrate fecundity by engaging in a purposeful contraceptive marital intercourse.} On the other hand, they recognized the problems that may arise if couples stay for an extended period of time without engaging in sexual intercourse. Such abstinence, they argued, can also affect the couple’s relationship and the total well-being of their children. To balance this situation, the Council Fathers placed the decision to engage in procreative intercourse or not on the couples to make, though, in conscience.
The Council Fathers hoped that such well-formed conscience(s) will in-turn lead married couples to make the choice to beget or not to beget a child in accord with sound principles that correspond to the nature of the person in totality and his or her acts. To this end, the Council Fathers opined: “there can be no conflict between the divine laws governing the transmission of life and the fostering of authentic married love.”

Rather, “acts proper to married life are to be ordered according to authentic human dignity and must be honored with the greatest reverence.” Therefore, “when it is a question of harmonizing married love with the responsible transmission of life, it is not enough to take only the good intention and the evaluation of motives into account; the objective criteria which epitomizes the nature of human person must also be used.”

The Council Fathers further elucidated what they meant by ‘objective criteria,’ as “criteria drawn from the nature of the human person and human action, criteria which respect the total meaning of mutual self-giving and human procreation in the context of true love; all this is possible only if the virtue of married chastity is seriously practiced.”

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116 Gaudium et Spes, 50. Notice the careful choice of the phrase ‘authentic married love.’ This suggests that there is or could be married love that claims to be authentic, while it is not. The major work for couples then, I think, will be to differentiate between the ‘authentic and the unauthentic married love which is why the Council Fathers encourage couples to seek the grace of God. Authentic married love can be construed as married love that seeks for the good and the total well-being of the person as a dignified human being. While unauthentic married love seeks but not limited to the objectification of the other and uses him or her as a tool for sexual gratification.

117 Gaudium et Spes, 51.

118 Gaudium et Spes, 51. Also see the first part of Gaudium et Spes for a comprehensive treatment of what the Council Father understood as the dignity of the human person. It is also clear that in doubt of whether a human life has been conceived, that the couples are to err on the side of protecting the life.

119 Gaudium et Spes, 51. What this means is that the personalist underpinning of this text does not suggest a subjective morality which promotes a moral evaluation or judgment based on the good intention of the person that performed the act. In other words, good intention alone does not justify moral actions; the actions themselves must meet the objective standards of morality. However, ‘objective criteria’ promotes the evaluation of moral actions in such a way that they are always good or made irrespective of the intention of the person who performed the act. Moral judgments based on the objective criteria will always seek for the total well-being of the human person.
chastity here echoes Aquinas’s teaching who referred to it as a virtue. It does not mean abstinence from the marital act. Therefore, it calls attention to the need for couples to avoid engaging in all sexual activities that intentionally frustrate fecundity and/or objectify the other for hedonistic purposes especially through contraception.\footnote{120} However, in condemning contraception as a means of birth control, the Council Fathers referenced previous magisterial documents that had spoken against it but they did not specifically address the newly developed oral contraceptives.\footnote{121}

Since the Council Fathers regarded the family as a fertile soil for children’s development as well as for the foundation of the society, they referred to the family as a “school of human enrichment.”\footnote{122} This is because the family is not only a place that houses siblings and their parents, more than this; the family provides a suitable environment for the harmonization of spiritual and social life. Children who are brought up in a healthy family will in-turn follow their different vocations in life in a responsible manner which will in-turn benefit the society. Seen through this lens, the most effective means of assuring the stability of society and/or of the

\footnote{120}{For succinct explication of the virtue of married chastity see Grabowski, \textit{Sex and Virtue}, 141-154.}

\footnote{121}{See \textit{Gaudium et Spes}, footnote 14. Cf. also Pius XI, Encyclical letter, \textit{Casti Connubii}; AAS 22 (1930), 559-561; Denz. 2239-2241 (3716-3718); Pius XII, \textit{Allocation to the congress of Italian Midwives}, 29 Oct. 1951: AAS 43 (1951), 835-854; Paul VI, \textit{Allocation to the Cardinals}, 23 June 1964: AAS 56 (1964), 581-589. “By order of the Holy Father, certain questions requiring further and more careful investigation have been given over to a commission for the study of population, the family and births, in order that the Holy Father might pass judgment when its task is completed. With the teaching of the magisterium standing as it is, the Council has no intention of proposing concrete solutions at this moment.” Here the Council Fathers were clear that they are maintaining the traditional teaching of the magisterium that condemned contraception pending the findings of the Commission and how the Holy Father chose to deal with it. On this question they were specific, unlike the question concerning the ends of marriage. I hope to examine the findings of this commission in chapter seven of this study that will study the teaching of \textit{Humanae Vitae}.}

\footnote{122}{\textit{Gaudium et Spes}, 52. The idea that the family is a school of human enrichment parallels \textit{Lumen Gentium}’s description of family as a domestic Church. The view that marriage creates a domestic Church reflects St. Augustine’s teaching in \textit{De Bono Conjugali} where the educating and nurturing of children were seen as a function of parents that begins in the family for the good of the family, the Church and the society.}
family would be to safeguard the values of marriage. Consequently, the Council Fathers encouraged the State and the government officials to enact laws that would protect marriage and parental responsibilities from disintegration because parents (mother and father) play a significance role in the proper upbringing and education of their children\textsuperscript{123}.

The significance of \textit{Gaudium et Spes} number 51 to this study is not only that it apportioned the family a significance role in the upbringing of children, but it was also presented in a manner that the irreplaceable role of mothers in the education and nurturing of children was maintained without interfering with their social advancement.\textsuperscript{124} Finally, the Council Fathers concluded their discussion on marriage and family by making reference to their earlier position in number 51, in which they encouraged married couples to practice conjugal chastity.\textsuperscript{125}

\textbf{6.4. SUMMARY}

From this brief analysis that examined \textit{Gaudium et Spes}’s section on ‘the Dignity of Marriage and Family life,’ it is clear that the Council Fathers not only maintained some of the principles that embody the traditional teaching with regard to the ends of marriage, but it also recovered and developed some aspects of the tradition that were lost in the modern focus on law prior to the Second Vatican Council. This is to say on one hand, that \textit{Gaudium et Spes} recovered

\footnote{\textsuperscript{123} See \textit{Gaudium et Spes}, 51.}

\footnote{\textsuperscript{124} With this teaching, women were longer regarded as having a subsidiary role in the upkeep of their families. Also they are no longer regarded as just house wives or mothers who are at the service of their husbands and children. The education meant here was to ensure that children become responsible in order to orient their lives without being so dependent on their families.}

\footnote{\textsuperscript{125} \textit{Gaudium et Spes}, 52.}
or restored some elements of the magisterial position that were lost during the centuries that understood the purposes of marriage strictly through the judicial terminology of the primary and secondary ends of marriage. On the other hand, *Gaudium et Spes* used some expressions which, though traceable to the traditional position, nonetheless, gave its teaching on the ends of marriage a new outlook by promoting the notion of a human persons as the only creature that is capable of engaging in a loving relationship called marriage.

According to the findings of the first section of this chapter, it is fair to say that the sexual freedom which the artificial contraceptives, Freud’s pansexuality theory, and the economic security that were associated with the industrial revolution, that most couples’ life style in Europe and America during the twentieth century was repugnant to the magisterial teaching that regarded *proles* as the primary purpose of marriage. On the other hand, the economic and the social advantages of having many children that are prevalent in most agrarian societies or cultures before the industrial revolution supported the traditional emphasis on progeny as the primary purposes of marriage. However, neither the emphasis on progeny as the primary purpose of marriage as the tradition taught nor the sexual freedom that came with the availability of artificial contraceptive represented what true authentic married love signifies. Similarly, none of these positions adequately embodied the true purpose of marriage as the treatment of the biblical creation accounts as chapter three of this study chronicles.

In order to restore this lost tradition, the Council Fathers described the nature of marriage as a covenantal loving relationship that recalled the relationship that existed between God and the Israelites. But more than this, in this new era, Christian couples participate in a covenantal

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relationship that resembles the relationship that exists between Christ and his Church. In developing the concept of the reciprocity of the gift of each other’s body which marriage as a partnership of love promotes, *Gaudium et Spes* restores the biblical view concerning the equality of a man and woman in their marital relationship that was explicitly stated in the first account and was supported by the Yahwistic account of the origin of humanity, and by extension, the origin of marriage. *Gaudium et Spes* also spoke of the love that exists among couples as an affection rooted in the will and capable of enriching them with a peculiar dignity and ennobling them elements and signs of conjugal friendship.127

Based on the insights from the deliberations that went on during the Council’s sessions before the approval of the final text and sections 47–52 of *Gaudium et Spes*, it is fair to say that the refusal to use the hierarchical terminology was neither a trivial one nor an omission that was done by a mistake. Rather, *Gaudium et Spes*’s teaching concerning the ends of marriage was a development of both the traditional position and that of the personalist thinkers’ teaching that promoted the subordination of one end of marriage to the other. In other words, in refusing to define the ends of marriage in the language of primary and secondary ends or meanings, the Council Fathers understood the purposes of marriage in its existential meaning—“an intimate partnership of life and love.”128

Hence, without limiting the primary purpose of marital intercourse to procreation, the Council Fathers, like Hildebrand, apportioned an intrinsic value to the conjugal act. But unlike Hildebrand, who worked within the framework of the primary meaning and the primary ends of

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127 *Gaudium et Spes*, 50.
128 *Gaudium et Spes*, 50.
marriage, *Gaudium et Spes* avoided such categorization as well as the designation of the ends of marriage as primary and secondary end that began with Aquinas and reached its apex in the 1917 *Code of Canon Law*. Rather, conjugal love finds its deepest expression in conjugal intimacy. Seen through this lens, the marital act truly becomes a human act that promotes the self-giving and the total surrender of the loved to the beloved as embodied persons.\(^{129}\)

Nevertheless, the study has also shown that conjugal love (as the embodiment of all the activities of married life) is not unrelated to the procreation and the education of children. Far from being the case, conjugal love was understood by the Council Fathers as naturally ordained for the procreation and education of children as well as for the welfare of the couples themselves.\(^{130}\) But conjugal love is not an independent end of marriage. Seen in this perspective, all of the activities of married life promote the ends of *proles, fides*, and *sacramentum* and contribute to the well-being of the family, their society and the Church as the family of God.

Also the Council Fathers drew attention to the practice of conjugal chastity as a virtue to protect couples from engaging in sexual activities that would falsify the mutual self-giving and receiving of each other’s body which authentic married love promotes. When couples’ conjugal acts are influenced by conjugal chastity, their expression of non-procreative intercourse and those of spouses who are able to procreate in its truest sense and meaning achieve the same purpose. Both of them will aim at the preservation and the promoting of conjugal fidelity. For this reason, the Council Fathers deplored the use of any means that either guarantees or excludes

\(^{129}\) See *Gaudium et Spes*, 49.

\(^{130}\) See *Gaudium et Spes*, 50.
conception outside of the free or exclusive marital act of the couple.\textsuperscript{131} However, judging by the deliberations that occurred during the Council sessions, it is fair to say that while the Council Fathers agree that children are part and parcel of marriage, and while the majority of them agree that the bringing forth of a new life should be responsibly controlled, opinions were divided even among the Council Fathers, as to what constitutes responsible parenthood.\textsuperscript{132}

On the specific question concerning the position of \textit{Gaudium et Spes} in reference to the language of the primary and secondary ends of marriage, it is clear that the Council Fathers avoided speaking of the ends of marriage in the terminology of primary and secondary ends as the \textit{1917 Code of Canon Law} did. What is debated among theologians is the correct interpretation of the refusal of the Council delegates to speak of the ends of marriage in hierarchical terms even though they provided a reason for not doing so as the second section of this chapter has accentuated.\textsuperscript{133}

Nevertheless, based on the analysis so far, one can say that neither the traditional teaching that understood procreation as the primary end of marriage nor those of the Igbo that regarded the procreation of male children as the primary reason for marriage can be substantiated or sustained by the teaching of \textit{Gaudium et Spes}. Rather, when couples share their love together through the activities that are proper to married life and are blessed with children, they accept the responsibility to educate and to nurture their children, and in doing so, they cooperate with God

\textsuperscript{131} See \textit{Gaudium et Spes}, 51.

\textsuperscript{132} I will say more with regard to this claim in chapter eight of this study which deals the analysis of \textit{Humanae Vitae} and the pre and post \textit{Humanae Vitae}’s debates.

\textsuperscript{133} Since I intend to study this question more carefully, I refrain from taking the reasons they provided for this silence as sufficient reasons until subsequent documents that embody this teaching are analyzed.
the master Creator and the architect of all lives.\textsuperscript{134} Seen in this perspective, children rightly contribute to the well-being of their parents, but the value of marriage is not dependent either on the good that children are meant to contribute or specifically on the male child as the Igbo hold.

If the primary purpose of marriage neither subsists in children nor male children, neither is marriage as partnership of love support polygamy nor other promiscuous activities in an effort to beget children or a male child in the event of sterility or the inability to beget male children. Therefore, as Pope John Paul II enunciated, Igbo childless couples should find solace in truly loving each other and in being open to the needs of others and those of the apostolate since being childless does not preclude them from the love of God or make their marriages insignificant.\textsuperscript{135} Rather, marriage as a partnership of love that stems from the love of Christ and His Church expects that in the unfortunate situation of sterility, the Igbo couples’ faith in Judeo-Christian God and the unconditional love which they share together would enable them to carry the cross of infertility by supporting each other and by asking for the grace of God. Both Augustine and more so Aquinas’s explication of the ends of proles, \textit{fides} and \textit{sacramentum} support this reading.

There is no doubt that married couples will always have the need to ask for the grace of God to live a holy life and to practice a love that is firm, generous, and prompt to sacrifice. However, those couples who desire to have children but are unable to do so because of sterility problems will be in most need of God’s grace to support one another in a culture like that of the Igbo that regards infertility as a curse as the second chapter of this study has demonstrated.\textsuperscript{136} In

\textsuperscript{134} See \textit{Gaudium et Spes}, 50.


\textsuperscript{136} \textit{Gaudium et Spes}, 49.
fact, the true test for couples’ faith in God and of the love they have and share for one another especially in Igboland would be determined by how infertile couples handled their sterility problems. Succinctly put, it is against the nature of a person as *imago dei*, marriage as a partnership of love, and the origin of the authentic married love as taught by *Gaudium et Spes* for the Igbo couple to either divorce, engage in polygamous marriages or other promiscuous activities for the purposes of begetting a male child to maintain one’s lineage even if the Igbo culture allows it.

Finally, having examined the background, the deliberations of the Council delegates before, and after the approval of *Gaudium et Spes* numbers 47-52, it is fair to make this observation: I note that although the analysis of both the deliberations and the promulgated text suggest that the whole framework that embody the teaching of *Gaudium et Spes* concerning the ends of marriage converge on a repudiation of the hierarchical structure of the primary and secondary ends of marriage, I refrain from taking an explicit position now for the following reasons. First, there was no direct and explicit statement of repudiation or congruity of the language of primary and secondary ends of marriage in *Gaudium et Spes*. Second, for the fact that *Gaudium et Spes* referenced both Augustine and the papal documents that embody the traditional primacy of *proles* over the mutual help and the allaying of concupiscence, I acknowledge with other scholars that the silence of *Gaudium et Spes* over the language of primary and secondary ends of marriage is susceptible to equivocal interpretations. Third, that to address this ambiguity, one needs to examine other subsequent magisterial documents that are relevant to the question of the magisterial teaching concerning the ends of marriage.
Examining some of the magisterial documents that followed *Gaudium et Spes* is perhaps key to a robust and explicit position on whether *Gaudium et Spes*’s silence over the hierarchical terminology of primary and secondary ends of marriage suggested a departure from or continuation with previous position. Therefore, as a way to continue to trace this history the next chapter will examine relevant sections of few post Second Vatican Council’s magisterial documents on the question of the ends of marriage. The specific documents that would be examined are: Pope Paul VI’s encyclical letter *Humanae Vitae* (1968), Pope John Paul II’s Apostolic Exhortation, *Familiaris Consortio* (1981), *The 1983 Code of Canon Law*, the *Donum Vitae* (1987), the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1993), and the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith Instruction, *Dignitatis Personae* (2008).
CHAPTER SEVEN

POST SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL MAGISTERIAL TEACHING CONCERNING THE ENDS OF MARRIAGE

INTRODUCTION

The teaching of the Second Vatican Council in its sixteen documents has undergone various interpretations in the hands of scholars and theologians sometimes without reaching unanimous conclusions on some key subjects and topics. For example, opinions are divided among scholars concerning the correct interpretation of the silence of the Council Fathers over the hierarchical terminology of the primary and the secondary ends of marriage. For some scholars like Theodore Mackin, this silence suggested a repudiation of the traditional hierarchy of ends, while for others like William E. May; it represented a continuation with the traditional teaching which understood procreation as the primary end of marriage.\(^1\) This lack of consensus among scholars with regard to what the Council Fathers actually meant or taught on key questions such as this one has become so intense that it may not be an over-statement to say that it breeds confusion for the average Catholic.

Pope Benedict XVI most recently attempted to present what he considered to be the appropriate significance or contribution of the entire Second Vatican Council documents, which he argued have been misconceived and misrepresented by some theologians. Thus, against the

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\(^1\) The arguments of the representative scholars that hold either of these views will be developed in part two of this chapter.
contention that the magisterial teaching as enshrined in the documents of the Second Vatican Council represented ‘discontinuity’ and ‘rupture’ with the past magisterial positions, Pope Benedict XVI argued that a comprehensive interpretation of the documents should not be found in “a hermeneutic of ‘discontinuity’ and’ rupture,’ but rather on a ‘hermeneutic of reform,’ of renewal in the continuity of the one subject—the Church that the Lord has given to us.”

Accordingly the Pope merged ‘discontinuity,’ ‘reform,’ and ‘continuity’ but not ‘rupture’ when he said, “it is precisely in this combination of continuity and discontinuity at different levels that the very nature of reform consists.” Although Pope Benedict XVI was not speaking specifically about Gaudium et Spes’s position on marriage, what he said concerning the whole of the Second Vatican Council’s documents can be applied to Gaudium et Spes’s teaching concerning the ends of marriage. This is because, as the preceding chapter has shown, although the framework of Gaudium et Spes’s teaching on marriage and its ends suggested a repudiation of the traditional supremacy of the end of proles over the mutual help and the allaying of concupiscence, the study was hesitant to draw such an explicit conclusion for two reasons. First, there was no explicit statement of repudiation of the previous position. Second, because some

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3 Pope Benedict XVI, “Interpreting Vatican II.” 536, 538. See also, Komonchak, “Novelty in Continuity,” 13. For more information concerning the language of reform(ation) its partial equivalents, as well as the way it was employed Pope Benedict XVI in his December 2005 address to the Curia see, John O’Malley, “‘The Hermeneutic of Reform’: A Historical Analysis,” Theological Studies 73, (2012) 517-546.
scholars have capitalized on this lack and the pastoral aim of the document to argue that *Gaudium et Spes*’s position concerning the ends of marriage was a continuation of the traditional hierarchy of ends which understood the procreation and nurture of children as the primary end of marriage.

Since this study did not consider the lack of an explicit statement of repudiation from or continuation with the traditional position, as well as the debate that it produces a trivial issue, in this present chapter, it will examine six magisterial documents following *Gaudium et Spes* that touched on the question of the ends of marriage to find out how best to interpret the teaching of *Gaudium et Spes* concerning the ends of marriage. Similarly, because of the equivocal interpretation that *Gaudium et Spes*’s silence over the hierarchical terminologies of the primary and secondary ends of marriage has produced, this chapter will also analyze the arguments of two scholars who seemed to have championed this debate or at least who clearly represent opposite sides of it. A clear and explicit understanding of what the magisterium has taught after the Second Vatican Council with regard to the purposes of marriage would be key in responding to the scholars who either interpreted the silence of *Gaudium et Spes* over the terminology of the primary and secondary ends of marriage as continuation with or repudiation of the previous position on this question.

examine the arguments of William May and Theodore Mackin as representative of the scholars who have argued that the Church’s teaching concerning the ends of marriage in *Gaudium et Spes* represented continuation with or repudiation of the traditional position.

### 7.1. POPE PAUL VI'S ENCYClical LETTER *HUMANAe VITae* ON THE ENDS OF MARRIAGE

Pope John XXIII not only convoked the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, he also formed a special Commission to study the Problems of the Family, Population and Birth Rate. This special Commission which served as an advisory body to the Pope on the aforementioned subject was expanded several times by Pope Paul VI. In studying the ‘Problems of the Family, Population and Birth Rate’ this special Commission particularly focused on the question of contraception which was made more pressing by a variety of factors particularly the development of oral contraception.

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4 Since this body was set up as a confidential advisory group to the Pope, its findings on the subject were not considered to be a definitive statement on the issue. It was still left for the Pope to make the final and authoritative pronouncement concerning the findings of the Commission.

5 Although the primary subject or topic that *Humanae Vitae* treated was the issue of contraception, however, what it taught about contraception is not unrelated to the question of marriage and its ends. Therefore, in this section the analysis will also include a condensed examination of the beginning sections of *Humanae Vitae* as a background to section number twelve which embodies its teaching on the ends of marriage. At the end of their study, the majority of the Commission members among other things recommended for the approval of contraception in the final document that was sent to Pope Paul VI. While a case can be made that this commission was not constituted to study the question of contraception since neither the Pope nor the magisterium had questioned the traditional condemnation of contraception, it is perhaps true that Pope Paul VI had doubts concerning the status of ‘the pill’ and wanted a more updated response to the Church’s teaching in light of contemporary problems such as but not limited to population issues. See Robert Blair Kaiser, *Politics of Sex and Religion* (Kansas City, Missouri: Leaven Press, 1985), 38-39. See also “The Birth Control Report,” The Tablet, May 6, 1967, 511; *The Birth Control Debate*, edited by Robert G. Hoyt, (Kansas City, Missouri: National Catholic Reporter, 1968), 63-77.
Following the recommendations of this special Commission, Pope Paul VI in his encyclical *Humanae Vitae*, while acknowledging certain changes and questions that modernity has precipitated, weighed in on the question of marriage and its ends. In light of these questions, Pope Paul VI recognized that the magisterium needed to give new and deeper consideration to “the principles of the moral teaching concerning marriage, a teaching that was rooted in natural law, illuminated and made richer by divine revelation.” According to him, marriage was established by God for the special purpose of “instilling His own design of love

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6 The changes that Pope Paul VI was referring to were the following: the rapid increase in population, the way women and their roles were viewed, and last but not the least, the value society placed on conjugal love and society’s understanding of the meaning of sexual intercourse in the light of love. See Pope Paul VI, *Humanae Vitae*, 2, as translated by Janet Smith in *Humanae Vitae: A Generation Later*, 273-295. All subsequent references will be from this translation unless otherwise noted. With regard to how these changes relate to the ends of marriage, Paul VI noted that they have helped in bringing clarity to both the importance and the harmony that exists between marital intercourse and fidelity so much so that some people have started to question the moral norms in which the Church’s teaching on the regulation of birth were founded. He noted that according to them, these norms can no longer be applied without heroic sacrifices on the part of the couples. See Paul VI, *Humanae Vitae*, 3. To address these problems these scholars have suggested that the principle of totality be applied in such circumstances. Through the application of the principle of totality they argue, “couples will be able to act responsibly by entrusting the mission of transmitting life more to their reason and will, than to the biological rhythms of their bodies” (Paul VI, *Humanae Vitae*, 3). On the contrary, Pope Paul VI referenced the just concluded Second Vatican Council’s teachings particularly, *Gaudium et Spes* numbers 47-52 as a good example of how the magisterium has used the insights from modern sciences to communicate an “integrated teaching on the nature of marriage, on the moral use of conjugal rights, and on the duties of the spouses” (Paul VI, *Humanae Vitae*, 4). Nevertheless, as the previous section of this study has shown, the Council Fathers refrained from giving a conclusive answer on the question of the regulation of birth because a special Commission was formed to study and to advise the Pope on how to address it. Against this backdrop, Pope Paul VI argued that the decision to have or not have children should not be based only on considerations of biology, psychology, demography and sociology, but rather by considering the whole man and the whole mission of giving birth to a new life. See Paul VI, *Humanae Vitae*, 7. This route is a *conditio sine qua non*, because the mission of generating new life “pertains not only to man’s nature and earthly existence, but also to his supernatural and eternal existence” (Paul VI, *Humanae Vitae*, 7). Grounded on this broader framework, Pope Paul VI chided those scholars whose positions concerning marriage and human sexuality supported the limitation of children through artificial means in order to promote conjugal love and/or responsible parenthood. See Paul VI, *Humanae Vitae*, 7.

7 Paul VI, *Humanae Vitae*, 4. While Pope Paul VI appreciated the work of the special Commission, he gave two reasons for going contrary to the recommendation of its majority members. First, he noted that there was lack of consensus among Commission members concerning the moral norms that ought to the proposed. Second that the methods and criteria employed in answering the question and in arriving at their conclusions “departed from the firm and constant teaching of the magisterium on what is moral within marriage” (Paul VI, *Humanae Vitae*, 6). Based on these two reasons and having seriously prayed over it Paul VI elucidated: “We think it right, through the power given to us by Christ, to give an answer to these weighty questions” (Paul VI, *Humanae Vitae*, 6).
through men [male and female].” This is evidently so because “conjugal love has core characteristics: Conjugal love is human; it is total; it is faithful as well as exclusive; and finally, it is fruitful.”

Pope Paul VI also referenced Gaudium et Spes’s juxtaposing of marriage and conjugal love to show their interconnectedness. “Marriage and conjugal love are ordained by their very nature to the procreating and educating of children. Offspring are clearly the supreme gift of marriage, a gift that contributes immensely to the good of the parents themselves.” In addition, “conjugal love requires that spouses be [truly] fully aware of their mission of responsible parenthood [by taken into account its] three legitimate and interconnected dimensions.”

8 Pope Paul VI, Humanae Vitae, 8.
9 Pope Paul VI, Humanae Vitae, 8.
10 Pope Paul VI, Humanae Vitae, 8. Because it is human, it does not operate only on the sensual level but also on the spiritual. Thus, it involves an act of free will and is shielded from being understood as only a product of natural instinct. It is total because it is a special form of personal friendship that fosters and enhances unreserved giving and receiving of each other simply for the sake of who one’s spouse is. It is faithful and exclusive because it is indissoluble. It is fruitful because the fullness of love far from being exhausted in the communion of persons, goes beyond it to generate new life. See Humanae Vitae, 9. [Therefore, he argues that] the teaching that supported artificial contraceptives as tools to limit the number of children neither represented the true meaning of conjugal love and responsible parenthood, nor took account of their origin and nobility. [Consequently, he calls it] a false claim to think that marriage resulted from chance or from the blind causation of natural forces. Marriage came to be because God established it” (Paul VI, Humanae Vitae, 8).

11 Gaudium et Spes, 50. See also Paul VI, Humanae Vitae, 9.
12 Pope Paul VI, Humanae Vitae, 10. In reference to Aquinas’s specification of the acts that all creatures share together as different from those that pertain to human beings as persons, Paul VI pointed out that if responsible parenthood is seen through the lens of biology, “it demands that one knows and honors the responsibilities involved in these processes” (Paul VI, Humanae Vitae, 10). In this regard, human reason has discovered that there are biological laws in the power of procreating life that pertain to human person. Cf. Aquinas, ST., I-II q. 94. a. 2. But if responsible parenthood is seen through the lens of innate impulses and inclinations of the soul, it becomes necessary
Pope Paul VI was also congruent with *Gaudium et Spes* in emphasizing the two characteristics of the conjugal act. The conjugal act does not only enable spouses to chastely unite to each other in a simultaneous transmission of life but it is also “good and worthy of human dignity.” He further noted that since every conjugal act does not naturally result to conception, spouses are obliged to obey, follow and use the naturally designed order in which God has allowed for the spacing of births.\(^{14}\) Referencing Pope Pius XI and Pius XII, Pope Paul VI noted that the teaching which expects each and every conjugal act to be open to fecundity was not only based on natural law, but has been a constant teaching of the magisterium.\(^{15}\) However, Pope Paul VI’s insistence that every conjugal act must be open to procreation was not based on the supremacy of the end of *proles* as primary over mutual help and the allaying of concupiscence as the secondary ends of marriage.

This claim is supported by what Paul VI said with regard to the ends of marriage. Thus on the specific question concerning the ends of marriage, Paul VI was generous in claiming that the magisterium has maintained “an unbreakable connection [that exists] between the unitive

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\(^{13}\) *Gaudium et Spes*, 49; and Paul VI, *Humanae Vitae*, 11.

\(^{14}\) This teaching reflects an influence of the biological and behavioral sciences which previous formulations lacked.

\(^{15}\) Cf. Pius XI *Casti Connubii*, 560; Pius XII, «Address to the Congress of Italian Catholic Association of Midwives,» 843; and Paul VI, *Humanae Vitae*, 11.
meaning and the procreative meaning [of the conjugal act] and both [of them] are inherent in the
cconjugal love.”¹⁶ He observed that this teaching “was established by God and man is not
permitted to break it through his own volition.”¹⁷ Paul VI argued that it was only when “the
unitive and procreative meanings are preserved that the conjugal act fully maintains its capacity
for [fostering] true mutual love and its ordination to the highest mission of parenthood, to which
man is called. Men of our time, we think, are especially able to understand that this teaching is in
accord with human reason.”¹⁸

Just as a conjugal act that is imposed on a spouse is not a true act of love and opposes the
moral order, so also does an act of mutual love which impairs the capacity of bringing forth new
life contradict both the natural order of the conjugal bond and the will of the Author of human
life. This is because God has assigned specific laws to guide and protect the conjugal act.¹⁹
Those spouses whose use of conjugal act which is the highest expression of couple’s intimacy
impedes fecundity not only rebel against the role of h’adam in the bringing forth of a child but
they also reject God’s plan for marriage. On the contrary, those whose use of conjugal act is
open to procreation do not only act in accordance with God’s plan for marriage, but they are

¹⁶ Paul VI, Humanae Vitae, 12. It is difficult to substantiate this claim based on the findings of the study so far. It is
probably true that Catholic tradition has in the past associated love with marriage, it was not until Gaudium et Spes,
but more so in Humanae Vitae that this inseparable connection between the procreative and unitive ends of marriage
was explicitly taught.

¹⁷ Paul VI, Humanae Vitae, 12.

¹⁸ Paul VI, Humanae Vitae, 12. Unfortunately, against his projection or assumption that men and women of our
time with reason are capable of understanding and of accepting this teaching based on their ability to reason,
subsequent history has shown that his assumption did not materialize as anticipated. Rather, the condemnation of
contraception which this inseparability of the two meanings of the conjugal act connotes had been and continues to
receive criticism in the hands of many scholars and laity up to the present.

¹⁹ See Paul VI, Humanae Vitae, 13.
simply acknowledging that they are not the masters, but rather ministers of new life.\textsuperscript{20} Hence, the inseparability of the procreative and unitive meanings of the conjugal act as taught by \textit{Humanae Vitae} also implies their equality since both of them have their origin in God’s creative plan and love.\textsuperscript{21}

In this brief examination of the sections of \textit{Humanae Vitae} concerning the ends of marriage, one does not need to go too far to notice that severally \textit{Humanae Vitae} alluded to the importance of spouses’ respect for both the procreative and the unitive meanings of marriage even as the couples pay a close attention to the physiological end of both the sexual organs and the sexual acts.\textsuperscript{22} In its treatment of the purpose(s) of marriage, \textit{Humanae Vitae} neither uses the Augustinian three goods nor the 1917 \textit{Code}’s hierarchical terminology of the primary and secondary ends of marriage that supported the supremacy of procreation over mutual help and the allaying of concupiscence. Rather, being influenced by the personalist theologians’ concept of meaning and \textit{Gaudium et Spes}’s explication of marriage as partnership of love, \textit{Humanae Vitae}...
*Vitae* teaches that an inseparable connection exists between the unitive and the procreative meanings of the conjugal act.\(^{23}\)

Although *Humanae Vitae* claimed that this teaching with regard to the inseparable connection is consistent with previous magisterial teaching, I contend that such consistency is difficult to substantiate based on the findings of this study so far. Rather, one can say that *Humanae Vitae*’s novel teaching at best was influenced by the personalist ideas of Doms but more so of Hildebrand who in reference to the relationship that exists between conjugal act, conjugal love, and procreation argued: “[These] constituents have been so organically united by God that to disrupt this unity by breaking this mysterious and solemn bond between the different factors must be on that account, if for no other reason a frightful sacrilege.”\(^{24}\) However, Paul VI could not use this to support his claim of consistency not only because Hildebrand was not an official spoke-person of the Church, but because this insightful teaching was also overshadowed by his support of the traditional primacy of the end of procreation.

While *Humanae Vitae*’s description of the purposes or ends of marriage in the language of meanings was similar to Doms’s and Hildebrand’s, its conclusion that understood an inseparable connection between the unitive and the procreative meanings departed from them.\(^{25}\) Thus, the teaching regarding the inseparable connection which exists between the unitive and procreative meanings of the conjugal act is truly the novelty of *Humanae Vitae*. Its significance,

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\(^{23}\) See Paul VI, *Humanae Vitae*, 12.

\(^{24}\) Hildebrand, *Purity*, 10. See also Hildebrand, The Encyclical “*Humanae Vitae,*” xi.

\(^{25}\) Although one can argue that Hildebrand's teaching which understood the primary objective meaning of marriage to be procreation and the primary meaning of marriage to be love is connected to each other, however, the level at which such connection exists is different from the inseparability of the two meanings as taught by *Humanae Vitae*. This is because Hildebrand still maintained the traditional primacy of the primary end of marriage, procreation over the primary meaning, love.
among other things, lies in that fact that it addressed the question of the primacy of one end or meaning of marriage to the other which has been a consistent weakness of the Catholic teaching in reference to the ends of marriage arguably prior to *Gaudium et Spes*. It also addressed the question of the supremacy of the primary end of marriage procreation, over the secondary ends, mutual help and the allaying of concupiscence that was explicitly taught by the *1917 Code of Canon law*.

The above claim is supported by the fact that, unlike the other sections of *Humanae Vitae* that referenced some past magisterial teachings to support its position, there was not even a single reference to any past magisterial documents in this section of *Humanae Vitae* that explained this inseparable connection, rather Paul VI assumed that his interlocutors were able to discern the congruity of its teaching with human reason. Additionally, *Humanae Vitae* was the first to use the term ‘unitive’ to refer to what the older tradition had categorized as love, *fides*, *sacramentum*, friendship, and pleasure under the big umbrella as the secondary ends of marriage—mutual help and the allaying of concupiscence.

Similarly, *Humanae Vitae*’s acknowledgment of the significance of the conjugal act did not obscure for it the specific character of conjugal love, a love which promotes and fosters the dignity of the human person. It also did not approve of the use of contraception as the majority members of the commission had suggested, but rather required openness to fecundity in all marital intercourse. Rather than resort to artificial methods when the physical and

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26 See Paul VI, *Humanae Vitae*, 12. It is left for the reader to judge for himself or herself the extent to which this assumption has been vindicated by history.

27 However, in demanding openness to fecundity, Paul VI acknowledged that there are some medical treatments whose primary purposes were to cure sicknesses that may either temporarily or permanently impair conception. Thus, for therapeutic reasons, *Humanae Vitae* allowed the use of some medical treatments which are necessary for the curing of diseases of the body but which may have a simultaneous consequence of thwarting one’s ability to
psychological conditions of one’s spouse necessitate the regulation and/or the spacing of children’s births, Paul VI teaches that “it is morally permissible to calculate their fertility by observing the natural rhythms inherent in the generative faculties and to reserve marital intercourse for infertile periods.”

_Humanae Vitae_’s inseparable connection between the procreative and unitive meanings of the conjugal act has immensely contributed to a balanced approach with regard to the ends of marriage. With _Humanae Vitae_, both the traditional teaching which understood the procreation of children as the primary end of marriage as well as mutual help and the allaying of concupiscence as the secondary ends of marriage and the reversal of this primacy as was taught by Doms were no longer maintained. Nevertheless, _Humanae Vitae_’s teaching is not without flaws or limitations. Its reference to natural law was not fully explained and as Grabowski noted was judged to be insufficient by some scholars. Consequently, many scholars criticized the teaching as not only myopic, but also as based on the biological finality of the conjugal act,

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28 Paul VI, _Humanae Vitae_, 15. By respecting this natural order, couples will be able to regulate and/or space their children in a morally permissible manner. The specific distinction between regulating birth through artificial methods and natural methods is that while the former impede the natural order of generation, the later makes legitimate use of a faculty that was given by nature to arrive at the same purpose or end—the avoidance of a child. Nevertheless, it is only in the latter case that the spouse’s conjugal act can truly be said to be aimed at promoting mutual love and fostering conjugal fidelity. Thus, in addition to contraception being condemned as an intrinsically evil act because of its object, Paul VI elaborated on other evil consequences that could arise from contraceptives practices to support his reason for condemning it. According to him, when natural order of the conjugal act is violated by the use of contraception, serious consequences follow. “Contraceptives will justify behavior that leads to marital infidelity and/or to gradual weakening in the discipline of morals. These consequences will result in husbands forming the habit of using their wives as instruments or objects of sexual gratification. Thus wives will longer be treated as equal companions who should be treated with dignity and love by their husbands. A contraceptive society will create an atmosphere of moral decay as well as encourage the legislative members of the society to enact rules that are offensive to family values and the generation of new life” (Paul VI, _Humanae Vitae_, 16-17). To this end, one can truly call Paul VI a prophet because history has vindicated his fears.

29 See Grabowski, _Sex and Virtue_, 130.
conception. How much of these criticisms were refuted and supported by post *Humanae Vitae* magisterial documents? Also, was the teaching that understood the procreative and the unitive meanings of the conjugal act as inseparable as well as their implied equality to one another maintained or abandoned by subsequent magisterial documents? To address these and other related questions, the next section will examine Pope John Paul II Apostolic Exhortation, *Familiaris Consortio*’s teaching concerning marriage and its ends.

### 7.2. JOHN PAUL II APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION *FAMILIARIS CONSORTIO*

Following Pope Paul VI’s encyclical letter *Humanae Vitae*, Pope John Paul II in his Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris Consortio*, broadened the Catholic teaching with regard to the ends of marriage by clarifying the nature, truth and the dignity of the human person who marries. For John Paul II, the true ends of marriage should be evaluated by considering the physical or natural and the spiritual nature of humanity. In other words Christian marriage cannot be true to its name if one considers its purposes or ends outside of the natural and spiritual nature of a person.

In propounding his teaching concerning marriage and family, John Paul II rejected the negative impression of freedom in relation to how one exercises one’s freedom to love which

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30 See John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation, *Familiaris Consortio*, 5 ASS 74 (1982), 96. It would seem that John Paul II reacted or responded to the weakness of *Humanae Vitae* by developing an exhaustive theological analysis which not only supported *Humanae Vitae*’s assertion of an inseparable connection, but which also embellished and refined it with his elaborate discussion on marriage and sexuality. See also John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them*, 178-188.
insinuates that freedom and love are opposed to the true nature of marriage. Rather than be in conflict, he argues that freedom is a distinct power or capacity of every human being. He explains that this conflict has resulted among other things to practices that contradict the values and dignity of marriage and family, such as but not limited to “the rejection of the moral norm that guide and promote the human and Christian exercise of sexuality in marriage.” To correct this misrepresentation of freedom to love as it relates to the exercise of the marital act in the face of the break-through of sciences he argues, “it is only an education of love rooted in the faith [that] can lead to the capacity of interpreting ‘the signs of the times.’”

31 On the contrary, he argued that “at the root of these negative phenomena lies a corruption of the idea and the experience of freedom, conceived not as a capacity for realizing the truth of God’s plan for marriage and the family, but as an autonomous power of self-affirmation, often against others for one’s own selfish well-being” (John Paul II, Familiaris Consortio, 5).

32 However, in relation to marriage, he observed that “there seemed to be a conflict between how one expresses one’s freedom in his or her exercise of love. In other words, a mutual conflict…, a conflict between two loves: the love of God to the point of disregarding self, and the love of self to the point of disregarding God” (John Paul II, Familiaris Consortio, 6).

33 John Paul II, Familiaris Consortio, 7.

34 John Paul II, Familiaris Consortio, 6. Although John Paul II appreciated the break-throughs that science has made in providing a better knowledge of the biological and psychological endowments of a human person (and will continue to make), he decried the fact that, “often science is used against its original purpose, which is the advancement of the human person” (John Paul II, Familiaris Consortio, 8). In order to ensure that the advancements in science are put to the proper service of humanity especially as they relate to the question of marriage and family values, John Paul II calls for a ‘new humanism’ “which will not distract people from their relationship with God, but will lead them to it more fully” (John Paul II, Familiaris Consortio, 8). John Paul II also acknowledged the impact of culture on Christian living. According to him, “the Church receives from the various cultures everything that is able to express better the unsearchable riches of Christ. For it is “only with the help of all the cultures will it be possible for these riches to be manifested ever more clearly, and for the Church to progress towards a daily more complete and profound awareness of the truth, which has already been given to her in its entirety by the Lord” (John Paul II, Familiaris Consortio, 10). However, in his recognition of the challenges and intricacies that are abound in the work of inculturation, he encouraged the Episcopal Conferences and the appropriate departments of the Roman Curia to do further study on this question so that the “Christian faith may come about ever more extensively, in the context of marriage and the family as well as in other fields” (Familiaris Consortio 10). As this study intends to show in the next chapter, there is urgent need for the Episcopal Conference in Igboland to address the Igbo cultural understanding of (male) children as the primary purpose of marriage in light of the magisterial position as advanced in this study to reflect the truth of Christ about marriage and its ends.
Based on this backdrop, Pope John Paul II began his teaching of marriage and family by calling attention to its origin and nature of man. Thus, as a being created in the image and love of God and empowered to increase and multiply via marriage, *h’adam* “is at the same time called for love.”

Therefore, since “love is a fundamental and innate vocation of every human being,” Christian marriage epitomizes this love in its fullness as a celebration of love which reflects the love of Christ for his Church. This love enables one to give and receive the beloved in an uncompromised manner as well as to engage in a permanent and exclusive selfless relationship. As a composite being (body and soul) “man [or woman] is called to love in his [her] unified totality which he [she] expresses either through married life [or other vocations].”

In performing the conjugal act couples must ensure that their act of conjugal intimacy not only fulfills its biological end, procreation but also the interpersonal relationship that exists or should exist among them as embodied persons possessed of dignity. John Paul II articulates this claim beautifully:

> Sexuality, by means of which man and woman give themselves to one another through the acts which are proper and exclusive to spouses, is by no means something purely biological, but concerns the innermost being of the human person as such is an interpersonal relationship among couples. It promotes the dignity of women, to responsible procreation, to the education of children. It is realized in a truly human way only if it is an integral part of the love by which a man and a woman commit themselves totally to one another until death. The total physical self-giving would be a lie if it were not a sign and fruit of a total personal self-giving, in which the whole person, including the temporal dimension, is present: if the person were to withhold something or reserve the possibility of deciding otherwise in the future, by this very fact he or she would not be giving totally. This totality which is required by conjugal love also corresponds to the

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36 See John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio*, 11.

demands of responsible fertility. This fertility is directed to the generation of a human being, and so by its nature it surpasses the purely biological order and involves a whole series of personal values. For the harmonious growth of these values a persevering and unified contribution of both parents is necessary.\footnote{John Paul II, \textit{Familiaris Consortio}, 11.}

One notices in this quote how John Paul II tactfully juxtaposed or blended \textit{Humanae Vitae}’s teaching concerning the purposes of marriage as being dependent on both the biological finality of the conjugal act as well as on its interpersonal dimension. Such blending freed his teaching from the charge of being based on the biological finality of the sexual act alone. Thus, both procreative and unitive meanings are possible because they are human values which are sustained by the free giving and receiving of each other’s bodies. That is, there is no authentic conjugal act in marriage when a focus on love or on conjugal intimacy subordinates or opposes the generation of a new human being. Similarly, the conjugal act is falsified if the couples become very focused on the generation of a new child to the detriment of the total personal self-giving, in which the whole person, including the temporal dimension, is present. The conjugal act must be a sign and fruit of total giving and receiving of each other.\footnote{John Paul II argues that “the only place in which this self-giving in its whole truth is made possible is marriage, the covenant of conjugal love freely and consciously chosen. In marriage man and woman accept the intimate community of life and love willed by God Himself, which only in this light manifest, its true meaning” (John Paul II, \textit{Familiaris Consortio}, 11). This is to say that marriage far from jeopardizing the well-being of the society or infringes on the inalienable freedom of any person, enhances it. This is because marriage “is an interior requirement of the covenant of conjugal love which is publically affirmed as unique and exclusive, in order to live in complete fidelity to the plan of God, the Creator. A person’s freedom far from being restricted by this fidelity, is secured against every form of subjectivism or relativism and is made a sharer in creative wisdom” (John Paul II, \textit{Familiaris Consortio}, 11).}
God who not only wanted *h’adam* not to live alone, but commanded *h’adam* to be fruitful.\(^{40}\) He explains:

In marriage the spouses participate in it as spouses, together, as a couple, so that the first and immediate effect of marriage (*res et sacramentum*) is not supernatural grace itself, but the Christian conjugal bond, a typically Christian communion of two persons because it represents the mystery of Christ’s incarnation and the mystery of His covenant…. The content of participation in Christ’s life is also specific: Conjugal love involves a totality of body and spirit, it deepens personal unity beyond the union of one flesh and leads to the formation of one heart and soul.\(^{41}\)

Consequently, marriage demands indissolubility and faithfulness in definitive mutual giving; and it is open to fertility.\(^{42}\)

Like Aquinas, John Paul II alluded to what makes a marriage Christian. In doing so, he points out that the significance of the sacramentality of Christian marriage as a union that represents the relationship that exists between Christ and his Church does not simply lie in the conjugal bond that is very exclusive and permanent, but also openness to children is required for a Christian marriage to be true to its name.\(^{43}\) To this end, John Paul II echoed *Gaudium et Spes*’s position which supported this unity. “Marriage is the foundation of the wider community of the

\(^{40}\) Genesis, 1:28; and 2:18.

\(^{41}\) John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio*, 13. Here John Paul II reflects the teaching of Aquinas whose strict interpretation of the good of *sacramentum* can be construed as the highest good at least in excellence. In this sense, the bond which is associated with conjugal love as a reflection of Christ’s love for His Church cannot truly die. This claim is contrary to the view of Mackin as I intend to show later in this chapter.

\(^{42}\) Cf John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio*, 13. See *Humanae Vitae*, 9. John Paul II maintained with the tradition that more than the normal characteristics of natural marriage, Christian marriage has a new significance. This distinctive character of Christian marriage not only purifies and strengthens Christian couples, but also raises them to the extent of making them the expression of specifically Christian value as a reflection of the relationship that exists between Christ and his Church as well as a sacrament that confers sanctifying grace. In doing this, John Paul II echoes Aquinas’s distinction between marriages which are specifically Christian and sacramental and those that are not.

\(^{43}\) This is perhaps because gay and lesbian unions can be both exclusive and permanent but also because it is a requirement for marriage.
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 glory.”

Furthermore, he maintained that love is essentially a gift and conjugal love, while leading the spouses to the reciprocal ‘knowledge’ that makes them ‘one flesh’, does not end with the couple. Rather the giving and receiving of each other via the conjugal act which is the intimate expression of couple’s love, enable couples to be capable of the greatest possible gift, the gift by which they become cooperators with God in giving life to a new human person. Thus, couples “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.” Therefore he notes: “Fecundity is the fruit and the sign of conjugal love, the living testimony of the full reciprocal self-giving of the spouses.”

The beauty of John Paul II’s synthesis is that while he gives such significance to children, he did not trivialize the significance of the unitive meaning of marriage. Like *Humanae Vitae* he blended the two meanings together and avoided the description of the meanings of marriage in the language of primary and secondary ends with procreation assuming the upper position. This is because while children enjoy this privileged position as ‘the permanent sign of conjugal unity,’ conjugal life does not lose its value in cases of sterility. Rather as John Paul II rightly observed, “the fruitfulness of conjugal love is not restricted solely to the procreation of children even understood in its specifically human dimensions: It is enlarged and enriched by all those fruits of

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44 John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio*, 13, 28; and *Gaudium et Spes*, 50.


moral spiritual and supernatural life which the father and mother are called to hand on to their children, and through the children to the Church and to the world.”

If children are no longer regarded as the primary purpose of marriage as *Familiaris Consortio* maintains, then a case can be made that infertility is neither a curse nor an instrument of doom. Rather, sterility can truly be a blessing in disguise. Sterility can offer couples the opportunity to excel in other forms of humanitarian and charitable services such as but not limited to, adoption, or the provision of basic necessities of life to children from poor and neglected families of the world. Consequently, whether a couple has children, male or female, only female, or no children at all, their union is fruitful and complete in itself as far as the ability to have only a particular gender or inability to have any was not a deliberate choice of their own. Rather, when the interpersonal dimension and the procreative aspect of marriage are appropriately intermingled or interwoven to reflect God’s plan for marriage, the union reflects nothing but a community of life and love as accentuated in *Gaudium et Spes*. Under this backdrop, it is probably fair to say that in its very roots the essence and role of marriage is in the final analysis specified by conjugal love understood as all the activities proper to married life and not by children or by the marital act. This is because man is a being created out of love, and challenged to love and to live in love. John Paul II explains, “Man cannot live without love. He remains a being that is incomprehensible for himself, his life is senseless if love is not revealed to him, if he does not encounter love, if he does not experience it and make it his own.”

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49 See *Gaudium et Spes*, 48.
own, if he does not participate intimately with it."^50 Although this love extends to a couple’s children and to the other members of one’s family and society, “the first communion is the one which is established and which develops between husband and wife."^51 Consequently, by virtue of the covenant of married life, the man and woman “are no longer two but one flesh and they are called to grow continually in their communion through day-to-day fidelity to their marriage promise of total mutual self-giving."^52

On the contrary, this communion that is established by the total self-giving and receiving of each other in love is radically contradicted by polygamy even if it is undertaken for the purposes of *proles*. This is because polygamy negates and contradicts the equal personal dignity of men and women and the fidelity promised in marriage.^53 Similarly, the communion of persons is also contradicted by divorce even in a case where the couple claims that their love for each other has died.^54 Rather, for the well-being of the couples as well as for the good of their children, marriage as a conjugal communion “imposes total fidelity on the spouses and an unbreakable oneness between them [amidst challenges.]"^55 Under this backdrop, Christian

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^52 John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio*, 19. In his 1994 letter to the families, he maintains that a married couple is already a family with or without any children. See 2 and 3.

^53 See John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio*, 19, and 22. See also *Gaudium et Spes*, 49. Here John Paul II echoes the equality of men and women which the word *h’adam* represented in the Genesis accounts of the origin of humanity. However, as the study has shown, this equality of *h’adam* which was enshrined in the scripture was obscured by the emphasis on law in the modern era. In the concluding chapter, this study will argue that by contradicting the good of *fides*, polygamy contradicted the goods of *sacramentum* and *proles* since they are interconnected to one another.

^54 While this is the current teaching of the Church with which I agree in principle, I will examine this position in the concluding chapter of the study as it seems to me that it might benefit from some fine-tuning.

couples are expected to remain faithful with each other forever, “in generous obedience to the holy will of the Lord.” Consequently, infidelity and/or acts which focus on the promotion or maintenance of one meaning of marriage to the detriment of the other contradict or falsify this equality that is embedded in their shared love and fertility. Therefore, Grabowski hits the nail on the head by noting that the total self-giving and receiving of each other in love is falsified not only when the conjugal act is bridged with a foreign element solely for the promotion of the unitive meaning of marriage, but also when one seeks to use or uses one’s spouse to achieve procreation to the detriment of mutual love.

To further buttress his position that the conjugal act has significance other than procreation, like Aquinas, John Paul II differentiated between the conjugal acts of human beings from sexual acts performed by irrational animals. In doing so, John Paul II pointed out that the conjugal act of human beings speaks a different language, a language of unity and fidelity, of love, of intimacy, and acceptance. Reflecting on John Paul II's view, Grabowski opines, “sexual intercourse communicates complete fidelity within marriage covenant and total self-

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58 The difference between Aquinas’s approach in distinguishing between the intercourse that was performed by irrational animals and the one that was performed by a human being was the fact that while Aquinas based his argument on the control of reason, John Paul II approached it an anthropological as well as from the language that love speaks. Thus, while reason enables human beings to apprehend the ends proper to them according to the dictates of natural law which enable them to have natural inclination towards marriage and procreation, John Paul II locates the distinction in the language of the conjugal act which when properly spoken within marriage fosters both the procreative and the unitive meanings of marriage. Drawing from the creation account of ḥadma John Paul II argues that the sexual union of couples speaks a language of unity and fidelity on the basis of their masculinity and femininity. See John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them*, 178-188. See also Aquinas, *ST*, II-II, q. 94, a. 1-16; *ST*, Suppl., q. 65, a. 1.

59 See John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them*, 178-188.
Hence, “to choose to eliminate or suppress one’s fertility negates part of the meaning of the gift; it is the falsification of the inner truth of conjugal love.” Contrarily, the sexual activity that was performed by irrational animals is simply based on instinct and emotion and neither speaks this language of love, nor communicates fidelity and permanence even though it is often procreative in nature.

The above reading is fully expressed in Wojtyla’s *Love and Responsibility*, where he argued that fertility should not be seen or viewed as merely biological aspect of the person that can be altered at his or her discretion, but like sexuality itself it is an existential reality, and pertains to the person as a whole. Reflecting later on this view, Grabowski agreed with Wojtyla and argued that “the procreative meaning of human sexuality is thus wedded to the expression of love by means of the personalist concept of self-donation and an anthropology that sees fertility as integral to the person.”

From what has been said so far it is evident that Wojtyla anticipated the inseparability of the two meanings of marriage that was taught by *Humanae Vitae*. Thus both in *Love and Responsibility* and in *Man and Woman He Created Them* John Paul II, not only supported *Humanae Vitae*’s teaching concerning the inseparability of the two meanings of marriage, he refined it by not only linking it to a natural law-based argument, but he also integrated the natural law language within the broader framework of the personalist norm. Similarly, he also showed

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60 Grabowski, *Sex and Virtue*, 131.
61 Grabowski, *Sex and Virtue*, 131.
63 Grabowski, *Sex and Virtue*, 131.
how the creation of *h’adam* was not only an act that manifested God’s love for humanity, but one in which God empowered men and women to be co-creators with Him. In participating in the creative work of God, *h’adam* also is expected to provide companionship to each other; since ‘it is not good for man to be alone.’ In line with this reading, Grabowski argues: “This same locus for understanding human sexuality makes clear that motherhood and fatherhood are not mere biological functions, but personal and experiential participations on the mystery of God’s creative design.”65

In fact, John Paul II’s explication is also useful in understanding the unity and the equality of persons as exemplified in both the post exilic and the Yahwistic accounts of creation but more so when marriage is seen as a covenant that represented God’s covenant with his people Israel as chapter three accentuated.66 Thus, it is fair to say that John Paul II addressed *Humanae Vitae*’s insufficient explication of the natural law in explaining the basis of its teaching concerning the inseparability of the procreative and the unitive meanings of marriage which made some scholars to criticize it as being based on the biological finality of the conjugal act.

Thus, by enhancing the teaching concerning the two inseparable meanings of the conjugal act within marriage not only on the biological finality of the conjugal act and the interpersonal dimension, but also on the biblical account, John Paul provided a more nuanced theological account for the principles on which this teaching was based than *Humanae Vitae*. On the strength of this developed teaching, it is fair to say that John Paul II’s explication addresses the concern of those scholars who criticized *Humanae Vitae*’s appeal to natural law as a form of

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66 See chapter three of this study especially pages 8, 18.
physicalism. Therefore, I agree with Grabowski that “to understand respect for the shared fertility of husband and wife as implied by the totality of bodily self-donation is a significant development within Catholic theological reflection on sexuality [and on the ends of marriage].”

Having analyzed *Humanae Vitae’s* and *Familiaris Consortio’s* teaching concerning the purposes of marriage, it is obvious that these documents did not use the language of the primary and the secondary ends of marriage in their explications of the meanings of marriage. Rather, *Familiaris Consortio* not only maintained *Humanae Vitae’s* inseparability of the procreative and the unitive meanings of the conjugal act and by association of marriage, but it also enhanced it by providing more theological substance to the argument. However, *Humanae Vitae* and *Familiaris Consortio* were not the only papal documents that treated marriage and its ends after the teaching of *Gaudium et Spes*. In order to continue to investigate on how subsequent magisterial documents approached the question of marriage and its ends, the next section will briefly examine the 1983 *Code of Canon Law’s* position concerning the purposes of marriage.

The primary concern here will be to find out if the 1983 *Code* maintained the hierarchical terminology of the 1917 *Code* in reference to the ends of marriage or whether it followed *Humanae Vitae’s* and *Familiaris Consortio’s* inseparability and the implied equality of both the procreative and the unitive meanings of marriage.

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68 From henceforth, the analysis of the remaining four magisterial documents (*The 1983 Code of Canon Law, The Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1994), *Donum Vitae* (1987), and the (2008) *Dignitas Personae*) in this chapter in reference to the purposes of marriage will be very brief when compared to the analysis of *Humanae Vitae* and *Familiaris Consortio*. The reason for this brief analysis is not only because their treatment of the purposes of marriage was not as elaborate as *Humanae Vitae* and *Familiaris Consortio*, but also to avoid repeating what these previous documents have taught.
7.3. THE 1983 CODE OF CANON LAW

Two years after Pope John Paul II’s Apostolic Exhortation *familiaris Consortio*, the 1983 *Code of Canon Law* was published. Following in the footsteps of *Humanae Vitae* and *Familiaris Consortio*, the 1983 *Code* also addressed the issue concerning the ends of marriage. In doing so, the 1983 *Code of Canon Law* described marriage thusly: “The matrimonial covenant, by which a man and a woman establish between themselves a partnership of the whole of life and which ordered by its nature to the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of offspring, has been raised by Christ the Lord to the dignity of a sacrament between the baptized.”

On another but related note, the 1983 *Code* also described marriage as a contract which cannot exist between the baptized persons without at the same time being a sacrament. Nevertheless, this contractual language did not carry the same judicial connotation or weight as it did in the 1917 *Code of Canon law’s* description. Rather, the 1983 *Code* like *Gaudium et Spes* also referred to the matrimonial consent as an irrevocable covenant which is constitutive of a marriage. Accordingly, the 1983 *Code* defines the matrimonial consent as “an act of the will by which a man and a woman mutually give and accept each other through an irrevocable covenant in order to establish marriage.”

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Reflecting on the teaching of the 1983 Code with regard to marriage and its ends, Ramon Garcia de Haro rightly observed that the 1983 Code is congruent with the teaching of the Second Vatican Council Fathers. However, he erred by maintaining that Gaudium et Spes’s teaching constituted a continuation of the hierarchical structure in which the ends of proles was regarded as the primary purpose of marriage. 71 Far from such congruity, neither Gaudium et Spes, nor the 1983 Code’s spoke in the hierarchical terminology of primary and secondary ends of marriage. Rather, both of their positions represented a significant departure from what the 1917 Code of Canon Law taught in reference to the ends of marriage. This is because, while The 1917 Code of Canon Law spoke of the ends of marriage in the hierarchical terminology of the primary and secondary ends, the 1983 Code like Gaudium et Spes, Humanae Vitae and Familiaris Consortio avoided such designations. This claim is supported by Schemenauer who correctly noted that “the 1983 Code’s did not retain the language of primary and secondary ends of marriage.” 72

As it stands, the three magisterial documents following Gaudium et Spes that this study has analyzed did not speak of the ends of marriage in the language of primary and secondary as the 1917 Code of Canon Law did. It may not be an over-statement to say that their evidence is enough to conclude that the magisterium has indeed departed from the traditional supremacy of the end of procreation over mutual help and the allaying of conscience. However, since the

71 See Haro, Marriage and the Family, 97. In fact, if one wants to categorize the teaching of the 1983 Code in a hierarchical structure like the 1917 Code did, a legitimate case can be made that the 1983 Code was a reversal of the traditional primacy of the good of proles. This is because according to the 1983 Code, marriage is “ordered by its nature to the good of the spouses (bonum coniugum) and the procreation and education of offspring”(1055). In this definition, the good of the spouses which can be construed as all the activities that are embedded in marital life (conjugal love) came first before the good of proles. However, the 1983 Code is not interested in speaking of the purposes of marriage in hierarchical terms. For a succinct formulation of the content of the bonum coniugum, ‘the good of the spouses’ as used by the 1983 Code see Dominic Kimengich, The Bonum Coniugum: A Canonical Appraisal (Rome: Pontificiu Athenaeum Santiae Crocis, 1997), 204; and Cormac Burke, “The Bonum Coniugum and the Bonum Prolis: Ends or Properties of Marriage?” Jurist 49 (1989), 704-13.

magisterium also teaches via its *Catechism*, it is pertinent to examine what the new *Catechism* which was published after the *Catechism of Trent* and the *1917 Code* taught concerning the ends of marriage. That is, how did the new *Catechism of the Catholic Church* approach the question of marriage and its ends?

### 7.4. THE CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* echoes the words of *Gaudium et Spes* and the *1983 Code* in its definition of marriage and its ends by calling the sacrament of matrimony a partnership of life and love. Accordingly, it notes that marriage is “the intimate community of life and love which constitutes the married life or state.”

While almost every society and culture engage in the act of marrying and giving in marriage, though with variations in types, rules and forms, yet, the *Catechism* notes that marriage is not purely a human institution or invention. Rather like *Farmiliaris Consortio*, the *Catechism* argues that since human beings are the product of God’s love, man and woman are called to love in such a manner that they fulfill their God-given responsibility and invitation to participate in the creative work of God’s love as co-creators with God.

But, if man and woman were created in the image and likeness of God and were called to love, it is then fair to say that their mutual love has its root in the absolute and unfailing love with which God loved them and empowered them to be fruitful. Hence, God blessed them

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saying “be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it.”\textsuperscript{74} But the significance of marriage does not solely depend on the ability of couples to procreate, but also to provide companionship to one another that is both exclusive and permanent. Consequently, the \textit{Catechism} referenced the scriptural texts that not only attested to the establishment of marriage, but also to its unbreakable character once entered.\textsuperscript{75} It is the culmination of both the demand for fecundity and for companionship that makes it wrong for married couples to promote or foster one end of marriage against or to the detriment of the other. In other words, not even for the reasons of begetting children or for sustaining the love which couples share between each other, support the prioritization of any of the meanings of marriage. Rather, it can be inferred that the \textit{Catechism} supports a simultaneous openness to the two meanings of marriage which the three preceding documents that this study has analyzed explicitly demonstrated.

Having seen that the three other magisterial documents of varied degrees that followed \textit{Humanae Vitae} taught and maintained the equality and the inseparability of the two meanings of marriage as \textit{Humanae Vitae} did, one would have thought that scholars would have agreed that the magisterium has indeed departed from the traditional hierarchy of ends. If this had happened, further explication of this position would not be necessary. Unfortunately, that was not the case. The position of \textit{Humanae Vitae} on the purposes of marriage was and continues to be challenged and debated by scholars from within and outside the Church even with the publication of these documents. This challenge is intensified not only because of how the twentieth first century

\textsuperscript{74} Genesis, 1:28; cf. 1:31; and \textit{The Catechism of the Catholic Church}, 1604.

\textsuperscript{75} See Genesis, 2:24; Mt. 19:6; and \textit{The Catechism of the Catholic Church}, 1605.
societies are increasingly becoming de-Christianized but because of the availability of different forms of contraceptives.  

It would seem that as an effort to address the concerns of Catholics who struggle with the demands of their faith that calls for an openness to procreation in every conjugal act in the face of the so called break-throughs of science in the area of human sexuality that the Congregation for the Sacred Doctrine of Faith, decided to bring further clarity to the Church’s position concerning marriage and its ends. Thus, the next section will analyze the 1987 CDF document, ‘Instruction on the Respect for Human Life in Its Origin and on the Dignity of procreation, Donum Vitae’s teaching concerning the ends of marriage.

7.5. INSTRUCTION ON RESPECT FOR HUMAN LIFE IN ITS ORIGIN AND ON THE DIGNITY OF PROCREATION—DONUM VITAE

The members of this Congregation under the auspices of Cardinal Ratzinger appreciated the positive advancements in biomedical sciences especially for therapeutic purposes or for assisting procreation. 77 However, Donum Vitae also noted that the scientific developments did

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76 While these contraceptives according to their promoters have a higher success rate in frustrating fecundity than the Natural Family Planning (NFP) that the magisterium advocates, there is data which shows otherwise in every case except in the case of surgical sterilization. See Wilson Mercedes Arzi, Love and Family Raising a Traditional Family in a Secular World (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1996), 246-155. Consequently, the teaching of Humanae Vitae and the four documents examined above continue to be rejected by some Catholics who claim that the use of contraceptives is a more efficient method of avoiding conception than (NFP).

not come without costs to the Church’s teaching regarding the relationship that exists between the procreative and the unitive meanings of marriage.

In its effort to strike a balance between the benefits and the burdens of scientific advancements Donum Vitae differentiated between the correct use of science for the purposes of enhancing fertility from yet another use of science which causes harm to fertility and by extension to marriage and its ends. Accordingly, it noted that advancement in sciences have led to some procedures which make it “possible to dominate the processes of procreation by enabling man to go beyond the limit of a reasonable dominion over nature.”78 But, Donum Vitae warns that “what is technically possible is not for that very reason morally admissible.”79 While the document praised the good that was embedded in these new technologies, it decried some of the uses of technological procedures which have taken away the production of a new life outside of a union that exists between a man and woman in marriage as morally unacceptable.

On the contrary, Donum Vitae argues that, “human procreation requires on the part of the spouses responsible collaboration with fruitful love of God, the gift of human life must be actualized in marriage through the specific and exclusive acts of husband and wife, in accordance with the laws inscribed in their persons and in their union.”80 One does not need to go too far to see the congruity of Donum Vitae’s personalist leanings in reference to the ends of marriage with the other documents already examined. Like Farmilaris Consortio, Donum Vitae’s

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79 Donum Vitae, 4, 10.

80 Donum Vitae, 4, 11. Here recourse is also made by Donum Vitae to the natural law argument. See also Gaudium et Spes, 51.
teaching was based on an understanding of a human person possessed of dignity who is enabled
by God to give and receive his or her spouse as an embodied person in a relationship that is
fruitful, exclusive and permanent. In the same vein, since a person is both a physical and a
spiritual reality, “marriage possesses specific goods and values in its union and in procreation
which cannot be likened to those existing in lower forms of life.” 81

Having said this, Donum Vitae quotes Humanae Vitae on the specific question
concerning the ends of marriage thusly: “An inseparable connection, willed by God and unable
to be broken by man on his initiative exists between the two meanings of the conjugal act the
unitive meanings and the procreative meanings. Indeed, by its intimate structure, the conjugal act
while most closely uniting husband and wife makes them capable of the generation of new lives,
according to laws inscribed in the very being of man and of woman.” 82 This law as this study has
noted at several occasions is comprised of both the injunction ‘to increase and multiply’ and the
provision of companionship to one another for ‘it is not good for man to alone.’ 83

Furthermore, Donum Vitae pointed to different practices that oppose the unitive and the
procreative meanings of the conjugal act and by extension of marriage and condemned them as
acts that are against the teaching of the Church concerning the ends of marriage and human
dignity. Consequently, like Familiaris Consortio, Donum Viate teaches that human procreation
has specific characteristics by virtue of the personal dignity of the parents and of the children.
Thus, “the procreation of a new person, whereby the man and the woman collaborate with the

81 Donum Vitae, 4, 12.
82 Donum Vitae, 4, 27. See also Humanae Vitae, 12.
83 Genesis, 1: 28; and 2:18.
power of the Creator, must be the sign and the mutual self-giving of the spouses of their love and their fidelity. The fidelity of the spouses in the unity of marriage involves reciprocal respect of their right to become a father and a mother only through each other.”

Seen through this lens, “the parents find in their child a confirmation and completion of their reciprocal self-giving; the child is the living image of their love, the permanent sign of their conjugal union, the living and indissoluble concrete expression of their paternity and maternity.” It is interesting to note how the mutual self-giving and the receiving of each other and the child are juxtaposed or wedded together in this document.

However, the document was careful to avoid the use of the hierarchical terminology of the primary and secondary ends of marriage that was prevalent in the 1917 Code even as it gave the child this esteemed position. Thus, the child is simply the confirmation and completion of their self-giving …,” but the child is not identified as the primary meaning or end of marriage. The child is the product of the reciprocal self-giving and receiving of each spouse in a way which respects their singularities as dignified persons. Neither the coming to be of this child nor the sexual act which is the intimate expression, realization or actualization of their mutual love should be separated from each other as an independent meaning of marriage. Therefore, Donum Vitae, like the other documents examined, maintained the inseparability of the two meanings of the conjugal act and by association of marriage and avoided the use of the primary and the secondary language which was used in the 1917 Code.

84 Donum Vitae, 1, 23-24.

85 Donum Vitae, 1, 24. See also Familiaris Consortio, 14.
While it would seem that based on the analysis of these five documents that followed *Gaudium et Spes* that this study has collected enough evidence to take a stand with regard to the appropriate interpretation of *Gaudium et Spes*’s silence over the hierarchical terminology of primary and secondary ends, the study refrains from taking a definitive position at this point. Such reluctance is to enable it to yet examine the most recent CDF document that touches on marriage and its ends in its treatment of the dignity of the human person. Therefore, the next section of this chapter will analyze the 2009 CDF document “*Dignitas Personae.*” The primary purpose here is to see if *Dignitas Personae* represents a continuation with or repudiation of the 1917 Code’s primacy of the end of *proles* over the mutual help and the allaying of concupiscence as secondary ends of marriage.

### 7.6. DIGNITAS PERSONAE

Twenty years later, the same Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith published another document dealing with questions in reference to the "Dignity of the Human Person" (*Dignitas Personae*). In this document, the authors also discussed the purposes of marriage. According to *Dignitas Personae*, the human person has a dignity which carries an indelible way its own identity and value. Therefore, in opposition to practices such as embryonic stem cell research and human cloning the document notes that, “the body of a human person, from the very beginning of his or her existence can never be reduced merely to a group of cells.”

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with *Donum Vitae*, *Dignitas Personae* taught that the origin of human life has its authentic context in marriage and in the family, where it is generated through an act which expresses the reciprocal love between a man and a woman. Procreation which is truly responsible vis-à-vis the child to be born “must be the fruit of marriage.”

This is because, “in the fruitfulness of married love, man and woman make it clear that at the origin of the spousal life there is a genuine ‘yes’ which is pronounced and truly lived in reciprocity, remaining ever open to life.”

As a composite being created in love and destined to love, man is both a physical and spiritual reality. Thus, *Dignitas Personae* noted: “These two dimensions of life, the natural and the supernatural allow us to understand better the sense in which the acts that permit a new human being to come into existence in which a man and a woman give themselves to each other, are a reflection of Trinitarian love.”

God created *h’adam* in His image and love and bestowed on *h’adam* the privilege to be co-creators with Him even as male and female provide companionship to one another. Understanding the composite nature and the dignity of a human person is key to an appreciation of the role of the conjugal act in marriage.

Unlike the previous tradition that at times appeared to limit the value of the conjugal act as only instrumental to the good procreation, *Dignitas Personae* like the other five magisterial documents examined, gave the conjugal act an intrinsic value in addition to the value of procreation. Again *Dignitas Personae* followed the more personalist approach in accentuating both the procreative and the unitive meanings of the conjugal act as equal and inseparable.

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87 *Dignitas Personae*, 6, 9. See also *Donum Vitae*, 1.


89 *Dignitas Personae*, 52.
Therefore, it is fair to say that the shift in the Church’s teaching concerning the purposes of marriage can be attributed to a more positive understanding of the conjugal act as the most intimate expression of couple’s conjugal love. For the expression of this intimacy to be true to its name, the couple will need to be open to give and to receive each other’s love and shared fertility as embodied persons.

Having analyzed the pertinent sections of six post Second Vatican Council magisterial documents that treated the question of marriage and its ends, it is obvious that none of the six documents supported the traditional hierarchical structure of the ends of marriage. Rather following the framework of repudiation that was implicit in Gaudium et Spes, these documents refrained from using any language that promoted the subordination of one end or meaning of marriage by the other. The other five documents also reinforced Humanae Vitae’s inseparability of the unitive and the procreative meanings of the conjugal act. Hence based on this overwhelming evidence from these documents, I contend that the silence of Gaudium et Spes over the hierarchical terminology of the primary and secondary ends of marriage, in fact, signals a shift in the Church’s teaching concerning the goods/ends of marriage.

This shift is not a trivial one. This is because prior to it, but before the 1917 Code, while the tradition referred to the good or end of proles as the primary and legitimate purpose of marriage, it did not maintain an explicit subordination of the goods of fides and sacramentum to proles. The classification of the ends of marriage in the language of primary and secondary ends in a manner that explicitly maintained the subordination of the procreative end over the secondary ends, mutual help and the allaying of concupiscence was the work of the 1917 Code of Canon Law. The study has also shown that while Gaudium et Spes avoided the use of the
language of primary and secondary ends of marriage without a direct affirmation or repudiation of it, *Humanae Vitae* took a different approach. *Humanae Vitae* was explicit in maintaining that an inseparable connection exists between the procreative and the unitive meanings of the conjugal act. This teaching was further nuanced in *Familiaris Consortio* by showing how this inseparability does not only depend on the biological finality of the sexual act but on a personalist understanding of conjugal love. This norm which understands respect for the shared fertility of husband and wife as implied by the totality of bodily self-donation is indeed a significant theological development of the teaching of *Humanae Vitae* and one which solidifies the contention that the magisterium no longer speaks of the ends of marriage in the hierarchical terminologies of primary and secondary ends.

The study also demonstrated that although this inseparable connection of the two meanings of marriage was explicit in post *Gaudium et Spes*’s documents, the whole framework of this teaching is evident in *Gaudium et Spes* itself. This is because *Gaudium et Spes* was explicit in its recognition of the centrality of love in its treatment of marriage and its ends. But as the study pointed out above, there was no mention of love in the teaching of the 1917 Code in reference to the ends of marriage. Similarly, the conjugal act, which is the intimate expression of conjugal love maintained an instrumental value in the 1917 Code as it has always done since the teaching of Augustine.

As it stands, neither *Humanae Vitae* nor the other five documents examined, supported or promoted the view that the implied equality of the two meanings of marriage means that one can choose to realize either of them at the expense of the other. This is where the “inseparability” that *Humanae Vitae* asserts plays a key role in understanding their equality. In the same vein,
with all the emphasis concerning the significance of love in marriage in these documents, none of them supported the view that marriage can be dissolved at the disintegration of couple’s love for each other. Also none of them described conjugal love as an independent end of marriage.\footnote{I will elaborate on these claims in the next section of this chapter that deals with May and Mackin’s arguments concerning the magisterial teaching in reference to the ends of marriage.}

Finally, it is the position of this study that, based on the evidence from the six post \textit{Gaudium et Spes}’s magisterial documents examined above, the silence of \textit{Gaudium et Spes} over the hierarchical terminology of the primary and the secondary ends of marriage was indeed the beginning of a shift from the traditional position which understood the end of \textit{proles} as the primary end of marriage. Also this teaching which maintains the inseparability and the implied equality of the procreative and the unitive meanings of marriage does not congruent with the Igbo understanding of the male child as the primary purpose of marriage. However, the conclusion that the magisterium no longer holds the end of \textit{proles} as the primary purpose of marriage does not enjoy unanimous acceptance by scholars.\footnote{As chapter six has shown, the lack of consensus among scholars was principally based on the following points: First, because of the silence of \textit{Gaudium et Spes} over the language of primary and secondary ends. Second, because in number 50 of \textit{Gaudium et Spes}, the Council Fathers referenced \textit{De Bono Conjugali} of Augustine and some previous magisterial documents which embody the teaching that understood the end of \textit{proles} as the primary purpose of marriage to support their position. Third, because of the Council Fathers’ reference to the pastoral nature of the document which was the response given to the minority members of the Council who wanted the terminology of the primary and the secondary ends to be inserted in the section that embodies the teaching concerning the ends of marriage.}

Thus, since scholars are divided concerning the current teaching of the magisterium in reference to the purposes of marriage, this next section will examine the arguments of May and Mackin as representatives of the scholars who argue either that the silence of \textit{Gaudium et Spes} over the hierarchical terminologies of the primary and secondary ends constituted a continuation with, or a significant departure from the traditional teaching which understood the end of \textit{proles} as the primary end of marriage.
7.7. THE ARGUMENTS OF WILLIAM E. MAY AND THEODORE MACKIN

7.7A. THEODORE MACKIN

Theodore Mackin spent significant portion of his book *What is Marriage?* analyzing the teaching of the Second Vatican Council Fathers concerning the nature of marriage and its ends. According to him, the Catholic teaching on the nature of marriage began its gradual change since the middle of the twentieth century and continued in the hands of the Rota judges.\(^{92}\) Drawing from the description of marriage in *Gaudium et Spes* as “an intimate community of marital life and love” Mackin posited a number of questions.\(^{93}\) “Does the forming of the intimate community of marital life and love belong to the essence or the object of marital consent? Do the man and woman consenting commit themselves essentially to the forming of this community—with the consequence that if they are unable to do so with one another, or refuse to do so, their consent is invalid and the ensuing union is null as a marriage?”\(^{94}\)

In his effort to address these questions, Mackin referenced the verdicts given by some Rota judges in which they apportioned ‘an intimate community of marital life and love’ a juridical essence in marriage. By juridical he means, what makes a marriage, marriage and of

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\(^{92}\) See Mackin, *What is Marriage?*, 297. The agents of this gradual change as Mackin claimed were: “the Bishops, philosophers and theologians who prepared the mind of the Second Vatican Council, the bishops of the Council themselves, Pope Paul VI, the sub-Commission that drafted the revision of the Catholic marriage law, the many who criticized the draft and the cardinals of the plenarium who ordered and supervised the law’s final formulation” (*What is Marriage?*, 297).

\(^{93}\) *Gaudium et Spes*, 48; and Mackin, *What is Marriage?*, 297.

\(^{94}\) See Mackin, *What is Marriage?*, 297.
which its absence is equal to no marriage.95 The first of this kind as he noted was by Rota judge Lucien Anne who argued that ‘the community of marital life and love’ of which Gaudium et Spes spoke of has a juridical essence.96 Mackin also gave an example of another verdict given by another Rota judge Mario Pompedda in his decision of December 1969, in which Pompedda borrowed from Humanae Vitae’s teaching on the inseparability of the procreative and unitive meanings of the conjugal act. Thus, referring to the unitive meaning under the heading of secondary ends of marriage, Pompedda insisted that the unitive meaning too belongs to the juridical essence of marriage.97 Therefore, Mackin argues that “because of the inseparability of the procreative and unitive meanings of the conjugal act, the love-union too must be included in the object of consent.”98

However, in Mackin’s estimation, it was not until April 1973 through 1976 that the teaching of Gaudium et Spes began to have an enormous influence on the decisions of the Rota judges. Consequently, Mackin argues that in April 5, 1973, April 30, 1974, and July 9, 1976

95 See What is Marriage?, 297-339.
96 See Mackin, What is Marriage?, 300. According to this decision, because a husband’s wife exhibited homosexual conduct with her long-time lesbian lover, and even though she had three children from her husband, Anne ruled contrary to canon 1018.1 that identified the object of the marital consent as the perpetual and exclusive right to sexual acts. Gaudium et Spes names other elements of this object which include but are not limited to an intimate community of marital life and love which is perpetual and exclusive. While the issue in the above case seems to do with the good of fides, Anne interpreted it as an absence of love and Mackin accepted Anne’s interpretation. In accepting Anne’s interpretation Mackin’s took his ruling as a serious deflection or perversion of the sexual instinct and thus concluded that since this perversion was one of the fundamental deficiencies making a person incapable of marital consent, “the woman’s emotional perception of herself as a male partner in her lesbian relationship kept her from giving herself into her marital relationship emotionally as a woman and thus as a wife” (Mackin, What is Marriage?, 300). This decision is available in full in Ephemerides Iuris Canonici, Vol. 26 (1970) 419-442. See Mackin, What is Marriage?, 300-302.
97 See Mackin, What is Marriage?, 302.
98 Mackin, What is Marriage?, 303. A case can be made that Mackin’s use of the decisions of the Rota judges to support his views instead of the magisterial documents themselves begs the question. This is because the authority of the Rota judges does not supersede that of the magisterial documents.
another Rota judge in the person of J.M. Serrano took the community of life and love a step further in his interpretation of *Gaudium et Spes* number 49 thusly: “The actions within marriage by which the couple are united intimately and chastely are noble and worthy ones. Expressed in a manner which is truly human, these actions signify and promote that mutual self-giving by which spouses enrich each other with a joyful and thankful will.”\(^9\) According to him, the interpersonal relationship required essentially by marriage demands also that the partners be capable of engaging in sexual relations in a way “worthy of human dignity.”\(^10\) Consequently, he opines “if this relationship is totally lacking, then marriage itself is non-existent.”\(^11\)

After sampling and critically analyzing these and other related judicial decisions following the teaching of *Gaudium et Spes* and *Humanae Vitae*, Mackin observed: there was no doubt that in *Gaudium et Spes* and *Humanae Vitae*, “a characteristic love is substantial to a marriage.”\(^12\) However, he noted that both documents left room for disagreement about the weight of this substantiality. Positing this doubt in series of questions he asked, “is this love so substantial as to be essential to a marriage so that if this love is absent from a relationship, or deficient in it, the relationship fails to be a marriage?”\(^13\)

Based on the ambiguity that Mackin found in *Gaudium et Spes*’s and *Humanae Vitae*’s, description of marriage ‘as a community of love’ and as ‘an intimate sharing of life and love’, he interpreted the documents thusly:


\(^{10}\) Mackin, *What is Marriage?*, 306.

\(^{11}\) Mackin, *What is Marriage?*, 305-306.

\(^{12}\) Mackin, *What is Marriage?*, 314.

\(^{13}\) Mackin, *What is Marriage?*, 314.
If as these documents say, a marriage is a community of love—if what a marriage is an intimate sharing of life and love—it would seem to follow that a relationship is a marriage as long as it is such a community, such an intimate sharing. If these endure for a lifetime, marriage endures for a lifetime. But what if a relationship that was these things for a while deteriorates and ceases to be such? Is it still a marriage? If so what keeps it such when the elements said by the Council and by the encyclical to make up its nature have vanished? Or do they only seem to say that the community and the sharing belong to marriage’s nature essentially—so that even though they disappear, what is truly essential in marriage goes on?

Using the verdict that was given in the tribunal of Utrecht in the Netherland in 1970 in a case between a native Italian couples who got married in Netherland in February 12, 1963, Mackin argued that a marriage can dissolve at the disintegration of the mutual love of the spouses. According to 1976 Rota verdict, the description of marriage as a community of love

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104 Mackin, What is Marriage?, 314.

105 See Mackin, What is Marriage?, 314. See also Lawler, Secular Marriage, 44-116.; and V. Heylin, “La promozione della dignità del matrimonio e della famiglia” in La Chiesa nel mondo di oggi. Studi e Commenti intorno alla Costituzione pastorale “Gaudium et Spes”(Florence: Vallacchi, 1966), 358. The decision that Mackin alluded above involved a man who deserted his wife after marriage. Thus, because the husband deserted his wife and their child four months after their wedding, the tribunal of Utrecht accepted the woman’s petition for a decree of nullity on the ground of defect of consent, and on August 12, 1971 rendered a favorable decision thusly; “it is evident that this marriage was null on the ground of defect of consent, that is of moral impotence” (Mackin, What is Marriage?, 314). Following this decision, “the tribunal of Haarlem took this decision on regular appeal and on September 28, 1971 sustained it agreeing that the attempt at marriage had been invalid because of relative moral impotence and on the subsidiary ground of defect of consent” (Mackin, What is Marriage?, 314). As it is a common practice of the Church, on September 5, 1972, the tribunal of Utrecht informed the favorable decision to the Signatura in Roma to be transmitted to Italian authorities for the implementation of its civil effects. According to Mackin, upon reading the decision, some officials of the Signatura were alarmed and asked for the acta of the case in both the first and second instances. Having read these, Cardinal Staffa asked the Apostolic See to appoint a commission of Signatura, cardinals to study (in the third instance), the merits of the lower-court decisions. Paul VI authorized the formation of this ad hoc commission on July 9 1973. He notes that what drew the attention of the Signatura was because of the argument of the first instance decision in Utrecht. The main elements of it were the following: Since according to Gaudium et Spes, a marriage is to be understood as intimate community of life and marital love, it can dissolve and disintegrate. Because a marriage is a communion, the ancient axiom ‘it is the consent of the parties that creates a marriage’ takes on exceptional meaning. But, if marriage is a union, the consent should no longer to be seen as an instantaneous juridical act granting a juridical right, once for all. It has the more existential nature of a commitment to a union of lives. That a true marital union be brought into existence, the parties must really will it in all its fullness. Thus to verify defect of consent in a particular case it is enough to verify that it has not been seriously willed in all its fullness as opposed to the very minimal intentionality required for the minister of other sacraments. The presumption here is that this marriage which lasted for approximately four months did not have the quality of a fully willed consent. This reading is supported by the verdict given by the tribunal of Haarlem. “Reading this case once comes to the spontaneous conclusion that this short-lived union could not have been a true marriage. It did not have the chance to develop to the point of becoming a normal community of life and love” (Mackin, What is Marriage?, 315, emphasis in original). In rejecting this decision, the Signatura made
in *Gaudium et Spes*’s supports the view that marriage can be dissolved at the disintegration of love.\(^{106}\) Based on all this, Mackin argued that *Gaudium et Spes* teaching concerning the ends of marriage was not only a repudiation of the traditional teaching that understood procreation as the primary end of marriage but that “conjugal love was raised to the level of an objective end of marriage, equal to, if not superior to the procreation and education of children.”\(^{107}\) Having briefly summarized Mackin’s interpretation of the silence of *Gaudium et Spes* in reference to the question of the ends of marriage, this study will now examine May’s argument in response to his view on this question before given its appraisal on both scholars’ positions.

**7.7B. WILLIAM E. MAY**

May in his book *Marriage the Rock on which the Family is Built*, chided Mackin not only on his claim that marriage dissolves at the death of couples’ love for one another, but also on his position that *Gaudium et Spes*’s silence over the language of the primary and secondary ends of marriage constituted a significant departure from the traditional teaching. May, elucidated:

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\(^{106}\) See Mackin, *What is Marriage?*, 319-320. See also AAS, vol. 68 (1976), 206-207.

\(^{107}\) Mackin, *What is Marriage?*, 235-237 This is the implicit position of Doms and the revisionist personalism which follows him as this study indicated earlier.
“Mackin is one among other scholars who have gravely misinterpreted the teaching of Vatican Council II, claiming that the Council Fathers repudiated the traditional understanding that procreation and education of children is the primary end of marriage and that it raised conjugal love to the level of an objective end of marriage, equal to, if not superior to the procreation and education of children.”

In developing his rebuttal against Mackin, May acknowledged that the Council Fathers did not use the hierarchical terminology of the primary and secondary ends of marriage for a different reason and not because they wanted to do away with the primacy of procreation over mutual help and the allaying of concupiscence. Rather, he argued that the Council Fathers avoided this terminology because of their technical and juridical connotations which rendered them inappropriate for a pastoral document like _Gaudium et Spes_. Therefore, May insisted that far from repudiating the traditional position, _Gaudium et Spes_ understood procreation and the education of children as the “primordial end of both the institution of marriage and conjugal love.”

May further argued that the Council delegates did not consider conjugal love as an end in marriage or a property of marriage as Mackin had argued. According to May, “conjugal love was consistently predicated with the same ends (primordially, the procreation and education of

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109 See May, _Marriage_, 99. See also _Acta Synodalia_, vol vi, par vii, 472. 98. While it is true that the reasons May gave in support of his contention is grounded in the Council’s history, I will show as this analysis advances that he gave too much weight to them in maintaining that this silence represented a continuation of the traditional hierarchy of the ends of marriage especially in light of the subsequent documents.

110 May, _Marriage_, 99.
children; and subsidiarily, mutual help and assistance) and the same properties that they
predicated of the whole institution of marriage.” In reference to Pope John Paul II’s *Familiaris
Consortio* number 11, May pointed out that “conjugal love is what constitutes the personal
reality which the institution of marriage confirms, protects and sanctions before God and
man.”

May rightly situated the significance of *Gaudium et Spes*’s teaching concerning the ends
of marriage as a partnership of love which was based on the conjugal covenant that enables
spouses to mutually give and receive each other for their good, the good of their children, and the
society at large. However, the giving and receiving of each other does not depend on their
arbitrary choice. He also properly apportioned conjugal love with the characteristics of unity
and indissolubility by echoing the words of the Council Fathers thusly: “This intimate union as
the mutual giving of two persons, as well as the good of the children, demand the full fidelity of
the spouses and require their indissoluble unity.”

May admitted that the Council Fathers’ recognition of the significance of love in
marriage and its relationship to procreation represented a true theological development. He
elucidated thusly:

What distinguishes the text, in relationship to the previous magisterium on the
ends of marriage, is that it distinguishes between two formally diverse elements
contained in the conjugal community [the institution of marriage and conjugal

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112 May, *Marriage*, 100.

113 See May, *Marriage*, 100.

114 See May, *Marriage*, 100.

It thus makes explicit “the significance of conjugal love even for the procreating and educating of children.”

Furthermore, he also noted that the first public act of conjugal love within marriage is the act of irrevocable personal consent through which the couples publicly announce their willingness to share their life together as husband and wife until death. Based on this premise, May referenced Augustine and Aquinas and argued that “conjugal love is included in the object of their consent, as the Christian tradition has consistently taught.” Although his reference in support of this point to Augustine and Aquinas appears to be overstated, he nonetheless interpreted the teaching of the Council delegates correctly as he elucidated thusly:

In the conjugal community, conjugal love is the life giving principle owned by virtue of the very consent that has generated it. But, its absence from a marriage does not destroy it. This is so because marriage, while born from the human act that brings it into being, does not depend upon their arbitrary will as Gaudium et Spes 48 noted. Therefore, the unjust and unlawful violation later on of the requirement of love cannot annul either the consent or the community as Vatican Council II insisted.

In the same vein, he notes that “conjugal love, therefore, is regarded by Vatican Council II and by John Paul II as the inner principle of marriage and of the vocation of married couples. However, he disagreed and rightly so with the idea that because conjugal love was recognized as important in marriage in Gaudium et Spes, it tantamount to a dissolution of marriage if couple’s

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117 Augustine, De Bono Conjugali, 3; Aquinas, Summa Theologiae, supplement to part III, q. 49, a.3; and May, Marriage, 103. It seems to me that May is reading Augustine and Aquinas texts through the lens of a twentieth century terminology for neither Augustine nor Aquinas spoke of conjugal love in their treatment of marriage and its goods or ends.

118 Gaudium et Spes, 48 See May, Marriage, 103; and Arjonillo, Conjugal Love, 291, 297.
love for each other dies.”119 To buttress his position May accepted Hellin’s formulation, “while up to now the magisterium of the Church affirmed that marriage tends toward the procreation and education of children, the Second Vatican Council tells us that both the institutional aspect and conjugal love tend toward the procreation and education of children.”120

May’s criticism of Mackin’s position concerning the dissolution of marriage at the death of couple’s love for each other was and continues to be the teaching of the Catholic Church because of the indissolubility and the sacramentality of Christian marriage. Similarly, May was right to argue that Gaudium et Spes did not make conjugal love an independent end in marriage. Therefore, I agree with May that Mackin erred by arguing that marriage dis-integrates at the death of couple’s love. This is because, first, while love is essential and in fact enhances a couples’ relationship, the tradition consistently taught that it is consent that creates a marriage and not love. Second, a careful reading of Mackin’s analysis suggested that he focused so much on the judicial aspect of marriage that he interpreted marriage through the lens of a contract rather than a covenant as the biblical tradition and Gaudium et Spes had taught. The change from seeing marital relationship as a covenant rather than a contract is one of the significant contributions of Gaudium et Spes to this subject as chapter six chronicled. Furthermore, none of the six post Gaudium et Spes’s documents that were analyzed in this chapter spoke of marriage as a contract with the exception of The 1983 Code of Canon Law whose use of the term did not obscure for it its covenantal connotation. Rather, they used the word “covenant” to depict God’s

119 See Mackin, What is Marriage? 315 where he writes “Since according to Gaudium et Spes, a marriage is to be understand as an intimate community of life and marital love, it can dissolve and disintegrate.” and May, Marriage, 103. See also Arjonillo, Conjugal Love, 291, 297 who supported May on this point.

120 Hellin, “El Lugar propio del amor conyugal,” 16 as cited by May, Marriage, 102.
covenant with his people Israel which in this new era represented the union of Christ with His bride the Church.

Having used May to respond to some of Mackin’s positions, I will now use Aquinas to address Mackin’s contention on the question of the indissolubility of Christian marriages. Mackin’s view is in conflict with the sacramental theology that was championed by Aquinas during the scholastic period and maintained in the Catholic tradition till the present concerning the indissolubility of Christian marriage. Aquinas’s teaching on the sacramentality of Christian marriage is key to understanding the Church's teaching that marriage does not dis-integrate at the death of a couple's love for one another once it is ratified and consummated. In developing the sacramentality of Christian marriage, Aquinas framed the healing, sanctifying and elevating work of the sacraments in light of his anthropology. In reference to the sacrament of marriage, Aquinas sees humanity within the broader framework of the creation narrative as the supreme and rational being that was empowered by God to form a union of love, especially love as friendship. Based on this backdrop, in his Scriptum Aquinas dismisses the view that marriage is a natural reality because of necessity, but rather accepted the naturalness of marriage based on its goodness. He further developed the indissolubility of marriage “as something required for

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121 Although Augustine also taught that marriage, especially Christian marriage is indissoluble, he did not have the elaborated sacramental theology to express fully the rationale as Aquinas did.

122 Biffi, Inos, La Teologia e un Teologo: San Tommaso d’ Aquino, Edizioni Piemme, Casale Monferrato, 1984, 88, 89, as referenced by Elliot, What God Has Joined, 90. I am relying mostly on Elliot’s interpretation of Aquinas in this section.

123 Elliot, What God Has Joined, 90-91.

124 See Aquinas, in IV., 26, I.I 581, 582; S.T. suppl. q. 41.1. (New York, Benziger Brothers, Inc. 1947), 2711. See also Elliot, What God Has Joined, 90.
the unity and stability of the family, the dignity of the wife and the deep friendship which ought to exist between the spouses who share their lives.”

Using the Aristotelean classification of matter (the material element or action) and form (the words which accompany the matter) Aquinas proposed consent as the form, and the sensible acts as the matter of the sacrament of marriage. Elliot observes that this designation “is close to our modern view that both matter and form are within the words and actions of mutual consent, mutual self-donation.” However, if the matter is the sensible acts and the form is the consent and the sacrament of marriage like other sacraments derives its efficacy from the Passion of Christ, how is this possible since marriage involves pleasure and not pain? Elliot argues that in responding to this dilemma Aquinas shows “an awareness of agape (love) in the great mystery in Ephesians.” He elucidates “Although matrimony is not conformed to Christ’s passion as regards pain, it is as regards love whereby He suffered for the Church who was to be united to him as his bride.”

Aquinas further explained that although marriage signifies the union between Christ and His Church, it does not cause the union. But if all sacraments cause what they signify, how is this possible in the case of marriage? To address this question, Aquinas developed his magna carta with regard to the indissolubility of Christian marriage. Thus, “Aquinas distinguished between

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125 Aquinas, in IV, 26, I I 582; (41, a. 2) as referenced by Elliot, What God Has Joined, 90.
126 Aquinas, in IV, 26, I I 582, (41, a. 2).
127 Elliot, What God Has Joined, 92.
128 Elliot, What God Has Joined, 92.
129 Aquinas, In IV, 26.2.1 ra 3, p 583 (s42.1 ad 3.), and S.T. 3a, 64. 7., 366. See also Elliot, What God Has Joined, 92.
130 Elliot, What God has Joined, 92.
three elements of any sacrament: the “sacramentum tantum,” the visible sacred sign, the “res et sacramentum,” that reality which is both contained and signified in a sacrament, and the “res tantum,” the Grace granted, requiring a response of faith to be efficacious and fruitful.”

With this framework, Aquinas clearly situated the sensible “acts as the sacramentum tantum, the bond between husband and wife as the res et sacramentum, and the effect of the sacrament as the res tantum, an ultimate contained reality.” Consequently, Aquinas accepted Lombard’s "reality not contained" as the signification of Christ united to his Church. Seen through this lens, Aquinas “discerned two contained realities: the bond, analogous to the indelible character in the three character sacraments; and the Grace of the sacrament given to the spouse who disposed to receive it through the created Grace of the bond.” As Elliot correctly observed, “Aquinas went beyond Augustine’s concept of marriage as a sacred symbol which only effects indissolubility, and beyond the schoolmen who did not see Grace as being caused by the mutual consent of the spouses.”

Aquinas linked both the Genesis 2.24 and Ephesians 5:31 accounts to further buttress the signification of one flesh that the couple becomes via marriage. According to him, “spouses are one flesh in three ways, first by “love, ‘per affectum dilectionis’, second, by shared lives ‘per conversationem’, and third, by sexual union, ‘per carnalen coniunctionem.”

However,

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133 See Elliot, *What God Has Joined*, 93.


136 Aquinas, Ad Ephesios cap. V, lect x, 333,334, 76-77. See also Elliot, *What God Has Joined*, 93.
Aquinas argues that sexual union is not essential for marriage and thus not essential for its sacramental signification that causes the bond and the Grace. Reflecting on this view Elliot surmised that, “sexual union in marriage is within the encircling signification, the ‘great mystery’ of Christ’s union with his Church and therefore is integral to it as a complete sign of the union between Christ and His Church” 137

As it stands, through consent, before consummation, marriage signifies the union of Christ with the soul through Grace. Through sexual union, consummation, marriage signifies Christ’s union with his Church.138 While the union of Christ with the soul can be broken by sin, the union between Christ as his Church cannot be broken, for it is his union with the Church “insofar as it is his assumption of human nature in the unity of his person which is completely indissoluble.”139 Consequently, Aquinas posed the Hypostatic union in the Incarnation as the source of the Church’s indissolubility of marriage which is both ratified and consummated.140 In other words, while the spiritual bond caused by consent can be dissolved before consummation say to enter into a religious life, the carnal bond caused by consummation cannot be broken.141 This is because marriage not only signifies the hypostatic union of Christ joined to his Church,

137 Elliot, What God Has Joined, 93. See also Aquinas, In IV 26;2.4 (s 42.4).

138 See Elliot What God Has Joined, 94.

139 Aquinas, In IV 27. 1.3b a 2. See also Elliot, What God Has Joined, 94.

140 Elliot, What God Has Joined, 94.

141 See Elliot What God Has Joined, 94.
but “because it completed the translation of the body of one party to the control of another” as epitomized in the first letter of Paul to the Corinthians. 142

As Elliot correctly surmised, “the signification of Christ and His Church imparts not only indissolubility, but a positive value to sexuality within the majority of Christian marriages where spouses consent to exercise their rights to bodily union.”143 It is this exercise of the body that Aquinas referred to when he spoke of paying the conjugal debt as a virtuous and meritorious act under the virtue of justice as chapter four chronicled. Thus, in marriage love makes every act of the couples including the marital act meritorious and holy only when they are performed in such a way to promote and foster the three elements that are enshrined in the sacramentality of Christian marriage, sacramentum tantum, res et sacramentum, and res tantum.

Based on Aquinas’s explication above, a case can be made that the sacramentality of marriage is built-in within the framework of the biblical story of the creation of humanity and by association with the establishment of the ideal marriage. This is because it is the same Word who out of love, prompted God to create h’adam in his image and likeness and empowered h’adam to be co-creators, is still the same Word who took flesh in Christ, suffered and died for the sanctification of humanity whom he loved so much from the foundation of the world. It is the same Word that Christian marriage participates in his love and union with His bride the Church. Grabowski articulates this claim beautifully in noting that “Christian marriage derives its

142 Elliot, What God Has Joined, 94. See also I Corinthians 7:3.4.

143 Elliot, What God Has Joined, 95.
efficacy from the Incarnate Word hypostatically joined to the humanity of Christ as disclosed through the whole of his life, particularly the intensity of love manifested in his passion.”

But, if couple’s love for one another is a reflection or a participation of the love of God as epitomized in the death, and resurrection as well as a reflection of Christ’s love for His bride the Church, it is not possible for such love to die. In other words, Christ’s love for his Church the bride is never extinguished. Christ’s passion is the culmination of sacrificial love and sanctifying grace. Therefore, Christian marriage is not simply a human or secular institution. The love that is marital is not based on emotions or instinct, as Christ’ love for his Church married love transcends emotions and is not limited to judicial, cultural and societal regulations.

Rather, Christian marriage is a sacrament that was instituted by Christ to impart His sanctifying grace to all married couples. And just as Christ’s love for His bride the Church does not die, so couple’s love for each other does not die too. Likewise, since Christ’s union with His bride the Church is indissoluble, so ratified and consummated marriages are also indissoluble. The significance of the grace of God in all these cannot be over-estimated. Hence the sacramentality of Christian marriage guarantees the presence of God’s grace, though it needs the assent of faith to be fruitful.

Based on the connection between Christ’s passion as well as His union with His Church and Christian marriage Mackin and his supporters may have concluded hastily in arguing that marital love dies. The same is also true concerning his view that Christian marriage dis-integrates at the death of couple’s love for one another. Seen through this lens, Mackin’s position

which argued for the dissolution of marriage at the death of couple’s love for each other ignored not only the biblical origin of marriage but also “the presence and transforming activity of Christ in marriage; the ordering of marriage to the cross within the larger context of sacramental theology and the eschatological ordering of Christian marriage.”

While a case can be made that some Christian married couples have a different experience and in fact may agree with Mackin that their love for each has died, this claim is not supported by the teaching of the Church concerning the sacramentality of Christian marriage. Therefore, I agree with May that Mackin erred in arguing that the teaching of Gaudium et Spes and Humanae Vitae support the position that marriage dis-integrates at the death of love. Also none of the documents that were examined in this chapter can be used to support Mackin on this point. It is one thing for one to say that this is what one would want the Church to teach about a certain doctrine or position, it is another thing to hold a position and claim that it is consistent with the teaching of the Church. I think Mackin belongs to the latter category on this question.

145 Grabowski, “And So He Revealed His Glory: Cana and the Sacramentality of Marriage,” 43.

146 Although it is certainly true that couples experience an ebb and flow in their feelings of closeness but feeling of closeness or the sense of intimacy is not the same as the reality of love as a choice empowered by grace. But, the decision to love and to engage in marital relationship truly is based on the virtue of love and not necessarily on love as a feeling or emotion. This is because, while the former is a theological virtue and cannot die or fail, the later does, or at least decreases with time. Nevertheless, it remains an open question whether a majority of married Catholics know that a marriage can exist in the absence of the feeling of love in this limited sense. In my discussion with a devout Catholic, he was in shock to know that according to the Church’s teaching that what creates a marriage is consent and not love (though a case can be made that marriage is a consent to love. For instance, the vow ‘I will love you and honor you all the days of my life’). This feeling of surprise by these couples is intensified and sometimes it is overwhelming to realize that most married couples are not aware of the implications of the Church’s teaching with regard to the sacramentality of Christian marriage and its indissoluble character and those who have this knowledge seem not to believe or accept it. Whether this lack of belief and reluctance to accept this teaching can be attributed to culpable or inculpable ignorance is a subject of another study, but it is one that is worth noting. This is because my personal experience in dealing with couples shows that a majority of the couples who are still living together today are doing so, not because of this highly sophisticated teaching concerning the sacramenality and indissolubility of Christian marriages, but because their society or culture abhors divorce, for financial and economic motivated purposes, and/or because of their children. Therefore, if the Church wants to continue to maintain this indissoluble character of Christian marriage, which seems like the right thing to do, the Church needs to find more effective ways to catechize her Catholics, for the current methodology is not working very well.
However, while I agree with May on the previous point, I would argue that he misinterpreted the silence of *Gaudium et Spes* over the hierarchical structure by insisting that it constituted a continuation with the *1917 Code of Canon Law*’s position in reference to the ends of marriage. As this study indicated earlier, May argued that the Council Fathers refrained from using the words primary and secondary in their explication of the ends of marriage “only because this technical and juridical terminology was judged to be inappropriate for a document of a pastoral nature.”¹⁴⁷ He further supported his position by noting that the section of *Gaudium et Spes* that embodies this teaching on the ends of marriage referenced both Augustine and Pius XI who were the architects in maintaining the supremacy of *proles* over the other ends of marriage.

As this study indicated earlier, May was right in pointing out that the majority of the Council Fathers gave this reason and inserted the texts of Augustine and Pius XI in the footnote of *Gaudium et Spes* number 50 which is the crucial text that deals with this question. However, he did not explain how or what led to this response from the majority members of the Council Fathers and the reference to Augustine and Pius XI. But as chapter six of this study chronicled, both this reason and the insertion of both texts were later additions to the text as a result of the pressure that was mounted on the majority members of the Council Fathers by the minority members of the Council delegates. In other words, they were added to appease the minority members of the Council as a compromise so that the Council can proceed with its other proceedings of the day, with the understanding that the majority members of the Council delegates have made their point in the body of the document itself by using neither the terminology of primary and secondary ends nor words that suggested a hierarchy of ends.

I am inclined to read the action of the majority members of the Council Fathers as a diplomatic compromise for the following reasons. If the Council Fathers wanted to maintain the primacy of the ends of *proles*, they would have stated it categorically as the tradition had done in the past. But for the fact that they did not use the terms in the body of the text, putting it in the footnote is an indication that they are doing away with it because the teaching which understands marriage as a partnership of life and love does not support such hierarchy but perhaps were not certain on how to appropriately approach this departure yet, but, their uncertainty does not mean that they were maintaining the 1917 Code’s classification of the purposes of marriage in the language of primary and secondary. This claim is not only supported by the fact that the major points or highlights of the teaching of *Gaudium et Spes* are not relegated to its footnote, but the whole framework of *Gaudium et Spes*’s teaching supported a repudiation of the hierarchy of ends contrary to May’s claims of continuation with previous teaching.¹⁴⁸

A case can be made that the language of the primary and secondary ends of marriage was neither emphasized nor abandoned, but rather muted so as not to clash with the overall pastoral tone of the document (as the reference to previous teaching made clear). Nevertheless, if the silence of the majority members of the Council delegates was in support of the traditional hierarchy of ends, the other magisterial documents following *Gaudium et Spes* would have explicitly stated and maintained it. But such is not the impression one gets from reading these post *Gaudium et Spes* magisterial documents. This claim is supported by the fact that none of the six papal documents that followed *Gaudium et Spes* which were analyzed in this chapter used the terms primary and secondary in treating the ends of marriage. On a similar note, when the

¹⁴⁸ Besides, people do not generally put the significant parts of their work in the footnote. Rather, the important parts of any written work form the body of the work and this practice still remains true in both pastoral and non-pastoral-minded work.
hierarchical structure was upheld in the 1917 Code of Canon Law, it was because procreation was considered as the most honorable and important end of marriage in order to show that the secondary ends, mutual help and the allaying of concupiscence were of lesser and subsidiary value. One does not need to go too far to notice the stark difference between this teaching and Humanae Vitae’s inseparability and the implied equality of the procreative and the unitive meanings of the conjugal act.

Under this backdrop, it seems to me that for May to base his argument of congruity with the traditional position strictly on either the pastoral connotation of the document or the reference to Augustine and Pius XI simply begs the question. This is because the framework of Gaudium et Spes’s teaching as chapter six of this study has demonstrated does not support May’s reading and interpretation of the silence of Gaudium et Spes as presupposing a continuation with the 1917 Code of Canon Law’s hierarchical structure in reference to the ends of marriage. Therefore, it is fair to say that May’s argument that was based on the pastoral connotation of Gaudium et Spes though grounded in the tradition, will use some fine-tuning or clarification. This is because the fact that a text is pastoral in nature does not separate it from the principles which form the basis of it teaching.

Rather as Brian Benestad correctly observed: “Gaudium et Spes—has two parts. Part one primarily lays out the doctrinal principles though not without pastoral connotation and part two deals with the pastoral aspect though grounded in the doctrinal principles.”149 Seen in this perspective, it is fair to say that Gaudium et Spes is built on the doctrinal foundation that was laid in Lumen Gentium’s call for universal holiness, thereby giving the impression that married life is

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both a vocation and a call to holiness.\textsuperscript{150} And the pastoral connotation is exemplified in the muted use of the terms primary and secondary ends to initiate dialogue with the whole world as the Council Fathers elucidated. While the unified aim of both the pastoral and the doctrinal aspects of \textit{Gaudium et Spes} was to present a teaching that would promote the goodness of marriage as a partnership of love and life and the promotion of marriage as a vocation that leads to a life of holiness. Consequently, through partnership of love and life, married couples are able to realize or achieve their salvation and sanctification by maintaining the inseparability of the two meanings of marriage. This claim finds more support in an earlier work in which Pius XI admonishes couples thusly: “that through their [couple’s] partnership in life they may advance ever more and more in virtue, and above all that they may grow in true love toward God and their neighbor.”\textsuperscript{151}

But based on the findings of this study so far, neither the primacy of the procreative end or meaning of marriage to the detriment of the unitive meanings of marriage, nor its twisted form that allocates this primacy to the male children can adequately lead to the life of holiness and sanctification of couples who promote them. Rather, as this study have shown and hopes to build upon in the next chapter, the prioritization of one meaning of marriage to the detriment of the other meaning has led to actions which do not promote the goodness of marriage, marriage as a partnership of love and life or lead couples to virtuous actions. Hence, for May to base his argument on the pastoral aspect of document is giving an undue weight and/or significance to it. Again, such attitude neglects the whole framework of \textit{Gaudium et Spes} and the variety of the

\textsuperscript{150} See \textit{Lumen Gentium}, 39-42; and \textit{Gaudium et Spes}, 48. See also \textit{Aposolicam actuositatem}, 11.

\textsuperscript{151} Pius Xi, \textit{Casti Connubii}, 23.
papal documents that followed *Gaudium et Spes* that touched on the question of the ends or purposes of marriage.

It was not accidental that the language of primary and secondary ends of marriage was not used in the six magisterial documents that followed *Gaudium et Spes*. This omission is very significant and it is surprising that May did not realize its magnitude when juxtaposed with the previous position on this question. Again, it was not by accident that the language of primary and secondary disappeared from the documents of the magisterium beginning with *Gaudium et Spes* and continued till the present. Thus, without prejudice to the reasons given by the majority members of the Council delegates for why they avoided the hierarchical terminology and their inserting of Augustine’s and Pius XI’s texts in the footnote, it is difficult to see how *Gaudium et Spes*’s position is congruent with the 1917 Code’s teaching regarding the ends of marriage. The 1917 Code neither treated marriage as a partnership of love nor expressed care about the well-being of the couples who marry. Rather, as the analysis of the 1917 Code accentuated, the canon lawyers who understood the ends of marriage in the language of the primary and secondary ends did so to help them to make judicial decisions on what was and what was not a marriage.

While it is true that the Council Fathers were not explicit in repudiating the traditional hierarchical structure of the ends of marriage, the whole framework of their teaching supported such repudiation. One can then make the case that Paul VI followed the framework embedded in *Gaudium et Spes* when he spoke of an inseparable connection which exists between the procreative and the unitive meanings of the conjugal act in its treatment of the purposes of marriage. In my judgment, *Humanae Vitae*’s teaching concerning the purposes of marriage was
explicit enough and in fact, brought clarity to the confusion or ambiguity which *Gaudium et Spes*’s silence suggested.

*Humanae Vitae* was also the first official Church document to explicitly speak of the purposes of marriage in a language that avoided the subordination of one end or meaning of marriage by the other. A teaching which does not promote such subordination should not be considered as a trivial development in the history of the Catholic tradition concerning the ends of marriage which has promoted such subordination. Finally, I contend that this is a significant departure from the previous teaching and to over-look it as May and his supporters did, neither represented adequately this theological development nor the current teaching of the Church concerning the ends of marriage.

To Pope Paul VI’s credit, his teaching concerning the inseparability and the implied equality of the procreative and unitive meanings of the conjugal act within marriage accomplished two things. First, by the implied equality of the unitive and the procreative meanings of marriage, he proactively responded to the scholars who may want to maintain the traditional hierarchical superiority of the procreative end over the unitive end. Second, by teaching that the procreative and unitive meanings are also inseparable, he struck down the argument of scholars who may want to argue that the equality of the two meanings suggests that there are no moral problems for one to choose to promote either of the meanings of marriage at the expense of the other.\(^{152}\)

\(^{152}\) This is the argument of the some scholars who support the use of contraception to foster the unitive end in the case where a birth of another child may pose an unbearable burden to the life of the couple’s and family. The same could be said concerning those who would want to promote the procreative via various forms of reproductive technologies, adultery or polygamy to the detriment of the unitive ends. I will say more on this in the concluding chapter of this study.
The above claims are supported by the words of Grabowski who commenting on the
teaching of Wojtyla opines, “just as it is wrong to willfully negate one fertility in the name of
fostering mutual love, it is wrong to seek to use one’s spouse to achieve procreation to the
detriment of mutual love.”153 Under this backdrop, it is morally unacceptable to use
contraception in the name of preserving the unitive end or meanings of marriage. Likewise, as
this study intends to elaborate in the next chapter, it is wrong to engage in polygamous
marriages, adulterous behaviors and/or employ the services of sex selective procedures such as
Microsort to promote the procreative meanings of marriage as the Igbo culture allows in search
of a male child whom they see as the primary purpose of marriage.

7.8. SUMMARY

This chapter has demonstrated that the silence of Gaudium et Spes over the traditional
hierarchical structure concerning the ends of marriage was indeed the beginning of a shift or
theological development in Catholic teaching with regard to the ends of marriage. To make this
judgment, it analyzed pertinent sections of six post Gaudium et Spes magisterial documents that
treated marriage and its ends. Prominent among them were Paul VI’s encyclical letter Humanae
Vitae and John Paul II’s Apostolic Exhortation Familiaris Consortio. Humanae Vitae spoke of
the inseparability and the implied equality of the procreative and the unitive meanings of
marriage. While it is true that the description of the purposes of marriage in the language of
meanings was not the novelty of Humanae Vitae, (but that of the personalist scholars such as

153 Grabowski, Sex and Virtue, 132. See also Wojtyla, Love and Responsibility, 58-50, 61-63, 233. It is pertinent to
note that Wojtyla’s personalist norm in the cited work cuts both ways.
Hildebrand and Doms), the teaching concerning the inseparability and their implied equality is truly the novelty of *Humanae Vitae*. To further buttress the position that *Humanae Vitae* is truly a new teaching from the old, the study accentuated that *Humanae Vitae* did not reference any past teaching where it taught this inseparability.

The chapter also pointed out that because *Humanae Vitae*’s appeal to natural law was considered insufficient by some scholars, its teaching on the meaning of marriage was chided as a form of physicalism—that is, based on the finality of the sexual act and as such was unable to respond to a development such as oral contraception. To address this weakness, John Paul II developed an exhaustive theological analysis which not only supported *Humanae Vitae*’s position, but which also embellished and refined it. Accordingly John Paul II noted “fecundity is the fruit and sign of conjugal love, the living testimony of the reciprocal self-giving of the spouses.”

Therefore, for John Paul II, “fertility is not merely viewed as a biological aspect of the person that can be altered at his or her discretion, but like sexuality itself, is an existential reality, and pertains to the person as a whole.”

John Paul also viewed his teaching as flowing from the biblical account of the creation of humanity which not only manifests God’s love, but which also empowers men and women to be co-creators with God. Thus, by basing the teaching concerning the inseparability of the procreative and the unitive meanings of marriage not only on the personlist norm, but also on the biological finality of the conjugal act, John Paul II was able to give a better theological account or explanation for the basis of the inseparability of the two of meanings of marriage than

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*Humanae Vitae* did. He not only based his argument on natural law, but he also linked it to the interpersonal dimension of the couple’s union via the language of the human body in which sexual intercourse “communicates complete fidelity within the marriage covenant and total self-donation.” Therefore, any conjugal act of the couple that prioritizes one meaning or end of marriage to the detriment of the other, negates part of the meaning of the gift and falsifies what true conjugal love represents.

Conversely, this chapter has also demonstrated that following the foundation laid down by *Humanae Vitae* and fortified by John Paul II’s *Familiaris Consortio*, the other four documents examined maintained to various degrees the inseparability of the procreative and the unitive meanings of marriage. None of the six post *Gaudium et Spes*’s documents supported the hierarchical structure of the ends of marriage as taught by the 1917 Code of Canon Law. Thus, it concluded that May and his supporters’ position that the magisterium has not departed from seeing procreation and the nurturing of children as the primary end of marriage is not only an inadequate interpretation of *Gaudium et Spes*, but also a neglect of the framework of *Gaudium et Spes*’s teaching, and the theological development that followed it as exemplified in the six documents analyzed in this chapter.

But to say that procreation is no longer the primary purpose of marriage does not suggest that this primacy has been transferred to conjugal love. A similar argument was also made in reference to the position of Mackin and his supporters’ who although correctly interpreted the *Gaudium et Spes*’s teaching as a departure from the traditional position, erred by maintaining that at the death of couples’ love for each other, that Christian marriage dis-integrates or dies.

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156 Grabowski, *Sex and Virtue*, 131.
The study has shown how this view is in conflict with the Church’s teaching concerning the indissolubility of Christian marriage and the current teaching concerning the ends of marriage. Finally, neither May nor Mackin’s positions can be used to support the Igbo emphasis on the procreation of male children as the primary purpose of marriage.

However, as the second chapter of this study chronicled, the Igbo understand the procreation of male children as the primary purpose of marriage primarily because of the *amaechila* mentality or syndrome. Also this belief in *amaechila* mentality is instrumental to the Igbo zero tolerance for infertility. But if as this study has demonstrated, Catholic teaching concerning the purposes of marriage does not support the prioritization or superiority of any of the meanings of marriage, the allocation of this supremacy to the male child(ren) as the Igbo do is in conflict with this teaching. The same is also true of the methods or ways (adultery, polygamy and sex selection) which Igbo culture allows for the solving of infertility problems or the lack of a male child in the case where a couple has only female children as the second chapter also observed.

But since the majority of the Igbo are currently Christians and predominately Catholics, it becomes urgent to find ways to assist Igbo Catholics to understand where the real meaning of Catholic Christian marriage lies without destroying their intention to keep their identity and core values that were the reason behind their emphasis on the male child as the primary purpose of marriage. In other words, if the Igbo’s main reason for seeing procreation as the primary purpose of marriage converge on the protection of family names, values, customs, economic security for parents, *et cetera*, is there no other way to achieve these values without putting a dichotomy between the procreative and the unitive purposes or meanings of marriage?
In the face of these conflicts and tensions, it becomes necessary to say that the Catholics in Igboland need to be re-catechized in light of the current teaching of the Catholic Church in reference to the meanings or purposes of marriage. Therefore, the next chapter will continue to analyze the central tensions and questions posed by the emphasis on male children as the primary purpose of marriage by arguing against the use of polygamy, adultery and MicroSort as methods of addressing infertility problems and/or the lack of a male child in light of the current Catholic teaching concerning the inseparability of the procreative and the unitive meanings of the conjugal act within marriage. It will also suggest alternative methods for Igbo Catholic couples to deal with their infertility problems that promote both the inseparability of the unitive and the procreative meanings as well as the implied equality of the two purposes of marriage and preserve the values for which the Igbo regard the male children as the primary purpose of marriage without creating a double standard of sexual morality among the Igbo. Finally, I will evaluate and conclude the chapter and the study.
CHAPTER EIGHT

INCULTURATION OF THE IGBO UNDERSTANDING OF THE PURPOSES OF MARRIAGE INTO THE CHRISTIAN IDEAL OF MARRIAGE

INTRODUCTION

The first chapter of this study among other things demonstrated how the male children especially the first male child (the Diopkala) of each family is the icon or symbol of authority to the extent that leadership both in family and at town levels in Igboland is entrenched around him. But since this male child must be the fruit of an approved form of marriage or arrangement, chapter two analyzed the institution of marriage as it was understood by the Igbo people of West Africa. In doing so, the study accentuated that although there are many forms of marriage; polygamy and monogamy are the prominent ones, with monogamy being the most widely practiced and favored form of marriage. In fact, a case can be made that presently all the forms of marriage in Igboland are necessary and useful to the extent they aid in the begetting of male children.

The second chapter also demonstrated that because the significance the Igbo attach to the male child is very profound, the Igbo sees the procreation of male children as the primary purpose of marriage. Thus, the Igbo see a marriage that has no male child as a failure and in need of help. Consequently, the Igbo culture not only has a zero tolerance for infertility, it also allows fertile couples who are not able to beget a male child to use other forms of marriage such as, but
not limited to, polygamy or adulterous practices to solve their inability to beget male children. The pressure that emanates from family and friends is such that some Igbo Catholics have even requested that sterility be made an impediment to Christian marriage. On a related note, since the advent of sex selective procedures such as MicroSort, some Igbo couples who are unable to beget male children on their own are replacing the culturally approved methods of addressing infertility problems (adultery and polygamy), with sex selective procedures to ensure that they beget a male child and the culture embraces it wholeheartedly.

In analyzing the Igbo understanding of the purposes of marriage, this study highlighted four key concepts that stood out as the motivating factors that are responsible for the Igbo emphasis on male children as the primary purpose of marriage. They are: The amaechila mentality, the belief in the interaction of the dead and the living, the religious conviction that God has blessed and mandated them to ‘increase and multiply’ in order to maintain their ethnic group, values and customs which is wedded to their belief that a child is both a blessing and a gift from God (Chi-omumu), and the security that the male children provide for their parents and families alive or dead. Among these four factors, the amachila mentality was noted as the primus inter pares.

In tracing the history of the Catholic teaching concerning the purposes of marriage, the study demonstrated that the Catholic teaching concerning the purposes of marriage has undergone significant development in the course of its history from the good of proles as the

1 See Okechchuku, Christian Marriage, 68. The case of Joe and Ann bears eloquent testimony to this claim.

2 MicroSort procedure is a reproductive method that sorts the male sperm prior to fertilization.

3 See Chapter two of this study.
primary purpose of marriage to an inseparable connection between the procreative and the unitive meanings of the conjugal act. Nevertheless, even when the tradition followed Augustine’s triad of goods (proles, fides and sacramentum) and maintained the good of proles as the primary and legitimate good or end of marriage, such primacy was not limited to the male child as the Igbo do, but to both male and female children. It also argued that Augustine’s three goods are interconnected with each other in spite of his referring to the good of proles as the primary and legitimate purpose of marriage. Consequently, the study accentuated that the Igbo may rely on neither Augustine nor the Catholic tradition for maintaining the supremacy of the male child over his female counterpart as the primary purpose of marriage.

This study also argued that the language of the primary and secondary ends of marriage in which the primacy of the end of proles which was explicitly taught by the 1917 Code of Canon Law was maintained in the Catholic tradition up until the Second Vatican Council Fathers’ teaching in Gaudium et Spes. Thus, while Gaudium et Spes established the framework for a repudiation of the hierarchical terminology of the primary and secondary ends, Humanae Vitae explicitly taught an inseparable connection which exists between the procreative and the unitive meanings of the conjugal act. Following Humanae Vitae, the traditional subordination of the secondary ends, mutual help and the allaying of concupiscence to the primary end, procreation finally disappeared. This most current position of the magisterial concerning the

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4 See chapter three of this study.

5 See chapter six of this study.

6 See Paul VI, Humanae Vitae, 12.
purposes of marriage further distances itself from the Igbo understanding of the purposes of marriage even more than the previous teaching did.

As it stands, neither the previous nor the present teaching can be used to justify the Igbo insisting on primacy of the male child as the primary purpose of marriage. Rather, the obsession for the male child as the primary purpose of marriage finds its root in the responsibilities that the culture assigns to the male child, the perpetuation of one’s ancestral lineage et cetera. As the study observed earlier, because of the *amaechila* mentality the Igbo culture allows certain practices and behaviors which are not only in conflict with the inseparability of the procreative and the unitive meanings of marriage, but which also expose the culture to a double standard of sexual morality. This is because, these methods also contradict core Igbo cultural values which they set-out to preserve. For example, promiscuous activity which is strongly condemned by the culture is tolerated and sometimes promoted for the sake of a male child. It is also doubtful whether it is only by having male children that Igbo ancestral lineage, identity, and ethnicity can be preserved.

But even if it is only through the male child that Igbo ancestral lineage, identity and customs are to be preserved, one wonders if there are no other way(s) to achieve them without jeopardizing the unitive and the procreative meanings of marriage. In other words, even if every Igbo couple wants to have a male child to maintain their family name *et cetera*, are there no moral and appropriate way(s) that would simultaneously achieve these goals and maintain the inseparability of the unitive and the procreative meanings of marriage? This is because while maintaining one’s family name, lineage, values, customs and religious convictions are indeed
very praiseworthy practices which every society should encourage its citizens to foster, in the case of the Igbo, they are achieved at a great cost.

Thus, this study will continue to show that both the exclusive view that understands the primary purpose of marriage as the male child and the methods the Igbo use to address infertility not only contradict the inseparability of the procreative and unitive meanings of marriage and the sacramentality of Christian marriage as taught by the magisterium, they also contradict some of the core Igbo cultural values around sexual morality. These practices are also incompatible with faith in the Judeo-Christian God. Since the study did not elaborate on the claim that adultery, polygamy and sex selective procedure like MicroSort put a dichotomy between the unitive and the procreative meanings of marriage, the first part of this chapter will critically analyze them. The second part will substantiate on the claim that these methods (adultery, polygamy and MicroSort) jeopardize some of the core Igbo values and encourage double standard of sexual morality among the Igbo. In doing this, it will not only suggest other ways which will simultaneously foster and promote the inseparability of the procreative and the unitive meanings of marriage and Igbo core values around sexual morality, but also propose the steps that needed to be taken in order to re-catechize Igbo Catholics on the true purposes or meanings of marriage. Finally, I will evaluate and conclude the chapter and the study.
8.1. A CRITIQUE OF THE CULTURALLY APPROVED METHODS OF ADDRESSING INFERTILITY AND/OR LACK OF MALE CHILDREN AMONG THE IGBO

8.1A. ADULTERY

The Old Testament condemned adultery which involves the having of sexual intercourse with another person other than one’s wife or husband as an evil against God.\(^7\) However, with the advent of Christ, the sin of adultery was no longer limited to having sexual intercourse with another person’s wife or husband; rather it was expanded to include looking at him or her with lustful intent or motive to engage in sexual intercourse with her or him.\(^8\) Christ’s validation of

\(^7\) The sin of adultery was punished severally by God irrespective of the culprit’s status in the society. For example when King David committed adultery with Bathsheba, Uriah’s wife, he was punished by God even though he repented and asked for forgiveness. See II Samuel 11: 1-26; 12: 1-25. There is plethora of texts in the Old Testament that condemned adultery in strong terms, but I will list just a few here: Proverbs 6:32; Jeremiah 29:23; Exodus 20:14; and Deuteronomy 22:22.

\(^8\) See Mathew 5: 27-28. See also Wilhelm Ernst, “Marriage as an Institution and the Contemporary Challenge to It,” in Contemporary Perspectives on Christian Marriage (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1984), 39-90. According to Christ, violation against the sin of adultery is punishable by throwing the culprit into Gehenna, that is, hell fire. However, since adultery committed in one’s heart (though sinful) does not lead to fecundity, for the purposes of this study, adultery as Igbo culture understands and allows it does not include the lustful looking at a person with the intent to perform sexual intercourse with him or her. Rather, it is the actual performance of sexual intercourse with another person other than one’s wife or husband to address his or her infertility problem or inability to beget a male child. This description better reflects the motive of some Igbo infertile couples who commit adultery because of their desire to beget a male child. This is because it captures even the sexual intercourse that was performed with unmarried persons and prostitutes which in some cases have resulted to the begetting of the desired male child. It is strictly on this circumstance that adultery is tolerated by Igbo culture. If one engages in adulterous behavior for other reasons, it is regarded as a grievous offence and depending on whom one commits adultery with and where, it can be punishable by performing some cleansing rituals to appease the gods of the land and/or expulsion of the culprit from the community. This practice resembles the post-exilic practice during which the sin of adultery was no longer punished by death penalty but by the exclusion of the adulterer from the community. See Proverbs 5:9-14. See also Anthony Phillips, Ancient Israel’s Criminal Law: A new Approach to the Decalogue (Oxford and New York: 1970), 28ff.
the sinfulness of adultery is within his teaching on the Sermon on the Mount. The Beatitude is the synopsis of Christ’s teaching concerning what He expects His disciples to do.\(^9\)

The Catholic Church has consistently condemned adultery as a sin against God and against the dignity of Christian marriage. In its most recent *Catechism*, the magisterium drawing from the biblical tradition listed and treated a deliberate and willful act of adultery as a mortal sin against God under the sixth commandment.\(^10\) According to the sixth commandment, God’s people were prohibited from engaging in a sexual intercourse with another person other than one’s wife or husband. Thus, the Lord said: “You shall not commit adultery.”\(^11\) In developing a theology of marriage that focused on the creation narrative as an act of God’s love for humanity and who in-turn expected humanity to love each other with a love that is fruitful and communitarian, the *Catechism* elucidated: “sexuality affects all aspects of the human person in the unity of soul and body.”\(^12\) Consequently, the *Catechism* understands the union of a man and a woman in marriage as a way of “imitating in the flesh the Creator’s generosity and fecundity…. 

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\(^9\) For more information concerning the implications of Christ’s teaching on the Beatitude as it relates to the call of discipleship see Grabowski, *Sex and Virtue*, 53-58. See also Martin, “Marriage in the New Testament Periods” in *Christian Marriage*, especially 61-69. St Paul also identified the sin of adultery, fornication and prostitution as sins that are capable of denying those who committed them from entering into the kingdom of God, See I Cor. 6: 9-10; Gal 5: 19-21; Rom 1: 24-32, 13:13; and Col 3: 8-10. Although those who accepted Christ’s message and followed him were originally identified as ‘The Twelve Apostles/Disciples’, the word disciple was later extended to include all Christians, that is, those who have been baptized in the name of Christ via the Trinitarian formula. For a comprehensive analysis of discipleship in the New Testament see Andre Feuillet, “Discipline,” in *Dictionary of Biblical Theology* 2\(^{nd}\) ed., ed. Xaveir Leon-Dufuor (New York: Seabury Press, 1973), 125-126; and Wolfgang Schrage, *The Ethics of the New Testament*, trans. David E. Green (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), 46-52.

\(^10\) *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2331-2336.


\(^12\) *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2332.
[making it possible for] all human generations to proceed from this union.”\textsuperscript{13} For this special and unique reason “a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh.”\textsuperscript{14}

It then follows that adultery which is engaging in a sexual intercourse with another person outside of the union between a husband and his wife is an adulteration of the ‘one flesh’ bond. Thus, adultery directly affects the good of\textit{ fides} which is necessary to unite body and soul and by that fact affects both the goods of\textit{ proles} and\textit{ sacramentum}. Seen through this lens, a case can be made that adultery is not only a sin against God, but by taking the sexual act outside of the union of a man and his wife, it is also against God’s intent for marriage as validated by Christ in the Sermon of the Mount and a sin against couple’s unity and shared fertility.\textsuperscript{15}

Adultery puts a dichotomy between the unitive and the procreative meanings of marriage. Martin supports this claim as he elucidates: “The flesh of my flesh and the expression one flesh: the union of a man and a woman realizes the unity of male and female ordained by God at the beginning.”\textsuperscript{16} Under this backdrop, it is logical to say that adultery causes harm to the complete and life-long mutual gift of a man’s body to his wife and vice-versa. It is the falsification of the one body, one flesh relationship and a rejection of the truth that is revealed in the “language of the body and the nuptial meaning of the body.”\textsuperscript{17} It also speaks a language of unconditional

\textsuperscript{13} \textit{The Catechism of the Catholic Church}, 2335.

\textsuperscript{14} Genesis, 2:24.

\textsuperscript{15} Matthew, 5:27.

\textsuperscript{16} Martin, “Marriage in the Old Testament and Intertestamental Periods” in \textit{Christian Marriage}, 35.

\textsuperscript{17} John Paul II, \textit{Man and Woman}, 152, 178-192.
fidelity and self-donation, which as the previous chapter argued is a reflection of Christ’s self-offering to the Church.\textsuperscript{18} Therefore, to engage in a sexual activity is to imply an unconditional and faithful gift of the self within the covenant of marriage. Elliot also rightly notes, “Adultery is a sin against the total and exclusive self-giving by attempting to impart that gift to another partner, outside of the bond, it falsifies the sign of one flesh.”\textsuperscript{19} Thus, to engage in an adulterous activity negates, falsifies and contradicts the true meaning of marriage and does not qualify as a true gift of oneself to the other in love.\textsuperscript{20}

In the same token, “respect for the unity of marriage and for the conjugal fidelity demands that the child be conceived within marriage; the bond existing between husband and wife accords the spouses in an objective and inalienable manner, the exclusive right to become mother and father solely through each other.”\textsuperscript{21} Therefore, adultery constitutes a violation of the reciprocal commitment of the spouses and “a grave lack in regard to that essential property of marriage which is its unity.”\textsuperscript{22} Elliot beautifully explicates the evil of adultery thusly:

The breaking of the sixth Commandment (adultery) is thus not only a sin against justice, a sin of deception, lust and infidelity to spouse and the family. It is a sin against the sacrament which signifies that faithful union between Christ and his Church, because it is a breaking up of the unity of the Mystical Body. Realized in the community of life and love, marriage as a lived sacrament is meant to be open

\textsuperscript{18} Cf. John Paul II, \textit{Familiaris Consortio}, 11.

\textsuperscript{19} Elliot, \textit{What God has Joined Together}, 160.

\textsuperscript{20} The falsification also applies to the case when the man later marries the woman. However, in this case, it at least provides the child the opportunity to be raised by his biological parents. The falsification is also applicable in a situation where the woman or man commits adultery with or without the permission of her husband or his wife.

\textsuperscript{21} \textit{Donum Vitae}, 2, 24, 25.

\textsuperscript{22} \textit{Donum Vitae}, 2, 25.
to the *agape* of the Bridegroom. In losing that *agape*, the adulterer has lost grace, rejecting the sacrificial truth of Christ, that love demands that otherness comes before self—always.\(^{23}\)

From the analysis so far, it is fair to say that to engage in adulterous intercourse for the sake of begetting a male child not only separates what God has joined together, the adulterer also breaks the covenantal relationship that exists between him or her spouse. Thus, the man or woman who commits adultery for the purposes of begetting a male child uses his or her partner as an object for utilitarian purposes.\(^{24}\) In doing so, the perpetrator finds in the body of the other, not a person to be loved and cherished, not a person to unite body and soul in total body-donation of mutual giving and receiving of each other, but simply a male-child producing machine for the perpetuation of his ancestral lineage. Adultery is also a rejection of the unifying character of the conjugal act.

Even St. Augustine who is the architect of the traditional primacy of the good of *proles* as the primary purpose of marriage also condemned adulterous acts for any reason. According to him, “in marriage, intercourse for the purpose of generation has no fault attached to it, but for the purpose of satisfying concupiscence, provided with a spouse because of the marriage fidelity, it is a venial sin; adultery or fornication however, is a mortal sin.\(^{25}\) Based on what has been said, it is obvious that adultery directly contradicts the good of *fides*. But if, as this study argued that

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\(^{25}\) *De Bono Conjugali*, 6.
Augustine’s three goods *proles*, *fides*, and *sacramentum* are interconnected to each other, then adultery not only contradicts the good of *fides*, but all of them.

The adulterer also risks committing a grave injustice against the child who is conceived through an adulterous activity. This is because the child would be denied the right of being conceived as a fruit of his parent’s shared fertility in an exclusive and respectful manner deserving of such act. The child who would be conceived through adulterous sexual intercourse has also been denied the right to be raised by his biological parents. This child may not even be able to know who his actual biological father or mother is for life.\(^{26}\) This injustice is done and tolerated among the Igbo in the name of wanting to protect one’s ancestral lineage and Igbo identity without considering the fate of the child. While denying someone the right to know his or her father may not sound like a severe injustice perhaps for some non-Igbo people, however, it is for an Igbo person a great injustice and deprivation because of the patrilineal character of Igbo society and family settings. The Igbo culture which promotes the right of every child to know his biological father and which ensures that male children inherit landed properties through their biological fathers contradicts this core value by promoting the begetting of a male child through adulterous activities.

On another related note, if the adulterous sexual activity led to the begetting of a female child, the life of this female child risks being in a great danger. She would either be abandoned by her biological father (because he does not need another girl in his house), or the woman

\(^{26}\) *Donum Vitae* makes similar argument while condemning heterologous artificial fertilization as not being “conformable to the objective and inalienable properties of marriage or respectful of the rights of the child and the spouses” (*Donum Vitae*, 25).
would be left to decide her fate. Depending on the woman’s readiness or not to nurse a baby, she may decide either to abandon the child to die or to nurse a baby when she is not prepared to do so.27 And even if she decides to nurse her girl, the child would be referred to as an illegitimate child; a concept which the Igbo culture abhors.28 Therefore, in allowing adulterous behaviors to be used to address the inability of couples to beget a male, the Igbo culture also contradicts two of its prime values; the sacredness of life from conception to death and promiscuous behaviors. In doing so, the culture’s high sense of sexual morality is significantly compromised.

Against this backdrop, one can argue that to use the act of adultery which is regarded as evil by both the Catholic tradition and the Igbo culture, but tolerated by the later for the purposes of begetting a (male) child not only puts a dichotomy between the unitive and procreative meanings of the conjugal act, it also destroys the very good it sets out to achieve, the good of *proles*. This is because according to Augustine, the good of *proles* is not limited to the begetting of children, but also includes raising them up in the most Christian manner.29 This practice also allocates an unprecedented importance to Igbo male children to the detriment of their female siblings and encourages a double standard of sexual morality among the Igbo.

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27 The repeated cases of babies (dead or alive) who are left on the streets by their biological parents bear eloquent testimony to this claim. The good news however, is that there are different Religious Orders in Nigeria who have taken it as their Apostolate to take care of such mothers and their babies. At the discretion of her mother, such a baby is made available for adoption.

28 By categorizing a child as “illegitimate,” the culture is indirectly informing this child that he does not belong to the family or village where he being raised. So when he or she reaches the marrying age, he or she would be determined to look for his or her biological family where the marriage ceremonies and rituals are performed. In the case of the man, it is in the family of his biological father that he has the right of inheritance. In the unfortunate situation that such a biological father could not be found, the illegitimate child gets whatever his uncles are willing to give him. Simply put, he is at the mercy of his uncles.

No wonder Archbishop Obiefula notes with regret not only on the double standard of sexual morality which such a practice encourages but also on the moral decay it ferments in Igboland.

In the Igbo moral and social life the question of offspring is of paramount importance. Its priority is such that it tends to tune down other moral demands. No matter what happened or what event surrounds the bearing of a child – was it through adultery, was it by concubinage, was it by one whose husband has died—all these may and are sometimes reprehensible but in the face of the fact that a child is forthcoming or is already born we must tune down our moral sensitiveness, because nothing is like offspring.30

Succinctly put, the practice of using adulterous behavior as a method to address infertility or the lack of a male child which the Igbo culture allows neither promotes the inseparability of the unitive and the procreative meanings of the conjugal act nor Igbo moral values concerning sexuality.

While the desire to have a male child who will perpetuate one’s family lineage, provide economic and social security to one’s parents, et cetera, are all noble causes, these benefits are not commensurate to the harm that the adulterous activity does to the sacramentality of Christian marriage which distinctively, exclusive, permanent, unitive and procreative. This is because the human conjugal act is not only an act of giving and receiving of each other’s body-donation, this gift must flow within couple’s shared fertility and married love. The child conceived must be the fruit of his parents’ shared fertility. He cannot be desired or conceived outside of this shared love which is part and parcel of the creation of humanity and the establishment of the ideal marriage.

The above claims have the support of *Donum Vitae* thusly: “The generation of a child must be the fruit of that mutual giving which is realized in the conjugal act wherein the spouses cooperate as servants and not as masters in the work of the Creator who is love.”31 For this reason, the moral relevance of the inseparable connection between and unitive and procreative meanings of the conjugal act demands that “the procreation of a human person be brought about as the fruit of the conjugal act specific to the love between spouses.”32 Adulterous activity does not respect this rule and cannot be justified because one wants to maintain his ancestral lineage.

It would also seem that in trying to beget male children at all costs, the Catholic couple who engages in this act of promiscuity is claiming to be the giver of the gift of life rather than its appropriate receiver. Such altitude is contrary to another Igbo cultural and religious belief which sees a child as a blessing and a gift from the God of fertility (the *Chi-omumu*) as chronicled in chapter two. If indeed a child is a gift from God, it is the prerogative of the giver of the gift to decide who, how and when to give a child of a particular sex to whomsoever He wishes. If Igbo Catholic couples truly believe that a child is a gift from God and that God knows what is best for them, then the absence of the gift of a child in the case of total sterility or the gift of only the female children should be received with utmost gratitude to the giver of the gift, God. Therefore, to beget male children through adulterous activity contradicts this Igbo cultural and religious conviction that a child is a gift from God which also is a Catholic belief.

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31 *Donum Vitae*, 4, 27. See also *Gaudium et Spes*, 50, 51.
32 *Donum Vitae*, 4, 29.
From what has been said, it is clear that there is no intention that would justify the use of adultery as a means to address couple’s inability to beget male a child. This is because in the evaluation of human acts, a good intention alone does not make an intrinsically evil act to be a good act. Rather as Donum Vitae rightly argues, “the love between spouses who long to obviate a sterility which cannot be overcome in any other way constitutes understandable motivations, but subjectively good intentions do not render or make a morally bad action like adultery good because the adulterer does not only losses spiritual gain but he or she loses grace.”

In the same token, the sacramentality of Christian marriage avails it the singular honor of conferring God’s grace, which as the study has shown needs the assent of faith to be effective and fruitful. Thus, a case can be made that the grace which the sacrament of matrimony confers on Igbo couples who commit adultery for the purpose of begetting a male child is compromised. For it is difficult for this grace to be active perhaps without at the time injecting a different kind of behavior that will spur Igbo Catholic couples to live their marital lives in a manner that promote the unitive and the procreative meanings of marriage and preserve the Igbo moral values around sexuality.

The above claim finds support in the view of Grabowski who, reflecting on the position of Gilbert Meilander concerning the usefulness of God’s grace notes that grace is not just for the forgiveness of sins, but also “the power to live differently.”

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34 See Gilbert Meilander, Faith and Faithfulness: Basic Themes in Christian Ethics (South Bend, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1991), 74-84. See also Grabowski, Sex and Virtue, 63.
couples who find themselves in the unfortunate situation of having only female children, rather than engage in adulterous intercourse need to activate the grace of the sacrament and act differently. That is, they need to implement the admonition of the Second Vatican Fathers by courageously opening themselves to the grace of God to assist them to live their married life chastely. For according to the Council Fathers, “outstanding courage is required for the constant fulfillment of the duties of the Christian calling: Spouses, therefore, will need grace for leading a holy life: they will eagerly practice a love that is firm [with or without male children] generous, and prompt to sacrifice and will ask for it in their prayers.”

Also, in the words of Aquinas, it is not only good intention that determines a righteous act, but also the uprightness of the will. Aquinas argues, “it often happens that a man acts with a good intention, but without spiritual gain, because he lacks a good will.” The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* also condemns certain actions and behaviors that perverse the will as evil in noting that “there are certain specific kinds of behavior that are always wrong to choose, because choosing them involves a disorder of the will that is, a moral evil.” The letter to the Romans attests to this moral rule in condemning those who propose to do evil so that good may come out

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35 *Gaudium et Spes*, 49. See also 47 where the Council Fathers condemned polygamy alongside unlawful contraceptive practices. While polygamy is contrary to the meaning of marriage in the Catholic tradition, I think that the Council Fathers made an over-statement in equating polygamy with free love and the plague of divorce. In fact, as I hope to show, in most situations in Igboland where the man had to marry another woman because of an infertility problem or his inability to beget a male child through his first wife, polygamy protects the woman from physical divorce. This is another area where I think that the Catholic teaching in reference to marriage is open to the charge of being predominately influenced by western culture.


37 *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1761.
of it. 38 While good intentions or a particular circumstance can diminish the evilness of intrinsically evil acts, they cannot remove them. Rather, “they remain irremediably evil acts per se and in themselves they are not capable of being ordered to God and to the good of the person.” 39 Augustine also condemns doing an evil act for good intention thusly: “theft, fornication, [adultery] who would dare affirm that by doing them for good motives (causis bonis), they would no longer be sins, or is even more absurd, that they would be sins that are justified?” 40

Thus, to intend directly something which of its very nature contradicts the moral order, and which must therefore be judged unworthy of man, even though the intention is to protect or promote the welfare of an individual, family or the society in general is morally unacceptable. 41 Therefore, circumstances or good intentions can never transform an act intrinsically evil by virtue of its object into an act subjectively good or defensible as a choice simply because one’s culture or society allows it. 42 Based on what has been said so far, it is perhaps fair to say that the Igbo couple who uses adultery as a means to address their inability to beget a male child for the good reasons listed above not only ricks compromising God’s grace, but the couple also falls short of good will. That is, if one commits adultery in order to beget a male child who will

38 Romans 3:8.

39 John Paul II, Veritatis Splendor, 78.

40 Augustine, Contra Mendacium, VII, 18. PL 40 528. CF. Aquinas, Quaestiones Quodlibetales, IX. Q. 7 a. 2; Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1753-1755; and John Paul II, Veritatis Splendor, 78.

41 See John Paul II, Veritatis Splendor, 78. See Paul VI, Humanae Vitae, 14.

42 John Paul II, Veritatis Splendor, 78.
maintain his family lineage and provide for his needs at old age, even though his intention is
good, the uprightness of the will is lacking. Therefore, no evil done with good intention can be
excursed.

Reflecting on this teaching John Paul II explains that, “the reason why a good intention is
not itself sufficient, but a correct choice of actions is also needed, is that the human act depends
on its object, whether that object is capable or not of being ordered to God, to the one who alone
is good and thus brings about the perfection of the person.”

The human person who performs
an act is created in the image and likeness of God and has as his final goal the beatific vision that
is, happiness with God. He pursues this goal through his or her actions. But for one’s actions to
accomplish this single goal, his or her activities must reflect the image and love of God who
wished humanity to reciprocate God’s love in its fullness. The act of adultery contradicts the
good of the human person who is made in the image of God and enjoined to enter into a lasting,
exclusive and permanent relationship of two but one flesh. Adultery puts a dichotomy between
this sacred union and is listed as one of the (intrinsically) evil acts condemned in the scriptures
and maintained by the magisterium.

Rather than justify or focus on the good intention of those who commit adultery because
it was not motivated by lust but by a desire to save his or her marriage, maintain family lineage
and provide of economic security, the conversion to Christianity and the demands of discipleship
trump over all these earthly benefits. This is because even the old dispensation that prioritized

43 John Paul II, Veritatis Splendor, 78.

44 John Paul II, Veritatis Splendor, 78.
children since the blessings of God were to come to his people through the propagation of human race, it did not permit or excuse adultery. But more so, with Christ’s death and resurrection, salvation or God’s blessings would be determined by the kind of life a person lived and not by the number of children (male or female) he begot. Catholic couples who have put on a new creation in Christ should be ambassadors of Christ even in their married life. Thus, what matters in the new dispensation is the rebirth in Christ. This is because as the study argued in the previous chapters, Christian marriage reflects the union between Christ and his Church which is salvific in character. Christ never abandons His bride the Church for whatsoever reason. The Catholic Igbo couples should imitate Christ and shun adultery even if Igbo culture tolerates it.

From the analysis so far, it is obvious that in addition to being a sin against God, adultery puts a dichotomy between the procreative and the unitive meanings of marriage. It also jeopardizes the Igbo’s high sense of sexuality morality even as it assists in the begetting of a male child. In doing so, it encourages a double standard of sexual morality among the Igbo. Thus, it is clear that the evilness imbedded in the adulterous activity outweighs whatever good, if any, it might accomplish. This problem becomes more troubling when a case can be made that the values which are instrumental for the Igbo understanding of male children as the primary purpose of marriage can be accomplished through other means that neither jeopardize the procreative and the unitive meanings of the conjugal act nor create a double standard of sexual morality.

However, before suggesting these other means, this study will now examine another practice or act which the Igbo culture allows as a means to address couple’s inability to beget a
male child, polygamy. If adultery directly contradicts the good of *fides* and is regarded as a sin by almost every society, secular or religious, the same cannot be said of polygamy. This is because in most African societies polygamy is regarded as an approved form of marriage second to monogamy.\(^{45}\) Does polygamy contradict the unitive and the procreative meanings of marriage? In other words, in what does the immorality or evilness of polygamy subsists?

### 8.1B. POLYGAMY

As indicated in the third chapter of this study polygamy was permitted in the Old Testament.\(^{46}\) In defense of this approval, the Church Fathers argued that polygamy was allowed in the Old Testament because of the necessity of children to maintain the continued existence of

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\(^{45}\) Polygamy is a widely accepted form of marriage in some African countries for a variety of reasons ranging from but not limited to, social-economic and cultural needs. However, in this section, this study will focus on polygamy as a means to address infertility problem and/or couples’ inability to beget a male child. It suffices to mention that polygamy should not be mistaken with the practice in which a brother begets children for his brother or relative who died without living an heir. In this case, the brother did not marry his brother’s wife, he only impregnates his brother’s wife while being married to or not to another woman which would seem to be a form of adultery. Granted that it raises a complex moral problem for Christians, but for the Igbo who practice this, it is considered neither as polygamy, nor a question of sexual relations outside marriage (adultery). In light of this, I agree with Benezeri Kisembo, Laurenti Magesa and Aylward Shorter, that this kind of relationship has no western or Christian equivalent. According to them, “it is injustice to call it marriage, just as it is unjust to call it adultery or concubinage” (Benezeri Kisembo, Laurenti Magesa and Aylward Shorter, *African Christian Marriage* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1977), 63. Rather as Kirwen defines it, “it is a marital adjustment in a continuing marriage in which a brother-in-law substitutes temporarily for a deceased legal husband” (Kirwen Michael “The Christian Prohibition of the African Leviratic Custom.” PH. D dissertation, (The University of Toronto, Canada, 1974), 79 as cited by Kisembo, Magesa and Shorter, *African Christian Marriage*, 64. For more information concerning polygamy in Africa see Kisembo, Magesa and Shorter, *African Christian Marriage*, 63-95.

\(^{46}\) See Martin’s succinct treatment of the different kind of polygamous marriages in the Old Testament. According to him, although polygamy was allowed, it was not the most famous form of marriage among the Israelites. Rather monogamy was the approved form of marriage in Israel. See Martin, “Marriage in the Old Testament and Intertestamental Periods” in *Christian Marriage*, 17-18. Also Grabowski makes the case that there were gradual developments of biblical thoughts which showed evidence of constant critique of polygamy through genealogies and other means to the extent that by the time of King Samuel, it was no longer popular. Rather, Polygamy was used by royal people. See Grabowski, *Sex and Virtue*, 23-70.
human race. According to Augustine, the Patriarchs were motivated to engage in polygamous marriages not by lust but solely by the desire ‘to increase and multiply.’ He elucidated:

It is made a matter of grave reproach to Isaac’s son Jacob that he had four wives; but a general consideration will clear him of all blame. When polygamy was a common custom, it was no crime; it ranks as a crime now because it is no longer customary. We must distinguish between offences against nature, offences against common custom, offences against positive law... If you enquire as to natural law, he too has wives not from fleshly lust, but in order that he might have offspring; If as to custom, it was a general practice at that time and in those parts; If as to positive law, there was none that prohibited it.

Augustine can be construed as saying that polygamy that was motivated by the customary law for the primary purpose of procreation was not condemned. Therefore, polygamy is immoral if it is motivated by lust, if it is contrary to the customs of the people and/or if it is prohibited by positive law. A strict interpretation of Augustine’s teaching here can be used to defend the Igbo use of polygamy as a method of maintaining ancestral lineage and to protect Igbo identity and customs. This is because polygamy is approved by Igbo customary law. Although in the past, the practice of polygamy in Igboland was motivated by the desire to have

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48 Augustine, Contra Faustum Manich, lib xxi, c 47, PL. 42. 428. See also De Doctrina Christiana, lib iii, c.12. PL. 34, 73; and De Civitate Dei, lib xvi, c. 38, PL. 41. 517.

49 See Augustine, De Bono Conjugalii, 5, 15-22.

50 As I intend to show later, although Augustine was aware of the biblical account of the institution of marriage which was later restored by Christ’s teaching in the Gospel of Mathew, he did not reference this text in basing his argument on what is permitted by law whether custom or positive.

51 However, Aquinas sees polygamy as contrary to the precepts of the natural law.

52 See Nwabude, Preparation for marriage and family life, 1-180; and Iwuji, Marriage Form in Nigeria, 12-21.
children for prestigious purposes, in the recent years, the inability of (Catholic) couples to beget a male child has become one of the leading causes of polygamous marriages.⁵³

Some of these Igbo Catholics refer to the approval of polygamy in the Old Testament as well as the absence of an explicit condemnation of polygamy in the New Testament (except by reference) as scriptural support for the use of polygamy for the purposes of begetting male children who will perpetuate family lineage and maintain Igbo customs.⁵⁴ A case can be made that although there was no explicit approval of polygamy in the New Testament, but more than this, things changed with the coming of Christ.⁵⁵ Hence, for the Catholic tradition, polygamy is not only incompatible with faith in Judeo-Christian God; it is also a contradiction to the true meanings of marriage.⁵⁶ In developing a theology of Christian marriage that was influenced by

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⁵³ In the past wives and children were seen as a sign of affluence among the Igbo and only few men could afford it. See Akalonu, Procreation in Igbo Marriage, 10-11. Though the culture still approves polygamy, it is no longer a sign of wealth and prestige among the Igbo. Rather, it is predominately used to address infertility or lack of a male child within a marriage. This claim explains why most Igbo Catholic families would be reluctant to encourage or escort their son in the negotiation and celebration of a second marriage when his first wife had begotten male children. In this circumstance, most Igbo Catholics, motivated by the Catholic support for monogamous marriages, would remind the person that there was no need to marry a second wife. Therefore, misunderstanding between couples and even bad behaviors of Igbo wives, including adulterous activities, are least in the list of things that would support for polygamous marriage among Igbo Catholics. But once it is a question of a male child, all religious, moral and cultural rules fall apart. See, Arinze, Polygamy and Childlessness,” APER 23, (1983), 98.

⁵⁴ I have encountered these arguments in my personal counselling sessions with some infertile Igbo Catholic men who were considering marrying a second wife because their first wives did not beget a male child for them. Also because they lacked the knowledge that a woman gives birth to the gender of a child depending on whether the man injects either an X or Y bearing sperm, some of them blame their wives for their inability to beget a male child. They supported their claim by giving examples of different occasion where the marrying of a second wife has resulted to the begetting of a child or children.


⁵⁶ While it is perhaps not the job of the Catholic Church or the West to place judgment or to determine for any society or culture what form(s) of marriage that is good or better for them, Eugene Hillman was right to note that the Catholic Church can at least legislate for its members the form of marriage that she approves based on her understanding of the meanings or purposes of marriage. See Hillman Eugene, Polygamy Reconsidered (New York: 1975), 206. Therefore, it is not the intention of this study to justify or condemn polygamy as it is practiced in most African countries by those who do not profess faith in the Judeo-Christian God for such is beyond the scope of this
the teaching of Christ in the New Testament the Patristic Fathers argued that with Christ, monogamous marriage was understood as the approved form of marriage because Christ restored marriage to a one-man one-woman relationship as God intended it during the establishment of marriage in the book of Genesis.\textsuperscript{57}

The scholastic theologians spearheaded by Aquinas also echoed the teaching of the Fathers, but in a more nuanced manner. Using the theory of the primary and secondary precepts of the natural law, Aquinas like Augustine referred to the purposes of marriage as \textit{proles}, \textit{fides} and \textit{sacramentum}. However, among these three goods, Aquinas notes that \textit{sacramentum} is peculiar to Christians because it is the symbolic representation of the union between Christ and his Church. He also contends that although polygamy did not contradict the first, \textit{proles}, but it posed a great impediment to \textit{fides}, and most importantly, it immensely destroys the sacramental symbolism of marriage.\textsuperscript{58} Aquinas also sees polygamy as contrary to the precepts of natural law.\textsuperscript{59}

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\textsuperscript{57} This is the position of Tertullian, Jerome, Chrysostom, Augustine, and Theodoret and Clement of Alexandria. See, Tertullian, \textit{Ad Uxorem}, c, 2 (\textit{PL}. 1. 1277); Clement, \textit{Stromata}, 12. (\textit{PG}. 8. 1184); Chrysostom, \textit{Homily}, 56, in \textit{Genesis}, n, 3 (\textit{PG}. 54, 489); Jerome, \textit{Ep.} 69, \textit{ad Ocean}, n. 5 (\textit{PL}. 22, 657) Theodoret, q 67, in Gen, \textit{Heret. Fab. Compendium}, lib v, c. 25 (\textit{PG}. 80. 175; 83. 537), all citations are as referenced by Joyce, \textit{Christian Marriage}, 576.

\textsuperscript{58} See Aquinas, \textit{Sentences}, iv, d. xxxiii, q. 1, art. 1.; and \textit{Supra} 6, 27 as referenced by Joyce, \textit{Christian Marriage} 576. As I indicate earlier, Aquinas’s claim that polygamy does not contradict the good of \textit{proles} will benefit from some fine-tuning based on the insights from the analysis of Augustine’s triad of goods, the three goods are interconnected to one another.

\textsuperscript{59} Aquinas, \textit{ST}. Suppl. q. 65, a. 1 and 2.
Following the scholastic position, the Council of Trent emphatically condemned polygamous marriages thusly: "if anyone shall say that it is lawful for a Christian to have more wives than one, and that this is not forbidden by any divine law, let him be anathema." A case can also be made that the Council Fathers’ condemnation of polygamy is supported by the Genesis account of the creation of humanity and the establishment of the ideal marriage. For according to the book of Genesis, man and woman were created in the image and likeness of God and were instructed to establish a union of love whereby the two, and not three or more, become “one flesh.”

The Second Vatican Council Fathers maintained the Council of Trent’s condemnation of polygamy and considered polygamy as a sin and an evil equal to slavery and adultery. In reference to the Second Vatican Council’s document Gaudium et Spes, the Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches, ‘the unity of marriage distinctly recognized by our Lord, is made clear in the equal personal dignity which must be accorded to man and wife in mutual and unreserved affection.’ Polygamy is contrary to conjugal love which is undivided and exclusive.” This is because as Joyce rightly notes “polygamy is gravely detrimental to the reciprocal attachment

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60 Section 24th Canon II, in The Canon and Decree of the Sacred and Ecumenical Council of Trent. Edited and translated by J. Waterworth (London: Dolman, 1848), 144. See also Joyce, Christian Marriage, 582.

61 Genesis, 2:24.

62 Gaudium et Spes, 49.

63 The Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1645. See also Gaudium et Spes, 49.
which should be found in marriage. The wife will assuredly not give her whole heart to a husband who offers her but a share in his divided affection.”

From what has been said so far, one can make the case that a polygamous person is living a life of deceit. He or she is a liar and lacks true love. He sleeps with one woman today and tells her that she is the one he loves, and the next day, he sleeps with the other and tells her the same. Therefore, I disagree with Joyce who argues that a polygamist is like the man who engages in adulterous activity simply because he can still take proper care of his children through each of his wives and sees that as satisfying the procreative meaning of marriage. On the contrary, both adultery and polygamy contradict the procreative and the unitive meanings of marriage since the good of proles is neither limited to the physical begetting nor the provision of the children’s needs, but also their nurturing and education in the most Christian manner.

Also when a man marries a second wife in Igboland for the specific purpose of addressing his inability to beget a male child, it is beyond doubt that the motivating factor for such a marriage is not love, but the male child. Therefore, I disagree with Kisembo, Magesa, and Shorter, who noted: “Polygamy for the desire for [male] children is founded on the mutual


68 Since a girl who marries a man even in the case of monogamous marriage believes that she is coming to beget male children for her husband, it remains an open question whether a true Christian marriage is possible in Igboland. This is because according to the Catholic teaching, any existing coercion or force before marriage that acted as a motivating factor for marriage is referred to as a diriment impediment and it invalidates Christian marriage. See *The 1983 Code of Canon Law*, 1103. See also Atado, *African Marriage Customs*, 51-60. The justification of this claim is beyond the scope of this present study, but it is worthy of noting and qualifies as a topic for further study.
attraction between a man and a woman and that it is essentially a loving relationship.”

They also erred by maintaining that polygamous marriages are indissoluble, sacramental and an effective sign of God’s covenantal love with Israel. On the contrary, what might be said is that most polygamous marriages in Africa and in Igboland have the potentiality of being a permanent relationship but this does not make it a sign of God’s covenant love as they claimed.

In fact, Africans in general, and the Igbo in particular, do not believe that a marriage cannot be dissolved because it represented God’s covenant with Israel or because it reflected Christ’s union with his bride the Church. Rather, the two factors that are instrumental for the reduced number of divorce cases in Africa, but more so among the Igbo, are the patrilineal and the communitarian character of marriages in Igboland. Therefore, far from being a relationship that reflects God covenant with Israel, or one that promotes the unitive meaning of marriage, polygamy destroys the permanent and unbreakable relationship and puts a dichotomy between the unitive and the procreative meanings of marriage.

To see a marriage that has no male child to show for it as a failure, defective or a curse is to miss the whole truth about Christian marriage. On the contrary, “the truly defective marriage is one in which true love is lacking, a marriage which the spouses live for themselves and not for each other.”

Blum also hits the nail on the head in noting that "childless couples [or couples with no male children] whose love is not deep enough to sustain the union despite the lack of

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[male] children lack something important, if not essential to their union." To engage in a polygamous marriage may have helped a couple to beget a male child, but it did so with so great a price. This is because, if as the study chronicled that Augustine’s goods of proles, fides and sacramentum are interconnected to each other, and the magisterium currently teaches that the procreative and the unitive meanings of the conjugal act and the implied equality of the two purposes of marriage are inseparable, then polygamy also undermines the very good or end (proles) which its sets out to promote.

It is fair to say that instead of engaging in polygamous marriages in the unfortunate situation of sterility and/or inability of a couple to beget a male child, Igbo Catholic couples should adhere to the words of Pope John Paul II who advised them thusly: "I know that in your country the childless couple bears a heavy cross, one that has to be born with courage all through life. To couples who cannot have [male] children of their own I say you are no less loved by God; your love for each other is complete and fruitful when it is open to others, to the needs of the apostolate, to the needs of the world." A case can be made that Kisembo, Magesa, and Shorter reflected the mind of Pope John Paul II in observing that “a childless marriage or marriages lacking [male] children can truly be a sign of authentic married love. It can be a sign of a value of suffering according to the Christian economy.”

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72 Blum, Monogamy Reconsidered, 122.


74 Benezeri Kisembo, Laurenti Magesa and Aylward Shorter, African Christian Marriage, 82.
In view of the teaching of Pope John Paul II and Kisembo, Shorter, and Magesa it is fair to say that Igbo Catholic spouses who accept the sufferings and the humiliations that are associated with inability to beget a male child or sterility in Igboland or any other culture with a similar practice are bearing witness to what true marriage represents. Polygamy contradicts faith in Judeo-Christian God and Igbo Catholic couples should not seek a solution for their sterility or inability to beget male children by engaging in polygamous marriages even if Igbo culture allows it. This is because conversion to Christianity trumps all cultural practices that are in opposition to the demands of Christian faith and natural law. Consequently, I disagree with Hastings who encouraged Christians to tolerate polygamy but minimize its increase by promoting the superior and ideal form of marriage which is monogamy. Such a statement encourages the primacy of the procreative meaning over the unitive meaning of marriage and its twisted form by the Igbo who allocates such primacy to the male children. On the contrary, marriage as this study has shown is a partnership of love and life whose two meanings cannot be separated from each other.

From what has been said so far, it is clear that Christian love; the selfless living for the other is the core of Christian marriage. An Igbo Christian spouse that remains faithful to his or her spouse despite the lack of a male child or in the face the problem of sterility gives testimony to this selfless and sacrificial love that is the hallmark of Christian marriage as epitomized in the

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75 The strong resilience which Joe showed against the pressure that came from his family and friends asking him to marry a second wife because Ann his first and wedded wife did not have a child to show for the marriage bear eloquent testimony to his claim. For more information concerning this view see chapter three of this study.

incarnation, death and resurrection of Christ. In being faithful to each other and in keeping to the demands of their marital vows in such a situation, the couple bears testimony and witness to Christ’s love and suffering. In doing so, they are saying that their love for one another is not determined by the procreative meaning of marriage or on what each person is able to produce. Rather, their union truly reflects the union that exists between Christ and his bride the Church.

Consequently, Igbo Catholics should engage in monogamous marriage as the only form which reflects the union between Christ and His bride the Church, and maintains the procreative and unitive meanings of marriage with or without children. Polygamy not only attacks the good of fides, it affects marriage in its totality. Therefore, Aquinas’s claim that polygamy does not contradict the good of proles is not nuanced enough. On the contrary, by its direct attack on fides, polygamy affects the three goods: proles, fides and sacramentum since they are interconnected to each other. This claim is further supported by the current teaching of the Catholic Church in reference to the purposes of marriage. Rather than refer to the purposes of marriage in the language of the primary and the secondary ends with its associated subordination, the magisterium now speaks of the inseparability of the procreative and the unitive meanings of the conjugal act. Therefore, like adultery, polygamy is neither compatible with Christianity nor with the inseparability of the procreative and the unitive meanings of the conjugal act.

While this teaching is slowly gaining the support of some Igbo Catholics, including infertile couples, some of them are turning to reproductive technologies like sex selective procedure MicroSort, to address their inability to beget male children and the Igbo culture is at
peace with it. These Igbo couples argue that MicroSort neither involves the sin of adultery, nor the life of deceit that is associated with polygamy, but a medical solution to their inability to beget a male child. Does this claim find support in magisterial documents? Does sex selective procedure promote the procreative and the unitive meanings of marriage? To address these and other related questions, the next section of this chapter will analyze sex selective procedure, MicroSort with the primary goal of showing whether it promotes or jeopardizes the inseparability and the equality of the unitive and the procreative meanings of marriage.

8.1C. SEX SELECTION

MicroSort procedure is a reproductive method that sorts the male sperm prior to fertilization. According to John Mcmillian, with the help of MicroSort couples have a 90% chance of getting a female child and a 73% chance of getting a male child by artificially inseminating into the woman’s womb X-bearing sperm or Y-bearing sperm. The 1983 Code of

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77 See Okechukwu, Christian Marriage, 28-45.

78 McMillian John, “Sex Selection in the United Kingdom” in Hastings Centre Report, vol. 32, no. 1, January-February 2002, 28. There are many scholars who support and those who oppose sex selective procedure as an ethical and morally acceptable form of reproduction. These scholars present both consequential and non-consequential arguments in support of sex selection which are not directly related to the reasons why some Igbo infertile couples use it except by inference. However, it is not the intention of this study in this section to engage in an analysis of these scholars’ arguments either in support or against sex selective procedure like MicroSort except where such arguments help to advance the subject matter of this study. That is, where it helps in showing whether MicroSort for the primary purpose of selecting a male child supports or opposes the procreative and the unitive meanings of marriage as taught by the magisterium. For the arguments of scholars who support sex selective procedure such as MicroSort see Edgar Dahl, “Sex Selection Technologies Should be Left to Parental Choice,” in Reproductive Technologies (New York: Thomson and Gale, 2007), 129-138; John Robertson, Sex Selection: Final Word from the ASRM Ethics Committee on the Use of PGD,” in Hastings Center Report, vol. 32, no.2, March – April 2002, 6; and Mary Anne Warren, Gendercide: The Implication of Sex Selection (New Jersey: Rowman & Allanheld
Canon law notes that fertilization is licitly sought when it resulted from a “conjugal act which is per se suitable for the generation of children to which marriage is ordered by its nature and by which the spouses become one flesh.” Therefore, from a moral point of view, “procreation is deprived of its proper perfection when it is not desired [or realized] as the fruit of a conjugal act that is to say, of the specific act of the spouses’ union.” This is because the marital act does not only aims to accomplish the generation of a new life, rather in performing the conjugal act, “spouses mutually express their personal love in the ‘language of the body,’ which clearly involves both spousal meaning and parental ones.”

In the conjugal act, the couple mutually expresses their self-gift while at the same time are open to the gift of life. It is an act that is inseparably corporal and spiritual. According to Gaudium et Spes, “the actions within marriage by which the couple are united intimately and chastely are noble and worthy ones. Expressed in a manner which is truly human, these actions signify and promote that mutual self-giving by which spouses enrich each other with a joyful and

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79 Code of Canon Law, 1061. According to this canon, the conjugal act is that by which the marriage is consummated if the couple have performed [it] between themselves in a human manner.” See also Donum Vitae, 4, 27.

80 Donum Vitae, 4, 27.

81 Donum Vitae, 4, 28. See John Paul II, Man and Woman He Created Them, 185-186.

82 Donum Vitae, 4, 28.
thankful will.” Sex selective procedure like MicroSort neither promotes such mutual self-giving and receiving of each other’s body nor respect for their shared fertility even when it succeeds in assisting the couples in the begetting of a male child.

Sex selective procedures also separate the unitive from the procreative meanings of marriage and threatens the “I-thou” relationship between spouses. It promotes the idea that couples are masters of creation rather than co-creators with God. Thus, while pre-selecting the sex of one’s child may have assisted the couple in accomplishing the procreative meaning of marriage, it does so to the detriment of the unitive meaning by putting a dichotomy between the procreation of a child and the conjugal act. Such an act contradicts Paul VI’s teaching concerning the “inseparable connection, established by God which man on his own initiative may not break between the unitive significance and the procreative significance, which are both inherent to the marriage act.”

There is no doubt that to bear children is an important task for couples, but the meaning of marriage does not rely or depend on children, let alone children of a particular sex. MicroSort procedure achieves the conception of this desired male child outside of the conjugal act of the couple which is the deepest expression of couple’s intimacy. While it is true that the conjugal act is not the only way that couples express their love and share their intimacy, surely, it is the most powerful and intimate expression of their shared fertility. This claim finds support in Hildebrand’s apportioning of marriage with an intrinsic meaning and value as the deepest and

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83 Gaudium et Spes, 49.

84 Paul VI, Humanae Vitae, 12.
closest love union. This intrinsic value and meaning are superabundantly accomplished through the conjugal act of the couples. But the quest to have a child of a desired sex through MicorSort procedure separates this inseparable and superabundant connection between procreation and the conjugal act.

John Paul II also refers to fecundity as “the fruit and sign of conjugal love, the living testimony of the reciprocal self-giving of the spouses. By engaging in the conjugal act which is apt for the procreation of a child sexual intercourse [speaks] a language of the body that communicates complete fidelity with the marriage covenant and total self-donation.” Thus, to choose to disconnect procreation from marital intercourse via MicroSort procedure is not only to reject part of the meaning of the gift of human sexuality but it also falsifies the inner truth of conjugal love.

Sex selective procedures (such as MicroSort), like adultery and polygamy qualifies as a falsification of the couples shared fertility and a negation of the sacramentality of Christian marriage. Commenting on such falsification, Grabowski argues, “fertility is not merely viewed as a biological aspect of the person that can be altered at his or her discretion, but like sexuality itself it is an existential reality (i.e., rooted in the order of existence) and pertains to the person as a whole. The procreative meaning of human sexuality is thus wedded to the expression of love

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85 Hildebrand, Marriage, 112.

86 John Paul II, Familiaris Consortio, 32.
by means of the personalist concept of self-donation and an anthropology that sees fertility as integral to the person.  

Rather than promote such falsification by the use of MicroSort procedure, the origin of life should flow from a procreation that is “linked to the union [not only of] the biological but also of the spiritual, of the parents made one by the bond of marriage.” Therefore, the act of pre-selecting the sex of a child via MicroSort contradicts the language of the couple’s shared fertility as Donum Vitae elucidates thusly: “fertility achieved outside of the bodies of the couple remains by this fact deprived of the meanings and the values which are expressed in the language of the body and in the union of human persons.” If St. Augustine and the scholastics were criticized for apportioning only an instrumental value to the conjugal act in marriage while maintaining the primacy of the good proles, the Igbo use of MicroSort to beget a male child who will maintain one’s ancestral lineage is a twisted scientific form of this practice and teaching.

Against this backdrop, the argument that sex selection via Microsort should be limited to married couples who are anxious to balance their family gender, in order to increase their happiness, et cetera, ironically, increases their sadness by denying couples the ability to perform one of the essential responsibilities of their married life as co-creators with God. Hildebrand

87 Grabowski, Sex and Virtue, 131. See also Wojtyla, Love and Responsibility, 57, 230; and John Paul II, Familiaris Consortio, 32.

88 John Paul II, Discourse to those taking part in the 35th General Assembly of the World Medical Association, October 29, 1983: ASS 76, (1984), 393. See also Donum Vitae, 4, 28.

89 Donum Vitae, 4, 28.

90 Both Dahl and Robertson make the case that sex selection will increase parents’ happiness by allowing them to have both genders in their families what some call “designer children.” See Dahl, “Sex Selection Technologies
supports this reading by maintaining that “the mystery of the birth of a man should be essentially linked to the wedded love through the conjugal act, which is destined to be the expression and fulfillment of the love. The birth of a child is also always linked to a creative intervention of God.”\textsuperscript{91} Seen through this lens, Warren erred in contending that “God has no right to claim an exclusive domain over the means of procreation.”\textsuperscript{92} Her argument not only denies a simple historical, factual and religious truth, but her claiming that couples have the reproductive liberty to decide the sex of their child is a usurpation of a role that neither belongs to the couples nor to any other human being.\textsuperscript{93}

While it is perhaps true that sex selection via MicroSort might be less in the gravity of its evil than say adultery or some other methods of artificial reproduction, since it does not involve abortion or experimentation of frozen embryos; it involves the immoral and disordered act of masturbation.\textsuperscript{94} Although a case can be made that the person who masturbates in order to eject

\textsuperscript{91} Hildebrand, \textit{Marriage}, 116.


\textsuperscript{93} Besides children born through a MicroSort procedure may grow up to see themselves as manufactured products, rather than distinctive individuals conceived within an act that expresses couple’s shared fertility. It gives the impression that in marriage a couple can choose to beget a particular gender according to their specifications which may not be the gender the child would have wanted to be if he or she was given the opportunity to choose.

\textsuperscript{94} See Gerald Coleman, \textit{Human Sexuality: An All-Embracing Gift} (New York: Alba House, 1992), 301-303; and Lawler, Boyle and May, \textit{Catholic Sexual Ethics}, 177-178. “Masturbation is described as a sexual act in which the agent derives sexual pleasure outside of marital intercourse. That is, one engages in a sexual activity to the point of orgasm outside the context of sexual intercourse. The person who engages in the act of masturbation generally does so in order to release sexual tension and to derive self-imposed sexual pleasure” (Grabowski, \textit{Sex and Virtue}, 115-116).
sperm for the MicroSort technician to use for sex selection, does so not solely for the intention to derive sexual pleasure outside of the normal sexual intercourse with his wife, but acted primarily with the intention to provide the specimen needed for sex selection to be completed known as medical masturbation. However, the deriving of pleasure outside of the normal sexual intercourse is not the only moral problem associated with masturbation in relation to the inseparability of the unitive and the procreative meanings of marriage.

Masturbation not only violates the virtue of chastity but a person who intentionally masturbates, performs a sexual act outside of the basic purpose of human sexuality; a reciprocal gift of oneself to the other with its associated procreative and unitive meanings. Donum Vitae beautifully articulates the immorality of masturbation thusly:

    Just as artificial insemination as a substitute for the conjugal act is prohibited by reason of the voluntarily achieved dissociation of the two meanings of the conjugal act, masturbation, through which the sperm is normally obtained, is another sign of this dissociation: even when it is done for the purpose of procreation, the act remains deprived of its unitive meaning; “it lacks the sexual relationship called for by the moral order, namely the relationship which realizes the full sense of mutual self-giving and human procreation in the context of true love.”

In addition to this, the person’s good intention to beget a male child neither makes his disordered act of masturbation to be a morally good act nor justifies the pre-selection of the sex of a child. While the desire for a male child for the Igbo and/or openness to children is a necessary prerequisite for a responsible parenthood, from the moral point of view and for

95 See The Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2354.

96 Donum Vitae, 6, 32. See also Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith, Declaration on Certain Questions Concerning Sexual Ethics, 9 ASS 68 (1976), 86 which quotes Gaudium et Spes 51. Cf. Decree of the Holy Office, August 2, 1929: ASS 21 (1929), 490; Pius XII, Discourse to those taking part in the 26th Congress of the Italian Society of Urology, October 8, 1853; ASS 45 (1953), 678.
responsible human procreation, this good intention is not sufficient to make a positive moral
evaluation of sex selective procedure like MicroSort. Rather, MicroSort like other productive
methods “must be judged in itself and cannot borrow its definitive moral quality from the totality
of the conjugal life of which it becomes part nor from the conjugal act which may precede or
follow it.”

There is also the impending danger that since sex selective procedure like MicroSort may
require several attempts before it would be successful. Thus the repeated need for the man to
masturbate may put him in danger of extending this practice beyond using it for sex selection.
Should this happen, it can lead to other immoral sexual practices like the use of pornography,
male prostitution and sex addiction. Each of these immoral activities jeopardize the sacredness
of marriage as an ‘I-thou’ relationship and affect the sacredness of the conjugal life.

The MicroSort procedure also involves the artificial insemination of the sorted sperm into
the woman ovum. When artificial insemination separates the marital act from the conception and
procreation of a child, it denies the couple their privileged right of giving and of receiving each
other via sexual intercourse on the pretense of achieving its procreative meaning. Although
Donum Vitae rightly observed that no reproductive technology (MicroSort included) should be
rejected because of its artificiality since each of them bear witness to the possibility of the art of
medicine. However it also notes that “they must be given a moral evaluation in reference to the

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97 Donum Vitae, 4, 29, 30. See also Paul VI, Humanae Vitae, 14.

dignity of the human person who is called to realize his vocation from God to the gift of love and the gift of life.”

Microsort does not bear witness to the dignity of the child to be born but treats him or her as a commodity that could be bought and manufactured according to the whims and caprices of his parents. This practice contradicts Igbo respect for the dignity of the human person in which they rightly observe that a child is not a commodity that could be bought in the market (anaghi azu nwa n’ahia). It also diminishes the dignity of the child and gives the impression that babies are some kind of commodity with optional features. It involves a relationship of mastery and domination, and transforms the potential child into an object of manipulation. It also undermines the child’s claim to equality as a fellow human being. A statement such as “my $15,000 baby” bears eloquent testimony to the above assertions.

Based on what has been said so far, it is clear that Igbo Christian couples are expected to respect the language which the conjugal act speaks by ensuring that their method of procreation takes place within a conjugal act between themselves. It is only in doing so, that they will show respect for the conjugal act’s openness to procreation as the fruit and result of their married love and shared fertility. While this study is empathetic to the plight of the Igbo Catholic couples who are not able to beget a male child, it does not support the begetting of children at all costs. Hence, infertile Igbo couples are not free to make marriage to be whatsoever they wish it to be. It

99 Donum Vitae, 3, 8-9. See also Dignitas Personae, 12, 14.

100 See Akalonu, Procreation in Igbo Marriage, 39-41.


102 Donum Vitae, 4, 28.
is not in the marriage ritual of any religion, culture or state that couples are to choose the sex of their children.

Thus far, the study has demonstrated that adultery, polygamy, and sex selective procedures do not support the inseparability and the implied equality of the unitive and the procreative meanings of marriage. It also argued that in allowing that these methods be used to address couple’s inability to beget a male child, the culture not only encourages a double standard of sexual morality, but it also contradicts some of its own basic moral values. Similarly, by using these methods to address their infertility or inability to beget a male child, Igbo Catholic couples compromise and undermine their faith in God. Therefore, with St. Augustine, I enjoin and remind Igbo Catholic couples with or without male children that they are blessed “not because they beget children, but because they beget them honorably and lawfully and chastely and for the society, and bring up their offspring rightly, wholesomely, and with perseverance; because they keep conjugal fidelity with each other; because they do not desecrate the sacrament of matrimony.”103

Having judged the methods that the Igbo culture allows for the addressing of infertility problem as contrary to the truth and meaning of Christian marriage, the next section will suggest alternative methods which infertile Igbo Catholic couples could use to address their infertility problems that will simultaneously accomplish the perpetuation of one’s ancestral lineage, the preservation of Igbo identity and core values without putting a dichotomy between the unitive and the procreative meanings of marriage.

103 Augustine, Holy Virginity, 12. See also Clark, St. Augustine on Marriage and Sexuality, 64.
INTERGRATION OF IGBO UNDERSTANDING OF THE PURPOSES OF MARRIAGE INTO THE CHRISTIAN IDEAL OF MARRIAGE

As the study has demonstrated, while female children are welcomed, the male child is regarded as the primary purpose of marriage among the Igbo. Thus, the arrival of a male child (the Diokpala) in a family assures the man that his family lineage/name would be maintained and to the woman that she has secured a permanent place in her matrimonial home since before this time, her position was very shaky. The Igbo man who has male children born to him sees himself as constantly alive in the lives of his children so that he considers both life and death as a continuum. He is assured of a befitting burial which is necessary to initiate him into the rank of the ancestors, the spirit world; his needs would be provided at his old age and his properties would be inherited by his own direct blood male child(ren). Among the four factors that were responsible for the Igbo understanding of male children as the primary purpose of marriage, the most prominent among them is the amaechila mentality.

The study also accentuated that whether as a traditional believer (pagan), or a Christian, the Igbo person worships the Almighty God; the Creator and giver of life (Chukwu ma obu Chineke). Consequently, the Igbo believe that a child is both a blessing and a gift from God and that God has blessed and mandated them to beget male children for the perpetuation of the Igbo ethnicity. Since the Igbo considers every child as both a blessing and a gift from God, the Igbo

104 Obi, "Marriage Among the Igbo of Nigeria," 50.
105 Cf. Chapter two of this study, especially 25-35.
106 See chapter two of this study, especially 27-29.
regard every life as sacred irrespective of how he or she is conceived, a belief which is also echoed in the Catholic tradition. As the study chronicled, while a strict interpretation of Augustine’s teaching above could be used to justify the Igbo cultural approval of polygamy, adultery and MicroSort to address infertility problem, there are other writings of Augustine which do not support procreation of children at all costs.

Although this study is sympathetic to the preservation of one’s ancestral lineage and the Igbo identity et cetera, for which the Igbo sees the procreation of male children as the primary purpose of marriage, it has raised doubts concerning the claim that these values can only be maintained through male children. This is because family names, ethnic identity, economic and social security, and cultural practices can be maintained by both male and female children through the names they are given at the time of their births and the language which they speak. An ethnic group is forgotten or wiped out from the universe not by the absence of male children, but by the absence of people who speak its language and practice its customs. Therefore, rather than focus on the male child as the only custodian of ancestral lineage and Igbo identity et

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107 However, the flip side of this respect for life as a gift from God that should be protected at all times both for the Igbo as well as for the Catholic tradition is that it tends to bend or soften their high moral standard around human sexuality. This is because although the culture and the Catholic tradition are opposed to out of wedlock pregnancy and conception via reproductive technology, for the sake of life and the child that is involved, both traditions welcome the birth of a new child with joy and condemn in strong terms all forms of abortion and/or murder. One wonders if there could be better way(s) to address this problem at least for the Catholic tradition.

108 See Augustine, De Bono Conjugali, 6.

109 The Igbo speak volumes through the names they give to their children and have used this means to underscore the primacy of male children in marriage. See Akalonu, Procreation in Igbo Marriage, 42-46. See also footnote 147 of chapter two of this study for more information with regard to this claim. I think it is time for the Igbo to also use this medium to emphasize both the equality of both genders and the normality of childless marriage.

cetera, the Igbo need to give Igbo names to their children, teach and promote the speaking of Igbo language and cultural practices to their children where-ever they live.

Thus, the current practice of some Igbo parents (living in Nigeria or overseas) of discouraging their children from speaking Igbo language in pursuit of the English language is a misplacement of priorities and a faster road to the total annihilation of ancestral lineage, Igbo identity, and customs. For, of what use is a male child in the preservation of ancestral lineage and Igbo identity who neither speaks Igbo language nor gives his children Igbo names? Also how can an Igbo person who neither knows how to perform say the *iwa oji* (the breaking of the kola-nut) ritual in Igbo language nor is grounded on the symbolism that are attached to the *oji* ritual claim to be a true son of Igboland? How can such a person maintain Igbo identity and customs?\textsuperscript{111}

Since a person who lacks the ability to perform these activities cannot truly consider himself or herself as an Igbo person, I contend that the effective methods to ensure the preservation of family lineage, Igbo identity and cultural values is by making sure that Igbo children (male and female) wherever they live speak Igbo language, answer to Igbo names, and are well grounded in Igbo customs and traditions that promote the dignity of the human person. By so doing, the Igbo person would be contributing to the perpetuation of Igbo ancestry lineage, identity and customs which were instrumental for the Igbo understanding of male children as the primary purpose of marriage. Most importantly to this study, these methods that were advocated

\textsuperscript{111} *Oji* is a very symbolic fruit in Igboland that it is at the center of all Igbo ceremonies. Oji signifies love and welcoming spirit among other things. Consequently, the *oji* ritual known as *(igo ma obu iwa oji)* can never be missed at marriage negotiations and ceremonies among the Igbo. Thus, the Igbo say, *onye wetara oji, wetara ndu, wetakwa ihunanya.* This is best translated as “the person who brings kola, brings life and love.” One of the symbolic attributes to *oji*, is that it does not understand any other language except the Igbo language. Hence, the *oji* ritual is not performed in other languages. See footnote 66 of chapter one of this study for more information concerning other symbolisms of *oji* among the Igbo. See also Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, 82; and Nwabude, *Preparation for Marriage and Family Life*, 60.
above would achieve these values without jeopardizing or putting a dichotomy between the unitive and the procreative meanings of marriage as does polygamy, MicroSort or adultery. These methods also do not encourage a double standard of sexual morality among the Igbo.

But for the sake of argument, even if it is true that ancestral lineage, social and economic security \textit{et cetera} can only be maintained and realized in Igboland through male children, I contend that there are other ways to do so without compromising the unitive meanings of marriage as well as Igbo moral values and identity. If the main reason for seeing the male child as the primary purpose of marriage is (the \textit{amaechila} mentality) to ensure the maintenance of family lineage, any adopted male child can accomplish this and even more.\textsuperscript{112} Thus, if a couple adopts a male child, gives him Igbo names, teaches him Igbo language, and educates him on Igbo customs, the adopted child will maintain their name, provide the economic and social security to his adopted parents and preserve the Igbo identity and customs when the time comes.

By using adoption of a male child as a method to address the absence of a male child in marriage, the Catholic couple will maintain the inseparability and the implied equality of the procreative and the unitive meanings of marriage. They will also preserve the values and customs for which the emphasis on male children as the primary purpose of marriage hinges. Therefore, I contend that adoption of a male child is a pastorally sensitive solution to the problem of infertility which simultaneously maintains the magisterial teaching in reference to the purposes of marriage as well as the reasons behind the Igbo understanding of male children as

\textsuperscript{112} I am aware that by suggesting that the Igbo Catholic couples who have female children adopt a male child to fulfill their want of an heir may give the impression that male children are superior to their female counterparts. But in a patrilineal culture or society like the Igbo, adoption is a sensitive pastoral and practical alternative in place of polygamy, adultery and sex selective procedures to address Igbo couples’ obsession for male children who will maintain the ancestral lineage, \textit{et cetera}. In this circumstance, adoption can be construed as an undesired option.
the primary purpose of marriage. Adoption also does not contradict faith in God. If this is so, why is it that Igbo sterile and/or couples who have no male children are reluctant to adopt a male child to address their infertility problem and/or inability to beget a male child?\textsuperscript{113}

The Igbo resist the adoption of a child to address their inability to beget a male child for the followings reasons. First, the Igbo are very conscious of the blood that runs in their families. Thus, in order to maintain that a clean blood runs through one’s family, Igbo parents undergo a thorough investigation before bringing someone into their family as a wife or as a husband. It is believed that a family blood, name and image can easily be contaminated and tarnished through the adoption of a child whose parents were of a questionable character.\textsuperscript{114} For a typical Igbo man, schooled in the Igbo culture, it is not only an act of immorality for a man to impregnate a woman other than his wife, it is also the greatest sign of irresponsibility and immaturity for him to give-up his blood-child for adoption. Thus, no family wants to be associated with an irresponsible and/or a person with a questionable character either through marriage or by adoption.\textsuperscript{115}

The Igbo also consider children born outside of wedlock as illegitimate, and those who were begotten within a culturally celebrated marriage or approved arrangement as legitimate.\textsuperscript{116}

\textsuperscript{113} See Akalonu, \textit{Procreation in Igbo Marriage}, 30.

\textsuperscript{114} See Chibuko, \textit{Igbo Christian Rite of Marriage}, 48-49.

\textsuperscript{115} See Chibuko, \textit{Igbo Christian Rite of Marriage}, 48-49; and Aniefula, “The Christian Family as the Path to a Culture of Life,” 191.

\textsuperscript{116} The only exception to this rule is in the case when a man engages in a sexual intercourse with the wife of his brother at his brother’s death to beget children for him. The same is also true when a woman marries another woman to beget male children for her parents who did not have a male child as chapter two of this study chronicled. While legitimate children have the right of inheritance, illegitimate children have no such rights. Rather, they are constantly reminded to look for their biological fathers through whom they have the right of inheritance.
The Igbo argue that supposing that the child takes after his or her parents way of life, sooner or later one’s family will be filled with fatherless (or illegitimate) and irresponsible children since these children are believed to be the product of promiscuous living.\footnote{See Nwabude, *Preparation for Marriage and Family Life*, 110.} But since Igbo culture abhors promiscuous living, their unwillingness to adopt a baby can be construed as a way to discourage promiscuous living and encourage responsible parenting.

Second, there is also the fear of the unknown (*onye ma echi, ma obu echi di ime*). The Igbo fear that if the baby should take after his parents’ acts of irresponsibility, immaturity and promiscuity, that he may bring a curse rather than blessing to his adopted parents and family. Should this happen, the adopted child may not be able to fulfill the responsibilities that were invested in the male children for which the Igbo consider a male child as the primary purpose of marriage. If this happens, the adopted parents would consider themselves as having lost everything they have toiled and worked for in life, including their good name.\footnote{Cf. Akalonu, *Procreation in Igbo Marriage*, 44. See also Nwabude, *Preparation for Marriage*. 111-112.} This is because an Igbo man may not have anything in terms of material possession, but he values, treasures and protects his good name, for the Igbo say ‘*ezigbo aha ka ego.*’ This is translated as ‘a good name is worth more than material possession.’ If he has a good name and his own blood male children to live after him, he considers himself happy, fulfilled and a productive person who has contributed to the continued existence of Igbo society and identity.\footnote{See Nwabude, *Preparation for Marriage*, 113. See also Sarah Robert, “Polygyny,” *AFER* 23, 1981, 100.} He can really and truly call himself *ezigbo nwa afo Igbo*. This is translated as “a good or true son of Igboland.”
Third, due to the patrilineal nature of Igbo society, every male child has the right of inheritance through his biological father and answers his name whether such a father is involved in his life and upbringing or not. Thus, the Igbo fear that if one adopts a male child, nurtures and educates him, this adopted child may leave him any day to search for his true biological father, and if he finds him, nothing will stop the adopted male child from going back to him. Should this happen, the hopes and dreams of the adopted parents would be quenched overnight. They would consider themselves as having indulged in a useless venture. The Igbo expresses such feeling of hopelessness with deepest regret with a statement such as *mmadu ikwocha aka tiere okoko aki*. This is translated as “a person spending his or her life and energy in a worthless and an unproductive venture. In fact, no Igbo man would want to be identified with such an expression. Based on all this and other related reasons, the Igbo do not consider the adoption of a male child as a safe method to address infertility problems. Rather, they argue that adultery, polygamy and sex selective procedures assure the couple that at least one of their chromosomes is involved in the conception of the male child in the case of adultery. And in the case of adultery, polygamy and sex selective procedures assure the couple that at least one of their chromosomes is involved in the conception of the male child in the case of adultery. And in the case of

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120 I have personally encountered these and other related arguments in my interaction with infertile couples.

121 To the best of my knowledge, there has not been any dispute between one’s biological parents and his or her adopted parents in Igboland. One of the reasons for the lack of such cases is the fact that adoption is neither popular in Nigeria nor in Igboland. However, based on how the judicial system is arranged in which there are areas where the customary law supersedes the civil law, I can say that it would be very difficult for an adopted parent to win a case involving the ownership of a child between them and the child’s biological father even if all the legal documents were properly documented. In fact, such a case would be considered as dead on arrival. This is because presently, the cultural practice which favors the father’s ownership of a child via the customary law supersedes the civil law. To avert this problem, those few couples who have adopted children in Igboland do everything possible to hide the biological parents from their children. While this appears to fix the problem for now, it may cause more problems in the future in this age of science where people can easily find their parents through DNA. For information on the relationship that exists between civil and customary laws in Nigeria see Iwuji, *Marriage Form in Nigeria*, 1-126.
polygamy and the MicroSort procedure, that both of their chromosomes are involved in the conception and procreation of the male child.

While there are perhaps problems associated with the adoption of any child in Igboland, they are nothing to be compared with the ones associated with the use of polygamy, adultery and sex selective procedure (MicroSort) to address infertility problems. In other words, the benefits in using adoption are greater than the risks or problems that are associated with it. This is because by adopting a male child, the couple did not do anything that contradicts or jeopardizes the unitive and the procreative meanings of marriage. By adopting a male child, the Igbo couple is assured that his name will be maintained at his death, his adopted child will give him a fitting burial, and inherit his property. Adoption also neither encourages or promotes double standard of sexual morality among the Igbo, nor contradicts faith in the Judeo-Christian God.

Granted that there might be a legitimate concern about the moral character and/or maturity of the adopted child’s parents, this concern can be addressed by the way the adopted child is nurtured, educated and trained. I think that the way a child is nurtured or brought up and the environment he or she grew up have much to contribute to the formation and the shaping of a person. It is most probable that if the adopted parents educate and show the adopted child the same love as they would have shown to the child if he was their biological child, that the child will grow-up manifesting the lifestyles and customs of his adopted parents rather than those of his biological parents whom he may not have seen or known. In her speaking of the family as the domestic Church and in calling parents the first teachers of their children, the Church did not
make any distinction between biological children and the adopted ones.\(^{122}\) Therefore, Catholic couples who find themselves in the unfortunate situation of sterility have to love, educate and raise their adopted child properly according to their faith and tradition.

But, if the Igbo do not use adoption to address infertility problems because the child may have been born out of promiscuous living, the male child that was begotten through adultery is also the fruit of promiscuous activity. The claim that one of the child parent’s chromosomes was represented in the conception and procreation of the baby does not make adultery a morally sound behavior or a better alternative than adoption. Therefore, this study rejects the use of adultery, polygamy and sex selection as alternative methods to address infertility problems. Rather, Igbo Christian couples should see in their adopted children a challenge to practice true Christian love and charity and to be the best of teachers to their adopted child(ren). The Igbo culture also needs to learn from the Catholic Church who although she regarded procreation as one of the meanings of marriage did not limit the success of marriage to the procreation of children, let alone male children.

Similarly, requesting that infertility be made an impediment to Christian marriage in Igboland because of the significance of children for that culture, gives the impression that marriage is nothing but a child-producing machine or institution.\(^{123}\) But as this study has shown, marriage not only has a human element or face, it also has a spiritual dimension. Marriage was instituted by God not only as an avenue for the procreation of children (male and female), but

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\(^{122}\) See *Lumen Gentium*, 11. Beside all Gentile Christians are adopted children of God. See Romans 8.

\(^{123}\) See Okechukwu, *Christian Marriage*, 68.
also as a means of providing companionship to one another so much so that it defiles mathematical logic.\textsuperscript{124} This is because in marriage, a man and a woman become one flesh and not two. In light of this biblical teaching, the Catholic Church while recognizing the significance of children maintains that both the procreative and the unitive meanings of marriage are inseparable.\textsuperscript{125}

In fact, because of the importance that Catholic Church attaches to procreation, it refers to children as their parents crowning glory.\textsuperscript{126} However, the Church does not limit such qualification to only male children. Also, the Church does not permit adultery, polygamy, or sex selection as avenues to beget children of any gender even though she understands children as the crowning glories of marriage. Although a case can be made that the emphasis on children as a purpose of marriage can be attributed to the Old Testament and the magisterium for its long support of the primacy of the good of proles over fides and sacramentum, none of these documents limited such primacy to male children. Rather, procreation was emphasized in the Old Testament because birth had a value for immortality which it did not have in the New Dispensation. In the New Dispensation marriage was raised to a sacrament by Christ. Similarly, with the Incarnation of Christ, the old self has been replaced with the new self. Christians have received a re-birth in Christ and have become a new creation.\textsuperscript{127}

\textsuperscript{124} See Genesis, 1:28; and 2:18.

\textsuperscript{125} Cf. Paul VI, \textit{Humanae Vitae}, 12.

\textsuperscript{126} Cf. \textit{Gaudium et Spes}, 50.

\textsuperscript{127} Cf. II Cor. 5:17.
As a Christian reborn through baptism, it is no longer the biological birth that is of utmost importance, but the re-birth in Christ. Christians do not overcome death by bearing children let alone male children, but by living out the beatitude and the Gospel message as exemplified in Christ’s death and resurrection. The call to discipleship encourages not quantity of, but quality of life in God who through Christ challenges Christians to worship him “in spirit and in truth.” It also demands on the part of the Igbo Catholics a change or a metamorphosis in their understanding of the purposes of marriage. Marriage has also an eschatological character and is more than an avenue for the procreation of children, let alone male children.

Thus, while Igbo Christians who engage in polygamous marriage for the sake of a male child may have indeed succeeded in maintaining their ancestral lineage here on earth, it has come at great costs. They may have jeopardized their salvation as free children of God. One wonders if the preservation of earthly name supersedes the preservation of heavenly home. Such attitude shows a misplacement of priorities. While the procreation of children is a praiseworthy thing to do within marriage, it should not be done at the expense of the unitive meanings of marriage. Rather, Igbo Catholics who have embraced faith in God need to go beyond the Igbo emphasis on male children as a primary reason for which they marry and accept the magisterial teaching concerning the inseparability of the procreative and the unitive meanings of marriage in words and in deeds. Their faith in God should spur them to reject adultery, polygamy and sex selection as methods of addressing their infertility problems.

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However, while the Igbo Catholics may be blamed and rightly so for their understanding of male children as the primary purpose marriage, there are perhaps still actions or omissions and statements within the Church (universal and local) that might be supporting the view which understood the procreation of children as the primary purpose of marriage, even if not in its twisted form to refer to the male child. For instance, in the preface for the wedding mass, it reads: “In Christian marriage you (God) bring together the two orders of creation: nature’s gift of children enriched the world and your grace enriches also your church”\(^{129}\) During the nuptial blessings one notices again this support of procreation: “Bless them (couples) with children and help them to be good parents. May they live to see their children’s children and after a happy old age grant them fullness of life with the saints in the kingdom of heaven”\(^{130}\) During the conclusion of the liturgy, the priest blesses the couple thus, “May your children bless you.”\(^{131}\)

With the significance of children mentioned at all the important stages of this celebration, it is difficult to convince couples of any race, let alone the Igbo that the unitive meaning is as equal to and inseparable with the procreative meaning. It is disturbing to note that this marriage Rite was translated and printed in 1970, a few years after both the conclusion of the Second Vatican Council, but more so, after Pope Paul VI’s encyclical letter *Humanae Vitae* that explicitly taught the inseparability of the procreative an the unitive meanings of the conjugal act.


\(^{130}\) The Roman Ritual, The Rite of Marriage, 77.

\(^{131}\) The Roman Ritual, The Rite of Marriage, 85. Although praying for the gift of a child does not directly imply insensitivity toward childlessness, but the way it is repeated in the Missal without a corresponding reference to the possibility of sterility or the values that are imbedded in the unitive meanings can be construed as an indirect acknowledgment of the primacy of the procreative meaning over the unitive meanings of marriage.
It is surprising to note that this novel teaching of *Humanae Vitae* was not reflected in the rituals for the celebration of Catholic wedding. It seems contradictory to say that both the procreative and the unitive meanings of marriage are inseparable when all the prayers that are said during the celebration of a Catholic wedding do not reflect such teaching. Although the above concern may sound as a trivial issue for people living in the western world, since they may not be as obsessed with the procreative meanings, for the Igbo, it is a very big omission and one that some have referenced in my consultation with infertile Igbo Catholic couples.

Similarly, while I understand the reason(s) behind the concept of the amendment of life (*imezi ndu*) in a situation where a man with multiple wives is required to choose any of them as his wife that he may have sexual intercourse with and regard his other wives as ‘his sisters in the Lord’ in order to allow all of them to receive Holy Communion, this well-intended act of reconciliation simply encourages polygamy. It also promotes the idea that marriage is simply an institution whose primary purpose is for the performance of sexual intercourse for the purpose of procreation. If marriage has both unitive and procreative meanings that are equal and inseparable, the present way that this practice of *imezi ndu* is implemented needs to be modified for it does not respect the inseparability of the two meanings of marriage.

In addition to this modified re-unification of the polygamous men and women, a more proactive, pastoral and practical approach which worked for the Igbo Catholics in the past could

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132 For this practice to achieve its intended result more ground work needs to be done and the man needs to take his first wife with whom he was wedded in the Church even if his younger wife or wives are of sexually active age. To leave the first wife and use a younger wife to amend the life simply because she can still conceive gives the impression that marriage is for the procreation of children. Such a practice does not reflect the current teaching of the Church concerning the inseparability of the procreative and unitive meanings of marriage.
be re-introduced and promoted to help put a stop to the Igbo emphasis on the male children as the primary purpose of marriage. For example, the Igbo in the past gave people names such as Okorie, Okafor, Okeke Nwankwor for male children and Mgborie, Mgbafor, Mgbeke, Mgbankwor, for their female children not only to mark the Igbo week/market day in which a particular child was born but also to pay homage to the particular deity that was being worshipped on that particular day. Today these names are dying a natural death because Igbo Christians, who make-up a greater number of the present Igbo population, have stopped giving such names to their newly born babies. The outcome is that the people who answer these names now are mostly elderly men and women who by the fact of natural selection would soon move on to the next life. Igbo Christians were able to stop the giving of these names because they were taught by the early missionaries as well as by their local pastors that these names pay tribute to the false gods and not to the God who gave them the gift of a child.

It was easy for Igbo Catholics to accept this teaching because they had already believed that a child is a gift from God. By this simple act, both these names and what they signify are gradually disappearing. Therefore, I suggest that one of the practical ways to address the Igbo understanding of male children as the primary purpose of marriage is to encourage Igbo Christians to cease from giving their children these names that suggest the superiority of the male children over their female counterparts and those that portray male children as the primary

133 See Uchendu, The Igbo of Southeast Nigeria, 90.

134 See Ebelebe, Africa and the New Face of Mission, 199-203.

135 See Onyecha, Family Apostolate in Igboland, 24. I personally have counselled some Catholics on this issue.
purpose of marriage. Since the present Igbo population is predominantly Christians, it is my hope that the Igbo emphasis on the male children as the primary purpose of marriage will gradually die a natural death if Igbo parents stop giving their children these names.

But if the Igbo continue to give names that suggest the superiority of male children over their female counterparts and/or the importance of procreative meaning over the unitive meanings of marriage, the emphasis on procreation and on male children as the primary purpose of marriage will continue to exist. This is because people who answer these names will continue to be living testimonies of the practice and the belief because as Wieschoff rightly argued, “names are not merely considered as tags by means of which individuals may be distinguished, but are intimately associated with various events in the life of the individual as well as those of the family and the larger social groups.”

Based on the evidence from this study, it is clear that the Igbo understanding of the male children as the primary purpose of marriage is not only in conflict with much of the traditional teaching concerning the purposes or ends of marriage but also with the current magisterial teaching concerning the inseparability and the equality of the procreative and unitive meanings of marriage. The study has also demonstrated that the methods which the Igbo culture allows for addressing infertility problems are incompatible with neither the Catholic teaching concerning the meanings of marriage nor faith in Judeo-Christian God. Under this backdrop, it is not an

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136 Akalonu has a plethora of such names. See Akalonu, Procreation in Igbo Marriage, 41-46.

137 I am aware that this alone will not address all the problems associated with the Igbo emphases of male children, but it will serve as a good place to start. For one thing, Igbo childless couples will feel satisfied knowing that the Church is beginning to understand and to take seriously their problem as her problem.

over-statement to say that there is urgent need to re-catechize Igbo Catholics to understand the current teaching of the magisterium in reference to the purposes of marriage and the evilness of the methods that it allows for addressing sterility problems or lack of male children within marriage.

To accomplish this much needed and over-due re-catechesis, I propose the following: First, on the universal level, the Rites for the celebration of Christian marriage should be revised to reflect the current magisterial teaching concerning the meanings of marriage. Also the Church needs to find other simple, approachable and practical ways to impart his teaching concerning the indissolubility of Christian marriage. The highly Aristotelian-Thomistic philosophizing and theologizing is not getting to the ordinary Catholics who would be expected to abide by it.

Second, the Episcopal Conference in Nigeria, but most importantly the bishops from the States that make-up the Igbo speaking part of Nigeria need to issue a communique to all pastors that will specifically explain the current Catholic teaching concerning the purposes of marriage as demonstrated in this study. The Bishops need to openly condemn the methods which the Igbo culture allows for addressing infertility problems and encourage the adoption of children as a pastoral alternative that does not jeopardize the procreative and the unitive meanings of marriage. In doing this, they should be careful to avoid the promotion of the procreative meaning over the unitive meanings or its twisted form that allocates this primacy to male children over the female counterparts. Such an explicit stand among other things will help the Igbo to appreciate children of both genders without prioritizing them and to see marriage as complete in itself, with or without a child.
Third, if local norms permit, a diocesan synod could be held with focus on ‘The Meanings of Marriage and Family life in Igboland.’ The Bishops in union with Igbo clerics who are part of the system and who understand the culture as well as the teaching of the Church concerning the meanings of marriage should engage in a grass-root campaign to alleviate the sufferings and pains of infertile couples who are marginalized because of their infertility problems. The current altitude of silence by some of the Church hierarchy over such sensitive pastoral problem or in leaving it to the discretion of some individual pastors who may or may not know the current teaching of the magisterium on this topic is not working. Rather, it breeds confusion among Igbo Catholics, just as the silence of the Second Vatican Council delegates over the hierarchical terminology of the primary and the secondary ends of marriage left the teaching with ambiguity for some scholars.

Fourth, the current magisterial teaching concerning the meanings of marriage should occupy a significant space in the syllabus for the preparation of young couples for Catholic wedding. During the marriage instruction before wedding, the instructor should spend enough time to explain to the couples in a very simply terms the current teaching regarding the purposes of marriage and this teaching should continue even after their wedding in the company of other Christians. While praying to God and asking others to pray for one is indeed a praiseworthy practice God also uses physicians to treat different kinds of sickness and problems. Therefore, during the marriage instruction, these potential couples should be encouraged to seek medical help in the event of infertility problem. The practice of giving infertile couples ‘annunciation-candles’ to light in anticipation of a miraculous conception and its similar practices by some
pastors should be discouraged. The Sunday evening in which the faithful return to the Church for catechetical classes or instructions in a question and answer format provides the Church in Igboland a great opportunity to impart this teaching.

Having seen that the Igbo emphasis on male children as the primary purpose of marriage and the methods it allows as means of addressing infertility or lack of male children have neither the support of the traditional primacy of the good of proles nor the current teaching concerning the inseparability and the implied equality of the unitive and the procreative meanings of marriage, the next section will evaluate and conclude the study as well as offer some suggestions for further study.

8.3. EVALUATION AND CONCLUSION

In examining the origin, location, social, family life and the governance of Igbo people, the study highlighted that culturally the Igbo ethnic group is a very religious and community oriented people whose leadership at all levels is entrenched around male children, especially the first male child (the Diopkala). The first male child of every Igbo family commands respect and authority among his siblings and is considered as the pillar and symbol of unity in Igboland. But since this male child must be conceived within an approved form of marriage or some other arrangement, the study also examined how marriage is practiced and understood among the Igbo. In doing this, the study demonstrated that the Igbo understood the male child as the primary, if not, the only reason for marriage so much so that a successful marriage is one that has male children to show for it.
In the course of the analysis, the study also highlighted the following four factors as being instrumental for the Igbo understanding of the male child as the primary purpose of marriage: The *amaechila* mentality, the assurance of a befitting burial which launches one into the rank of the ancestor-hood, the belief that God has blessed and mandated the Igbo to ‘increase and multiply’ in order to maintain their ethnic group's values and customs, and the economic and social security that male children provide for their parents and Igbo society. Among these factors, the *amaechila* mentality was accentuated as the *primus inter pares*. Since the Igbo consider a marriage that has no male children to be a failure and/or a curse, the Igbo have zero tolerance for infertility and infertile couples contemplate old age with great fear and anxiety.

To address the problem of infertility or the inability to beget a male child, the Igbo culture allows the use of polygamy and adultery and Igbo infertile couples including Catholics use them. While sex selective procedure like MicroSort is new to Igbo culture, some Igbo Catholics also use it to address their inability to beget a male child and the Igbo culture is at peace with it. However, by approving or tolerating these methods as means of addressing infertility or inability of couples to beget a male child, the study showed that the Igbo culture which condemns promiscuous living ironically, encourage a double standard of sexual morality among the Igbo. These methods also contradict some Igbo cultural values concerning the family.

Using the Igbo ethnic group as a representative of a culture that sees the procreation of children as the primary purpose of marriage, this study traced the history of the traditional teaching concerning the purposes or ends of marriage to see whether it was congruent with the Igbo understanding of marriage and its ends. In tracing the history of the Catholic teaching
concerning the purposes of marriage beginning with the biblical tradition, the study accentuated that there were elements in the biblical tradition which supported not only the procreation of children as the purpose of marriage, but also the provision of companionship.\(^{139}\)

While the biblical tradition was clear that marriage as God instituted and established it was for the purposes of procreation and for providing companionship, the reality of the ‘Fall’ and its associated concupiscence created tension or uncertainty to the traditional understanding of the role of the conjugal act as it relates to procreation and marriage. On one hand, the early Christian Fathers for the most part leaned toward the view that saw procreation as the approved reason for engaging in the conjugal act within marriage. On the other hand, some Patristic Fathers encouraged Christians to shun marriage and its associated conjugal act since it affects their relationship with God.\(^{140}\)

As a consequence of the debate that arose between Jerome and Jovinian over which vocation of life (marriage or celibacy) is superior, Augustine, developed his teaching on the goodness of marriage. In doing so, he articulated a sexual ethic that struck a balance between Jerome’s exaggerated emphasis on the superiority of the life of celibacy and Jovinian’s unprecedented exultation of married life and allocated to marriage with three distinct goods, \textit{proles}, \textit{fides} and \textit{sacramentum}.\(^{141}\) In analyzing Augustine’s teaching concerning the goodness of marriage, this study highlighted that Augustine regarded the good of \textit{proles} as “the primary,\[139\] See Genesis, 1:27-28; and 2:18.  

\[140\] See Chapter three, subsection two of this study.  

\[141\] See Augustine \textit{De Bono Conjugali}, 32.
natural and the legitimate purpose of marriage. “Also Augustine taught that “a child is good and a creature of God irrespective of how he or she was begotten or born.” However, even though he referred to the goods of proles which is not limited to the physical begetting of children but to their nurture and education in the most Christian way as the primary and legitimate purpose of marriage, he did not refer to the goods of sacramentum and fides as secondary goods or ends of marriage. Likewise, while Augustine referred to the good of proles as the primary purpose of marriage, he nonetheless, linked the three goods together so much so that to contradict one tantamount to contradicting all of them.

The study also argued that although a strict interpretation of Augustine’s apportioning of the good of proles as the primary purpose of marriage and his insisting that a child is good and a creature of God irrespective of how he or she was begotten or born can be construed as a support of the Igbo understanding of (male) children as the primary purpose of marriage, that such would not be an adequate representation of Augustine’s teaching. This is because not only that he did not limit such primacy to the male children, but to both male and female children, but that there other teachings of Augustine which show that he did not approve or promote the procreation of children at all costs. Thus, the study argued that the Igbo culture cannot rely on Augustine’s teaching as a reference for its understanding of the male child as the primary purpose of marriage.


143 See Augustine, De Bono Conjugali, 32.

144 See Augustine, De Bono Conjugali, 6, 7.
Nevertheless, even with Augustine’s erudite teaching concerning the goodness of marriage which had and continues to have a tremendous influence on the western tradition in the area of marriage and sexuality, the study highlighted that his failure to recognize the significance of love in marriage and his apportioning of only an instrumental value to the conjugal act left Augustine’s teaching with significant weaknesses. To address this weakness, the scholastics, especially Bonaventure and Aquinas gave greater attention to the role of love in marriage.\textsuperscript{145} However, they still maintained Augustine’s teaching that regarded the good of proles as primary end of marriage.\textsuperscript{146}

The study also argued that while Aquinas’s treatment of the purposes of marriage in the language of the ends rather than the goods of marriage did not lead to his description of the purposes of marriage in a hierarchical structure, his classification of the purposes of marriage in the language of ends was instrumental to the 1917 Code of Canon Law’s description of the purposes of marriage in the language of the primary and the secondary ends. In doing so, the 1917 Code explicitly, taught and maintained the subordination of the secondary ends of marriage, mutual help and the allaying of concupiscence, to the primary end—the procreation and education of children.\textsuperscript{147} The 1917 Code also was not interested in apportioning love with any significance in its judicial evaluations of what was and what was not a marriage.

\textsuperscript{145} Bonaventure, \textit{Sententiarum}, iv, 33.1.2; and Aquinas, \textit{ST}, II-II, q.26, a. 11.

\textsuperscript{146} See Aquinas, \textit{ST}. vol. iv. Suppl. q.65, a.1.1.

\textsuperscript{147} See \textit{The 1917 Code of Canon Law}, 1013.1.
Following the 1917 Code’s classification of marriage in hierarchical terminologies of the primary and secondary ends, and its abject refusal to apportion love any significance as a juridical basis for marriage, the personalist scholars of the twentieth century brought back this lost heritage. Thus, Hildebrand apportioned an intrinsic value to the conjugal act while acknowledging the significance of conjugal love as the animating principle of marriage as its primary meaning. However, even with this more nuanced teaching that accounted for the significance of love in marriage, Hildebrand’s position still maintained the supremacy of procreation as the primary end of marriage, over the primary meaning of marriage, conjugal love.¹⁴⁸ On the other hand, Doms’s teachings maintained the supremacy of the primary meaning of marriage, ‘the two-in-oneness’—Zweieinigkeit, over the immanent meaning of marriage, the procreation of children.¹⁴⁹

Against this backdrop, the study pointed out that while Hildebrand’s position supported the subordination of the primary purpose of marriage, procreation over the primary meaning conjugal love, Doms’s teaching was a reversal of both Hildebrand’s and the traditional position. In spite of these more nuanced teaching by these personalist scholars, the hierarchical structure in which the procreation of children was regarded as the primary purpose, while the mutual help and the allaying of concupiscence were understood as the secondary and subordinated ends of marriage was the consistent teaching of the Catholic Church in reference to the purposes of marriage prior to the Second Vatican Council’s teaching in Gaudium et Spes.

¹⁴⁸ See Hildebrand, Marriage, v.vi, 4; and Purity, 12.

With *Gaudium et Spes*, marriage was referred to as a partnership of love and life that “is rooted in a conjugal covenant of irrevocable consent and mutual gift of two persons.”\(^{150}\) On the specific question regarding the ends of marriage, the Council Fathers refrained from using the hierarchical language of primary and secondary ends. Rather, the limited understanding of conjugal love to mean the conjugal act was expanded to include all the activities of the married life of which the conjugal act is only one of them. In doing so, the Council Fathers accentuated that marriage and the married love are by nature ordered to the procreation and education of children. Thus, “true married love and the whole structure of family life which results from it, is directed to disposing the spouses to cooperate valiantly with the love of the Creator and Savior.”\(^{151}\) Consequently, the study argued that while a case can be made that *Gaudium et Spes*’s silence over the terminology of the primary and the secondary ends of marriage created some uncertainty with regard to whether it represented continuation with or a repudiation of the traditional hierarchy of ends, the analysis of the history of the text and the promulgated text converge on the view that the whole framework of *Gaudium et Spes* supported a repudiation of the traditional hierarchical structure in reference to the ends of marriage.

But, since some scholars did not agree with the assertion that *Gaudium et Spes* did not continue to maintain the traditional hierarchy of the ends of marriage in which procreation was seen as the primary purpose of marriage, the study critically analyzed six other post *Gaudium et Spes*’s magisterial documents that treated marriage and its ends. After a thorough and critical

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\(^{150}\) *Gaudium et Spes*, 48.

\(^{151}\) *Gaudium et Spes*, 50.
analysis of these documents the study noted that the language of the primary and secondary ends of marriage did not appear in any of them. Rather, these documents followed the framework that was set-up in *Gaudium et Spes* and in doing so, *Humanae Vitae* explicitly taught the inseparability of the procreative and the unitive meanings of the conjugal act. The study argued that with *Humanae Vitae*’s inseparability and the implied equality of the procreative and the unitive meanings of the conjugal act, the long-aged traditional subordination of the unitive meanings of marriage by the procreative meaning finally disappeared.

In reaching the above conclusion, the study also examined the arguments of May and Mackin as representatives of the scholars who clearly represented opposite side of the argument. At the end of a critical examination of their positions, this study observed the following: First, that May erred in his interpretation of the silence of *Gaudium et Spes* over the hierarchical terminology of the primary and the secondary ends of marriage as a continuation with previous teaching that understood the procreation of children as the primary end of marriage. Second, that Mackin was right in holding that *Gaudium et Spes*’s teaching on the purposes of marriage signals a shift from the traditional hierarchy of ends and indeed a departure from the traditional understanding of procreation of children as the primary end of marriage. Therefore, May’s claim that the magisterium still holds the primacy of children over the unitive meanings of marriage is not an adequate representation of the magisterial teaching concerning the inseparability and the implied equality of the unitive and procreative meanings of marriage.

This study also agreed with May that Mackin erred in not only arguing that marriage dis-integrates at the death of couples’ love for each other, but that the Council Fathers made conjugal

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152 See Paul VI, *Humanae Vitae*, 12.
love an independent end of marriage. In the same vein, neither May claims that *Gaudium et Spes* teaching is a continuation of the magisterial teaching which understood procreation as the primary end of marriage nor Mackin’s claims of repudiation of the hierarchy of ends can be used to justify or support neither the Igbo understanding of the male child as the primary purpose of marriage nor the methods which it allows for addressing infertility problems or inability of couples to beget male children.

Finally, this study has shown that although Catholic teaching concerning the purposes of marriage has undergone significant developments in the course of history from seeing the good of *proles* as the primary purpose of marriage to an “inseparable connection between the procreative and unitive meanings of the conjugal act,” the current Igbo cultural practice which understands male children as the primary purpose of marriage and its methods of addressing infertility problems are in conflict with much of this tradition as well as the current magisterial teaching concerning the inseparability and the implied equality of the procreative and the unitive meanings of marriage. This new understanding with regard to the purposes of marriage which started from beginning of the twentieth century to the present is in fact a significant development and a departure from the previous magisterial understanding of the purposes of marriage.

Having arrived at this conclusion, I propose the following for further study. First, there is need for more scholars to examine *Gaudium et Spes*’s teaching in reference to the meanings of marriage, especially in light of the subsequent magisterial documents in order to bring the much needed clarity to the ambiguity which the silence of the Council Fathers over the hierarchical terminology of primary and secondary ends of marriage suggested. Second, scholars of liturgy
and theology if not on the universal level, at least on the local level (Igbo), should revise the
*Rites* for the celebration Catholic weddings to reflect the Church’s teaching concerning the
equality and the inseparability of the two meanings of marriage. Third, Igbo scholars should
study topics such as adoption, name-giving and the impact of language in human development to
show how they can assist in the preservation of cultural identity. Fourth, the judicial body,
(traditional and civil) needs to develop rules to regulate the adoption of children in Igboland in
order to alleviate both the founded and unfounded fears of some Igbo who may want to adopt a
child.
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