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Text of Father Connell's Family Life Address

By VERY REV. FRANCES J. CONNECE, C.SS.R. (Associate Professor of Moral Theology at the Catholic University of America, Washington, D. C.)

(This is the text of an address entitled, "God Talks To The Family," which Dr. Comnell delivered at the sypcolum om "The Christian Family," held Tuesday evening, March 2, 1918, at the Columbus Civic Center, Bochester, under the spomsorship of the Informational Federation of Cathodic College Alumanae.)

More than 1900 years ago Our Divine Saviour elevated marriage to the dignity of a morament. He did not indeed institute marriage itself. That was done in the very

beginning of the human race when the Creator, after having fashioned the bodies of the first man and woman and endowed each with a spiritual soul made to His own image and likeness, blessed thezn and bade them to increase and mul-

This was the first marriage. and it took place in the state of happiness and holiness which our first parents enjoyed in the Garden of Paradise. It was a sacred union, enriched with the special benediction of the Almighty; but it was not a sacrament.

The dignity of a sacrament was conferred on matrizmony only with the establishment of the New Law, when the Son of God instituted certain rites and ceremonles to serve as instruments of divine power to impart supernatural grace to will of Christ that there should be seven such rites, or sacraments, adapted to the more pressing needs and the more important tasks of human life. from the cradle to the grave. Of these, seven, five were intended to asisist man to perform his duties as an individ-The other two were intended to assist him to fulful important dulies for the benefit of society. Of these two, one was meant for those who dedicate their lives to the welfare of mankind in the priextly office, the sacrament of Holy Orders. The other was meant for those who dedicate their lives to the welfare of man kind in the conjugal state, the

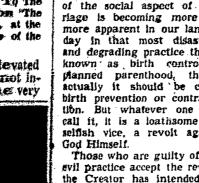
sacrament of Matrimony. THE TRADITION OF the Catholic Church has always found a close parallel between the priest and the Christian dwelling devoutly in the married state. Each occupies a consecrated office. Each has an important mission from the Most High for the well-being of his fellowmen. Each has apreading the kingdom of God in this life and in leading souls to the kingdom of God

in the life to come. One of the great needs of our time is a deeper knowledge of the benefits which the sagrament of Matrimony confers on those who receive it and on society at large. In fact, if the citizens of our land understood better the teachings of the Catholic Church concerning marriage and applied those teachings to practice, most of the domestic problems that are afflicting modern American life would be readily solved.

Sixteen centuries ago St. Augustine, one of the most brilliant scholars that ever 12lumined the Catholic Church Christian marriage under a threefold heading - children. Madity, permanence. Now, 18

is true, these blessings were produced by marriage even as a natural institution; but as a sacrament, matrimony confers them in a far more aublime manner and a far more exalted degree. And if we study these three blessings as they are: meant to be the product of Christian marriage, we shall find that most of the difficulties that beset married life





DB. CONNELL

mowadays arise from the fact that many married couples are mot seeking or obtaining these blessings from their marriage.

Consequently, the only solution of the problems that overwhelm society at the present time from broken marriages and unhappy homes la a return to the ideals of Christian marriage to see so many married complex roller to zasychizarists and marrage coursellers and clinics in an effort to mave their marriage from disaster, when they should so to Christ

According to Catholic teachings, it is the will of God that the first and most important blessing of marriage shall be children. Now, this does not mean that every marriage is sure to obtain this blessing. Sometimes it is permitted by God that a couple, through no levilled the transfer not able to have children.

Yet, it remains true that the primary purpose of marriage general is to continue the current of Fruman life, to bring little ones into the world and to eare for them until they are able to take care of themselves. In a word, marriage is primarity a social institution—it is directed chiefly toward the good tol society rather than the benefit of the two persons who enter into it.

In recent years a different concept of the purpose of marriage was proposed. There were those who claimed that the first object of marriage is the perfecting of the personalof each of the parties through the complete self-surrender of the other, so that there is formed what they called a "two-in-oneness." But, a few years ago the Holy Office. the Roman Congregation deputed to safe guard the integrity of Catholic faith, rejected this view and clearly reneser ted the traditional Catholic doctrine, that the primary purpose of Christian matrimony is the generation and the proper rearing of children.

IT 18 QUETE evident that this Catholic notion of the chief purpose of marriage is very different from that which prevails among many Americans at the present time. Perhaps people would not express their ideas in technical language, but from their conduct it is very evident that a great proportion of our American people regard marriage as directed in the first place toward their own plea in and happi ness. In entering upon the married state. they seek them selves primarily, not the wel fare of society. Self-gratification rather than the good of mankind is the chief, if not the only, object of their union. And consequently, such per sons and unfortunately they are numbered by the millions in our land today - never conceive the idea that in entering marriage they have accepted a



state in life which has definite obligations toward society. Certainly, in practice the

definite and emphatic rejection of the social aspect of marriage is becoming more and more apparent in our land today in that most disastrous and degrading practice that is known as birth control or planned parenthood, though actually it should be called pirth prevention or contraception. But whatever one may call it, it is a loathsome and selfish vice, a revolt against

Those who are guilty of this evil practice accept the reward the Creator has intended for those who cooperate with Him in the propagation of the human race, yet at the same time they deliberately frustrate the designs of God.

They challenge the will of the Most High, they maliciously pervert the wonderful power He has given human beings to reproduce their kind. And, by a just retribution of nature. they harm themselves in harming the human race. For selfindulgence always brings disgust and dissatisfaction, whereas generosity and self-control bring happiness and peace of

If all the married couples in our land could realize how disastrous the practice of birth control is, not only to society. but also to themselves, there would be a widespread return to the true Christian ideal of the primary purpose of marriage and our country would be spared the ignominy of race suicide toward which it is hastening.

Under this first blessing of marriage, the blessing of children, is included also the pringing up of these children until they are able to are for themselves. It is interesting to note here the difference between the modern attitude toward the care of little ones and the attitude which the Catholic Church proclaims as the will of God. To the modern young couple

the care and supervision of children are often regarded as a weersome burden, as a hindrance to the full enjoyment of life. To those who accept the Christian notion of marriage, it is a privilege to spend themselves in the task of caring for little ones, a source of pure, wwwifish happiness.

The truly Christian parent realizes that in fulfilling his duties toward his children he is performing a function like that of the priest, the amointed miinister of the Most High. For parenthood does not mean merely the providing of the children with food and clothing and shelter, and the supervision of their education with a view to making then rich and prominent in this

Parenthood, as a Christian ideal, means primarily the whole-hearted, generous cooperation of father and mother toward directing the steps of their children toward the goal of life eternal. The ambition to help their boys and girls to attain to success in the world is not, indeed, wrong on the part of Catholic parents, but ever and always their main ambition is to bring those to whom they have given life to life everlasting.

nized as one of four major problems. Every day we read in the newspapers of shocking crimes committed by boys and girls in their teens. It is evident that some measures must be taken to remedy this condition, but the tragedy

is that so many of our peo ple are ignorant of the only effective measure for this deplorable situation - the religious instruction of our young There are people - often, good sincere people — who tell

(Continued on Pag *)

The first desire of truly Christian parents is to train their little ones in suchwise that one day they will be citizens of the kingdom of heaven. It is not necessary for me to

prove the neglect of this ideal of parenthood that prevails in our land today. Millions of American children are growing up without any instruction about Ged or Ged's law. Juvenile delinquency is recog-

us that the problem of luvenile delinquency will be satisfactorily solved if we can provide our boys and girls with more

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