



III^{ème} Rencontre Internationale des Responsables Régionaux
Roma 6-11 Septembre, September, Setembro, Septiembre, Settembre 2015

The fruitfulness of love

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Our meditations each morning have one theme “conjugal love”, which represents the most profound mystery of our human condition of beings created in the image and likeness of God. It was so from the beginning. According to the first account of creation, God created man in his own image and likeness and created them male and female. In the second account of creation, first man and then woman, they are created directly by God which, like a Potter, models the man and woman with His hands. According to Saint Irenaeus of Lyon, God formed man from clay and the woman from the interior of man with his bare hands, that is, with the word and the Holy Spirit. So, we are configured in all of our being, in the image of the Trinity, which translates into the depth of our being as persons, beings of truth, freedom and love.

We can never stress this point too much, because this is the basis from which we can recognize our highest dignity, as we were created in the image and likeness of God, since the beginning, which means, in the rationale of Scripture and how it is received and interpreted in the Church, that each of us is created by God. In our physical and biological composition, we are heirs of our parents, but in the spiritual and deep dimension of our being, we are created directly by God who instills in each of us a soul, just as in the beginning God breathed into man the spirit that turned him into a living being.

So whether in one account or the other, but especially in the second, Holy Scripture reveals the origin of matrimony in thoughts and in the will of God. In the beginning, God made man and woman in such a relation of interiority that the man leaves his father and mother and joins his wife and the two form one flesh.

In the Gospel of St. Matthew, on the subject of divorce, which may occur among his disciples, Jesus refers to this beginning [in Genesis] and says in a way that does not allow doubts: what God has joined no man shall separate.

This union is one of the most profound manifestations of love, because love unites. But this unity is not an end in itself: it happens so that from this unity, new lives arise, as the text says: be fruitful, multiply, fill the Earth. Therefore, the fertility is inscribed in the nature of the union of man and woman in marriage, which, at least in the way we say in Portuguese, has in it the orientation for maternity and protection.

In the theology of matrimony, fruitfulness manifests itself in children, which are one of the gifts, if not, the best principal of marriage, but the first order. Marriage is the proper place in which life embraces and spreads, with the generosity of those who believe in life and like to live and is spontaneously broadcast as the greater good. But the greater good of fruitfulness is collaborating with God to populate the sky and Earth, and so the spouses become collaborators of God in the work of creation. He could have created children from rocks, as Jesus says in one passage. But this was not the path he wanted to follow: he created man and woman in his image and likeness. This image and



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likeness is reflected in our condition of beings seeking the truth that liberates and is fruitful in love; this almost divine mystery unites us and distinguishes that in us lies the root of all creation; which is the origin of life that springs from a love that precedes us.

Dear couples, dear spiritual advisers, to paraphrase the language of Pope Francis, do not allow our love, both the spousal love that unites priests to the mystery of the Church, as well as the spousal love of the spouses, to become unfruitful. Don't remove the fruitfulness from love.

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