



BOOK REVIEW

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TITLE: *On Marriage and Family Life*

AUTHOR: St. John Chrysostom

On Marriage and Family Life is a collection of six sermons by St. John Chrysostom on St. Paul's Epistles concerning the the Apostle's teachings on marriage union. Although St. John Chrysostom was a monk, he had a deep understanding of the needs of his flock and had much to say to them. The first chapter is a sermon on 1 Corinthians 7 in which St. John states the husband does not own his body, but the wife does. The same is true for the wife - she does not own her body, but the husband does. Both husband and wife are equal in the eyes of God, for there is neither Jew nor Greek, male nor female, for all are one in Christ Jesus. St. John also adds that if a believer is already married to an unbeliever, he or she is to remain with the unbelieving spouse for the unbelieving spouse may come to Christ by the example of the believing spouse. The second chapter is a sermon on Ephesians 5:22-33 in which St. John tells us that the wife must respect her husband and he is to love and protect his wife. The marriage relationship is similar to that of Christ and the Church: as the husband is the head of the wife, so is Christ the head of the Church. The third chapter is a sermon on Ephesians 6:1-4 in which St. John discusses the role of children within a family. Children should be taught to obey their parents in the Lord, for this is a commandment from God. They are to be raised in a godly way - the parents are to live out their faith in front of their children so that they can grow up in Christ and develop a faith of their own. This is about building a strong foundation shared by father, mother and children. The fourth chapter is a sermon on Colossians 4:18 in which St. John teaches that both husband and wife are to have respect for the marriage union. He tells us that spending much money on the wedding reception is folly and should be avoided. St. John stresses that the husband and wife are joined together into one body. "Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled (Hebrews 13:4)." Marriage itself is an image of the presence of Christ and is a great mystery. The fifth chapter of the book discusses marital fidelity. St. John says God created marriage for chastity, not fornication. The last chapter is entitled "How to Choose a Wife." St. John gives advice on this topic and offers wisdom for those who seek the sacrament of marriage. He describes that when the wife lives in harmony with her husband, nothing will be unpleasant, even if storms arise every day.

Reviewed by Anastasia Vassilakis

Dear Parishioners, if you would like to share with us a book you have read from the parish library, please fill out a "review form" which can be found downstairs in the library.