

When Sexual Pleasure Is Good



R. J. M. I.

By

The Precious Blood of Jesus Christ,
The Grace of the God of the Holy Catholic Church,
The Mediation of the Blessed Virgin Mary,
Our Lady of Good Counsel and Crusher of Heretics,
The Protection of Saint Joseph, Patriarch of the Holy Family,
The Intercession of Saint Michael the Archangel,
and the cooperation of

Richard Joseph Michael Ibranyi

To Jesus through Mary

*Júdica me, Deus, et discérne causam meam de gente non sancta:
ab hómine iníquo, et dolóso érue me*

Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam

“Let thy fountain of water be truly thine own, and rejoice with the wife of thy youth.
Let thy loving hart and thy graceful colt company with thee;
and let her be considered thine own and be with thee at all times,
for ravished with her love thou shalt be greatly increased.
Be not intimate with a strange woman;
neither fold thyself in the arms of a woman not thine own.”
(Proverbs 5:18-20)

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Summary of My Old and New Opinions

My old opinion (all sexual pleasure is lust and thus sinful or a fault)

My old opinion, as stated in my book *Sexual Pleasure Is Lust*, was that all sexual pleasure is intrinsically evil and therefore all sexual pleasure is lust and thus sinful if one explicitly seeks to fulfill it. Hence, according to my old opinion, even spouses must fight against sexual pleasure when they have sexual relations to have children; if they do not, and embrace instead of reject the sexual pleasure, then they commit a sin or a fault. Because I no longer hold this opinion, I will remove this book from the general public. If anyone wants a copy, ask me and give me your reason. If I approve of your reason, I will make a copy available to you.

My new opinion (when sexual pleasure between spouses is good and thus not lust)

My new opinion is as follows:

- Sexual pleasure is not intrinsically evil.
- Sexual pleasure is good and thus not lust when it is attained with the right person, for the right reason, in the right way, at the right time, and in the right place.
- The right person to enjoy sexual pleasure with is one's spouse and thus not with anyone or anything else. "Drink water out of thy own cistern, and the streams of thy own well... Keep them to thyself alone neither let strangers be partakers with thee. Let thy vein be blessed and rejoice with the wife of thy youth. Let her be thy dearest hind and most agreeable fawn. Let her breasts inebriate thee at all times, be thou delighted continually with her love. Why art thou seduced, my son, by a strange woman, and art cherished in the bosom of another?" (Prv. 5:15-20) Therefore any sexual pleasure other than which occurs between spouses (a husband and his wife) is the mortal sin of sexual lust. "Marriage honourable in all, and the bed undefiled. For fornicators and adulterers God will judge." (Heb. 13:4)
- The right reason for spouses to enjoy sexual pleasure is primarily for procreation if it is possible and secondarily for the sexual pleasure itself. Hence spouses must desire that conception occur and thus do nothing to prevent conception even if conception is impossible. If they desire or plan to prevent conception¹ when they have sexual intercourse, then they commit the mortal sin of sexual lust and the mortal sin of contraception. Sexual pleasure is good and thus not sinful or even a fault

¹Any plan or action to prevent conception either before sexual intercourse (such as by planning to have intercourse only during the female's infertile period in order to prevent conception, aka Natural Family Planning, or by sterilization) or during sexual intercourse (such as by condoms or IUD's) or after sexual intercourse (such as by foams or pills) is the mortal sin of lust and the mortal sin of contraception. (See RJMI book *Natural Family Planning to Prevent Conception Is Contraception*.)

when spouses have sexual intercourse only for sexual pleasure provided they desire that conception occur if possible. St. Paul says, “Let every man have his own wife and let every woman have her own husband. Let the husband render the debt to his wife, and the wife also in like manner to the husband.” (1 Cor. 7:2-3) Procreation must still be the primary reason for sexual intercourse even when it is not possible (such as in a barren or pregnant womb). While sexual pleasure is the main motive in this case, procreation still remains the primary motive, as the spouses believe that procreation is the primary reason for sexual intercourse, just as men who at times eat food only for enjoyment and not sustenance know that the primary reason for food is sustenance. However, if men eat only for pleasure while preventing its primary reason of sustenance by vomiting after they eat, then this is the mortal sin of gluttony, of lusting after food.

- The right way for spouses to enjoy sexual pleasure is with the motive of spilling the husband’s seed into his wife’s womb. Hence any voluntary spilling of the male seed outside the womb is a mortal sin of lust. Spouses are allowed to fondle each other’s private parts, which includes female breasts, with their hands. “How beautiful art thou, and how comely, my dearest, in delights! Thy stature is like to a palm tree, and thy breasts to clusters of grapes. I said: I will go up into the palm tree, and will take hold of the fruit thereof: and thy breasts shall be as the clusters of the vine...” (Can. 7:6-8) Loving embraces and kisses are also good. “I languish with love. His left hand is under my head, and his right hand shall embrace me.” (Can. 2:5-6) However, open-mouth kissing is against nature, is the mortal sin of sexual lust, and is unhygienic. And sodomy, oral sex, or any other contact of the private parts with parts of the body (other than with hands or with private part to private part) for a sexual purpose is unnatural, is the mortal sin of sexual lust, and is unhygienic. “So that now they neither keep life, nor marriage undefiled... All things are mingled together... forgetfulness of God, defiling of souls, changing of nature, disorder in marriage...” (Wis. 14:24-26) Immoderate and thus excessive sexual intercourse between spouses (such as three times a day) is the mortal sin of sexual lust, just as eating too much food to the point of being unhealthily fat is lust and the mortal sin of gluttony. Sexual gluttony between spouses can harm the health, steals time by taking up an excessive amount of time, and indicates a lack of control and moderation of the sexual desire and thus this good passion turns into lust and becomes obsessive and addictive. Such a spouse would not be able to control himself or herself if their spouse got sick or died and thus would commit the sin of lust by seeking sexual pleasure in a sinful way.
- The right time for spouses to enjoy sexual pleasure is by not having sexual intercourse during forbidden times, as determined by the Catholic Church. Just as the Catholic Church has the right to ban

Catholics from eating meat or feasting on certain days, so also She can ban sexual intercourse between spouses on certain days. “And Moses came down from the mount to the people, and sanctified them. And when they had washed their garments, he said to them: Be ready against the third day, and come not near your wives.” (Ex. 19:14-15) If spouses engage in sexual intercourse during forbidden times, they commit the mortal sin of sexual lust and the mortal sin of disobedience for violating a disciplinary law of the Catholic Church.

- The right place for the sexual act between spouses is in privacy and not in forbidden places. Hence if spouses have sexual intercourse in public for anyone to see or in a forbidden place (such as a church), then they commit the mortal sin of lust. And if it is done in a church, then it is also a mortal sin of sacrilege and the mortal sin of disobedience for violating a law of the Catholic Church.

Both Opinions Are Not Part of the Ordinary or Solemn Magisterium

In my book *Sexual Pleasure Is Lust*, I said that my opinion that all sexual pleasure is lust was part of the ordinary magisterium, which is the unanimous consensus of the Church Fathers on faith or morals, and thus was an ordinary magisterium dogma. However, I did not teach that it was a solemn magisterium dogma because I could not find an infallible papal decree to support my opinion. Since then I have researched more deeply and discovered that my opinion that sexual pleasure is always lust is not part of the ordinary magisterium.

Church Fathers who teach that sexual pleasure is not intrinsically evil

While some Church Fathers, such as Pope St. Gregory the Great, teach that all sexual pleasure is lust, several Church Fathers, such as St. Augustine, teach that sexual pleasure between spouses when elicited for the right reason, in the right way, at the right time, and in the right place is good and thus not lust and hence is not a sin or a fault:

“Let thy fountain of water be truly thine own; and rejoice with the wife of thy youth. Let thy loving hart and thy graceful colt company with thee, and let her be considered thine own, and be with thee at all times; for ravished with her love thou shalt be greatly increased. Be not intimate with a strange woman, neither fold thyself in the arms of a woman not thine own.” (Prv. 5:18-20)

Didascalia, 1st to 3rd century: “Chapter 2: *Teaches every man that he should please his wife alone...* Let us be patient with one another, O servants and sons of God! Let not a man despise his wife nor behave contemptuously and haughtily towards her but let him be compassionate, and let his hand be liberal in giving. Let him please his wife alone, and soothe her with honour; let him study to be loved by her alone, and not by any other.”

St. Augustine, *The Good of Marriage*, 401: “18. For what food is unto the conservation of the man, this sexual intercourse is unto the conservation of the race:

and both are not without carnal delight: which yet being modified, and by restraint of temperance reduced unto the use after nature, cannot be lust.

“3. ...Marriages have this good also, that carnal or youthful incontinence, although it be faulty, is brought unto an honest use in the begetting of children, in order that out of the evil of lust the marriage union may bring to pass some good. Next, in that the lust of the flesh is repressed, and rages in a way more modestly, being tempered by parental affection. For there is interposed a certain gravity of glowing pleasure, when in that wherein husband and wife cleave to one another, they have in mind that they be father and mother.”

St. Augustine, *On Marriage and Concupiscence*, 419-420: “Conjugal intercourse is not in itself sin, when it is had with the intention of producing children, because the mind’s good-will leads the ensuing bodily pleasure instead of following its lead, and the human choice is not distracted by the yoke of sin pressing upon it, inasmuch as the blow of the sin is rightly brought back to the purposes of procreation.”²

St. Augustine, *Against Faustus*, 400: “For thus the eternal law, that is, the will of God creator of all creatures, taking counsel for the conservation of natural order, not to serve lust but to see to the preservation of the race, permits the delight of mortal flesh under the guidance of reason for the continuance of the race through the procreation of children...”³

St. Augustine, *Retractations*, 426-428: “... (2) I also said in a certain place: ‘For what food is to the health of the body, coition is to the health of the race, and both are not without carnal pleasure which, however, when curbed and brought to its natural function by a restraining temperance, cannot be lust.’ (3) This was said because the good and right use of lust is not lust.” [RJMI: He should have said “the good and right use of a good passion is not lust.”]

From the information I have, no pope infallibly defined anything, one way or another, regarding sexual pleasure between spouses. Hence both opinions are allowed until a future pope infallibly settles this legitimate dispute; that is, the opinion that all sexual pleasure is lust and the opinion that sexual pleasure is good when attained between spouses for the right reason, in the right way, at the right time, and in the right place.

Reasons for Changing My Opinion

My study of stoicism, and my condemnation of nominal Catholic stoics

For a long time I thought my old opinion could be wrong. What led me to change my opinion was a chapter I was working on titled “The Stoic and Epicurean Philosophies” in my book *The Hellenization of Christianity by the Anti-Church Fathers and the Scholastics*. I will first publish this chapter as a separate book. The part about the stoics, in particular, greatly influenced my new opinion. I realized that the stoics condemn or at least abhor the material world and good passions that God has given men to enjoy. For example, they believe it is sinful or at least a weakness to enjoy good-tasting food. What are men to do when they eat good-tasting food? Are they to turn off their taste buds that God has given them? That would be impossible! Or in order to not enjoy good-tasting food, are men to eat only bland food? That would deny the dogma that God Himself has

² b. 1, c. 13.

³ b. 22, sec. 30.

decreed that men should eat not just for survival but also for enjoyment, as when Jesus made and drank the best wine and ate broiled fish and honey. Wine is not something men need to survive, yet Jesus drank it. And good-tasting food is not necessary for men to survive, yet Jesus ate good-tasting food. Hence it was becoming very clear to me that sexual pleasure when elicited the way God intended is good and to be enjoyed. Hence, just as good-tasting food is not intrinsically evil, so also sexual pleasure is not intrinsically evil. It is only evil and thus sinful when elicited with the wrong person, for the wrong reason, in the wrong way, at the wrong time, or in the wrong place.

One thing I realized about the stoics is that they deny the natural law by telling men to go against the very nature God has given them, which is impossible. They tell men to do the impossible and, even worse, to not do what God has told them to do. They condemn or abhor the good things and good passions God has given men to enjoy. Hence the stoics feel guilty when they have to eat or sleep, something they cannot avoid; but the stoics do their best to avoid these things. And when they do eat or sleep, they feel guilty as if they have sinned or at least are weak and have committed a fault. As a result, they have a big dose of scruples for not being able to live up to their stoic ideal. In short, the stoics have lost common sense, call good evil, and deny the natural law and thus the nature God has given men. As you can see, my old opinion that all sexual pleasure is lust was influenced by the stoics. I, too, told spouses that they could not enjoy sexual pleasure when they perform the sexual act and thus was telling them to go against the nature God has given them and to do the impossible. As a result, I infected those who believed my old opinion with a big dose of scruples and guilt for not being able to live up to this stoic ideal. Hence I apologize to all those whom I have harmed and scandalized by my old opinion. One person I must apologize to personally is the Mr. X whom I attempted to refute in my book *Sexual Pleasure Is Lust*. He was right on this point, and I was wrong. Here is a quote from Mr. X in a letter he wrote to me:

Mr. X to RJMI, 11/13/2008: “Richard, I didn’t have sex for 29 years before my marriage, and of course, with God’s grace I...can give sex up for 9 months or longer. So why does the Catholic Church allow for copulation when procreation is impossible under the name of quieting of concupiscence when there are less pleasurable ways to quiet concupiscence? Answer: The fighting against pleasure or the minimization of pleasure is NOT a teaching of the Catholic Church. You are binding people more tightly than the Church binds people and that is SIN! Please respond. I value your opinion very much. You have proved me wrong many a time in the past, but in this case, your position falls apart because you have to admit that the Church allows for the enjoyment of pleasure means of quieting concupiscence (namely conjugal relations during pregnancy), even when other less pleasurable ways are possible. Therefore, pleasure during conjugal relations need not be fought against.”

The stoic heresy that enjoying food is intrinsically evil and the stoic error that sexual pleasure is intrinsically evil are contained in two nominal Holy Office decrees from the 17th century:

Apostate Holy Office, *Various Errors on Moral Subjects*, 1679: “8. Eating and drinking even to satiety for pleasure only are not sinful, provided this does not stand in the way of health, since any natural appetite can licitly enjoy its own actions—condemned.” (D. 1158)

Apostate Holy Office, *Various Errors on Moral Subjects*, 1679: “9. The act of marriage exercised for pleasure only is entirely free of all fault and venial defect—condemned.” (D. 1159)

Since I have discovered the many idolatries and heresies of the Great Apostasy, which began in the 11th century, these so-called Holy Office decrees are meaningless, invalid, null and void, and heretical, as were many other decrees from the apostate antipopes, the apostate holy office, etc.

Telling men not to enjoy good-tasting food or spouses not to enjoy sexual pleasure when doing what is necessary for procreation is telling them to do the impossible, telling them to go against the nature God has given them and thus makes God the author of sin:

St. Augustine, *The Good of Marriage*, 401: “18. For what food is unto the conservation of the man, this sexual intercourse is unto the conservation of the race: and both are not without carnal delight: which yet being modified, and by restraint of temperance reduced unto the use after nature, cannot be lust...

“However, what unlawful food is in excessive indulgence of stomach and palate, this unlawful intercourse is in lust that seeks not a family... As therefore it is better to die of hunger than to eat things offered unto idols: so it is better to die without children, than to seek a family from unlawful intercourse [outside of wedlock]...

“Wherefore as the Fathers of the time of the New Testament taking food from the duty of conservation, although they took it with natural delight of the flesh, were yet in no way compared with the delight of those who fed on what had been offered in sacrifice, or of those who, although the food was lawful, yet took it to excess: so the Fathers of the time of the Old Testament from the duty of conservation used sexual intercourse; and yet that their natural delight, by no means relaxed unto unreasonable and unlawful lust, is not to be compared either with the vileness of fornications, or with the intemperance of married persons. Forsooth through the same vein of charity, now after the spirit, then after the flesh, it was a duty to beget sons for the sake of that mother Jerusalem... Thus it was necessary that even Prophets, not living after the flesh, should come together after the flesh; even as it was necessary that Apostles also, not living after the flesh, should eat food after the flesh.”

Stoics who infect others with their stoic heresy make them feel sinful, faulty, or weak when they enjoy or do things according to the natural law and thus according to the nature God has given them. They place not only a heavy burden on men but an insupportable burden which is impossible for men to carry. For example, telling men not to eat or enjoy good-tasting food is telling them to do the impossible because men would die if they do not eat and they cannot turn off their taste buds when they eat good-tasting food. Likewise, telling spouses not to enjoy sexual pleasure when they are doing what is necessary for procreation is impossible, especially regarding the husband.

The Book of Tobias and the Septuagint vs the Clementine Vulgate

One thing that convinced me to hold this new opinion was the Septuagint version of the Book of Tobias as opposed to the Clementine Vulgate version.⁴ The Clementine

⁴ Far from being infallible, the Clementine Vulgate contains many corruptions, errors, contradictions, and inconsistencies. The Septuagint was the only authentic Old Testament which was used by Jesus Christ and the apostles and other Church Fathers. The Vulgate did not even exist in the days of Jesus and the apostles. The Vulgate was created by the apostate Jerome. He was the most influential person to corrupt the Old Testament by rejecting the Septuagint as the main text and using a corrupted Hebrew text which he got from apostate Jews, which became known as the Vulgate version. At this time in the 4th and 5th centuries, the Septuagint was corrupted, due mostly to the apostate Origen, and thus needed some correcting. But it should have remained the main text to work

version can easily be interpreted to mean that all sexual pleasure is lust, but not the Septuagint version. According to the Clementine version, the reason Sara's seven husbands were killed was that they were full of sexual lust. But according to the Septuagint, the reason was that her husbands were not of her kindred; and it mentions nothing about lust as a reason:

from while referring to the Old Latin (also called the Italic, *Vetus Itala*, or *Versio Antiqua*), which were Latin translations of the Septuagint, to correct the Septuagint. But a corrupted Hebrew Old Testament used by the apostate Jews should never have been used as a reliable source, let alone the main template as Jerome had done. The invalid Council of Trent's promotion of Jerome's Vulgate was irresponsible, illogical, and deceptive. It gave the impression that a pure version of Jerome's Vulgate existed somewhere and hence ordered a search for it. Yet even if a pure version of Jerome's Vulgate were found, that would not solve the main problem. The main problem was Jerome's Vulgate itself because it was the origin of the corruption of the Old Testament. Trent, then, promoted a corrupted version of the Old Testament while rejecting the only authentic and infallible Old Testament, the Septuagint. Trent should have ordered a search for the pure Septuagint and put all its efforts in that direction. After the invalid Council of Trent, the apostate Antipope Sixtus V (1585-1590) wanted to use the Septuagint as the main text but was disobeyed and ignored. Instead, he ended up approving and promulgating a version of the Vulgate (known as the Sixtine Vulgate) that was so corrupted that it had to be withdrawn. The next Vulgate version to be approved and promulgated was called the Clementine Vulgate because apostate Antipope Clement VIII confirmed and promulgated it in 1592. Yet this version, too, is filled with corruptions, errors, contradictions, and inconsistencies and is used down until today as the official Catholic Bible. Yet it is not the official Catholic Bible because Clement VIII was an apostate antipope and thus all his acts were null and void (invalid), as well as all of the acts of the so-called following popes because they too have been apostate antipopes. I have been working on a book that goes into more detail regarding this topic. When and if I get the time, I will complete and publish it.

Clementine Vulgate	Septuagint
Tobias, Chapter 4	
12 Alms shall be a great confidence before the most high God to all them that give it.	11 For alms is a good gift unto all that give it in the sight of the most High.
13 Take heed to keep thyself, my son, from all fornication; and beside thy wife never endure to know a crime.	12 Beware of all whoredom, my son, and chiefly <u>take a wife of the seed of thy fathers, and take not a strange woman to wife, which is not of thy father's tribe:</u> for we are the children of the prophets, Noe, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: remember, my son, that our fathers from the beginning, even that they all married wives of their own kindred, and were blessed in their children, and their seed shall inherit the land.
14 Never suffer pride to reign in thy mind or in thy words, for from it all perdition took its beginning.	13 Now therefore, my son, love thy brethren; and despise not in thy heart thy brethren, the sons and daughters of thy people, in not taking a wife of them: for in pride is destruction and much trouble, and in lewdness is decay and great want, for lewdness is the mother of famine.
Tobias, Chapter 6	
14 Then Tobias answered, and said: I hear that she hath been given to seven husbands and they all died; moreover, I have heard that a devil killed them.	13 Then the young man answered the angel: I have heard, brother Azarias, that this maid hath been given to seven men, who all died in the marriage chamber.
15 Now I am afraid lest the same thing should happen to me also: and whereas I am the only child of my parents, I should bring down their old age with sorrow to hell.	14 And now I am the only son of my father, and I am afraid lest if I go in unto her I die as the other before: for a wicked spirit loveth her, which hurteth no body but those which come unto her; wherefore I also fear lest I die and bring my father's and my mother's life because of me to the grave with sorrow, for they have no other son to bury them.
16 Then the angel Raphael said to him: Hear me, and I will shew thee who they are over whom the devil can prevail. 17 <u>For they who in such manner receive matrimony as to shut out God from themselves and from their mind and to give themselves to their lust,</u> as the horse and mule, which have not understanding, over them the devil hath power.	15 Then the angel said unto him: <u>Dost thou not remember the precepts which thy father gave thee, that thou shouldst marry a wife of thine own kindred? Wherefore hear me, O my brother: For she shall be given thee to wife;</u> and make thou no reckoning of the evil spirit, for this same night shall she be given thee in marriage.

While the Clementine version of Tobias 6:17 can be used to uphold both opinions (the stoic opinion that all sexual pleasure between spouses is lust; or the other opinion that only sexual pleasure attained between spouses for the wrong reason, in the wrong way, at

the wrong time, or in the wrong place is lust), it can all too easily be taken to hold the stoic position. And the Clementine version of Tobias 6:22 leans even more to the stoic position:

Clementine version: “And when the third night is past, thou shalt take the virgin with the fear of the Lord, moved rather for love of children than for lust, that in the seed of Abraham thou mayest obtain a blessing in children.” (Tob. 6:22)

There are only two things that occur when spouses do only what is necessary for procreation: 1) the desire to have children; and, 2) sexual pleasure. Hence one is led to believe by this passage that all sexual pleasure is lust. However, this passage could also be interpreted to uphold the opinion that only sexual pleasure attained between spouses for the wrong reason, in the wrong way, at the wrong time, or in the wrong place is lust and thus sexual pleasure between spouses for a good reason, in the right way, at the right time, and in the right place is good and thus no sin or fault. This problem does not exist in the Septuagint because it does not contain what is said in Tobias 6:17, 22. However, in Tobias 8:7 the Septuagint does uphold the dogma that even spouses can be guilty of the sin of lust:

Septuagint version: Tobias 8:7: “And now, O Lord, I take not this my sister for lust but uprightly: therefore mercifully ordain that we may become aged together. And she said with him, Amen.”

Tobias is saying, “I take my sister because I love her as my wife and because I want to have children with her, thus not only because I want to enjoy sexual pleasure with her. I do not look upon her as a prostitute or whore in which no true love exists. Hence I will have sexual intercourse with my wife for the right reason, in the right way, at the right time, and in the right place.”

All the Church Fathers used the Septuagint version. The anti-Church Father and stoic Jerome is the one who corrupted the Book of Tobias and much of the rest of the Old Testament by using apostate Jewish Bibles as his template and not the Septuagint, which till then was the official text used by Jesus and the apostles and all the other Church Fathers. Jerome took his Latin translation from an apostate Hebrew Bible that was translated from an apostate Chaldean Bible for use by the apostate Jews. And he says that he began and finished the book in one day.

St. Paul on spouses paying the marriage debt

If all sexual pleasure between spouses were evil and thus a sin or fault, then St. Paul, speaking for God, would have commanded spouses to do something evil and thus to commit a sin or fault. And God is not the author of sin and thus never commands men to commit a sin or fault. As recorded in 1 Corinthians 7:2-5, St. Paul teaches that spouses can and should have sexual intercourse for a reason other than procreation; that is, for sexual pleasure, especially to avoid being tempted to attain sexual pleasure with someone other than their spouse and thus committing a mortal sin of lust. Hence he teaches that spouses are allowed to have sexual intercourse with the main motive of enjoying sexual pleasure with one another instead of doing so in a sinful way with someone else:

“For fear of fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. Let the husband render the debt to his wife, and the wife also in like manner to the husband. The wife hath not power of her own body, but

the husband. And in like manner the husband also hath not power of his own body, but the wife. Defraud not one another, except, perhaps, by consent, for a time, that you may give yourselves to prayer; and return together again, lest Satan tempt you for your incontinency.” (1 Cor. 7:2-5)

St. Paul commands spouses to satisfy their sexual desire only with their spouses in order to avoid the sin of lust if they satisfy their sexual desire in any other way. For example, if a Catholic has two choices of food to eat, food offered to idols or food cooked by his Catholic wife, he can never eat the food offered to idols and thus should eat the food made by his wife, especially in order to not go hungry and be tempted to eat the food offered to idols. And if the only choice the husband has is to eat the food offered to idols, then he must still refuse it and starve to death rather than sin against God. The enjoyment of eating food is present in both cases, but in one it is sinful and in the other it is good.

Hence St. Paul allows spouses to have sexual intercourse for a reason other than procreation, to satisfy their sexual desire and thus to enjoy sexual pleasure without committing a sin or fault. Hence sexual pleasure in this case is a good thing and thus cannot be a sin or fault. If it were a sin or fault for spouses to have sexual intercourse only for satisfying their sexual desire, then St. Paul, and thus God, whom St. Paul speaks for, would have commanded men to commit a sin or fault. But God is not the author of sin and thus does not command men to commit a sin or fault:

“Say not: He hath caused me to err: for he hath no need of wicked men. The Lord hateth all abomination of error, and they that fear him shall not love it... He hath commanded no man to do wickedly, and he hath given no man license to sin.”
(Eccus. 15:12-13, 21)

While in the case mentioned by St. Paul, the main motive for spouses to have sexual intercourse is for one or both of them to enjoy sexual pleasure, the primary motive of procreation must still be present even when procreation is not possible. They must still desire that conception would occur if possible and must do nothing to prevent it. While sexual pleasure is the main motive in this case, procreation still remains the primary motive, as the spouses believe that procreation is the primary reason for sexual intercourse, just as men who at times eat food only for enjoyment and not sustenance know that the primary reason for food is sustenance. However, if men eat only for pleasure while preventing its primary reason of sustenance by vomiting after they eat, then this is the mortal sin of gluttony, of lusting after food.

St. Augustine’s opinion in this regard vs mine

St. Augustine correctly teaches that sexual pleasure between spouses is good as long as procreation is possible, they desire children, and they do nothing to prevent conception. However, in my opinion, he erroneously teaches that when one or both spouses have sexual intercourse with the main motive of sexual pleasure (such as in cases where procreation is not possible), as St. Paul condones in 1 Corinthians 7, they commit a fault, and in another place he says they commit a venial sin. Hence St. Augustine has St. Paul and thus God commanding men to do evil, to commit a fault or a sin:

St. Augustine, *The Good of Marriage*, 401: “6. Further, in the very case of the more immoderate requirement of the due of the flesh, which the Apostle enjoins not on

them by way of command, but allows to them by way of leave, that they have intercourse also beside the cause of begetting children; although evil habits impel them to such intercourse, yet marriage guards them from adultery or fornication. For neither is that committed because of marriage, but is pardoned because of marriage. Therefore married persons owe one another not only the faith of their sexual intercourse itself, for the begetting of children, which is the first fellowship of mankind in this mortal state; but also, in a way, a mutual service of sustaining one another's weakness, in order to shun unlawful intercourse: so that, although perpetual continence be pleasing to one of them, he may not, save with consent of the other. For thus far also, 'The wife hath not power of her own body, but the man: in like manner also the man hath not power of his own body, but the woman.' That that also, which, not for the begetting of children, but for weakness and incontinence, either he seeks of marriage, or she of her husband, they deny not the one or the other; lest by this they fall into damnable seductions, through temptation of Satan, by reason of incontinence either of both, or of whichever of them. For intercourse of marriage for the sake of begetting hath no fault; but for the satisfying of lust, but yet with husband or wife, by reason of the faith of the bed, it hath venial fault: but adultery or fornication hath deadly fault, and, through this, continence from all intercourse is indeed better even than the intercourse of marriage itself, which takes place for the sake of begetting. But because that continence is of larger desert, but to pay the due of marriage is no crime, but to demand it beyond the necessity of begetting is a venial fault, but to commit fornication or adultery is a crime to be punished..."

St. Augustine, *On Marriage and Concupiscence*, 419-420: "It is, however, one thing for married persons to have intercourse only for the wish to beget children, which is not sinful: it is another thing for them to desire carnal pleasure in cohabitation, but with the spouse only, which involves venial sin. For although propagation of offspring is not the motive of the intercourse, there is still no attempt to prevent such propagation, either by wrong desire or evil appliance. They who resort to these, although called by the name of spouses, are really not such; they retain no vestige of true matrimony, but pretend the honourable designation as a cloak for criminal conduct."⁵

Hence St. Augustine teaches that St. Paul, speaking for God, has commanded spouses to do evil, to commit a fault or sin, and thus has God as the author of sin because St. Paul commands spouses to have sexual intercourse with the main motive of sexual pleasure (to relieve the sexual desire), even when procreation is not possible, rather than seek sexual pleasure from someone else and thus in a sinful way. By implication, St. Augustine teaches that men can commit a fault in order to avoid a sin, or a lesser sin to avoid a greater sin. He is teaching that men can commit a lesser evil to avoid committing a greater evil. He teaches that God commands spouses to commit the lesser fault or venial sin of having sexual intercourse with one another with the main motive to enjoy sexual pleasure in order to avoid the mortal sin of having sexual intercourse with someone other than their spouse.

But in his other teachings, St. Augustine rightly condemns the belief that men can commit a lesser evil to avoid a greater evil, a fault to avoid a sin, or a lesser sin to avoid a greater sin:

St. Augustine, *The Good of Marriage*, 401: "8. 'Honorable,' therefore, 'is marriage in all, and the bed undefiled.' And this we do not so call a good as that it is a good in comparison of fornication: otherwise there will be two evils, of which the second

⁵ b. 1, c. 17.

is worse; or fornication will also be a good because adultery is worse, for it is worse to violate the marriage of another than to cleave unto an harlot; and adultery will be a good because incest is worse, for it is worse to lie with a mother than with the wife of another; and until we arrive at those things which, as the Apostle saith, 'it is a shame even to speak of,' all will be good in comparison of what are worse. But who can doubt that this is false? Therefore marriage and fornication are not two evils whereof the second is worse..."

St. Augustine, *Against Lying*, to Consentius, 420: "19. Some man will say, 'So then any thief whatever is to be accounted equal with that thief who steals with will of mercy?' Who would say this? But of these two it does not follow that any is good because one is worse. He is worse who steals through coveting than he who steals through pity: but if all theft be sin, from all theft we must abstain. For who can say that people may sin, even though one sin be damnable, another venial? 20. ...But then, if we shall open this way to sins, that we are to commit lesser sins in order that others may not commit greater: by a broad boundary, may rather with no boundary at all, but with a tearing up and removing of all bounds, in infinite space, will all sins enter in and reign. For, when it shall be defined that a man is to sin less than another may not sin more: then, of course, by our committing thefts shall other men's committing of lewdness be guarded against, and incest by lewdness; and if any impiety shall seem even worse than incest, even incest shall be pronounced meet to be done by us... And in each several kind of sins, both thefts for thefts, and lewdness for lewdness, and incest for incest, shall be accounted meet to be done... To be wise in this sort, what is it but to lose one's wits, or rather, to be downright mad? Mine own iniquity, not another's, whether perpetrated upon me or upon others, is that from which I must beware of damnation. For 'the soul that sinneth, it shall die?' 21. If then to sin, that others may not commit a worse sin, either against us or against any, without doubt we ought not..."

St. Augustine's correct teaching that God does not command men to commit a lesser evil to avoid a greater evil refutes his teaching that St. Paul and thus God commands spouses to commit a fault instead of a sin, or a venial sin instead of a mortal sin. This is more proof that the debt spouses owe one another by having sexual intercourse with the main motive of enjoying sexual pleasure, such as when procreation is not possible, cannot be a fault or a sin and thus has to be a good thing or God would be commanding men to commit a lesser evil to avoid a greater evil, a fault to avoid a sin, or a venial sin to avoid a mortal sin and thus God would be the author of sin.

In the following quote St. Augustine seems to contradict himself, but he does not. He says that even when spouses perform the sexual act for all the right reasons, lust is still involved; and thus one would think he means that they commit a fault or a venial sin:

St. Augustine, *On Marriage and Concupiscence*, 419-420: "Wherefore the devil holds infants guilty who are born, not of the good by which marriage is good, but of the evil of concupiscence, which, indeed, marriage uses aright, but at which even marriage has occasion to feel shame. Marriage is itself 'honourable in all' the goods which properly appertain to it... Yet, whenever it comes to the actual process of generation, the very embrace which is lawful and honourable cannot be effected without the ardour of lust, so as to be able to accomplish that which appertains to the use of reason and not of lust."

In this passage it seems that St. Augustine is teaching that even when spouses have sexual intercourse only to have children they are guilty of lust and thus commit sin, which would contradict his teaching in this same work where he says that they are not guilty of lust and thus by implication have not sinned or committed a fault:

St. Augustine, *The Good of Marriage*, 401: “18. For what food is unto the conservation of the man, this sexual intercourse is unto the conservation of the race: and both are not without carnal delight: which yet being modified, and by restraint of temperance reduced unto the use after nature, cannot be lust.”

St. Augustine’s mistake and error that causes confusion is that he refers to the good use of sexual intercourse and sexual pleasure between spouses as lust but not sinful because they use lust in the right way:

St. Augustine, *Retractations*, 426-428: “. . .(2) I also said in a certain place: ‘For what food is to the health of the body, coition is to the health of the race, and both are not without carnal pleasure which, however, when curbed and brought to its natural function by a restraining temperance, cannot be lust.’(3) This was said because the good and right use of lust is not lust.”

If lust, in this case, is not lust, then do not call it lust. It is not lust. It is a good passion used the right way. Lust is the embracing of evil passions, or the misuse of good passions.

Nominal *Catholic Encyclopedia*, “Lust”: “The inordinate craving for, or indulgence of, the carnal pleasure which is experienced in the human organs of generation. The wrongfulness of lust is reducible to this: that venereal satisfaction is sought for either outside wedlock or, at any rate, in a manner which is contrary to the laws that govern marital intercourse.”

This is one of St. Augustine’s main problems in dealing with this topic. He never calls the sexual pleasure that comes from the right use of sexual intercourse in wedlock a good thing, a good passion. Instead, he calls it lust but lust used rightly. That is like saying one can do evil as long as one does evil rightly. Again, this contradicts his correct teaching that men may never do an evil and thus must not commit a lesser evil to avoid a greater evil. According to St. Augustine, the pleasure of eating food is always lust but lust used in the right way when the eating is done in moderation and the right way. The truth is that pleasure from eating food is a good thing, a good passion, and thus not any kind of lust if the eating is done in the right way. Likewise, the pleasure that comes from sexual intercourse between spouses used in the right way is a good thing, a good passion, and thus is not any kind of lust or sin at all. The good passions of enjoying food and sexual pleasure become lust when used in the wrong way. St. Augustine, no doubt, was influenced by the stoics on this point even though he was not a stoic himself.

How Men Are Conceived in Sin

St. King David teaches the dogma that all men, except Jesus and Mary, are conceived with original sin: “For behold I was conceived in iniquities; and in sins did my mother conceive me.” (Ps. 50:7) The question is, “How are men conceived in sin?”

My opinion, which I believe is irrefutable, is as follows. The venom of original sin is in the flesh of all men except Jesus and Mary, but it is not in their souls. This venom causes the concupiscence of the flesh. And this venom that is in the male seed or female egg or both transmits itself into the conceived body (into the flesh) in the womb of the mother. And the instant the soul is created within its body, the venom of original sin that is in its body injects original sin into the soul. Hence there is not one instant when the soul does not have original sin. Therefore, as the Bible and Catholic dogma teach,

original sin comes from Adam and Eve by generation. Father and mother make available bodies but not souls for their offspring and hence this is the only way original sin can be transmitted to offspring from its parents; that is, by something in their bodies. That something is the venom of original sin. This venom, then, is in the DNA, in the flesh, in the body of men. For more information on this topic, see RJMI book *Miracle of the Immaculate Conception*.

However, some Church Fathers believed that original sin is transmitted by the sexual pleasure or, as they say, the lust that occurs during the sexual act:

St. Fulgentius of Ruspe, *To Peter on the Faith*, 7th century: “16. ...And, because man and woman are joined to each other to bear children, the sexual intercourse of the parents is not without concupiscence, because of which the conception of children born from their own flesh cannot come about without sin where the lust, not the propagation as such, transmits the sin to the children... Thus, the blessed David, although himself born of a legitimate and just marriage in which indeed neither the guilt of infidelity nor the stain of fornication could be found... he exclaims and says, ‘Behold in iniquity was I conceived and in sin my mother bore me.’”

I believe this opinion is false and indefensible. Sexual pleasure (whether it is lust or not) transmits pleasure but cannot infuse sin into another person. Those who believe this teach that all sexual pleasure is lust and thus sinful and hence original sin is transmitted to offspring by this sinful pleasure during intercourse. First, even if all sexual pleasure were lust and thus sinful, this actual sin cannot transmit *original* sin to others. Second, not all sexual pleasure is lust and thus sinful. Sexual pleasure between spouses who legally have sexual intercourse is not lust and thus not sinful and hence is good. In this case, then, according to this opinion, original sin would not be transmitted because there was no lust, no sin, during the sexual intercourse. But we know this is false because all men are conceived with original sin, except Jesus and Mary. Third, this opinion has God as the author of sin because God would have made it impossible for spouses not to sin when they have sexual intercourse; in other words, the only way spouses can have children is by sinning when they have sexual intercourse and thus God would be the author of sin.

On the erroneous but allowable opinion that sexual pleasure is caused by original sin

It is an allowable opinion that sexual pleasure was a punishment from God when Adam and Eve committed the original sin. Some Church Fathers, such as St. Augustine, held this opinion. I, too, held this opinion at one time but no longer hold it; and I believe it is indefensible. According to his opinion, St. Augustine teaches that if Adam and Eve had not committed the original sin, the sexual act between spouses would not include sexual pleasure any more than a handshake, just as childbirth would not have been painful:

St. Augustine, *The Literal Meaning of Genesis*, 416: “18. ...Why should we not suppose that before sin those two human beings were able to control and command their genital organs for the procreation of children in the same way as their other limbs, which the soul moves for all kinds of action without any trouble or any sort of prurient itch for pleasure? ...So why should it seem incredible that he made bodies for the first human beings of such a kind, that if they had not sinned and straightaway contracted a sort of disease of which they would die, just as they

commanded the feet when they went walking, so they could have commanded at will the organs that bring the fetus into being, so that it would have been neither sown in palpitating heat nor brought forth in piteous pain? Now, however, as the just deserts of their transgressing the commandment, they found the movement of that law fighting back against the law of the mind in the members of the body of that death they had contracted, a movement which marriage regulates, continence subdues and curbs, in order that just as the sin was turned into punishment, so the punishment might be turned into merit.⁶...

“6. ...I still cannot see what could have prevented their also being wedded with honor and bedded without spot or wrinkle (Eph 5:27) in Paradise, God granting this right to them if they lived faithfully in justice and served him obediently in holiness, so that without any restless fever of lust, without any labor and pain in childbirth, offspring would be brought forth from their sowing.”⁷

The main and what I believe to be the debate-ending argument that sexual pleasure is not a curse from God because of the original sin is that, according to that opinion, God would be the author of sin. He would be forcing spouses, no matter how good and honorable their intentions are, to commit sin if they want to have children since they cannot avoid the sexual pleasure that occurs during intercourse, especially the husband. But God is not the author of sin:

“Say not: He hath caused me to err: for he hath no need of wicked men. The Lord hateth all abomination of error, and they that fear him shall not love it...He hath commanded no man to do wickedly, and he hath given no man license to sin.”
(Eccus. 15:12-13, 21)

Hence I believe that sexual pleasure was ordained by God as a good thing, even in the Garden of Paradise before Adam and Eve sinned, when elicited rightly between spouses. Just as the pleasure that comes from eating is a good thing ordained by God when used rightly, and this pleasure existed in Paradise even when eating was not necessary for survival.

A curse that men do inherit from Adam and Eve when they committed the original sin is the concupiscence of the flesh (the venom of original sin that is in their flesh). This curse tempts men to lust after good passions by misusing or abusing them. Men must now fight and struggle, with the assistance of God’s grace, to control their good passions and avoid evil passions. This is the war of the flesh against the spirit that St. Paul speaks of, the concupiscence in his flesh that tempts him to sin:

“For I know that there dwelleth not in me, that is to say, in my flesh, that which is good. For to will, is present with me; but to accomplish that which is good, I find not...I find then a law, that when I have a will to do good, evil is present with me.”
(Rom. 7:18, 21)

Catholic Commentary on Rom. 7:17-18: “**Flesh:** The meaning of this passage is that although now healed and renewed by grace he could have a perfect desire of doing good; yet still on account of the evil of concupiscence dwelling in his flesh, he found not himself able to perform all the good he wished, because concupiscence was always urging him on to evil against his will.”

That is why St. Paul says that the body, because of the concupiscence in the flesh, has not yet benefitted from the redemption:

⁶ b. 9, c. 10.

⁷ b. 9, c. 3.

“We ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption of the sons of God, the redemption of our body.” (Rom. 8:23)

The good passions, then, become evil if used the wrong way by lusting after the good passions. When a man lusts after something (even a good thing or good passion), that thing or passion becomes an idol to him. It becomes more important than God who commands him not to sin; in this case, the sin committed by the misuse or abuse of good passions. And this lusting after a good passion makes him a slave to that passion so that he cannot control himself in this regard. His lusting after a good passion rules him and makes him do things that are not reasonable and commit other sins. Hence the man who does not control the good passion of eating and thus lusts after food becomes addicted to food (he becomes a glutton); the man that does not control the good passion of drinking alcohol becomes addicted to alcohol (he becomes an alcoholic); the man that does not control the good passion of sexual pleasure becomes addicted to sex (he becomes a sex pervert); the man who does not control the good passion of attaining knowledge becomes addicted to knowledge (he becomes an idolizer of the intellect); the man who does not control the good passion of attaining money and other possessions becomes addicted to money and possessions (he becomes greedy and selfish); the man who does not control the good passion of loving a family member becomes addicted to the family member (he becomes an idolizer of that family member, a lover of men more than of God): “He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me.” (Mt. 10:37) Hence the good passions are not evil, such as loving a family member, but the lusting after good passions is evil, such as by idolizing a family member and thus loving him more than God. This is what both Jesus the son of Sirach and Jesus Christ condemn:

“Go not after thy lusts, but turn away from thy own will.” (Eccus. 18:30)

“And others there are who are sown among thorns: these are they that hear the word, and the cares of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts after other things entering in choke the word, and it is made fruitless.” (Mk. 4:18-19)

Shame of nakedness after the original sin

Some who hold the allowable opinion that sexual pleasure is a punishment due to the original sin refer to the shame Adam and Eve experienced regarding their nakedness after they committed the original sin in which they covered their private parts. They believe that this indicates a motion in their private parts not present before, which they say is sexual pleasure. Hence, if they had not committed the original sin, sexual pleasure would not exist. I held this opinion before but hold it no longer. Here is a quote from my old opinion:

Richard Ibranyi, *Natural Family Planning Is Contraception*, Current Version 4/2009 [the newer version no longer contains this opinion]: “God had originally created the sexual act between man and woman to be no more pleasing to the flesh than a handshake, and childbirth was not to be painful. The emphasis on the flesh, both the momentary pleasure during the act and pain during childbirth, are effects of Adam and Eve’s original sin. After Adam and Eve committed original sin they covered their private parts indicating a violation had occurred in this area not intended by God. This quick, momentary pleasure during the sexual act placed the excitation of the flesh at the center of attention instead of the true cause, which is

the procreation of a child. Satan always promises a quick thrill while death lies underneath. This strange sensation that Adam and Eve experienced, this momentary flesh pleasure, was at the same time very shameful, something alien to them, to which they sensed a loss of control over their bodies. It is a misplaced and inordinate pleasure. Circumcision, which brings pain where a pleasure never belonged, is a sign that God reclaimed dominion over those that faithfully bore it, so that the devil may not tempt them with lust. The pleasure of the marital act was to be purely spiritual, the joy of bringing a godly child into the world who can be loved and return love, who would be a source of joy, comfort, and aid. The whole focus of attention during the marital act was to be solely the joy of bringing a godly child into their family and the world. Since the fall of Adam and Eve, the deep, spiritual love of bringing a soul, a human being, into the world had to compete with the pleasure of the flesh. It is a misplaced and inordinate pleasure that distracts from the intention of the marital act and is selfish in nature. Selfish, because gratification of the flesh had entered a realm where it does not belong. The motive of bringing a child into the world had to compete with the motive of self-gratification of the flesh. Spouses who allow the motive of self-gratification (fleshy lust) to usurp the motive of bringing a child into the world will be infected with the sin of self-love. They will not be able to truly love God, their children, or even themselves. *‘Men shall be...lovers of pleasure more than of God.’* (2 Tim. 3:1-5)”

One thing that refutes my old opinion is that God does reward men with pleasure when they do things necessary for survival. For example, eating is necessary for survival. One can eat bland food and live just as well as when he eats good-tasting food. Yet God has given and commanded men to eat many good-tasting foods, and even some that are not necessary for survival, such as wine. In the same way, procreation is necessary for survival. And God could have made the intercourse between spouses bland and thus with no sexual pleasure. Yet He did reward spouses with sexual pleasure during the marital act. Just as pleasure in eating the right way does not distract from the primary purpose of eating, which is survival, so also pleasure when performing the marital act the right way does not distract from the primary purpose of the marital act, which is procreation.

The Bible verse I used in the above quote to defend my old opinion actually refutes it: “Men shall be...lovers of pleasure more than of God.” (2 Tim. 3:1-5) It does not mean that men should not be lovers of pleasure but that men should not love pleasures more than God. Therefore, men should love pleasures but not more than they love God. If one loves a good passion, a good pleasure, more than God, then he sins for idolizing that pleasure.

The most important thing that refutes my old opinion is that it makes God the author of sin because God made sexual pleasure necessary for procreation. Hence if sexual pleasure is intrinsically evil and thus intrinsically sinful, then God is forcing spouses to sin if they want to have children. But God is not the author of sin:

“He [God] hath commanded no man to do wickedly, and he hath given no man license to sin.” (Eccus. 15:12-13, 21)

Whether or not sexual pleasure existed in the Garden of Paradise before Adam and Eve committed the original sin, it is certain that it existed after they sinned. And it existed in such a way that it was necessary for the propagation of the human race and hence must be a good thing or else God would be the author of sin because He would have made it impossible for spouses not to sin, no matter how good or honorable their intentions and actions are, when they have intercourse in order to have a child.

The shame Adam and Eve felt because of their nakedness was because concupiscence and thus lust entered their flesh, which now tempts spouses to have sexual intercourse with persons other than between themselves. Things now entered their mind and attempted to enter their heart which previous to their original sin never entered their heart or mind, things that were completely unknown to them.⁸ Their shame caused by their original sin was a safeguard against falling into lust and thus committing these sins. From this point forward, because of the concupiscence of the flesh, spouses must not unnecessarily look upon the naked private parts (which includes naked buttocks and naked female breasts) of anyone other than their own spouse or else they will be strongly tempted to commit sins of sexual lust with that person. In the Garden of Paradise, no such temptation existed; and thus if Adam and Eve had not sinned and man had remained in the Garden of Paradise, spouses would not even think or desire to have sexual intercourse with anyone other than their own spouse even though all men would be naked. This is what St. Augustine correctly teaches:

St. Augustine, *City of God*, 413: “Justly is shame very specially connected with this lust; justly, too, these members themselves, being moved and restrained not at our will, but by a certain independent autocracy, so to speak, are called ‘shameful.’ Their condition was different before sin. For as it is written, ‘They were naked and were not ashamed,’ not that their nakedness was unknown to them, but because nakedness was not yet shameful because not yet did lust move those members without the will’s consent; not yet did the flesh by its disobedience testify against the disobedience of man. For they were not created blind, as the unenlightened vulgar fancy; for Adam saw the animals to whom he gave names, and of Eve we read, ‘The woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes.’ Their eyes, therefore, were open, but were not open to this, that is to say, were not observant so as to recognize what was conferred upon them by the garment of grace, for they had no consciousness of their members warring against their will. But when they were stripped of this grace, that their disobedience might be punished by fit retribution, there began in the movement of their bodily members a shameless novelty which made nakedness indecent: it at once made them observant and made them ashamed. And therefore, after they violated God’s command by open transgression, it is written: ‘And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.’ ‘The eyes of them both were opened,’ not to see, for already they saw, but to discern between the good they had lost and the evil into which they had fallen. And therefore also the tree itself which they were forbidden to touch was called the tree of the knowledge of good and evil from this circumstance, that if they ate of it, it would impart to them this knowledge. For the discomfort of sickness reveals the pleasure of health. ‘They knew,’ therefore, ‘that they were naked,’ naked of that grace which prevented them from being ashamed of bodily nakedness while the law of sin offered no resistance to their mind. And thus they obtained a knowledge which they would have lived in blissful ignorance of, had they, in trustful obedience to God, declined to commit that offence which involved them in the experience of the hurtful effects of unfaithfulness and disobedience. And therefore, being ashamed of the disobedience of their own flesh, which witnessed to their disobedience while it punished it, ‘they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons,’ that is, cinctures for their privy parts; for some interpreters have rendered the word by *succinctoria*. *Campestris* is, indeed, a Latin word, but it is used of the drawers or aprons used for a similar purpose by the young men who stripped for exercise in the campus; hence those who were so girt were commonly

⁸ The concupiscence in their flesh also tempted them to lust after all the good passions, such as eating, drinking, love of family members, acquisition of possessions or knowledge, etc.

called *campestrati*. Shame modestly covered that which lust disobediently moved in opposition to the will, which was thus punished for its own disobedience. Consequently all nations, being propagated from that one stock, have so strong an instinct to cover the shameful parts, that some barbarians do not uncover them even in the bath, but wash with their drawers on. In the dark solitudes of India also, though some philosophers go naked and are therefore called *gymnosophists*, yet they make an exception in the case of these members and cover them.”⁹

On the Canticle of Canticles

The Canticle of Canticles is to be taken in two ways: literally and allegorically. Literally, it is a poem of love and intimacy between a husband and wife, a king and his queen. Allegorically, it is symbolic of the love God has for His holy Catholic Church, the love He has for the Blessed Virgin Mary (the spouse of the Holy Spirit), and the love Mary has for God. All Catholics are to love God and Mary in the same way Mary loves God and God loves Mary. If spouses are to rightly love, honor, and be faithful to one another, how much more must they love, honor, and be faithful to God, the author of all true love, honor, and fidelity. And this love, the love of God, not only brings joy and pleasure, but the greatest of all joys and pleasure. The legal sexual pleasure between spouses is compared to the spiritual pleasure Catholics experience when united in true love with God. The physical loving and intimate embraces of a husband and wife are compared to the spiritual loving and intimate embraces that God gives His faithful by His graces and other means. Both give a feeling of comfort, joy, warmth, and protection.

Sexual Intercourse Rightly Used between Spouses Is an Act of Love and Fidelity

Sexual intercourse between a husband and his wife, if used rightly, is not only for procreation and sexual pleasure but is also an act of mutual love and fidelity to one another. Even though Pius XI was an apostate antipope, he teaches the truth regarding this matter:

Apostate Antipope Pius XI, *Casti Connubii* (On Christian Marriage), 1930: “For in matrimony as well as in the use of matrimonial rights there are also secondary ends, such as mutual aid, the cultivation of mutual love, and the quieting of concupiscence which husband and wife are not forbidden to consider, so long as they are subordinated to the primary end and so long as the intrinsic nature of the act is preserved.”

Sexual intercourse between spouses is a physical expression of the spiritual bond that exists between them, that the two are as one:

“Have ye not read, that he who made man from the beginning, made them male and female? And he said: For this cause shall a man leave father and mother and shall cleave to his wife, and they two shall be in one flesh. Therefore now they are not two, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.” (Mt. 19:4-6)

⁹ b. 14, c. 17.

“So also ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife, loveth himself. For no man ever hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it as also Christ doth the church, because we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and shall cleave to his wife, and they shall be two in one flesh.” (Eph. 5:28-31)

Just as Eve came out of Adam’s flesh (his rib), so also all husbands and their wives are to be like two persons in one flesh:

“Then the Lord God cast a deep sleep upon Adam: and when he was fast asleep, he took one of his ribs and filled up flesh for it. And the Lord God built the rib which he took from Adam into a woman, and brought her to Adam. And Adam said: This now is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman because she was taken out of man. Wherefore a man shall leave father and mother and shall cleave to his wife, and they shall be two in one flesh.” (Gen. 2:21-24)

Catholic Commentary on Gen. 2:24: “**One flesh:** Connected by the closest ties of union, producing children, the blood of both. S. Paul (Eph. 5:23) discloses to us the mystery of Christ’s union with his Catholic Church for ever, prefigured by this indissoluble marriage of our first parents.”

Adam, in a sense, physically re-unites Eve to himself in sexual intercourse when rightly used by spouses. However, the first, most important, and necessary bond that makes husband and wife one is the spiritual bond, their spiritual love for one another that manifests itself in their everyday life and in all that they do. Spouses who truly love one another, love one another 24 hours a day and not just when they have sexual intercourse, which only takes up a very small portion of their time. Spouses who truly love one another are best friends:

“With three things my spirit is pleased, which are approved before God and men: The concord of brethren, and the love of neighbours, and man and wife that agree well together.” (Eccus. 25:1-2)

Spouses who truly love one another, love their souls infinitely more than they love one another’s bodies. They are willing to suffer and die for one another if they must. “Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” (Jn. 15:13) What good is a beautiful body if it has an evil soul? But what a great good is a virtuous soul even if it has a not-so-beautiful body:

“Praise not a man for his beauty, neither despise a man for his look.” (Eccus. 11:2)

Catholic Commentary on Eccus. 11:2: “**Look:** The beauty of the soul must be regarded.”

For example, a physically beautiful wife who has an evil soul and does not cook, clean the house, and take care of her husband and children is not only worthless but a great evil and burden, a disaster and whirlwind of evil within the family:

“There is no head worse than the head of a serpent: And there is no anger above the anger of a woman. It will be more agreeable to abide with a lion and a dragon than to dwell with a wicked woman. The wickedness of a woman changeth her face, and she darkeneth her countenance as a bear and sheweth it like sackcloth. In the midst of her neighbours her husband groaned, and hearing he sighed a little. All malice is short to the malice of a woman, let the lot of sinners fall upon her. As the climbing of a sandy way is to the feet of the aged, so is a wife full of tongue to a quiet man. Look not upon a woman’s beauty, and desire not a woman for beauty. A woman’s anger, and impudence, and confusion is great. A woman, if she have superiority, is

contrary to her husband. A wicked woman abateth the courage, and maketh a heavy countenance and a wounded heart. Feeble hands, and disjoined knees, a woman that doth not make her husband happy. From the woman came the beginning of sin, and by her we all die. Give no issue to thy water, no, not a little; nor to a wicked woman liberty to gad abroad. If she walk not at thy hand, she will confound thee in the sight of thy enemies. Cut her off from thy flesh, lest she always abuse thee.” (Eccus. 25:22-36)

“It is better to sit in a corner of the housetop, than with a brawling woman, and in a common house.” (Prv. 21:9)

Whereas a not-so-beautiful wife who cooks, cleans the house, and takes care of her husband and children is a great good and benefit to the family, a source of love, order, and peace:

“Happy is the husband of a good wife, for the number of his years is double. A virtuous woman rejoiceth her husband and shall fulfil the years of his life in peace. A good wife is a good portion; she shall be given in the portion of them that fear God, to a man for his good deeds. Rich or poor, if his heart is good, his countenance shall be cheerful at all times...

“A jealous woman is the grief and mourning of the heart. With a jealous woman is a scourge of the tongue which communicateth with all. As a yoke of oxen that is moved to and fro, so also is a wicked woman; he that hath hold of her is as he that taketh hold of a scorpion. A drunken woman is a great wrath, and her reproach and shame shall not be hid. The fornication of a woman shall be known by the haughtiness of her eyes, and by her eyelids. On a daughter that turneth not away herself, set a strict watch, lest finding an opportunity she abuse herself. Take heed of the impudence of her eyes, and wonder not if she slight thee. She will open her mouth as a thirsty traveller to the fountain, and will drink of every water near her, and will sit down by every hedge, and open her quiver against every arrow until she fail.

“The grace of a diligent woman shall delight her husband and shall fat his bones. Her discipline is the gift of God. Such is a wise and silent woman, and there is nothing so much worth as a well instructed soul. A holy and shamefaced woman is grace upon grace. And no price is worthy of a continent soul. As the sun when it riseth to the world in the high places of God, so is the beauty of a good wife for the ornament of her house. As the lamp shining upon the holy candlestick, so is the beauty of the face in a ripe age. As golden pillars upon bases of silver, so are the firm feet upon the soles of a steady woman. As everlasting foundations upon a solid rock, so the commandments of God in the heart of a holy woman.” (Eccus. 26:1-24)

“The beauty of a woman cheereth the countenance of her husband, and a man desireth nothing more. If she have a tongue that can cure, and likewise mitigate and shew mercy: her husband is not like other men. He that possesseth a good wife, beginneth a possession: she is a help like to himself, and a pillar of rest.” (Eccus. 36:24-26)

The same applies to good and evil husbands. What good is it for a wife to be married to a physically handsome husband who has an evil soul and thus is lazy, does not work, does not take care of his family and children, is a drunkard, or unjustly beats his wife and children. Infinitely better is the husband with a good soul and a not-so-handsome body.

However, there is nothing wrong with wanting a beautiful wife or a handsome husband as long as she or he has a good soul.

Without the spiritual bond (the true love of a husband for his wife, and the wife for her husband), there can be no true physical bond in sexual intercourse but only a sinful,

selfish bond of lust for both spouses or for the spouse who does not truly love his or her spouse.

The oneness of a husband and wife who truly love one another, in which each has a right over the other's body, also unites them in a bond of fidelity. Their bodies belong to one another and not to anyone else. Hence the object of their sexual pleasure is directly only toward one another and not toward anyone or anything else. True love and fidelity between husband and wife banishes any thought of sexual pleasure with anyone or anything else. Hence a husband who commits adultery does not truly love his wife and breaks the bond of fidelity with her and thus is not truly one with her. He is not only guilty of mortal sin for committing adultery but also for not truly loving his wife and for breaking the bond of fidelity with her (for breaking a solemn and binding oath and condition that spouses agree to before they get married). The same applies to a wife who commits adultery:

“So every woman also that leaveth her husband and bringeth in an heir by another: For first she hath been unfaithful to the law of the most High: and secondly, she hath offended against her husband: thirdly, she hath fornicated in adultery, and hath gotten her children of another man. This woman shall be brought into the assembly, and inquisition shall be made of her children. Her children shall not take root, and her branches shall bring forth no fruit. She shall leave her memory to be cursed, and her infamy shall not be blotted out.” (Eccus. 23:32-36)

St. Augustine, *On the Good of Marriage*, 401: “4. There is this further, that in that very debt which married persons pay one to another, even if they demand it with somewhat too great intemperance and incontinence, yet they owe faith alike one to another. Unto which faith the Apostle allows so great right, as to call it ‘power,’ saying, ‘The woman hath not power of her own body, but the man: again in like manner also the man hath not power of his own body, but the woman.’ But the violation of this faith is called adultery, when either by instigation of one's own lust, or by consent of lust of another, there is sexual intercourse on either side with another against the marriage compact: and thus faith is broken... Thus a woman, if having broken her marriage faith, she keep faith with her adulterer, is certainly evil...”

While sexual intercourse between spouses is an act of mutual love, it is only one act and not a necessary one for spouses to love one another. If this were not true, then spouses who vow to live chaste (such as St. Joseph and the Blessed Virgin Mary) and spouses who cannot have sexual intercourse because of age or some other reason would not be able to love one another. The true love between good spouses that live chaste and good spouses that do not live chaste is the same. The one act of mutual love expressed during sexual intercourse is only momentary; whereas, the spiritual love between spouses who truly love one another is 24 hours a day and expresses itself in all that they say and do. After all, no two spouses loved one another more than St. Joseph and the Blessed Virgin Mary, and they were chaste:

St. Augustine, *On Marriage and Concupiscence*, 419-420: “God forbid that the nuptial bond should be regarded as broken between those who have by mutual consent agreed to observe a perpetual abstinence from the use of carnal concupiscence. Nay, it will be only a firmer one, whereby they have exchanged pledges together, which will have to be kept by an especial endearment and concord,—not by the voluptuous links of bodies, but by the voluntary affections of souls... Wherefore, then, may not persons remain man and wife when they cease by

mutual consent from cohabitation; seeing that Joseph and Mary continued such, though they never even began to cohabit?”¹⁰

No Sexual Pleasure in the New World to Come

After Jesus Christ comes the second time and thus after this earth as we know it will be destroyed, He will re-create a new earth that will be more glorious than the Garden of Paradise was. On this new earth, there is no death and thus no killing. And men will not need to eat to survive. Yet men will still eat, just as Adam and Eve ate in the Garden of Paradise, not for survival but only for pleasure:

St. Augustine, *City of God*, 413: “The bodies of the righteous, then, such as they shall be in the resurrection, shall need neither any fruit to preserve them from dying of disease or the wasting decay of old age nor any other physical nourishment to allay the cravings of hunger or of thirst: for they shall be invested with so sure and every way inviolable an immortality, that they shall not eat save when they choose nor be under the necessity of eating while they enjoy the power of doing so... Our faith leaves no room to doubt regarding our Lord Himself, that even after his resurrection and when now in spiritual but yet real flesh, he ate and drank with his disciples, for not the power but the need of eating and drinking is taken from these bodies.”¹¹

On this new earth, procreation is no longer necessary and thus ceases to exist. Hence one might ask, Would not then God still allow spouses to enjoy sexual pleasure even though it is not necessary for procreation, just as humans are allowed the pleasure of eating even though it is not necessary for survival? The answer is no, because Jesus said that on the new earth to come, as is in heaven now, humans are no longer married:

“For in the resurrection they shall neither marry nor be married; but shall be as the angels of God in heaven.” (Mt. 22:30)

Hence there is no sexual pleasure in heaven and in the new world to come, not because procreation ceases to exist but because humans are no longer married.

¹⁰ b. 1, c. 13.

¹¹ c. 13, c. 22.