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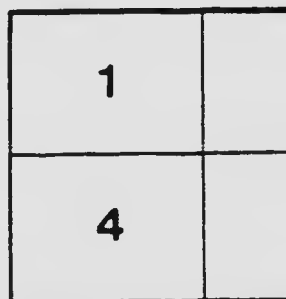
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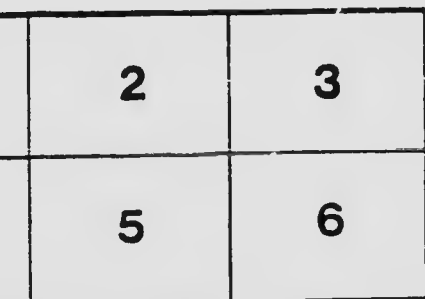
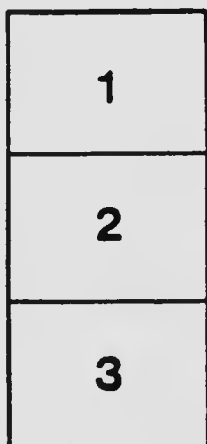
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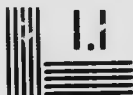
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Edward,  
By the Grace of God and Favor of  
The Apostolic See,  
Bishop of Saint John,  
To the Clergy and Laity of the Diocese:  
Health and Benediction in the Lord.

DEAR BRETHREN:

We have deemed it appropriate at the commencement of the holy season of Lent to address you on such parental duties as are essential to the happiness and sanctification of the Christian home. It has been truthfully observed that the welfare of human society depends upon well-ordered family life. Good homes are the bone and sinew of the country. The child who grows to manhood under the influence of a good home will, in all probability, be a faithful member of the Church and a useful citizen of the state. A good tree will bring forth good fruit. But a bad home is a nursery of bad men who dishonor religion and are a menace to the peace and happiness of the community.

We are reminded by the Fathers of the Council of Quebec that "the stability of the Christian home depends entirely on the indissolubility of the marriage tie." The Church gives us to understand that marriage is a divine institution, that its conditions have been laid down by Christ Himself. She repudiates divorce as contrary to the express prohibition of man's supreme Law-giver. "What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder."—*Mat. XIX.*, 3. She holds marriage to be a sacrament and the holiest of all earthly contracts. She

teaches that there are three parties to every marriage, namely: man, woman and Almighty God. It is because God is left out of consideration that so many marriages result in disrupted homes — homes where there is no mutual love and confidence, no sense of responsibility, naught but selfishness and discord. The God-given mission of the home is not to pander to the degraded instincts of luxury-loving men and women, but to give true men and true women to the world, to make them good and true by the example of virtuous parents who hold themselves accountable to God for the souls entrusted to their care.

The father, holding the place of God in the home, is the protector and guide of his wife and little ones. The Almighty who ordained the home virtues as the foundation of the moral world, owes it to Himself and to us that no father of a family shall find happiness or lasting honor except in the company of his wife or society of his children. He may find elsewhere a passing pleasure, but this is not happiness. If the father be a good man, if he has won the love of his wife and the respect of his children, his own fireside will be to him the sweetest and most attractive spot on earth.

As a rule, home is what the father makes it; hence it is highly necessary that he be, above all things, a sober man. Alas, for the ravages wrought in homes by the drunken habits of intemperate fathers! The abuse of intoxicating liquor is one of the greatest curses in the world to-day. Nearly all the misery, misfortune and poverty, that we witness are traceable to this evil. Who has not seen broken-hearted wives and mothers, children half-clad and suffering from cold and hunger, their education neglected and religious duties set aside, because of the beastly passion of him whom God intended to be the model of a Christian household? From his high position as the head of a happy family, from the pedestal whereon his moral virtues placed him, we have seen "God's noblest work" dragged down, a hideous libel on humanity, and a more hideous one on the divinity that had shaped him in innocence and worth. Can

the wife and children of such a man — happy? By no means. Deprived of that aid which, by every human and divine right, he is bound to secure to them, they are in a most miserable condition, and we have sometimes known it to happen that, unless God directed some charitable person to their humble abode, they might almost have perished of hunger, the unnatural father having taken the last dollar from the house to riot in the society of his boon companions. Is it any wonder that, in such cases, the sons, early in life, begin to imitate the father's wicked example?

There is probably only one sight more sad and repulsive than a drunken man, and that is a drunken woman. "Given to man as a helpmate and bosom friend to share his cares and lighten his toils," formed by God with a delicacy of feeling, a leaning to virtue and an aversion to vice, her fall, when she yields to the vice of intemperance, is something startling like that of Lucifer from heaven, and from an angel of light she is changed into an angel of darkness; instead of being the solace of her husband, she often becomes his weightiest trial; from being the pious parent of a family of saints, she often becomes the guilty mother of a generation of criminals.

We shall not enter, beloved brethren, into further details concerning the awful havoc that liquor makes in the Christian home, neither shall we dilate on the other vices that follow in its train, such as cursing and swearing, anger and malevolence, dishonesty and impurity; but we would remind fathers and mothers and all others whom it may concern, that, if they wish to draw upon themselves the blessing of God and to have peace in their households, they must be people of temperate habits, in fact it may be absolutely necessary for the vast majority of them to leave liquor alone. Assuredly the man who never touches intoxicating liquor will never become a drunkard. Much of the highest and purest happiness on earth, — health, plenty, long life, and the joys of the domestic circle — is the fruit reaped by those whose watchword is "total abstinence."



Christian marriage being solemnized in the face of the Church and consecrated by the divine blessing, the husband and wife most solemnly promise before God to fulfill their mutual duties. From the very beginning, both should endeavor to increase in true Christian love for each other. Without this, the married state is little less than a life-long bondage; with it it is certain to be a life-long joy even when the path to be trodden lies through hardships and struggles.

Saint Paul, writing to the Ephesians, says: "Let every one of you in particular love his wife as himself, and let the wife reverence her husband." — *V.* 33. And again: "Husbands love your wives as Christ loved the Church and delivered Himself up for it." — *V.* 25. When the Almighty in the terrestrial Paradise instituted marriage, the union of our first parents was ratified in these words: "Wherefore a man shall leave father and mother and shall cleave to his wife and they shall be two in one flesh" (*Gen. II.*, 24), Holy Scripture thus giving us to understand that the tie of conjugal affection which binds a man to his wife is stronger and closer than any other tie of blood, stronger even than that which binds him to those from whom he derived his being. Obligated as we all are to love each other because we are brethren and sisters in Jesus Christ, "members one of another," husband and wife have a special reason to fulfill this duty on the ground of the sacred union existing between them. Living under the same roof, united by the most intimate and indissoluble of ties, they ought to love each other for God and in God; each should have the happiness of the other at heart and learn to condone the other's failings; each should show the other sympathy and encouragement in bearing the crosses of life, and, whenever it is necessary for one to point out something reprehensible in the conduct of the other, this should be done in all patience and charity.

Husbands and wives owe each other mutual fidelity, and any violation of the solemn compact they made before the altar of God is one of the gravest sins. Those who are guilty of it

profane their most sacred obligations; they deprive themselves of the graces they need for the fulfillment of the duties of their state of life; they desecrate their own bodies which had been sanctified in Baptism; they dishonor Jesus Christ and profane the temple of the Holy Ghost.—*1 Cor. III.*, 16. They commit a crime of flagrant injustice to the innocent party, too horrid to be described. In the Mosaic law, the Almighty expressly commanded that the one guilty of such a crime should be put to death.—*Lev. XX.*, 10. In the Christian law, Saint Paul reckons it among the most detestable of crimes, and says in plain unmistakable words that adulterers shall not possess the kingdom of God.—*1 Cor. III.*, 10.

Parents have been charged with the important mission of teaching their children, by word and example, the way of God.

It is the will of the Almighty that a religious atmosphere should pervade the home in order that God may be known and loved, and that the seeds of virtue, implanted in the soul, may unfold and grow, may blossom and bear fruit that the child's heart may thus become the abode of purity and innocence. The human mind cannot be too early impressed with religious truths. The child is born into the world helpless; its faculties are undeveloped. Had the Almighty wished, He could have created it with its mind matured and in the full possession of its senses, but He has not seen fit so to do. He leaves the child to its parents and expects that they will bestow upon it such care and instruction when its faculties begin to unfold, as may be necessary to enable it to grow up in a Christian manner, that is to say, in the fear and love of God.

It is, therefore, the primary duty of the mother, because the care of the child belongs almost exclusively to her, to teach it its prayers at the earliest dawn of reason, and to see that it recites them the morning and evening of each day. In Baptism, the child was dedicated to God and to His service. What more imperative, then, than to teach it who its Lord and Master is, and what He commands and what He forbids, and how it should

endeavor to pass its whole life without offending Him? The rewards or punishments that await a child hereafter, according as it has done good or evil here, should also be deeply impressed on the infant mind.

As soon as it has come to about the age of seven years, every Catholic child is bound by the precept of the Church to assist at Holy Mass on Sundays, to go to confession, to be sufficiently instructed to receive its first Communion; consequently, fathers and mothers are bound to give such instruction at home as will enable their children to fulfill these duties.

But this alone is not sufficient. They are also bound to see that their little ones attend the parish Sunday School. There are parents who think it a matter of small consequence whether those under their charge attend Sunday School or not, but we warn both them and their children that they are unworthy of absolution in the sacrament of Penance as long as they persist in neglecting this duty. Oh, the lamentable consequences resulting from ignorance in religion! So many heresies and persecutions, so much forgetfulness of God, so much indifference to salvation! It will be found on the last day that many have been lost through ignorance, who, had they availed themselves of instructions when they were young, might have been saved. "Ignorance when avoidable," says Saint Augustine, "is sin."

It must not be forgotten that the most efficacious means for saving youth and reviving the Christian spirit in society is by frequent and daily Communion. The Blessed Sacrament is the antidote against sin, and the safe-guard of virtue. It is our earnest desire, therefore, that all the little lambs of our flock will come frequently to Christ for that nourishment which their souls require for their sanctification.

Here we are reminded to admonish parents to keep a strict supervision over their young in order to guard their innocence from danger. "Evil communications corrupt good manners,"

hence it is the duty of the father and mother never to allow their children to associate with bad company, always to keep them away from dangerous amusements, to exercise a vigilant care over what they read, and never permit them to go out at night unless they know them to be in good society. "If a child is left to itself," remarks a noted writer, "and allowed to run about the streets and to play with evil companions, and to indulge, without let or hindrance, all its wayward inclinations, propensities and passions, and to associate with whom it likes and to see what it likes, what possible chance has it of developing into a good, honest Christian, loyal to God and Church, to country and King."

In concluding our Pastoral Letter, we desire all those who have the care of the young to remember that no matter how early they may begin to give them a virtuous education, no matter how agreeably or sweetly they may conduct it, the example they set them is more powerful than precept in bringing them up for heaven. A child is naturally disposed to imitate the actions of its parents. It is more deeply influenced by what it observes and by what it can see with its own eyes, than by what it is told. If the parents, therefore, are not what they should be, what can we look for in the children? How can a child be expected to grow up sober, if it frequently sees its father under the influence of liquor? How can a child remain modest, pure and respectable, if its parents lead loose and dissolute lives? How can a child be gentle and patient and forgiving, if its parents quarrel and fight and use threatening and injurious language? And if its parents deliberately stay away from Mass on Sundays, or go seldom to the Sacraments, how can we expect the little one to be a fervent Catholic, or a frequent or daily communicant?

Fathers and mothers will have a strict account to render on the last day for the example they give their families. Our Lord has pronounced most terrible woes on whosoever scandalizes the young, and declares it were better for such a person that a mill-

stone were hanged about his neck and that he were drowned in the depths of the sea.—*Matt. XVIII.*, 6. Would that all whom God has charged with the care of others could say to them what Saint Paul once said to his spiritual flock: "Be ye also followers of me, as I also am of Christ."—*1 Cor. XI.*, 1. Then indeed would virtue abound; then would the kingdom of God make strides upon earth. It has been remarked that if every household would fulfil its exalted mission, the earth would be peopled with saints and all would recognize the blessings that flow to the world from the Christian family.

We earnestly exhort the faithful of the diocese to enter seriously into the spirit of Lent and profit by the many graces now at their disposal. We recommend that they offer their prayers and good works, with a view to obtaining for Europe, now so disturbed by war, "a speedy and favorable peace that shall be founded on understanding and not hatred, to the end that peace shall endure."—(*Royal Proclamation*).

The regulations for Lent will be the same as last year.

The Reverend Clergy will read this letter to their congregations on the first Sunday after its reception.

Given from our residence in Saint John on the feast of Saint Mathias, February 25, 1916.

† E. A. LEBLANC,  
*Bishop of St. John.*

WM. DUKE,  
*Chancellor.*



