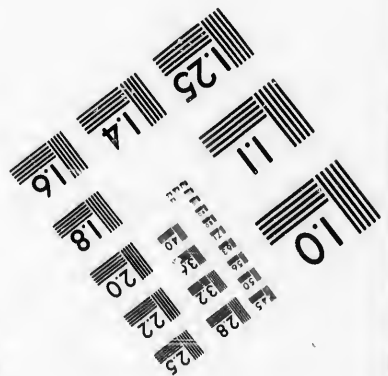
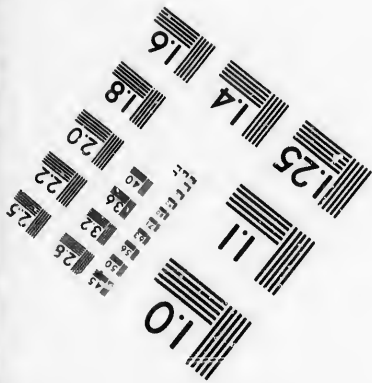
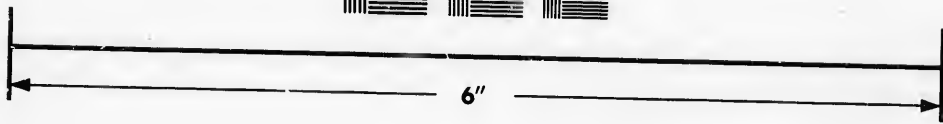
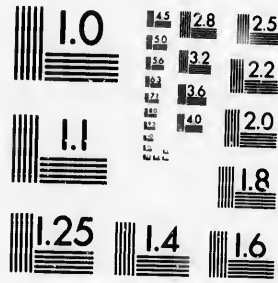


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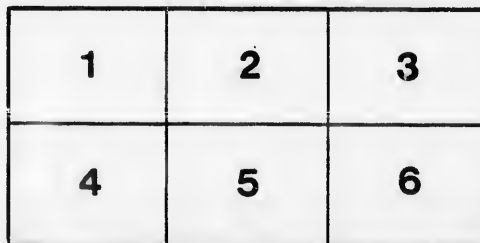
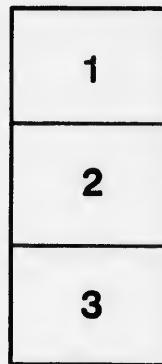
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PASTORAL LETTER

—OF—

His Lordship the Bishop of Toronto,
ON MATRIMONY.



John Joseph Lynch, by the Grace of God and by
the Authority of the Holy Apostolic See, Bishop of Toronto,
Assistant at the Pontifical Throne, &c., &c.

To the Faithful of Our Diocese, Health and Benediction.

According to our Diocesan Ordinances each Pastor is bound, once a year, to give an instruction to his parishioners on the holy Sacrament of Matrimony. This year, I undertake to perform this duty myself. This blessed source of a Christian Society, in those unhappy times, is attacked by the enemy of all good, and even so called laws are enacted to place that Divine Institution on a level with merely civil contracts. I wish to remind you that this Most Solemn Engagement that can be entered into in this life has for Author God the Father Himself. That He instituted it with Solemn Ceremonies and Covenants in the Garden of Paradise, between our first parents before their fall; that he made it an indissoluble union between two persons, a man and a woman; but that in course of time, through the hardness of the hearts of the people, Our Heavenly Father tolerated divorce for adultery. His Divine Son, Jesus Christ, who came to repair, and to re-edify the shattered constitution of fallen humanity, and to make all things new (Apoc.) recalled the union of man and woman to its primitive Sanctity, and indissolubility; and raised that union to the dignity of a Sacrament in His Holy Church, that the offspring of such marriages might be a holy nation, a Sanctified people, a royal priesthood; (1 Peter, ii. 9.)

God from whom all paternity proceeds on heaven and on earth, (Eph. iii, 15.) Created our first parent to his own image and likeness. He formed his body from the clay of the earth, but his Soul He created from His own Spirit. (Gen. xi. 7.)

"And the Lord God formed man of the slime of the earth, and breatheth into his face the breath of life, and man became a living soul." [Gen. ii, 7.] He breathed into him the breath of life; and a life so fruitful as to be transmissible throughout all generations to the end of time, by the ever acting agency of our Great Creator, God.

The dignity of human nature therefore is sublime, and no wonder that the Son of God would die to save it from death. It pleased the Divine Providence of God to provide Adam, the first parent and head of the human family, with an assistant and a companion to share his joys and happiness, or his misery, should he disobey the Divine commands. "And the Lord said: It is not good for man to be alone; let Us make him a helpmate like unto himself." [Gen. ii. 18.] And that this helpmate might be an integral part of himself, and that the unity might be complete. "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 bone, 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 cleave to his wife; and they shall be two in one flesh." [Gen. ii, 22.]

The idea of leaving father and mother proves that if our first parents had not fallen, the earth would be peopled with a sinless and happy generation. Remark, also, that God Himself gave away the bride, "He brought Eve to Adam, and blessed their union." Two in one flesh marks unity; and the leaving of father and mother to cleave to his wife marks, also, the breaking sacred and natural ties, to become a corporate body, consisting of a male and female. Such is the history of matrimony before sin and shame entered the world. It was between one and one, and was indissoluble, inasmuch as that when two are made one this one is indissoluble, except by death; and from this unity, as a rivulet from its source, springs the entire human family. Thus God instituted matrimony as a permanent state for life, till death should break the tie.

Our Divine Saviour came on earth to make all things new, and He called to its primitive condition the most solemn engagement for life, upon which depends the happiness of the married couple, and the proper education of their offspring. For a man and woman do not enter into the holy state of matrimony solely for their own individual happiness or advantage, but for that of their offspring also; and hence the Divine founder of matrimony did provide for both, by a permanent marriage tie, one with one exclusively and for life.

At the time of Christ the marriage tie was too often broken. The Jews sent away their wives without sufficient reason, often because another pleased them better. Our Lord Jesus Christ reprov'd the disorders and irregularities of the day, and especially that of divorce. In this He excited against Himself and His doctrine the prejudices of the people whom He came to convert, and especially that of the Pharisees. "And they came to Him, tempting Him, and saying: Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?" Our Divine Redeemer answered them by laying down the primitive law of His Heavenly Father on marriage. Have ye not read that He who made man in 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 shall be two in one flesh. Wherefore they are no more two, but one flesh. What, therefore, God hath joined together let no man put asunder. They objected to Him the permission of Moses, and said to Him why then did Moses command to give a bill of divorce, and to put away one's wife. But Our Lord said to them: Moses, in the old dispensation, "because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to put away your wives, but from the beginning it was not so." No divorce was permitted then; and I, promulgating a new law, say unto you "whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery, and he who shall marry her that is put away committeth adultery." His disciples say unto Him, "If the case of a man with his wife be so, it is not good to marry." He said to them: "All receive not this word but they to whom it is given." Matt. xix. 2 11. v. This Divine legislation on matrimony has been accepted by Christians who pretend loyally to follow all the teachings of Christ. It is a sad reflection, however, to think that many legislators pretend to interfere with this legislation on marriage by Christ, and with sacrilegious temerity try to undo the work of God by disjoining those whom God hath joined, thus introducing amongst a Christian people the Jewish dispensation of divorce, granted to those carnal people on account of the hardness of their hearts. It is alleged by some that when Christ said that, "whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication," He permitted divorce for fornication; or, in other words, that the crime broke the marriage tie. This is false,—Christ did not say so. He restricted the many causes which might induce a man to put away his wife to that of fornication. The Jews dismissed their wives for the most trivial causes, whereas only one was allowed by the law. (Deut. xxiv.) Then, tempting Him, they ask Him, "Can a man put away his wife for every cause?" This question evidently contains two distinct clauses. First. Can a man put away his wife for every cause? To this Jesus Christ answers, No; unless for fornication. Second. Can a man marry again after sending away his wife for the crime of fornication? or, in other words, does the sending away on account of fornication break

the marriage tie, thus leaving either party free to marry? To this our Divine Lord answers, "And he who shall marry her that is put away committeth adultery," which would not be the case if the marriage tie had been broken by the divorce; for a person who is free could not commit adultery by re-marrying. Hence Christ restores matrimony in the New Law to its primitive sanctity and oneness, and pronounces, "What, therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder." St. Mark narrates nearly in the same words as St. Matthew, this conversation with the Pharisees on matrimony, but makes no mention of the dismissal for fornication. St. Luke, in the xvi. chap., verse 18, gives a synopsis of the whole doctrine in one verse. "Every one," says he, "that putteth away his wife and marieth another committeth adultery, and he that marieth her that is put away committeth adultery."

Here we must remark that Christ promulgates His new doctrine in contradistinction to the old, and condescends to give lengthened explanations in a matter of such great importance, involving, as it does, the happiness of the human family. The disciples became almost alarmed about the doctrine, and, apart from the multitude, privately in a house, asked Him concerning the same thing; but our Divine Lord reiterates His new doctrine, and said to them: "Whoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. And if the wife shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery." (St. Mark x. 10.) The apostles received this doctrine from Christ, and preached it to their converts in its entirety. Notwithstanding their prejudices in favor of divorce which they had enjoyed for so many centuries by the toleration of God Himself in the old law, St. Paul, writing to the Romans, in chap. vii., 2, 3 v., enforcing the doctrine of His Divine Master, expressly says, "For the woman that hath a husband, whilst her husband liveth, is bound to the law; but if her husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. Wherefore, whilst her husband liveth, she shall be called an adulteress if she be with another man; but if her husband be dead, she is free from the law of her husband; so that she is not an adulteress if she be with another man." This law of not permitting divorce agitated all newly converted Christians. The Corinthians wrote to St. Paul, demanding explanations concerning the new doctrine of Matrimony and virginity. The holy Apostle answers all their questions. He commences by saying (1 Cor. vii.) "Now concerning the things whereof you wrote to me," &c. "But to them that are married," continued the Apostle, "not I but the Lord commandeth that the wife depart not from her husband; and if she depart, that she remain unmarried, or be *reconciled* to her husband: And let not the husband put away his wife." These words of the holy Apostle of the Gentiles need no comment; they are plain and clear. The woman is to remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband. This indissoluble union of man and wife was not left by its Divine Author de-

void of grace. He raised this natural contract to the dignity of a sacrament in His Divinely constituted Church; and condescended to bless by His presence, and with that of His Blessed Mother, a marriage performed in Cana of Galilee; at which, also, He commenced that series of wonderful miracles by which He manifested His glory, and gained over His disciples to believe in Him. St. Paul, explaining the duty of husband and wife, declares their union to be a sacrament. (Eph. v.) "Let women be subject to their husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is head of the wife, as Christ is Head of the Church. He is the Saviour of his body. Therefore, as the Church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be subject to their husbands in all things. Husbands love your wives, as Christ also loved the Church, and delivered Himself up for it, that He might sanctify it, cleansing it by the laver of water, in the word of life; that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. 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: for 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 adhere to his wife, and they shall be two in one flesh. This is a great *Sacrament*; but I speak in Christ and in the Church." The Apostle here speaks only of marriage between Christians duly baptized in Christ and members of His body, the Church; but a marriage between a Christian and an unbaptized person may be dissolved for certain reasons mentioned by the Apostle in the same Chapter. The foregoing texts amply prove the unity and indissolubility of matrimony; and no wonder, then, that sacramental or special graces are required by married persons to enable them to perform their several important duties for a life-time, with the same party. They must love and cherish each other with Christian charity; they must carry each other's burdens, and put up with each other's humors, and weaknesses: for no two persons have similar dispositions: it is so ordained by Almighty God. They must bring up, support and educate properly the offspring that God may send them, and so conduct themselves through the various vicissitudes of life, as not to render themselves unworthy the honor and reverence due to them from their children. And as natural and moral defects are transmissible through nativity to the offspring, powerful and special graces are required to live holily and chastely, in all self-restraint, that those children may be fitted for good citizens of our earthly habitation, and for saints in the realms of our Father who is in heaven.

The Angel Raphael indicated, Chastity to Tobias, that sound children might be born. [Tobias, vi, 21.] This holy union between a man and his wife has all the constituent parts of a Sacrament.

1st. It has God for its author, minister and witness, His Divine Son Jesus Christ confirmed it in the new law, and raised it to the dignity of a Sacrament, and said "what God hath joined let no man separate."

2nd. The marriage contract is an outward sign to which grace is attached. It is the symbol of the union between Christ and His Church, which is cemented by the abundance of grace infused into it. So from the union "in the Lord" of man and wife in lawful wedlock flows, a special grace, called Sacramental, to the married couple. Hence persons should look upon marriage not according to carnal propensities, or worldly fortune or social position, for in these there is often too much misery; but according to its Divine institution and its dignity in Christ, "Marriage honorable in all," [Heb. xiii, 4.] that is in all those who honor that blessed state.

Catholics, on entering into this responsible and honorable position, should have proper intentions, have their consciences cleansed from sin, and be in the state of grace, in friendship with God. They should say with the young, [Tobias, vii, 5.] "we are children of Saints, and we must not be joined together like heathens, who know not God." The Church in the name of Christ imparts special blessings on the marriage contract, and adopts the actual words of the venerable Raguel giving in marriage his daughter Sara to the young Tobias. [vii, 15.] "And taking the right hand of his daughter he gave it into the right hand of Tobias, saying: the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, be with you, and may he join you together and fulfil his blessing in you." True marriages are planned in Heaven, says the old proverb, doubtless from that prayer of the servant of Abraham, who was sent to seek a wife for Isaac. He prayed that he might find *her* out whom the Lord had *prepared* for his master's son. [Gen. xxiv, 44.] From the very commencement of the Church, marriage was considered honorable and sacred. The intervention of the priest, the minister of God, was always sought, when possible, to bless it; and divorce was always considered unlawful and wicked, and asked from carnal and wicked motives. St. Augustine, in a short phrase, characterises it; "Marriage from God, divorce from the devil." In the whole legislation of the Church we do not find that a marriage lawfully contracted and consummated was ever dissolved. History informs us of applications being made by the most powerful Princes; nay, the supreme Pastor of the Church tolerated whole kingdoms to separate themselves from the one fold, and true shepherd, rather than betray the sacred doctrine of our Divine master, who has removed the bond of true matrimony from all legislation of this world, when he said: "what God has joined let no man separate." There are social reasons of the highest order against divorce. The general laws for the good of all are not to be abrogated for occasional personal grievances. Scandals will come, [Mat. xviii, 7.] but

is the framework of society to be shattered that individuals may be pleased? This, no wise legislation will permit.

We will now advert to the natural contract to see does divorce enter into it. A man and woman, after much deliberation, pledge their faith to one another under the most solemn circumstances, before the altar of God, and in presence of friends and relations. At that solemn moment they pledge for life. Would they pledge only for a time? What parent would give away the daughter of his heart to a man for a while, as long as she pleased him? In the Episcopal Church service and, we presume, in that of other Protestant denominations which have sprung up after them, the words of the marriage promise are substantially the same. "*I take you for my wedded wife, &c., &c., till death us do part*, according to God's holy ordinance." The minister having asked them previously the question wilt thou have, &c., &c., and keep thee only unto *him* or *her* as long as ye *both shall live*. The answer is "I will." These words: "*as long as both shall live*," and "*until death us do part*," sound like a Catholic contract of marriage, dissoluble only by death. A divorce permitted after this has a parallel in Protestant doctrine. When they interpret the text: *This is my body*, to mean This is *not* my body.

Let divorce be put as a condition in the marriage contract, and we ask what lady would accept it? The doctrine of divorce keeps the marriage bond in a continual state of uneasiness. There is no passion stronger and more capricious and fickle than carnal love. We hear of mothers abandoning their husbands and children for other men, and fathers acting the same unnatural part towards their wives and offspring. This unholy and cruel flame of unnatural love is fanned by the unhallowed Legislative permission of divorce. Were marriage indissoluble, the first assaults of forbidden love would be repelled—its approach would receive no encouragement—there would be no yielding little by little to the tempter, since doing so, would entail misery and disgrace upon them and their children in this world, and eternal unhappiness on the guilty party in the next. It is easy to see that the idea of divorce encourages adultery, cruelty, desertion, &c.; now the idea of non-divorce deadens all, by a flat denial. Another social reason may be drawn from the injury divorce inflicts, especially on the weaker sex—the woman. Our Lord "wonderfully fashioned human nature, and more wonderfully restored it." He raised up woman to a high dignity in making the Immaculate Mary his own mother, and woman on paradisaical terms with man. In the new law, woman is, by matrimony, ennobled in the eyes of God and man. The children of a good mother rise up and call her blessed (Prov. xxxi. 28); but let her be *divorced* from her husband, she loses the respect of all—she is deteriorated, she falls from a dignified condition. The fate of children of divorced parents is rendered dishonored and miserable. Of all creatures, man comes into this world in a most helpless condition, and remains so for a long time. The child re-

quires the close attention of the mother, and both require the care and labor of the father. Let divorce separate the parents, then how unhappy is the lot of the child. To which of his parents will he turn for support, or how is he to render the honor due to parents?

We have heard of enraged sons pointing revolvers at the breast of their father, and threatening to shoot him, should he not return to their mother. Will the mother bring her daughter to her new husband? and the husband his son to his new wife after divorce and a new marriage? Poor children! Were you consulted before birth you would rather not be born than of such parents.

It is urged in favor of divorce, that it would be intolerable for the innocent party to be obliged to remain with the criminal. To this We say, a separation from bed and board is permitted for causes which We need not now enumerate, and this law meets that difficulty. It is further alleged, that it is hard for the innocent party to remain unmarried.

There are, it is granted, individual cases of hardship, as there are individual cases of maladies and accidents; but general laws for the good of the whole community must take their course; and individuals must pray, must forbear, must mortify their passions and concupiscences, and God, who never "permits any one to be tempted above his strength," will comfort, and give them victory.

Divorce is the offspring of unbridled passion, and the frequency of divorce argues hasty and carnal marriages. We rejoice, that the Catholic Church, true to the mission of her Divine Spouse, has at all times and under all circumstances, steadfastly resisted with all her power any infringement of the Divine institution of Matrimony; and that her children notwithstanding the legal inducements held out to them, have always obeyed that Law. Some have been found who have transgressed it; but they, by the fact, have incurred the excommunication of the Church, or have apostatized.

We warn our people against the evil examples that surround them, and we would remind them, that it is an article of faith solemnly defined by the Church that the Sacrament of Matrimony is indissoluble among Christians, and that no Christian legislator can conscientiously aid in framing a law of divorce for a Christian community. Let him bear in mind the sentence of our Lord, so often quoted, "What God hath joined let not man separate."

† JOHN JOSEPH,
Bishop of Toronto.

*Given at St. Michael's Palace, on the Feast of the
Espousals of the Blessed Virgin Mary and St.
Joseph, January 23rd, 1869.*

