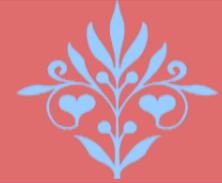


THE IMMACULATA



Father talks on Women and the Emotional Life

After the fall of Adam and Eve there were four wounds; the wound of the intellect, the malice of will, weakness or infirmity and concupiscence. Today we have another problem which affects women and it is the question of emotions. Emotions are not strictly speaking in the will, they affect the will and the intellect if they are not put in check. They are in our bodily make up and can come from many different things.

Emotions were given to us by God in order to help follow the intellect. When we see something which is good, it is not enough to want to achieve it, we have to be urged on. Much like food has a flavour which makes us want to eat it, otherwise it wouldn't interest us. Emotions apply to our soul in achieving the good. Some of the basic emotional reactions to a perceived good are love, desire, joy courage and hope. Towards something we perceive as evil or bad are hatred, aversion, sadness, fear, anger and despair.

With this reality, knowing full well that the mind and body may produce the emotions in an almost independent manner. Dreams, subconscious impressions and functioning of the glandular system are responsible for many emotional states which cannot be explained by the ordinary activities of intellect and will.

The emotions contribute motively to the gaining of many merits and avoiding many occasions of sin. **The emotions can be a great help or a great hindrance.** The emotions are neither meritorious nor sinful in themselves for their action has moral significance only in relation to the part they play in the exercise of virtue or sin.

Is a highly emotional nature a spiritual asset or a spiritual liability? Well, it may be either. The determinant is the manner in which one controls; if you are following reason it is going to be a great help, if it is not following reason it is going to be an emotional rollercoaster.

Understood, directed and controlled emotions can give great assistance to the soul in achieving its highest aspiration. **Emotions must be directed because if we are not in control, it will lead us to having emotional rollercoasters making us mentally ill.** We see people in life who have been sensitive and touchy, bit by bit if they don't control that they can make their own life a disaster and the home life of those around them a disaster; everyone has got to walk on egg shells around them because they are disordinate in their emotional life.

Since the emotions are largely a product of physical nature, they are capable of draining away vital powers of strength and stamina, just as intense physical efforts or sufferings might do. **An apathetic or, worse still, a chronically depressed or neurotic**

The Saints took the expression 'always the same'

state of mind may be the result due to the constant disturbance by the disordered emotions.

For this reason **the Saints took the expression 'always the same'**. This is what our attitude should be, always the same. After the fall, women by nature want to rebel and want to rebel against the authority of her husband. Therefore when there is a desire to resent authority and it is added to the emotions, they take emotional reactions to situations as a way of trying to manipulate the situation. **We may try to sulk or give the silent treatment because we are not getting our way. We are using our emotions to achieve what we want disordinately.**

For example you see something that is difficult but when you add to it the emotion of joy you find that you add a blessing, someone who is always joyful even when they are doing something difficult makes it seem easy.

That is why the words sacrifice and suffering seem like dirty words to us but to make it seem like a beautiful word is to do it cheerfully, if you are suffering cheerfully, **if you are doing your hard work cheerfully in your home and carrying a cross of a difficult husband or whatever it may be but it seems like it is easy because of the emotion of joy that you added to it** which means you are directing your emotions to help you achieve these difficult things.

If you add that to your marriage and use your emotions with reason you will have a beautiful marriage, if you misuse them and start sulking and pouting then you will have an unhappy marriage. The practical application is that you must suffer cheerfully. You must rationalise if you are justly upset about this or is it just sulking. God did not give us emotions to be suppressed or frustrated, **the Catholic concept is to channel and direct emotions in order to be the best person that God has made us to be.**

Our emotions must always be subject to the moral virtues of Prudence, Justice, Fortitude and Temperance, this is because of the manner in which the emotions influence attitudes and decisions and because of the support or opposition to the practice of virtue which they can provide. For example in a marriage or a friendship, it has to be ordered in such a way, if there is a disorder it has to be corrected. We cannot turn a blind eye; the virtues of integrity, prudence, charity and justice have to guide it.

The emotions must be directed under the influence of reason, in this way we are acting manfully but at the same time joyfully and cheerfully, using the emotions as God wanted us to use them.

How to Practice Humility by Fr E. Dunne, CSSR.

Humility does not mean being weak and cowardly. The Saints were humble, yet they were strong minded. Humility does not mean telling everyone your mistakes. It is humility honestly to admit them, but you are not bound to publish them. Humility does not mean looking dejected or being poorly dressed. You may be poor yet detestably proud. You can appear to be on top of the world and still be humble.

Humility is a virtue and so implies strength – strength of soul. It means you have the courage to recognise these three things:

- That **you are God's child, wholly dependent on Him;**
- That **any good you have - brains, good looks, good fortune, comes from Him;**
- That **the only things you can really call your own are your sins.**

This description of humility alone shows how necessary it is. It is the foundation of all virtues. Without fundamental humility you will make little headway with the other virtues. You need humility in order to be sorry for your sins, to be pure, to be obedient, to love God.

If you recognise these three fundamental truths on which humility is based, you will be humble, but you won't feel humble. At the worst you'll feel miserable, and at the best you will be quietly trustful, leaving yourself in God's hands.

With this attitude before God, you will find it relatively easy to practice humility in your life. In these ways:

1. Renew your sorrow for your sins many times during the day and at your evening prayers. If you should fall into a new sin - impatience, lack of charity, impurity, *humble* yourself before God; saying: *"Dear God, see how weak I am. I am sorry for having-offended your goodness. I detest my sins."*

2. When you are tempted to criticise others and recount their faults and sins, remember that before God you are probably more blameworthy, because you are better instructed in Christian doctrine, and have received more graces. Possibly the people you criticise, in the things which appear sinful, do not commit any sin at all, because of ignorance or inadvertence. It is humility to judge oneself and to leave the judgement of others to God.

3. Do not try to reform others by nagging at them. This applies especially to reforming your husband. He may not be perfect, but neither are you a model of all virtues. You will do far more good by gentleness, deference, prayer and good example.

4. When you receive an insult, a harsh word, a contemptuous remark, a 'poisonous' glance, or the silent treatment that makes you think people despise you, think of Our Blessed Lord in His Passion. This is the only thing that will relieve the pain of a wounded heart. When you accept such spiritual suffering in union with the like sufferings of Jesus, you are on the road to holiness. There is no room for vanity in this because you will feel that it is only He who supports you and strengthens you. Left to yourself you know you would launch into bitter, revengeful words, hurt and angry thoughts that would spell the death of many virtues. It often happens that lights and insults are not intended, yet many women wreck their chances of growing in union with God because of their sensitiveness and proneness to taking offence. Their real trouble is lack of humility. If they thought more of Our Divine Model they would learn from Him how to be humble, a wonderful peace would come to them, and strange as it may seem, their personalities would flower, and they would become more likeable to all!

"Learn of Me" says Jesus, *"for I am meek and humble of heart."*

Cardinal Newman's Prayer

Dear Lord, help me to spread Thy fragrance everywhere I go. Flood my soul with Thy spirit and life. Penetrate and possess my whole being so utterly that all my life may only be a radiance of Thine. Shine through me and be so in me that every soul I come in contact with may feel Thy presence in my soul. Let them look up and see no longer me but only Thee, O Lord! Stay with me, and then I shall begin to shine as Thou shinest; so to shine as to be a light to others. The light O Lord will be all from Thee; none of it will be mine; It will be Thou, shining on others through me. Let me thus praise Thee in the way Thou dost love best, by shining on those around me. Let me preach Thee without preaching, not by words but by my example, by the catching force, the sympathetic influence of what I do, the evident fullness of the love my heart bears to Thee!

The Wife Desired is an Inspiration to Her Husband

John was dead tired as he left work for home late one Monday afternoon. His physical fatigue partly accounted for his low spirits. He felt that he was on an economic treadmill. He was getting nowhere. Married five years he and Aeleen and the two little ones were still cooped up in a miserable little four room birth control trap of a flat. And worst of all they had saved pitifully little for their own home. It was not like John to quit.

John was not giving up this particular Monday night either. Yet he was worried about the future. He did not seem to be getting anywhere. He had cast about in his mind for some solution till he was in a mental whirl. Should he look for a part time job on the side? Should he quit his job, take the plunge, and go in with Joe Burns on that gas station? He hated to vex Aeleen with these problems. She had the housework and the children. His was the responsibility of decision.

As he reached for the kitchen door knob, he paused. A dark cloud passed over his face. Aeleen had no bargain in him. She was the beauty of her whole school. Intelligent and bubbling over with personality she could have done much better.

As the door swung open, Aeleen was wiping a bit of spilled milk from the floor. One knee was on the floor; the other balanced Michael, the culprit whose mess she was cleaning up. Her face came up to meet John's. It was all smiling. The hug and the kiss told him that no one else in all this world was as welcome to step through that kitchen door. She noticed that he held her just a little longer than usual. "He needs me this evening more than ever," she sensed. "And what a comfy feeling to know one is needed."

That evening Aeleen fulfilled with colours flying the greatest function of a wife. She was his inspiration. She quickly drove the black devils of defeatism from his troubled mind. Before bedtime he was ready like Cyrano de Bergerac, to fight giants. Her confidence in him was complete, not that she did not have to chase out disturbing doubts now and then about his capacities. She was much in love with John and knew his love. This mutual love made it easier for her to discipline her mind, so that her whole being evidenced her assurance in him. Come what might John was her man and he was the best in the world for her.

Thoughts constant and deep have a way of manifesting themselves especially to one spiritually tuned in to the thinker. Aeleen's faith, quietly evidenced in her husband, renewed his courage. He would not fail her. Aeleen was God's manifestation to him of all that was good and beautiful. Like David, the psalmist, he felt that, if Aeleen was with him, who was against him?

Aeleen made him conscious that he was the greatest man in the world for her money. There was no pretense in Aeleen's admiration for John. She loved him deeply. He was her sunshine and the light blinded her from seeing anyone else. It was no effort for her to stifle within her soul any invidious comparisons between John and other husbands seemingly more successful. On the surface, the husbands of some of her acquaintances might be more successful. Some of them obviously commanded much more income. "So what?" fought back Aeleen within herself. "It takes more than that to make a husband. John may not be on fire, nor the most gifted person, but take him for what he is, all in all, he is a man."

From this brief little picture of Aeleen and John, it is obvious that the ideal wife is much more than a companion, a good housekeeper, a good cook, and a good mother. She is an inspiration. Unless she is this to her husband there is danger that all the other fine aspects of her role as wife will be wasted in final failure.

The first purpose of this chapter should be to convince all wives that they have been endowed by God with the ability to inspire their husbands. Many wives do not seem to realize their potential power in this respect. It has been a revelation to me to find out how many wives do not have any concept of this important function of a wife. No doubt that is why we are both so unfortunate as to meet at the Chancery.

The world is quite a bit what women make it. If our sojourn here below is a triumphal parade to the tune of swinging music, to women go the bouquets. If it is a forced march through a vale of tears, to our lady friends go the brickbats. On the one hand we have our Blessed Lady. On the other hand we have to contend with Eve. Women have a way about them of sweeping men on to the heights of nobility or of plunging them into the depth of degradation. To women God has given a mysterious power of bringing out the best or the worst there is in a man. History and literature reminds us of a multitude of women who activated this latent force within themselves and thus provided the motivation and inspiration of great accomplishments.

Men left to themselves too long tend to become rough, brutish, and even evil. I saw enough of this in the Army during the two years overseas with the same outfit. There was something vital missing in the lives of these soldiers. It was the influence of their mothers, their sisters, their wives, and their sweethearts. The deterioration of the soldiers overseas was slow and gradual but still very definite. The great mass of mankind finds it pretty difficult to climb very much above its environment. An all male environment is not good for a man over a long period of time. God never intended for the average man to so live. Eve appeared on the scene soon after Adam.

The ideal wife gives comfort and encouragement when needed. She is wise with a woman's intuition, so at times she pricks his pride subtly to enable him to rise to some particular situation. Always he has her understanding. She shows her sympathy without being sorry for him. Above all, she never allows him to feel sorry for himself.

There are times when she senses that her best contribution is silence. Her presence is all she can give, and it is all he needs. He is upset, out of sorts, confused, and angry with himself. She will not add to his turmoil with advice or suggestions. Patiently she waits, until he comes down to earth. Sometimes she is at a loss for what to say or do to help him. So she says and does nothing. Her best efforts at inspiration and encouragement may meet with failure and even rebuff. She is human and feels the hurt, but valiant is the word for her. She can be blue and down over his lack of response, but because she is strong of heart she bounces back with resilience for another day and its tasks. She does not run and hide from problems. If an understanding must be reached over some situation or other, she does not hesitate to thrash the matter out with him. Yet she never needlessly worries him. Some wives worry their husbands into an early grave, they themselves remaining around to collect the dividends of lonely old age.

Taken from The Wife Desired by Fr Leo J Kinsella

The Great Blessings of a Large Family *by Pope Pius XII*

Large families are the most splendid flowerbeds in the Church's garden where, in a fertile soil, joy and holiness grow up and ripen together. God intends every home, even the smallest, to be a harbour of spiritual peace. But there is a profound difference here: for here the number of children is not much greater than one, this intimate yet life-giving sense of peace has something sad and pale about it; it lasts for a shorter time, is perhaps more uncertain and often over clouded by secret fears and doubts. Quite different is the serene happiness of families with a large number of children.

A well founded joy, the sure sign of God's blessing, overflows on all sides. And although the mothers and fathers of these families are besieged with continual worries, there are no traces of deep anxiety or of the fear which comes at the thought of an eventual return to a lonely life. While there are children about the house and its walls re-echo to the sound of their voices or those of the grandchildren, parents never seem to lose their own youth.

The additional work, the greater sacrifices and the renunciation of any expensive forms of entertain-

ment are largely compensated, even here below, by the abundance of affection and great hopes that fill their hearts, without however overwhelming them. And these hopes soon become facts-the day when the eldest daughter begins to help the mother by looking after the latest baby, or the day when the eldest boy returns proudly home with his first wage-pocket. That day will be especially blessed by the parents, for now they are no longer threatened by the prospect of a miserable old age and are sure of receiving one reward of their sacrifices.

The many children, in their turn will not know the boredom of loneliness or the disadvantage of having to live only with grown-ups. It is true that at times their very number may lead to a lively difference of tastes and that quarrels may lead to short-lived storms: however, when these are superficial and brief, they help all the more in the formation of character. Children in large families are their own teachers, teaching themselves responsibility for their own actions, mutual respect, the need to help each other, frankness and generosity. For them the family is a trial run for the more demanding and difficult world outside.

Training Your Little Ones

Training your little ones cannot be learned in a day, but it can and must be learned *day by day*. The wise parent makes few rules, gives few commands, but insists upon their being carried out. A properly trained child of two has the beginning of the notion of obedience. Parents must seize the chances as they appear to teach obedience definitely.

Suppose Mum says: "Baby, pick up the ball." Baby laughs or pokes the ball further away. Mum says: "No, bring the ball." Mum looks serious. Baby brings the ball. Mum smiles, says "Good baby," kisses him and makes him feel happy. Suppose that after two attempts baby does not bring the ball. What then? You may take the ball, put it into baby's hands and go through the motion of his giving it to you. Then bestow smile and kisses.

With a child of two it is usually foolish to fight a long battle the first time. Some mischievous tots think you are playing a game with them. It is better to distract them, push the ball out of sight, and do something different. In a few weeks try again. Do not make an issue of the incident. But make sure that after two or three trials you win. A smiling command will usually produce the ball. It must be clear that you are in authority.

Taken from Catholic Family, December 1990