

Study Guide



Made For The Common Good

A CATECHETICAL AND EDUCATIONAL AID ON
MARRIAGE AND THE COMMON GOOD



MARRIAGE
Unique for a Reason



ABOUT THE ART

Saints Joachim and Anne are the father and mother of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Mary is the fruit of their marriage. By a singular grace of God in view of the merits of Jesus, she was preserved from all stain of Original Sin from the moment of her conception. Thus it is in the context of married life and conjugal love that Mary is prepared to receive the Divine Logos, the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ our Lord. Jesus is the Logos, the "Reason" at the heart of all reason and truth, including the truth of marriage. The marriage between Joachim and Anne is a significant witness to why marriage is "unique for a reason."

The Subcommittee for the Promotion and Defense of Marriage is grateful to the artist Rev. Marko Rupnik for the use of this image.

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United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

MARRIAGE: UNIQUE FOR A REASON

The *Made for the Common Good* Study Guide was developed as a resource and approved by Bishop James D. Conley, Chairman of the Subcommittee for the Promotion and Defense of Marriage of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). It was authorized for publication by the undersigned.

Msgr. J. Brian Bransfield
General Secretary, USCCB

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Introduction: What is the Common Good?

“The family founded on marriage is an irreplaceable natural institution and a fundamental element of the common good of every society.”

- St. John Paul II¹

Marriage, family, and the common good are bound together. They are all fundamental parts of the human experience: love between a man and a woman; the procreation of children; and the community that both forms and is formed by families. Today, when these basic realities are questioned and even redefined, it is vital to rediscover their meaning and work toward their fulfillment.

The common good is “the good of ‘all of us,’ made up of individuals, families, and intermediate groups who together constitute society.”² Every one of us contributes to the functioning of society as a whole, so we all bear some responsibility for the common good and should work together for it. Like the old saying that two hands are better than one, people who come together in community are able to accomplish much more for each person than any individual would on his or her own. We need one another to become fully who we are

called to be. Marriage as the union of husband and wife is the first “community.”³ It is foundational not only to the family but to the larger community made up of many families and to society as a whole.

Marriage serves the common good in many ways, but it is probably best understood when viewed from the perspective of children. A child is formed from the relationship of a man and a woman and in most cases is raised within this relationship. Here, in the context of this family, a child learns what it means to live, love, and forgive. While no family is perfect, a family built upon the solid foundation of lifelong marriage provides something for a child that no other relationship or institution can: a mom and a dad united in the covenant of marriage. In order to understand the essential contribution that marriage makes to the common good, it is vital to recognize that marriage is the only institution that unites a man and a woman together and to any children that come from their union.

Children deserve to know where they come from, and in ordinary circumstances, to be cared for by the mother and father who brought them into existence.⁴ This is a fairly common sense view and leads to the conclusion that we should be working together to support and strengthen natural marriage. Since the importance of natural marriage can no longer be taken as a given, we must relearn it and invite others to do so as well.

This study guide accompanies the video entitled [*Made for the Common Good*](#), the fourth and final video in the [*Marriage: Unique for a Reason*](#) series. The first video, [*Made for Each Other*](#), centered on the nature of sexual difference and how it is essential to the unique relationship of marriage. The second video, [*Made for Life*](#), examined how openness to the gift of a child is also an essential element of marriage. Marriage is not closed in upon itself but rather opens the

man and woman to each other and to the possibility of becoming father and mother together. In the third video, *Made for Freedom*, the integral relationship between marriage and religious freedom was examined in view of the redefinition of marriage in the law and the growing challenges to people of faith. This final video, *Made for the Common Good*, completes the series on the unique gift of marriage by exploring how strong marriages (or the lack thereof) deeply affect the entire community and the capacity of individuals to achieve true happiness and fulfillment.

This guide is intended to assist and facilitate discussion of the concepts raised in the video *Made for the Common Good*, such as: How is marriage a matter of social justice? Does marriage between a man and a woman really make a difference to children? How does family affect society and what is the role of the state in ensuring healthy marriages and families?

For more information and further resources, including access to other videos in the series, go to www.marriageuniqueforareason.org.

Marriage Is a Matter of Social Justice

As Pope Francis has said, “We must reaffirm the right of children to grow up in a family with a father and a mother.”⁵ Justice is giving a person what they are rightly due. When we say that someone has a right, we are recognizing that someone deserves something. Understanding a child’s rights, then, comes from understanding who a child is and what he or she deserves.

Every child is a gift with the inviolable dignity of a human person. A child is meant to come from a loving bond between a man and a woman. It is a fact that every child has a mom and a dad. It therefore is reasonable to argue that a child has a right to know, love, and be raised by the two people who brought him or her into existence. This may not be possible or in the best interests of the child in some cases,⁶ but for the most part, society recognizes that knowing who your parents are and being raised by them is important. In fact, it is a basic, natural right. Marriage, then, is the one and only institution that serves this natural right of the child, striving to keep the mom and dad united as they care for any children they may be blessed with.

When a child does not have a connection to where he or she came from, he or she may experience a deprivation. Something the child needs, and thus has a right to, is missing. That “something” is rather a “someone”—a mother or a father. This is an injustice when it is done on purpose, and being fatherless or motherless can be described as a great poverty. A child may experience this poverty for a variety of reasons, through a tragedy, such as death or incapacitation, or it may occur because of adults’ choices, such as through divorce, abandonment, abuse, or other reasons. The practice of adoption is, in many ways, how society seeks to respond to this kind of loss for a child.

Catholic adoption agencies, for example, normally seek to place children in homes where they will have a married father and mother. Deliberately depriving a child of the love of a father or a mother is an injustice.

Marriage is not often understood as a matter of social justice. But as a public institution that seeks not only to ensure the best possible environment for children but also to respect the basic rights of children, it is a social justice issue. That is, it is an issue that affects everyone in society and concerns the basic rights of the most vulnerable among us.⁷

Discussion Questions:

1. *Pope Francis has said, “We must reaffirm the right of children to grow up in a family with a father and a mother.”⁸ Why is that?*
2. *Have you, or has anyone you know, experienced fatherlessness or motherlessness? How has it affected you or them?*
3. *Why is marriage a social justice issue and not a simply a religious issue?*

Sexual Difference Matters

Human beings at birth are not simply smaller versions of adults. A human baby cannot survive alone but relies completely on the care of at least one other human being to make it past infancy. Babies who are not affectionately touched enough will actually stop growing.⁹ While mothers offer distinctive affection and nurturing, including nourishment even from their own bodies, fathers likewise offer care and protection that is irreplaceable.¹⁰ Sexual difference is not only essential for conceiving a child but is also of great consequence for raising a child. And this is a key reason why natural marriage is so important for the common good: it keeps moms and dads together for the shared task of parenting.

Pope Francis has spoken of the importance of mothers, fathers, and their relationship. He has thanked mothers for their examples of “tenderness, dedication, and moral strength.”¹¹ He has exhorted fathers to teach by word and example, and to show their children how to live well and forgive.¹² The Holy Father has also highlighted the importance of sexual difference in marriage.¹³ As he has noted, parenthood is grounded in being created male and female: “This is the ‘first’ and most fundamental difference, constitutive of the human being.”¹⁴ “It is not a healthy attitude which would seek ‘to cancel out sexual difference.’”¹⁵

What if this positive experience of sexual difference is missing for the child? While it may be tempting to say that any two-person household will do, a number of adults who were raised in households with two adults of the same sex have come forward to speak of their experience of loss. Below is the testimony of one of them:

While I did love my mother’s partner and friends, I would have

traded every one of them to have my mom and my dad loving me under the same roof. This should come as no surprise to anyone who is willing to remove the politically correct lens that we all seem to have over our eyes.

Kids want their mother and father to love them, and to love each other. I have no bitterness toward either of my parents. On the contrary, I am grateful for a close relationship with them both and for the role they play in my children's lives. But loving my parents and looking critically at the impact of family breakdown are not mutually exclusive.

Now that I am a parent, I see clearly the beautiful differences my husband and I bring to our family. I see the wholeness and health that my children receive because they have both of their parents living with and loving them. I see how important the role of their father is and how irreplaceable I am as their mother. We play complementary roles in their lives, and neither of us is disposable. In fact, we are both critical. It's almost as if Mother Nature got this whole reproduction thing exactly right.¹⁶

The experience of an adult who was raised in a same-sex household as a child should certainly bear important weight. This experience is supported by social science data that continues to highlight the consistently better outcomes for children raised by their own married parents when compared to every other alternative arrangement. While still only emerging, such data questions a narrative that claims sexual difference and family structure are irrelevant.¹⁷ If society is truly concerned for the well-being of children, then it should listen carefully to these adults who courageously share their experiences of being deprived of a mother or father.¹⁸

Discussion Questions:

1. *If you have children, can you give a few examples of the different ways that you relate to your children versus the way that your spouse does? Or think back to the differences in the ways your mother and father related to you.*
2. *How does the stable, lifelong relationship of their parents benefit children? What is your reaction to hearing about the experience of those who were raised by two persons of the same sex?*

Family Structure Affects Society

Family structure matters, and healthy, intact marriages and families yield a number of positive outcomes. Data continues to bear this out in various ways.

Marriage benefits the men and women who enter into it. For married men, they tend to have higher incomes and better health than unmarried men.¹⁹ Married men have a lower incidence of cancer and a lower risk of dying from cancer.²⁰ Marriage tends to improve and foster men's relationships with their children.²¹ Men who are married fathers have lower levels of testosterone, which is correlated with less risky behavior or aggression.²² For women, marriage provides significant psychological benefits.²³ It decreases a woman's risk of domestic violence or abuse.²⁴ In general, married people tend to have longer life expectancies²⁵ and higher incomes²⁶ than their unmarried peers.

Studies also continue to show numerous positive outcomes for children of healthy, intact marriages.²⁷ A married mom and dad still offer “the best context for child well-being and development.”²⁸ For example, children's physical and emotional health consistently fares better in intact married families.²⁹ Physical, sexual, and emotional abuse is much lower for children being raised by their own married parents, and children generally experience less behavioral and emotional difficulties when raised by their own married parents.³⁰

All of this has ramifications for society at large. For example, research confirms time and time again that a healthy marriage culture is one of the best anti-poverty measures in existence. In fact, “the strongest predictor for child poverty in America is whether the child's parents are married.”³¹ States in which there are more marriages are wealthier states—marriages seem to encourage economic

mobility and lead to less child poverty.³² The connection between marriage and economic stability appears to be strongest for young men.³³ A serious challenge today is that while college-educated people are still getting married and raising fairly stable families, people in working-class and less-educated environments have much lower rates of marriage and higher rates of divorce.³⁴ Family fragmentation costs taxpayers over \$112 billion annually.³⁵

Marriage also combats violence in the community. Violent crime decreases in areas with a high percentage of married households, even when social scientists control for other socio-demographic factors.³⁶ And even in areas where violence is more common, children in married households with a mother and a father are less likely to be victims.³⁷

Healthy marriages model so many virtues and good habits that are vital for social life.³⁸ In other words, the joyful and sacrificial love between a man and a woman in marriage serves as an example to their children of what it means to love other people in general. Marriage advances a “genuine human ecology,” which includes a respect for and proper understanding of the human body and sexuality.³⁹ And at a fundamental and basic level, an intact marriage between husband and wife remains the “most fertile source” and well-integrated environment for new members of society.⁴⁰ If the concept of social justice is to be embodied better in American communities, society must work to support the natural family based on marriage as the union of one man and one woman.

Discussion Questions:

1. *What are the three ways marriage is good for the entire society as outlined here?*
2. *Can you explain how a child who is in a single-parent household may still benefit from intact marriages in his or her community?*

The State's Role in Promoting the Common Good

The common good is everyone's responsibility. It "involves all members of society" and "no one is exempt from cooperating, according to each one's possibilities, in attaining it and developing it."⁴¹ The efforts we make on a daily basis to be attentive to the needs of others are a contribution to the common good. This is called our "positive duty to contribute to the common good and to act in solidarity with those in need."⁴² On the other hand, if we routinely ignore the needs of someone near us, we are doing injury not just to that person but also to the common good.

Every person's actions count; but the state as a whole has a major responsibility for the common good, "since the common good is the reason that the political authority exists."⁴³ In fact, according to St. John XXIII, "the whole reason for the existence of civil authorities is the realization of the common good . . . For this reason, every civil authority must take pains to promote the common good of all, without preference for any single citizen or civic group."⁴⁴ The authorities of the state should be concerned for the welfare of all, and the structures and legislation that civil groups set up should reflect this concern. As the US bishops have said, "How we organize our society—in economics and politics, in law and policy—directly affects the common good and the capacity of individuals to develop their full potential."⁴⁵

St. John XXIII described the connection between the common good and public authority as "intrinsic"—they are not simply related on the outside, for some external purpose, but rather from within, from what they are.⁴⁶ It is a noble calling to serve the people of your area or nation. Pope Francis wrote, "Politics, though often denigrated, remains a lofty vocation and one of the highest forms of charity,

inasmuch as it seeks the common good . . . I beg the Lord to grant us more politicians who are genuinely disturbed by the state of society, the people, the lives of the poor!”⁴⁷ The pope’s words apply especially to politicians who are Catholic. “Having been entrusted with special responsibility for the common good, Catholic leaders must commit themselves to the pursuit of the virtues, especially courage, justice, temperance, and prudence.”⁴⁸ A Catholic involved in the public square must have a spirit of service.

Public authority does not exist except to accomplish the good of all, and the good of all cannot be effectively accomplished without the aid of public authority. It is a reciprocal relationship. In the United States, we entrust the common good into the hands of our elected officials.

The video *Made for the Common Good* may prompt you to evaluate how well public officials are promoting and defending what is truly best for all. Because marriage is so intimately bound with the common good, the state has a vested interest in promoting and defending marriage and in seeing that marriages thrive. How well has it done so, and how can we encourage a renewed dialogue in support of building a healthy and vibrant marriage culture?

Discussion Questions:

1. *Name some of the structures in society, necessary for the common good, that require more support than any one private citizen could provide?*
2. *If you were a politician striving for the common good, what are examples of programs or policies that you would enact?*
3. *The state is involved in solemnizing marriages; why do you think that is?*

Conclusion

Marriage is an integral part of the common good that civil society is called to uphold. Everyone has a responsibility to support a healthy marriage culture, and everyone has something to lose when marriage fails or is in decline. Recent debates and conversations have focused on questions of equality and fairness—values that are vital to any society. But what these debates have often missed—all the way up to the Supreme Court of the United States—is the fundamental question: *what is marriage?* Before you can talk about equality or fairness in access to an institution, you must define what the institution is. And further, it's imperative to ask, *why has the state been—and why should it be—interested and involved in recognizing and supporting marriage?*

The answer to the latter question depends upon the answer to the first about the meaning of marriage. If marriage is fundamentally about the romantic relationship of two adults, what justifies the state's involvement? In this case, various relationships and friendships would seem open to state recognition, but the rationale for such recognition would have to be demonstrated. The state has not been in the business of ratifying friendships or any other type of relationship on the basis of the degree of affection or level of commitment. In fact, most of us would probably think that was an overreach and intrusion by the government in our private lives. However, the Supreme Court of the United States' decision in *Obergefell* can only be based on this superficial understanding of marriage—an emotional and sexual bond between two people.

Historically, however, the state has been invested in supporting marriage because of what marriage uniquely is and its unique

contribution to the common good. Marriage as the union of a man and a woman is the only *naturally procreative* institution that encourages mothers and fathers to stay together for the shared task of parenting. Marriage as the union of a man and a woman is ordered to two inseparable ends or goods: the good of the spouses and to the procreation and education of children. Marriage has never been simply a matter of catering to adult desires. As a social and legal institution, it has always been intrinsically child-centered (even though not every marriage results in a child ⁴⁹). No other relationship is what marriage is or does what marriage does in uniting a man and a woman to each other and to any child born of their union.

This is why understanding marriage's relationship with the common good is so important. The current civil law has redefined marriage, but the law cannot redefine nature. Current civil law does not correspond to the reality of nature, and so it tells society a lie about what marriage is. This aspect of civil law, therefore, is unjust and does not serve the common good. Advancing a healthy marriage culture requires a renewed conversation and a renewed witness of marriages and families themselves—in a word, it will require all of us to stand up for marriage. Pope Francis's challenge to young people is a challenge for all: "Today, there are those who say that marriage is out of fashion . . . They say that it is not worth making a life-long commitment, making a definitive decision, 'forever,' because we do not know what tomorrow will bring. I ask you, instead, to be revolutionaries . . . yes, I am asking you to rebel against this culture that sees everything as temporary and that ultimately believes you are incapable of responsibility, that believes you are incapable of true love. I have confidence in you and I pray for you." ⁵⁰ In truth and love, may we all have the courage to witness to and stand for the unique and irreplaceable gift of marriage. Marriage is unique for a reason.

NOTES

1. Pope John Paul II, [Address to the participants in the plenary assembly of the Pontifical Council of the Family](http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/2002/october/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_20021018_pc-family.html), November 20, 2004, *Vatican*, http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/2002/october/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_20021018_pc-family.html (accessed January 25, 2017).
2. Pope Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter *Caritas in Veritate*, June 29, 2009, *Vatican*, http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20090629_caritas-in-veritate.html (accessed January 25, 2017), no. 7. The more formal and traditional definition of the common good is: “the sum total of social conditions which allow people, either as groups or as individuals, to reach their fulfillment more fully and more easily” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* [CCC], 2nd ed. [Washington, DC: Libreria Editrice Vaticana—United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2000], no. 1906).
3. Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris Consortio*, November 22, 1981, *Vatican*, http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_19811122_familiaris-consortio.html (accessed January 25, 2017), no. 17.
4. There are few exceptions to this rule, as in particular adoption situations.
5. Pope Francis, [Address to the International Catholic Child Bureau](https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2014/april/documents/papa-francesco_20140411_ufficio-cattolico-infanzia.html), April 11, 2014, *Vatican*, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2014/april/documents/papa-francesco_20140411_ufficio-cattolico-infanzia.html (accessed January 25, 2017).
6. For example, in situations of abandonment, or in abusive situations or when one or both parents are unable to provide the child with basic needs or safety.
7. “The family, founded upon marriage freely contracted, one and indissoluble, must be regarded as the natural, primary cell of human society. The interests of the family, therefore, must be taken very specially into consideration in social and economic affairs, as well as in the spheres of faith and morals. For all of these have to do with strengthening the family and assisting it in the fulfilment of its mission” (Pope John XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Pacem in Terris*, April 11, 1963, *Vatican*, http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-xxiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_j-xxiii_enc_11041963_pacem.html [accessed January 25, 2017], no. 16).
8. Pope Francis, [Address to the International Catholic Child Bureau](#) (2014).
9. Maia Szalavitz, “[Touching Empathy](#),” *Psychology Today* (March 1, 2010).
10. In every human society, fathers have played a role in childcare. See Paul Raeburn, *Do Fathers Matter? What Science Is Telling Us about the Parent We’ve Overlooked* (New York: Scientific American/Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2014), p. 19.
11. Pope Francis, “[The Family—the Mother](#)” General Audience, January 7, 2015, *Vatican*, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2015/documents/papa-francesco_20150107_udi-enza-generale.html (accessed January 25, 2017).
12. Pope Francis, “[The Family—the Father \(first part\)](#)” General Audience, January 28, 2015, *Vatican*, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2015/documents/papa-francesco_20150128_udienza-generale.html (accessed January 25, 2017) and “[The Family—the Father](#)

- (second part)” General Audience, February 4, 2015, *Vatican*, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2015/documents/papa-francesco_20150204_udienza-generale.html (accessed January 25, 2017).
13. Pope Francis, “[The Family—Male and Female \(1\)](https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2015/documents/papa-francesco_20150415_udienza-generale.html)” General Audience, April 15, 2015, *Vatican*, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2015/documents/papa-francesco_20150415_udienza-generale.html (accessed January 25, 2017) and “[The Family—Male and Female \(2\)](https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2015/documents/papa-francesco_20150422_udienza-generale.html)” General Audience, April 22, 2015, *Vatican*, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2015/documents/papa-francesco_20150422_udienza-generale.html (accessed January 25, 2017).
 14. Pope Francis, [Address to Participants in Rome’s Diocesan Conference](https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/june/documents/papa-francesco_20150614_convegno-diocesi-roma.html), June 14, 2015, *Vatican*, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/june/documents/papa-francesco_20150614_convegno-diocesi-roma.html (accessed January 25, 2017).
 15. Pope Francis, Encyclical *Laudato Si’*, May 24, 2015, *Vatican*, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html (accessed January 25, 2017), no. 155.
 16. Katy Faust, “[Dear Justice Kennedy: An Open Letter from the Child of a Loving Gay Parent.](#)” *Public Discourse* (February 2, 2015). See also Heather Barwick, “[Dear Gay Community: Your Kids Are Hurting.](#)” *The Federalist* (March 17, 2015) and Brandi Walton, “[The Kids Are Not Alright: A Lesbian’s Daughter Speaks Out.](#)” *The Federalist* (April 21, 2015).
 17. See, for example, D. Paul Sullins, “[Invisible Victims: Delayed Onset Depression among Adults with Same-Sex Parents.](#)” *Depression Research and Treatment*. Vol. 2016 (2016); D. Paul Sullins, “[Emotional Problems among Children with Same-Sex Parents: Difference by Definition.](#)” *British Journal of Education, Society and Behavioural Science*. Vol. 7, No. 2: pp. 99-120, 2015. Mark Regnerus, “[How different are the adult children of parents who have same-sex relationships? Findings from the New Family Structures Study.](#)” *Social Science Research*. Vol. 41, No. 4, July 2012, pp. 752-770.
 18. These stories have tended to be ignored, dismissed, or even silenced by those who have an interest in ensuring that nothing negative is said about same-sex sexual relationships. For example, see Robert Oscar Lopez, “[Growing Up With Two Moms: The Untold Children’s View.](#)” *Public Discourse* (August 6, 2012). While some argue that children do “just fine” in a same-sex household and that children are glad when those two men or two women who raised them are able to be “married,” the evidence for this is not readily available. When searching for information or writing from *adults* who were raised in same-sex households, very little is available, and most of it is of the character shared here.
 19. Stanley, S. M. (2011) “What is it with Men and Commitment, Anyway?” Working paper based on a keynote address to the 6th Annual Smart Marriages Conference in 2002 in Washington, DC. Retrieved from <http://www.box.net/shared/1zketqdi1ccnqb5vlf9>.
 20. Aizer, Ayal et al, “[Marital Status and Survival in Patients with Cancer.](#)” *Journal of Clinical Oncology* (September 23, 2013). p. 3870.
 21. Family Scholars, *Why Marriage Matters, Third Edition: 30 Conclusions from the Social Sciences* (Institute for American Values, 2011).

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24. L. Waite & E. Lehrer, "[The Benefits of Marriage & Religion in the U.S.: A Comparative Analysis](#)." *Population & Development Review*, Vol. 29, No. 2, June 2003.
25. Witherspoon Institute. *Marriage and the Public Good: 10 Principles* (Princeton, NJ: The Witherspoon Institute, 2008), p. 13.
26. See "[Married Couple Families Have Higher Incomes](#)," The Heritage Foundation. 2011.
27. See: W. Bradford Wilcox, "[Even for Rich Kids, Marriage Matters](#)," Family Studies, December 19, 2013; "[Why Marriage Matters, Third Edition: 30 Conclusions from the Social Sciences](#)," Institute for American Values, 2011.
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David Ribar, "[Why Marriage Matters for Child Wellbeing](#)," *The Future of Children*. Vol. 25, No. 2, Fall 2015.
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28. Pierpaolo Donati and Paul Sullins, *The Conjugal Family: An Irreplaceable Resource for Society*, 37-137 (Rome: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2015): 73. "The proposition that the natural family comprising joint married biological parents offers the best context for child well-being and development is among the most strongly attested assertions in all of the social sciences. National health surveillance surveys have repeatedly found that children in alternate family arrangements are subject to a wide range of emotional and behavioral problems at higher rates than are children in conjugal families" (*ibid.*, 73).
29. Paul Sullins, "The Conjugal Family in America," 73-76.

30. See Sullins, “The Conjugal Family in America,” 76-77.
31. Paul Sullins, “The Conjugal Family in America,” 38.
32. Jim Tankersley, “[Why States with More Marriages are Richer States.](#)” *The Washington Post*. (October 20, 2015).
33. W. Bradford Wilcox, Robert I. Lerman, Joseph Price, “[Strong Families, Prosperous States: Do Healthy Families Affect the Wealth of States?](#)” *American Enterprise Institute and the Institute for Family Studies*. (October 19, 2015).
34. W. Bradford Wilcox, “[Family Structure Matters — Science Proves It.](#)” *National Review*. (October 23, 2015).
35. Lynne Marie Kohm and Rachel K. Toberty. “[A Fifty-State Survey of the Cost of Family Fragmentation.](#)” *Regent University Law Review*. Vol. 25:25. 2012.
36. W. Bradford Wilcox, Robert I. Lerman, Joseph Price, “[Strong Families, Prosperous States: Do Healthy Families Affect the Wealth of States?](#)” *American Enterprise Institute and the Institute for Family Studies*. (October 19, 2015).
37. Nicholas Zill, “[Even in Unsafe Neighborhoods, Kids Are Safer in Married Families.](#)” *Family Studies*. (February 23, 2015).
38. “The family is the first and fundamental school of social living: as a community of love, it finds in self-giving the law that guides it and makes it grow. The self-giving that inspires the love of husband and wife for each other is the model and norm for the self-giving that must be practiced in the relationships between brothers and sisters and the different generations living together in the family. And the communion and sharing that are part of everyday life in the home at times of joy and at times of difficulty are the most concrete and effective pedagogy for the active, responsible and fruitful inclusion of the children in the wider horizon of society” (Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris Consortio*, no. 37). See also *Familiaris Consortio*, nos. 21 and 36.
39. See Pope Francis, Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'*, no. 155.
40. Paul Sullins, “The Conjugal Family in America,” 70-73.
41. *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 167.
42. USCCB, [Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship](#) (Washington, DC: USCCB, 2015), no. 24.
43. *Ibid*, no. 168.
44. Pope John XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Pacem in Terris* (April 11, 1963), nos. 54 and 56.
45. USCCB, [Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship](#), no. 47.
46. *Ibid*, no. 136.
47. Pope Francis. Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 205.
48. USCCB, [Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship](#), no. 39.

MARRIAGE: UNIQUE FOR A REASON

49. Please see the video and study guide in this series, "[Made for Life](#)," which expounds on this point.
50. Pope Francis. [Meeting with the Volunteers of the XXVIII World Youth Day](#), Brazil (July 28, 2013).

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