

All uses are Church uses.

2

The Most Excellent of All Uses



The use of conjugal love is the most excellent of all uses, because therefrom comes the procreation of the human race, and from the human race the angelic heaven.

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1. *The First Essential of the Lord's Love and the Most Excellent of All Uses*

Gen. 2:7. And Jehovah God formed the man, dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of lives, and the man became a living soul.

TCR 43. *It is the essence of Love to love others outside of oneself, to desire to be one with them, and to render them blessed from oneself.* The essence of God consists of two things, love and wisdom; while the essence of His love consists of three things, namely, to love others outside of Himself, to desire to be one with them, and from Himself to render them blessed. And because love and wisdom in God make one, as has been shown above, the same three things constitute the essence of His wisdom; and love desires these three things, and wisdom brings them forth.

[2] The first essential, which is to love others outside of oneself, is recognized in God's love for the whole human race; and for its sake God loves all things that He has created because they are means; for when the end is loved the means also are loved. All men and things in the universe are outside of God, because they are finite and God is infinite....

[3] The second essential of the love of God, which is a desire to be one with others, is recognized in His conjunction with the angelic heaven, with the church on earth, with everyone there, and with everything good and true that enters into and constitutes man and the church. Moreover, love viewed in itself is nothing but an endeavor towards conjunction; therefore that this aim of the essence of love might be realized, man was created by God into His own image and likeness, with which a conjunction is possible....

[4] The third essential of the love of God, which is to render others blessed from Himself, is recognized in eternal life, which is the endless blessedness, happiness, and felicity that God gives to those who receive into themselves His love. For as God is love itself, so is He blessedness itself; for all love breathes forth delight from itself, and the Divine love breathes forth blessedness itself, happiness, and felicity to eternity. Thus God from Himself renders the angels blessed, and men after death; and this He does by conjunction with them.

TCR 44. That such is the nature of the Divine love is known from its sphere, which pervades the universe, and affects everyone in accordance with his state. It especially affects parents, and is the source of their tender love for their children (who are outside of themselves), and their desire to be one with them, and to render them blessed from themselves.

TCR 47. From these things when rightly understood it can be seen that the universe is a coherent work from first things to last, because it is a work that includes ends, causes, and effects in an indissoluble connection. And because in every love there is an end, in all wisdom there is a promotion of an end by means of mediate causes, and through these causes effects, which are uses, are attained, it follows that the universe is a work that includes Divine love, Divine wisdom, and uses, and is thus in every respect a work that is coherent from things first to last. That the universe consists of perpetual uses, brought forth by wisdom but initiated by love, every wise man can observe as in a mirror, as soon as he acquires a general conception of the creation of the universe, and from that observes the particulars; for particulars adapt themselves to their own general, and the general arranges them in a form in which they are in harmony.

Questions for Discussion

1. How is the creation of man an inevitable effect of the Lord's love?
2. The three essentials of the Lord's love are "to love others outside of oneself, to desire to be one with them, and to render them blessed from oneself" (TCR 43). Do you see a connection between this passage and the truth in *Divine Love and Wisdom* 47 that "Love consists in this, that its own should be another's. To feel the joy of another as joy in oneself, that is loving"?
3. The sphere of the Lord's love to want to love others outside of oneself affects especially parents, it says in TCR 44, but it also affects everyone. Think of all the uses that benefit children that are served by people who are not necessarily parents themselves. Does understanding the nature of the Lord's love help explain why so many people perform so many important uses for children who are not their own?
4. Does this series of passages help explain for you what love really is?

2. *The Lord's Divine Providence and the Most Excellent of All Uses*

Genesis 1:27-28. And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. And God blessed them, and God said to them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the earth.

DP 27. *The Lord's Divine Providence has as its end a heaven from the human race.* Since heaven is from the human race, and heaven is an abiding with the Lord to eternity, it follows that this was the Lord's end in creation; and since heaven was the end in creation this is the end of His Divine providence. The Lord did not create the universe for His own sake, but for the sake of those with whom He is to be in heaven; since spiritual love is such that it wishes to give its own to another; and so far as it can do this, it is in its being [*esse*], in its peace, and in its blessedness. Spiritual love derives this from the Lord's Divine love, which is such infinitely. From this it follows, that the Divine love and the Divine providence therefrom have as their end a heaven consisting of men who have become or are becoming angels, upon whom the Lord is able to bestow all the blessings and felicities that belong to love and wisdom, and to communicate these from Himself in them.

CL 386. *That two universal spheres proceed from the Lord for the conservation of the universe in the state created; one of which is the sphere of procreating, and the other the sphere of protecting what is procreated.* The Divine, proceeding from the Lord, is called a sphere because it proceeds from Him, surrounds Him, fills each world, the spiritual and the natural, and works out the effects of the ends which the Lord predestined in the creation....

CL 386 cont'd. From the Lord through the sun [of the spiritual world] proceeds the sphere of heat and light, or what is the same the sphere of love and wisdom, for the working out of ends, which are uses. But that sphere is designated by different names, according to the uses; the Divine sphere looking to the preservation of the universe through successive generations, in the state created, is called the sphere of procreating; and the Divine sphere looking to the preservation of the generations in their beginnings, and afterwards in their progressions, is called the sphere of protecting what is procreated.... The operations of uses through these spheres are the Divine Providence.

CL 391. It was said above (n. 386), that the operations of uses by the Lord, through the spheres going forth from Him, are the Divine Providence. . . . But because with the living, to whom freedom of choice is left, this cannot be done immediately by the Lord, it is done mediately, through His love implanted in fathers, mothers, and nurses. That their love is love from the Lord with them they do not know, because they do not perceive the influx, still less do they perceive the omnipresence of the Lord. But who does not see that it is not of nature, but of the Divine Providence operating within nature, by nature? And that there could be no such universal except from God, through some spiritual sun which is in the center of the universe, and whose operation, because without space and time, is instant and present from things first in the last? But it shall be told in what follows how this Divine operation, which is the Lord's Divine Providence, is received by animate beings. That they are not able to protect and sustain themselves is not the cause of the love which moves mothers and fathers to protect and sustain infants, but is a rational cause from that love falling into the understanding. For from this cause alone, without the love that inspired and inspires it, or without a law and a penalty enforcing it, man would no more provide for infants than a statue.

Questions for Discussion

1. What does it mean for the end of the Lord's Divine Providence to be a heaven from the human race?
2. Without the sphere from the Lord of "protecting what is procreated," CL 391 says "man [*homo*] would no more provide for infants than a statue." How does this teaching strike you?
3. How do the spheres of procreating and protecting what is procreated affect people whether they are parents or not?
4. What challenges are there to these two spheres in our surrounding culture that we should be mindful of?
5. Do evil spirits want more children to be born?

3. *Conjugal Love and the Most Excellent of All Uses*

Mark 10:14. Let the little children come to Me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God.

CL 68. As conjugal love is the fundamental of all good loves, and as it is inscribed upon the very least things of man, as has been shown before, it follows that its delights exceed the delights of all loves; and also that it imparts delight to them according to its presence and at the same time its conjunction with them. For it expands the inmost things of the mind, and at the same time the inmost things of the body, as the delicious current of its fountain flows through and opens them. It is because of the superior excellence of its use above all other uses that all delights from first to last are gathered into this love. Its use is the propagation of the human race and of the angelic heaven therefrom; and as this use was the end of ends of the creation, it follows that all the states of blessedness, satisfaction, delight, gratification, and pleasure that could ever be conferred on man by the Lord the Creator are gathered into this love.

CL 183. Finally, the angels said, “Let this be the conclusion: That all fructification [*or bearing fruit*], all propagation, and all proliferation come originally from the influx of love, wisdom, and use from the Lord: from immediate influx from the Lord into the souls of men; from mediate influx into the souls of animals; and from influx still more mediate into the inmosts of plants. And all these are effected in the ultimates from the firsts. It is plain that fructifications, propagations, and proliferations are continuations of creation; for creation cannot be from any other source than from Divine Love, by Divine wisdom, in Divine use. All things in the universe therefore are procreated and formed from use, in use, and for use.”

Afterwards those who were sitting on the grassy banks asked the angels, “Whence are the delights of conjugal love, which are innumerable and ineffable?” The angels answered, “They are

from the uses of love and wisdom. And this may be seen from the fact that in so far as one loves to be wise for the sake of genuine use he is in the vein and potency of conjugal love, and in so far as he is in these two he is in delights. Use effects this, because love by wisdom delight each in the other, and they play as it were like little children, and as they grow up, they enter into genial conjunction. This is as if by betrothals, nuptials, marriages, and propagations; and these continue with variety to eternity.

“These things take place between love and wisdom inwardly in use; but these delights in their beginnings are imperceptible, but become perceptible more and more as they descend thence by degrees and enter the body. They enter through degrees, from the soul into the interiors of man’s mind, from these into its exteriors, thence into the inmost bosom, and from this into the genital region. Yet these heavenly nuptial sports in the soul are not in the least perceived by man; but they insinuate themselves thence into the interiors of the mind, under the form of peace and innocence; and into the exteriors of the mind in the form of blessedness, pleasantness, and joy; but into the inmost bosom under the form of the delights of inmost friendship; and into the genital region, by influx continuous even from the soul, with the very sense of conjugal love, as the delight of delights.

“These nuptial sports of love and wisdom in use in the soul, in proceeding towards the inmost bosom become enduring, and in that bosom present themselves sensibly under an infinite variety of delights; and by virtue of the wonderful communication of the inmost bosom with the genital region, these delights become there delights of conjugal love, which are exalted above all delights that are in heaven and in the world, for the reason that the use of conjugal love is the most excellent of all uses, because therefrom comes the procreation of the human race, and from the human race the angelic heaven.”

Questions for Discussion

1. What can each one of us do individually to serve the most excellent of all uses?
2. How is the most excellent of all uses served by people in uses other than being a parent?
3. How can the Kempton Society support the most excellent of all uses?
4. How would communities be different if the most excellent of uses was the primary focus and every other use was seen as supporting that use?

4. *Women and the Most Excellent of Uses*

I Kings 3:26-27. And the woman whose son was the living one said unto the king [Solomon], because her compassions yearned over her son, and she said, In me my lord, give her the living child, and do not make him dying be put to death. But the other said, Let it not be even mine or even thine; sever it. And the king answered and said, Give her the living child, and do not make him dying be put to death; she is his mother.

CL 223. *That [the conjugal] sphere is received by the female sex, and through this is transferred into the male sex.* That there is no conjugal love with the male sex, but that it is solely with the female sex and from this sex is transferred into the male, I have seen attested by experience; of which above at n. 161, with which the following reason also accords: That the masculine is an intellectual form and the feminine a volitional form, and an intellectual form cannot of itself grow warm with conjugal heat, but from the conjunctive heat of one in whom it is implanted by creation. Therefore it cannot receive that love except through the volitional form of a female adjoined to itself, because this also is a form of love.

This same might be more fully confirmed from the marriage of good and truth; and before the natural man from the marriage of the heart and lungs, because the heart corresponds to love, and the lungs to wisdom. But as very many are deficient in knowledge of these things, confirmation by them might rather darken than illustrate. It is from the passing over of this sphere from the female to the male sex that the mind is enkindled even by the mere thought of the sex. That thence also is propagative formation, and thus excitation, follows. For on the earth unless heat is added to light nothing flourishes, or is incited to cause any fructification there.

CL 393. *That this sphere principally affects the female sex, thus mothers, and the male sex, or fathers, from them.* This comes from the same origin spoken of before, that the sphere of conjugal love is received by women, and through women is transferred into men, because women are born loves of the understanding of men and the understanding is the recipient. It is similar with the love of infants, because this by origin is from conjugal love. That mothers have a more tender and fathers a less tender love is known. That the love of infants is inscribed upon conjugal love into which women are born, is manifest from the lovely and winning affection of little girls for infants, and for the images of them which they carry about, dress, kiss, and press to their bosoms. Boys have no such affection. It appears as if mothers have the love of infants from the nourishing of them in the womb out of their own blood, and thence the appropriation to them of their own life, and thus from sympathetic union; but yet this is not the origin of that love, for if, unknown to the mother, another infant were substituted for the true one after birth, it would be loved with equal tenderness as if it were her own. Besides, infants are sometimes loved by nurses more than by their mothers. It flows from these considerations, that this love is from no other source than the conjugal love inherent in every woman....

CL 410. *That the love of little children continues after death, especially with women.* As soon as little children are resuscitated, which takes place immediately after death, they are taken up into heaven, and are handed over to the care of angels of the female sex who in the life of their body in the world loved little children, and at the same time feared God. These angels, because they loved all little children with maternal tenderness, receive them as their own; and the little children there, as if from inherent affection, love them as their own mothers. As many little children are with them as they desire from spiritual, maternal love.

Questions for Discussion

1. Thinking from these passages, what would happen to the most excellent of uses if women were not at the center of this use?
2. “There is no conjugal love with the male sex, but that it is solely with the female sex and from this sex is transferred into the male” (CL 223). How does this teaching compare to your experience?
3. What does the story from I Kings in the beginning of this section teach us about the love of infants?
4. It seems that a New Church culture would especially cherish infants because of these teachings. How can we encourage such a culture within the church?
5. How can we promote and share these teachings with others not familiar with them in a popular culture that can be unfriendly to such ideas?

5. *Parents and the Most Excellent of All Uses*

CL 385. There are indications which show clearly that conjugal love, and the love of infants [*or little children*], which is called storge, are conjoined; and there are indications also which may induce the belief that they are not conjoined. For there is a love of infants with married partners who from the heart love each other, and with married partners who are discordant; and also with those that are separated, and sometimes it is more tender and stronger with them than with others. But nevertheless, that the love of infants is conjoined perpetually with conjugal love is evident from the origin from whence it flows in. Although varied in those who receive it, the loves yet remain unseparated, just as the first end is in the final end which is the effect. The first end of conjugal love is the procreation of offspring, and the last end, which is the effect, is the offspring procreated.

CL 392. *That this sphere affects the evil as well as the good, and disposes everyone to love, protect, and sustain his offspring, from his own love.* It is testified by experience that the love of infants, or storge, is equally with the evil as with the good; likewise with gentle and ungentle beasts; in fact, that with evil men and with ungentle beasts it is sometimes stronger and more ardent. The reason is that every love proceeding and flowing in from the Lord is turned, in the subject, into the love of its life. For no animate subject feels otherwise than that he loves of himself, since he does not perceive the influx; and while in fact he is really loving himself, he makes the love of infants the love of his own, for he as it were sees himself in them and them in himself, and thus himself as united with them.

CL 405. *That the love of infants is of one kind with spiritual married partners, and of another with natural.* To appearance the love of infants with spiritual married partners is similar to the love of infants with natural married partners, but it is more internal

and thence more tender, because that love exists from innocence, and from a nearer reception and thus more present perception of it in themselves; for the spiritual are spiritual in the degree that they partake of innocence. Moreover fathers and mothers, after they have tasted the sweetness of innocence with their infants, love their children altogether otherwise than natural fathers and mothers. The spiritual love their children according to their spiritual intelligence and moral life; thus they love them according to their fear of God and actual piety, or piety of life, and at the same time according to their affection for and application to uses serviceable to society, that is, according to the virtues and good morals with them. For their love of these things, principally, they provide for and minister to their necessities. Wherefore, if they do not see such virtues in them, they alienate the mind from them, and do nothing for them except from duty.

With natural fathers and mothers the love of infants is indeed also from innocence, but this, received by them, is wrapped about with their own love, and hence they love infants from this and at the same time from that, kissing, embracing, carrying, taking them to their bosom, and fondling them beyond all measure, and look upon them as of one heart and one soul with themselves. And then, after their state of infancy, up to adolescence and beyond, when innocence no longer operates, they love them, not on account of any fear of God and actual piety, or piety of life, nor for any rational and moral intelligence in them, and little, indeed scarcely at all, do they consider their internal affections and thence virtues and good morals, but only the things external for which they have regard. To these they adjoin, affix, and attach their love, and consequently close the eyes to their faults, excusing and favoring them. The reason is that the love of their progeny with them is also the love of themselves....

Questions for Discussion

1. What is storage? And what makes it good or bad?
2. How does baptism relate to a parent's commitment to being a spiritual parent, as opposed to a merely natural parent? What does baptism do?
3. What might be signs we need to watch out for that would indicate an excusing and favoring of faults in a child as described in CL 405?
4. How can we support parents who are trying to be spiritual parents as described in CL 405?
5. What does it mean in CL 405 when it says spiritual parents "alienate the mind from them, and do nothing for them except from duty"?

6. *Spiritual Offspring and the Most Excellent of All Uses*

AE 622. As the “belly” signifies the interiors of the thought or of the understanding, so “the fruit of the belly” signifies in the spiritual sense the goods of the understanding, and “sons” its truths. Thus in David: “Lo, sons are the heritage of Jehovah, and the fruit of the belly is His reward....” (Ps. 127:3)

In Moses: “He will bless the fruit of the belly and the fruit of the ground” (Deut. 7:13).

In Hosea: “Even when they have brought forth I will slay the desires of their belly” (9:11, 16).

“The fruit of the belly” and “the desires of the belly” signify in the sense of the letter, natural offspring, but in the spiritual sense spiritual offspring, which is knowledge [*scientia*], intelligence, and wisdom, for man is reborn into these when he is regenerated. This is why “births,” “sons,” “daughters,” and other terms pertaining to nativity signify such things as pertain to spiritual nativity, that is, regeneration; for angels, who perceive the Word spiritually, know of no other births or “fruits of the belly.”

CL 44. Then the newcomers asked whether from the ultimate delights of this love offspring are born there, and if there are not offspring, of what use are they?

The angelic spirits replied, “There are no natural offspring, but spiritual offspring.”

And they asked, “What are spiritual offspring?” They answered:

“Through ultimate delights married partners are the more united in the marriage of good and truth, and the marriage of good and truth is the marriage of love and wisdom; and love and wisdom are the offspring which are born of that marriage. And as the husband in heaven is wisdom, and the wife is the love of it, and as

both of these are spiritual, therefore no other than spiritual offspring can be conceived and born there.”

CL 52. The reason why marriages in the heavens are without proliferation, but that instead of it there is spiritual proliferation, which is of love and wisdom, is that the third degree, which is the natural, is wanting to those who are in the spiritual world, and this degree is the containant of things spiritual, and spiritual things without their containant do not remain stable after the manner of those that are procreated in the natural world, and regarded in themselves spiritual things relate to love and wisdom; these therefore are what are born of their marriages. It is said that these are born, because conjugal love perfects an angel, for it unites him with his consort, whereby he becomes more and more man [*homo*].

CL 211. For a man is wise in proportion as the interiors of his mind are opened; because by this opening the thoughts of the understanding are elevated into superior light and the affections of the will into superior heat, and superior light is wisdom, and superior heat is the love of it. The spiritual delights conjoined with the natural delights, that they have who are in love truly conjugal, cause amiability, and thence the faculty of growing wise. Hence it is that with angels conjugal love is according to their wisdom; and the increments of that love and at the same time of its delights are according to the increments of wisdom; and that the spiritual offspring that are born of their marriages are such things as are of wisdom from the father, and such things as are of love from the mother, which they love from spiritual parental affection—a love which adds itself to their conjugal love, and continually elevates it and conjoins them.

Questions for Discussion

1. What is spiritual offspring? What is an example of spiritual offspring?
2. Can a husband and a wife have spiritual offspring on earth? If so, what is an example of spiritual offspring on earth?
3. How does spiritual offspring relate to use?
4. Does it help to understand what spiritual offspring might be when it says in CL 211 that “the spiritual offspring that are born of marriages [in heaven] are such things as are of wisdom from the father, and such things as are of love from the mother, which they love from spiritual parental affection”?
5. Why do you think the Lord teaches us about spiritual offspring?