

**"OVIDIUS" UNIVERSITY OF CONSTANTA
FACULTY OF THEOLOGY
DOCTORAL SCHOOL**

**DOCTORAL THESIS
Summary**

**COORDINATOR::
PR. PROF. UNIV. DR. DUMITRU RADU**

**CANDIDATE:
PR. OVIDIU IOAN POLEXĂ**

CONSTANȚA 2013

**"OVIDIUS" UNIVERSITY OF CONSTANTA
FACULTY OF THEOLOGY
DOCTORAL SCHOOL**

**FAMILY IN THE THOUGHT OF ST.
JOHN CHRYSOSTOM**

**COORDINATOR::
PR. PROF. UNIV. DR. DUMITRU RADU**

**CANDIDATE:
PR. OVIDIU IOAN POLEXĂ**

CONSTANȚA 2013

CONTENTS

Abbreviations	5
INTRODUCTION	6
HOLY LIFE AND PERSONALITY of Saint John Chrysostom.....	10
FAMILY IN THE LIGHT OF THE HOLY SRIPTURE.....	23
2.1. The originary status of the family in Heaven	23
2.2. The human: man and woman, the crown of creation	40
2.2.1. Eva, the mother woman	67
2.2.2. Adam, the father man	71
2.3. Family in the Old Testament	80
2.4. Family in the New Testament	98
3. Marriage in the thought of St. John Chrysostom	121
3.1. Marriage from "Love" to "Mystery"	130
3.2. Arguments in favor of marriage	135
3.2.1. Recommendations for a true union	135
3.2.2. The Bride's Choice	139
3.2.3. Unorthodox habits at the wedding	151
3.3. The true meaning of marriage	157
3.4. Virginity and marriage	164
4. MARRIAGE AND FAMILY LIFE	181
4.1. The relationship between the couple	181
4.1.1. Unity and indissolubility	181
4.1.2. Love, equality and respect between spouses	186
4.1.3. The wife's role in the family	189
4.2. The relationship between children and parents	195
4.2.1. Childbirth – the purpose of Christian marriage	211
4.2.2. Preparing young people for marriage	219
5. ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM – TEACHER OF THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY.....	227
5.1. Family, the Home church	227
5.2. Education at the preschool age.....	230
5.3. The Factors of Christian Education	234
5.3.1. The Family	235
5.3.1.1. The Father's Contribution	238
5.3.1.2. The Mother's Contribution	240
5.3.2. The Teacher	243
5.3.3. The Church	248
5.3.4. Society	251

CONCLUSIONS	255
REFERENCES	259
Editions of the Holy Scripture and the New Testament	
The writings of the Apostolic Fathers
Grammars, Dictionaries, Encyclopedias	
Comments, works and studies	

Abbreviations

YATA (AATA) - Yearbook of Andreiana Theological Academy, Sibiu 1923-1947.
Arch. - Archimandrite
R.O.C. (B.O.R.) - Romanian Orthodox Church. Official Journal of the Romanian Patriarchate.
Buc. - Bucharest
cf – according to
diac. - Deacon
dr. – PhD, Doctor
Drd.- Phd. candidate
ed. - Edition, publisher
franc. - French
GB (VC)- Voice of the Church. Official journal of the Holy Metropolis of Hungarian-Wallachia
gr. – Greek, Greek language
No. - Number
MCB (MB) - Metropolitan Church of Banat
 MCMB (MMB) - Metropolitan Church of Moldova and Bucovina
 MCMS (MMS) - Metropolitan Church of Moldavia and Suceava
 MCO (MO) - Metropolitan Church of Oltenia. The official magazine of the Metropolitan of Oltenia
Orthodoxy - Orthodox Romanian Patriarchate Magazine
PG - Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Graeca, 162 ... JP Migne, Paris, 1857-1866
pr. - Priest
F.E.W (P.S.B.) - Fathers and ecclesiastical writers (collection)
rd. - line
ROC - Romanian Orthodox Church News, Bucharest, 1970.
rom. - Romanian, Romanian language
JoT (RT) - Journal of Theology, Sibiu 1907-1947, 1991.
sec. - Century
T. S. (S.T.) - Theological Studies. Journal of Theological Institutes Romanian Patriarchate.
TR – Romanian Telegraph, Sibiu, 1853.
trad. - Translated
vol. - volume

FAMILY IN THE THOUGHT OF ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

The theme of the Christian family was and is not only current, but also necessary. Treated from the vision of Patristic literature it means a refresh of Orthodox Christian bases that underlie the institution.

The meeting of Christianity with paganism, the first Christian centuries, especially during persecution, was made with great tension, yielding pagan institutions hardly innovating ideas of the teachings of Jesus Christ. This is clear from the writings of the Church Fathers of these centuries. Christian teaching prevailed especially in living a moral, irreproachable life, the new relations between husband and wife, blessed by God in the sacrament of marriage, the attitude towards children and fellow people.

Marriage and family is a deep ocean worn by the waves of time, from the first couple of people to this day, a synergy between the work of God and human involvement, a measure of love in both directions, between the Creator and the crown of creation, vertically, and between the wreath, horizontally. It is human life itself, covered by Divine Providence and icon of the mysterious embrace between the Savior Bridegroom and the Church Bride in the Pantries of Everlasting Kingdom.

This paper begins with an overview of the life, work and personality of St. John Chrysostom. In all likelihood, John became second deacon quite early and was ordained deacon in 381 by Archbishop Meletius. In 386, John receives sacred ordination to the priesthood – the one who ordained him this time being Archbishop Flavian, the successor of Meletius. Immediately after ordination, the Archbishop put him in charge of the mission to carry out activities in the great church of Antioch. The Oratorical education gained during the teacher Libanius had proved useful. Shortly after taking commission, crowds gathered to hear him speak. His eloquence and his amazement delighted everyone, but what amazed them most was the fact that young John preached without the use of written notes.

In 397, when the Patriarch of Constantinople, Nectarios passed away, John the famous preacher of Antioch, was invited by newly Emperor Arcadius to follow him in the patriarchal chair. Archbishop Theophilus of Alexandria, who took part in the enthronement of John by the emperor, but against his own will, and who hated John - Alexandria being the prey of the strong resentment of jealousy on Constantinople - had now an opportunity to rise against him, binding to the question of the "high four brothers." It was about four monks from the Egyptian desert, which Theophilus had banished from Egypt, accusing them of Origenist heresy. When the four had reached Constantinople, Patriarch John offered them accommodation in one of the Constantinopolitan churches, yet showing prudence not to allow them to receive Holy Communion before solving the case.

Once those brothers presented their case to the Constantinopolitan authorities, Theophilus was summoned by imperial order to appear in the capital, as accused in the trial against them. Arriving in Constantinople, however, accompanied by 29 Egyptian bishops and loaded with presents, Theophilus began to organize parties (at which he invited members of the local clergy and the nobility), right in the imperial palace, which had been put to his disposal by the Empress Eudoxia herself, who decided to support him against John. Theophilus gradually tightened around all those who were unhappy with the authority of the patriarch, manifested in his sermons in his lifestyle and church administration issues. He thus gathered as many charges against the patriarch as he had gathered against him- ie putting sale

on church property (had sold building materials which were supposed to be used for helping the poor), the disparagement of clerics (he criticized for not taking their pastoral duties seriously), maintenance of private conversations with women (Olimpiad served him his meals daily in private), illegal dismissal of the bishops in Asia (he had banished the bishops who had taken bribes in the Efes region), assault on Eudoxia (he once said that some priests were just "priests who ate at Jezbel's table"), etc..

Enjoying the support of the empress, Theophilus convened a synod consisting of 36 bishops (29 of which being from Egypt, however, had no legitimacy in Constantinople), managing the amazing performance to get the removing of Patriarch John of Constantinople. Firm in the belief that God does justice to the innocent in ways known only to Him, John does not oppose any resistance, therefore he is exiled. Obeying the imperial officers, he went onto a ship destined for Bithynia.

St. John Chrysostom passed away in exile during a forced march to another village of banishment, on the 14th of September of the year 407. He fell asleep to the Lord in Comana, a small town, in the Church of the Holy Basilisk in front of the coffin of the holy martyr, who had appeared in his dream the night before, comforting him and telling him that the next day they would be together in heaven. In line with everything preached throughout his life - that man must endure trials with dignity, nobly and without complaint, his last words were: "Thank God for everything!"

In writing his biography shortly after death, Bishop Palladius predicted that there will not be long and Saint John Chrysostom will be sanctified: "You will see that after the passage a generation, John will be honored as a martyr while those who have opposed him will rot." Indeed, many of those who had persecuted him ended miserably shortly after, including the Empress Eudoxia.

In the year 438, when St. Proclus, one of the disciples of the Holy Father, was Hierarch of Constantinople, his remains were brought in a ship to Constantinople with great pomp. Climbing into boats, thousands of people came to meet him offshore. He was buried in the Church of the Holy Apostles only after Emperor Theodosius II, son of Arcadius and Eudoxia, asked for forgiveness on behalf of his parents.

Chapter II, *The Family in the Light of the Holy Scripture*, has a grand scriptural basis, both from the Age of the Old as well as the New Testament.

The Eden family, the family of the first parents Adam and Eve, represents, until their fall – a fall that resulted in expulsion from paradise - the family taken to the highest level of resemblance to the Trinity prototype. Never was man closer to God than in those times, never has the family been closer to the Trinitarian perfection, which results from the fact that they saw the image of God (Gen. 3, 8). The man was then a man, a quality he since lost but was restored to him by God-Man Jesus Christ. "Man is a complete unit, therefore the image of God, because human unity is achieved not in its personal uneven duality, but in a male – female unity"

This mutual togetherness of perfect humanity is demonstrated in two ways in the book of Genesis. Firstly, this is reflected clearly from common physical origin of the two. In the beginning man was created as a single person, as Adam-Eve having the feminine virtually included in it, as evidenced in Genesis 1, 27: "And God created man in his image, in the image of God made; made man and woman. " Thus, in the beginning God created man-unity, but because "there is only one suffering, that of being alone," and God, in His omniscience, knew that "man should not be alone" turned human unity in his image, making it "the unity of two persons in one being, one substance, or otherwise: a union of body and soul, but two people" to the image and likeness of Trinitarian Unity. "The conjugal Ego does not suppress people in any case but the image of the Trinity in one nature oneness of the three persons

form one topic, suddenly one God and Trinity, as well as the conjugal union of two persons form a dyad- monad, two and one suddenly ... So conjugal man is the image of God is Trinitarian dogma of the Trinity and the divine archetype, the icon marital community. "

This twosome unity is what the Holy Scripture refers to when it says "the man shall leave his father and mother and be united to his wife and they shall become one flesh" (Gen. 2, 25), a body in the spiritual sense. The Eden family is a family in the true sense of the word. The Principles by which this family was placed by God are to be rediscovered and followed by the "contemporary family." This is the experience that the modern man should reach in order to achieve the purpose of life through family. Individuality and selfishness must be melted in the oven of a twosome unity.

But as I said, this unity of the Christian family, a real family, also demonstrates its truthfulness by another phenomenon existing in family life from the beginning. It's about the birth of infants. Adam man, possesses the feminine with its characteristic birth-giving quality. For this reason, God, Creator of all, having made Adam the man in His image, put him in heaven, and blessed him, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it".

Fathers of the Church emphasize the idea that "the image is not the limit of the human, a final state because human nature was intended to similarity, the fruit of freedom." Adam was meant, to earn likeness consciously, becoming a small *elohim*. The fulfillment of similarity means the putting into practice of the face powers, namely the cultivation of virtues, or the possibility of moral and spiritual development and perfection. We distinguish here the nucleus of a dynamic pedagogy, that is the understanding that the humans are caught attributes of what "can" be developed.

The Orthodox Church teaches that with the deterioration of the image of the original form, this likeness to God was possible only through the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is "the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation" (Col 1, 15). Every Christian should strive to become conformed to the image of the Son of God (Rom. 8, 29). The image of God in man consists precisely in its ability to reach deification through a life manifested by growing evangelical Christian virtues.

From Biblical Creation essay we learn that the first family, from which descends the whole human race was created by God. At home, in the splendor of the Garden of Eden, the family experienced the happiest time in its history. But man by accepting sin compromised this state of bliss of the family and is responsible for all the sufferings that have befallen them over time.

From Eden to Sodoma the family traveled the slippery road of decadence, humiliation and lack of consistency. It was necessary - as shown in the pages of Scripture - for Jesus Christ to restore marriage to the dignity of a sacrament and restoring its eminently holy and perfect character lost because of sin. (cf. Mt. 19th, 4-6).

Biblical antropogony and the story of the family establishment presents the paradigmatic image of man before the fall, as it was and ought to be today. This revealed truth offers her readers an exemplary model of family behavior, a means by which the believer will shape the path of virtue and perfects his own person and get the cooperation of the Holy Spirit at salvation and deification.

In ancient times, biblical truth rarely suffered complaints from the Bible interpreters. Contemporary academic prejudices tend to deny that Scripture can serve as a vital source of human understanding and moral instruction. Liberal commentators' questions and doubts regarding the origin of man and his family have tried to highlight the fallibility of the revealed word. They think that we humans are the result of an accident occurred millions of years ago and not the result of love and nurturing of a Creator.\

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, scientific evolutionism became the first article of faith to many European and North American scholars. Just a few generations

ago, state laws prevented the teaching of modern evolutionary theory in schools. Revealed teachings about human origin submitted by holy books were accepted as true and worthy of trust.

Today, however, the presence of the Bible in schools and, in general, of religious symbols became a very heated topic of debate and controversy. The school Curricula adopted in many European countries shows that in biology classes there is no place for discussions on the creation of the cosmos and our origins as stated in The Holy Scripture because they "would only create confusion in the minds of students, who could not distinguish between faith and science. " To the detriment of countless contradictions and inconsistencies any criticism against the theory of evolution is often ruthlessly suppressed in academic circles and high schools.

Even from the beginning modern science did not appear friendly to religious feeling. Advances in science and technology have made mankind get used to this situation. There appeared successively new assumptions and presuppositions and old ones become obsolete. Some theories have not resisted even a few years.

Unfortunately today, many scholars pay tribute prejudices at the same time, as they did previously and advocate atheism and dialectical materialism. They approach the biblical text in the same manner in which they search a document containing scientific data, forgetting that the Holy Bible is not a textbook of astronomy, biology or history, but the message of God revealed usefully for the salvation of our souls. In efforts to find solutions to persistent questions plausible in a scientific society, some new theses have developed as theistic evolutionism or its counterpart, scientific creationism.

The second part of this chapter refers mainly to man, as man and woman, the crown of creation. We wanted to show, in particular, that the God who is a communion of Persons (Elohim) creates man as a person able to partake of the love of the Creator, and to share love. Nothing can justify the existence more than love: "Love never satisfies anyone." The inspired writer sees in a man and woman the ontological unity through love: one can not exist without the other. In Hebrew mentality, man is fulfilled with his wife, apt for a family and perpetuation of the human species.

The purpose of marriage - according to the first article of Holy Scripture - is to participate in the act of creation and transmitting the image of God in the birth of new people. Family unity is guaranteed by the way in which both sides come together and complement each other in perfect order.

St. John Chrysostom shows that the woman is as much image of God as man. So the original family, before being a couple was first triangle: God - man - woman.

God addresses both sides, male and female, the same tasks and provisions:

- to be masters of Creation (Gen. 1, 28);
- collaborate on human population growth (Gen. 1, 28);
- have direct access to a free and equal access to sources of supply (Gen. 1, 29).

Holy Father points out that after the knowledge of sin, in the earthly part God permitted a mode of reproduction similar to that of animals. Fighting passions, by the heavenly man longs to restore communion and friendship with God, a higher condition of existence. A sign of this spiritual reality is that "the truth, the good and the beautiful are the spiritual values which man strives to constantly translate into his own life."

The end of biblical cosmogony proves that the entire action is subject to a creative liturgical purpose: establishing the Sabbath as a day of rest (*requies*) and celebration (*festum*) and give it divine mark. The Israelites, to whom the content of the sacred writings is addressed, were not able to understand abstract thinking about creation, which is why the writer represents God as a worker completing His work over six days and then resting. Hence

the belief that every faithful Jew is obliged to observe the seventh day of the week as a day of rest (Sabbath) and peace (shalom), imitating the very Creator of the world.

Biblical cosmogony - according to supporters of the documentarian hypothesis – did not appear suddenly; it is the result of the school of scholarly priests during the Babylonian exile (sixth century BC), the result of several generations' strivings. During his exile, the priests insisted that the religious and moral heritage should be saved so that Israel could be protected from assimilation. In such circumstances, deprived of the holy Temple in Jerusalem, and thus religiousness, the major concern was writing holy books and organizing the religious life of the community. Renaissance of the spiritual life of the elected people was conditioned by the proximity of the messianic promise and reconciliation with God.

Regarding the family in the Old Testament, St. John points out that the pre-Christian family has departed so much from what it was created to be. It "remains a purely earthly reality, and the marital relationship between man and woman has no prospect of transcendence, being given only a social status with an immediate end and an end in itself".

Of all the pre-Christian peoples, that who remained the closest to the Eden family was the Hebrew people. This is due to the fact that this nation was God's chosen people, the people that God has permanently provided for, because from the seed of this nation the Savior will be born, the Son of God Incarnate. God took care of the people, reminding them through prophets and chosen people that man must be true to his purpose on this earth.

"In the strength of the covenant which Yahweh lays down with Abraham or Moses, there are the holy institutions, the gifts and the gracious word to the people chosen to prepare the incarnation of the Word. The moral law and the cosmic order, in which divine providence protects marriage, are no longer simple manifestations of the sanctifying power, but signs of a personal divine presence, symbolic forms of the Alliance of Lord God with Israel and typical images of Christ's union with the Church. In some moments of the history of salvation, marriage bears a prophetic function. "

As Father Vasile Gavrilă calls it in the title of his book, marriage is life in God's kingdom. The importance of marriage is shown by the books of the Old Testament, God's chosen people revealing more of His truths using the image of the bridegroom and bride in marriage. God shows that man accompanying the woman "is marked by a divine calling and follows a destiny. There's no chance alliance. "

Yahweh Himself confirms marriage when choosing a wife for Isaac." Thus, according to the story of Scripture, Abraham sending his servant of Mesopotamia, to choose a wife for his son Isaac, has entrusted these words: "It is the Lord God of heaven and God of the earth, who took me from my father's house and from the land on which I was born, who spoke and swore to me, saying: "I will give you and your descendants this land", who will send his angel before thee, and thou shalt take a wife for my son from there "(Gen. 24, 7) The most obvious sign and necessary at the same time, in God's blessing was the furthering of generations. Abraham's obedience and faith in God leads to the promise of a generous progeny: "Therefore I will bless you with blessings, and I will multiply thy seed very, to be as the stars of heaven and as the sand on the seashore, and your descendants will master the cities of their enemies, and shall be blessed through your descendants all the nations of the earth, because thou hast obeyed my voice "(Genesis 22, 17-18) .

In biblical Israel the idea of family was a concept much broader in its meaning than today. In Scripture there are four basic levels:

- Bet av, "father's house" a concept very similar to what we currently define as the nuclear family consisting of father, mother and children, which at the same time could include the servants or slaves of the house: among the Hebrew there was simultaneously spread the concept of bet m, "mother's house" which means the same social entity as bet av but from a matriarchal perspective (Gen. 24, 28; Ruth 1:8; Song of Solomon 3, 4, 8, 2).

- mishpa ha, the wider family, usually translated as "clan", "gens", "big family", a grouping of several households where there is a family relationship, occasionally was used to mark larger social units, sometimes even the whole nation of Israel;

- Shevet or mate means "tribe" and consists of several clans. In Eretz Israel there were twelve tribes corresponding to the twelve biblical Patriarchs of whom the twelve chosen people of God descended.

- Am Yisrael referring to "Israel"; sometimes the idea of "nation of Israel" is suggested by other set phrases.

In the Old Testament, the idea of family represents the purpose of procreation. most obvious sign and necessary at the same time, in God's blessing was the furthering of generations. Abraham's obedience and faith in God leads to the promise of a generous progeny: "Therefore I will bless you with blessings, and I will multiply thy seed very, to be as the stars of heaven and as the sand on the seashore, and your descendants will master the cities of their enemies, and shall be blessed through your descendants all the nations of the earth, because thou hast obeyed my voice "(Genesis 22, 17-18) .

In the New Testament, the Holy Father shows that in His divine work of the world, the Savior "again strengthens the bond of marriage between man and woman and raises it in the order of nature, in the order of grace." By participating in the wedding at Cana, Jesus Christ "blessed the marriage taking it under his protection" giving the family its original dimension before the fall.

Thus, "in the mystery of marriage, the love that makes the two people live together, is crowned with agape love that unites the three Persons of the Holy Trinity -" God's man-servant is crowned ... with God's maid-servant ... in the name of the father and the Son and the Holy Spirit "- so the family that is created is not a mere biological fact, a social institution, an erotic existential or psychological union but infinitely more, a cell of the church, that is real live limbs of the holy Body of Christ. "

Love becomes the cornerstone of marriage. But the feeling of love can only be expressed in the company of freedom. Love must be nurtured by a free heart; feelings are generally sincere only insofar as they are shown by a person who truly feels them, or, as Romanian proverb says, forced love cannot be. These two aspects of the family, love and freedom turn the family seen as a social institution into a divine mystery, above any law or human reasoning.

Christian marriage is not without structure; therefore it does not lack authority. Due to the special grace with which it is endowed, it has the power to represent a real connection with Christ's Church, becoming united with Christ into sacrifice and appropriating the divine factor, which transforms into a "house of God".

The woman must obey her husband as the church submits to Christ, but after this, the Apostle Paul adds the command for men, a more obvious imperative than previously addressed to the woman, "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her "(Eph. 5, 25).

These words come to show the extent to which men should be the head of women. "You know how big the power of love is? Christ laid aside all the wonders that the disciples were to make and said: By this shall men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another (John 13, 35). And Paul said that love is the fulfillment of the law (Rom. 13, 10) and, if there is no love (1 Cor. 13, 1-2), charisms are no good. "

Chapter III, *Matrimony in the Vision of St. John Chrysostom*, in fact the most succinct, is the one in which St. John Chrysostom insists mainly on preserving the spiritual health of the soul. Everything that promotes virtue and closeness to God must be maintained and kept, and everything that is against these goals should be set aside. Salvation and

sanctification accomplished in this world have as aim the eternal restoration from the other world. The entire light spread in this life is indeed the light of life in the kingdom of heaven, a prophetic foretaste it. This world is transient, in essence, its purpose is to prepare us for life beyond where natural bodies will be fully remodeled into eternity. The great coryphaeus of Christian eloquence draws our attention to this immutable truth:

"Currently we are in some kind of school life here on earth, receiving teachings from diseases, temptation, sorrow, poverty and other evils apparent, to be prepared to receive the blessings of heavenly life."

The Holy Father puts a particular focus on human guidance to eternal salvation, "I am bound to seem oppressive and offensive, not for my sake, but for your good and salvation, which I cherish above all."

Therefore, to St. John Chrysostom, the Church is the most important thing because it is the way of the kingdom of heaven: "Our journey has targeted the next life and the treasures of heaven. And they lead us to the path we are here in the Church. " The Church is the kingdom of heaven on earth, like an embassy in a foreign country: "For the Church is [...] abode of the angels, the archangels, the palace of God, heaven itself."

It is the place where believers are sharing the life and truth of God - where all men co-unite in His Body (from "stacking" themselves to His body in the Sacrament of Baptism) and receive as food his broken body on the Cross and His Blood shed for them in the deepest humility and love. Here is how St. John Chrysostom describes the Holy Eucharist: "Your kingdom sits before a table; angels themselves serve you, the King himself is present." So the Church is the most important area of the world where God Himself shelters His herd from the storms of this life, carrying it to the safe and secure port of Heaven, like a pilot leading a loaded treasure ship to shore. According to St. John Chrysostom and according to tradition, the Church, "bride of Christ" (cf. Eph 5, 23-32), is also our mother: "The Church, our mother, gathers us all in her bosom and sways us in her arms, comforting us daily."

Therefore the family, being a "small church" implies a certain behavior and the corresponding quality of Christian religious life. Practice of virtue, prayer and fasting are recommended to the spouses as a means of spiritual advancement and perfection. But this must be done in line and without disturbing the natural relations between spouses, abstinence not constituting itself into a possible justification for immorality from one or the other.

The Holy Father also believed that all Christians, whatever their mode of life, not only were able to have such spiritual wisdom, but should live in its spirit, putting it into practice at every step. In the Commentary on the Gospel of John 1, 12 ("But as many as received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God"), the Holy Father exclaimed:

"Whether bond or free, whether Greek or barbarian or Scythian, be aware, be ignorant, men or women or children or old people, or honest, or despised, either rich or poor, whether kings or ordinary people: all, saith your Lord are worthy of the same honor. Faith and grace of the Holy Spirit lifting human inequality put them all in the same form (morphen) marking them all with the same royal seal (charakter)."

Believing wholeheartedly in the power of Christ to change lives, St. John Chrysostom imagined at that time that the company may be formed in an authentic Christian community. This transformation could take place, he thought, not through a social revolution, but by the mission entrusted to each of the members of society - that is to live fully as Christian as possible.

Regarding the role of women in society, the Holy Father shared the general views of the era in which he lived, when the main tasks of women were very valuable, and were manifested especially in household chores, giving birth to children and educating them. Not only that, but he raised these tasks to a higher level, giving them an important choice and

spiritual power. What constantly exasperated him was the excessive permissiveness of the Antiochian society to customs and practices that he considered overly demeaning to women, such as prostitution, nudity in theaters and other public performances and excessive attention paid to cosmetics.

In the Sacrament of Marriage, the bond between the bride and groom is transfigured, overcoming the natural state, and enters a gracious state, meant to carry them on the steps to perfection and to their union with Christ. "Christ again reinforces the bond of marriage between man and woman and a high order of nature in the order of grace, enveloping it, by participating in the wedding in Cana, in the gracious ambiance that radiates from his person." St. John emphasizes the fifth chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians in which we discover a new meaning of Christian marriage, which cannot be reduced to utilitarianism nor Jewish nor Roman legalism. We find opportunity and responsibility given to each bride and groom, to transform "their agreement" in the reality of the Kingdom. In this sense, every bridegroom should be aware that he comes before the Holy Altar to receive in Church, from the "hand" of Christ the bride whom he is to keep as a "glorious church", the spotless Bride of Christ - "without spot or wrinkle or anything like this, but to be holy and without blemish" (Eph. 5, 27). The bride must have the same awareness.

The receiving of the "crown in the Kingdom of Heaven" does not mean anything other than that they are entrusted to each other to be united, sacredly, with Christ, who was embodied in them during the Holy Baptism and whom they carry in their bodies and souls through the Holy Communion.

St. John Chrysostom addresses us about the time of marriage as well. He advises young people to marry for wanting to keep them from falling into the sin of fornication with all its consequences on their future marriage. Father advised that this great mystery of marriage should be realized when the man reached physical maturity and spiritual qualities, but it should still be early, lest the young people who slip more easily than those established in the year and virtue, should have the opportunity to seek fulfillment of lust outside of marriage. Early marriage possibly before going out in the world in various ministries or public duties: functions, military service, have as aim thus preserving spiritual and bodily chastity.

He addresses particularly to parents who are responsible for raising and training their children until they themselves raise a family becoming potential parents through lawful marriage. To these he says: "When your child has grown, before going to war, before all you take care of marrying him."

St. John considers that the dominant if not even exclusive role, of family life is to ensure chastity and starting from the observation that in the young lust is quite violent and unmanageable, he recommends that young people should marry "as early as possible. "Marriage is a shield of chastity, a remedy against the assaults of the flesh, exposing to mistakes and hence punishment.

In this regard, St. John Chrysostom says: "before the young person knows lust they should marry him to a good and wise girl. She will remove her husband from sinful ways and will be for him what the reins is to the foal. There is no other reason to lechery and adulteries than the fact that young people are left on their own. If the young man has but a prudent wife is will tend the house and his glory and his good name. "You tell me he's young. Yes, I know. But if Isaac was married at the age of forty years and had lived in virginity until then, with much more in the days of grace, young people should practice this philosophy. " St. John Chrysostom emphasizes the spiritual nature of introspection, which must accompany the Holy Sacrament of Matrimony.

He does not show himself against entertainment. "Have fun - he says - but not at such a price." He is the one who shows us how the wedding of Christians should be "It is

allowed – according to him - to enliven the wedding with such things, for example, as tables laden with food, beautiful clothes and the like. You see, I do not disapprove of such things not to seem to be too wild - although Rebecca only needed a thin coat. It is allowed to enjoy the beauty of wedding clothes, the presence of worshiped men and women. " Seeking to give us a definition of virginity, St. John in the word about Martyr Thecla says: "The virgin is a sacred vessel, a purple which is due to no one other than the king of all, it is a virginal bride's wedding forever. How happy is the wedding bed with immaculate sheets! For such a wedding our blessed martyr faced danger. She saw the beauty of the Bridegroom and did not separate from His face. "

St. John Chrysostom says that "virginity is to be holy body and soul." And its reward is: "As a peaceful harbor, silence, tranquility and peace of mind mastered virgin soul. This peace descends in her soul because Virgin does not deal with earthly things, she lies constantly talking to God always has her eyes riveted on him. Who can measure the pleasure? What word could describe 'the happiness of a soul is in such a state? No one and no word! Only those who enjoy Lord know how great is the joy and pleasure, that does not accept likening".

St. John Chrysostom also speaks about the benefit of virginity: "Even from now the virgin enjoys the future goodness and lives the holiness of resurrection. That says the Lord: In the resurrection she neither marries nor is married. That loss of such a good is very high, because the good itself is great. Therefore the licentiousness of the one who has decided to live in virginity is more polluted than the lechery of the whore. "And in the Treaty of virginity the Saint says: "The virgin is not forced to inquire about the groom to be married, nor fear of being cheated. God is not man, he is the master, not a slave like one of us. So great is the difference between the bridegroom of the virgin and bride groom who is getting married! Here are now the suitable wedding gifts for a virgin. The gifts of that bride are the heavens and heavenly bounties, not a slave, nor hectares of land, or many, many gold coins. More! The married trembles with fear of death for a lot of reasons, but also that death separates her from her husband. Yet the virgin really wants the end, she is tired of life; She hurries to see the groom face to face and be greeted by heavenly glory ".

Chapter IV, entitled *Marriage and family life*, seeks to emphasize that the unity of marriage was always considered as one of the fundamental properties of marriage (Gen. 3:24).

St. John Chrysostom, in the famous Word 20 to Ephesians (commenting the Wedding reading from Ephesians 5.20 to 33), says: "Since the very beginning and we see that God did much caring to accompany it and as the one speaking for both so saying "men and women have made them" (Gen. 1:27) and again "Neither male nor female" (Gal. 3:28). "

Our father speaks about material and spiritual benefits of such a union of mind and soul in marriage: "Because nothing will be able to hurt or harm those who are so bound in this life. For when there will be unity and bond of peace and love with the woman and the man there will be flowing all the wealth and they will be unharmed by all enmity being surrounded with great and invincible wall, ie the union into God. This will make them more virtuous than diamond, stronger than iron, it will use them more than all the riches and wealth, it will raise them to sublime glory, it will cause them the love of God with great abundance. "

St. John Chrysostom emphasizes the connection between unity and mutual love in marriage saying, "So, when you love each other you are yourselves. For this is what friendship signifies: the lover and the beloved are no longer two separate people, but are somehow one man, something that could never happen without love. So look for those who are not yours in order to find your own."

Man and woman become one flesh not only by origin but also by their mission, so that the man can only be separated from a woman through a painful operation as one that consists of cutting off someone's flesh - as says the Holy Father.

The mystery of the wedding sanctifies the edifice of love, giving it permanence and exclusiveness. Marriage-mystery par excellence means participation in grace that elevates human love for each other, strengthens the unity and indissolubility and sanctifies the spouses. The spouses' perpetual and exclusive link is a union of wills permeated by love, a ceaseless innovation and support of grace, a collaboration with God in the work of life and love. Conjugal union that is fulfilled in Christ and the Church, Christ's presence in the family, make it a small domestic church, a body that pulsates eternity.

The foundation of the Christian family is thus in the conception of St. John Chrysostom.

Love for man is the heart of Chrysostom's humanism. No other contemporary has praised her as he did. For him, love is the foundation of individual and social life, it raises man to his true calling and true sense. It comes from the God who is the model of perfect love and goodness flowing from, the gifts, the world and man. The very presence of God in history and among humans, is a presence through love wearing different appointments: creation, providence, redemption, sanctification, perfection.

Within the family, for the good of themselves and the purposes for which it was left by God, each spouse has their own separate duties, stemming from its specific nature.

St. John Chrysostom said that "God has entrusted everything neither to man nor to woman, but he split duties." It sees the division of responsibilities between husband and wife as a new link of love that God wills within the family. "From the beginning - he says - the man had to deal with public affairs, and women take care of household chores back."

The Holy Father believes that God gave women the guidance of the house, and the man all state affairs, those relating to trade, judgments, military affairs and other public ranks. She can not handle the gun, but she can keep and manage her own family as it should all the housewives. She can not always give an opinion on a matter public, but only in the home, where so often she is better than man. She can not properly direct the affairs of state, but may modestly raise children. She may supervise work done by servants, giving man all the peace, in the care of women are preparing meals, garments and all other maintenance chores that are not proper for men. Another sign of wisdom and divine elite is the man though he is able to do significant things, but can not make them smaller ones, which looks clumsy, as, in this way, women have a important role.

In the concept of the Holy Father, the wife has a duty to provide for raising children and managing the house and everything in it. He says: "The woman has only one task: to care for your babies (children) to take care of your income (the husband's), to take care of your home. That is why God gave her to you, to take care of these and all the others. Because our life consists of two kinds of business: the public and at home. God divided the tasks between man and woman and gave her management of the house and him all affairs of state and those which are done aside: judgment, advising, military command and everything. She can not carry a spear, throw a dart, but can take hold the fork or weave a cloth or put order around the house ... she can raise good children, the most precious treasure than all, can give confidence to the man, relieved him of all the worries that requires a household, ie pantry, weaving, food, clothes and others that are neither suitable nor easy for a man, even if he wants to take them over him."

Saint John showed special care for the problem of education. The love of parents for their children should be as God's love for them, because St. John says: "You can not say that God does not give attention to children. God cares more for their growth. Because that God

planted in human nature a love of children so that parents are forced, as a law that can not be breeched, take care of raising their children. "

St. John paints this beautiful expression of love of parents towards children especially when they are sick, "Many people have five or six sons or daughters, and if one of them gets sick the father sits around the bed, kisses the child's eyes, shakes his hands, reckons day night, and light for darkness, that would not because the phenomena have changed, but because you can no longer enjoy them because of the sadness of pain. The beds have new linen, the doctors are with many around the patient and the father melts on his feet. If he were rich he would not bear his richness, if he had thousands and thousands of things he would leave them all, he could not get round to them, he is dizzy with pain. For him all the world can not be cured of evil. "

Children's education must begin very early, when they can not manage their own actions. The Holy Father says: "Even in small childhood fence the children with the spiritual weapons and teach them to seal their forehead with their hands, and before they could do it with their own hand you yourselves should mark on their foreheads the mark of the Holy Cross'. Right from birth, the parents do not care to raise their children well, but "to adorn and make them beautiful clothes and gold jewels, they hang gold in their ears, let their hair grow long on the back, so that from the beginning they accustom the children learn with experiences that by nature they are unaware of. "

Education ought to be made not by servants, but the first educators should be the parents whom St. John advises: "All things should come second to child care and duty to raise them up in the discipline and submission to the Lord."

St. John Chrysostom says that the teacher is like a king who has a town under his rule. This city is the soul of the child. As in the city some steal and some do good deeds, some work well and others are all sloppy and random, so are there thoughts and thoughts in one's soul.

"Some are fighting the reckless instincts of the soul, such as soldiers in the city, others take care of the good condition of the house of the body, such as state people, others speak of shameful and immoral things such as the immoral people of the city, others respectfully tell things as they are sober and wise men of the city, others are noble, as free people in the city ".

And as a city needs to be given laws, by which the rulers should bridle, or, by case to banish the bad people, so in the soul of the child should be established laws to dispose of the troubling thoughts and to develop and nurture good thoughts: "Give therefore laws to this "city", frightening and harsh laws for citizens of the city. Be the defender of the laws that are violated. There's no use giving laws if these laws are not enforced. " St. John Chrysostom, who knew how to present the value of marriage in such beautiful words has as high an idea about children.

First he insists on the Christian meaning of the birth of children, showing that marriage and childbirth are not obstacles to salvation. He says: "No one should count marriage as hindrance in pleasing God, no one should consider childbearing an obstacle in the way of virtue. If we are sober, then neither marriage, nor parenting, nor anything else we will prevent us from pleasing God. "

St. John Chrysostom believes that for a man who wants to lead a clean life with his wife, children are the most precious thing: they are God's gift and through them women can gain their soul's salvation (I Tim. 2 15). Giving birth to children, which is "the reason for great joy" is, at the same time, the start of pain. St. John Chrysostom interprets the words addressed to Eve by God after the Fall: "By multiplying I will multiply your pains and your sighing, in pain you shall bring forth sons" (Gen. 3:16) showing that birth pains are a part of anamnesis of constantly reminding women

over times how hard the sin which he has committed is and "how big is the transgression of the commandment" and thus may know that deceit is the cause of all the pain (Gen. I, XVII, VII, p 200).

The birth of children is, however, the starting of pain: the bearing of the pregnancy "as a burden" for nine months, the frequent suffering derived hence, "the breaking of bones and those terrible pains that are only known by those who have given birth."

St. John Chrysostom strongly condemns the pagan superstitions about receiving a baby, superstitions in which many Christians believed firmly. Even in putting names were employed "signs or symbols folly." Here is an example of this: "When they put a child's name, they let the holy names aside, (as the ancients used to do), they light candles and give the baby a fancied name, thinking that in this way the child will live more in the world. " In the conception of St. John Chrysostom, the children from adultery are condemned by their parents to a life of dishonesty covered by sin, no matter how many riches they would leave as inheritance.

St. John Chrysostom emphasizes not the material but the spiritual preparation for receiving the sacrament of marriage to young people. The Holy Father believes that this training role of parents is overwhelming. They must follow, on the one hand keeping chastity of their children, and on the other hand, training and learning them piety, modesty, despising wealth and embracing every virtue.

In the conception of St. John Chrysostom, the most important and the most difficult to achieve is to preserve chastity of the youth: "For nothing can be so difficult and tiring - he says - that preventing the absurd pleasures. At such an age nor the love of money, lust for glory, nor any such thing can upset a couple like the love of their body."

You should be aware that not keeping chastity until marriage entails serious consequences for the future of young marriage. St. John warns us: "That because of this carelessness, so to speak, is born all evil".

The Holy Father speaks of "familiarity with sin" that "causes with the passing of time so much damage that no advice has any power over one accustomed to sin." This habit makes the spouses prone to infidelity, to slipping easily into sin that brings so much disorder, turmoil and trouble in the family. "He who never found out what immorality is - he says - does not know what lechery is, and that who has rolled in the former, and will quickly go to the latter," for "He who was wise and thrifty before the wedding, more so after the wedding will be. " The young man who is used to being unchaste before marriage, will be faithful to his wife and will appreciate her no more than a day or two - says Saint John - and after that will quickly slide down the slope lust, seeking that absurd and spasmodic laughter, those words full of trivialities, those gestures shameless and ultimately all impropriety that we even shame to speak of ". This young man will not find all these in a wife wedded to virtue, because she did not marry to be dirtied, to be dishonored, or to stir her husband stirring to fornication, but for the birth of babies, and the caring of the home, to teaching her own man that what is dignified.

Chapter V, *St. John Chrysostom teacher of the Christian family* - reveals in words so beautiful, the value of Christian education for marriage.

He insists that education starts at preschool age, for that is when the child's Christian character is formed. In this moment the child is like a soft thing, "What is tender and has not yet gained a strong form, can be molded into any form ", but if the work is made badly, then it is very hard to change. The Holy Father even from the beginning advises the parents that they should be careful to steer their children them towards the right and must punish unhealthy manifestations in the soul of children so that the job is easier.

So it is obvious that the delicate preschool age is not only the best time to receive Christian guidance, but it is also crucial for his future Christian life. If good teaching is

embedded in the soul of the child while it is still soft, no one can take it out, because they have left indelible mark as the seal in soft wax. "Because at this age especially, the holy bishop notes, they need to hear things. Because being so delicate they quickly deposited all the spoken words, like the mark of seal in the wax, so it imprints a story in their mind."

An additional reason for the start of Christian Education from the early age of childhood is the practical advantage of real parents and children safety. If from the beginning we establish good ways of life for children, says the holy teacher, you will not need to work hard in the future, because good habits will be their law.

Talking about education St. John Chrysostom tells us that any educational activity should take into account the physical strength and spiritual needs of children and their ability to assimilate information. In this respect he makes a parallel with God and tells us that "Scriptures were given to us from the beginning, that man should be taught first of the things of nature and not of the letters". Education should start at an early age so that the things which become a habit at that age should become law in adolescence.

In the writings of St. John Chrysostom it is noted that in addition to a number of external factors there are also internal factors, planted by God in our souls. The most important internal factor is the conscience: "Conscience is one of the books that lead us to the knowledge of truth; she raises her voice from the depths of the soul and tells us what to do." And as external factors we have: family, school, church and society.

The oldest and also the most powerful human institution is the family, crown of creation and expression of love and communion with God. It was often called "little church" or "home church" for its community character and atmosphere of holiness that it must cultivate.

Good parenting in the vision of St. John Chrysostom is the main occupation of the mother. St. John says that "she can not order good public affairs well, but can grow good kids." This is because the mother has the privilege of being longer than the father in the family. A mother's heart is endowed by God to be closer to the soul of the child. But this work of good parenting is achieved only when the mother uses true love for her children. St. John underlines the mother's role in girls' education. This should start when children are still young. For only they can more easily approach girls and they can straighten their soul, they can teach them the true moral values. The furthering from luxuries represents the principal element in St. John Chrysostom when he talks about girls' education. "But the important thing here is that this kind of education should be the starting point in the first years of childhood."

The mother should educate her daughter to be a housewife, but above all to be faithful, unloving of riches and respectful.

St. John Chrysostom has a broader view when we talk about the education of girls, thinking ahead because from his writings, from the advice addressed to the mother we notice that the education of girls will get salvation not only for themselves but also for the man with whom they will marry, and in addition will get the salvation of the children who will be born and maybe even their grandchildren. Spiritually cultivated in this way the girl walks towards marriage holding the necessary knowledge about the education of children to the love of Christ.

The present paper ends with the presentation of conclusions and a rich bibliography, which led to the writing of this paper, which we hope to be of interest not only to parish priests and theology students, but to all lovers of ethics and pedagogy.