

Leading the FLOCK

BY BISHOP DANIEL E. THOMAS



“*Humanae Vitae*: Fifty Years Proclaiming the Truth about Love”

The joy filled truth about married love, human life and human sexuality: that’s what Blessed Pope Paul VI proclaimed and taught in his encyclical *Humanae Vitae*. This year, on July 25th, we joyfully celebrate the 50th anniversary of *Humanae Vitae*, which illuminates for us the beauty and richness of the Church’s teaching on the transmission of human life and God’s plan for married love, as well as the ramifications of the perilous direction our society has been headed for generations now, through the lack of understanding and misuse of our God given sexuality. That encyclical, rejected by many at its publication, now decades later, has proven its prophetic genius.

While illustrating the beautiful and positive reality of what God intends for the union of one man and one woman in the Sacrament of Marriage, Pope Paul VI focuses on four key features of married love: human, total, faithful and fruitful. He also warned, with startling precision, about the negative outcome of behaviors and choices we have been making as a human family for over 50 years.

We have never seen more confusion or pain in the heart of humanity regarding our bodies, our human nature and our human sexuality. We find ourselves struggling to understand how to see each other, how to interact with one another, and even how to see ourselves. One of the greatest tragedies of all is for a person to lose sight of who they are created to be by God, and what they are worth in the eyes of the Lord. We see the dignity of the human person being stripped

away when people become disposable through abortion or euthanasia. We see the dignity of the family being torn asunder with the record number of divorces, infidelity and co-habitation. We see how spouses struggle selflessly to share themselves completely with one another in marriage. We see how the practice of artificial contraception has replaced an openness to life which is the foundation of Natural Family Planning.

Blessed Pope Paul VI writes: “It is to be anticipated that perhaps not everyone will easily accept this particular teaching... In preserving intact the whole moral law of marriage, the Church is convinced that she is contributing to the creation of a truly human civilization. She urges man not to betray his personal responsibilities by putting all his faith in technical expedients. In this way she defends the dignity of husband and wife” (HV18).

The Lord has blessed us immensely through Pope Paul VI’s encyclical *Humanae Vitae*. There is great richness and peace of mind, heart and soul to be found in the prayerful reception of this document. I encourage you to read, to pray over and heed the wisdom of *Humanae Vitae*, and to see in it what genuine creative human love looks like. As we celebrate together the amazing gift of this encyclical, I encourage especially our young people, engaged couples and married couples to faithfully live out the joyful truth of *Humanae Vitae*, and so to be vibrant witnesses to the world of the blessing and gift of married life, family life and human life,

according to God’s design.

Be sure to join me for our Diocesan Celebration of the 50th Anniversary of *Humanae Vitae* on Saturday, August 25, 2018, from 8:00 am until 1:00 pm, at Saint Joan of Arc Parish (Toledo), beginning with breakfast, welcome and prayer; followed by two inspiring presentations by Dr. Janet E. Smith, Moral Theology Professor at Sacred Heart Major Seminary in Detroit, an eloquent and well known presenter on the Church’s teaching on human sexuality and *Humane Vitae*; concluding with Mass for Giving Thanks to God for the Gift of Human Life. Don’t miss it!

To download Blessed Pope Paul VI’s encyclical *Humanae Vitae*, go to:

http://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_25071968_humanae-vitae.html

For more information on the Diocesan Celebration of the 50th Anniversary of *Humanae Vitae*, or for a list of Natural Family Planning instructors in the Diocese of Toledo, please contact Mr. Nick De La Torre, Coordinator of the Office of Marriage & Family Life, tel. 419-214-4918, or by email at ndelatorre@toledodiocese.org.

Peace be with you and may the Lord bless you abundantly with His love.

+ *Daniel E. Thomas*

Most Rev. Daniel E. Thomas
Bishop of Toledo
July 2, 2018

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