

Book 1

First Book on the Christian Education of Children

Chapter 1

How in the Holy Church there are various and diverse states

The prophet David, full of the Holy Spirit, in the forty-fourth psalm [According to the Septuagint or Vulgate numbering] describes the wedding of the heavenly Spouse, Jesus Christ, with his delightful Bride the Holy Church. And after having sung highly of the beauty, of the strength, and of the reign of the heavenly Spouse, he turns to narrate the lauds of the newly-wed Bride, who he represents in the form of a very noble queen, assisted on her right by her dear consort, decorated by richest clothing; covered with a golden dress, and surrounded by a mantle, embroidered of various decorations, with the highest textile skill of diverse colours of silk and of marvellous gold. Now these rich decorations and embroidering, that adorn the dress of this grand queen, point at and figure the diversity, and the grace of the various states of the Holy Church militant, that is of the Virgins, of the Celibate, and of the Marrieds. Inasmuch as there are some, who renouncing the solitudes of the world, and having made a perfect holocaust of themselves to God, live in flesh almost outside of flesh a more immediately angelic than human life; others connected to the matrimonial yoke, between the domestic cares, and the many occupations of the civil life, navigating as through a turbulent sea, they also tire themselves of coming to the port of true rest. And although between them are these, and similar States in the Holy Church of different grade, and dignity, all nonetheless are beautiful, all holy, all adorn the noble Bride; and all consequently are grateful and delightful to the eyes of her eternal Spouse; who not only is pleased by them, that in the holy cloisters, and in the mountains, and through the woods they stay with the beautiful Rachel, sterile, but of keen sight and of luminous eyes contemplating God; but he rejoices so very greatly in seeing his delightful Bride adorned with numerous hosts of active and working men, that with Leah, however less beautiful, nonetheless fecund, tire themselves in the exercises of the active life. And so, as from many and distinct voices, which with great concord clash, a very sweet harmony, and consort, is born of them; and how from various and distinct members, destined by nature to diverse and separate operations, one single body results, very beautiful to see, very useful to keep, very fit to operate; so not otherwise from such variety of States, that are in the Holy Church, proceeds a marvellous union, and if it forms of them this spiritual body, the head of which is Jesus Christ, so ordained, and so strong that he frightens hell, very graceful, and very beautiful are those who are in love with God, and all heaven.

Chapter 2

That God did not oblige us to the sublimity of some States

The mercy of God is truly grand, which did not oblige his servants to need of necessity to choose some sublime States, but sympathizing to the infirmity and weakness of many, left free election to each to adhere oneself to that manner of life, that pleases him more. Christ Jesus, our redeemer and master, did not say to some under obligation of law, and of precept, but by way of evangelic council and of perfection: "go sell what thou hast, and give to the poor, [...] and come follow me." (Matt. 19:21). The Apostle Saint Paul, thinking of his virginal state, affirms not to "have some commandment from the Lord, but his legate and ambassador councils, persuades, and desires that all were the same, which he was, loosened from the care and solitudes of the world, and not subject to the tribulations of the flesh. In order that he did not say to some not to take a wife, and not to marry off your daughter; but only said, exhorting, and inviting to the highest and perfect state, "he that giveth his virgin in marriage, doth well; and he that giveth her not, doth better" (1 Cor. 7:38): if however this is the will of the maiden, or of the son for not wanting the earthly wedding, but rather the heavenly. Many thanks therefore one needs to render to the most benign God, father of mercy, who did not close to some, nor made difficult the way of eternal salvation, rather in many ways opened and paved the way for, so that not only the poor of voluntary poverty, the religious, the cleric, the virgin, and the celibate, and those who for the kingdom of heaven deprived themselves of the procreation of children; but even the rich, the laity, and the secular, and finally the family father, retaining his richness, and rejoicing of his things, of the spouse, of the children, and of the servers, will be able to, with the help of divine grace, have place and part in the in the kingdom of God, and in his eternal beatitude.

Chapter 3

That in every State the fear of God and the observance of the divine precepts are necessary

So there are, as it was said, these various states, although distinct in perfection, all nonetheless good and acceptable to God; and each is a secure path that leads to heaven, although some more quickly, some others with greater difficulty and travail. But there is however someone who flatters oneself, and gives oneself to believe in having everything electing a state of life of its nature laudable, for if in the good State he does not live well, and does not fulfil the obligations of his vocation, vainly will he ask for the good of his state; rather as an awful servant, and disobediently that he has known the will of his lord, and has not cared to execute it, he will be severely punished. So he does not believe the married man, although not bound with the bonds of religion, and undressed of its proper substance, nor of the use and power of the flesh, and that he has not finally deprived himself voluntarily of his own will, does not believe, I say, in being through this loosened and free from every obligation. For many, and greater, that some give themselves to believe, are the obligations of the marrieds, and especially regarding the inviolate observance of the faith, and of conjugal chastity, as will be said at its place. So he may not say I am neither a monk, nor brother, I have not made vows, nor a profession of chastity, of poverty, or of obedience; but he says instead I am a Christian, I

have made in baptism the great vow, and the noble profession to serve under the standard of Jesus Christ Crucified, and of fulfilling with the help of his divine grace his most sacred law; I solemnly renounced the tyranny of the demon, and of the world, and have put my neck under the sweat yoke of Jesus Christ. So he that with mature council, as will be said shortly, will have elected the matrimonial life and state, he does his wedding so happily, but he invites also Jesus Christ, as he made that wise man spouse of Cana of Galilee, so the great and omnipotent host converts equally in the home waters into wine, he posses his goods, but with Jesus Christ, his is free, not of liberty of the flesh, but of spirit, of that infernal liberty of the flesh which Jesus Christ has freed us, he attends to the generation of children, but for the glory and honour of Jesus Christ. And briefly, remembering that to each it is said and commanded by the supreme divine Legislator: "if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments" (Matt. 19:17); search with every solicitude and diligence to satisfy the obligations of your proper state, and well, and to live saintly in the sacred married state.

Chapter 4

Of the obligation of the Fathers to raise Christianly their children

Certainly many and not light are the obligations and the offices of a family father in the care and familial regiment since he in his home is almost a small king to whom it appertains to keep the peace and domestic tranquillity, to maintain justice, and to oversee the nutrition and other necessary things regarding the sustenance of his subjects, but all this with various regards and ways, according to the variety of the persons; for the care needs to be varied, and the authority of the family father regarding his own wife, also regarding the children, and also for however much he concerns himself with domestics, and servants; now, as it has been begun to say, many and not light are the above-said offices, in the government of the house; but without any doubt one of the greatest, and of the gravest obligations of the family father is that which is incumbent on him regarding the children, that is to educate them, and to raise them well and Christianly. Since raising them only for safeguarding the body and the natural life, is for us common with the animals; and similarly the moral education, conformed only to the light of reason, is for us common with the people who live in the shadows of infidelity, and that they do not know the true path of salvation. But that proper to the Christian, and of the faithful consists in the raising of children, accordingly points us to the law of Jesus Christ, so living these, and dying well, and healthily, they are on earth instruments of God for the beneficence and help of the human society; and finally they are in heaven heirs of the kingdom of God, from whose grace and help we have to live well, and to die will, for eternally rising in his glory, and in the eternal rejoicing of him himself. So do not believe one to make a small error, while maybe neglecting in the office of which we are speaking, not procuring with solicitude to raise well his children; that rather he would commit a very grave sin, and would offend in many ways himself, his children, his home, and his descendents, humankind, the Saints in heaven, and finally the supreme God. Whatever better he might wish, it behoves the father to consider that he, who neglects to raise well the child, offends primarily himself. For the child is in a certain way part, and his work, which remaining for his fault imperfect

and impaired, the defect results from him, and his imperfection; and it is in the guise of a body, whose members are either truncated, or dry, or unnecessary. In the second place he offends his same children, to whom having, as instruments of God, gave them being, and life, does not give them the good being, that matters much more. He offends the home and his lineage, since from his evils children will probably be born worse decedents; so the ancient nobility, that is virtue of the greatest, little by little becomes less, and one closes the road to acquire it with the true means of virtue; and through this means the families come to ruins. It equally offends, and does grave injury to the patrimony, to which he was obliged to give good and useful citizens, who knew, and wanted to help it in every need; whereas he either leaves them a useless and miserable generation, or, which is worse, leaves men kings, and pernicious, that are like many torches to thousands of fires of discord, and of dissension; and that of others they do not enjoy but to perturb, and to destroy with their bad example, and with their worse works the welfare, and the public tranquillity. But the very bad fruit from the seed of paternal negligence does not only stop here, rather, proceeding many others, is reason that he offends with the bad children all the human generation, and all the community of men, of which each man is a particle. With this it is the indisposition, and the bad quality of a part, however small, that is without harm to all; and in how much to him, this father destructs the human concord, and reduces the world to a forest of beasts; for, as the sage said, the unjust man is worse than any beast. And passing from the earth to heaven, how much offence does the father commit, that he did not raise his children well and healthily, against the saints, and the angels of heaven who for his fault are deprived of a very great happiness that they would receive from the glorification of these souls, and of their company in heaven, which greatly they desire? But who will ever stop to say the very grave and inestimable injury that one does against God to which we are only more obliged than to all the creatures together? Woe to that father that will have badly taken care of a deposit so precious given to him by God, which is the soul of the child, recommended to his care under the danger of eternal damnation: a deposit that God so much values, that making himself mortal man for redeeming him from the hands of the Demon (who because of the sin of man was usurped), judged as well spent the price of his most precious blood, paid with infinite charity, and with the bitterest dolour, and with his death itself upon the trunk of the Cross.

Chapter 5

How much the good Education of children is acceptable to God.

From the things up to now said one can very happily infer through the opposing part of how good is reason, and how much laud is needed to that good father that, remembering of his great obligation, and not loving his children less according to the spirit, than according to the flesh, watches with solicitude to their government, and procures with every study to raise them well. These truly he accumulates for himself a precious treasure of consolation, and of merits in the present life, and in the future life: he will get back these very abundant fruits of his efforts, and his memory will be in the blessing of the posterity; these his home will increase in true honor and nobility; he will leave to the patrimony the most dear pledge of

love, that he can leave them: for many times it happens that from the good and valor of a single citizen depends the conservation, and the salvation of an entire republic; and finally those who will be praised by men, and rewarded by God. Therefore we read in the sacred pages that the great patriarch Abraham was especially commended by God for having raised well the children, then when, needing God to give the horrible punishment over Sodom and Gomorrah, he said this sentence: "Can I hide from Abraham what I am about to do? [...] For I know that he will command his children, and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord, and do judgment and justice: that for Abraham's sake the Lord may bring to effect all the things he hath spoken unto him." (Gen. 18:17,19). Similarly the Holy Spirit not without reason left us written how much the paternal care of Job had been, constantly afraid that his children were not offending God. One encounters other examples of this sort in the divine literature from which one manifestly recollects how much it pleases God that children are raised saintly, and how much the contrary ever displeases him.

Chapter 6

Of the negligence that is recognized in many regarding Christian education

Now after many bonds of natural, human, and divine, with which (as in part it was demonstrated) each father is obliged to make every possible diligence so that the child results good and virtuous, it is truly a thing deigned with great marvel, and with sorrow together the sight today of how commonly this very important study of Christian education is neglected, of which for many is known just the name. I do not deny that through the grace of God one does not find in all places, and in all the states good and zealous fathers for the holy honour of God, and for the salvation of the children, who with solicitude attend to raise them in the fear of God, and in the virtues, in prudence, and diligence of which one is not distracted for something that I say, rather I intend to give them always great laud. But the number of these is too much fewer than those who would be welcomed in the holy nation, to whom, as the Prophet says, God has manifested justice and his will; and that they would be found in something of much monument, and of great private and public consequence, as is good education. For some fathers do not think neither more nor less, as if to them it did not apply; and because these all are dedicated to the sensual appetites, so not only do they permit, but rather they please themselves in seeing you immersed again, their miserable children. Others more careful procure that the children are worldly-wise, and awake, and apt at conversation, and at the acquirement of stuff, that are instructed in letters, and adorned with certain apparent citizenly manners, or as they are wont to say, gentlemen; and for these same to seem to have done a great thing well, and of being excellent masters, of educating children well, not making a great case of the true and solid Christian good, or as little necessary, or as lacking principle, and in summary reputed by them for the same, that, rearing the boy in the more mature years, if this comes of him as a consequence after the above-said things, almost from himself, without other industry that you adopt for them in the tender childhood; and how much do these same deceive themselves who will demonstrate it more at large, and in more opportune place.

Chapter 7

That for the most part one has greater care of animals, and of possessions, than of one's children

But much less reason to lament there would be, if children were raised well civilly and morally: for all that which the light of right reason teaches us, however much it is not perfect, is nevertheless good and useful, and can be ordered to his final debt; but it is worse that the majority of fathers do not think but very superficially. Nor can one say that this happens because the men are uncouth, materialistic, and lacking understanding; rather our era is sharp, and prudent of the prudence of the flesh. But the thing stays just the same, that every other interest is regarded more by family fathers, I do not say by all, but rather by many, than their own child; and when one speaks of the child, one intends to speak principally of the soul, that it is the better and the more essential part of us, ordered to his true and ultimate end, that is God. One marvels and laments with the wise writer, though pagan, that one takes more care and solicitude with flocks, herds, and horses than with men. But with greater zeal the glorious father saint John Chrysostom exclaims, as one who was all lit with charity, and with love of God, and who better understood the very grave prejudices of souls, lamenting of a very great inconvenience, which is that one has greater care of farms, than of one's own children, for reason of these same goods are acquired, and kept. And who cannot see how much diligence one puts into caring for the thoroughbreds of horses, how much effort one makes to raise them, and to tame them, for use in war, for charm, or for delight? Truly it is an astounding thing to consider the pain, and the patience of a cavalier in rendering docile and obedient to each little movement of the hand, and of the spur an animal so ferocious; for not to speak of them, which through a light pleasure with much attention, and excessive industry train dogs, and birds, instilling them with supreme artifice almost humanly, and reasonably, undressing them a little less of their own ferocity, and their natural rapacity. So he can never tire, of the perseverance, that in the end defeats every obstacle: I leave speaking of agriculture, of mercantile, and of traffic, and of the various exercises of men, through which neither travail, nor spending, nor dangers, nor the health of his body saves him. That if a bit of those watches, of these many thoughts and efforts were applied to the raising well a child, they would see marvellous effects, and so much better would the world be. But it often happens that while the family father now goes through the snow, now through the fierce heat of the sun procuring that his possessions are well cultivated, he then abandons the field most precious and fruitful, which is the soul of the child, that neglected in childhood becomes a prickly wood of abominable vices, and of sins. And while the foolish father, through the accumulating stuff for the children, goes navigating the farthest seas, he leaves the unhappy children in a more stormy sea of our wild appetites, and evil inclinations, without some government or regulation; for it is not something to marvel if daily they follow such miserable shipwrecks of the youth, as we unfortunately see in our times, with great perturbation, and devastation of human things, and divine.

Chapter 8

How the great calamities of our times, also in relation to religion, have for the most part their origin in poor education

Maybe to some it will seem that I use too much exaggeration in what I am about to say; but the importance, and the gravity of the subject moves me to speak liberally what I feel about it. To me it seems that the many calamities of which we see disturbing the world in these recent times, and in this, for so to call it, decrepit age of the world, originate for the most part in the poor education of children: for men are not formed if not after having been children, and young men, so, ordinarily speaking, good men, and bad men are not made if not of good, and of bad children, and of young men; therefore it happens that some having been in their most tender years poorly disciplined, and raised with the fear of God, and not being accustomed to obeying their father and mother, but to do their own will, but enlarging the bridle to carnality, to the unrestrained appetite for stuff, and to ambition, then goes beyond, increasing with the years, the evil habit again; and so done with the robustness of the body vice is strengthened in a heart, not now more fearing more neither men, nor God; and the use being continued, and the evil habit in the sinner, to which he does not resist, runs finally without restraint to hurl oneself into the abyss of all the abominations, and of wickedness. Of these same, as of instruments prepared for every iniquity, the devil then produces not only the seditious, and those perturbing the public tranquillity, the revolts of cities, and of kingdoms, but similarly the heretics, the arch-heretics, and those, who with the fool and stupid person, of whom the Psalmist speaks, "said in [their] heart: There is no God." (Ps. 13:1). In this way are born the divisions, and arise the heresies in the Holy Church, as one could easily prove with many examples of these same proud and ambitious men, that either for disdain, or impatience of having had rejected the attainment of some dignity and honour, or not thinking themselves content within the limits of the private life, and for the desire to dominate, and of having proselytes, to make themselves a name in the world; lacking the true means of virtue, for more easily preventing their awful scorns, they raise the banner of revolution, of some new or old heresy, rediscovered, and restarted from the buried ashes of hell. And with it they then draw together all those who have the same disposition; and these vessels of the devil, ministers of perdition, are much more pernicious, inasmuch as with their vicious and filthy life there is coupled some acumen of talent, and knowledge of letters, and that science, which being, as the Apostle says, deprived of charity, does not edify, but puffs up, and makes others proud; and this more easily happens if there is added language, and eloquence through reasoning, and through writing. And this precisely is the bellows that ignites every great fire of discord, and of sedition. In summary one does not usually attain such great extremes of sin, as is the separating oneself from the Holy catholic and apostolic Church, if not after a long habit of sinning; and this happens with many acts, and long periods of time, starting little by little, since the unripe age, in which if the first roots of vice are not uncovered, the sense becomes so powerful, that the force of the unrestrained passion blinds so to speak the intellect; and therefore men come to such frenzy and horrible blindness, that not content by sinning, want also that their sin be reputed virtue; and the most impure lechery, and thousands of other wicked men are worshipped for saintly things; and these same, as much as

it is in them, sit themselves in the holy temple of God, pontificating in the chair of pestilence errors so abominable, and in the faith, and in the customs, that not only the divine Scripture, the consensus of the Holy Fathers, and the authority of the Holy Church, but also the same light of reason detests them, and condemns them.

Chapter 9

How many disorders and perturbations of States happen for the same reason

Similarly he who will want to consider who were those who raised the people, affected rebellions, and overturned the Cities, the Provinces, and the Kingdoms, will sense that in the childish age, and while they were yet little youngsters, they were dissolute, and involved in every sort of sin, in the sin of gluttony, of lust, of gambling, and in excessive spending to satisfy their unrestrained appetites: for which the flame of their concupiscence becoming with the years always greater, and their lacking the stuff that fuels it, begins to desire a change of state, and so did new things; and as they did not know to preserve their own faculties, so not from their heart of gaining through licit means, nor wanting to support the effort, as those who from their early years were fed in idleness, and in carnal pleasures; and afterwards their judging the common peace for their own war, not knowing how to develop themselves from debts, nor how to supply the large and profuse spending, thrust themselves like desperadoes into the waves of whatever deliberation. Others of these give themselves to steal secretly in the cities; others become public thieves in the woods; and others plot treasons against the princes, and revolutions of government, especially those who are nobly born, and accustomed to live comfortably, and to keep many servants, adulterers, and other very idle people. These, I say, impatient of poverty, rather of mediocrity, lavish of their own, and greedy of the substance of others, stimulated also by ambition, a very powerful stimulus, are resolved to turn to the iron in the bowels of the patrimony that generated them, hoping in the tempest, and in the ruin of others to rediscover their tranquillity and stability. And if otherwise they do not come to fulfil their so perverse designs and machinations, they cover themselves with the veil of public good, and hide themselves also under the shield of religion, deceiving with specious names the simple commoners; and so one sees that they favour heresies, and these same become heretics, although truly most of the time they are sooner ambitious, seditious, disobedient and rebellious, than heretical; as their aim is not so much this, as it is to dominate and not to be subjected neither to law, nor to some legitimate power.

Chapter 10

How superiors are prudent in keeping particular care of the good education of children

I think that it has been up to now sufficiently demonstrated that many evils that perturb in many guises the afflicted Christian republic had, and still have for the most part origins from private, and public negligence in raising children well. For with much reason can we say that

not less prudently, than piously these princes and superiors, who have their eyes wide open, and take special care that the little children, and the youth are raised well in the exercises of virtue; and thus they introduce them into their cities as religious and saintly men; and they take other similar precautions for this very import goal. Whilst otherwise done, and reason persuades it, and experience unfortunately demonstrates it, and much more so with the old, than with recent examples, that if a proud mind is not reformed by the holy fear of God, much less will be the fear of laws; and that he who does not care to break the faith given by God, and by the Church in holy baptism, will neither care to break that given by his prince; and to say it in a word, the mutation of the states, and of the of the regiments almost necessarily follows that of religion; and where one lives licentiously, and that the men are carnal, ambitious, irreverent to God, and dedicated to sin, there is a there is a great and very proximate disposition to accept, when the opportunity comes, also the change of religion. Therefore he who wants to keep away from so pernicious consequences, agrees that at the right time he cut the first roots of poor education in the early years, in which ordinarily all the sins and disorders, of the following and future ages, germinate.

Chapter 11

That the writing of this work was not superfluous

No one, I believe, who ponders the things until now espoused, will deny that raising children well is not an important thing and for the public, and private interests; but maybe there will be someone who will repute that the writing the of present Work had been a superfluous effort. One will also say that in the books of the ancient philosophers, inasmuch Greek, as Latin, and of the same poets there are scattered sufficient precepts for the government of any one age; and that there are not lacking authors, who not only of accident, but of intent have treated of education; and among the others, it has not been much time for there to be a man of excellent talent and furnished doctrine [M. Della Casa il Galateo, that is de' Costumi], who in the Florentine language wrote a pleasing little book about the good manners of children. Which however much I consent to be true, I thought nonetheless to take large space to write usefully on this argument. I therefore believed it to be a work deigned with merit to try to do what one could, much more than the method, that I am taking, it will be, if I do not deceive myself, that from that followed by many others. With this being so, the end of this work will not already be to write simply on political education, in how much this regards the human happiness, considered by the philosophers; but it will instead be that of writing on Christian education, which is ordered, and directed to the supreme and perfect heavenly happiness. Wherefore in this treatise the child will be principally considered as christian, than as man, and social animal, and more as appertaining to the city of God, than as citizen, and part of an earthly republic, although even on this there will be the needed care. It is enough for now to reflect that in this manner the Gentile philosophers did not treat, nor could treat of education; from the vestiges of these philosophers our modern writers do not deviate much.

And although in the ancient Fathers, clear in doctrine, and sanctity, one reads many notable things of similar material, nonetheless these are scattered, and almost hidden in various

places, that not being reduced together under certain and distinct order, one does not come to collect all that benefit that would convert; and in addition they are not so accommodated to the capacity of many, as I intend to do, having promised myself to write, generally speaking, for the commoner and lower class people, of whom there is a greater need of instruction; and the number of these is doubtless much greater, than those who are very intelligent.

Therefore I believe I need to be excused, if through the good intention of benefit I will descend not infrequently to very particular things, knowing from elsewhere that in human works the particular documents bring more benefit, more than the universal rules; although maybe these sometimes bring a certain greater dignity to the writer. But, as if the thing is, I repute it convenient to him who reasons on the mode of raising children well to descend to the smallest things, if truly these can serve as opportune means to conduct to the acquisition of so high an end.

And if this valiant Florentine Writer, who I pointed out a bit ago, had wanted, not only without reproof, but with great laud to weave his book with many detailed memories, to form a child in the single manner and civil custom, much more, if I do not deceive myself, will it need to be licit to me to treat a similar argument, in which I not only prefigure myself to introduce in the children that exterior decency that one needs in human converse, but similarly the internal composure, and the solid virtue, by means of good education and Christian discipline

Chapter 12

Of the reasons that persuade one to need to treat from the beginning of the dignity, and of the sanctity of Matrimony

eeding therefore, for how much the divine grace concedes to us, to point out the method of raising children christianly, born of an equally christian matrimony, a saying of Saint Augustine comes to me, that children are fruits of matrimony, as he denotes it this same name, one marrying the woman for her to become mother. And if the good fruit, according to the proverb of the Saviour, is born of the good tree, it will not be unreasonable to say that also good children need more so to be expected from a good, and holy matrimony: not just that this is absolutely a necessary consequence, one seeing not infrequently bad children born of good fathers, and likewise for the contrary; but one speaks of that which probably, and more commonly can happen. Therefore it seemed to me not inconvenient to start our education from its first principle, that is from the excellence and the sanctity of the matrimonial state, espousing in part what christian marriages need to be, since each one confesses that in each case the good principle is of greatest importance; and that above the foundation, so so say, of a good matrimony leans for the most part the hope of the happy generation, and of the holy education of those children who we now undertake to educate.

And if to some it might seem that I dwell too much on this material, which is not the principle, I pray my benign reader to want to reflect that to me it appertains almost necessarily to speak in three place of this work on matrimony.

The first is where we now are, because of the direct connection there is between children and matrimony; as between the reason and the effect, for this being, as it is indicated, the first base, and the foundation of all our building.

The second place is in the second book, where reasoning, through the arguments explained in their place, of all the seven sacraments of the Holy Church, also of this, that is one of those, it will be worthwhile for us to discuss.

Ultimately then in the third book, after having conducted our child to the marriageable age, it is not needed to be omitted to say some due things to that very important deliberation, and to the conjugal offices between the husband and the wife. Wherefore I reputed not to be something unbecoming to unite in a single place all the discourse. That which I do more voluntarily, as one sees, if we want to say the truth, that one of the things for the most part least understood, and least considered in the faithful populace, is the sanctity of marriage, of which but I do not intend to want to treat lightly, but only as much as is enough to our purpose, sooner morally, than doctrinally, and briefly; leaving for the rest to their own books, and treatises, where diffusely, and with more solid foundations one teaches what the nature of matrimony is, and its conditions, and its effects.

Chapter 13

Of the origin, and of the institution of Matrimony, considered as a natural office

I say therefore that matrimony, which is a marital union, and legitimate between the man and the woman, tied with very close links is indissoluble, and that it contains a custom and individual communication and is inseparable during the whole life, matrimony, I say, was not introduced because of an invention, or a human law, but because of a disposition of nature, which instituted it in the state of innocence, before Adam, our first father, sinned. For, as one reads in the sacred Letters, God having created the first man, he did not want that he be alone, but that he would have a helper, and a companion similar to him: therefore placing him in a profound sleep, he took from his side a rib, and with his omnipotence formed it into a woman, who was our first mother Eve, and conducting her to Adam, he gave her to him as a companion, and for a wife, and blessed them both, telling them "Increase and multiply." (Gen. 1:28). Then Adam, receiving her for his companion, according to the command of God, spoke to her with high sentiment in this guise: "This now is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man" (Gen. 2:24): "Wherefore a man shall leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they shall be two in one flesh" (Gen. 2:25); until here are the words of Adam. Great therefore is the excellence and dignity of matrimony, since its origin and institution comes from God from the beginning of the world, in the happy state of innocence, and of original justice; in which if our first Fathers had preserved, all the children, and their grandchildren would have been saints and just (being born in the state of sanctity). And not only God instituted matrimony, but he himself tied it with an indissoluble bond, of which we spoke above: since manifestly our Saviour Jesus Christ taught us in the sacred Gospel: "What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder." (Matt. 19:6; also Mk. 10:9).

Chapter 14

That Christian Matrimony is not only a natural office, but is similarly a Sacrament of the new law

Matrimony was therefore, as was said, instituted by God, as a natural office for the propagation of humankind. From this it happens that matrimony, considered in addition to a work of nature, is a joining and companionship of one sex with the other, and like so, I say, it was reputed as something in a certain way sacrosanct, and deigned with great veneration, and respect. And so it is not only recognized after the law from God to Moses, but first then, and not only among the Jews, but even among the gentiles; though one does not have doubt that the marriages of the holy holy ancient Patriarchs, and of the Hebrew people were filled with greater sanctity, and were contracted, and were observed with a much superior religion. Now it behoves us to know that Christian matrimony is not only an office of nature, as it was formerly, but much more is it a sacrament of the new law, instituted by Jesus Christ, our master, and Saviour; and to say it more clearly it is one of the seven sacraments of the gospel law, true, and strictly, as are the others; and in summary it is one of the seven fonts, and of those seven canals of gold, for which it communicates to the soul, if one does not place an obstacle, the divine grace, and the virtue, and the efficacy of the passion, and of the merits of Jesus Christ. Nor in this place is it necessary to prove with many arguments the truth of this doctrine, which was fully proved by the holy theologians, and by councils, and ultimately by the holy Council of Trent. So the authority of St. Paul is enough, who, writing to the Ephesians, calls matrimony a great sacrament in Christ, and in the Church; for it signifies the union of Church with the his spouse the Church, and it confers special grace, and virtue, so that the conjugal office can exercise itself well and holily, as we will say shortly: so precisely the holy Roman Catholic Church, our mother, pillar and firmness of truth, taught us and teaches us; and this is enough to be known by true Christians, children of the holy Church, to whom, and for whom one presently writes.

Chapter 15

Of the great dignity of Matrimony, because this is a Sacrament

he holy Doctors say that grace does not destroy nature, and that rather it gives it perfection and accomplishment; for which matrimony, because it is a sacrament, does not lose those prerogatives, and goods that harmonize because it is a work of nature; rather it acquires some of the others; and those same ornaments that it has first, become more perfect through the sacrament, and so to say of better quality, as for example it is proper to matrimony, even naturally, as a natural contract, that it is a joining like this, that is not dissolved if not because of death, that it is a union of two very faithful companions, husband and wife, for whom the habitation, life, substances, legitimate procreation, and the raising children are shared, the prosperous things, and the adverse of this life, the one's helping the other with fondness in all the needs, and other similar things. Now of all these conveniences and fruits, matrimony

enjoys the greater and the most perfect, because it is a sacrament of the gospel law. For this venerable sacrament not only signifies, but contains, and works efficaciously in that soul, that does not place an obstacle, a particular grace, which sanctifies the husband, and the wife, rendering perfect that natural love that is between them, and confirms the indissoluble union of the matrimony; and, as saint Bonaventure says, raises from the disordered corruption of concupiscence; because from the grace of this same sacrament is born a sweet bond of charity, that sweetly ties the souls of both consorts, so that they love between themselves with holy and cordial affection; so that the one does not bother the other; and non of them have strange, and illicit loves; and the chaste marriage bed not blemished: for which how much reverence one must have the Apostle with these very grave words instructs, when, writing to the Hebrews he told them: "[May] [m]arriage [be] honourable in all, and the bed undefiled." (Heb. 13:4). These and other graces, and gifts confers matrimony as sacrament instituted by Jesus Christ our Lord, who with his passion, and precious acquired and merited it for us, as the sacrosanct Council of Trent openly teaches it to us.

Chapter 16

Of the three goods of Matrimony, and primarily of of the offspring

And so the dignity of the christian matrimony is better delineated, I will continue to say that the holy Doctors have reduced to three titles the goods, and its fruit: and these are the offspring, the faith, and the sacrament. The offspring were always in matrimony a great good, that is the children that follow from the legitimate wife; and that from the laws, which in every thing greatly favour them, are called children born of legitimate matrimony: this good is much greater in the Christian matrimony, because its end in this matter is more sublime, and more noble. For matrimony, because it is a natural joining, regards the propagation and multiplication of humankind; and in any particular man it regards the generating of another similar to himself, conformed to the natural appetite, for which any thing, as it can, desires to preserve itself, and to perpetuate itself, which not being able naturally to attain it itself, is obtained in a certain way in the conservation of the species, through the means of generation; which is likewise common with the irrational animals. But man, as a very social and civil animal, considers in his joining other more perfect ends, as for example the conservation of the family and of the patrimony, and other similar things; for all are either natural, or civil. In the new law then matrimony is raised up to much dignity, that it was principally instituted for generating and multiplying the those people, the holy people, the people of God, acquired with the inestimable price of his most precious blood, with which he raised, and cleaned the small children in the waters of sacred baptism, were inserted into the body of the Holy Church, and became living members of Christ; so that, preserving in the faith, and in the cult of the true God, and in the observance of his commandments, they fill not only the earth, in which we are in guise of foreigners and of pilgrims, but much more heaven, that is our true patrimony, and the end, and the rest of this brief, and painful voyage. And though the Holy Fathers of the old testament proposed in being married the principle intention of having children that were lovers of the true God, and that would preserve that people, from which

the seed was born, in which it is needed to bless the people: that not thence their marriages were a true sacrament, as is ours; and each good, that one finds in their marriages, becomes much more perfect in ours, for grace is more perfect, and truth, of that which they were the law and the shadows; and the state of the Holy Church is without comparison much more perfect, diffused through all the peoples, not that of the old and narrow synagogue.

Chapter 17

Of the second good, called Faith

The second good, called faith, consists in that fidelity that is between the husband and the wife, who, having given mutually the one to the other the the power of each other's body, conserve inviolably the marital faith, not giving their own power to one, because in this part they are not theirs, but of another, as the Apostle says well: "The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband. And in like manner the husband also hath not power of his own body, but the wife." (1 Cor. 7:4). And this good of matrimony is very necessary, that without this each other's good either is destroyed, or remains gravely offended. Many things could be said here against those, who, lacking the given faith, and a very strict obligation of the conjugal bond, in disparaging the holy sacrament, and the law of God, against the debt of justice, with offence, and very great injury of their neighbour, and of the consort, with prejudice of the children, and of the patrimony, and finally with the ruin, and damnation of their own soul, commit adultery: a very grave sin in the presence of God, very abhorrent to humans, and to the divine laws, that there are not world sufficient enough to explain it. So that it is greatly to lament that in these our calamitous times this sin has become very frequent, that by many it is taken as a joke; and a little fewer impudently glory in it; who with the hardness, and impenetrability of their heart they hoard, to use some of the words of St. Paul, and they accumulate against themselves the ire, and the vendetta of the just and tremendous judgement of God. Therefore he does not need to cause a marvel if in a case, where a very grave offence is committed against holy matrimony, many dissensions, and calamities, then abound, that everyday we see. And that which more makes our proposition, and that induces us to reason of the things said above, is that it is no surprise that marriages like these, because of the just judgement of God, are often times little happy, and as well as in the generation, as in the education of children; for where there is not observance of the marital faith, neither can there be love, nor charity, nor peace, nor God, nor any other perfect good.

Chapter 18

Of the third good, called Sacrament

But how much there needs to be cordial and ardent fondness between the two conjoined consorts in matrimony, and how much more holy, how much chaste and pure, and more closely divine, than human their mutual love needs to be, that it brings us to the third good of

matrimony, called Sacrament: because matrimony, as sacrament, is a sacred and venerating sign, which signifies the strictest and most holy joining of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, with the Holy Church, his most dear and most chaste spouse; from which, as Christ never is separated, rather perpetually with a very solid knot of charity is united with her, so the marital bond, through the virtue of this sacrament, cannot be loosened, nor ever dissolved, as long as the two spouses live, despite that, for any grave reason, and for ecclesiastical justice, the cohabitation between them is separated. Now if this high mystery were with attention, and pondered well by those who want to contract, or who find themselves to need to contract matrimony, they would fully suggest those to be christian marriages, those are the obligations, and the offices needed between the husband and the wife; and which the union, and the affection that there ought to be between them. That which will not be to me hard to demonstrate at least more particularly, because a great disposition to obtain children from God, and to raise them well, as elsewhere it is said, consists in the casting well the foundations of a holy matrimony, opening likewise the door to grace, that God wants principally to give through this effect.

Chapter 19

How useful considerations are drawn from the union of Jesus Christ with the Church, represented in human Matrimony

To consider therefore one of the many things that could be mentioned on this particular, I say that those who want to be married, or who are already married, need to reflect attentively when it comes to doing, or that they did not do a common and ordinary act, and only human, as daily happens in the other contracts and exchanges of men, but rather a work full of sanctity, and of a sublime mystery: because Jesus Christ our Lord, true God, and true man, wanted to declare to us the divine, and strict union, and the inestimable love that there is between him and the Church, with the holy marital joining of the man and the woman. So that with reason the Apostle said words, already referred by us, that is that "This is a great sacrament; but I speak in Christ and in the church," (Eph. 5:32) in a manner that many is likened to Christ, and the woman to the Church: and as Jesus Christ is the head of the Church, so the man is the head of the woman; the Church is the body and flesh of Christ; and the woman is the flesh and the body of the husband, and of Christ, and of the Church; and of the husband, and of the wife it is understood this sentence, "they shall be two in one flesh." (Gen. 2:24). Now if we will consider what love Christ brings to the Church, and reciprocally the Church to Jesus Christ; and how together she loves him, and reveres him with a holy, fond, and affectionate fear, as only desires to please the eyes of her spouse, as she drives away the impudent and false lovers, and does admit the voice and the gaze of strangers, as she is fecund in the procreation of spiritual children, as she is attentive in the teaching of them, and in raising them well, as she is always concordant with her spouse, and of one and the same want, and not to want all things; from these I say, and from other similar considerations it can easily come to mind what the bearing towards the wife needs to be. This the apostle St. Paul demonstrates to us, which in many places in his divine epistles, admonishing the marrieds,

and the women of their offices, so they can live well and saintly in the matrimonial state, and vocation, forming his precepts and exhortations, he gives us this rule and norm of the heavenly wedding of Jesus Christ with the Holy Church. For wanting to show the great love, full of chaste affection that husbands need to bring to their wives, he says in one place thus: "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ also loved the church, and delivered himself up for it;" (Eph. 5:25) in which place the Apostle means the obligation until death, when the Saviour, driven by excessive and most ardent love, endures the bitterest passion of the cross to cleanse, and sanctify the Church, and to fill her with honour and glory. And in the same place, a bit below he says in this manner: "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ also loved the church, and delivered himself up for it: That he might sanctify it, cleansing it by the laver of water in the word of life: That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any; such thing; but that it should be holy, and without blemish. So also ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife, loveth himself. For no man ever hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, as also Christ doth the church: Because we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones," (Eph. 5:25-30) and that which follows; applying and comparing the heavenly wedding to the earthly. And with the same similitude he reasons again of what pertains to women in this way: "Let women be subject to their husbands, as to the Lord: Because the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ is the head of the church. He is the saviour of his body." (Eph. 5:22-23). So that the Apostle continues thus: "as the church is subject to Christ, so also let the wives be to their husbands;" (Eph. 5:24) and in the end of that chapter, after a long discourse, he concludes with those words, already more than once attached: "This is a great sacrament; but I speak in Christ and in the church;" (Eph. 5:32) and he adds, "let every one of you in particular love his wife as himself: and let the wife fear [riverisca, "revere"] her husband." (Eph. 5:33).

Chapter 20

Epilogue, or collection of utilities contained in the significance of Matrimony.

So we conclude that it cannot be explained enough how great, and how holy the love of the husband and of the wifed needs to be; because it represents the holiest and most fervent love of Christ with the Church. Therefore one can also understand what reverence and respect there needs to be from the wife toward the husband, inasmuch as common faith between the two, and the guarding the marriage bed; similarly may no blemish of impudence, however small, ever contaminate it: how modest and prudish the matrimonial intercourse needs to be, as peace and concord in all things, conjugally in a loving communication in all the domestic secrets, and substances, and faculty, taking away the odious names of yours, and of mine; which in much union they must never have place. Other than this that readiness, and great charity that is needed between the two consorts in one's helping the other in the necessities, being helped, and rejoicing together, not regulated by one's own interests, but by sincere love. And in summary who will be discussing well, will find that all the goods, all the fruits, all the debts, and offices of matrimony are contained in this divine representation of the joining of Jesus Christ with the Church. Therefore the marrieds oftentimes need to recall these things to

their mind, as much as to know better their own obligations, as also to receive continually with this holy meditation a new grace and virtue from God to bring them to fulfil it. But this mysterious Sacrament demonstrates to us particularly two things, that more closely appertains to our present purpose; the one is that the desire to obtain children needs to be principally directed for making them good for the glory of God And for this the maternal fecundity needs to consider itself happy, as happens in the holy Church, that fecundated from the divine grace of her heavenly spouse, that gives birth to him each day of water and of spirit in holy Baptism numerous hosts of very beautiful, and very holy children. The other thing then is that whoever wants to place the head under the matrimonial yoke, can, and needs to learn of the wedding of Jesus Christ which needs to be the Christian matrimony, and with what intention, for which respects, with which means, and a which end it comes to be contracted by two consorts: and how accurately it needs to be avoided for there to be a commitment to something that offends the eyes, and the sanctity of him, whose most pure, and most divine wedding in the Sacrament of these humans are represented, as at times it seems I need to demonstrate it again.

Chapter 21

What the Christian Marriages need to be, and of the mature deliberation to contract them

It is a manifest thing that in whatever deliberation and action of some moment, that the prudent and christian man pretends to do, not only does he need to proceed naturally, and with much council, as the sages of the word have recognized to need to do; but in the first place he needs likewise to contemplate before his eyes the glory of God, and the health of his soul; and this is sooner a single end, than two. So what we need principally to love in God, and for his glory us ourselves, and our salvation, so that where it is prejudiced to this end of the good of the soul, and of the honour of God, a Christian does not have place for deliberation, being always true the saying of the supreme Truth: "Quam dabit homo commutationem pro anima sua?" (Matt. 16:26: "what exchange shall a man give for his soul?"). wanting to say that in this world something happens of such value, for which man can give in exchange his precious soul. Now if with forthright intention, and with mature deliberation one can enter into any interest, and also that it is treated for a brief period of time, how much more will this same prudence be required in the joining oneself in matrimony? An action to huge, and that done one time only has to continue forever, until the end of the life? He therefore who intends to take wife (that for now we will reason of the man, as head, although the same things proportionately one needs to say of the woman) knows, that as elsewhere it is said, he takes to do something that of its nature is good, holy, and grateful to God, that to say this is only enough to praise it so much; but it can well be that a thing is per se absolutely good, and that it is then not it for some particular person; since the good wine is not good to the feverish; so likewise it can happen that an operation, that of its disposition is good, in conjunction with a bad circumstance, or of a bad end becomes dissolute, as would be the giving of alms for vainglory. I say therefore that the prudent, and

Christian, man deliberating in himself to enter into the holy matrimonial state, needs primarily to return to the principle middle, and the most efficacious to conduct to a good end each business, that is to warmly recommend oneself to God with devout prayer, and his, and some of the servants of God, so this deliberation, and election is guided by him, that it is supreme wisdom, and supreme good; and who intends perfectly, and wants our true good; and after this he adopted again the human means, and is worth above all that which, and his own prudence, and the council, and the help of good and faithful friends suggest him. He cautions but well that if God were to call him to the more sublime and perfect state of virginity, and of religion, he must not lightly, for the satisfaction of others, and for human respect, as of saving his house, and his substances, resist the Holy Spirit; and the same is said of those that consider a second wedding, widowhood being holy, and its continence, however difficult, of greater perfection. But because these things consist in many particularities, and circumstances that are innumerable, and that they cannot be reduced under a certain rule, it is enough to have remembered that it does not run precipitously, nor blindly, as many usually do; but that the deliberation to take a wife with prayer, with time, with council, and with obedience, especially to the spiritual father, custodian and guardian of our soul, by whose means, presenting ourselves in truth, in faith, and humility, God will manifest his holy will, and will show us that which is expedient for our eternal salvation.

Chapter 22

On the intentions and the ends that those need to have in contracting Matrimony

But already supposing that joining oneself in matrimony is expedient, one needs however to warn of entering in this path, as is wont to say, with steady feet, that is with straight and holy intention, and with good end, so that God, and his glory always goes forward, as we said above; and as St. Paul admonishes us, writing to the Corinthians, when he says "do all to the glory of God," (1 Cor. 10:31) and he repeats it to the Colossians, telling them, "All whatsoever you do in word or in work, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ." (Col. 3:17). Therefore he disposes himself, and makes steady deliberation that he elects that state for the glory of God, and for saving in Him, with the help of divine grace, his soul, being one of the laudable states of Holy Church, ordained by God; which from holy matrimony, although inferior to the virginal state, comes the virgins, who so please His divine Majesty, and Who so highly crowns them; and finally Who through the means of matrimony multiplies the Church, and fills Heaven. The procreation of children to enrol in the Christian militia, and in the the profession of the true and Catholic faith, is proposed; and in sum because they are more children of God, than his own, the holy remedy is proposed against the battle of the flesh in which one is not feeling sufficiently strong to be able to resist; and on the other hand not wanting brutally, and with damnation of his soul to involve himself in the lot of lechery, and of fornication, elects this state, that after the fall of Adam began to be the remedy and medicine of concupiscence, and of human fragility, to obviate the sins of lust, when the appetite obeys the reason, it was the office of nature.

Giuntamente con queste cagioni più principali ve ne possono essere dell'altre sante, et buone,

che se bene sentono più del terreno, non però contradicono à quelle di sopra, anzi vanno orditamente al medesimo fine; come saria à dire lo haver uno aiuto, et una compagnia per passar meglio, et più facilmente il mare tempestoso de i travagli di questa vita, il desiderio di lasciar heredi et successori per mantenere le famiglie, conservar la facultà, gli stati, et honori antichi delle case, et quello ch'è tanto meglio, quanto il ben commune avanza il privato, per desiderio di conservar la patria, et la republica, et altre simili cagioni.

Chapter 23

Of the abuses that are committed by many of the above-said things

Nor does one need to recollect oneself if after having formed the intention, and established the purpose to take a wife, according to the right order of the above-said reasons, descending then to the choice in particular of this, or of that person, one may have some regard of nobility, of relatives, of beauty, and of riches, and of other similar respects, the which do not repulse, simply speaking, the health of the marriage. But it is good to lament greatly of the misery of our times, in which one mostly sees that in the contracting of marriages one has principally in view the great gifts, the hope of successors, or the vent of a youthful ardour, enkindled immoderately by other's beauty, not remembering these things to be Christians, and less of not being real men, running frantically there where the appetite takes him, as if they were brutes, who if they would not consider another than that who the Angel Raphael said of a similar purpose to the young Tobit, they would certainly have more shame of themselves, and more fear of the ire of God. For one reads in the holy Scripture that the Angel Raphael having comforted Tobit to take Sara for his wife, the little holy one feared to do it, and said to the big Angel, whom he esteemed as a man. "I hear that she hath been given to seven husbands, and they all died: moreover I have heard, that a devil killed them. Now I am afraid, lest the same thing should happen to me also: and whereas I am the only child of my parents, I should bring down their old age with sorrow to hell. Then the angel Raphael said to him: Hear me, and I will shew thee who they are, over whom the devil can prevail. For they who in such manner receive matrimony, as to shut out God from themselves, and from their mind, and to give themselves to their lust, as the horse and mule, which have not understanding, over them the devil hath power." (Tob. 6:14-17). And pursuing the Angel to converse, demonstrates with how much different intention, and with prayer to God, Tobit must chastely and religiously accompany Sara to enjoy a happy and propitious marriage. And since it occurred to insert this little bit of the story of Tobit, I will not omit to say that this book is useful for fathers, and for family mothers, and for the education of children, and that it is full of holy and healthy teachings; so I remember the most intelligent, that in this state one finds, that they read it frequently with attention and devotion, as it befits writing, not yet by human purpose, but by the divine Spirit dictated, and for our instruction faithfully transmitted.

Chapter 24

That marriages done only because of human and carnal ends turn out many times

unhappy

But returning to our purpose, I say that because contracting marriage for nobility, faculty, and beauty is not condemned, as was already said, having regarded in the contracting marriages to the nobility, to the faculties, and to the beauty, however the precipitous course of our appetite in these things is to be much contained by the check of reason, so they may not go on to the other more principled and worthy things of a Christian; but that they may from then on follow in their order with moderation, and with measure; otherwise eloquence and reason and experience teach us that these marriages, counselled only by flesh and blood, have often times little happy success, because, as is ordinary in human things, that while they are not had they are ardently desired, and after they are in our power greatly lose their esteem, and little do we care of them. So it happens oftentimes that the young spouse, venting the bad, lights his flame of concupiscence and is turned to new loves; and how inebriated by the more potent wine, the love in him of his new spouse not only is tepid, but is cooled; and sometimes is converted into hate and into disdain; and as an indomitable animal that is seen tied up, quivers and is thrashed about under the matrimonial yoke, so that a miserable and unhappy life between the two consorts follows with a very great perturbation of each thing.

Now those who to grow in condition and to cover up the baseness of their lineage under the greatness of others, run behind the nobility, it does not happen that, in place of asking oneself to sit at the side of a faithful friend and companion, oftentimes they are placed above the head of a hard man. So ordinarily, according to our corrupt customs, the nobility by blood produce haughtiness and disdain of inferiors among the other bad consequences; usually that if the wife is disproportionately superior to the husband in nobility, to be woman and lady, and not to be ruled, but to rule the husband herself, and to hold the office of chief, and to make valid that which pleases her; and therefore the good order of the family remains above all subverted. And if on the contrary the nobility of the husband is this, it is forgotten that the wife is given to him not for a slave, but for a companion, with whose name Adam, speaking with God, named Eve, saying "the woman who you have given me as a companion;" customarily that often the husband abusing legitimate authority, that he has over his wife, with grave prejudice to the domestic government and of that love that is required between persons so tightly conjoined, that if, as was said elsewhere, they are not two fleshs but one.

But that we will speak of them, that lured by gold, not thinking of anything else, and see, so to speak, to a price of a great dowry, the perpetual peace and quiet of their life one knows that, according to the ancient proverb, however great is the sea, that much greater is the tempest; I want to say that the rich wife, with the great dowry, spends even now for many things and the excessive pomps, for which not being able then to supply, neither are they made with ruin of the houses, nor if they just want to moderate something, gives material to continue to seek them, thinks to the evilly-desired dowry, the which foment the vanity of others and is opposed to the shield of all the appetitive disorders.

Chapter 25

That in marriage one needs to seek equality and virtue

It is not however necessary that the above-mentioned marriages, measured more by the love and interests of the flesh than from the love of God, may always be accompanied by the discomforts of which we spoke, because blessed God by his supreme goodness repairs that which men have damaged, and the prudence of one of the two spouses can gain in this way the soul of the other, that it conducts it to the good and straight way, and finally the grace that is given in this holy sacrament, if it finds some glimmer of good disposition, makes through space and time, as it pleases God, marvellous effects, but because in human and moral things there are not required mathematical, certain, and immutable demonstrations as a sage of the world would say; one must know that he reasons according to that which very commonly happens, and so very probably it can be affirmed that all that which begins with a bid principle is not bound to have neither a good success nor a good end. And so the best thing needs to be judged by them who want to join themselves in matrimony, the searching how much can the equality, also of heritage and of condition and of ability and of age, however much it is convenient and above all of customs, which by themselves can induce friendliness