

# GENERATIONS OF LOVE

## HUMANAE VITAE (1968-2018)

*Celebrate God's gift of married love and life!*

National Natural Family Planning Awareness Week

July 22-28, 2018

*Most Rev. Peter Sartain, Archbishop of Seattle*

### 16<sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time

#### Weekday Homily Notes

July 23-28, 2018

#### Monday, July 23 (Mi 6:1-4, 6-8; Mt 19:38-49)

Jesus reminds us that the Queen of Sheba “came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon.” What was she seeking in her heart of hearts, that she would travel such a distance to see first-hand someone she knew only by rumor and reputation? What do we truly seek, in our own heart of hearts? Do we seek to have our own opinions justified, do we seek some kind of 21<sup>st</sup> century proof? Or do we seek the truth that comes only from the One “greater than Solomon?”

Tie these thoughts to the truth of Church teaching in *Humanae vitae*. Church teachings are not man-made, they are God’s gifts to men and women. Consider that the Lord God designed human sexuality in such a way that it reveals its full meaning *only in marriage*—where husband and wife live the one-flesh union for the whole of life which is oriented toward the gift and nurture of children. The Church in the United States takes this week, the week of the anniversary of *Humanae vitae*, to hold up the methods of Natural Family Planning which respect God’s design for married love and life.

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#### Tuesday, July 24 (Mi 7:14-15, 18-90; Mt 12:46-50)

The Lord Jesus was sent by the Father to gather the scattered flock into one fold, to teach the sheep of the flock the truths of their sacred origin and eternal destiny, and to reconcile all to God with His gift of peace. Just as He was sent by the Father to do His will, so He gathers His family into the loving embrace of the Church. “For whoever does the will of my heavenly Father is my brother, and sister, and mother.” Do we ever resist God’s fatherly embrace because we think he asks too much of us, or because we think we know better than He?

This last question is especially important as we reflect upon the fiftieth anniversary of the papal encyclical, *Humanae vitae*. Many may think that the Lord God has put a heavy burden on men and women because He designed marital intimacy to be unitive *and* procreative. But, do we understand God’s precious gifts of married love, human sexuality, fertility, and the transmission of life? These gifts are designed not only for the individual happiness and holiness of husband and wife, but also for the world. That’s because marriage builds families! Contraception rejects these divine gifts. The methods of Natural Family Planning, on the other hand, support God’s divine design. Why not take the time to prayerfully read and reflect on these truths in *Humanae vitae*? You can find the text at the Vatican’s website, [http://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_p-vi\\_enc\\_25071968\\_humanae-vitae.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_25071968_humanae-vitae.html).

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### **Wednesday, July 25 (2 Cor 4:7-15; Mt 20:20-28), The Feast of St. James, and The 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of *Humanae vitae***

On the Feast of St. James, we think of the ever-popular “Camino” or pilgrimage to the shrine of St. James at Santiago de Compostela. Every pilgrimage is a metaphor for a disciple’s journey through life with Jesus, guided by the Holy Spirit, to the Father. We know from experience that every life has its deaths and resurrections, its tragedies and triumphs. St. Paul writes to the Corinthians, “For we who live are constantly being given up to death for the sake of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh.” Jesus is with us, every step of the way on the pilgrimage that is our life. Will we take His hand and let Him lead us, every step of the way, even when He teaches challenging lessons?

Soon-to-be-Saint Pope Paul VI (canonization is in October) in his encyclical, *Humanae vitae*, raises up a challenging lesson—that married love is unitive *and* procreative and therefore, couples are not free to use contraception. That is because contraception does harm to God’s gift of spousal union and fertility. What are couples to do then, if they need to plan their families? The Church answers with the methods of Natural Family Planning (or NFP). NFP respects God’s gifts. These methods are based on fertility education and appreciation—no devices or barriers are ever used to harm their spousal union or the gift of fertility. Learn more about Church teaching and these methods at the bishops’ website, [www.usccb.org/nfp/index.cfm](http://www.usccb.org/nfp/index.cfm).

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### **Thursday, July 26 (Jer 2:1-3, 7-8, 12-13), Feast of Saints Joachim and Anne, Parents of the Blessed Virgin Mary**

The Church has a beautiful tradition, coming down to us from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, of naming the Blessed Mother’s parents “Joachim” and “Anne.” It is beautiful to think of the home into which Mary was born and reared. It must have been a home where God was welcomed and praised, where God’s word was heard with reverence and devotion, and where the tasks of daily life were lit by the presence of God. The psalmist prays, “For with you is the fountain of life, and in your

light we see light.” Do we allow God’s light, and God’s light alone, to illumine the intimate life of our family?

Thinking about God’s presence in the intimacy in marriage may not be something we easily consider. But, as an ancient saying reminds us, “Invited or not, God is present.” In this year of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *Humanae vitae* and in this week that the Church in the United States raises up the methods of Natural Family Planning, learn about how NFP can help husband and wife strengthen their spousal intimacy by honoring God’s plan for their marriage!

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### **Friday, July 27 (Jer 3:14-17; Mt 13:18-23)**

Jesus’ sower was a wasteful fellow. He threw seed far and wide, seemingly without concern for the kind of soil that would receive it. But when the seed that is the Word of God is sown, and when a ready heart receives it, the yield is amazing: not just a pleasing thirtyfold, or even a bounteous sixtyfold, but an astounding, unheard-of, miraculous hundredfold. God’s Word is found in Sacred Scriptures and the Teachings of the Church, and the Good Shepherd continues to teach us through our popes. Have we made up our minds about things, or will we be receptive to the powerful seed of God?

Challenge yourself to learn more about Church teachings—especially about marriage and the gift of life. And learn about the virtue of chastity which enables every one of us to love rightly, within the boundaries of our life’s choices. This is especially important in today’s world where so many mistakenly have accepted sexual promiscuity and even pornography (which is an extreme abuse of the human person and God’s gift of sexuality). In this week where the Church in the United States promotes education about Church teaching on married love and the gift of life and the methods of Natural Family Planning, learn more at the bishops’ website, [www.usccb.org/nfp/index.cfm](http://www.usccb.org/nfp/index.cfm). And, above all, pray to be fertile ground where God’s seeds can bear fruit.

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### **Saturday, July 28 (Jer 7:1-11; Mt 13:24-30)**

At times we are frustrated and embarrassed by the weeds that have sprung up in the garden that is our life. “How could I have let this happen,” I question myself. Should I unceremoniously yank these pesky weeds out of the soil without delay? I don’t know how! Should I give in to discouragement? Jesus reminds us that His Father is patient and knows that we are not perfect. He lovingly tends our gardens with mercy; He sees through our weeds to the precious wheat He knew was there all along because He planted it Himself. St. Francis de Sales writes, “It is our Lord garbed as a gardener whom we meet day by day, here and there, in the ordinary mortifications that present themselves to us.” And Blessed Paul VI writes in *Humanae vitae*, “Husbands and wives, therefore, when deeply distressed by reason of the difficulties of their life, must find stamped in the heart and voice of their priest the likeness of the voice and the love of our Redeemer” (HV 29).

As we conclude National NFP Awareness Week, let us remember that “God’s patience is directed to salvation”—the salvation of each of us. There is nothing that any one of us may have done which cannot be forgiven. We must take the first step however, accept God’s truth, His love, and His mercy!