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Book Review

A Marriage Manual for Catholics.
William A. Lynch, M.D.

Review by

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A Marriage Manual for Catholics is the fruit of years of experience in the field of gynecology and obstetrics and of over fifteen years of marriage counseling, Cana Conference work and lectures before students and faculties of many colleges on Marriage Guidance.

Doctor Lynch presents us with a valuable guide to marriage, covering the usual topics of marriage manuals adequately but giving fuller treatment to matters within the specific competence of the physician.

In the Groves of Academe and in the research laboratories, each science and discipline creates its own glossary, symbols and jargon. Between acquisition of new knowledge and its revelation to the layman in the vernacular, there is expected to be a time lag. A knowledgeable person with a gift for expression must be found to establish lines of communication between specialist and layman. A marriage manual, cutting across many fields of learning, adds a new dimension to the problem of communication. The author must be familiar with many allied facets of knowledge, pass easily from medicine to philosophy, theology, psychology, and even economics, and be able to coordinate and synthesize the whole.

This reviewer thinks that Doctor Lynch has managed to accomplish this with a high degree of efficiency. He has made the break-through to the younger generation of readers he had

in mind in writing the *Marriage Manual for Catholics*.

He is easy to follow and he keeps the reader attentive with apt figures, practical reflections and flashes of humor.

Doctor Lynch views marriage as a sublime vocation, a sacrament of love and a way of life that needs some art and skill to bring lasting happiness.

He presents the ideal of marriage as obedience to the design for living established by God for the majority of mankind. The family is an image of the divine society of the most holy Trinity. "Let us make mankind to our own image and likeness. In the image of God he created him, male and female he created them." *Gen. 1 26, 27.*

Doctor Lynch describes the love of spouses in the Pauline analogy "Husbands love your wives just as Christ also loved the Church." The theme-song of love, altruistic love, complete giving of self to one's spouse recurs constantly. "Sex can be equated with love only within the context of the family." Accordingly, sins of the married are treated as outrages against love as well as justice.

In the chapters on the mystery of life and conjugal love, we are given a clear, frank and inspirational treatment which begets a reverential awe in the face of Divine Providence, which invites human cooperation and gives pleasure to the co-creators of another child of God.

In discussing the problem of family limitations, the Doctor draws upon ethics, papal encyclicals and allocutions as well as sound medical lore in support of Catholic teaching. He also touches upon the obverse problem concerning aids to fertility for childless couples. The progestin and anti-nida-

tion pills are to him just as immoral as the usual positive contraceptive agents. Medically he fears the effects of continued use of the pill and lists a number of side effects already known or suspected.

More coverage is given in this book than in most manuals to the normal ills to which human flesh is heir, especially on the distaff side. Not that it becomes a medical manual, but normal processes and physical phenomena of a woman's life are described and some common ills indicated. Enough is given, the author thinks, to allay foolish fears and make women chary of auto-diagnosis and self-medication.

Engaged couples will want to read the manual through entirely, meditate on it and from time to time in their married life reread chapters of special personal interest.

Brides of every age will be grateful to Doctor Lynch for his sage advice and for his many insights into their minds and hearts along with his evident concern for their happiness. I think this book will give them more reasons to rejoice in their femininity. They will realize more clearly that in natural and supernatural dignity they are equal to men, never inferior, yet different, in order to be complementary to men for the good of their child and for their own perfection.

Each spouse makes easier the temporal and eternal vocation of the other.

Men will profit from study of this book; they will come to a better understanding of the mystery that is woman and not be tempted to try to make her over into their own image and likeness. Doctor Lynch gives no grounds for men to feel smug or even justified in abdicating their authority in the home either by inertia or overdedication to a career. He convinces the reader that "the child finds security in the discipline of one who loves him enough to correct him justly, honorably and politely."

A Marriage Manual for Catholics is published under Catholic auspices and carries the *Imprimatur* of Richard Cardinal Cushing and the *Nil Obstat* of Rev. James O'Donoghue, of the Archdiocese of Boston.

A graceful and warm foreword by His Eminence, Richard Cardinal Cushing, Archbishop of Boston, bears witness to Doctor Lynch's credentials as an author on matters marital and medical.

This book will be welcomed by marriage counselors, parish priests, Cane Conference directors, teachers and engaged or married couples.

A Marriage Manual for Catholics
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