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The Attainment of the True Joy of Love by Way of the Splendor of Truth

Abstract

The moral teaching of the first chapter of the encyclical *Veritatis splendor*, according to which Christian morality is both teleological and Christocentric, is applied to the realm of conjugal love in order to shed light onto the issue of Catholic divorce-remarriage and Holy Communion. First, the paper shows that this moral teaching is grounded in Scriptures and in continuity with the sound moral theology developed by the Doctors of the Church. Second, using this moral teaching as a framework, this paper examines conjugal love from a perspective which integrates three schools of thought: the Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition, Hildebrand's phenomenological study on love, and Wojtyla/John Paul II's teaching on spousal love. The three main characteristics of love, *unio*, *concordia*, and *benvolentia* are analyzed in two settings: first, as they are realized in a well-lived Christian marriage and second, in the phenomenon of Catholic divorce-remarriage. The analysis leads to the conclusion that, in marriage, the key to attaining the true joy of love—properly understood as love and communion with the Triune God, and with the beloved person in God—entails that conjugal love be understood and lived in terms of Christian discipleship.