



Canadian Bishops on *Humanae Vitae*: 'Yes! to the fullness of life'

The Bishops of Canada release a statement for the 50th anniversary of Pope Paul's Encyclical *Humanae Vitae* published by Pope Paul VI in 1968, saying it was and is an "emphatic 'Yes!' to the fullness of life".

The Commission for Doctrine of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCC) have issued a statement to Canadian Catholics and all people of good will. In "[The Joy of Married Love](#)", issued in both English and French, the Canadian Bishops hope to inspire and encourage married couples to find the promise of joy that *Humanae Vitae* offers.

'Yes' to life

Rather than only saying 'No' to contraception, the Canadian Bishops affirm that *Humanae Vitae* provides a resounding " 'Yes!' to the fullness of life promised to us by Jesus Christ (John 10:10).

Human love incarnates divine love

The Bishops continue saying that human love is meant to reflect divine love which is free, total, faithful, and fruitful. Human beings embody this love and express it through the "language of the body". This love is, therefore, "life-long, exclusive, and ready to reach beyond the couple itself, even bringing forth a new life!" the Bishops write.

Marriage reflects Christ's love

Using Ephesians 5:32, the Bishops then reflect on married love. We unite ourselves physically and intimately with Christ the Bridegroom when we receive Communion. Union with Christ empowers us to “make the complete gift of self” which he models to us, they write.

Sexuality expresses divine love

Even the gift of human sexuality partakes in expressing divine love. Thus, the Bishops explain that every sexual act “is meant to speak a love” that is free and not coerced, total in the gift of one’s entire self, faithful, and open to new life which makes the couple’s love fruitful.

Made for infinite love

Since we are made for infinite love, only infinite love can satisfy us, the Bishops remind us. The Church wishes that married couples experience the fullness of human love in marriage. This means using this divine gift without “depriving it, even if only partially, of its meaning and purpose”, as Pope Paul VI wrote in *Humanae Vitae*. “Intentionally modifying a sexual act so as to render it sterile...ends up falsifying the language of our sexuality”, the Bishops write.

Joy of Married Love

In conclusion, the Bishops encourage Catholics to read *Humanae Vitae* and “rediscover the beautiful truth contained within it”. For this end, the Bishops pray,

*May all married couples, in faithfulness to the grace of their baptism and marriage vows, live and experience the joy of married love as taught in *Humanæ Vitæ* and thus be signs of God’s loving presence in the world.*