

Sex, Love and Marriage, by Paul Flaman. Ottawa, Justin Press, 2015. 300pp., Pb. \$23.95. ISBN-13: 9780991934294.

Reviewed by Anna Severin, University of Alberta, aseverin@ualberta.ca

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Paul Flaman is the author of the work *Sex, Love and Marriage*, published in 2015 by Justin Press. The book is a compilation of Flaman's insights, and invites readers to view sex, love and marriage through the lens of faith as presented and taught by the Catholic Church.

Flaman writes in a manner that draws the reader into a real conversation about human sexuality and marriage. The work is divided into fifteen chapters, and its structure is similar to an inverted pyramid. *Sex, Love and Marriage* begins at the center and core of human experience, by addressing perceptions of, and types of love. The piece then branches outward into concepts of conscience, gender roles, biblical understandings, and ends more globally, with reflections upon contemporary issues faced in relationships and marriages today. The timely reflection questions pull the reader into dialogue, frequently asking them to assess their own understanding and experience of a concept in light of this holistic, presentation of love.

Two main themes are present within the text; namely, a holistic view of human love and sexuality, and the concept of Vocation. The work begins with, and is infused with, the perception that love is not one-dimensional—as is often presented by our culture. Rather, there are “four kinds of love respectively to the biological, psychological, moral and spiritual dimensions of human persons” (17). Flaman discusses how “true love” occurs “when all four loves are harmoniously integrated” (21), as embodied in the person of Christ (*agape*). This concept of whole, integrated love provides illumination on murky, often silenced subjects, such as non-marital sexual relations or unmarried cohabitation.

The second central theme, Vocation, is intrinsically woven throughout the chapters of Flaman's work. Vocation identifies and elevates the intrinsic role of humans and their unique capacity to love “God and humans as God, as He loves—perfectly and unconditionally” (100). Flaman identifies the unique capacity for men and women to love, express *agape*, through the fullness of their identity as sexual, sacred beings made to love and be loved. Common pitfalls and struggles are identified with gentle honesty, and how the development of virtue, “Christ-like qualities related to loving God and people properly” (177), can be an effective roadmap for living out one's Voca-

tion authentically. *Sex, Love and Marriage* is a profound piece that works to reclaim a holistic, fulfilling concept of love in a broken world, and strives to help people find their identity as beings of love, created in the likeness of He who is Love.