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### SUMMARY

In Pope John Paul II's 1981 Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris Consortio*, he called for a renewal of marriage preparation in order to foster more successful marriages, and to help families better recognize their identity and mission within the Church. This dissertation examines John Paul II's call for a renewal of marriage preparation in light of a *Retreat for Engaged Couples* that Karol Wojtyła (the future pope) gave in 1960. The retreat is analyzed based on his own formative experiences, pastoral approach to marriage preparation, and his other writings on marriage and family published in 1960. The retreat is centered around the vows from the *Order of Celebrating Matrimony*, in order for the couples to better understand the sacrament of Matrimony, and to adequately prepare themselves for receiving the graces of the sacrament, not just on their wedding day, but throughout their marriage. Through this catechesis, he gives greater meaning to love as a virtue, fidelity through active trust, reciprocity, the common good, and conjugal honor that recognizes the ends of marriage. John Paul II's call for a renewal of marriage preparation can find a model in Wojtyła's approach and content of the retreat.

Over the past 50 years, there has been a massive decline in the number of couples getting sacramentally married in the Church in the United States. Emerging adults are delaying marriage, resulting in a substantial time of separation from the influence of family and the witness of marital love. In the interim, many become immersed within a hookup culture of brief, uncommitted relationships and casual sexual encounters. This contributes to a void of formation and doubt regarding the capacity of self or others to enter into authentic lifelong marital commitment. Many are wounded by a consumerist, utilitarian, and temporary mentality, which thwarts their capacity for self-gift, reciprocity, and love. Karol Wojtyła's approach and content provides insight into an adequate marriage preparation that can meet the challenges of our cultural climate, providing marriage as a healing sacrament for both the couple and the culture.

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