

We believe in the PERMANENCE of the Doctrine traditionally taught by the Church and in the objective sense of the formulas that express the dogma and truth that Holy Church teaches.

We believe that the truths of Faith remain absolutely independent of the ways of thinking and living of men, since Truth comes from God through the Church and her Tradition and does not arise from the instinct and religious feeling of the people.

We have absolute CERTAINTY that our position is legitimate, not by virtue of our arguments and ideas, but because we take our stand on that which the Church herself has taught us and in such a way that we could make our own the words of St. Augustine when he exclaimed that, if what we believe were an error, then God himself would have deceived us.

WE HAVE FIRM HOPE that within a short time the Church will have overcome the current crisis she is living through, and, dissipating the darkness of heresy, will return to shine out as always, as a glorious beacon to the nations: 'The gates of hell shall not prevail against it.' (Matt. 16, 18)

WE LOVE from the bottom of our hearts our Mother, the Holy Church, Catholic, Apostolic, Roman. For her we wish to give our lives if it is necessary.

Campos, Easter 1982

(25 signatures are appended of 5 Monsignori and 20 other priests)

Mons. Licínio Rangel
Mons. Benigno de Britto Costa
Mons. Francisco Apoliano
Mons. Ovídio Simon
Mons. Henrique Conrado Fischer
Father Emanuel José Possidente
Father Fernando Areas Rifan
Father José F.M. Collaco
Father Edmundo G. Delgado
Father José Moacir Pessanha
Father Eduardo Atahyde
Father Antonio Alves de Siqueira
Father José Olavo Pires Trindade
Father Elcio Murucci
Father David Franceschini
Father Antonio Paula da Silva
Father José Eduardo Pereira
Father José Gualandi
Father Jonas dos Santos Lisboa
Father Geraldo Gualandi
Father José Ronaldo de Menezes
Father Alfredo Oelkers
Father José Onofre Martins de Abreu
Father Alfredo Gualandi
Father Gervasio Gobato

Catholic Marriage

by Brother John Berchmans, M.I.C.M. Tertiary

Unlike many of the steps taken in the perilous journey called life, the step into marriage is one that cannot be retraced. Marriage endures "until death". It is a relationship which can and should propel each partner toward heaven. Too often, however, married persons fail to cooperate with the special graces given them. Instead of marriage helping one attain salvation, denial of its sanctity and indissolubility leads many to eternal damnation.

It is glaringly obvious that very few brides and bridegrooms appreciate the momentous importance of the step called marriage. Inadequate consideration of both the dignity and the duties of the married state leads frequently to a breakup, and to additional problems. Many a marriage that flourished so vibrantly and showed such promise withered as quickly as the wheat which sprang up in the rocky ground and could not stand the ordinary heat of summer. The spiritual roots of each partner were not deep enough.

Other marriages seem outwardly sound, but inwardly degenerate into selfishness and lust as the married partners defile each other and the married state itself by violating their nature and their unitive purpose. There are even marriages today which are entered into with the sinful decision to remain childless.

It takes no great wisdom to know that better preparation will



lead to holier and happier marriages. In turn, these will result in more souls spending eternity in the presence of God. It is our hope that readers, especially the young, will place marriage on the high pedestal God intends for it so that the taking of such a step will help and not hinder them on the road to salvation.

Instituted By God

Marriage was instituted by God. We read in Genesis that God created them male and female, and blessed them, saying "Increase and multiply, and fill the earth." Gen. 1; 27-28.

Later, we read:

But for Adam there was not found a helper like

himself. Then the Lord God cast a deep sleep upon Adam: and when he was fast asleep, he took one of his ribs, and filled up flesh for it. And the Lord God built the rib which He took from Adam into a woman and brought her to Adam. And Adam said: This now is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman because she was taken out of man. Wherefore a man shall leave father and mother and shall cleave to his wife: and they shall be two in one flesh.

Gen. II; 20-24

Christ Himself referred to these very passages when the Pharisees asked Him if it were lawful for a man to put away his wife. The Savior reminded them that marriage had been instituted by God. Then He emphatically confirmed the indissolubility of the bond: *What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.* (Mt. XIX; 6)

Marriage A Sacrament

Sacramental dignity, with all the special graces that adhere to any sacrament, was conferred on marriage by Christ. Indeed, St. Paul calls marriage "a great sacrament" placing it above others. When Christ wished to give a sign of the union that exists between Him and His Church, he chose the sacred union of a married couple. No higher dignity could be attached to any relationship.

Through the sacrament of Matrimony, husband and wife

receive graces which join them in the bonds of mutual love, aid them to share affection for one another, strengthen them to avoid illicit attachments and passions, fortify them to become worthy parents, and help them to keep their marriage honorable in all things. A marriage entered into with such proper dispositions will be blessed in many ways.

Ends of Marriage

It is important to realize that marriage is not obligatory. Those who enter the state do so voluntarily. Anyone who chooses not to marry, but instead selects a life of holy virginity, has chosen an exalted state which is strongly recommended in Holy Scripture, and which earns its own eternal rewards.

But those who contemplate marriage are not unaware that nature itself implants an instinct in both sexes toward the companionship that marriage brings. An obvious end of this union is the close relationship through which each partner supplies to the other that mutual assistance needed to bear more easily the many trials of life.

Another end of marriage is the procreation and rearing of children. As we have seen, God Who told us to "increase and multiply" did not impose on all the obligation to marry. These words, therefore, declare a purpose for the institution of marriage. Married persons who prevent conception or procure abortion are guilty of a fundamental perversion of the married state. The Archangel Raphael told Tobias that such persons have

allowed the devil to take power over them: "For they who in such manner receive matrimony, as to shut out God from themselves, and from their mind, and to give themselves to their lust, as the horse and the mule which have not understanding, over them the devil hath power." Tobias VI: 17.

The Archangel later counseled that Tobias should take his bride "with the fear of the Lord, moved rather for the love of children than for lust, that in the seed of Abraham thou mayest obtain a blessing in children." Tobias VI:22.

A further end of marriage takes note of human passions, supplying married persons with a praiseworthy way through which to avoid the sins of lust. "But for fear of fornication," said St. Paul, "let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband." I Cor. VII:2.

It is for these reasons that a person should marry. Once a prospective bride or bridegroom has understood and assented to these, he or she may, with no fear of condemnation, choose a partner because of physical beauty, wealth, bloodline, personality and so forth.

Selecting A Partner

With the above as fundamental considerations, let us offer some guideposts for those who expect to be married. We certainly recommend that these be studied before physical attractions cloud good judgement. Remember that the choice one makes in a marriage partner will in all probability be the most important decision one would make in an entire

lifetime. Questions that should be entertained follow:

1. Is this person going to help me to save my soul? Are problems likely to arise because of religious differences? Consider that the eternal consequences of an act should always be contemplated. When the act will lead to an indissoluble union, they should be of utmost concern. Placing oneself in a relationship that is likely to become sinful is the height of stupidity.

2. Am I going to help this person save his/her soul? You can love no one more than to assist that person to achieve eternity with God in heaven. Since attaining salvation is no small accomplishment, and since the marriage relationship can easily become an obstacle on the path to salvation, each intended spouse ought to enter the married state with a firm commitment to be a help, not a hindrance to the married partner. This is what real love is all about.

3. Is this person someone whom I want to be the parent of my children? Raising children is never easy. God will ask each person who becomes a parent how he or she met the responsibilities of raising a child. A parent is commanded to train offspring in the ways of the Lord. Many a saint developed sanctity at the knee of a holy mother, or from the example of a strong and pious father, or from both. Obviously, the responsibilities of parenthood are shared responsibilities. Is the person whom you may marry the kind who can be relied upon to meet them properly, and to help you to meet them?

4. Does the intended partner want children? We have already stressed that the begetting of children is of the essence of marriage. Entering into marriage with the intention of postponing child-bearing is wrong, even without the use of contraception. If circumstances are such that having children right away would be undesirable, then the marriage should be postponed.

5. Is the woman willing to accept her duty in marriage as described by St. Paul? He counseled: "Let wives be subject to their husbands...; as the Church is subject to Christ, so also let the wives be to their husbands in all things." Eph. V: 22-24. There is no room for modern woman's liberation in a God-centered marriage.

6. Is the man willing to accept his duty to lead the family in the way that God intends? St. Paul also said: "Husbands, love your wives as Christ also loved the Church." Just as there is no room for the modern attitudes of women, there is no room for the equally repugnant attitudes of some men, some of whom let women rule them and some of whom look to wives as servants. A man must be prepared to be worthy of the woman who will subject herself to him in marriage.

Each partner in a truly God-centered marriage is always given graces to help in fulfilling the respective duties described by St. Paul. Marriages founded on the firm ground supplied by St. Paul will endure in happiness and please God in many ways.

7. Do I and the partner I will

choose realize that sacrifice will be required to preserve our union? Sacrifice is usually difficult and irksome. Love can make it easy, and perfect love can make it a joy.

8. Am I planning to "change" my spouse after marriage? If deficiencies in a prospective mate present themselves and there is an unwillingness or an inability to overcome them, the wise course would be to stay unmarried. Marriage is not easy, and problems are sure to develop. To enter into an indissoluble relationship, knowing of problems, is stupid and dangerous. Marriage is not a reformatory where persons who are badly reared can readily be transformed into saints.

9. Similarly, marriage should not be used as a vehicle to run away from problems. Those who marry as a way out of some difficulty will almost always do so in haste, and then find that they have a lifetime for regret.

10. Do I and my intended spouse understand that the accumulation of material goods should not be an all-consuming goal? Many a marriage has foundered when misguided aspirations for great wealth have proved to be illusory. No one should forget that Christ assured us that those who put love of Him ahead of love of things will be provided for.

Be not solicitous therefore, saying, What shall we eat: or what shall we drink, or wherewith shall we be clothed?

For after all these things do the heathens seek. For your Father knoweth that

you have need of all these things.

Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God, and his justice, and all these things shall be added unto you.

Mt. VI; 31-33

11. After reflecting on all of the above considerations, there are numerous additional characteristics in a mate which may be assessed in making a choice. Too often, physical beauty is accorded an inordinate priority. It is not wrong to find oneself attracted to a pleasant looking individual. Nor is the attractiveness of wealth or social posi-

tion evil in itself. But these enticements should remain secondary to the vitally important moral and spiritual values of an intended spouse. Young people often fail to realize that physical beauty and financial stature can and do fade. What will remain to take their places?

In summary, therefore, let us urge that marriage be based on love of God, love of children, and the joy of sacrifice. A marriage entered into wisely will likely speed a soul toward eternal happiness. And a marriage entered into haphazardly or selfishly will likely lead another into the fires of hell.

