

MARRIAGE: GOD'S GIFT OF LOVE SUSTAINS YOU

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"Have you not read that from the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female' and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, no human being must separate." Matthew 19:4-6

Husbands and wives need each other. God made them female and male out of love, for love. The love between a husband and wife comes from God. It is placed in our hearts by God to fulfill his loving design for each person.

"Without me you can do nothing." John 15:5

For the Catholic Church, marriage is more than a social contract made by two people. It is more than the benefits afforded married couples by society. The sanctity of marriage unites the entire being of spouses in love and is a sign of God's love for humanity.

The love of the spouses requires, of its very nature, unity and permanence, which embraces their entire life: "so they are no longer two, but one flesh." They are called to grow continually in their communion through day-to-day fidelity to their marriage promise of total mutual self-giving. This human communion is confirmed, purified, and completed by communion in Jesus Christ, given through the Sacrament of Marriage. It is deepened by lives of faith and by the Eucharist received together. The Holy Eucharist, in fact, is considered "the source and summit of the Christian life" (Lumen Gentium, no.11). It can be said also that Eucharist is the source and summit of Christian marriage as well.

"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the church and handed himself over for her." Ephesians 5:25

In a profound way, marriage represents and reflects the love Jesus Christ has for his Church. Marriage is a gift from God and a vocation. A vocation is God's plan for our lives and by following this plan we journey towards holiness and grow closer to God. Those who are called to the vocation of marriage are called to place God in the center of their marriage, realizing that God instituted marriage as a Sacrament.

Marriage is the joining together of a man and a woman to be co-creators with God to bring children into the world. While not all marriages are blessed with children, God calls us to be open to life because of our great love for our spouse and our great love for God. This is why the Church recommends methods of natural birth planning where couples abstain during times of fertility. This affirms the dignity between husband and wife and promotes mutual respect and total acceptance.

Marriage between a man and a woman unites children with their father and mother in a loving bond. Family is a microcosm of the world and it is how we are introduced to our faith and our understanding of self-less love. When we love and trust God and follow his will for our lives, we cherish families, marriages and the children entrusted to us. We also respect the gift of life from conception to natural death.

"The root of the crisis of marriage and family lies in a false notion of freedom." Blessed Pope John Paul II

Through the power of Christ's redemptive death, which is realized in the Eucharist and represented by the marriage covenant, the husband and wife as domestic Church are partners in the creation of "a new heaven and a new earth."

"Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth." – Revelation 21:1