

The Sacrament of Marriage

“Together Forever”

CURSO
DE
PREPARACION
MATRIMONIAL



“What God has united that man does not separate him”

(Mc 10, 9)

CHAPTER 1

First Pillar of Marriage: Faith and Approach to God

Marriage in the Plan of God

Sacred Scripture opens with the story of the creation of man and woman in the image and likeness of God and closes with the vision of the "wedding of the Lamb." From one extreme to another, the Scripture speaks of marriage and its "mystery", of its institution and of the meaning God gave it, of its origin and its end, of its diverse achievements throughout the history of salvation, of their difficulties born of sin and its renewal "in the Lord" all in the perspective of the New Covenant of Christ and of the Church.

Marriage in the order of creation

"The intimate community of conjugal life and love, founded by the Creator and provided with its own laws, is established on the marriage alliance ... a sacred bond ... does not depend on human discretion." God himself is the author of marriage "The vocation to marriage is inscribed in the very nature of man and woman, as they came from the hand of the Creator.

Marriage is not a purely human institution despite the many variations it has suffered over the centuries in different cultures, social structures and spiritual attitudes. These diversities should not make you forget your common and permanent traits.

"The salvation of the person and of the human and Christian society is closely linked to the prosperity of the conjugal and family community."

God who has created man out of love has also called him to love, the fundamental and innate vocation of every human being. Because man was created in the image and likeness of God, which is Love. Having created them God, man and woman, the mutual love between them becomes the image of the absolute and unfailing love with which God loves man. This love is good, very good, in the eyes of the Creator. And this love that God blesses is destined to be fruitful and to be realized in the common work of the care of creation. "And God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it.'"

The Holy Scripture affirms that man and woman were created for each other: "It is not good for man to be alone". The woman, "flesh of her flesh", her equal, the creature more similar to man himself, is given by God as a "help", thus representing God who is our "help". "That is why man leaves his father and mother and joins his wife, and they become one flesh." That this means an unfailing union of his two lives, the Lord himself shows it by remembering what was "in the beginning", the plan of the Creator: "So that they are no longer two but one flesh."

Marriage under the bondage of sin

Every man, both in his environment and in his own heart, lives the experience of evil. This experience is also felt in the relationships between men and women. At all times, the union of man and woman lives threatened by discord, the spirit of domination, infidelity, jealousy and conflicts that can lead to hatred and rupture. This disorder can manifest itself more or less acutely, and can be more or less overcome, according to cultures, times, individuals, but always appears as something of universal character.

According to faith, this disorder that we see painfully does not originate in the nature of man and woman, nor in the nature of their relationships, but in sin. The first sin, rupture with God, has as a first consequence the breaking of the original communion between man and woman. Their relationships are distorted by reciprocal grievances; their mutual attraction, the gift of the creator, is changed into relations of domination and concupiscence; the beautiful vocation of man and woman to be fertile, to multiply and subdue the earth is subject to the pains of childbirth and the efforts to earn bread.

However, the order of Creation subsists although severely disturbed. To heal the wounds of sin, man and woman need the help of the grace that God, in his infinite mercy, has never denied them. Without this help, men and women can not achieve the union of their lives in order to which God created them "at the beginning".

Marriage under the pedagogy of the old Law

In his mercy, God did not abandon sinful man. The penalties that are a consequence of sin, "the pains of childbirth," work "with the sweat of your forehead," are also remedies that limit the damage of sin. After the fall, marriage helps to overcome the withdrawal of self, selfishness, the search for one's own pleasure, and to open oneself to the other, to mutual help, to the gift of self.

The moral conscience concerning the unity and indissolubility of marriage developed under the pedagogy of the ancient Law. However, the Law given by Moses is aimed at protecting women against an arbitrary control of man, even if it also leads, according to the word of the Lord, the traces of "the hardness of the heart" of the human person, which is why which Moses allowed the repudiation of the woman.

Contemplating the Covenant of God with Israel under the image of an exclusive and faithful conjugal love, the prophets were preparing the conscience of the chosen People for a deeper understanding of the unity and indissolubility of marriage. The books of Ruth and Tobit give poignant testimonies of the deep meaning of marriage, fidelity and tenderness of the spouses.

Marriage in the Lord

On the threshold of his public life, Jesus performs his first sign at the request of his Mother on the occasion of a wedding banquet. The Church attaches great importance to the presence of Jesus at the wedding at Cana. She sees in it the confirmation of the goodness of marriage and the announcement that marriage will be an effective sign of the presence of Christ.

In his preaching, Jesus unambiguously taught the original meaning of the union of man and woman, as the Creator wanted it at the beginning: the authorization, given by Moses, to repudiate his wife was a concession to the hardness of the heart; the marriage union of man and woman is indissoluble: God himself established it: "what God united, that man does not separate him".

This insistence, unequivocally, on the indissolubility of the marriage bond could cause perplexity and appear as an unrealizable demand. However, Jesus did not impose an impossible and heavy burden on the spouses. Coming to restore the initial order of creation disturbed by sin, it gives the strength and grace to live the marriage in the new dimension of the Kingdom of God. Following Christ, renouncing themselves, taking their crosses on themselves, spouses can "understand" the original meaning of marriage and live it with the help of Christ. This grace of Christian Marriage is a fruit of the Cross of Christ, the source of all Christian life.

The fact and meaning of marriage

In the life of the man and the woman there is a moment when, normally, love springs up. Carried away by that love, they decide to enter into a stable communion of life and form a family. This decision and commitment is called marriage.

Marriage and the family are counted among the most valuable assets of humanity. They are the fundamental cell of the human community: "The well-being of the person and of the human and Christian society is closely linked to the prosperity of the conjugal and family community" (GS 47).

The Christian conception of marriage

One of the most beautiful pages of Genesis is that in which man finds himself alone in the midst of creation. Despite naming all animals and things, he feels mute, unable to utter a word because nobody gives him an answer. In those moments of existential loneliness and of vital poverty, God presents the woman. From these moments the dialogue begins and the encounter of love in history and marriage is outlined little by little, until it is fully clarified in the person of Christ.

In the new testament, Jesus was present at a wedding at Cana in Galilee, recognizing with his presence the human value of marriage. In addition to collecting the marriage image of the covenant suggested by the prophets, he compares the Kingdom of God with a wedding banquet in which he identifies with the husband. During this banquet the friends of the groom do not fast

(Mt 9, 14-15), those who are on the roads are invited, while some reject the call (Mt 22, 1-14, Lk 14, 16-24), and I need to be alert to participate in the party (Mt 25, 1-13).

In Mt 19: 3-9 Jesus reaffirms the original ideal of creation (Gen 2:24) by defending the indissolubility of the marriage covenant. Jesus at this moment, overcomes the Law, manifesting the deep relationship that exists between the order of creation and the Alliance. Here is the origin of the sacrament of marriage: Jesus recognizes him as instituted since creation, charging him a special dimension. This particular significance will be clearly expressed by St. Paul in the letter to the Ephesians: "For this reason man will leave his father and his mother, he will be united to his wife and they will be the only one." This symbol is magnificent; applying Christ and the Church, but also you, each one in particular, must love his wife as himself, and the woman must respect the husband "(Eph 5, 31-33)

Marriage is a sign of Christ

As we have just seen, the Covenant of God with men will be signified through marriage in the Old Testament. Jesus Christ is the fullness of that Covenant; in the God he pronounces an unrepeatable yes to the human being, making himself the flesh of that Covenant of God with man.

The marital love of those who unite in the Lord is a symbol that updates the love of God that appeared in Jesus Christ, with marriage being a reality in which death and resurrection, Passover, are lived in a peculiar way. So donation, forgiveness, conflicts, deficiencies, guilt, all that what is and means a life in common, is integrated into the Easter triumph of God's love because "conjugal love is assumed in divine love and it is governed and enriched by the redeeming virtue of Christ and the salvific action of the Church "(GS 48)

Marriage is the sacrament of the Church

The Second Vatican Council, in the Constitution on the Church "Lumen Gentium", says that marriage and the family are like a Church in small, domestic Church (LG 11). The spouses possess within the Christian community a charism that is their own, a vocation and a singular mission: to be witnesses in the world of God's love and to transmit and educate their children in the faith. "By virtue of the sacrament of marriage they help each other to sanctify themselves in the conjugal life and in the procreation and education of the offspring and therefore have their own gift, within the people of God, in their state and in their way of life (LG11)

Assets and demands of conjugal love

"Conjugal love involves a totality in which all the elements of the person enter - claim of body and instinct, force of feeling and affectivity, aspiration of spirit and will - look at a deeply personal unity that, beyond the union in a single flesh, it leads to having only one heart and one

soul, it demands the indissolubility and fidelity of the final reciprocal donation, and it opens to fertility. In a word: it is about normal characteristics of all natural conjugal love, but with a new meaning that not only purifies and consolidates them, but elevates them to the point of making them the expression of properly Christian values ". (Familiaris Consortio, 19 John Paul II)

Unity

The love of the spouses demands, by its very nature, the unity and indissolubility of the community of persons that embraces the whole life of the spouses "So that they are no longer two but one flesh" (Mt 19,6). "They are called to grow continuously in their communion through reciprocal total donation." The unity of marriage, confirmed by the Lord, appears broadly in the same personal dignity that we must recognize the woman and the man in mutual and full love.

The Indissolubility and fidelity in the marriage.

Conjugal love demands of the spouses, by its very nature, an inviolable fidelity. This is a consequence of the gift of self that husbands give each other. Authentic love has by itself to be something definitive, not something temporary. This intimate union, as a mutual donation of two people, as well as the good of the children, demand the full fidelity of the spouses and urge their indissoluble unity. It may seem difficult, even impossible, to unite for the whole life of a human being. This is why it is all the more important to announce the good news that God loves us with a definitive and irrevocable love, that the spouses participate in this love, that comforts them and maintains them, and that by their faithfulness they become witnesses of faithful love of God. The spouses who, with the grace of God, give this testimony, often under very difficult conditions, deserve the gratitude and support of the ecclesial community. (CIC, 1648)

Fertility

"By its very nature, the very institution of marriage and conjugal love are ordered to procreate and educate the offspring and with them are crowned as their culmination" (Gaudium et spes 48). Fertility conjugal love extends to the fruits of the moral, spiritual and supernatural life that parents transmit to their children through education. Parents are the main and first educators of their children. In this sense, the fundamental task of marriage and the family is to be at the service of life.

The family, domestic church

Christ wanted to be born and grow in the bosom of the Holy Family of Joseph and Mary. The Church is nothing other than the "family of God." From its origins, the nucleus of the Church was often constituted by those who, with all their house, had become believers. When they converted, they also wanted their whole house saved. These converted families were islands of Christian life in a non-believing world.

The Second Vatican Council calls the family, with an old expression, *Ecclesia domestica*. In the bosom of the family, parents must be the first announcers of the faith with their words and example, and they must promote the personal vocation of each one, and with special care, the vocation to the consecrated life .

The spiritual relationship

To grow together in spirituality, marriages should accentuate the moments and religious practices that both have in common (We understand by spirituality the way in which we live our relationship with God and with others and how we live it in the daily situations of the lifetime)

To build a Catholic home between two Catholics

It is very common that, within the Hispanic community, couples are formed who share the same Catholic faith. However, it is likely that one of the two does not have the same spiritual development or the same level of commitment to faith. That is to say, that is, as it is said colloquially, only "a hot bench" or "Ash Wednesday Catholic and of patron festivities." That's when things start to get complicated. If you find yourself in a case like this, it is highly recommended that you do not try to blackmail this person emotionally to do what you want because you can not only annoy him but even make the person move further away from the faith. to emphasize the moments and religious practices that the two have in common. Try also to go, step by step, creating prayers that the two of you can do 'together' at the time of the meal, when you wake up, and when you sleep. It is not a matter of making a rosary at the beginning but of surrounding your life with the presence of Christ Jesus so that it is His love that unites you and faith does not become a cause of divisions.

And if both are Catholics but have never been fully involved in the spiritual life it is highly recommended that they adopt together this new lifestyle that in the end, is the same as their children will adopt in the future. The preparation to the marriage that you are now doing can be a good start so that together you are interested in asking and knowing a little more about the foundations of the faith; so that both confess and prepare the Eucharist for their wedding day, know better the beauty of the Mass and be interested in continuing to frequent it. Thus, when they are already spouses they will always be able to seek in this Sacrament the strength to continue loving and surrendering like Jesus. This effort to celebrate together the Eucharist and to grow in faith is something that they will never regret as it is the guarantee of great benefits for the couple. Thousands of couples testify that their life has been different since they invited Jesus to enter their homes and their hearts.

For couples where one is a Catholic Christian and the other is a Christian of another denomination or is not a Christian:

In this case the respect of the conscience and faith of the other is decisive: Neither of the two must therefore try and much less force the other to change religion. Rather look for the balance

resulting in each grow in their faith, and establish forms of prayer in which they can come together, either reading and meditating the Scripture (if both believe in Jesus), or sharing rites or prayers that are common to the two churches or that are acceptable to both. And of course, make it your love life and shared values to base your life together. This will make the most of both religions.

It is equally important not to make explicit criticisms of the religion or the Church of the other as this can hurt susceptibilities and create great divisions in the couple. It is desirable, therefore, that couples of Christians, even if they are not of the same denomination, belong to churches that maintain a good ecumenical dialogue and that do not condemn each other.

It should also be clear that the Church asks the couple with disparity of worship ("mixed marriages") to commit to baptize and educate their children within the Catholic faith. Therefore, this point must be discussed and agreed clearly before marriage.

Finally, remember that religiosity and spiritual life is something that greatly enriches our personal and couple's life. She is part of that little taste of heaven that God has prepared for us and should begin to be made possible through our love for others and therefore for our partner.

Benefits of the sacrament of marriage

When the spouses love each other with the love of Christ invoked and celebrated in their sacrament and consummated in their daily life, they also become instruments or "ministers of the love of God."

The Catholic tradition has always recognized that marriage is also a natural relationship. People of any religion, or non-believers, can marry and their marriage is respectable and worthy. Whether they know it or not, it has its origin in God himself, who, by creating the human being, made him capable of loving his partner and giving himself to her to form one meat Jesus is willing to be the very force of love that, together with the effort or consent of love of each spouse, leads them safely to love and give themselves forever. This force is also called "matrimonial grace"

As the Catechism of the Catholic Church describes it, God, who always came to meet his people, now goes out, through the sacrament of marriage, to meet the Christian spouses and "remains with them, gives them the strength to take up their cross, to rise after their falls, to forgive each other, to bear one another's burdens, to be subject to one another in the fear of Christ (Eph 5, 21), and to love each other with a supernatural, delicate and fruitful love . "(CIC, 1642)

When the spouses love each other with the love of Christ invoked and celebrated in their sacrament and consummated in their daily life, they also become instruments or "ministers of God's love." Thus, through each one of them, God himself continues holding, listening accepting, caressing and serving the spouse and the children born of their relationship. That is to say, through marital grace, the spouses not only manage to be happy but also become mutual instruments of salvation for their spouse.

Therefore, if you are still not married, or you got married but did not know what Jesus has prepared for your love, you can do it now, seeking the sacrament of marriage offered by the Catholic Church or, if you have already done so, you can always renew your promises matrimonial and benefit from his grace. Now, for the wealth and grace of the sacrament of

marriage to bear fruit, it is essential that together you discover, each day, what God's plan is for them. For this purpose, they must keep close to God and the means that lead them to God and to his grace. This is an individual and couple's work. On the one hand each one has to look for God according to his spirituality.). Even when their spirituality is different and even when they belong to different religions, couples can find joint ways to live their relationship with God and discover how God wants them to live their marriage and transmit their faith and spirituality to their children.

Spirituality in Marriage

Even when their spirituality is different or they belong to different religions, couples can find joint ways to live their relationship with God.

When couples get married, they choose the person they want to accompany them for the rest of their lives. With this person they have to grow as people and as a couple. And for Christian couples and especially for those who chose to make their relationship a sacrament, that is, they went before the altar and promised to love each other as Christ loves, his life will have a very special meaning. "That is why the man will leave his father and mother and will join his wife and the two will become one flesh." (Genesis 2, 24 and Ephesians 5:31)

Now, for the wealth and grace of the sacrament of marriage to bear fruit, it is essential that together you discover, each day, what God's plan is for them. For this purpose, they must keep close to God and the means that lead them to God and to his grace. This is an individual and couple's work. On the one hand each one has to seek God according to his spirituality. (We understand by spirituality the way in which we live our relationship with God and with others and how we live it in the daily situations of life). Even when their spirituality is different and even when they belong to different religions, couples can find joint ways to live their relationship with God and discover how God wants them to live their marriage and transmit their faith and spirituality to their children.

Each couple is choosing how they will live their spirituality, but for this they need to create an intimate life before they can share their thoughts, their illusions, their history, the dreams they have together; and decide how they will live their married and family life. Therefore, as part of their spiritual commitment, they must avoid everything that can move them away from the true meaning of love. The statistics of today show us a very sad picture. On the one hand the high levels of divorce caused by pornography and marital infidelity, and on the other hand, the lack of development of marital love due to selfishness and even materialism.

That is why it is important that, from the beginning, the spouses give themselves freely and mutually to each other and look for everything that unites them and makes them grow. Allow me to suggest some practices that may be useful to you:

Pray for each other. Encomense God the needs of your partner.

Ask God for the grace to love your partner as God loves you.

Pray together for the needs of your family and the world around you.

Look for opportunities to serve as a couple or as a family. For example, through the Christian Family Movement, Marriage Encounters, and other organizations, activities, or ministries in your parish or region.

Take care of the senses, avoiding the use of programs or images that damage your spirituality and your married life.

Avoid pornography and those programs that damage your image of marriage.

Open to everything that life can be acts of affection and understanding.

Take care of what makes your partner happy.

Avoid at all costs using your partner for your own purposes.

Look for opportunities to do things together like going for a walk, playing a sport, etc.

Try to make appointments but never use them to discuss or pretend to resolve conflicts.

Make special appointments to talk about a problem or conflict, and preferably look for a place other than your bedroom for the meeting.

Seek professional help when you consider that you are not having the desired results in your relationship. Do not avoid it. Your marriage is too important.

Decide every day when you wake up, that you will love your partner and look for ways to prove it.

How beautiful it is to see couples who have managed to be one soul. We hope that your marriage is one of them and that together you will live your vocation to happiness as a couple.

Importance of values in the construction of a successful marriage:

Common values

The importance that values have for the relationship of a couple: if the two lists or codes of values coincide, harmony and well-being will be largely guaranteed.

Many experts in marriage counseling and couples agree that although the commitment or marital promises establish and seal the relationship with the strength of a stable bond, the common values create the daily union that favors and sustains coexistence. They are what make it possible for two people, even if they come from very different worlds, to discover themselves as "twin souls", with "kindred spirits", or in popular terms, as the "half orange" with which communion can be achieved of life and desirable purposes in a marriage.

What is a value

Values have to do with what motivates a person, what makes them act, what gives meaning to their life. In short, "the values of a person are, in a way, their own". They constitute "the center" where interests come from; they are the reason that makes a person vibrate, his loves, what is most sacred and important to him. (See, Geneviève Hone and Julien Mercure, *the Stations of the Couple* ", Sal Terrae, 1993, pp. 82 et seq.)

The values in common create the daily union that favors and sustains coexistence.

Each person, throughout his life, and according to the messages received and assimilated, creates a list of values that constitute, so to speak, "his treasure." This list serves as a parameter to judge whether something pleases him, if you go with him or her, or on the contrary, if you dislike him, dislike him or offend him. Hence the importance that values have for the relationship of a couple: if the two lists or codes of values coincide, harmony and well-being will be largely guaranteed; It

will be easy to reach agreements on the objectives in money management, the raising of children, the distribution of trades, etc. In short, it will be quite easy for you to create plans together and above all to design a common project of life where no one feels frustrated, limited or forced.

To have this coincidence in values one does not need to be of the same religion or the same country, but certainly having grown up in homes with similar moral and spiritual principles favors the coincidence. When instead there are many more values in which it does not coincide, than those that are held in common, it is to be expected that the relationship is, if not conflictive, at least very difficult.

What to do when there is no perfect coincidence in the values?

No one totally and perfectly matches the values of the other. There will always be between spouses, tastes, preferences or different ways of seeing reality. That, however, should not be the cause of difficulties in the relationship. Love supposes the acceptance of the other as it is and does not imply that the other is my identical. On the contrary, their difference can give me ways of seeing life and acting, of which I can learn a lot and end up integrating them into my own value scheme.

It is therefore about learning to "manage" the differences, which is different from "supporting" or submitting. In negotiating and finding agreements, learning communication techniques and tools for conflict resolution will always be of great help. However, the following should also be taken into account:

Are negotiable values that do not affect or harm the good of either spouses or children: Values that are essential or fundamental such as responsibility for life and the good of the people in the family; Respect, fidelity, honesty, truthfulness, delicacy in the deal, etc., are not negotiable or renounced.

Values that are more likes or appreciations can be negotiated or simply accepted as a characteristic characteristic of the spouse.

The couple must be able to construct their own code of values that will identify them as a family and as a marriage. In this elaboration, the advice of friends and relatives can be taken into account but it should not substitute the decision of the couple in agreement.

We all evolve and circumstances may cause us to give up, not to our principles, but to certain ways of applying them (For example, if you can not all have dinner together, at least you can look for a day when you can meet). Having this flexibility can facilitate coexistence.

Committing together with Christian values and striving to fulfill them will create in your partner the richest and most fruitful treasure that will guarantee your unity and strength as a couple. Remember "what God has joined is not separated by anyone."

What values do we share?

When a couple has many values in common, or at least agree on the values that the two consider fundamental, they can easily understand each other and make decisions together.

The values have to do with what a person considers more important or more valuable in their life. They determine the preferences, tastes, options and even the sacrifices that a person is

willing to make. Knowing a person is therefore to know, as far as possible, what their values are. This is therefore a decisive issue to know if you are really about to marry the person that best suits you.

When a couple has many values in common, or at least agree on the values that the two consider fundamental, they can easily understand each other and make decisions together. These common values are like the treasure of which daily decisions are nurtured, both for the life of a couple and for the management of money, the upbringing of children, relations with the respective families, etc.

It must also be borne in mind that not all values have the same importance for each person. Thus, even recognizing the value of money, a person may decide that maintaining a friendship is more valuable than fighting for money with a friend, etc. Therefore, next to the list of values of a person we must perceive the degree of importance it gives them. There are values that we can call "fundamental" or inalienable, values to which we can renounce and values that we are willing to "negotiate" with others.

There are many ways to discover the most important values for a person

To begin, do not just look at how he behaves with you or what he says, because during the romance it is always possible for the person to try to positively impress his partner by exaggerating his virtues or hiding what he thinks the other may not like .

Look at how you behave and act with others: For example, note what your partner is most concerned about, or what you most admire about your friends and family. Also look at the kind of people you surround yourself with, as the saying goes, "tell me who you are with and I'll tell you who you are". Also examine how your money is invested and how important it is for people and relationships with your family, with your friends and with God. And of course, find out what other people like colleagues and friends think or admire about him.

Celebration of Marriage

Monition

S. Dear brothers,

We are here, next to the altar, so that God will guarantee with your grace your willingness to contract Marriage before the minister of the Church and the Christian community now gathered. Christ copiously blesses your conjugal love, and he, who consecrated you one day with holy Baptism, enriches you today and gives you strength with a peculiar sacrament so that you keep each other and perpetually faithful and can fulfill the other obligations of Marriage. Therefore, before this assembly, I ask you about your intention.

Scrutiny

S. NN and NN, Do you come to contract Marriage without being coerced, freely and voluntarily?

R. Yes, I come freely.

S. Are you determined to love and respect each other, following the way of life proper to marriage, throughout life?

R. Yes, I am determined.

S. Are you willing to receive the children responsibly and lovingly from God, and to educate them according to the law of Christ and His Church?

R. Yes, I'm willing.

Consent

So, since you want to contract holy Matrimony, join your hands, and manifest your consent before God and his Church.

They give their hands right.

I, NN, receive you, NN, as a wife and I surrender to you and I promise to be faithful in prosperity and adversity, in health and in sickness, and thus love and respect you every day of my life.

I, NN, receive you, NN, as a husband and I surrender to you and I promise to be faithful in prosperity and adversity, in health and in sickness, and thus love and respect you every day of my life.

CHAPTER 2 — Married Love

Are you ready? Have you given yourself the opportunity to know if you meet the requirements to be a good husband or wife?

Often people think about how they would like their partner to be; in the requirements that a true husband or wife must have. But, have you given yourself the opportunity to know if you meet those requirements? Do you feel that you have already solved your emotional conflicts and that your heart is then ready, not to find who will solve them but to share what you are? Do you love yourself enough to give yourself and love without selfish or complex expectations? What kind of partner do you think you would be?

These are all questions that may lead you to seek professional help. For our part we want to help you in your process of discernment and self-discovery of your aptitudes to form a couple and of the feelings and the type of relationship you have built up to this moment, to know if you and your partner are ready. That's why we invite you to consider the following points:

How do I know if marriage is for me?

Being open to changes and flexible enough to yield when it's not worth clinging to one's own views or tastes is vital.

The fact that you feel very much in love and that you think you have already found the person of your dreams does not mean that everything is ready. There is a very important part to consider: your own skills and abilities to become a husband or wife.

That is, although we were all born for love, we are not always ready to give and receive it. This is particularly true when it comes to marital love because the characteristic of this love is that we give up thinking and acting as single or single individuals to decide to build a "we", that is, a communion of life or community.

We start this community with the decision and promise to give ourselves completely. But it is in the daily life where this surrender is put into practice and becomes the basis from which the harmony, the understanding and the unity that constitute the communion of married life are born.

If this is your concept and the kind of love to which you aspire, you are on the right track. But anyway it is good to analyze if you are already equally trained and ready to put it into practice.

With this objective, we propose you to ask yourself the following questions:

Are you a happy person who knows that happiness does not depend on anything or anyone outside of you, but on your decision to see life with positivism and gratitude?

Are you happy with what you do because you always give your best, or are you on the contrary a conformist or a person who you judge yourself with severity?

Do you know how to express your disgust and anger without offending others?

Do you know how to apologize when you make mistakes and you know how to forgive when they offend you?

Do you feel capable of changing or sacrificing your decision to go out with your friends to always include your partner in your fun plans?

Am I ready to create and enjoy the time that is shared as a couple and as a family?

Can I list at least five sacrifices that I am willing to make when I am married?

Do you think that being older has given you enough maturity to know how to lead a marriage?

Or, if you are young, do you know if your age does not allow you to have the maturity that you should?

Do you think that marriage will be the solution to many of your problems?

Are you sure of being in love with your partner and no one else?

Are you going to get married only because there is already a pregnancy involved?

Are you sure that when you marry you do not try to run away from the problems you have in your home?

The reason why you get married is because your partner understands you?

Have you decided to get married because you feel that you are too old to be single yet?

If your answers gave as a result that what moves you to marry is only love and the desire to give your best for the good of the other person, even if this implies sacrifices, then you are already quite prepared (a) to marriage.

How do I know if what I feel is true love?

It is very easy to confuse the love with the feelings of pleasure and fascination that a person wakes us up, and thus end up making promises and deliveries of love when we are not ready yet. Fortunately several modern sciences such as psychology and even bio-chemistry have come today to the step of the lovers to help them clarify their feelings. Based on these data we can therefore say, from now on, that love at first sight does not exist. Every couple relationship, because it is the meeting between two people, goes through different stages until, sometimes, even true love.

Identifying at what stage of the relationship you are going with your partner will help you to know also what kind of option suits you best, and how you can guide your relationship towards the conquest of true love.

The stages of love:

The couple's relationship goes through different stages that can be identified as falling in love or attraction; the romantic stage or "I love you" and finally, "Love"

Stage of Infatuation:

It is the pink and exciting stage in which one couple feels strongly attracted and fascinated by another the other person. These sensations are so strong and pleasurable that many couples believe that this is love.

However, the attraction that unites lovers is nothing more than the effect of substances called pheromones that, in addition to altering our senses and making us feel great pleasure and passion at the slightest contact with the other person, makes us believe that with nobody could be so happy.

That is to say, the physical pleasure is so strong that the mind also remains as blinded or fascinated. That's why lovers do not see the defects of their partner and even doubt that they can have them. Everything seems perfect.

To this lack of objectivity is added the fact that, lovers, if they do not lie about themselves, at least hide their mistakes and exaggerate their virtues because they want to conquer at all costs the person who provides them with such pleasant feelings.

In conclusion, falling in love is a phase where pleasure prevails but where realism is lacking because we do not yet know what the other person really is like. In fact, during falling in love, what we love about each other is not what he or she is, but what their caresses, details and company produce when they touch me, talk to me or invite me

These sensations are also transient as the effect of the pheromones lasts up to 3 years. If during this time the couple has not been given the opportunity to talk much and strive to know the reality of the other, instead of being engulfed in encounters full of caresses but with little content, the relationship ends. If you also have sex during this stage, the blinding effect of the pheromones will double creating a fictitious sense of intimacy.

The infatuation is not the stage for the delivery that supposes the sexual and matrimonial life. I still do not know the other person to know if I would be willing to give him the keys to my house or the secret code of my bank account. And if that is the case, then it is a sign that we are not yet ready for a total surrender, such as sexuality or marriage.

Romantic stage or the "I-want"

The romantic stage, the couple begins to share more and therefore to know each other better. As you enter the other person's world, your tastes, your ideas, your characteristics, your abilities, etc., the things that really appeal to the person begin to appear, and not only their physicality or their attractive You begin to enjoy what the person is, and not only what that person causes in me.

Some of the characteristics that we discover in the couple are real. We can already see some defects, but there can also still be a lot of fantasy or idealization (I love the dreams that the other

awakens in me). That is why it is important to remember that the knowledge of the other person is just beginning.

Along with the passion of pheromones, tenderness appears in the romantic stage. This seeks to reach deep into the other person to flatter or make her feel good.

All in all, the romantic stage is not yet true love. After knowing each other, sharing tastes and ideals, wanting to spend more time together and realizing that we can not live without each other, we will make the decision to live together for life and we will be ready to receive the Sacrament of Marriage, and start a new stage,

The true love

Love is not the blind and passionate outburst of lovers. Nor is it the romantic idealization of romantics. Love is the close union, the deep trust and the desire to seek in all the good of the other person. This feeling arises when the couple is known and they are happy with what is known about them. Then the confident impulse is born of giving all of oneself and of receiving all that the other is, to form a "we".

In other words, in love trust and generosity are the key elements and are mutually related: because we trust, we want to give generously all our lives. But you can not reach trust without mutual knowledge. Reaching true love involves time and dedication, love grows day by day and we must nourish it so that it grows and strengthens through time, therefore reaching true love should be our goal as a marriage.

That is why we can say that love is made up of four elements: Knowledge, acceptance, trust, and desire to surrender.

Knowledge: Knowing yourself means at least that:

I know where you're from and where you're going
I know how you react tired, with anger, under stress, when you're happy.
I know a lot of your flaws and qualities.
I know your values and I share them.
Although you are not perfect, I love you so.

Acceptance:

It satisfies me and I admire what you are.
I like your physique and your way of being
Among all the people that can like me, I choose you.
I do not expect you to change to love you.
I love you and I accept you as you are. (with your faults and virtues)

Trust:

I know that at no time do you want to hurt me
I can trust my health, my money, my future because I know you want to take care of me

Delivery wish.

Seeing you happy satisfies me.
I know your aspirations and I am willing to support them.
I offer everything from me to look for your material, sexual as well as emotional good.
I am willing to invest all my energies in accompanying you, understanding you and serving you, even when it implies renunciation and sacrifice.

For those who believe, it is clear that there is no better definition of love than the one Jesus gave us: "There is no greater love than giving your life for your friends" (John 15,13). Thus, love ceases to be just a feeling and becomes the permanent action of self-donation or surrender for the good of the other.

In a couple not always the two arrive together, or at the same time to develop this kind of love. If after a period one of the two, or both, does not advance until reaching this delivery love is because they are not ready to be a marriage.

Love must be nourished permanently. That is why the fact that a couple marries in love does not imply that their happiness is guaranteed. Each one should strive to care for and advance in the delivery, trust, mutual knowledge and acceptance of the other.

Christian love.

"To discover true love we must go to the source of Love that is God himself" - Juan Pablo Segundo

Couples who decide to join their lives in marriage will surely love each other. But what is love really? John Paul second in his "Theology of the Body" says that to discover true love we must go to the source of Love that is God himself. We know that the love of God is freely given and received. That the love of God is fruitful; that is, always life-giving. The love of God is always faithful and total.

If we take into account these four aspects of God's love and apply them to marriage, we can reflect on some of the characteristics necessary to have a marriage in which the couple becomes lifelong companions.

Love is freely given and received

Although each couple may come to love in different ways, once they fall in love, each one makes a free choice to love and surrender to their partner. In this way they become vulnerable to the beloved. This means that this person will know you like no other. No one better than the couple will know what makes them happy, or what can cause them suffering. And once we get to know what is expected is that we are accepted as we are. That is, the delivery of love is a gift that must be received and guarded with respect.

Love always requires a response that is also free and adequate. As you discover how the other person is, you must also accept and accept what the other person is. Couples who take the time to get to know each other and lovingly respect their differences, can become so intimate that they are no longer two, but one.

Respecting a person is accepting it as it is, and receiving what it offers without trying to change it; and above all, without trying to manipulate her into doing things the way I want her to do them. It is due, that if, to count on the fact that the other will do everything possible to satisfy me, but I can not demand that he do what he can not or is against his way of being.

Love always wants the good of the other, so the ideal is for couples who love and respect each other to ask themselves:

What can I do for the good of my partner? How can I correspond to the love I receive? In this way love will start from the free and generous decision of each one, without impositions.

Love is fruitful

When we talk about marital love being fruitful we do not just mean that it must be open to the possibility of giving life. Love is fertile or is life-giving in all aspects of the word.

To give life is to worry about what the couple needs; is to support her to realize her dreams, and give her spaces to express herself and be herself. When a person is in turn "absorbing" does not let the other grow and develop. To give life to the other is to treat the couple with affection; it is to avoid those things that we know that are going to bother, that can humiliate or reduce the self-esteem of the other, or that are in bad taste. We give life when we control the language by expressing our frustrations or our anger or anger.

Those who are open to life also learn to forgive and to seek reconciliation. Forgiving and reconciling are not the same. To forgive, you only need a person because forgiving is the decision, that a person takes, to free himself from the resentment or resentment that a fact caused him. It is not about forgetting, since this is practically impossible, and remembering is necessary to learn. It is more about accepting that the other was wrong and not bitter about it.

Reconciling on your own is trying to rebuild the relationship after you have forgiven. But for this it is required that the person who offended desires forgiveness, asks for it and offers to modify the behavior that led him to offend.

In marriage there will be many opportunities to forgive, ask forgiveness and be reconciled. When there is love, the exercise of forgiveness and reconciliation will help strengthen the marriage relationship. When forgiveness is not given, reconciliation is impossible and marriage is hurt by traces that destroy the relationship.

Love is faithful

Fidelity has always been a challenge for couples. I am not referring only to the fact of giving oneself bodily only to the person to whom we have promised an exclusive love of a couple. There are those who destroy their relationship as a result of falling slaves to pornography. Other people dedicate more time to the game or the bottle, or to friendships than to their partner.

Fidelity requires a couple's life to be a priority for each one. Do not let work, or friends, take up most of your time. Sometimes women take refuge in the obligations of the home and in the care of their children and put their husband in a place within his heart that is not his due. Faithfulness requires putting life, feelings and actions into perspective. It is advisable that couples try to have common projects, where both have the opportunity to develop their skills, have fun, enjoy each other's company or simply spend time together. Do not forget that the biggest project they may have in common is the care and education of their children. This work will undoubtedly require a loving surrender of themselves.

Love is total

You love yourself completely or you do not love yourself. But, before looking at how much love you receive, it is convenient that you evaluate the quality of the love you give. It is commonly said that no one can give what he has not received. However, when we talk about love, we can all learn to give ourselves more in order to learn to love as God loves us.

When was the last time you expressed your love to your partner? Do not leave for later what you can do now. Write a love letter to your partner, tell him what it means for you to have him in your life. Make an appointment with your partner. Despite the difficulties, love is always possible, and just as some things may have changed for the worse, they can also change again for the better. Much is in your hands! Take every opportunity you have to LOVE and live your love until death separates you.

Your marriage is the most important business of your life. It is the place where you can not only realize your vocation to love and service, while you grow and allow your partner to grow, but also the space where love can be opened to the miracle of a new life.

Put another way, your marriage can become the environment of company, trust, unity, solidarity and challenge to the transcendence that God once designed for you when he created you and gave you the possibility of surrendering yourself to "being One meat "with your spouse. Your marriage is also the beginning of a proper family life from which healthy, happy and capable people should come out to love and love each other.

In this way, love becomes commitment and commitment becomes the best gesture of love that we can offer to those we love. With him we assure him that we are not playing; that he can surrender confidently because even when we feel weak in our capacity to fulfill our promises, God himself will come to our aid and help us to be faithful and coherent with the promised love.

Evaluation of the relationship

Evaluate the relationship is not to question the love, is rather to note what can be or should be improved.

During the married life the couple is discovering itself. In the day-to-day life of their cohabitation, the spouses learn to adapt to each other and also find a way to polish rough edges. Together they choose the values they will embrace and decide how they will live them.

Importance of evaluating the relationship:

Every couple experiences stages in the marriage in which they are more or less satisfied with their relationship. However, it is important that, with some frequency, take time to evaluate your relationship and agree on the type of adjustments you must make to make your relationship more satisfying and happy.

Very often, believing that conflicts are avoided, couples make the mistake of silencing their dissatisfactions. In this way, the problems can grow or create a climate of dissatisfaction that is damaging the relationship little by little.

In a relationship of adults, where everyone sees themselves as equals, it is important that there is a trusting environment where their needs can be expressed without fear of the other person being upset or not wanting to listen.

CHAPTER 3

Third Pillar of Marriage: Communication

The Communication in Marriage.

In marriage, the ability to communicate adequately is essential for a stable and happy relationship. "It is an art that can and must be learned."

The communication is composed of three elements:

Issuer.- The Person that issues a Message.

Receiver.- Person (s) receiving the same message.

Message.- Content expressed by the issuer.

In turn, the quality of the message will depend on the clarity to communicate and the willingness and ability of the receiver to listen. The more specific, short, direct and interference free is the channel we use to communicate, the message can be heard more clearly

Likewise, the feedback that the listener gives to the issuer is of great help for the communication to be successful. Feedback is paraphrasing what you heard or thought you heard.

In communication also interfere what is known as "communication hindrances". Here are some of the most frequent:

Lack of clarity in the message or language: Remember to be specific and above all bring only one issue at a time. Think about what you want to say and how you are going to say it. What is the best language and vocabulary that you can use with the person you want to communicate with. Remember that the end of communication is to be understood so that the other can respond to our expressed need.

Emotional noise: This depends on how people are feeling: For example, if a person is feeling unappreciated, that feeling will affect how he transmits or listens to what his partner wants him to say.

The tone of voice and inadequate accentuation of the words: The tone of voice and accentuation help to create the right environment for communication to take place.

The negative attitude of the listener: To be successful in communication, the person with whom you want to communicate has to want to communicate.

The environment that surrounds them, the time of day, the present noises: Experience tells us that the best time to resolve a conflict is not when you are angry

Listen carefully, looking into the eyes of the speaker, with serenity, without judging what he is saying, respecting his opinion and without interrupting while the other speaks.

Express clearly, directly and simply your point of view or your need

Concentrate on the problem, really talk about the problem of the moment, without bringing up other issues or past situations, because then the snowball will continue to grow. For example, it is better to say, "I feel lonely and misunderstood. I need you to listen to me," he said. "Is that you never hear me", etc.

People also have different ways or styles to communicate, depending on our personality (introverted, extroverted, cheerful, serene, etc.) which is absolutely normal and is conditioned to all our past experiences in life. When we know and appreciate the communication style of our partner we can improve our communication and better understand their attitudes.

Communication as well as love are expressed in many ways.

In the case of marriage these two are very close. For some couples the physical contact is very important and they are flattered that you take them by the hand, a hug, a direct and firm look, etc. We often think that what we like or that makes us happy is going to flatter our partner. However with time and observation, we realize that this is not so. Communication between couples should improve over time. Couples who know each other may be more attentive to each other's needs.

Before the disappointments.

Always remember that it is with the person next to you that you are going to make equipment to overcome this situation. The popular saying that says, "the tiger is not how you paint it," also applies to marriage. Before getting married, we were able to make romantic ideas of couple's love, motherhood and fatherhood. We could imagine a home always harmonious, a father always affectionate, as well as worker and responsible; an always loving mother and always obedient children. But the truth is that these realities do not occur by themselves. You have to work them, negotiate them, build them little by little. The conjugal relationship is a society where one must constantly express one's needs and negotiate them with the needs of the other, until reaching agreements that satisfy both.

A negotiation does not work either once and for all. Changed the circumstances of life can be reframed or feel that what was agreed a few months ago no longer satisfies as before. That is why we must be open to listen, negotiate and even give in, not once, but seventy times seven. This does not mean that you are always the one who has to give in. The yield must be from both sides to achieve a harmonious relationship. We must also know that we are not obliged to give in to what is proper to us and that we consider a personal characteristic that can not be waived. But we can, for love, stop giving so much importance to things that are not so enter into a dialogue of mutual agreement and with the greatest willingness to find a solution.

Be humble and willing to forgive and ask for forgiveness, because your partner and your children are the most important thing in your life.

When you are talking and you see that the dialogue is turning into an offensive discussion, propose to your partner to hold hands, look each other in the eye and raise a prayer to God as a couple. After this small space, continue with your conversation.

When the relationship is very deteriorated or you think it requires, a third person intervenes because between you two can not reach agreements or do not know how to solve it, it is good to seek a professional, a spiritual guide or a person recommended for their knowledge in the subject or his wisdom, so that it provides marriage counseling. There are also group therapies or couples support groups that can be useful to you. Avoid resorting to a relative or person close to both.

Analyze the situations in an objective way: If one day they could understand each other and love each other, it is very likely that they will be able to do it now. Do not forget the dreams and joys that united you to start a courtship and get married. Having the will to improve your conjugal and family life is a powerful energy to get ahead, and do not forget that you always count on the grace of God.

"Tools for the solution of conflicts"

Having different opinions or points of view is normal. But for these differences are not the occasion of a conflict, much less a marriage crisis, it requires learning the techniques of communication and conflict resolution. This learning is convenient for everyone because, although sometimes we tend to imagine that the problem is of the other, it is clear that communication is an art with very varied techniques, and each person is a world that is worth learning to decipher and conquer from its particularity.

"Many differences in the couple come from the fact that each one brings with it his own experience of life and culture, besides starting from his nature of Feminine or Male Gender"

Although marriage is founded on love, it is natural for couples to find differences and difficulties that they must learn to recognize and resolve, to avoid conflict. A conflict is not a disagreement. Disagreements are normal. But when disagreements are not respected or cause problems in the couple, they become conflicts.

We can all have by nature a different way of thinking, without this necessarily causing a conflict.

Our attitude towards differences are those that determine if these will become a conflict or not.

Expressing your points of view, wishes or needs in a clear and simple way will facilitate understanding within the communication in our home, no one knows better what a person thinks or needs than herself. Therefore, waiting for the other person to guess my thoughts is unreal.

Have an open mind where other options and ways of seeing a reality can fit. Nobody owns the whole truth. The point of view of another can also enrich you.

Express our opinions without offending, trying to use the appropriate language that expresses my point of view.

Insist on talking about one issue at a time, do not get out of the issue, without falling into the trap of responding to insinuations or destructive behaviors that divert communication and make the conflict grow.

Try to take responsibility for what you think has contributed to the problem. You can say for example, "I recognize, or, I regret that I ...". When trying to resolve a conflict, reconciliation is often sought. But if we do not take responsibility for our actions or apologize, finding a solution to the conflict will be easier.

Although all these skills will be very useful, it must be recognized that perhaps the most important thing for good communication is how you see yourself, that is, your self-esteem.

This means assessing yourself and at the same time knowing how to recognize your mistakes.

Finally, do not forget to try to put yourself in the place of the other, that is, be willing to recognize that on many occasions if you were in the same circumstances you would possibly act the same or maybe even worse.

Domestic violence

"Domestic violence is any kind of behavior used by one person to control another through fear and intimidation."

When talking about domestic violence some people may think of blows or violent actions of a husband against his wife or vice versa. However, physical violence, beatings and injuries are only a part of what domestic violence really is.

Domestic violence can be defined as any type of action, attitude, use of physical force or words to control a person, within an affective relationship. There is violence when the emotional or spiritual integrity of a person is attacked. This can occur between spouses, couples, parents to children and children to parents and is physical, emotional and sexual.

The Bishops of the United States define abuse as "any kind of behavior used by one person to control another through fear and intimidation. This includes emotional and psychological abuse, beatings, and sexual assault.

"Domestic violence is any kind of behavior used by one person to control another through fear and intimidation."

Physical violence: It is all physical aggression that a person does to another. For example: punching, kicking, wounding, pinching, hair pulling, biting, slapping, etc.

Emotional violence is any action, attitude or word that denigrates, lowers or hurts the emotions or self-esteem of a person. Unlike physical violence that generally involves an aggressive discharge on the victim, emotional violence does not necessarily require violent actions. One person can demean and make another one feel bad with words, actions and soft attitudes, of double meaning, sarcastic and that even sound affectionate. Here are some forms of emotional violence:

Verbal abuse. Ridicule, scorn, insults, as a conscious or unconscious strategy to lower the self-esteem of the victim.

Isolation: Denying the word to a person, ignoring it; Do not take it into account at all.

Intimidation and threats. Threats of death if he speaks, of taking children away, of hitting him, etc.

Blame the victim. The abuser blames his victim for his bad character, his violent outbursts, his problems, his disappointments, his failures and the blows and abuses he receives.

Economic abuse. In many cases the victim does not work and when he does, he must give his check to the abuser, who controls everything related to money in the home. He (or she) makes all the decisions without giving an account to your spouse of what you do with the money.

Use of children Use the children to make the other person feel guilty. Convince children that their spouse is wrong by putting them against it. It makes him feel guilty and responsible for the upbringing and education of the children. If the children behave badly it is always their partner's fault, for example.

Sexual violence: Whenever one of the spouses, without the consent of the other, demands and forces his partner to have sexual relations, he is exerting violence against his partner. It includes all types of sexual practices that one of the two can impose on the other by force, for example: the imposition of the use of contraceptives, abortions, sexual contempt and even the tolerance of infidelity.

Get help

National line for victims of domestic violence 1-800-799-7233 or www.ndvh.org

National Coalition Against Domestic Violence 303-839-1852 or www.ncadv.org

Alpha and Omega. Weekend Pastoral Strategy, with two years of follow-up, to effectively help couples overcome domestic aggression, addictions, drugs, alcohol and other conflicts. For more information, please call Valentin Araya at 312-534-8274, Archdiocese of Chicago. Visit the digital page www.vidafamiliar.org

Infidelity

According to the experts, the infidelity is brewing, little by little, long before one of the two decides to be unfaithful. Poor communication, harmful habits, boring routines, bad moods, little time to share with your partner, sexual disinterest, and power struggle, etc., could be counted among the causes of infidelity.

Machismo, on the other hand, can induce some men to think that they have the "right" to have amorous adventures outside of marriage. This can even make the "macho" man culturally pressured to be unfaithful, to demonstrate his "manhood."

Another important cause of infidelity is the absence of God in a person's life. Without God, the person can feel freer and more vulnerable in the face of the influences of the libertine and hedonistic society and opt for infidelity.

Infidelity is the deepest wound that one spouse can do to another and, therefore, the hardest offense to forgive. However, many people, moved by their Christian faith, manage to discover the power of forgiveness and initiate the long, difficult and painful process of forgiveness.

With forgiveness, the person is not ignoring the damage received, justifying such behavior or preparing to be unfaithful again. His decision only means that he renounces revenge and decides to overcome the pain, freeing himself from resentment and resentment, as a means to heal his wound.

Some couples also manage to reach a reconciliation and reestablish their marital relationship. This requires that the unfaithful person make sufficient merit to win back the trust of his spouse and that the victim learns to trust again in his partner. Trying to see your partner with the merciful eyes of God facilitates this decision. However, experts estimate that this process can last between two and four years, provided that the conversion is sincere, and the couple receives the necessary professional help and spirituality.

Many couples report that after reaching reconciliation, when the wound has healed completely and trust has been restored, they experience much closeness, love and security in their marital relationship.

The power of forgiveness

As long as there is a real will to change and a sensitivity to accept that we are all limited, forgiveness and reconciliation will almost always be possible.

The offenses coming from our loved ones usually hurt more because, to the damage received the feeling of having been in some way betrayed in our trust, our affections or our expectations is added.

That is why mistakes between spouses tend to become not only "problems to be solved" but also "heart pains" that threaten the relationship itself and make even doubt about love.

What is to forgive?

Forgiveness is above all freedom from negative and destructive feelings, such as resentment, anger, outrage, that a miserable suffering woke us up and choose to understand that it is in my hands to add suffering to the damage received or put the problem where it is: in the limitation that my spouse had of loving better, in a certain circumstance.

Forgiving is not accepting the unacceptable nor justifying evils such as abuse, abuse, lack of solidarity or infidelity.

Nor is it to do what it has not happened. That would be to force us or ignore reality and accumulate resentment.

Equally, to forgive is not to try to forget what they have done to me, because it is always good to learn from what has been lived.

In short, to forgive is: Is, to look at my spouse and their negative actions, with the realism and mercy of God who, without ignoring our faults, does not identify us with sin and gives us the opportunity to be better.

Why forgive?

Because while with hatred and resentment we are tied to the evil that they have done to us and we stagnate the marriage relationship concentrating only on the error and pain that a certain action caused us, forgiveness gives us the opportunity to see the lack as a real error but without the emotional burden that harms us. Then, in addition to recovering peace, we recover the

lucidity to evaluate the damage in its real dimension and take the necessary measures in front of the relationship.

It is also clear that if my spouse gave me one day his life in marriage is because he loves me and therefore, most likely is that his mistake was not deliberate but the result of his limitations as a human being in process.

Because loving your spouse means accepting that you are limited and renouncing my expectations in exchange for your reality and willingness to do your best.

Difference between forgiveness and reconciliation

While forgiveness is a decision of each person, within their own heart, reconciliation involves the recovery of the relationship between the two. The ideal is therefore that, once I get rid of the anger and give up identifying my spouse with the mistake he made, we are prepared together to analyze the damage and seek, as far as possible, a repair. Said reparation supposes that the offender recognizes his error, evaluates the effect of what he caused and asks for forgiveness. The victim must then also accept the apology and offer his forgiveness as the basis to start a new relationship, without anger or resentment, but knowing that there is something to improve.

We must know that every couple always goes through moments of tension, of misunderstandings, and even of changes of mood due to the current pressure of modern life.

But when a couple frequently touches the issue of separation or tensions and disagreements are permanent and increasingly difficult to handle, it is necessary to seek professional help. If this help is also sought in time, immediate difficulties can be worked on without waiting until the conflicts reach almost unmanageable dimensions.

Seek professional help is a sign of maturity in the couple because it means they are aware that the crisis itself can not always be resolved and that a person prepared to do so, and from outside the couple, can better and objectively see the origin of the crisis. conflict. For this resource to bear the expected fruit, it is important to bear in mind the following:

Who to turn to for professional help?

Start by talking with your spiritual guide, the pastor or the person in charge of family ministry in your parish. They may suddenly know initially if a "Retreat of couples", a "Marriage Encounter," or a family workshop program offered by the diocese can help them.

If you really need a professional, look for college or county centers that offer "counseling or psychological assistance to couples." Among psychologists there are also some who specialize in couples therapy.

In many cases it is first started by an individual therapy, where each one can express what they feel and clean up their own conflicts and then work as a couple.

When then it is necessary to consult?

When jealousy begins to be unbearable and unmanageable and becomes a constant reason for fights.

When there is infidelity. Perhaps it is one of the reasons why it is urgent and necessary to consult for all the damage that this generates and the emotional implications it entails for the wounded person.

When relationships with others, such as the political family, children, friends, are interfering in an inappropriate way in the relationship.

When economic problems become a permanent boomerang of conflicts and incomprehension within the couple.

When sexuality is cause for dissatisfaction for both, because it is routine or because of significant differences in the expression of it. Or when it is unpleasant for one of the members of the couple, either because they feel that their partner does not respect them, or does not value them in their own sexual identity.

When there is a mental illness that is preventing a harmonious relationship.

When there is physical or psychological violence of one of the partners or both.

When in the relationship begin to manifest expressions of coldness, ironies, sarcasm, often enough to affect the relationship.

When the communication is impaired to the point of only talking to the functional or even handle prolonged silences and evasions. Or on the contrary, when the communication begins to be based on aggressive words, insults and humiliations of the other.

It is important to keep in mind that you can always learn to love more and better and that the grace of God also passes through qualified people who can help you. A happy and harmonious relationship prolongs life, generates health and physical and psychological well-being. For this reason it is convenient to seek help!

CHAPTER 4

Fourth pillar: Sexuality in marriage Intimacy and sexuality in Marriage

Intimacy supposes acceptance, trust and tenderness

The essential characteristic of married love is its condition of total surrender of life, with the purpose of constituting a community of people who give each other security, pleasure, companionship, comfort and support.

That is why the kind of intimacy that this delivery establishes includes the free and joyful donation of our bodies through sexual intimacy, but it is not limited to it. Moreover, the degree of benefits of sexuality has to do with the degree of intimacy that the couple has reached in different aspects of their lives. This is, with the degree of communication, of trust, of respect, of delicate treatment and with solidarity and mutual support in their daily coexistence.

It can therefore be said that, with the exception of the limitations that sometimes a disease or a biological dysfunction can bring to the sexual life, the great majority of the problems faced by couples in bed, has to do with their intimacy in the daily life.

Men and women have different ways of living this dimension of human nature. While for most women the fullness of their sexuality is strongly connected with the satisfaction of their emotional needs, in the case of men this fullness is related to physical contact, primarily.

The strengthening of this pillar depends precisely on the commitment of both of them to mutually understand their natures and to seek first the satisfaction of the other rather than their own.

The first structural support of a good relationship is found in one word: Fidelity. A marriage built on the pillar of security can better withstand the inevitable storms of life. On the contrary, insecurity can cause a very great damage to a marriage, causing its entire structure to shake and fall apart.

What do we mean by the word fidelity? For us, fidelity is the confidence that someone has committed to love us and value us for the rest of our lives. It is the permanent awareness that whatever difficulties we face, we will work together to solve our problems.

80% of a woman's desire for physical contact is not sexual. Unlike men who manifests in opposite ways. In the woman, affectivity over sensuality predominates, so for her, the security of knowing that she is loved more than the corporal union will be more important. Hence, the union between the spouses must begin with the union of their hearts; In this way, the union of their bodies will become the culmination of what has begun inside each one.

For example, holding hands while waiting in a row, giving her a back massage without being asked, gently stroking her hair and tenderly holding her, are all ways to increase intimacy in a relationship.

To improve the level of privacy, a couple must therefore take into account, at least the following:

Intimacy supposes acceptance:

We accept our spouse when we make him feel that, even knowing his defects and limitations, both of character and physical, she or he is the most important person in our lives and that is why he can always count on us. We demonstrate this through the attention with which we listen, through the words of comfort that we give, through the interest and concern we manifest in knowing how the other person feels, and in the way that, even when we manifest our disagreements, we do it without judging the intentions of the other.

Intimacy supposes trust:

Trust is not something that can be demanded but a reality that arises spontaneously between two who feel accepted. But trust can be cultivated. For this, it is necessary to start from an act of fundamental faith: to believe that at no time does the other have the explicit intention of offending or hurting us. This attitude of trust in the good intentions of the other and in their fundamental goodness is decisive for an open dialogue between couples, both at the level of differences of opinion or ways of acting, and on the preferences we have at an intimate level. .

The lack of confidence can instead hinder all levels of communication, both emotional and corporal. Thanks to trust, couples should be able to tell each other which caress they like the most and which they do not like or like. In short, trust creates the complicity and friendship that is required between two good lovers and that makes them companions forever.

That trust should also give the couple the freedom both to be able to suggest having a relationship and to be able to refuse it because they do not feel like doing it, without this leading the other to think that they are rejecting him or that they do not love him.

And when, over the years, sexual intimacy is not the same, trust can maintain in the couple the degree of unity through which it is experienced that there are no secrets between the two; that with the spouse you can address even the most difficult issues such as feelings about the relationship with your family, or work problems, including our dilemmas of conscience.

Intimacy supposes tenderness.

Tenderness is composed of generous gestures or words with which a person caresses not only the body but also the soul of the other person. That is to say, it is those admiring looks, that wink of an eye that raises the spirits of our spouse; are the flowers with which we want to say to someone: "Today I thought especially about you"; It is the hug of consolation or company with which we receive our partner after a day of work. They can also be the "compliments" or phrases of flattery that, although time passes and the mirror lets see the deterioration, make our partner feel that we continue to admire and love. In short, the power of tenderness is such that we can say that it is the greatest and best aphrodisiac, not only because it motivates caresses, but because it keeps the couple in love.

For all this it is clear that "making love" is much more than going to bed. It is to develop in all aspects of communication and coexistence the possibilities of surrender and intimacy of which God has made us capable, and that with his grace we can always improve.

More on this subject can be seen in: Alba Liliana Jaramillo, The solutions you are looking for / in the sexual. Readings that can help: Zig Ziglar, How to make romance not die with marriage. Ed. Norma, 1991; Hendrix Harville Friends and lovers: the ideal couple relationship. Editorial Norma 1991.

When and how do sexual problems begin?

The difficulties couples encounter in their bodily or sexual communication also has to do with the difficulties of communicating through the word. Dialog is then key.

Sexuality is undoubtedly a very important aspect in the life of a marriage because it generates a lot of dynamism that collaborate with the development and strengthening of the couple. Achieving a good level of body dialogue is therefore important.

Therefore, it is recommended to take into account:

Sexuality occupies a central place in the life of the couple. It should be avoided that the desire for work, domestic problems or concerns for children affect it.

During the stage of raising children and a lot of work, the couple should escape from time to time of the routine, find who takes care of the children for a few hours and plan a romantic moment "just for them".

The two must decide, by mutual agreement when to have relations, taking into account each one's state of mind and their responsible use of natural planning.

Sexuality includes all the gestures, words and attitudes that facilitate expressing, through our body, the affection, respect and attention for the other. That is why it is not reduced to gestures in bed, but includes and begins with the details, the environment of good communication and solidarity in daily life.

Sexuality is a way of expressing and celebrating love. Therefore, it assumes that love in general is being fed by attitudes of trust, dedication and desires to please the other. One can not therefore reach the privacy of the brave bedroom, with resentments or fears that the previous dialogue has not resolved.

During sexual intercourse each member of the couple must openly express what their sexual needs are, as well as what they like and dislike. In this way the two will feel that they have been satisfied. And once the relationship is concluded, there must also be space for open communication, which allows knowing the degree of satisfaction that each one achieved.

As intimacy in conversations grows, intimacy in the sexual relationship should also be open to the possibility that spouses grow in mutual knowledge of their bodies, discover better and better what pleases the other and allow them to break the routine of gestures.

It is important to arrive at the stress-free relationship by external responsibilities to the relationship, and without the pressure of pretending that sex should be perfect. It must be made from that moment a true space of intimacy where each one listens to the needs of the other, respects their rhythm and preferences and accompanies them, with patience and delicacy, to their satisfaction.

More on this subject in, Sexuality and intimacy. Some books: Zig Ziglar, How to make romance not die with marriage. Ed. Norma, 1991; Hendrix Harville Friends and lovers: the ideal couple relationship. Editorial Norma 1991; Dagmar O'Connor, How to make love with the same person for the rest of his life and with the same enthusiasm, Ed. Planet, 1989.

Marriage Preparation



Work notebook

LESSON 1— Faith and the approach to God - The Sacrament of Marriage

(At the end of each session the questions should be given to your guide partner)

Read the guide text, watch the videos indicated and answer the following questions:

1.-What does Christ represent in your life? How do you think your faith is in this moment? What experience of faith have you received from your family? What do you need to grow in your spiritual life? Personal reflection:

2.-Why do you want to receive the Sacrament of Marriage and marry before God ?, Do you believe that you are ready to make a commitment for life, to be faithful to your partner, to be open to life and to the plan that God has for you? your married life? Personal reflection

3.- I am aware that the Sacrament of Marriage is a commitment for all life, (It is indissoluble), therefore, that we have to do to fulfill what God has established "What God has united that man does not separate him "? (See Video on Youtube: Yes, I want 05 That adds the Sacrament and Read Text)

4.- What is the Sacrament of Marriage? Who instituted it? (Watch Video on Youtube: Yes, I want 05: Adding the Sacrament) and text

5.- What does Marriage Alliance mean and what are its protagonists? (Watch Video on Youtube: Yes, I want 05: That adds the Sacrament)

6.- What do you mean by the Sacramental grace of Marriage, how do we make it grow and how do we lose grace? (Watch Video on Youtube: Yes, I want 05: That adds the Sacrament)

7.- What is needed to contract marriage validly? (Watch Video on Youtube: Yes, I want 05: That adds the Sacrament)

8.- Because we say that marriage is a vocation of holiness, you know that your first responsibility in marriage is to help your husband (a) be Holy (to see Video on YouTube: Yes, I want 05: That adds the Sacramento)

9.- What is God's Plan for Marriage and why is it said that marriage and the family is a domestic Church? Text

10. What does unity, indissolubility, fidelity and fertility in marriage mean to you? (Text and Videos seen before)

11.- - In what way will God be present in your married life after receiving the Sacrament of Marriage? and how will your marital spirituality be? Text and Personal Reflection

12.- Write the wedding promises and deliver them to your boyfriend (a) on the day of your appointment with the instructors. (Watch Video on Youtube: Yes, I want 06. The wedding more than a party?)

LESSON 2 — Marriage Love

Read the guide text, watch the videos indicated and answer the following questions:

1.- How do I know if the marriage is for me? How do I know if what I feel is true love? What stage of love do you think this relationship is? infatuation, romantic and true love. Explain your answer. (text)

2- The four elements of true love are: Knowledge, Acceptance, Confidence and desire to surrender, in which of them do you need to work more? (text)

3.- The Christian love is: free, fruitful, faithful and total, how will you apply this love of God to your marriage? (text)

4.- What is love, what is to fall in love and what is love ?, Why love is a decision? (See Video on YouTube: Yes, I want 01. You know your partner?)

5.- What is the most important virtue in Marriage? Make a list of 10 or more values that we should cultivate and practice in our marriage. (Watch Video on Youtube: Is there happiness without values?)

6.- What is the stage of disappointment in marriage and what should be done at this stage? (Watch Video on Youtube:: Yes, I want 04. Can love end?)

7. - Write a "love letter" to your boyfriend or girlfriend answering the following questions:

Why do I want to be your partner for life?

What am I willing to give of myself to make you happy? What do I expect from you?

What do I commit to so that our marriage lasts for life?

(place it in an envelope and bring it on the day of your appointment.)

LESSON 3 — Marriage Communication

When you finish reading the guide text and watch the videos indicated, answer the following questions:

1.- I am different from my partner and how can we share our life together? I know my partner completely, I know and accept his virtues and defects?

(Watch Video on Youtube:: Yes, I want 09. How do we understand each other?)

2.- What did you understand by spiritual divorce and apathy in marriage, how can we fall into apathy and loneliness, what should we do and what should we do? (Watch Video on Youtube: Yes, I want 09. How do we understand each other?)

3.- Are the conflicts in the couple's relationship bad? How should we resolve our conflicts? What should I do to resolve conflicts? What domestic violence is to you? Text and Video on Youtube: Yes, I want 09. How do we understand each other?

4.- Do you know how to forgive? Can you ask for forgiveness? Do you think you're proud? Who helps me forgive? What was the last chance you forgive? Difference between forgiveness and reconciliation? Text and Video on Youtube: Yes, I want 09. How do we understand each other?

5.- How is a healthy and clean discussion? (Watch Video on Youtube: Yes, I want 09. How do we understand each other?)

6.- Do you have details of love for your partner? Give an example of the last detail you offered your partner. Reflection

7.- What are the seven pearls of love that I can offer my partner? (Watch Video on Youtube: Yes, I want 09. How do we understand each other?)

8.- What obstacles can threaten and interfere in our married life? What should we avoid to overcome these obstacles? What is a married - single? (Text and (Watch Video on Youtube: What dangers lie in wait for us.) (See Video on Youtube: What dangers lie in wait for us.) (11.57 minutes duration)

9.- Who should be in first place in your marriage relationship ?. What is the secret to carry out the marriage? (Watch Video on Youtube: What dangers lie in wait for us.) (11.57 minutes duration)

10.- In the communication of the couple we must talk about many areas of life.

These questions have been asked: (Text) (personal reflection)

How will the responsibilities of the house be divided? How many children do you want to have? Who will take care of them? If they have not finished their studies how will they help each other to achieve it? Can we live on the salary of only one of us or is it absolutely necessary that we both work? Can I change my work for my family? Is it necessary for the two, or at least one of the two, to look for a more remunerative job? We know how to manage money?

11.- Answer only if it is your case. If either or both of you already have children from previous relationships, your marriage will need adjustments and changes to which everyone will have to adapt. For that reason from now they must talk about:

What are you going to tell the children? - How will your children's relationships with their natural father and mother and their families be maintained? How will the subject of discipline and authority be handled? (Reflection)

LESSON 4 — Sexuality in Marriage

When you finish reading the guide text, watch the videos that are indicated and answer the following questions:

1.- The Intimacy and Sexuality in Marriage, Intimacy supposes acceptance, trust and tenderness. Read the text and make a personal reflection, to improve your Marital relationship.

2.- When and how do sexual problems begin? Read the text and make a personal reflection, to improve your Marital relationship.

3.- What does Body Theology mean? (Video Youtube, Theology of the Body of Father Chuck Kelly)

4.- What is lust? Can it be presented within the marriage relationship? What is the difference between loving and using my partner? (Video Youtube, Theology of the Body of Father Chuck Kelly)

5. What does it mean to love your partner as he loves God? (Video Youtube, Theology of the Body of Father Chuck Kelly)

6.- How should sex be since you receive the Sacrament of Matrimony and through the years? (Video Youtube, Theology of the Body of Father Chuck Kelly)

7. What do contraceptives mean for my body, my marriage relationship and my marriage before God? (Video Youtube, Theology of the Body of Father Chuck Kelly)

8. How does Satan attack your Marital relationship? (Video Youtube, Theology of the Body of Father Chuck Kelly)

9.- How is sexuality according to God's Plan? (Video Youtube, If I want 7, How do husbands love?)

10- What would we do or how would we react if one of the two is infertile? If we can not conceive, will we be willing to adopt? Personal reflection.

11.- Why is pornography harmful to my body, my marriage relationship and my Sacrament of Marriage? Personal reflection.