Matrimony

Matrimony is one of the two sacraments “at the service of communion”. It, along with Holy Orders, is directed toward the salvation of others.

God gives married people special helps to bear the crosses of married life. He even guarantees them all the material things they need, such as food clothing and shelter, provided they keep His laws in marriage, trust Him, and pray for their needs.

In order to love each other the way Christ loves us, husband and wife need special graces. A Christian marriage demands far more love and ability to make sacrifices than a purely civil marriage. That is why Christ made it a sacrament.

The Sacrament of Matrimony

This is the sacrament by which a baptized man and a baptized woman bind themselves together for life in a lawful marriage and receive the grace to discharge their duties. Church laws require a Catholic to be married in the presence of the parish priest or the bishop of the diocese, or a priest delegated by either of them, and two witnesses.

Being married at a Nuptial Mass with devout reception of Holy Communion is the best way to obtain God’s blessing for a Catholic marriage.

The nature of Matrimony

The marriage covenant, by which a man and a woman form with each other an intimate communion of life and love, has been founded and endowed with special laws by the Creator. By its very nature it is ordered to the good of the couple, as well as the generation and education of children. Christ the Lord raised marriage between the baptized to the dignity of a sacrament.

What is meant by the unity of the sacrament of Matrimony?

The unity of the sacrament of Matrimony means that the husband, during the life of his wife cannot have another wife, nor the wife, during the life of her husband have another husband.

What are the chief duties of a husband and wife?

To be faithful to one another.

To provide in every way for the welfare of the children God may give them.

What should Catholics do to prepare for a holy and happy marriage?

Pray that God may direct their choice.

Seek the advice of their parents and confessors.

Practice the virtues, especially chastity.

Frequently receive the sacraments of Penance and Holy Eucharist.

What is necessary to receive the sacrament of Matrimony worthily?

To be in the state of grace.

To know the duties of married life.

To obey the marriage laws of the Church.

The partners must freely consent to it.

What are some of the essential elements of marriage?

Unity – one husband, one wife.

Indissolubility – no divorce.

Openness to fertility – acceptance of the “supreme gift”, the child.
**What are the benefits received in the sacrament of Matrimony?**

An increase in sanctifying grace.

The special help of God for husband and wife to love each other faithfully, to bear with each other’s faults, and to bring up their children properly.

**Divorce is forbidden by God**

The bond of Matrimony lasts until the death of the husband or wife because Christ has said: “What therefore God has joined together, let no man put asunder.”

Love should be permanent, or it is not true love. It is not a feeling that comes and goes, but a power to give what should be there even at times when feelings die out.

If a couple gets divorced in court, God keeps the marriage bond on them. If either remarries, it will not be a real marriage, but adultery.

**Separated Catholics**

There are some unfortunate situations in which living together becomes practically impossible. The spouses do not cease to be husband and wife and are not free to remarry. In this difficult situation, the best solution would be reconciliation. The Christian community is called to help these persons live out their situation in a Christian manner and in fidelity to their marriage bond, which remains indissoluble.

**Divorced Catholics**

“Today, there are numerous Catholics in many countries who have recourse to civil divorce and contract new civil unions. In fidelity to the words of Christ, the Church maintains that a new union cannot be recognized as valid, if the first marriage was. If the divorced are married civilly, they find themselves in a situation that objectively contravenes God’s law. Consequently, they cannot receive Eucharistic communion as long as this situation persists. For the same reason, they cannot exercise certain ecclesiastical responsibilities. Reconciliation through the sacrament of Penance can be granted only to those who have repented for violating the sign of the covenant and the fidelity of Christ, and who are committed to living in complete continence.”

**On the Duties of the Father and the Mother in the Christian Home**

To bring up their children in the love and fear of God is the first duty God has imposed on the father and mother—not on the mother only, but on the father and the mother.

It is true that the mother, especially in the early and tender years of the child, has the greater duty of implanting in it the true Christian spirit, and of introducing it into the Christian life. Nevertheless, the training of a child will not be accomplished if the Christian mother has not a Christian husband to put his hand to the work and assist her. The Lord has not entrusted the child to the father only, or to the mother only, but to the father and mother together.

**References**

