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The Angelus

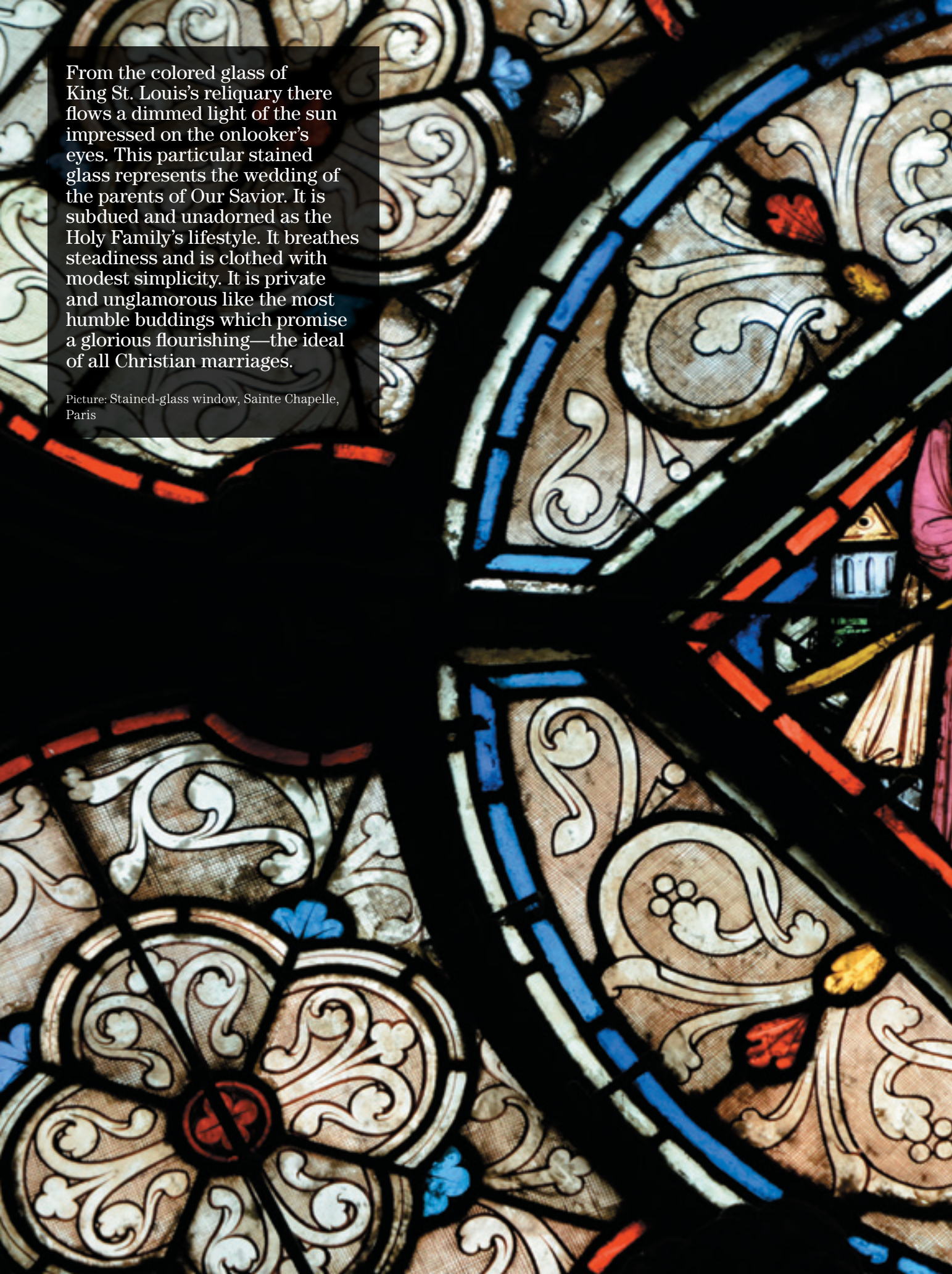
“Instaurare omnia in Christo”

Marriage

Controversy over Marriage Vows

Marriage and the State of Perfection

The Basis of a Happy Wedlock



From the colored glass of King St. Louis's reliquary there flows a dimmed light of the sun impressed on the onlooker's eyes. This particular stained glass represents the wedding of the parents of Our Savior. It is subdued and unadorned as the Holy Family's lifestyle. It breathes steadiness and is clothed with modest simplicity. It is private and unglamorous like the most humble buddings which promise a glorious flourishing—the ideal of all Christian marriages.

Picture: Stained-glass window, Sainte Chapelle, Paris



Letter from the Publisher

At the February consistory of cardinals, Cardinal Walter Kasper gave a lengthy conference on the question of the family. At the sight of innumerable divorced and remarried Catholics he demands that the Church's doctrine on the indissolubility of marriage be reassessed and adjusted to reality.

While reading this conference, an association to C. S. Lewis's *The Great Divorce* imposed itself. Two friends, one dwelling in heaven and the other in hell, are discussing their loss of faith in college, and the slow process that led up to it. The damned soul firmly maintains that his opinions on religion, while possibly wrong, were honestly formed, and therefore did not merit condemnation. Then his old friend replies: "Of course. Having allowed oneself to drift, unresisting, unpraying, accepting every half-conscious solicitation from our desires, we reached a point where we no longer believed the Faith. Just in the same way, a jealous man, drifting and unresisting, reaches a point at which he believes lies about his best friend: a drunkard reaches a point at which (for the moment) he actually believes that another glass will do him no harm. The beliefs are sincere in the sense that they do occur as psychological events in the man's mind. If that's what you mean by sincerity they are sincere, and so were ours. But errors which are sincere in that sense are not innocent."

For the Catholic Church, doctrine comes first and sets out the rules for life. Cardinal Kasper inverts the order. To him reality imposes its rules on doctrine. Facing a new social phenomenon he seems to feel obliged to make doctrine match contemporary life. Therefore he claims a new approach: a new 'doctrine' for having remarried divorcees admitted to the sacraments.

This issue of *The Angelus* is dedicated to the theme of marriage. It strives to give us a clear understanding of the Catholic doctrine on marriage, and at the same time it wants to offer practical advice for how to put this doctrine into action.

"If you do not live what you believe, you will end up believing what you live."

Fr. Jürgen Wegner
Publisher

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The Angelus

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Controversy over Marriage Vows

by Fr. Dominique Bourmaud, SSPX

This issue of *The Angelus* on marriage cannot avoid the heated debate which has avidly fed the media at large, for and against the Catholic Church. What is at stake is nothing less than the sanctity of Catholic marriage since the problem, practically speaking, is whether or not to allow remarried divorcees to receive Holy Communion. On this question, the reader may refer to the statement of Bishop Fellay and to the important historical text of Prof. de Mattei in reply to Cardinal Kasper.

Remarried Divorcees and the Church

Christ said that marriage is an unbreakable bond. In Matthew 19:3-12, Christ specifically

ruled out divorce, saying, “Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning.” “Whoever puts away his wife and marries another, commits adultery against her; and if the wife puts away her husband and marries another, she commits adultery” (Mark 10:11; Luke 16:18).

Following Christ’s condemnation, the Church has always affirmed that remarrying after divorce or separation was sinful. The Church Canon Law (of 1917) imposes an automatic excommunication on those who marry before a non-Catholic minister (can. 2319). The Third Council of Baltimore explains how this applies to divorcees who remarry. Church law moreover denies Christian burial to public sinners (can. 855), and among these are included those known to be remarried divorcees.



Chesterton said: “We do not need a Church which moves with the world; we need a Church which moves the world.” The Church cannot be the salt of the earth without becoming a sign of contradiction. Her impeccable moral principles based on the natural law and the Ten Commandments (e.g. Thou shalt not commit adultery; thou shalt not desire thy neighbor’s wife) fly in the face of a permissive society where liberty translates as license. However, sexual liberation is bound to speed up the downslide of societies. Contraception has led to abortion; abortion led to divorce; divorce has led to civil unions of all kinds. Families and children are under direct attack from such immoral legislation.

Would a slackening of Church rules and of God’s commandments prove merciful? Some object that the Church is merciless to those who made hard decisions due to painful circumstances. Yet, for these as for all sinners, the Church has applied the balm of the faith and understanding, and is still offering them the support she bestows on all sinners. Indeed even public sinners are apt to receive succor from Holy Mother the Church, dependent on the circumstances. In the case at hand, the Church has always made the proper distinctions between notorious and hidden cases, between those locked in a free or necessary cohabitation, with the prerequisite that they live chastely as brother and sister to be able to receive any sacrament. Yet such a demand, not so uncommon in lawful marriage bonds, does not stand a hearing from a world sunk in filth.

The Kasper Bomb

At the February consistory of cardinals, Kasper, at the request of Pope Francis, gave a lengthy conference on the question of the family which will be the topic of the October Synod. In less than ambiguous terms, he advocated for a revision of the Church praxis of not admitting remarried divorcees to the sacraments, given their state in life.

In the present conference, he suggested that the current situation is analogous to that of the

Second Vatican Council on issues of ecumenism and religious freedom: Without violating the binding dogmatic tradition, the Council opened doors. We can ask ourselves: Is it not perhaps possible that there could be further developments on the present question as well?

He added that “we cannot presuppose that spouses” understand the conditions which make for a valid marriage, and asked if the presumption of validity “is not often a legal fiction.” In light of this, he suggested that instead of questions of nullity being decided by a tribunal, “As an alternative, one might think that the bishop could entrust this task to a priest.”

Likewise, the sacraments should be made available to the few seriously prepared couples: “A divorced and remarried person: (1) if he repents of his failure in the first marriage, (2) if he has clarified the obligations of the first marriage, if it is definitively ruled out that he could turn back, (3) if he cannot abandon without further harm the responsibilities taken on with the new civil marriage, (4) if however he is doing the best he can to live out the possibilities of the second marriage on the basis of the faith and to raise his children in the faith, (5) if he has a desire for the sacraments as a source of strength in his situation, should we or can we deny him, after a period of time in a new direction, of ‘metanoia,’ the sacrament of penance and then of communion?”

Our Comments

The statements of Cardinal Kasper are pregnant with strange assumptions.

1. Progress in disorder. It is revealing to hear Kasper use the ‘developments’ on ecumenism and religious freedom at Vatican II to force a similar ‘development’ on the question of concubines. Put in less diplomatic terms, this means that the dogmatic contradiction of postconciliar teaching is the key which opens the door to the more obvious contradictions now erupting in the moral arena.
2. Devious praxis forces devious laws. The presumption that modern-day couples >

Rites of Matrimony

Past and Present

by Fr. Christopher Danel

More than any other sacrament, the liturgical ceremonies of matrimony are nuanced by long-standing social customs native to the various nations where the light of the Catholic Faith has penetrated. This is understandable because marriage is the *sine qua non* for establishing home and hearth; it constitutes the foundational unit of civil society, and thus has social and religious implications that are paramount.

The Church has been careful to preserve these customs when possible. The Council of Trent declared: "If any regions follow other praiseworthy customs and ceremonies when celebrating the sacrament of marriage, the Council earnestly desires that by all means these be retained" (Session XXIV, *De matrimonio*). Due to this variety of national customs, the liturgical sources for the sacrament of matrimony also tend to be more scarce than for other aspects of the Church's liturgical life. Some texts are present in the Leonine Sacramentary, attributed to Pope

St. Leo the Great (440-461). Additional texts, with French influences, are found in the Gelasian Sacramentary (VI-VII century), as well as in the Gregorian Sacramentary, sent by Pope Adrian I (771-795) to Charlemagne. Beyond these, scholars must turn to glimpses from the Church Fathers and from extant texts of various local rituals. Based on all of these, one can trace an outline of marriage customs and ceremonies from the ancient Greco-Roman world, through the fourth to tenth centuries, into the mediaeval period and to the present day.



Greco-Roman Customs and the Early Church

For both Greeks and Romans, two family ceremonies took place: betrothal and marriage. The heads of the families would meet to agree on the betrothal, the formalities of the marriage, and the dowry. In the Roman Empire, the agreement (*stipulatio*) was a firm contract, and was itself celebrated with family festivities. The betrothal took place with a simple question to the youths (*Spondesne? Spondeo*—Do you pledge? I pledge), the joining of their hands (*dexterarum coniunctio*), and the conferral of a ring. Held some time later, the marriage celebration itself was naturally more exuberant, but the formalities associated with the marriage contract had already taken place with the betrothal. Thus, the marriage day was essentially a festive commencement of marital life by the newlyweds, and celebrated by the whole clan.

Amongst the Greeks, a banquet was held at which the spouses would appear crowned. Afterwards, the bride would be led by her father, with a torchlight procession, to the house of the groom's family. There the bride would be crowned again with symbols of fertility (figs, dates, etc.) and she and the groom would process around the hearth and into the bridal chamber.

Amongst the Romans, the young bride would wear a simple white tunic tied with a cord, and a particular flame-red bridal veil (*flammeum*). A banquet would be held in the bride's home, under the charge of a steward (*architriclinus*), during which the newlyweds would eat of a wheat cake together as a sign of marital union, seated on two special seats and wearing floral crowns, with a common veil held above them (the veiling, or *velatio nuptialis*). Afterwards, there was a spectacular procession to the groom's house at the conclusion of which he would carry the bride over the threshold, loosen the cord of her tunic, and all would withdraw.

By and large, Catholics of the early centuries adhered to these customs, and the primary ecclesiastico-juridical act concerned the exchange of consent as described. St. Ambrose wrote simply, "The contract entered into by the spouses constitutes a marriage" (*De*

institutione virginum. "Facit coniugium pactio coniugalis"). Obviously, many similar customs shine through in the Gospels: the betrothal vs. the wedding—consider Our Lady and St. Joseph during this interval—the wedding banquets and garments, the torchlight processions where the wise virgins had their lamps, and the abundant references to Our Lord as the bridegroom Who comes to lead us into His wedding banquet, that is, into the beatific vision.

The Fourth to Tenth Centuries

With the vows of consent remaining fundamental to the contract of marriage, and social customs still prevailing for the festivities, the Church in addition endeavored to confer copious blessings. These are primarily upon the bride due to her role in childbearing, as this constitutes the primary *raison d'être* of the union being contracted. These were initially conferred at different points in the ceremonies, whether during the veiling of the couple, the crowning (in the East), at the joining of hands, or at the bridal chamber (*in thalamo*), but eventually the nuptial blessing would be given in the context of the Nuptial Mass.

The Leonine Sacramentary provides a blessing for the couple under the title of *Velatio nuptialis* (nuptial veiling), with veiling being the predominant custom at both Rome and Milan (Ambrosian Rite). The titles in the Gelasian and Gregorian Sacramentaries are respectively *Actio nuptialis* (nuptial action) and *Orationes ad sponsas velandas* (prayers for veiling brides). This nuptial blessing was sung according to the preface tone, just as the ordination prayers, and the blessing of fonts and sacred chrism. It placed before the bride the examples of the Old Testament matriarchs and invoked the blessing of God for her fruitfulness. It was sung after the *Pater noster*, and during this blessing a special nuptial veil would be placed on the bride, which in later years became a larger veil either extended above or placed upon both bride and groom. The Gelasian Sacramentary adds a special prayer for both bride and groom after Communion. The Gregorian Sacramentary amplifies >

Christian Marriage, Guarantee of the

Dignity of the Woman

by Archbishop Lefebvre, taken from *Against the Heresies*

By proposing to women the model of the Blessed Virgin Mary, whom God himself chose to be the mother of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Church proves the esteem in which she holds womankind. Whereas in all the ancient civilizations, and in all the history of paganism, one finds universally the contempt of woman. She is considered as a mere object. She has no civil rights; she can be repudiated and even sold.

The Church gives to women freedom, and she guarantees it. I was able to observe in Africa that in all the pagan tribes that I encountered, the great problem is always that of the woman. The men spend their time selling their daughters or purchasing wives or reselling them. They term this arranging the dowry.

This is false, for it constitutes a real commerce. Scarcely have they been born when the girls

become the object of trade; someone puts down money to purchase them. As soon as someone else comes along with more money than what a husband has paid, the parents arrange for the daughter to leave her present husband. They return the “dowry” to the husband who had purchased her first, and keep the rest. If a woman is sold for two hundred dollars and another comes along with four hundred, they return two hundred to the first and keep two hundred. It is a real traffic that is almost impossible to imagine.

The missionaries had to fight to uphold Christian marriages, and even then it was difficult because this habit is so deeply rooted in their mores. And then, the parents were not always Christian, but pagan, and acted towards the daughter who had become a Christian and married in the Church as if she were a pagan. >




Dakar, 1955, Feast of
Corpus Christi: Mothers
and girls participate in
the procession



Senegal, Ngasobil: Sisters and girls, 1953





It's no stretch to say that children have a serious advantage in life if they come from a loving, supportive and stable family. Knowing that our parents love us and learning life lessons at home make all the challenges of day-to-day living that much easier to face.



Male and Female

He Created Them

by Fr. Paul Robinson, SSPX

¹ St. Thomas, in I, q. 102, a. 4, says that Adam was created outside the Garden to indicate that it was not owed to him according to his nature, but was something added.

² This and succeeding quotations are taken from the Confraternity Douay Rheims Bible.

In recounting God's creation of the universe, Moses makes clear that man is unique. For the rest of the cosmos, God merely speaks a word to bring things into being from nothing, but man's body He forms specially from the slime of the earth, the *adamah*, and then breathes life into him with His own breath (Gen. 2:7). And so, unlike the others, man is created in God's image (Gen. 1:27).

Something that naturally intrigues us about the Mosaic account, however, is the two-stage production of the sexes. Gen. 1:27 tells us, "Male and female he created them," but we learn in Chapter 2 that Adam was created first, taken into the garden,¹ and given the command to tend it and not eat of the forbidden tree. Then God immediately says, "It is not good that the man is alone; I will make him a helper like himself" (Gen. 1:18).² Was woman, then, an afterthought to God's order, a last minute addition to address an unforeseen need? Certainly not!

We know that Adam was appointed head of the human race and was given dominion over the creatures of the earth. To fit him for this role, God infused clear and ample knowledge of the created order into Adam's mind. At the same time, Adam had no experience; as yet, he had received no >



A Pastor's Perspective

How to Have a Happy Marriage

by SSPX priests

This interview was given to SSPX priests who have had extensive experience in preparing couples for their wedding and working out their differences during marriage. There is little doubt that this refresher can be a useful reminder of the real purpose and the wonderful effects of the vows for those who live up to them.

Marriage Preparation

What, in your opinion, are the prerequisites of young adults who contemplate marriage?

By and large, they must be good Catholics who understand that marriage requires self-sacrifice. Said otherwise, they need to be responsible and take fidelity and their potential children seriously.

Concretely, I would suggest the following four points in ascending order of importance:

1. The physical preparation—that's hardly worth mentioning, it happens all by itself, normally at an age far removed from a reasonable age for marriage!
2. The financial preparation—when the couple marry they don't need to be able to support a family of ten children (unless a man marries a widow with ten children!) but they do need to have a reasonable financial plan.
3. The emotional preparation—there is a certain level of maturity needful for this sacred state of sacrificial love. They must be unselfish, that is, love the other more than themselves.
4. The spiritual preparation—far too many lose sight of the fact that marriage is a sacred state instituted by God for the sanctification of men. >

This lack of understanding hobbles a couple, resulting in a number of problems that could be easily overcome if they worked with God's grace.

What are the duties of the Pastor towards these young adults arriving at the marital age?

Obviously, the preparation for marriage cannot begin when the couple approaches the priest to "start the classes." There must be sermons, catechism classes, perhaps even youth groups where they can receive formation before the choice of a spouse is even contemplated. Even more remotely, we priests should strive to form the parents of the future spouses so that they can form their children properly from a very young age.

More proximate preparation will include the pre-marriage conferences wherein the pastor should stress the beauty and grandeur of this state of life stemming from the fact that it is a symbol of the bond uniting Christ and the Church.

In your long years of practice, have you noticed a progress or decline in the formation, understanding, and sense of responsibility of married life among the young adults?

In general, there has been a gradual lessening of fervor among our long-time faithful which infects all areas including marriage and marriage-readiness. The decline of maturity is rooted in an overwhelming materialist atmosphere. This atmosphere breeds selfish men like flies. They want instant gratification, video games and pleasure at their finger tips.

Against this bleak background, we can still say that, in our traditional circles, there has been an increase of understanding, due to their being raised in our parishes, attending our schools, following our retreats, etc. Moreover, newcomers to Tradition are often much more fervent in wanting to do the right thing, even if they may be less informed about what it is.

But, generally speaking, there's little hope for those raised in the *Novus Ordo* or away from Tradition. They simply have no understanding of the duties of married life, especially on raising a Catholic family. I also notice a lack of perseverance in the conversion of those who become Catholic on the occasion of the marriage.

At the least difficulty, they will give up Church practice and, with the loss of sacramental life, comes inexorably the decline.

There is often the complaint that the Pastors in the SSPX offer little by way of formation of young adults. What do you have to say about this?

The problem is not with the priests, I don't think, but with the world in which they live. The young people today are all "plugged-in" to something: the phone, computers, Internet, music. We preach on the primacy of the spiritual life, but we have difficulty competing with the world's influence. How long do they listen to us? How can twenty minutes of the Sunday sermon and another five in confession fare with all the Internet sites they peruse, the movies and TV shows they watch?

Is the choice of a fiancé(e) the first question to be raised?

It is a pity that most envisage marriage as the only thing up the road. Most launch into it as if there were no other higher option to which God could call them and miss the graces attached to their proper state in life.

What, in your opinion, could be done to better insure the proper choice of a companion for life?

First, parents educated in and living the Faith are of paramount importance. If young people are sure that they are destined for marriage, before they start "going steady" with someone, I would advise them to choose their partner from the Communion rail—someone whom they regard as better than themselves. I instill in their minds the troubles which usually accompany mixed marriages. If this is emphasized in their high school years, there is much less chance that they will come to us asking to marry a non-Catholic.

What is to be advised for living a courtship profitable for their perseverance in the married state?

Once the partner is properly chosen, let them come and see me quickly. I will then offer

Commencement Address, Notre Dame
de LaSalette Academy, 2014

A Magnanimous Man!

by Brian McCall, J.D.

Reverend Father McMahon, Reverend Fathers, Holy Religious, Esteemed Faculty, Parents, Family, Friends, Benefactors, and boys, about to become young men, of the graduating class of 2014, I am truly honored to address you today. I have not come here today to teach you. The time for teaching you on this hallowed ground has come to an end. All I can do in these final few moments of your precious time here is to attempt to distill for you the essence of this esteemed institution. I hope to pull together the threads of what you have been doing here these past few years, to summarize why it is that your parents have made such heroic sacrifices, of which I am deeply aware, to give you the great gift of a La Salette formation.

What then is the essence of La Salette? To know the essence of something is to know it

for what it is—to know it through its causes. Simply put, the essence of La Salette, known through its final cause, is to form young men. You entered the doors of the chapel in September of 2010 boys and you will process out the doors of this Coliseum men, albeit young men. This final cause of La Salette is what makes her a sign of contradiction to our world. Although there are still a small number of institutions who school only males, these few do not form men. There is a significant difference between simply being a male and being a man.

What does it mean to be a Man? Shakespeare places these words on the lips of his character Hamlet: “What a piece of work is a man! How noble in reason, how infinite in faculty! In form and moving how express and admirable! In action how like an Angel! In apprehension how like a



god! The beauty of the world! The paragon of animals! And yet to me, what is this quintessence of dust? Man delights not me.”

Hamlet poetically captures the position of Man as a creature between purely spiritual and purely corporeal beings. In his highest faculties Man is capable of rising to the level of angelic action and participating in the very nature of God. Yet, although capable of the operations of an angel and the apprehension of God, rather than rising to the height of his potency, Man can also be drawn down to the level of the brutes. He can sink to the dust of the unmanly family members who disgust Hamlet. To form a Man is to educate him to apprehend like God, to rise to his highest faculty.

St. Thomas more philosophically defines the divinely established end of Man when he teaches that the common good of Man is his “proper virtue” or “that which makes its subject [Man] good.” The common origin of the Latin words for Man (*Vir*) and Virtue (*Virtus*) demonstrates that even the pagan Romans understood this inextricable connection between Man and the call to virtue. Simply stated, a true Man is he who is virtuous.

This common end of Man found in virtue consists in that tranquility of order (*tranquillitas ordinis*) spoken of by St. Augustine and St. Thomas. St. Augustine defines it thus: “Peace between man and God is the well-ordered obedience of faith to eternal law. Peace between man and man is well-ordered concord.”

Things can only be well ordered by reason. Doing so requires obedience to Eternal Law, which St. Thomas defines, in part, as nothing other than the Divine Reason (*ratio*) directing all things to their due end. This action involves both intellect and will. It is the power of the will directing according to the power of the intellect. The tension in such is between ordering which

consists in a power or strength (again *virtus* connotes not only virtue but strength or power) rationally directed to a due end. Hence tranquility of order requires both strength and peaceful concord, both intellectual and moral virtues. One without the other deflects Man from his true end and results not in a Man but a deformation of Man. Peace can only be if it is rightly ordered.

These facsimiles of Men malformed by the World today emerge by emphasizing one of these components over the other. One facsimile of a Man is produced by directing males to peace without the strength found in obedience to

Eternal Law. This produces the effeminate so prevalent all around us. These hollow

men, whom T.S. Elliot lamented a century ago, seek peace at any price. These Chamberlains

abandon the powerful strength of obedience to the Eternal Law chasing after an elusive false peace.

They are blown about by the winds of time, not fixed to anything real but in a false hope of concord flutter through history. They have invaded the Church

and seek to make disordered peace between the Church and the World, between the princes of the Church and the Prince of this

World, between vice and virtue, and ultimately between God and the devil. These Churchmen seek to transform your beloved motto: *Contra hostes tuos* into *Cum hostibus tuis*, neglecting the reality that a Man cannot be *cum hostibus tuis* until the *hostes* become *fili tui* and thereby *Fratres nostri*.

When the world does not turn males into effeminate it perverts the balance towards the power and strength of order. In so doing they pervert authority into the authoritarian. They deform strength into brute force, drawing these males down to the level of brute beasts (the dust which disgusts Hamlet). This unbridled, disordered authoritarian force produced the bloodiest century in the history of the world, a century in which males reduced to beasts



>



Innocent III, Marriage, and Militant Christendom

by Dr. John Rao

For the popular mind, no pope symbolizes the majesty and glory of the Roman Catholic Church at its height more than Lothario dei Conti di Segni. Born around 1160, the future Innocent III was educated in Rome, Bologna, and Paris. Cardinal Deacon at the age of twenty-nine, he became Supreme Pontiff a mere decade later, while still under that of forty (1198-1216). Caricatured by enemies of the Faith as a purely secular-minded “lord of the world” (See *Innocent III: Vicar of Christ or Lord of the World*, ed. James M. Powell, Catholic University, 1994), presiding over a power-hungry Catholic political machine with an admittedly great energy and efficiency, Innocent III was actually an icon of the entire spiritually-focused reform movement of the High Middle Ages. It was transformation of all things in Christ that was his primary concern, and he underlined this theme in writing with reference to the topic of central importance to this issue of *The Angelus*: marriage.

One cannot look to the pope’s most famous work, *On the Misery of the Human Condition*, for proof of my point. Innocent intended to complement this “negative” text with another “positive” volume that he never had a chance to finish: *On the Dignity of Human Nature*. In any case, a much more complete guide to the spirit of Innocent’s thought can be found in his *Fourfold*

No Light from the

Orthodox East on Christian Marriage

by Gabriel S. Sanchez, J.D.

The Eastern Orthodox Church, though having remained in a state of schism for nearly a millennium, still holds on to much which can instruct and inspire Roman Catholics. As I wrote in the January-February issue of this magazine, Orthodoxy's liturgical ethos should inspire traditional Catholics to go the extra mile with respect to restoring Rome's own liturgical patrimony. With respect to certain moral matters, specifically marriage and the family, there is, lamentably, no light coming from the Orthodox East.

Instead of keeping fast to Christ's admonition that "[w]hat God hath joined together, let no man put asunder" (Mt. 19:6), the Orthodox Church, through the application of *oikonomia* (a vague principle of canonical flexibility which will be discussed further below), allows its members

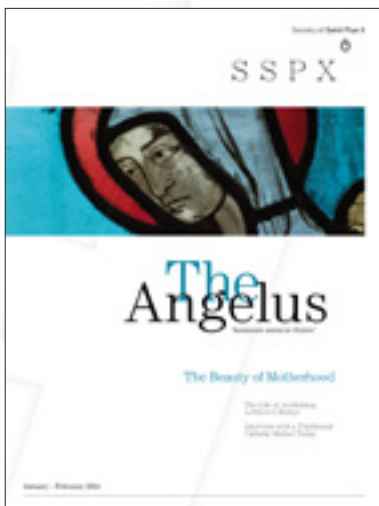
to contract second and third marriages even where the first spouse is still living. This laxity has had an unfortunate spillover effect into the current intra-Catholic debate over the future of the Church's practice with respect to giving Communion to those faithful who divorce and remarry without having their first sacramental union annulled. Catholic bishops, priests, and laity who advocate for a more "flexible" or, as they say, "pastoral" approach to illicitly remarried Catholics routinely cite the Orthodox as their model with nary a glance to the confused and inconsistent nature of that communion's approach to the sacrament of marriage.

Before delving further into that confusion, it would be helpful to get some grasp on the theological and practical differences between Catholicism and Orthodoxy with regard to



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What God Has Joined

by Roberto de Mattei

Kasper cannot erase history and doctrine with “a resounding revolution of culture and praxis”

“The doctrine does not change; the only change concerns pastoral praxis [practice].” This slogan, now repeated for a year, on the one hand reassures those conservatives who measure everything in terms of doctrinal statements, and on the other hand encourages those progressives who attach little value to doctrine and who trust only in the primacy of praxis.

Subordination to worldly powers

A striking example of the cultural revolution proposed in the name of praxis is offered to us by the presentation devoted to “The Gospel of the Family” with which Cardinal Walter Kasper opened the work of the Extraordinary Consistory on the Family on February 20. The text, described by Father Federico Lombardi as “in great harmony” with the thought of Pope Francis, deserves also for this reason to be evaluated in its full extent.

The starting point of Cardinal Kasper is the observation that “between the Church’s doctrine on marriage and family and the convictions lived out by many Christians, a chasm has been created.” The Cardinal, however, avoids formulating a negative judgment on these “convictions” antithetical to the Christian faith, evading the fundamental question: why is there such a chasm between Church doctrine and the philosophy of life of contemporary Christians? What is the nature, what are the causes of the process of dissolution of the family? In no part of the presentation is it pointed out that the crisis of the family is the result of a planned attack on the family, the result of a secular worldview that is opposed to it. And this despite the recent document on Standards for Sex Education by the World Health Organization (WHO), the approval of the “Lunacek Report” by the European Parliament, and the legalization of same-sex marriages and the criminalization of homophobia by many Western governments. And the question still remains: Is it possible in 2014 to devote 25 pages >

The Last Word

Dear Readers,

In a sermon now famous, in 1979 Archbishop Lefebvre launched a crusade of fathers of families in order to restore all things in Christ. (You'll find the sermon in *Apologia Pro Marcel Lefebvre*, II, 332-344.) How much is this crusade still necessary today, 35 years later!

"Charity begins at home," the saying goes. Indeed. Vocations too, by the same token. "A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruits," the Divine Master said. As a proof of this, most of the SSPX vocations in recent years have come from our own families and schools. "Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit." Here are a few wise comments of St. Pius X on this crucial subject, written more than 100 years ago.

"A well-founded and universal complaint can be found today on the lips of all kinds of people concerning the immorality and the corruption, not just of the young adults, but also of children, even the youngest ones. Of these, one can deplore that, from the very awakening of their reason, they are led by fatal tendencies to detestable vices, which should make tremble any one in society bearing some responsibilities. The Holy Ghost has said that children resemble their parents. With the exception of a few rare branches which do not correspond to the nature of the tree to which they are united, the wickedness of children must be attributed to the negligence, carelessness, and, God forbid, to the malice of the parents. That is why, if anything good can be expected for society, it must above all come from the family" (Oct. 29, 1907, *The Christian Home*, Solesmes, nn. 10-11).

"My program, my star, my banner, has never changed: to restore all things in Christ, that is, to ensure that all men, if that were possible, but especially all Christians, live according to the faith that they profess, that they live following the Christian law" (Oct. 12, 1908, *Actes de St. Pie X*, B.P., vol. VI, pp. 69).

Dear parents and future parents, the future of the Roman Catholic Church is in your cradles.

God be with you.

Father Daniel Couture