

Reflections

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Sanctity of Marriage

What does the fundamental attitude in married life consist of in order to achieve sanctity? What is the secret which would motivate us to become saints within marriage? I think the secret is this: to be always there for “you”(the spouse)!

When someone becomes a Franciscan, he/she embraces poverty. When someone becomes a Jesuit, he embraces obedience. When someone becomes a Schoenstatt Father, he embraces the Marian apostolate, and when someone marries, what does he/she embrace? He/she embraces a “you!(a spouse)”

Being there for the other, although it may seem beautiful, is most difficult in life. To be there for the other means that I no longer have the right to think of my comfort.....that I have to forget myself.....that I have to be there for the other just as Christ is there for the Church.

My mission is, then, to support my spouse.....to complement him/her.....to lead him/her to heaven. This is not easy – you know it better than I do – because we are selfish, because we are narrow-minded.

If someone is able to maintain this attitude throughout one’s married life, “*I am only there for the other,*” he/she would become a saint. If it deals with canonizing a married spouse, then it will always be looked into if he/she was there for the other.

To be like Christ is for the Church is to be there with noble and transparent love, not with love which asks that the other be there for me but that I am there for the other. The marriage will be a happy one according to the measure in which we live out this norm.

I should then know how to limit myself in my likes for “you.” What if I like noodles and she likes French fries? Am I condemned to eat French fries all my life!

I will bear it for one week. But will I bear it for 10 years, 30 years? What if God has given me the joy of 60 years of marriage? Perhaps we are laughing, nevertheless, here is the key to marital happiness or to marital tragedy.

See the positive qualities.....always

Being there for the spouse means to always be disposed, to always be conscious of the “you,” of the good qualities “you”(the spouse) has. The spouses should never become accustomed to this.

They should be accustomed to many things, but must not become accustomed to the good qualities of the spouse. On the contrary, every day they should learn to appreciate them more. I think this must be something which makes sanctity in marriage so difficult. One soon becomes accustomed to the good qualities “you” has, and later only focuses on the bad qualities. It seems that the bad qualities increase and the good qualities decrease.

Therefore, marital happiness depends on the spirit of sacrifice, on the ability of letting oneself be crucified for the other. It is the way of true love which is really what is most difficult in this human existence. The German poet, Rilke, said it: “The most difficult, the most difficult task man has to learn is love.” Why? Because what costs us more is to forget ourselves and to look toward the others.

Questions for reflection

1. Do I often sacrifice my likes, or do I insist on them?
2. Do I continue to see the qualities of my spouse or have I become accustomed to them?
3. Is it easier for me to see the negative even when it clouds the virtues of the other?

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