

# COURTSHIP AND MARRIAGE

BY MARTIN J. SCOTT, S. J.

## 1 - YOUNG MEN AND COURTSHIP

One of the most important periods of a man's life is that which precedes marriage. Marriage is a contract which almost every man makes sooner or later. It is the biggest contract of life. It binds to more than any other contract we can sign. Christian marriage is a bond which only the Creator can undo. A good marriage is the greatest blessing a man can enjoy. A bad marriage is the most dreadful calamity, humanly speaking, that can befall a man.

Business men, before they sign a contract of importance, reflect a good deal on the issue. Yet a business contract may turn out badly without destroying a man's happiness. He may try again. He can start anew even if the contract has ruined him. But marriage is for better or worse until God parts man and wife by death.

Therefore the young man who is keeping company is at the most consequential period of his life. The result of his courtship may make him a happy husband and father, or a miserable and disheartened partner for life.

The girl has it in her power to make him happy or wretched for life. There is no middle road in matrimony. A wife is to her husband either a solace or a sorrow. His children will be, to a great extent, what his wife makes them. A good marriage means more to a man than a fortune. A bad marriage is little short of a catastrophe. On no one thing of life does so much depend as on marriage.

This means that a young man's most important decision is made when he says: "This is the girl I am going to marry." For she is going to make his marriage a boon or a bane. All depends on whether or not she is the right girl for him. A girl who would make one man's life agreeable might make another's wretched. The thing each man must be sure of, as far as possible, is whether he has chosen exactly the girl for his happiness.

Marriage is a lottery, it is said. That, is because so many young men make it a lottery. They marry a pretty face rather than a girl of suitable disposition. A pretty face is all very well, but frequently it is misleading. There are certain persons who are satisfied with what is superficial. Some people buy a book for its cover. A pretty face is not to be scorned, but it is not enough.

Is the girl with the pretty face also a girl with sensible ways? Is she the right girl for you? If not, she will be your undoing. Is her character suitable to yours? And how are you going to know? Ah, there's the rub! If a man could only know! However, just because it is so uncertain, a man should take all the measures possible to know what he is doing. That is the object of courtship. But if he turn courtship into "spooning," everything conspires to make him marry the wrong girl. If he employs the opportunities of courtship as an occasion of dissipation, of course he will regret it later.

Many of the unhappy marriages nowadays, and there are not a few, are made so because the young man is out for a good time during courtship rather than to consult his future welfare. A good time, certainly, is not taboo—courtship is an oasis, one of the few in the desert of life. But why forget the journey ahead, in the short rest and refreshment possible on that tiny spot? A man and a maid can have a very good time during courtship without losing sight of its main object, and without doing anything that will make them repent afterwards.

For a Christian man will regret it if, in any way, he treats the girl who is to be his wife and the mother of his children with less respect and propriety than he would manifest toward sister or mother. The girl who is the right girl for a young man will inspire him with reverence for her. Unless she makes him feel that he is in the presence of something almost sacred when in her company, he does not truly love her, no matter what attraction she may have for him.

Certain qualities in women attract every man. But love is more than attraction—it is reverence as well. It is something which makes a man feel that the girl he is courting is a God-given treasure that will ennoble and enrich his life. The girl a man marries should be an inspiration to him for higher and for better things. Courtship, if conducted in the Catholic way, which is God's way, will show a man, ordinarily, whether or not the girl he hopes to marry is suitable for him.

What a dreadful mistake, therefore, some young men make when they rush into marriage because they are taken by a

soft voice or a winsome face. What a misuse of courtship those make who measure its success by the extent of the liberties they can win from a maiden! Mark it well, young men, the girl who is free and easy with you during courtship, may not be more honourable as a wife than she was as a maiden. The maiden without modesty may be the wife without love.

Love is so sacred, so sublime, that it is cultivated only in modest courtship. Its fruition is in marriage only. Any word or gesture that a man would resent if used towards his mother or sister, should be banished from courtship. Your fiancée is not your wife. The purpose of courtship is not the enjoyment of any, even the slightest, tokens of wifely affection, but to discover whether the girl of your choice is suited to be your life's companion.

For she will be your closest companion all the days of your life, closer to you than father or mother, without displacing father or mother in your affection. She is destined to be your helpmate. Your sorrows—and you will have them—will be hers, your joys also. If she is the right girl for you, she will enable you to face any difficulty and to bear any reverse. She will be your inspiration. It will be a pleasure for you to work for her and your home. No matter how good or great a man may be, he is better and greater if the girl he marries is the right girl for him. On the other hand, if she is not, she becomes a dead weight on her husband's aspirations and achievements.

Am I not right, then; young men, in saying that the time before marriage is the most important period of life?

In important matters, wise people consult wiser heads. No matter how well educated you may be, even if you have had advantages greater than your parents, it will do you no harm to consult with them about your marriage. I realise that young men at present consider themselves well able to take care of themselves. But it is only necessary to look about you to find that in many cases they have made sad work of their boasted self-sufficiency.

A young man owes it as a matter of obedience and love, to consult with his parents on such an important step as marriage. If his own boy later on should fail to show him the respect of advising with him on such an important matter, he would feel it keenly. The man who expects God's blessing on his married life, must do his part to deserve it, and He commands us all to honour father and mother. Some young men forget that there is such a commandment. They only recall it when they have children of their own.

Love can be a mild form of insanity. Oftentimes I have heard men say that they must have been crazy to marry such a girl. Perhaps they were. When young people are enamoured of each other, they are in a trance, delightful, maybe, but there must be an awakening. And then! They say love is blind. At least, it is not all clear-sighted. That is why consultation and advice will do the young lover no harm.

I know that some who read this, will be ready to grant that it is true generally, but they will say that it does not apply to them. That is why I wish to convince you that it does apply to you, to you more than anyone else. The blindest in love are those who think they see best.

I knew a man of great business acumen, whose common sense was remarkable. He had often given sound advice to others and was held in esteem for his good counsel. He frequently boasted that he would never be fooled by a girl, that when he married he would know what he is doing. Hearing him speak in this strain, I cautioned him: "You are the very kind of man that gets a bad bargain, when your business is with a woman's heart." But he was sure of his own prudence. Well, he got married, and his wife turned out to be a vixen. She led him a furious dance, and before long, the poor man seemed to have lost all interest in life. Three years after his marriage, he said to me: "Father, no man is so big a fool as the wise fool!"

I do not mean to be hard on the girls. A girl is just as apt to be deceived as the man. In my talk to young women, I shall tell them now much depends on their accepting the right kind of man. Both man and woman are entering upon a very serious and uncertain venture. Again I say, "Go slow; seek counsel: consider not only a girl's face, but her disposition." Nothing that attracts the love of a man, loses its hold so quickly as a pretty face. The strong bond of love is disposition. That does not wear out. Looks, especially the artificial looks of the modern girl, fade; but a good disposition lasts and improves with association.

In every walk of life there are men who know everything apparently. Usually they come to grief. Successful men are

successful because they have profited by the wisdom and experience of others. Having shared for years the confidences of men and women seeking help in marriage problems, and having employed sincere effort in helping those unfortunate in marriage, I may truly say that courtship is the period in a man's life when he can least afford to be unmindful of the future.

We hear a good deal nowadays about incompatibility.. A young man and woman stand before the priest to be married ; he thinks that she is the most wonderful woman in the world, and she considers him the finest man that ever lived. If the priest should say to either that something might one day estrange them, they would not believe it possible.

And yet how often these two, after a few years, sometimes after a few months, barely tolerate each other! It hardly seems possible. During courtship they seemed angels to each other. After marriage association, they appear as ordinary mortals. During courtship each saw the other under only the most favourable conditions. Instead of employing that period to get acquainted, it was used for amusement, regardless of what the outcome might be.

If a man uses all his power and resources to please a girl, of course she seems angelic. Later on when he pays her just ordinary attention her true disposition appears. In courtship therefore try to be what you expect to be all your life. In a word, be just yourself. Then she will be herself, and there will be less likelihood of mutual disappointment.

In this advice to a young man about choosing wisely, I do not imply that the girl is not lovable and desirable. A girl who would make an ideal wife for one man might make marriage a veritable plague for another. Unless there is mutual adaptability a young man may as well say farewell to happiness if he marries.

In speaking thus to a young man, I am not taking it for granted that he is perfect. What I say to him I say to both that they should make sure that they are united to be lifelong companions, in the most intimate companionship known to mankind.

Since religion plays such an important part in the life of a good girl, it is ordinarily a mistake for a Catholic to marry a non-Catholic. With good people religion is a serious matter.

A good girl who is a non-Catholic will thus be at variance with her husband in a matter which plays a big part in life.

If it should happen that the wife's religion is not a serious matter, another great difficulty arises. Children will be under the influence of a mother to whom religion means little or nothing. In spite of all their father may do, the chances are that they will grow up indifferent Catholics, or lose the Faith entirely.

The religion of a non-Catholic wife either means a good deal to her, or it does not. If it does, there is created by that very fact a serious difference between husband and wife. If it does not, the Catholic husband is consigning his children to irreligious influence. Children will not make religion a serious matter ordinarily if their mother does not. A mixed marriage is a great responsibility for any young man.

As a matter of fact, difference of religion does ordinarily cause more or less estrangement between man and wife, introducing an element of discord. It does not show itself in courtship, when both are so wonderfully absorbed in each other and other things are in the background. But when everyday life begins, differences in religion assert themselves. A young man should not wait until he is deeply in love with a girl before knowing what her religion is. It may be too late then. Before he begins to court her, he should find out her faith. Even with similarity of religious belief, there are apt to be many differences between man and wife. If difference of faith is added, other differences will be multiplied in number and intensity.

If you are willing to take the advice of one who knows intimately the conditions which ordinarily prevail in mixed marriages, you will hesitate seriously before marrying a non-Catholic. Even with the help of religion, marriage will have its hardships and misunderstandings. A young man needs only to look at his own family to verify this. He knows what has happened in its circle. Of course he fancies that his own married life will be different. His father and mother had the same conviction; otherwise they would not have married.

But all of us must expect our share of tribulation in life, as a reminder that our heaven is not here.

However, do not mistake me, I do not wish to discourage marriage, but, rather, to help to introduce into it the maximum of happiness. If marriage has its' uncertainties and sorrows, so has single life. A good marriage is the greatest

good fortune a man can experience in life. A young man should pray frequently during courtship for God's guidance. He prays for success in other things. Nothing compares in importance with marriage. His happiness here, and perhaps hereafter, is intimately associated with it.

In conclusion, therefore, let me sum up. Courtship is to be regarded not as a diversion, but as the most serious period of life. During courtship, a man should reverence the girl he hopes to make his wife. A good woman values modesty above everything else, and a good young man will not want a wife who does not put virtue above everything.

Courtship does not entitle a man to any more liberties with a girl than are customary in the family circle. Lust is not love. Sexual familiarity of any kind is just as much a sin in courtship as it is out of it.

Even betrothal does not entitle a man to liberties. God has implanted certain sexual instincts in man and woman for the purpose of drawing them together in marriage, but before marriage any deliberate indulgence of a passionate character is a sin. This applies to the woman as well as to the man.

A loose code of morals prevails among many people who are irreligious and worldly, and the consequences are most dreadful. But I am addressing Catholics, who realise that passion must be controlled by the law of God. If a man's feeling for the girl he intends to marry is of such a nature and strength that he cannot restrain it within proper bounds, it is to be feared that he is swayed by lust rather than by love.

I am speaking plainly, because with some people courtship has degenerated into licence. And courtship so carried on, breeds nothing but misery, besides being sinful. Marriages which result from that sort of courtship will not be happy ordinarily. They do not merit God's blessing on them.

Again I say that modesty is the guardian of purity, and purity is the basis of Christian marriage. Everything is undue in courtship that is undue out of it. A sweetheart who invites familiarities is not the girl for a good young man. Moreover, the sweetheart who is subjected to undue familiarities will suffer inexpressible anguish if she is virtuous.

True love will never humiliate or embarrass. Because a girl is weak or over-anxious to please a man, he should not take advantage of it. Let him conduct himself as a man of Christian honour. In that way, true love will increase between man and his betrothed, the only love which will ennoble both and make them worthy of each other.

When a young man goes a-courting, therefore, he should realise that the girl whom he addresses will be his companion of soul as well as of body and mind, for life he marries her. He should employ this momentous time to find out if their dispositions will make for agreeable association through all the years during which they may be man and wife. And, above all, he should be mindful of Catholic modesty, the guardian of purity and the guarantee of true love. A courtship conducted thus may reasonably be expected to confer on man and woman the greatest of life's blessing—a happy marriage.

## II. YOUNG WOMEN AND COURTSHIP.

MARRIAGE MEANS a good deal to a man, but more to a woman. When a marriage turns out badly, the man has any number of diversions and business interests to occupy his time and thought. The woman, whose duty is mainly in the domestic circle, has little opportunity of distraction, as our ethical code permits her almost no social life independent of her husband. It is safe to say that for determining her natural happiness, and comfort, marriage is the most important step in a woman's life. The most important person in her world is the man she marries: he is part of her life—and a very considerable part.

Suppose you could choose your own father or mother! How careful you would be to select the best possible. A husband is more in a girl's life than father or mother have been. Yet some girls accept a man's attentions without knowing anything more about him than he shows when on exhibition.

Every man courting a girl is on exhibition: He is at his best. If she accepts him at face value, basing her estimate on appearances only, she will believe that he is one of the finest men that ever lived. It is easy for a man to be nice to a girl when he is attracted by her. He can hardly help it.

Some men are angels in love and brutes in marriage. After the spell of love-making is over, the man returns to normal.

It is his normal self that will eventually be in the home.

Common sense therefore tells the girl to try to know what kind of normal man he is who courts her. For the sake of a little vanity or brief enjoyment, she should not give herself to a man whom she does not know thoroughly.

Why are there so many unsatisfactory marriages nowadays? The man does not know the girl and the girl does not know the man. They think they do. But it is harder to know a man or a woman than to know anything else. Yet young people often fancy that they know each other after a very short association.

They forget that there is more camouflage in courtship than in anything else, except war. Indeed, we may leave out war, and put marriage first. A man presents his best, and only his best, to the girl he courts. Of course, that is right—for him. But the girl should realise that he will not always be at his best, and that she must discount a good deal if she wants to know what he is normally.

How often have I heard married women say: “Oh, if I had only known him, I never would have married him!” Perhaps he says the same of her. At all events, it brings home the point I wish to make. A young woman should study the man who offers her attentions, more carefully than any other matter in life.

And yet, see how many fine girls rush to the first plausible man who holds out a hand to them! It happens, too, that a girl, after she has found that the man is undesirable, will sometime’s continue to accept his attentions. She fears talk. What will people say? Her vanity or pride or weakness make her give her hand, if not her heart, in marriage. And then she wonders that her married life is a nightmare.

The beginning of courtship should be so slow and reserved that the girl may withdraw at any time without attracting comment. Before accepting constant attention from a man she should observe him seriously, and thus be in a position to prevent the full development of a courtship which cannot ripen into a happy marriage. A girl should not accept the marked admiration and favours of a man until she knows him well enough and favourably enough to accept his proposal.

In Catholic countries, where a marriage is always a careful procedure, unhappy unions are the exception. Here (America) nobody knows anybody any too well, and there is so much mingling of the sexes, and so little of home life and neighbourly acquaintance, that the whole problem is different and difficult. A girl frequently permits a chance meeting to develop into courtship. What is the result? Too often a broken life.

A man should not be taken at his face value. Let him visit the girl in her home, and let her see him at his home, before she allows him to go out with her regularly. And when she finds him repeating his attentions, let her ask the opinion of her parents about him, and, better still, find out, if she can, the real opinion of his own parents about him.

I know that some girls consider themselves the sole and capable judges in such matters. Very well. They will not be the first to find out, too late, that two heads are better than one. If the young fellow is suitable, a girl’s father and mother will be more glad to say so than she will be to hear it. That is certain. And if he is not suitable, it will be as hard for them to say it, as for her to hear it. It can be taken for granted that a girl’s parents love her and want her to be happy. But they love her sensibly. A girl in love loves foolishly, too often. She closes her eyes to the future to indulge a pleasant prospect for the moment. There are few regrettable marriages where girls are guided by their parents.

The first direction I give, therefore, to a girl contemplating marriage is to go slowly and carefully. If a man really loves her, he will love her all the more for her reserve. This leads me to the second point. It may sound contradictory, but it is nevertheless a fact that men, or at least many men, will take all the liberties a girl will allow, and yet the more she allows the less they will think of her. Is that not strange? A man never loves a girl so much as when she keeps him at a proper distance and makes him respect and reverence her.

Moreover, the willingness to take liberties with a girl, and true love for her rarely go together. The man may think he loves her, but it is his animal nature that asserts itself. A man who, out of regard for the woman who is to be his wife, does not master his passions and respect her modesty, will not respect her as his wife and the mother of his children. It is common to hear men say that they would never marry a girl who would allow familiarities.

A man can recognise a girl’s love for him without her relinquishing anything of maidenly propriety. On his very first attempt at being unmindful of her womanly dignity, she should put her foot down hard. If she does not, he may take it as

an indication that she wants him to go further. Then the barrier of decency and reserve is down, calamity follows, and eventually sin, which is worst of all. A man loves a woman in proportion as she shows maidenly reserve. If he does not respect her modesty, she may know that he will not make her a true husband.

Now I come to the third point, which will make many scowl, I fear. And yet more depends on it, almost, than on other one thing. In courtship, of course, the girl will be at her best. But she should not pretend to be what she is not. Deception during courtship is accountable for more unhappy marriages than anyone could believe.

Some girls do not care for consequences. They are satisfied to make an impression, regardless of whether or not it is genuine. What is the result? A dreadful disillusionment comes at a time when it is too late to offset it. Love turns into indifference or disgust, and the married life becomes a prolonged misfortune. It is very well for a girl to be at her best, but let it be her true best—with a resolution to maintain it all her life. I have heard girls say that they would use any means to win a man. Such girls usually come to grief—and they deserve it.

Another point I wish to insist on is that a girl should regard not so much a man's looks as his character. If his disposition does not fit in with hers, if there is not a sympathy of feeling between them, if their natures are not congenial, it is a sign that they are not intended for each other. Better no marriage than an uncongenial marriage. The trials of married life are many under the best circumstances, but under bad conditions they are innumerable and unbearable.

I now come to my last observation. Even with the blessing of religion on married life, we find a great deal to make us realise that our heaven is not here below. But without religion, we are deprived of the very best means given by God, for marriage welfare.

True, some mixed marriages turn out well. But even these would be doubly blessed if both persons were Catholics. Many mixed marriages are tragedies. Nothing is so near to the heart of a true Catholic girl as her religion. Some men will respect the Faith and practice of a Catholic wife, but many more, notwithstanding their pre-marriage promises, will not. Every priest has a sad record of broken families due to a difference of religion between man and wife.

When a man is in love he is under a spell. It is easy for him to rise to wonderful heights of magnanimity. But that spell does not last. The points of difference about religion which seemed little or nothing previously may rise up and form a wall of ice between husband and wife. What is deepest in her life, she finds, has no meaning for him.

But that is not all. When the children see the father practise one religion or none at all, and the mother another, they conclude in many cases that religion does not matter much. The number of children of mixed marriages who have lost the Faith is legion.

A Catholic young woman should hesitate to assume the responsibility of such an outcome.

Before a girl permits courtship to begin, she should ascertain whether the man is a Catholic and a good Catholic. The single state in life is a thousand times preferable, in most cases, to a mixed marriage. When husband and wife are of the same faith, there is a bond uniting their very souls. In joy they will rejoice more abundantly, and in sorrow they will have an unflinching support.

To sum up, therefore, let me say again that choosing a husband is, humanly speaking, the most consequential thing in a girl's life. In regard to it, there should be exercised more deliberation than on anything else.

In courtship, maidenly reserve should never be compromised. Modesty should be sacred. It is the guardian of purity. It is a maiden's most beautiful adornment. Even the men who will do their utmost to rob a maiden of that adornment will despise her when they have succeeded.

A Catholic girl should not be guided by the loose moral code of those who have no religion. Courtship has degenerated among certain classes into downright sin.

Some young folks think that courtship entitles them to free love. The law of God holds for young people during courtship just as strictly as it does for everyone else.

The young lady who joins maidenly reserve to her other actions inspires love far more than does a girl who makes concessions to her lover. And when I speak of concessions, I mean anything and everything which a girl would hesitate to do in the presence of her sister or mother. Courtship is preparation for marriage. If she expects God's blessing on married

life, she must respect His law during courtship. I say it is only right and proper that a girl should be at her best during courtship—but let me remind her that it should be her genuine best.

Moreover, as marriage is so important an event, everything should be done to have it as God wishes it to be. Without every possible safeguard, marriage with a non-Catholic is a losing venture, and even with every precaution, it risks true welfare. A girl should prepare for marriage by being true to her religion. Marriage deserves every effort to draw God's special blessings on it by prayer and frequent Holy Communion.

If my advice and counsels have helped one young woman to recognise and accept the right man, a man of her own religion, who will find in her a God-given wife, I shall be recompensed for my efforts. My words may perhaps, in some respects, seem to restrict inclinations, but I can affirm from experience that they point the way to permanent peace and welfare.

In conclusion, I say: Seek first the kingdom of God and His justice. God's way is always the best way, here and hereafter. The longest life comes to an end. May the marriage of the Catholic girl be the means of making that end the beginning of everlasting life and blessedness for herself and the man to whom she gave her heart in wedlock.

## APPENDIX

### MATRIMONY

*The Dispositions for receiving the Sacraments—duties and obligations of married people. Abridged from Perry's Full Course of Instruction.*

What is Matrimony?—Matrimony is a Sacrament which gives grace to those who contract Marriage with due dispositions to enable them to bear the difficulties of their state, to love and be faithful to one another, and to bring up their children in the fear of God.

#### DISPOSITIONS AND PREPARATION NECESSARY FOR RECEIVING THIS SACRAMENT WORTHILY

I. You should endeavour to procure the favour and direction of Heaven, by fervent prayer, by being attentive to all the duties of a good Catholic, and by avoiding sin. "A good wife is a good portion: she shall be given to a man for his good deeds (Eccl. xxvi, 3). Nothing is of greater importance in entering into the married state than to obtain the divine blessing; and yet nothing is sometimes less attended to!

2. They who are about to get married should consult their parents (see page 6) and not allow themselves to be hurried away by passion. "My son, do nothing without counsel, and thou shalt not repent when thou hast done (Eccli. xxxii, 24)

3. They should have a right intention such as God had in the institution of Marriage: namely, to be a mutual help to each other; to have children who may serve God; and to prevent incontinence. Their intention, then, should not be to gratify ambition, or avarice, or carnal desires.

4. They should be careful to choose a proper person. This is of very great importance; yet, to be of a high family, rich and beautiful, seem oftentimes to be made the chief considerations by many of those who marry. These may be very well as secondary, but should not be the chief determining motives.

The choice should fall on one of the true Faith and a good Christian: your own peace and happiness, your salvation and that of your children depend greatly upon it. Family, riches and beauty, are but poor helpers to happiness, if the temper be bad, the humour extravagant, or the passion violent. "Happy is the husband of a good wife, for the number of his years shall be doubled." (Eccli. xxvi, 1).

What is the *more immediate Preparation*?

I. To be instructed in the nature of this Sacrament, and in the conditions necessary for receiving it; also in the duties and obligations of married life—and to resolve to comply with them.

2. To be in the state of grace: otherwise the marriage would be sacrilegious; and would tend to draw down the curse of God, instead of His blessing.

3. To receive the Sacrament of Penance, if in the state of sin.

### DUTIES AND OBLIGATIONS OF THE MARRIED STATE

The duties of married people are most serious and important, because their own and their children's happiness, both here and hereafter, depend very much upon them. For the fulfilling of these duties special graces are necessary; and Faith teaches the graces this Sacrament gives them.

What, then, are the *Duties and Obligations of the Married State*?

I. The husband and wife must have a mutual love for each other. "Husbands, love your wives as Christ also loved the Church. . . So also ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself" (Ephes. V, 25, 28). Without this there will be no happiness. The only limitation in this mutual love is—husband and wife must love God more than they love each other.

2. They must give each other good example and pray for one another, and preserve inviolably the sanctity of marriage (cf. Heb. xiii, 4). Infidelity is a most grievous crime, being: *1st*, the violation of a sacramental contract; *2nd*, the breach of a vow made before God and the Church; *3rd*, a great injustice to the innocent party. If it should be discovered (or suspected, which is often the case), it then sows the seeds of perpetual discord.

3. The husband should exercise his authority with prudence, meekness and charity. "The husband is head of the wife, as Christ is head of the Church" (Ephes. v, 23). Therefore, as Christ is solicitous for the good of His Church, so the husband should be solicitous for his wife.

4. The wife should behave towards her husband with due respect, obedience and submission. "Let women be subject to their husbands, as to the Lord. . . As the Church is subject to Christ, so let wives be to their husbands in all things (Ephes. v, 22, 34 .

If both parties would observe these duties, how happily they would live together!

5. There is another very important duty of married people, namely, to bring up their children religiously. They must instruct their children; instil into them religious habits; see to their prayers, confessions and Holy Communions; watch over them; keep them from bad companions and from the occasions of sin; set them good example; and pray for them. These duties towards children lay parents under a heavy responsibility, and yet how often they are neglected!

These are the duties and obligations of the married state. They are important and difficult, and cannot be fulfilled religiously, without particular graces. These graces the Sacrament of Matrimony gives to such as receive it with proper dispositions. How important, then, it is to make a good preparation for it, how great the advantages of receiving it with proper dispositions, and how careful husband and wife should be afterwards not to lose, by sin, those special graces which it gives to those who receive it worthily!

Nihil Obstat:  
CAROLUS DOYLE, S.J.,  
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Imprimi Potest:  
✠ EDUARDUS,  
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