

LOVE'S ALL THAT MATTERS

By DANIEL A. LORD, S.J.

WE are a romantic age, no doubt of that. Our romantic instincts have been deliberately cultivated by the writers, the songsters, the motion-picture producers, our not always too wise elders.

Into the lives of most people, we are told, there is bound to come a time when romantic love will seem to be all that matters. What possibly could then stand against it?

Sometimes it may be that this strong romantic attachment, this physical affection that can combine with a strong desire for union of lives, may mean that the two people can marry and remain contentedly married for life.

The first impulse is backed by a lot of important things. There are tastes that match and backgrounds that dovetail. There are souls that command respect, and there is virtue that gives that respect. That is the culmination of a dignified wooing that brings the young couple to that altar of God where a sacrament consecrates their lives.

Splendid.

But if it should be that the romantic attachment comes in the form of merely a major emotional disturbance...if a thousand reasons cry out that this is not really love at all but fascination and infatuation... if for all their physical and romantic urge the man and the woman would clearly not make each other durably happy or would enter marriage at costs too heavy to pay.

UNACCEPTABLE LOVE

For this romantic attraction may well come to people who should not under any circumstances let it lead them further. The quick flash of fascination may come when one of the pair is already married. Sounder judgment may shake a warning finger and cry out, "This won't work."

Literature has never been quite sure whether a person in a state of emotional enthrallment is a comic or a tragic figure. Usually he or she is a little of both. For undoubtedly romance has a way of vastly exaggerating. The fascination that seems like true love makes the other person totally desirable. Longing and misery become twin companions. The fascinating person looms so large that a shadow is cast over all else. Life itself seems for the time momentarily worthless without the fulfilment of what passes for love.

I don't need to remind even a relatively thoughtless reader that the consequences of love are pretty durable...or should be. Two young people look upon each other and feel the strong attraction. Each awakes in the other a mutual thrill; they find themselves electric in each other's company, and the evening passes like a fairy-tale second. Yet this is only a beginning. Out of this love may come marriage, long years of companionship, the founding of a home and the establishment of a family. Despite the old song the climax of life together is not the honeymoon. And if the honeymoon fades swiftly away, leaving

SADDER MAIDS, WISER MEN,

they are right to feel that they have allowed themselves to be tricked.

Real love is a permanent attraction based not only on the physical fascination but on mutual respect. It is meant to be the opening gate to a long and stable relationship. It is God's invitation to the sacrament of matrimony, which sacrament becomes in turn the beginning of a life of beautiful partnership in the creation of domestic peace and virtues and human life.

Fascination can be tricky. Love must be trustworthy enough to be used as the foundation of an entire new life.

THE MODERN AND ROMANCE

Many a modern thinks pretty casually and superficially about romance. Love, he will show you in his novel or his drama, is really all that matters. Vast quantities of pulp literature every year grind out this simple thesis: When two people are in romantic love, when they feel this fatal fascination for each other, nothing else really counts. Love comes before all. And in a strange perversion of morality love is said to make all things right.

Regrettably a good many people are acting as if this pulp romance were a sound and quite reasonable philosophy.

Too, too many plays have in recent years followed the same theme.

IRONY HERE

The more intelligent among the critics may note the irony in the situation. The actress who plays the love-conquered heroine has herself been married three times—each time for romantic love, and each time with less permanency than her last permanent wave. The hero has been twice married and twice divorced and is at present (according to the columnists) imperishably in love with a third undying affection. The author of the play is in court, trying to explain to a judge how he could have two violent love affairs at the same time that he is married to the romantic love that was so publicized in his marriage of three seasons ago.

I have shuddered often enough when on the screen I have watched the fascination of two totally unsuited characters. The heroine falls in love with a gangster, reforms him in the last hundred feet of film, and they marry. In one film a fine young detective falls in love with a woman who by all the force of clues and plot is supposed to be a murderess. When he asks his good old Irish mother (a highly synthetic character, believe me) whether she would object to his marrying a murderess, the dear good woman answers, "Not if she's a good girl." I found that the most unconsciously funny line of the year.

For a time there was an epidemic of pictures in which psychiatrists, who should have known better, married their half-loony patients. I recall one male doctor who did that and one attractive woman doctor who slipped into the currently fashionable pattern. It is possible that a psychiatrist finds himself physically attracted toward an otherwise charming patient. But having worked in the jungle of their patients' psychoses, psychiatrists would not be likely to want to take over the job of living with these near-nuts for life.

NOT ALL IN FICTION

I wish the attitude of "romance over all" were merely a matter of stage, screen, and fiction. Unfortunately that attitude is common in real life. We are, I repeat, a race of real romanticists...and that powerful attraction of a man and a woman for each other is supposed all too often to justify the most unwholesome, outrageous and foredoomed lines of conduct.

Here is a girl who finds a divorced man fascinating. She gives up her religion in order to marry him. "Ah," sighs the bridge club, "but they loved each other so much and for so long."

The Catholic boy hesitated quite a while before he finally gave up his religion to marry the girl who insisted on marriage in her fashionable Protestant church. "But," ask his friends, "what else could he do? He was madly in love with her."

This chap is a college professor; the girl "slung hash in the 'Bowl of Beans'." A microscope would find in them no common interest of language, education, or tradition. But because of a fascination like that depicted so terribly in "Of Human Bondage," they married. Anyone should be able to see the reefs ahead in such a marriage. "But," sigh the romantics who read the item in the newspapers, "what does anything matter as long as they have their love?"

NOT SO NEW

This attitude is not so modern as I may make it sound. We can read in history how fascination was mistaken for love and romance in the physical sense used as substitute for a durable foundation for marriage.

A tough old Roman general named Mark Antony, who had had almost as many love affairs as he had freckles on his

forearm, fell madly in love with Cleopatra. She was already old and tired of her succession of lovers when Antony arrived. But that love became one of history's famous infatuations.

When the crucial naval battle of Antony's career came, he knew that by nightfall he would be either master of the world or a fugitive from the short sword of Caesar's legionaires. The battle was going not too badly, when he saw the warship of his timorous Cleopatra turn in flight. Promptly he ordered his ship about and raced, not to ram the flagship of his enemy, but to escape with his retreating lady. That night Caesar owned the world....and Mark Antony slipped from the arms of his fascinating mistress into the scrap heap of history.

A sentimental Elizabethan playwright made of that story a play called, with an eye to modern taste, "All for Love." Bernard Shaw, in his "Caesar and Cleopatra," tells another side of the story....how Caesar had once found Cleopatra fascinating. But Shaw is a great disbeliever in the all-for-love school. So when in G.B.S.'s play really important things come up—Caesar's future career, his leadership in Rome....the mastery of the empire—the great Julius gives Cleo hardly a thought; he moves past her fascination to the top ranks of history. The girl in both plays was Cleopatra; the love in each case fascinating and highly romantic. But two different men were involved—Mark Antony and Julius Caesar—so there were two different evaluations of romance and two very different destinies and falling curtains.

Caesar had no silly ideas of love's being all.

ROMANCE IS EXAGGERATED

I am afraid that many of my inevitably romantically-minded readers will think me Padre Lovekiller when I say that romance is much over-emphasized today.

Strong, pure, unselfish, stable young love can be a beautiful thing. Mature love grows in dignity and strength. A man and a woman who are consecrated by the sacrament knit their souls through trial and joy, creation and achievement. The old, mellowed love of a man and a woman on their golden wedding day is an amalgam of affection and respect, of dangers known and triumphs shared, of lives that side by side grew into something vast and grand and noble.

But the physical love of a man for a woman or of a woman for a man, the fascination that can spring up between totally unsuited people, is by no means the only kind of love—if it is true love at all.

Let's realize that there are all kinds of emotions that fall under the too easily used word called love. We speak of the love of God and the love of good food, the love of family and of work, the love of friends and of books, the love of scenery and of horses, the love of a hobby and the love of good conversation, the love of prayer and the love of sea and sky, the love of exercise and the love of sport, the love of travel and good wine and ripe tobacco, the love of peace and the love of the saints.

So even the most dignified and most beautiful love of a man and a woman is by no means the whole of life. So can the quick fascination or brief infatuation felt by two youngsters be the whole of life? Often a really strong and constructive love seems much like a background for life. It is an atmosphere from which a man moves out to great achievement. It is the shelter in which a woman achieves her more complete development.

Love may often be very important—when it is an inspiration that lifts the lover to higher levels and gives him or her new motives for virtue and creative living. But there is something terribly unfair about the writers who make every life story merely a love story that presents the whole of existence as a concentration on that brief period of intense physical love and that presents the great objective of life as the search for and the finding of the right partner for romance.

MUCH ELSE TO OFFER

Life has much more, often very much more, to offer. A really perfect marriage is one that opens to both husband and wife long and inviting avenues for exploration and for their individual and joint development. On the other hand, what might seem to the participants to be a predestined perfect marriage soon shows itself hardly satisfactory at all if there are merely romance and physical attraction.

Life, if it is to be satisfactory, has to be made up of a variety of elements; it has to satisfy the whole human being, body,

soul, tastes, habits, possibilities for development, aspirations. Even those of the fairy tales that talked in terms of “bread and cheese and kisses” put the bread and cheese before the kisses.

And quite rightly. Under stress of a romantic fascination lovers may briefly lose their appetites. But very soon appetite comes back with a bang and a bite; romance is not enough to fill a hungry stomach, cool a parched throat, or pay a rent bill. As a matter of brutal fact the most romantic love and the most fervent kisses in these days of rising costs of bread and luxury prices of cheese will need to be supplemented by an assured income and a wise sense of budgeting.

LET’S LOOK AT CASES

A wholesome, satisfactory life has in it a lot of hard things—like cash.

A man or a woman need—if they are to attain lasting happiness here and now—a great many elements to satisfy natural cravings and God-given desires. Love cannot long outlast hunger. That hunger may be for God, for peace, for understanding, for success in life, for self-development, for virtue, for grace.

To offer romance and physical fascination as substitutes for all these hungers is to make men and women too, too simple.

Let’s say that the married man is swept off his feet by his charming if not too serviceable secretary. It is, he protests, the romance of a lifetime. So he pensions off his lawfully wedded and properly protesting wife, gives his children a final paternal—if slightly regretful—pat on the heads, and with his fresh love heads off for a new honeymoon.

The romantics may sigh that love made this course of action inevitable. People with any regard for the decencies have a very different outlook. They wonder how long he will be happy with his new light-of-love. They wonder how far his business associates will trust this man who has in his own affairs proved so untrustworthy. For all its casual talk about morality the world has not forgotten the importance of such things as obligations, the pledged word, responsibilities, duties to contracts. He will come up against a good many cold shoulders. It well may be that his career will be sharply curtailed.

There is the headlined story of the wife who falls in love with the husband of her best friend. He fervently returns her love. They make a brief and not too up-and-up struggle; no referee would call it an honest fight. In the end they break the news to the other wife, and everybody is “highly civilized about it.”

We have not yet reached a point where most people cannot recognize that the “highly civilized” conduct would be spurned by savages. We are pretty sure of the unhappiness that is built upon this romantic fascination, this physical attraction.

We severely doubt that this “great romance” will compensate for loss of honour, the brand of adultery, the collapse of will, the failure to meet simple obligations, the betrayal of sworn agreements.

LOVE THAT COSTS TOO MUCH

We who have faith are sometimes astonished at the temerity of a man or a woman who dares to ask that for his or her sake God be renounced.

Here we are, we mortals, moving toward our destiny, which is God, knowing that we are deeply at peace only when we possess God, certain that in the end we will be wretchedly miserable without God.

Then into the life of a Catholic comes a fascination that centres around, let’s say, a divorced person. Usually fascinations of this sort are not lightning affairs. They come with plenty of warning; often they are of slow growth. The Catholic struggles a bit, yields a bit...and then finds that he or she is deep in a romantic fascination.

Suddenly the choice becomes appallingly clear: God or this new romance. There can be no clinging to both. If the Catholic gives up the person to whom he (or she) has no right, he retains God and all that God alone can give. If he keeps the person, he gives up God and the incredible riches of God’s grace and God’s promises.

I am amazed that there should be among human beings something that so closely approaches idolatry. What right has any human being to cry out, “I shall make up to you for your loss of God”? How dare a limited, finite being pledge

himself or herself to make the Catholic forget the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit? Or if the non-Catholic could not be expected to understand, if in his conceit he regarded himself capable to fill the vacuum left by an ejected and rejected God, then surely the Catholic should know just what is happening here.

The fascination of a limited, weak mortal to make up for the limitless love of God? What can the affection of a human being give to compensate for the loss of grace from the Almighty? Are a few brief years of life with this man or that woman enough to make up for an eternity without God?

The whole business is so much worse than merely tragic; it is utterly and unbelievably stupid and inhuman.

“GIVE UP FOR ME...”.

Or there is the Catholic who falls in love with someone outside his Church. He professes his romance to be overwhelming. Yet this incredibly attractive and fascinating person is not big enough or generous enough to make a few concessions. “I will not be married in the Church,” says the non-Catholic, “and I shall not make the promises.”

Again the choice is clear—His Church with all its God-endowed powers to guarantee eternal happiness...or the arms of a selfish human being.

Yet in the fierce fascination of the moment the Catholic will give up all...Christ in the Eucharist, the mothering love of Mary, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, his heir-ship to heaven . . . and expect the world to count all well lost for the fascination of a moment....a day....a year....yes, a lifetime.

LOVE JUSTIFIED ALL?

The modern romanticist holds in theory and for practice that if you do a thing for love you do what is right. Love justifies whatever is done—the trampling on duty, the desertion of wife and children or husband and children, the walking out on one’s home, even the giving up of God. It is as if a person infatuated by romance were not really responsible for what he did.

Luckily for all of us, that theory doesn’t hold very far when we consider what humans regard as the really serious affairs of life.

Let’s imagine that the scene is the front line of battle. The supposition I am making tends to caricature the whole setting. But we shall imagine that in the shadow of night the colonel has advanced his regiment to striking position. With the first glimmer of dawn he and his men will spearhead the attack that may decide the entire engagement. His junior officers synchronize their watches with his. He gives them final instructions. He settles back to await the moment at which to attack.

But suddenly his wireless operator appears, a puzzled look on his face. He hands the colonel a message. The colonel unfolds the sheet and reads the contents.

“Darling,” runs the message, “I could not live if you were to be killed in battle. Your death is almost certain if you attack the enemy this morning. I am just five miles back of the lines safe and waiting. If you will come at once, I will marry you. If you stay, I am sure you will die. That cannot be. You could not love your country more than you love me. Come. I am waiting. Love is all that matters.”

The wireless operator looks at the colonel as if he were someone out of a cartoon. The colonel acts the part.

“Have my jeep brought around,” snaps the colonel. He lays his hand upon the shoulder of his astounded subordinate. “I am going to the woman I love. Let the next in command take over. Love justifies all.”

When the colonel is brought up before the court-martial, what he has to say about romance and physical love falls on chilly ears. When he repeats that line about love’s justifying all, they snort rudely. They happen to know that a lot of other things are more important than romance and that his duty to his regiment and his country was one of those other things.

BUT NOBODY IS IMPRESSED

Let’s take another case, ridiculous as it is bound to read.

The courtroom was crowded, for the case promised to be sensational. Tax evasion was a familiar enough sort of charge; but the newspapers had got wind of a startling defence, and they were playing it up in headlines: "Tax Dodger Dodged for Love."

Confidently the defendant walked to the stand. Over the heads of the court he smiled serenely at the woman he loved, his beautiful wife beautifully dressed in a rich, almost ankle-length ermine coat, the lapels of which she was stroking with heavily jewelled fingers. Her smile was full of confident love. The romance between them was so beautiful that its force swept over the spectators, and a sob sister had that look that suggested that she was wiping her eyes with a sheet of carbon paper.

His lawyer leaned forward. "Tell the court," he said, in a ringing voice, "just what you told me."

The man in the chair, his eyes turned innocently to the judge, told his story with convincing simplicity.

"I loved her," he said, "more than life. When I met her, she was being wooed by the city's wealthiest man. What chance had I if he gave her what she needed to frame her beauty, to cushion her loveliness? My income was scarcely half his. If I gave over a part of my income to the Government, I would be robbing her, thwarting my love. So I gave her what her beauty demanded, furs, jewels, the cars she craved. I could not woo her properly and at the same time pay my taxes. What right, then, has the Government to expect me to forgo my love for the sake of mere taxes?"

"Surely I was right. I gave her a house worthy of her beauty. I have dressed her as befits her love and mine. Surely I had the right to give her whatever guaranteed our love. I am sorry that I could not pay my taxes, too. But I followed my heart...and love conquers all."

Maybe the spectators cheered. Maybe they laughed. Anyhow, you may be sure that the judge came down on him pretty heavily. For, seemingly, love does not justify tax evasion. You had better not love some man or woman more than you love your country.

THIEF FOR LOVE

The ridiculous cases could so easily be multiplied.

They picked him up as he stepped out of his cashier cage. "You are ten thousand dollars short," they said. But he smiled.

"Of course I am," he answered, calmly. "I did it for the woman I love, and love justifies all."

To the police court, and the slack-jawed reporters he poured forth his magnificent statement of love, his justification of what he defied them to call a theft.

"She was married to a brute," he explained. "He abused her frightfully. And she was so fragile, so lovely, so good—and beautiful. And a resistless love drove us into each other's arms."

"Better than a soap opera," said a police reporter, wiping away salty tears.

"She had no money. She couldn't bring suit for divorce," continued the gallant romancer. "So I took from the bank what she needed."

The desk sergeant choked back a sob.

"You mean....you, the cashier....stole....?"

The prisoner's brave eyes flashed indignantly. "Don't use that ugly word. I took money to win her freedom and make possible our love. And love makes all things right."

Two bailiffs and two police reporters carried him about the court on their shoulders.

The judge sentenced him to twenty years; but judges are so unromantic.

(In parenthesis: John Galsworthy once wrote a play not too unlike this bit of fiction, and he, too, seemed surprised when his leading character got a stiff sentence from the judge.)

LOVE DOESN'T STAND IN THE WAY

History has yet to pass its final verdict on the pitiful ex-king of England who gave up his throne for the sake of "the

woman I love.” But it is interesting to note that his most friendly apologists always hasten to explain that love was not the real reason for Edward’s abdication. He was, they insist, the victim of the men who owned the mines and mills. The king had been too sympathetic to those workers. He was not just a reckless romanticist chucking his responsibilities for a divorcee; he was a democrat tired of playing king, a victim of gang politics. Any of a dozen explanations are offered to make us forget that here was a king who walked out on his country, a man who renounced his oath of service because he was fascinated by a woman.

Tellingly enough his own country knew how the people felt about him and did what they thought was fitting. When Britain’s fate hung on the wings of a few planes and her enemies were cutting those planes to pieces, when the royal couple who had taken over walked the bombed streets of London in peril of their lives, England handed its former king a post in the pleasure resort of Nassau. Not even in time of peril did his country want the man who had put love before his sworn duty. Ironically, he was handed a tropical playground where he could continue, if he wished, his honeymoon.

JUST NOT DONE

A community would not forgive a doctor who, during a ‘flu epidemic, fled with his young wife to safety and left the people of the town to their peril. It would expect him to put his duty to his patients before his love of his wife. It would regard as shameful any effort on his part to escape to safety, however great might be his love for his wife.

If a scientist was far along in some essential and dangerous experiment, he would be expected to complete his work. The fact that he fell in love, that his wife was afraid that he might be the victim of an explosion or that some dangerous germ he was isolating would attack him would be considered poor excuse for his failure to do for the world the job he had been set to do.

THOUSANDS LIKE HIM

There have been a thousand Mark Antonys in history, men who ran away from battle in order to be with the women they loved, men who betrayed their country because of some infatuation. History finds them subjects for endless hissing. History either blots them forever from its pages or presents them unmistakably for what they are—traitors.

IS IT ENOUGH?

The romantics who put love over all justify themselves with three simple words: Love is enough. If you are in love, that is all you need. When a man loves a woman and she loves him, they have in that love all that is necessary for happiness and the fulness of life. On romance and physical fascination the present can be built and the future firmly established. With romantic love a couple have everything. Without romantic love nothing is worth while.

So people who are infatuated become so absorbed in each other that they consider the world well lost. In fact, for the time the world may seem actually lost in a haze, a mist, a sort of golden mirage. They are convinced that if they could settle in a cottage on some desert isle they would know the completeness of life.

They walk to their happiness over broken vows and the smashed altars of God, they believe that they will find at journey’s end what they threw away—and more.

It is as if they believed that the physical happiness of a man and a woman together could include all other happiness of heaven and earth.

Even the slightest experience with the world proves how totally false this is. Romantic love can be the most fleeting of passions. The divorce courts grind daily the grist of romance—the couples who married in a mad rush of passion were totally blinded by the hypnotism of romance, and in a matter of months—even weeks—knew what all the wise men of the world could not prove to them earlier.

To guarantee the love of a man and a woman, God decreed the great outpouring of sacramental grace. He called down upon them multiplied blessings. He instituted a sacrament to consecrate their union.

Back of romantic love must be all that we have so often indicated: respect of each for the other, good qualities that

appear when the blinding glitter of romance fades, virtues that make a person livable with, interest in a common enterprise that both love and into which both throw their fullest resources, prayer together, dignified recreation together, a richness that each uses to enrich the other, strength that each gives to the other, patience and forbearance that make it possible for each to endure the limitations that are found even in the best human being that ever lived.

ONE ONLY ONE

The preoccupation with romantic love, the conviction that “If I miss this love, I shall never know another,” rests on a strange fallacy. Somewhere in relatively recent times there grew a notion that two specific people were made for each other, these two and these two only. Marriages are not confirmed in heaven through the sacrament of Christ’s institution; marriages are arranged in heaven. It is as if definitely assigned angels equipped with filing cards place in a certain bracket the cards of John and Jane . . .and if, for some reason, John and Jane do not hit it off on earth, the angels have to tear up the cards and call off any possibility of Jane’s and John’s ever marrying anyone else.

You’d think that every woman was to a specific man as a single key is to a Yale lock—just one make of key that fits the lock. . . .no other key that could open it. You’d think that a man was to a woman as a final piece is to a jigsaw puzzle—only one piece that can complete the puzzle. . . . only one man that can complete the one woman’s life.

So you find that when modern young people grow romantic, when they feel this fascination for each other, they adopt an attitude of final fatality. This, they are sure, is the one and only love of a lifetime. If this passes them by, never will another come.

He looks at her and says, “If I marry you, I shall find happiness. If I don’t marry you, I shall never know another love.”

She gazes upon him and says, “From all eternity you were destined to be my mate. Without you I am incomplete. With you and only with you can my life reach fulfilment.”

PRETTY MUCH NONSENSE

You’d think that widows and widowers never married again.

You’d think that people who have fallen in love once never fall out of that love and into another love with someone else.

I have often told the story of a young woman who wrote me of her romantic fascination—for a divorced man. She had to marry him, or her life would be wrecked, ruined. I wrote her and reasonably presented the arguments against this folly. I got no answer. Two years later I got her wedding announcement: She, a Catholic, had been married in a Protestant church.

When I visited her town, she surprisingly came to see me.

“I suppose you are disgusted with me,” she said.

“That’s hardly the word,” I replied. “Anyhow, when I got your first letter and you told me how mad you were about this man, I felt that my arguments would do little good.”

She had the grace to blush. “Oh,” she said, “I’m married . . .but not to the man I wrote you about.”

So she had fallen hopelessly in love successively with two men—both divorced. She married the second one.

I have known a hundred and more cases of the one-and-only love that turned out to be merely the first of a series of one-and-only loves. Perhaps the fourth or the fifth was the one genuine, reverential, devoted, self-sacrificing, durable love on which the marriage could be safely established.

Recently a thoroughly pagan modern author was quoted as having said that conceivably any young man could fall in love with any of a hundred thousand young women and that more than likely any normal girl could, given the opportunity, fall in love with any of a hundred thousand acceptable or convenient young males.

Only the most romantic nonsense makes people think that one man from all eternity is predestined for one woman—and vice-versa—and that marriages are so arranged that if through some fatality these two never meet or never marry, there is no one else on earth for either of them to marry.

Even a short experience should indicate how ridiculous this is. Fascination and romance are so common that only when there are in addition the sober, serious, deep, lasting qualities that make a love strong enough for marriage should fascination and romance be taken seriously.

LOVE SO OFTEN SECOND

Time and again, however, even the most beautiful and permanent love must be put in second place.

The country calls its citizens to arms. Those in control of the Government do not ask how deeply in love are the young men and women. No consideration is given to the loneliness of a soldier's wife or the reluctance with which a husband is parted from the woman he loves. The country slaps the men into uniform even if love has to wait. It takes the men away from their homes, however painful the separations. And if the beloved must die on the battlefield or upon the deck of a destroyer, that is because there are interests more important and more pressing than romantic love or even the deepest and most genuine love.

STILL MORE THAN LOVE

Certainly love is an important element in life. True and constructive love, the kind that binds a man and a woman in beautiful unity and makes them build together their own personal lives and the lives of the children God sends them, is vital to the world's happiness.

But always love is only one of the elements of life. Romance is only a part of love. And the physical aspects of romance are merely a part of the united life of a man and a woman.

Love is prelude to a very serious business.

Through true love God invites a man and a woman to become partners with Him in the creation of human life, in the education and full development of His sons and daughters. However glorious the assignment, here is a tremendous responsibility, a genuine profession.

Almost before all else it is vital that a young couple know how each feels about this essential work of their future life. Nothing else will bind them more closely than the common enterprise of the establishing of a home. Nothing else will give them a greater sense of unified achievement than the realization that with God they are bringing into the world His children, who are destined for an eternity of happiness.

THE START IS A SACRAMENT

Perhaps the love between a man and a woman can be made most clearly understandable if we say of it that it is meant to be— prelude to a sacrament.

Not the chance meeting and mating of animals. Not the casual entrance into an affair that might characterize pagans. But the joining of hands and hearts, of souls and bodies in an outward sign which expresses the inward grace that God is pouring into them for their elevation and their help.

St. Paul could find no other comparison worthy of the greatness of this union of a man and a woman in sacramental marriage than that of the union of Christ and His Church.... the husband loving the wife as Christ also loved the Church....and the wife ministering to the husband as the Church serves its divine lover.

In our age, as in all other ages,, love between a Catholic man and a Catholic woman leads inevitably to the altar. There they tell God that they love each other with a love so deep and true, so permanent and constructive that with His help they feel capable of carrying out His high command to increase and multiply.

Their love has led to a union, a union with each other and a union with God in the enormously vital work that means home-making and the entrance of God's little ones into life.

Any love that fails to meet the standard of this divine measure is far below what should be at the foundation of Catholic marriage.

PARTNERSHIP

So if you are looking for successful love, you have to peer through the glamour of romance and the glitter of fascination to see the essential qualities that mark the development of love.

Successful love is a successful partnership.

It is a partnership with God.

But it is also a partnership between the man and the woman. Each contributes to the success of the other's life. Each brings to bear qualities that complement and develop the other. Each plays a part in the intensely constructive work that must follow and mark the whole course of marriage.

In love there are so many elements. After the highly romantic and physical attraction there must come a peaceful and pleasant companionship. A good friend and companion in marriage is likely to be more durable than a violent lover. Often there is more joy in partnership than in passion. Too much romantic love is likely to wear far less well than pleasant dispositions and the common enjoyment of interest, work, and friends.

So when a romanticist cries out, "Love's all that matters," our first question should be, "Just what do you mean by love?"

If he means only physical attraction, that is sheerest nonsense.

If he means the swift fascination, the infatuation that can come between the least suitable persons, he is talking unintelligently.

If he means true love, a love that holds beyond physical attraction, a love based on mutual respect, a feeling of friendliness and comradeship, a desire to work together, to achieve together, to share common interests and friends—this, at least, is a love that offers more chance of happiness.

If he goes a step further and talks of a love that unites the father and the mother with God in the creation of home and family, he has reached something wonderfully important and significant.

But even such a love must be set aside for higher interests and deeper duties; when love of country calls, when a man must dedicate himself to the service of his fellow-men, when God and God's law forbid that love.

For no love is important enough to make up for the loss of God.

No romance could possibly compensate for the death of the soul and the forfeiture of all eternity.

Love is richest and most human and humane when it brings with it honour, an increased sense of duty, an inspiring love of work, a multitude of friendships shared and interests held in common, a united and uniting faith, a life that binds God to the very centre of their united and consecrated life.

Love is only part of what matters for happiness in life.

But, according to the heart of God love can bring us very close to the Creator and Saviour, Who is the lover of mankind.

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