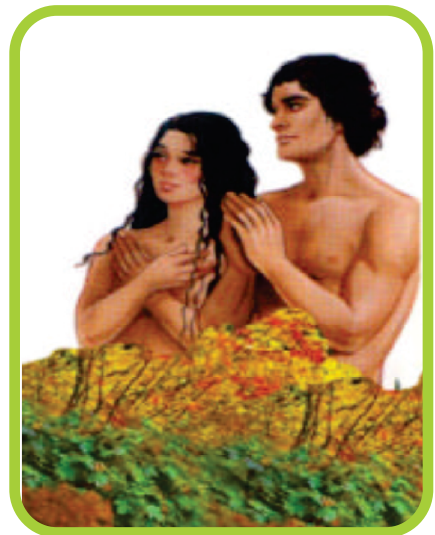


## THE SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY



Once, the Pharisees came to Jesus and to test him asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any cause"? He answered: "Have you not read that the one who made them at the beginning 'made them male and female' and said, 'For this reason, a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate" (Mt.19:3-6).

God, who is all love, created man in His image and likeness. He was given the gift to love and to be loved. Despite being in the midst of all the bliss in paradise, God decided that it is not good for man to be alone. So He gave him a partner to love and to be loved. Adam united himself to Eve and both of them became one body (Gen. 2:24). God made them one because He wanted to make them partake in the work of creation. "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it" (Gen. 1:28).



## Matrimony- a Sacrament

Jesus raised the divine covenant of matrimony into a sacrament. Matrimony is a sacrament that gives us the necessary grace to love limitlessly, to cooperate with God in procreation, and to rear children.

The most important ritual in the sacrament of Matrimony is the blessing by the priest who is the official representative of the Church after receiving the marriage covenant the bride and bridegroom render before the witnesses. With the holy Gospel as witness, the bride and groom take an oath. Besides, holding the hands together, tying the 'thali', exchanging the rings, adorning the bride with the 'manthrakodi', garlanding each other etc. are rituals lending meaningfulness to the celebration of marriage. These rituals are symbols of mutual giving and dedication. The woman and man, having been born in the grace of baptism and attained an inseparable relation with Jesus, will grow in divine grace when they receive the sacrament of Matrimony. During the sacrament of Matrimony, Jesus blesses them, and unites them inseparably and gives them the grace to execute their duties.

### The Indissolubility and Fidelity in Marriage

Matrimony is a sacrament that continues until the end of life. The spouses promise, during the celebration of the sacrament, their readiness to be united in any circumstance, happiness or sorrow, wealth or poverty,

### ACTIVITY - 1

Write down in order the rites of the sacrament of marriage. Mention also the passages that are read during the sacrament.



health or sickness and live with oneness of mind, mutual love and fidelity, right from the day of marriage until death.

The love of the spouses requires, by its very nature, the unity and indissolubility of their entire life. (Catechism of the Catholic Church 1644). No man can separate what God has joined (Mt.19:6). The Church teaches that, true to the matrimonial promise taken, they must grow constantly in their communion through day-to-day fidelity of total mutual self-giving.

The mutual fidelity of the spouses is a fundamental factor of their matrimonial relationship. Fidelity is the result of their mutual self-giving. The intimacy of two individuals in married life on account of their mutual giving to each other, inspires them to root themselves in ultimate fidelity and inseparable unity and ensure the welfare of their children. The basis of alliance in marriage is the fidelity of God to His covenant and the fidelity of Christ to his Church. (Catechism of the Catholic Church 1646-47).

During the time of marriage, the grace to live in fidelity without being separated until death is given. Since their life starts with Christ, this grace strengthens them to carry on their life flawlessly. In proportion to the growth of love, unity, and fidelity, they will enrich themselves in grace. They, being united in the love of Christ, dedicate themselves to God. Their mutual love and dedication paves the way to the love of God.



## To Love and to Give Life

This sacrament has two aims: conjugal love and procreation. The spouses are obliged to love each other in all innocence and without measure. The love Jesus has for the Church and the submissiveness of the Church to Jesus should serve as models for them. St. Paul says: “Husbands, love your wives just as Christ loved the Church and gave himself up for her”(Eph.5:25). “Just as the Church is subject to Christ, so also wives ought to be, in everything to their husbands”(Eph.5:24).

God had devised a plan to strengthen the mutual love and dedication of the spouses right at the beginning itself when He created man. Thus, He created man as male and female so as to make them complementary to each other (Gen.1:27). In order that they get attracted towards each other, God granted them the great gift of sex. This gift is to be exercised in marriage relationship alone; it is sinful and not permissible outside marriage.

The husband and the wife, being united in marriage, cooperate with God in the holy act of procreation. Children are the supreme gift of God for the heavenly love shared between them. The sacrament of matrimony exhorts the spouses to grow in mutual love, fidelity, and purity and to bring up their children in a way pleasing to God. We are taught in the Second Vatican Council: “Marriage and conjugal love, are characteristically intended





to beget children and bring them up... Children are the supreme reward of married life. Let the spouses consider that their special duty is to beget children and bring them up.(The Church in the Modern World,50). The spouses receive the necessary grace for this through the sacrament of matrimony.

**LET US  
READ AND  
MEDITATE THE  
WORD OF GOD**

(Eph. 5 : 22 - 33)

**A Verse to Remember**

“ Each of you, however, should love his wife as himself, and a wife should respect her husband”.

(Eph. 5:33)

**Let us Pray**

O Jesus, who loved the Church and sacrificed yourself to render her as your spotless wife,  
enrich our families  
with the grace of divine love.

**My Resolution**

I will pray daily so that  
I may find out my  
vocation in life and  
receive it with the  
necessary wisdom  
and grace.

## **Teachings of the Fathers of the Church**

The husband and wife become one with an exclusive privilege of self-giving.

This is to beget children and bring them up with the cooperation of God.

Thus they, hand in hand, soar up into perfection.

## **QUESTIONS**

1. Why do we say that marriage is a covenant of love?
2. What are the duties entrusted to the spouses through the sacrament of matrimony?
3. What are the aims of the sacrament of matrimony?
4. Matrimony is a sacrament. Explain.
5. Procreation is one of the primary aims of matrimony. Elucidate.