

In Praise of Marriage Fidelity

Part II

The first characteristic of faith lies in its nature as RESPONSE. Married faith, as well as Christian faith, is never an isolated,



autonomous act by which one takes hold of his own existence, and affirms he lives for himself or by himself alone. Rather, both Christian faith and married faith are a Declaration of Dependence, a committed search to find the fuller meaning of life in another. Faith is a pursuit of fulfillment in and through another, and this process guarantees that

we will never allow life to become self-centered. Because faith always points to another, it is basically a form of dialogue. Faith is to speak "Yes!" to someone who addresses me, who calls me to an experience beyond myself, who summons me to a fuller dimension of life beyond my own personal horizons. Faith is an awareness that one is being called to respond with the totality of his existence.

A second mark of faith is that it involves a basic risk. True faith, because based on genuine reliance, becomes self-destructive whenever it seeks absolute security or perfect proof. Faith cannot exist where strict guarantees are asked or given. The mind needs logic to function; the heart, in which faith is born, bred and blossoms, has reasons the mind knows not. Faith is never born from an argument, it must be an

adventure, or it is nothing at all. That is why, both in one's commitment to God as well as to one's spouse, total certainty or absolute assurance given by the other is missing. One must either make the leap beyond himself, or one will never experience the self-liberation that are faith and love. To believe is to reach beyond oneself, to transcend self. Little wonder, both faith and love are so solidly grounded on trust — the same trust that is always risk!

A third characteristic of faith is that it must spring from FREEDOM. Because it is free, it comes from that quality in man that is most uniquely human. Because it is free, it can be challenged, questioned, even forfeited. But when faith continues to be freely expressed, we have a living testimonial to human generosity of a high form and a high degree. Faith is an invitation to man's free will, to let go of the present for the promise of the future as yet vaguely perceived. Faith is a summons to give up the securities of self for the greater benefits of a life lived with and for another. It is precisely in this area that one can understand most clearly the best definition ever offered of marriage: love placed at the service of new life.

Love is the motive, service is the manner, new life (both of the spouses now living together, as well as of the children which may reaffirm the life and love of the parents) is the overall purpose.

Without the quality of true freedom, faith is mere enslavement.

Finally, faith is a form of hope that looks to further fulfillment. Faith is truly

faith only when it looks beyond the mortal limits of time and space. True faith points man beyond the horizons of this world. In other words, authentic faith refuses to be limited by man's mortal nature. Without hope, faith withers away. In brief, faith cannot be faith if it is not able to lead man beyond the experience of death.

In a word, faith is RESPONSE. Faith is RISK. Faith is SERVICE FREELY GIVEN. Faith is a HOPE UNCONFINED BY LIFE on earth.

For all of these reasons, faith is an invitation accepted, a reliance upon another, a service of freedom, a hope that aspires towards eternity.

If our analysis is correct, then both forms of faith, that in God and in one's spouse, is the condition for a new creation. It is a new and deeper dimension of life. Both forms of faith, that in God through Baptism, and that in one's spouse through Marriage, are guarded and guided — graced through special sacraments.

By baptismal belief one enters the Christian community of faith. By marriage fidelity one enters the domestic or household community of faith. In both cases the power and the presence of Christ are experienced. Through baptism, the Christian person becomes part of the Mystical Body of Christ. Through marriage, the Christian person embodies and ministers the grace of Christ to his marriage partner.

Little wonder, Christian marriage is a mystery of deepest faith.

The Slot Man

By Carmen Viglucci

You Might Call Him a One-Third Wit

Watched the Democratic hulabaloo the past few weeks and think they have a dandy idea in dividing state delegations in proportion to the split in the popular primary vote.



What I was wondering is why couldn't such an idea be applied to other areas, such as three-judge federal courts which decide on laws regarding aid to private schools.

For instance in the most recent such case concerning our state, the three-judge court voted no-no by 2 to 1. Thus using the logic of the Democratic party shouldn't one third of the private schools

receive aid and only two thirds be deprived?

I carried this weighty question to a veteran lawmaker who declared:

"Basically I see the point although I don't want to go on record on it at this time. I'll know how I feel about it when it comes to the floor . . . and after the governor says what he thinks about it."

Then he let me in on his own plan, off the record.

"Instead of giving aid to one third of the schools," he said, "and leaving out the rest why not give one third of the aid passed by the Legislature to all the private schools?"

The last bill passed by the Legislature

would have provided \$35 million in aid, thus about \$12 million would be available.

"Say," I said. "That's not too bad. Are you going to propose such a plan?"

"I was," he confided, "until I talked to a colleague who had a different plan. He says we should give all the aid to all the private schools with the stipulation that only one third of them teach religion. Or that they all teach religion only one-third of the time.

"What did you say?"

"Well, I told him. I go along with him some, about one third of the way."

They had agreed to announce their plans in the last third of the year, just after Election Day.

Editorial

Buck Stops at Supreme Court

It has been evident for quite a time that such questions as abortion and government aid to private schools would eventually be settled by the Supreme Court of the United States. With the two recent decisions concerning New York State laws these issues are now closer than ever to the highest court.

Though the State Court of Appeals decided against the anti-abortion petition by a margin of 5-2, the case would have gone on to the Supreme Court anyway even if they had decided otherwise.

Let's hope the buck stops there, for up to now the abortion issue has been kicked from hither to yon and back. Many legislators refuse to follow their consciences on this moral problem, saying that it is not a matter for lawmakers. Then along comes the state's highest tri-

bunal in its majority opinion stating that "legal personality" (the unborn baby) is up to the definition of state legislatures.

Women's rightists say men are not capable of deciding. Yet when one man, Gov. Rockefeller, vetoes a repeal of liberalized abortion, these same women applaud his decision.

The fact that abortion is now a national question became crystallized at the Democratic national convention when a minority report attempted to have liberalized abortion included in the party's platform.

In the meantime the scourge continues with the rights of the unborn virtually neglected and the plight of women with unwanted pregnancies glossed over with the facile solution of abortion.

Government aid to private schools also is headed once again to the Supreme Court. The most recent federal court split decision (2-1) holding up funds approved by the State Legislature for these schools constitutes a true hardship for schools which, complying with state regulations, are not even reimbursed for these imposed expenses.

To compound this problem, diocesan school officials have been hearing that they will not receive any federal aid for schools damaged by the Southern Tier flood.

If the argument of separation of Church and state ever held any validity as regards school aid it has been negated by this obvious stretching of the point to penalize a section of American society when it has already been dealt a body blow by a natural calamity.