

Marriage Encounter - Cana Revisited

The prophets of doom whose number is legion would lead us to believe that permanent and happy marriages are but memorabilia — a quaint custom of days long gone. And their message is accompanied by staggering evidence that surrounds it with the aura of credibility — 768,000 divorces and annulments in our country last year, plus the increasingly acceptable pattern of evasions of permanent commitment to marital unity which are beyond calculation. (cf. PASTORAL PERSPECTIVE of January 17, 1973).

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But, thank God, opposing voices are coming through loud and clear with a message of hope and faith in the sanctity of their marriage vows and in their collective "Couple Power" to renew themselves and the face of the earth. Among these prophets of hope are members of a rapidly growing dedicated movement that now numbers some 20,000 couples in the United States. Their apostolate is called Marriage Encounter.

The program originated in Spain more than 10 years ago as part of the Christian Family Movement. It has been subsequently tested and refined by countless couples in Spain, England, Australia, Can-

ada and Mexico. It was introduced in 1967 to the United States and has spread rapidly largely because of the contagious enthusiasm of couples who have experienced its grace of renewal. Its philosophy is simply stated by the Rev. Gabriel Calvo, its founder:

"The Marriage Encounter is designed to give married couples a chance to examine their lives together — their weaknesses and strong points, their attitudes toward each other and toward their families, their hurts, desires, joys, ambitions, disappointments, and frustrations — and to do so openly and honestly in a Christlike, face-to-face, heart-to-heart encounter with the one person on this earth who means more than any other and upon whom happiness here and hereafter depends."

The program is now growing in the Rochester area. I was invited to take part in a weekend Encounter Retreat recently held at Notre Dame Retreat House in Canandaigua by Father Robert Collins, who serves as a priest moderator of the movement in this diocese. My 'yes' to the invitation must have been quickly flashed across the country. For, a week later I met Archbishop Timothy Manning of Los Angeles at the Bishops' Conference in Washington. "Glad to hear you are making the Encounter," he said. His enthusiasm convinced me that I had made a wise choice and would be forever grateful that I had accepted the invitation.

The subsequent experience has confirmed that decision. The strength of the Church here as everywhere will always depend on the vitality of our Christian families. As bishop charged with leadership in developing here a strong faith community, I heartily endorse Marriage Encounter and all similar programs which serve to strengthen the love and unity of family life — the basic structure in human society.

The late Cardinal Gibbons once remarked about the dignity of Christian marriage and the apostolate of the Christian family as the Church in miniature as he applied to parents in a special way the words of Peter's first Epistle:

"You are priest and priestess of the sanctuary of your homes, called to offer up daily on the altar of your hearts a sacrifice of prayer, praise and thanksgiving to God."

Such a dignified vocation with its awesome responsibilities needs constant strengthening and renewal. The Lord's assurance of His abiding presence in the Sacrament of Marriage does not negate the continual human effort needed to make marriage worthy of His blessing. Even at Cana He asked for the human offering of filled water jars before His power transformed man's gift into the wine of joy. Marriage Encounter can serve to make your married lives such an acceptable offering.

By Carmen Viglucci

The Slot Man

There's a long, long trail awinding . . .

Robert McNamara, Martin Luther King, Gen. Creighton Abrams, Hubert Humphrey, Melvin Laird, John F. Kennedy, Sgt. Barry Sadler, My Lai, Bob Hope, Averell Harriman, Lt. William Calley, the Angel of Dienbienphu, Madame Nhu, Tet offensive, Daniel Ellsberg, Sen. William Fulbright.



Lyndon B. Johnson, Martha Raye, Capt. Robert Marasco, Big Minh, Haiphong, Father Daniel Berrigan, Gen. Lewis B. Hershey, Ellsworth Bunker, Sen. Wayne Morse, Nguyen Cao Ky, U Thant, Gen. Maxwell D. Taylor, Bao Dai, Eugene McCarthy, moratorium, Dow Chemical,

An Indochina Litany

tiger cages, Robin Moore, Curtis LeMay, Bernafd Fall, I. F. Stone, Vietnamization, SDS, Clergy and Laity Concerned about Vietnam, J. Edgar Hoover, Cambodian incursion, Cardinal Spellman, Gen. Giap, Joan Baez, Dean Rusk.

Pope Paul VI, Gen. David M. Shoup, George McGovern, Dwight David Eisenhower, Dick Gregory, Gulf of Tonkin, Wayne Morse, Henry Cabot Lodge, Pleiku, Arthur Goldberg, Jane Fonda, Father Phil Berrigan, Melvin Laird, Gen. Thieu, Frances Fitzgerald, Clark Clifford, Ho Chi Minh.

Henry Kissinger, Capt. Medina, Ngo Dinh Diem, Bobby Kennedy, Peter Arnett, Raymond Burr, Johnny Bench, Edmund Muskie, Da Nang, Prince Sihanouk, escalation, Sister Elizabeth McAllister, George Jessel, Abbie Hoffman, Dr. Benjamin

Spock, Le Doc Tho, William Rogers, Mike Mansfield, POW- MIA, Kent State, Ramsey Clark, Georges Bidault, CIA, Bill Moyers, Gen. William Westmoreland.

Richard M. Nixon, Gen. Earle G. Wheeler, Joey Heatherton, Col. Robert Rheault, Hue, Walt Whitman Rostow, Judge Julius Hoffman, Charles Goodell, Edward Brooke, Song My, East Coast Conspiracy to Save Lives, Alexander Haig, fragging, SAMs, Paul O'Dwyer, Weathermen, Gen. Paul Harkins, Edward Kennedy, Ton Duc Thang, Angkor Wat, Jerry Rubin, Tran Van Dinh, Spiro Agnew, Yippies, Richard Daley, Jean-Paul Sartre, self-immolation, Corita Kent, David Halberstram, Mekong Delta, William Sloane Coffin, Muhammad Ali, DMZ, Cora Weiss, Dave Dellinger.

Peace.

Editorial

Peace and a New Job Ahead

There was good news and bad news in the astounding week that was last week.

The good news, of course, is the peace declared in Indochina. And the bad news the Supreme Court's decision on liberalized abortion.

Peace needs no interpretation. We will feel it in no longer worrying about boys going to possible death, in seeing our POWs come home, and in finally learning the fate of those missing in action.

We will feel it in knowing that no longer is the greatest nation in the world killing people of a weaker country.

We will fully realize it if the money spent in waging this war is turned into production that will benefit our schools, that will erase our poverty, that will clean our rivers and lakes, that will help the underprivileged wherever they are in our world. If we can afford to bomb, we can afford to build, renewing the image of the United States as a humane and

spiritual nation.

As for those who for so long waged peace, who for so long talked against killing, perhaps there is another role in the same realm — the struggle for our unborn.

The Supreme Court's decision, described as "shocking" by Cardinal Cooke but perhaps more aptly to be called shattering, has floored those who thought progress was being made in shoring up the dikes against a wave of disrespect of life. Many had seen a glimmer of hope in last year's State Legislature vote for life, and in North Dakota and Michigan where the people said no to death.

When the most respected court in the land turns its back on such effort, there is a tendency to give up, to feel that perhaps you really are some kind of religious fanatic, that it would be acceptable to draw back into the safety of your own convictions, and let everything else be damned.

This tendency must be resisted. There are directions to take in the face of the Supreme Court failure to protect life.

The U.S. Constitution could be amended so that the rights of the unborn will be guaranteed.

We must, in the meantime, reduce the reasons women consider abortions. Help, personal and governmental, moral and financial, should be made available to those to whom society has presented death as a reasonable alternative.

We must once and for all time remove the stigma of illegitimacy of those born out of wedlock.

None of these is an easy task and help obviously is needed. All those who for so long tenaciously fought for peace in Indochina must now turn their attention to the new battle for life here at home.

No matter what the backdrop, the moral is the same — every human life is sacred and none can be sacrificed to the wiles of present-day society.