

Bride & Groom 1974



Creative Challenge of Matrimony

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Someone told me recently that the second hardest thing in all the world is to engage in the trying process of living intimately with one other person. The hardest thing in all the world is living alone. Any human relationship is a challenge to create a friendship, a bond of love, an opening to each other of the secrets of the real me. A certain pain accompanies this creation of friendship, the pain of breaking down all the walls and masks and shields which I have built up over the years to protect me from being hurt.

Matrimony is a sacrament which binds two people together in a love relationship for life, enabling them to break down the walls, get behind the masks and lower the shields which prevent the intimacy and closeness which is God's plan for man and wife. I sometimes wonder as I see a newly married couple leaving church amidst a shower of good

wishes and confetti whether they really believe that Matrimony is a sacrament and whether they will make the effort to reach that intimacy and closeness. Do they know that to love is to be vulnerable? Do they realize that if you love anyone or anything, your heart may be broken?

How many will be willing to take that risk? And how many will settle into a comfortable routine of mediocre marriage where love dies slowly through the process of slow erosion, of neglect, of not investing time or imagination in each other? Enthusiasm will leave first, then concern, then caring and two people roam around, lost in the hulk of an empty marriage.

Is there a remedy or recipe for a "Marriage Made in Heaven"? I offer these ingredients:

1. Generosity, which requires that the satisfaction, security and development of another person becomes as significant to you as

your own satisfaction, security and development.

2. Understanding, which requires that I love you, not only for what you are but for what I am when I am with you, for putting your hand into my heaped-up heart and passing over all the foolish weak things you can't help seeing there, and for drawing out into the light all the beautiful qualities no one else had looked quite far enough to see.

3. Sacrifice, which requires, quite simply, that my priority in our marriage be in all things we and us rather than I and me.

4. Honesty, which requires that I tell you who I am always, in an atmosphere of love and trust, and that I have a yearning to know who you are and do not prevent you from telling me.

5. Prayer, which requires that we go to God as a couple and realize that by being open to one another we are being open to God.

I am hopeful and optimistic about the future of Matrimony because I see more and more people using these ingredients to make their marriage an adventure in love. And I see more and more couples who believe and accept the creative challenge of St. Paul's words to the Corinthians:

"Love is never boastful, nor conceited, nor rude; never selfish, nor quick to take offense. Love keeps no score of wrongs; does not gloat over other men's sins, but delights in the truth. There is nothing love cannot face; there is no limit to its faith, its hope and its endurance. Love will never come to an end. In a word, there are three things that last forever:



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faith, hope and love, but the greatest of them all is love."

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