

On Your Wedding Day: Thoughts from a Friend

By M.R. McHoughlin

Today, on this very special occasion, you are undertaking a difficult journey. I call it a difficult journey because the pitfalls are many and the temptations great. I say these things to you because you are young, yet old enough to realize that the time ahead will not always be pleasant. There will be times that will tax your faith; yes, even times that you will question your love.

This is a sacred moment for you both, one brought about by strong mutual feelings of love and respect. There is no question of that love, otherwise, this marriage would not be taking place.

God wants you both to realize the perils of young marriages today so that you may strengthen and fortify yourselves against them. Let us look at some of these dangers and meet them head on.

Money, or perhaps the lack of it, has caused young marriages to fail. Unless you are endowed with a lot of it, then there will be times that important sacrifices must be made.

It is sad but true that some young couples do not possess a realistic attitude on their impending marriage, perhaps having lofty ideas as to what makes it a success. This eventually leads to unpleasant disagreements. It is important that the marriage bonds be made stronger and one of the many ways to accomplish this is to say a simple "I love you" to each other. It is true that you can't live on love alone

but be assured that no marriage will survive without it. When you find your faith and love in doubt, your mind troubled — the cure is quite simple: grasp each other's hand and say, "Father, thank you for saving this special person for me." Let there be no misconceptions concerning the part God plays in the success of any marriage. Was it not He who instituted this sacred rite?

This is a solemn occasion but there will be times when you shall share laughter and happiness with each other — happiness like that experienced when the sun, coming over the horizon, signals the beginning of a new day; or the happiness one feels while strolling through the forest, seeing how pure everything seems to be after a gentle rain.

This will be a new life-style for each of you and it will call for patience and understanding of each other's habits and idiosyncrasies. Sometimes the success of a marriage is based on how well each of the partners adjusts to them and makes allowances. There will be times that will call for a great deal of self-control and patience on days that seem to start wrong and there will be displays of emotion to which your partner in marriage has never been exposed. A simple "I love you" may not be a panacea but it is nice to hear when things are not what they should be.

There was a man, upon his enlistment into the Army, who was asked what he would

like to do. Without hesitation he answered: "Be a paratrooper." The strange thing about it was that height terrified him. Every phase of training which involved height was an ordeal. When the time arrived to actually jump from the airplane he prayed: "Father give me the courage that I may not falter." He jumped and continued to do so for some time.

This is perhaps, a strange situation from which to draw an analogy but has not marriage often been compared to a "big step" or a "big jump?" You will come to realize that the Sacrament of Marriage is far more complicated than a parachute jump and will require more courage, in the long run.

And so this is where "Father, give me the courage that I may not falter" comes in. You will be tried and you will be tested but you shall succeed.

I never cease to be amazed at the number of people who fail to realize that God is there anytime He is needed. All one has to do is ask. Granted, it may appear that He is a little slow in His response but one thing is certain, He never fails to answer.

It is very important to remember — never let material things become so outstanding as to cause you to lose sight of the most important elements in your relationship — faith, love, and understanding.

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