

Men and Women are from Eden

Dr. Mary Healy

Chapter Six: Marriage: The Primordial Sacrament

1. Marriage in the Bible
 - a. Bridal imagery is the most pervasive imagery in the Bible
 - b. Marriage as the “primordial sacrament”
2. Israel, Bride of God
 - a. The Prophets (Jeremiah, Isaiah, Hosea, etc).
 - i. Husband/Spouse
 - ii. Covenantal love in oath of fidelity
 - iii. Marriage is meant to bear witness to the character of God
3. The Great Love Song
 - a. *Song of Songs* as wellspring of mystical and spiritual theology
 - b. Fathers: Allegorical interpretations
 - c. Modern exegetes: Jewish love poetry between husband and wife
 - d. John Paul II: Celebration of mutual attraction of husband and wife; spiritual aspects: body is source of mutual fascination of lover and beloved
4. The Church, The Bride of Christ
 - a. The cross is the consummation of God’s love for humanity
 - b. Essence of a husband’s role is to lay down his life for his bride
 - c. The Eucharist is the consummation and renewal of Christ’s spousal gift of himself on the cross
 - d. Each person is called to receive God’s spousal love, and to love God back with a total love.
 - e. Mary is the model of the bridal response to God
 - f. Holiness ultimately must be *received* from God: to draw from the fount of the living waters

Chapter Seven: Living the Mystery

1. Marriage in Christ
 - a. Overcomes the disorders sin causes in us
 - b. Joins the *eros* of our natural attractions to the *ethos* of the sacrificial love of Christ on the cross
 - c. Transformed by grace and “incarnates” in the world the one flesh union of Christ and the Church
2. A Reflection of Divine Love
 - a. Ephesians 5: A model of marital relations that overturns the model of domination and subservience caused by sin
 - b. Reciprocal love of spouses forms a communion of persons, which participates in the mystery of Christ’s redemption
3. “Be Subject to One Another”

- a. The mutual submission of the spouses forms the entire basis of their relationship
 - b. Just as a wife is to “ be subject” to her husband, so must he love her with total affirmation of her as a person, and a willingness to sacrifice totally for her
 - c. John Paul II sees mutual submission between spouses as a development of doctrine
 - d. The Trinitarian Dimension: Single purpose of love, and common deference is to be a mark of the Christian spouses
4. Truth in the Language of the Body
- a. A marriage becomes dissoluble when it is consummated through sexual union
 - b. Sexual union is the language of the body, which expresses a total, self-giving love
 - c. The body has the power to speak both the truth and a lie
 - d. Sexual union speaks the truth of the covenant, echoing God’s words of betrothal to Israel, and Christ’s words of self-giving love on the cross
 - e. Failure to speak truthfully in the language of the body results in self-seeking gratification and use of the other
5. Practical Applications
- a. All good marriages manifest come form of mutual submission
 - b. Problems with Mutual Submission
 - i. Fighting over which spouse must compromise
 - ii. Imbalance of submission, where one side always submits, can lead to resentment
 - iii. Withdrawal into a peaceful coexistence
 - c. Challenges can make marriage a channel through which God’s graces flow
 - d. Holy Spirit gives the spouses the power to do what they could not do on their own: the cross of marriage is its glory
 - e. Even in difficult circumstances, one must draw strength and grace from Christ
 - f. Mutual submission in marriage
 - i. Is “new”: since it was instituted by Christ, and is a development of doctrine
 - ii. Is “ancient”: since it is a living out of the complementarity between the sexes to which God originally called man and woman

From the Catechism of the Catholic Church:

772 It is in the Church that Christ fulfills and reveals his own mystery as the purpose of God's plan: "to unite all things in him."¹⁸⁹ St. Paul calls the nuptial union of Christ and the Church "a great mystery." Because she is united to Christ as to her bridegroom, she becomes a mystery in her turn.¹⁹⁰ Contemplating this mystery in her, Paul exclaims: "Christ in you, the hope of glory."¹⁹¹

773 In the Church this communion of men with God, in the "love [that] never ends," is the purpose which governs everything in her that is a sacramental means, tied to this passing world.¹⁹² "[The Church's] structure is totally ordered to the holiness of Christ's members. And holiness is measured according to the 'great mystery' in which the Bride responds with the gift of love to the gift of the Bridegroom."¹⁹³ Mary goes before us all in the holiness that is the Church's mystery as "the bride without spot or wrinkle."¹⁹⁴ This is why the "Marian" dimension of the Church precedes the "Petrine."¹⁹⁵