PROBLEMS OF COURTSHIP AND MARRIAGE

William S. Bowdern, S.J.

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Title Page and Dedication

PRICE 10¢

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Courtship

and

Marriage

by WILLIAM S. BOWDERN, S.J.

THE QUEEN'S WORK
3742 West Pine Boulevard St. Louis, Mo.

Problems of

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PROBLEMS OF

Courtship and Marriage

By

William S. Bowdern, S. J.

Dedicated
To the Modest Young Women
and
To the Gallant Young Men
Whose Love
Perpetuates the Virtues
Of Which
Thomas Moore Sang

The Legend: Such was the virtue among the men and women of Ireland in the reign of King Brian Boru (1000 A. D.) that it was said that a beautiful girl, laden with jewels and unaccompanied, could travel by day and night in perfect safety from one end of the country to the other.

Rich and rare were the gems she wore,
And a bright gold ring on her wand she bore;
But, oh! her beauty was far beyond
Her sparkling gems or snow-white wand.

"Lady, dost thou not fear to stray,
So lone and lovely, through this bleak way?
Are Erin's sons so good or so cold
As not to be tempted by woman or gold?"

"Sir Knight, I feel not the least alarm;
No son of Erin will offer me harm:
For, though they love women and golden store,
Sir Knight, they love honor and virtue more."

Problems of

Love or Lust — Which?

Is It Love?

COURTSHIP AND MARRIAGE

Are you in love? And if you are in love, are you sure it is really love? Because if you are sure, you have nothing to fear; but if you are not sure, may heaven help you, for nothing is more destructive of love and of love's happiness than is the lust which masquerades as love.

Love and lust are different from one another, as completely different as day is from night. And yet how many young men and young women come to realize this tremendous difference only when it is too late, only when lust has killed pure love, only when what seemed to be affection has shown itself to be sin and has debased what might have been a happy courtship and an even happier marriage.

Failure to distinguish clearly between lust and love is the reason why there are so many sinful, saddened hearts in courtship, which is meant by God to be such a holy and happy time. Yes — holy and happy; we have paired these words deliberately. Sinful days can never be happy days. They may seem in the beginning to be happy days, but their close will bring sad hearts. For sin can bring neither happiness nor genuine peace to a heart that wants to be good.

There can be happy and holy courtships and marriages only if young men and young women are what God intended them to be. It is to help young people to this end that this little booklet is written.

The Sacredness of Marriage

Marriage has always been sacred, but it has been doubly sacred since the time of Christ, who elevated marriage to the dignity of a sacrament. Do most young people realize the full meaning of that elevation? Christ placed marriage as a means of grace on the same plane with the holiest things we know: baptism, confirmation, penance, extreme unction, holy orders, and the Holy Eucharist itself. Even had there been doubt before, there can be none now — now that Christ has spoken. How sacred the duty and how great the privilege of a father and a mother! They are the instruments that God uses to bring into this world children made in His own image and likeness, children with immortal souls, children whose destiny it is to be God's children in this world and in the next.

The Enemies of Marriage

The most malignant enemies of marriage are those foul-minded educators who interpret all life in terms of sex. From the most delicate flower to the most modest woman and the most gallant man—they see sex in everything and everything in sex. Sigmund Freud is their master, and his disciples are numerous. It is they who determine the philosophy of life in the many schools in which their theories are the norm of learning and the code of conduct.

Small wonder that the pernicious principles which these educators proclaim beget free love and companionate marriage—new names for the old sins of fornication and adultery. And many are the young men and young women victims of these principles, young people whose early years were full of promise but who have come to know the pain and sorrow of broken, bleeding hearts and blighted dreams. And debauchery continues because there are fathers and mothers who, though perhaps overanxious about every ache and ill of their children's bodies, are apparently unconcerned about the tragic death of their children's souls. What is wrong with young people today? Why is it that morals have become lax? Look to the schools. There you have an answer. And if you have been so foolish as to entrust the education of your children to men and women whose principles of morality are in open conflict with the clear teaching of the pure Christ, demand from those educators an account of themselves. It is the very existence of such schools that makes the Church demand a Catholic education for her children. To educators like Freud—and there are many such in our secular schools—love and lust are interchangeable terms; but to you and to me and to God lust is as different from love as sin is from virtue.

Courtship

Marriage is beautifully sacred, and so should be the courtship that precedes marriage. Days of courtship are the days of love's young dream, the days that test youth's character. Courtship must be pure if it is to be happy; and pure and happy, it will provide the test of character that is necessary for a blessed and a happy marriage.

It is true that some people manifest the ugly side of their character only after long years of married life. But at least some indication of compatibility or incompatibility for marriage is made manifest during courtship. If a young man and a young woman cannot get along agreeably before marriage, it is almost a certainty that they will not get along after marriage. Never marry with the idea of reforming your partner. In all probability your idea will never materialize. Life just doesn't work out that way.

Courtship is necessary in the light of marriage. The period of courtship should be neither too long nor too short. It is absolutely necessary that courtship be noble and pure. Only too frequently an improper courtship results in an unhappy marriage. In order that courtship may be all that it should be, young men and young women must know clearly the strength and the weakness of human nature. To this end they must know well the history of the first man, Adam, and the first woman, Eve —the history of the fall and its terrible consequences.

Before Adam Sinned

Adam and Eve were our first parents. God created them directly and immediately and endowed them wonderfully in the order of grace. We were to have been created in that same wonderful state. But Adam sinned. When God created Adam, He gave him the supernatural destiny of heaven and four wonderful gifts. The first of these gifts was the supernatural gift of grace, which was to make it easy for Adam to keep the simple command that God had given to him. The other three gifts were preternatural, *i. e.*, beyond nature, gifts that, while not above human nature, were in no way the just due of the creature man. These gifts that Adam had, we were to have had. The three preternatural gifts were **immortality of body,** which meant that we would never have suffered physical pain and that we would not have been subject to death; **infused knowledge,** which meant that we would have been born with that knowledge which we must now labor to acquire; and **freedom from concupiscence,** which meant that we would have had perfect control over our sensual appetites and that we would never have experienced the involuntary promptings of the flesh toward sins of impurity, drunkenness, and the like. If you read the Scriptures carefully, you will find that it was a sin of pride that preceded Adam's external act of disobedience and that eventually brought about the fall

After Adam Sinned

With Adam's sin came our many troubles. With the loss of **freedom from concupiscence** came the dangers that surround courtship. Had sin not entered the world, there would have been no lustful dangers in courtship and no reason for booklets of this nature. **But Adam sinned,** and he thereby lost for himself and for us these special gifts from God. His destiny, heaven, remained and was transmitted to us, but the supernatural gift of grace was taken away. But because of the merits of Christ, the possibility of grace was not irrevocably removed. Through the merits of Christ we can reclaim those graces that Adam lost for us. But the three preternatural gifts that were given to Adam —immortality of the body, infused knowledge, and freedom from concupiscence—were lost for us and will never be returned. Because Adam fell, man would have to fight against sickness and finally yield to death; he would have to struggle to educate himself; he would have to wage an incessant war against temptations to impurity and all other forms of immorality. No longer would the appetites of the senses be under the perfect command of reason; in order to subject those appetites, man would have to exert relentless effort and call upon the grace of God. Life was to be a warfare. With his intellect darkened and his will weakened because of the loss of those preternatural gifts, man would have to call frequently on the grace of God and on his own human resources in order to avoid the pitfalls of lust and of sin.

The Effects on Courtship

Foolish indeed is the young man or the young woman who fails to realize that Adam's fall has surrounded courtship with ever-present dangers. It is true that young women, well trained and with high ideals, are generally not so strongly tempted through concupiscence as are men. But that man has never lived — unless through a special grace of God, such as was given to a few saints—who is not always in danger's path when there is question of purity. Hence it is well for the young woman of today to be fully aware that her escort, no matter how good and well-intentioned he may be, is tempted strongly, and at times violently, against the holy virtue of purity. That is the fact of the case, and all the sweet talk in the world cannot change it. Your escort, by simple reason of the fact that he is a man, is **not** different. He, like all other men, is subject to the destructive sweep of temptations against purity. And the best man in the world, even if it is he that is your escort, is no exception.

Lust and Love

Two short words—love and lust—monosyllables, four letters each. How powerful they are! How different one from the other! One is the denial of the other, means death to the other. **For lust is truly the death of love.**

Love had its birth in heaven; lust was conceived in hell. Love is virtuous; lust is sinful. Love raises a man or a woman to holy heights; lust degrades a man or a woman to the level of the brute beast, and even lower. This is a hard saying, but not all the ingenuity in the world will ever convert the rank weed of lust into the lily of purity.

Love is the mighty weapon against concupiscence; lust is the cowardly surrender to concupiscence. Love is beautiful, noble, self-sacrificing, **pure; it seeks the good of the beloved**; there is not a selfish note in the song of love. Lust is hideous, base, selfish, **impure; it seeks nothing outside itself.**

Love, if it is true, is pure and therefore the best preparation for marriage; it brings down the blessing of God upon a young man and the girl he loves. Lust, since it can never be true, is never pure and hence is the worst possible prelude to marriage; lust draws down, not God's blessing, but God's displeasure. If through courtship a man and a woman are encouraged in purity, then love is the basis of that courtship and enduring affection will be the result; if through courtship a man and woman are encouraged to impurity, then lust is the foundation of that courtship and evil and sin will be the result.

Young people, especially young women, can never be too well instructed on this all important difference between love and lust. The two should never be confused. Many a girl, once beautiful in the eyes of God and of man because she was pure, can trace her broken heart and her wrecked life to her failure to realize the difference between lust and love.

All the fine promises of affection, all the sweet expressions of endearment that are whispered to a girl are but lies and deceits of the vilest kind if it is lust that prompts those expressions. Every young man knows this. Every young girl should know it, for in many cases a girl's very ignorance in this matter may lead her to the brink of the danger.

The young man who truly loves a girl guards her purity almost jealously. He would give his very life to protect and preserve it. And men of character, courage, and high ideals have been known to do just that very thing. Time was when to be a young woman's escort was to be the champion of her purity, the guardian of her virtue. There are such men today, thank God; and if their number is not legion, it should be.

Heaven and Earth Tell the Story

The story of true love is eternally beautiful and inspiring. It is the love of the Father and the Son from which proceeds the Holy Ghost. Love redeemed the human race after Adam's sin had closed the gates of heaven to mankind. The way of Christ from the crib to the cross—through Galilee, Samaria, and Judea—was a way of love, love for men and women, young and old, saint and sinner; love now for John, now for Mary Magdalen, now for Martha, now for Dismas dying on the cross beside Him—love for you and for me. The greatest love story in the world is the story of Christ on the cross. His was the supremely pure, courageous, and completely unselfish love.

The love of a mother for her child is an example of exalted love. No one questions the essentially pure and self-sacrificing character of such a love. So too is the love between a good husband and a devoted wife, faithful through long years of sacrifice.

The love of a soldier for his country is an example of genuine love. We are all proud of that splendid patriot Nathan Hale, whose dying regret was that he had only one life to give for his country. There was no selfishness there; he had given his all.

And so runs each story of true love. All the great and noble achievements that are recorded in the history of man have been motivated and carried to completion by enduring, unselfish love.

Love has always been the inspiration of all that is good in the achievements of men; it is lust that has always written red pages of sin in man's record. When lust ruled the world in the time of Noe, God sent the deluge and destroyed the entire human race except Noe and his family. God reduced to ashes the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha because of the lust of the inhabitants. The destruction of Tyre and Sidon bespeaks forever God's hatred of lust.

Nature herself has exacted penalties of destruction from nations that exalted the vices of lust and trod on the virtues of purity: Golden Greece fell; proud Rome fell, victim of her vices (the lustful courtship of Antony and Cleopatra is but a single instance of the widespread immorality of the old Rome); France, the country of the sainted crusader King Louis IX, knew the pains of punishment when, under the guidance of de Pompadour and du Barry, she turned her kingly palace into a brothel. And the world cannot number the millions of men and women on whose lips the kiss of would-be love has turned to the cold gray ashes of lust. For lust is sin, and sin is a ruthless, exacting master.

Only for Catholics?

For some unknown reason many non-Catholics—and even some Catholics—hold that the Church's sane and just laws and rules that govern courtship and marriage apply only to Catholics. Certainly you have often heard non-Catholics, and even Catholics, say that it is hard to be a Catholic because of the Catholic teaching on love in courtship and in marriage. Well the fact of the matter is that these laws on love and marriage are just as binding on pagans and non-Catholics as they are on Catholics.

Let us take the case of a Christian, one who believes in God and has been baptized. Even if he looks to no ruling body for his guide in faith, he believes in the Bible. To many Protestants the Bible means everything—the one thing to which they cling. And the Bible is uncompromising in its condemnation of lust and impurity. Let the Protestant read his Bible and learn its lessons: There is the story of the sin of Onan, the story of the deluge, the record of the complete destruction of Sodom and Gomorrha —all stories of sins of impurity and consequent punishments.

The Catholic Church didn't write the Ten Commandments; let the Protestant read particularly the sixth and the ninth commandments (some Protestants number these commandments as the seventh and tenth), which clearly condemn lust. Certainly no Protestant can claim the slightest exemption from the doctrine of purity which the Catholic Church teaches, that doctrine which the Protestant can find clearly given in his Bible and in the Ten Commandments.

But purity was made known to men even before there was God's spoken or written word. The doctrine of purity has always been known to man through the natural law—that law which is written in the heart of every man, be he Catholic, Protestant, Jew, or pagan. It doesn't require much reasoning from the most fundamental precepts of the natural law to realize that any man who has the use of reason and even the slightest self-respect must acknowledge that purity and the consequent reverence and respect due women is binding upon every human being.

Sadly enough there are Catholic girls who plead in defense of their non-Catholic escort: "But, father, he isn't a Catholic—he doesn't regard this as sinful." But he does, and don't ever let him convince you that he doesn't. And if his standards are such that they flout Catholic teaching on love, then he is not fitting company for you or anyone else who lays the slightest claim to decency and self-respect. He is rotten, and his company can mean only your ruin.

This alleged difference of opinion figures prominently and works great havoc in cases of mixed marriages. The non-Catholic husband or the non-Catholic wife may say to the Catholic: "Artificial birth control is not wrong; the Catholic Church merely tries to make you believe that it is wrong. We are going to have only as many children as we want, and we are going to conduct our marriage relations as we please." The non-Catholic is wrong, and he knows that he is wrong. The law of God binds him as it does you. Neither you nor he is free to break that law. If you do break that law, you are sinning and barring from your home the grace and blessings of God, for where sin is, God cannot be. Sin and God's presence are mutually exclusive. When sin enters a home, God must leave that home. When God enters with His graces, sin must leave. And the married couple, whether or not the marriage is a mixed marriage, know that they must choose between God and sin.

None of the Priest's Business

There is the Catholic whose comment on sin in courtship or in marriage is: "I don't confess it because it is none of the priest's business." Such a person has closed all doors to God's grace and to right living. Undoubtedly it is sin, and the forgiveness of sin is certainly God's business; hence it is of necessity the business of the priest, whom God has appointed as the mediator in the forgiveness of all your sins. And the Catholic who conceals a serious sin like a sin against purity is guilty of a sacrilege and would have done better if he had not come to confession. For he leaves the confessional with sin—and the knowledge of sin—on his soul and has thereby added one more terrible sin to his guilt—the sin of sacrilege. And the communion which follows—if he is brazen enough to receive Holy Communion in such a state—is the traitorous, sacrilegious communion of a Judas Iscariot, who, some say, received the body and blood of Christ before he departed into the night to execute his terrible betrayal. Some maintain that even Judas did not sink so low, that he left the supper room before committing the crime that would have been blacker than his actual treachery.

If you have sinned with another in courtship or in marriage, at least come back to Christ—and the road back leads you to the feet of the priest, the ambassador of Christ.

The Beauty of Purity

"God made man a little less than the angels." For the angels are pure spirits, and man is composed of spirit and matter—soul and body. But purity is the virtue that makes man greater than the angels. The angels have no need to fight impurity; man must wage war against the sins of the flesh. So it is that a man rises to the greatest heights when he remains pure in face of the temptations of the flesh.

God could choose His own mother; and He chose Mary, a young Jewish maiden perhaps sixteen or seventeen years old, the purest of all women. John, the virgin Apostle, was the disciple "whom Jesus loved." Little children, pure in their youthful innocence, were very dear to the master. And those who would scandalize these pure little ones Christ threatened with terrible punishments.

In the successive trial scenes in the Passion, Christ appeared before many judges. The only one to whom Christ did not deign the courtesy of an answer was the lustful Herod. Christ spoke to the weak-kneed, time-serving Pilate, whose cowardice precipitated His crucifixion; but for the impure Herod He had not a single word.

Long is the list of the saints of God whose glory was their purity. They too had temptations, often greater ones than you or I have had, but these saints had the courage and the love of purity that brought them in glory to the throne of Christ in heaven. The pure are they who will "follow the Lamb withersoever He goeth." In the sermon on the mount Christ said for all the world to hear: "Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God." The lustful, the impure cannot see God because their eyes are riveted to the things of the earth; they cannot raise their eyes to heaven because their hearts are with the things of the flesh.

The thousands of priests, sisters, brothers, and lay men and women, married and single, young and old, throughout the Catholic world, serving Christ in purity of life, are the boast and glory of the Catholic Church. She points to them as the flowering fruit of the Church that is holy. They are the living proof that the Church is divinely founded.

Even pagan Greece and Rome paid homage to the ten vestal virgins, women who because of their purity were chosen to keep the temple fires burning. Romans who were decaying physically and spiritually assigned these women a place of honor in the festivals. Rotten themselves, they had not fallen so low that they did not at least admire and respect virtue in others. And many are those not of the Catholic faith whose lives are holy, thank God, in spite of the tragically false teaching of their churches concerning divorce, remarriage, and birth control.

The Place of Women

In an age that exalts the achievements of men, women can well boast that the fairest and finest creature, the masterpiece of all God's creation, was a woman, the Blessed Virgin Mary. The Protestant English poet Wordsworth paid Mary mankind's compliment when he wrote of her:

> "Woman! above all women glorified,
> Our tainted nature's solitary boast,
> Purer than foam on central ocean tossed . . ."

God placed woman on a pedestal. He did this in order that men would have to look up to see her. She was to be his inspiration; she it was who would make man look up to see her and thus see God, who made her.

How foolish for women to talk of their equality with men. It is not a question of equality; it is rather a question of woman's place as distinct from man's place. And as long as she remains there—on the somewhat higher plane on which God has placed her—she will be respected, admired, and loved. But when she falls, she falls lower than a man can fall, not that there is a double standard of morality, but that her fall has been from a height greater than his. Woman maintains her position of honor only as long as she guards her modesty, her fairest adornment. But let her fall into the mire of lust and impurity, and the very man who was responsible for her fall will cease to love her and will leave her. The man who has stolen the maidenly virtue of a woman has never respected that woman, even though he may have protested that he loved her.

If he loves her, he must respect her; his lust is the very denial of respect. The man who looks on a girl and lusts after her is the worst enemy of that girl. When will young girls come to understand and realize this? To young girls we give this injunction: Set down as lies of the vilest sort any words or actions of a young man that lead you to be less modest.

His Sister

Whether or not young women suspect it, every decent young man regards his sister as a paragon of virtue; of her he will think nothing but what is most pure, most good. To protect her virtue, he would lay down his life. Sisters sometimes get the impression that their brothers are indifferent toward them; perhaps they feel that their brothers rarely give them more than a passing thought or consideration. But the fact is that every young man places his sister on a pedestal, and woe betide the man who looks at her with lustful eyes.

So every girl can test the genuineness of her escort's affection. If the young man would be in the least improper in her presence, let her ask him what his feelings would be if on his return home some evening he found his sister being improperly embraced by a young man. If the escort is honest, he will admit that his anger would know no bounds. Why? Because in his heart of hearts he knows that such conduct arises from lust, not from love; he knows that such conduct will eventually lead to the ruin of his sister.

Let every young woman therefore demand of her escort the same respect that he demands that other men have for his sister; let every young man reverence the girl he loves with the same reverence that he accords his sister. Such respect is the life of true love; the absence of such respect is the death of true love.

The Commandments of Purity

The sixth and ninth commandments deal exclusively with God's condemnation of impurity. They forbid everything impure not only in act but also in word and in thought.

Every man is confronted with many thoughts of impurity, thoughts that he has not invited. These he must fight insistently; these he can overcome with the grace of God and his own relentless resistance. These thoughts come to him against his will; he has no part in their attack. So through his victory over them he becomes one of God's heroes.

But we are not talking here of these temptations which come against the will; many of God's greatest saints have had such temptations. We are concerned here with those temptations that are of the man's or the girl's own making. Such temptations the man brings upon himself, or they are brought upon him by the young woman who should want him to be pure. How foolish and treacherous is the girl who by her manner invites in her escort conduct which spells the end of his and her purity—and the end of love. And impure thought knowingly and willingly entertained is a mortal sin.[1]

1 N. B. A word to the scrupulous: Always follow the advice of your regular confessor.

Sin—an Angel Becomes a Devil

Do not make light of sin, not even sins of thought. **One sin of thought changed an angel into a devil.** Before his fall Lucifer was serving close to the throne of God. He sinned once, in thought; because of that one sin of thought Lucifer the angel was changed into Lucifer the devil. Adam sinned once—his first sin was one of thought—and because of that sin all men lost heaven, and upon the world descended sickness, death, hatred, war, pestilence, famine, and all evil—all the result of Adam's sin. Look at your crucifix: It tells the story of sin. We through sin put Christ there. We are the deicides; we killed the Son of God. Sins of courtship and of marriage help to explain Good Friday.

What Does God Say About Impurity?

Never let anyone tell you that God's laws about courtship and marriage apply only to Catholics. For many Protestants the Bible is the rule of faith and morals. In the Bible, God says clearly:

"Thou shall [sic] not commit adultery." **(Ex. xx, 14.)**

"Neither shalt thou desire his wife." **(Ex. xx, 17.)**

"The body is not for fornication, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body." **(1 Cor. vi, 13.)**

"Know you this and understand, that no fornicator, or unclean, or covetous person . . . hath inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God." **(Eph. v, 5.)**

"If what he charged her with be true, and virginity be not found in the damsel, they shall cast her out of the doors of her father's house, and the men of the city shall stone her to death, and she shall die." **(Deut. xxii, 20-21.)**

Not only are gross actions of impurity forbidden by God's commandments; not only are impure touches forbidden; but all impure thoughts and desires are also forbidden. Read what God has said about these:

"How long shall hurtful thoughts abide in thee?" **(Jer. iv, 14.)**

"I made a covenant with my eyes, that I would not so much as think upon a virgin." **(Job xxxi, 1.)**

"Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, to refrain yourselves from carnal desires which war against the soul." **(I Pet. ii, 11.)**

"For perverse thoughts separate from God." **(Wis. i, 3.)**

"Evil thoughts are an abomination to the Lord." **(Prov. xv, 26.)**

"Wine and women make wise men fall off." **(Ecclus. xix, 2.)**

Never Forget This Text

Should a young man and a young woman forget the laws of purity and then seek to defend their lust with the pretext that it is love, let them read and remember to their dying day the clear and terrible words that Christ spoke on matters of impure and lustful thoughts and desires. The following text, from Saint Matthew's Gospel, if memorized by every young person who is keeping company, will help to keep the young man noble and chaste and the young woman pure and good. **Let those who indulge in passionate kissing, lustful embraces, "petting," "necking," and passionate "good nights" never forget these terrible words uttered by the all-loving Christ. They are as true today as they were on the day that He spoke them in Galilee. They are a warning to every man and every young woman in courtship.** In the text the word scandalize is used in the sense of being an occasion of sin. The meaning is that if your hand is an occasion of sin to you, cut it off rather than lose your soul. We are taught to fly the immediate occasions of sin, though our desire for them may be as great as our need of a hand or an eye.

"But I say to you, that whosoever shall look on a woman to lust after her, hath already committed adultery with her in his heart.

"And if thy right eye scandalize thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee. For it is expedient for thee that one of thy members should perish, rather than thy whole body be cast into hell.

"And if thy right hand scandalize thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee; for it is expedient for thee that one of thy members should perish, rather than that thy whole body go into hell." (Matt. v, 28-30.)

Kissing

Is kissing a sin? That question is asked more frequently by young women than it is asked by young men. Why? Because girls in their innocence do not see its danger; young men do. Ninety per cent of the vilest sins of impurity—and that is a conservative estimate—have had their beginning in kisses.

Is kissing a sin? It is a mortal sin knowingly and willingly to consent to impurity in deed, in word, or in **thought.** If kissing leads to such impurity, even of thought, it is without doubt a sin; and all the sweet talk in the world will never make it otherwise. God has in the sixth and the ninth commandments condemned all impurity, and the Church has promulgated His teachings throughout the centuries.

Is kissing a sin? A kiss of pure affection is not a sin, because it does not provoke the sins about which we have been talking. But certainly prolonged passionate kissing or the kissing which is accompanied by a close, passionate embrace is generally at least a serious occasion of mortal sin, if it is not already grievously sinful. "Soul kissing" might be better named "soul killing"; such a kiss with the tongues is a serious threat to a young man's purity, if it has not already steeped his soul in mortal sins of thought and desire. We would hesitate to mention this degrading practice here if we did not desire the protection of countless young women whose very innocence of the strong passions of men can be their downfall.

"Petting" and "Necking"

Are "petting" and "necking" sinful? In the light of the very clear commandment which brands as sin all impure thoughts, desires, words, and actions, the answer to this question is very easy. It is fatal for a girl to forget that the desires of the flesh are very active in the young man with whom she is going. He may insist that "necking" and "petting" do not arouse lustful desires in him. But his very denial of these desires is a bare-faced lie, and his deception will steal from you the very virtue which can make you truly loved by a decent man.

All passionate embracing and kissing and all impure touches are most certainly wrong. Let me ask young men and young women this question: Why will a young man touch a girl impurely? There is only one answer to that question—and every young man knows that answer by heart. He does so simply and solely because he derives a sexual pleasure from it, a pleasure that he knows is sinful. That is the answer. And it is an answer that you young women must know and never forget. Forget it, and you sacrifice your purity, lower yourself in the esteem of decent men and women. And more: The young man who has professed his love for you and acted impurely with you no longer respects you, cannot truly love you, and in all likelihood will never marry you, because a young man wants the girl he marries to be pure.

Young men, would you allow a young man to "pet" or "neck" with your sister? If you would, you are anything but the gallant, pure, virile man you should be. Young women, always go back to this test: Never allow to the young man that you are going out with anything that he would not allow to the escort of his own sister. And whether or not he admits it to you, he would not allow any young man to degrade his own sister.

It is wrong and sinful—considering the passions of men—to indulge in "petting" and "necking." Do not seek excuse in the statement: "But everybody does it." That statement is not true. There are thousands of young women who do not allow a young man to touch them improperly. If you don't know such girls, then it does not speak well for the circle of your friends. And in any case no matter how your friends and acquaintances conduct themselves, the fact remains unaltered: God forbids all impure thoughts, desires, words, and actions. There are many souls in hell today who said: "But everybody does it," and forgot to complete the sentence: "and goes to hell if the sin is not forgiven."

Some young women have said: "But a girl isn't asked out a second time if she doesn't allow the young man to act in this way." Then thank God that such a young man does not ask you out again; the very fact that he will not ask you out again is proof positive that he regarded you only with lustful eyes. He didn't love you; he wanted only to sin with you. And he proves that by the very fact that he does not want to be with you if you wish to be decent. If sin is the price of his company, he is not much of a man; and you are a lucky girl if you never see him again.

Drinking

It is not a sin to drink, but it is always a sin to drink too much. The man or woman who loses the use of reason through excessive drinking commits a mortal sin and thereby descends to a level lower than that of the brute beast. It is intellect that distinguishes man from the animal; when a man paralyzes his intellect, he becomes lower than the animal. But you will say: I never do that. We hope not, and for this reason we shall deal here with drinking that does not end in drunkenness.

What effect does drinking have on courtship? Drink adds fuel to concupiscence; it increases the force of temptations to impurity; it weakens the powers of the intellect; it lowers the resistance of the will. Many a young man and young woman who normally would not think of lust have ruined their courtship and destroyed their love through drinking. The danger is ever present, and foolish are the young people who refuse to see it and recognize it for what it is.

The prohibition that was sponsored by the defunct Eighteenth Amendment did not make for virtue; temperance and voluntary total abstinence are recommended and commendable. The man who does not drink is neither weak nor effeminate. Quite the contrary; he is strong. And the girl who prizes her virtue and demands self-respect will make it a habit not to drink when she is in the company of young men. Many are the young women whose saddened lives attest the wisdom of such a habit.

For young people to declare that a party without highballs lacks goodfellowship and sociability is a sorry admission of stupidity. A maximum of education or social grace is not required to carry on an interesting conversation without the stimulation of whiskey. For youth to insist that liquor is essential to gaiety is for youth to brand itself with a mental status that is far down in the scale of intelligence. The "life" of the party that is inspired by highballs is too often the death of the soul.

Parking

Young people in parked automobiles have brought about some of the world's greatest tragedies of immorality. How many pure young men and innocent girls have fallen into impurity for the first time in parked automobiles, where the sin lust is mistaken for the virtue love. Parked automobiles, scenes of passionate kissing, "petting," and "necking," are veritable graveyards in which are buried the innocence and purity of thousands upon thousands of young men and young women. Such conduct is not prompted by love, because love is unselfish and seeks the good of the beloved; such conduct arises from lust, the most selfish sin, which seeks impure self-satisfaction at the expense of the goodness and virtue of the so-called beloved.

We must remember the story of the concupiscence of the flesh and the fall of man. Even under the most favorable conditions every young man has to struggle to keep pure; and certainly parking for such purposes is anything but a favorable condition. God said: "He who loves the danger will perish in it." How well these words apply to this situation. Young women, because they are less exposed to the temptations than are young men, must be made to realize this danger. What decent girl wishes to drag down into the mire of impurity the young man whom she loves? And yet because she is less easily tempted than is her escort, the girl fails to see that she is destroying his virtue and their love. She allows the young man to park his automobile and to become passionately affectionate toward her; lust is the inevitable consequence. And lust is the death of love. For when lust enters the heart, love leaves; and love is not nurtured by this kind of parking.

Good Night

Next to parking, the most dangerous occasion to a pure courtship is the passionate good night between a young man and a young woman. They have been in each other's company all evening, and their conduct has been honorable and virtuous. At the end of the evening's entertainment the young man accompanies the girl to her home. Instead of bidding her good night when they arrive at her house, he accompanies her inside. The hour is late; other members of her family have retired for the evening. The young man and the young woman are alone and unobserved. Such an occasion not only can be but often has been the ruin of a pure courtship.

The young man, having the most honorable intentions, may wish to kiss the girl before he leaves. He intends the kiss to be a pure token of love. But child of Adam that he is, he will most probably be tempted to impurity unless he does not protract his stay. When the kiss has become one of passion, when he lays an improper hand on the girl he loves, he is acting through lust and not love—he is sinning, though the girl may not at the time realize it.

If they wish to be in each other's company for another fifteen minutes or so, let them prolong the evening's entertainment that much longer. But when they arrive at the young woman's home, let them keep the good night from becoming the black night of sin. Let the young man who esteems his virtue and truly loves the girl bid her good night at the door and allow her to enter alone. In this way each will be a protection for the other, and their love, a pure love, will increase.

Do You Wish to Be Pure?

We are told in Scripture that purity is a virtue which we carry around with us in frail vessels. In other words purity is a virtue that can easily be lost. To remain pure is a big task; it calls for the best that is in man and woman. Alone—without the grace of God—we cannot accomplish this task; with His grace we are all-powerful.

We obtain the grace of God through **prayer** and the **sacraments.** In confirmation we are made soldiers of Christ, but we become weak and cowardly soldiers unless we nurture that divine gift with prayer and the frequent reception of the sacrament of confession and Holy Communion. Holy Communion is the "wine that makes virgins." Holy Communion makes a young man strong and pure. To excuse yourself from frequent communion on the ground that you are not worthy is foolish. No one, not even the saint, is worthy. But Holy Communion isn't a reward for virtue; it is an essential means of becoming good and remaining good. Christ gave us Himself in the Blessed Sacrament as an aid to virtue; we cannot be good without Him. And certainly young people in courtship need the Blessed Sacrament in order to remain pure and to keep their innocent, honorable love from degenerating into sinful, degrading lust. So receive Holy Communion frequently—at least once a week, every day if possible. This may require a sacrifice on your part, but everything good calls for sacrifice, and this sacrifice will reward you a hundredfold.

You Don't Wish to Be Pure Unless . . .

The grace of God is necessary for you if you wish to be pure, but you must cooperate with that grace; you must dispose your will toward the reception of that grace. Grace was not wanting to Judas Iscariot, yet he refused to cooperate with that grace, betrayed Christ, and died in despair.

This necessity for cooperation with God is something of which young people in courtship can never be too conscious. Avoid the occasions of sin. If you know that someone or something is an immediate occasion of sin for you, avoid that person or thing. Reread Christ's words that are quoted on page 17.

There are many young people who receive the sacraments frequently, attend many novena services, attend the Tuesday services to Our Lady of Perpetual Help, hear Mass and receive Holy Communion on first Fridays—all with the intention of not sinning against purity in their courtship.

And yet very often these young people do not take the clearly natural means at their command to avoid the proximate and immediate occasions of sinning against purity. They wish to be pure;

they pray to be pure; and yet they will park their car in some lonely place and knowingly put themselves in danger of losing their purity. Or they will with full knowledge of the consequences remain alone together for a long time in the young woman's home, indulging in conduct which, if not actually sinful, may be the proximate occasion of sin. They attend special church services and devotions, and then they insist upon indulging in "petting," and "necking." Such people do not really **will** to be pure; their plea for purity is a mockery; their sorrow in confession is hypocrisy; and their Holy Communion, if they are aware of what they have been doing, is a sacrilege.

With their lips they pray for virtue, they protest that they want to be pure and good; but by their actions they proclaim to all the saints in heaven that they will have nothing to do with purity. They pray to God for purity, and then they expect Him to save them from sin when they knowingly and willfully place themselves in the immediate occasions of sin. Is it surprising then that they fall? Why it is a miracle if they do not fall under such conditions. Even the saints could not remain pure under such conditions.

The first, the absolutely necessary thing that these young people must do is put a stop to parking that leads to sin and to the good nights that turn love to lust. And until young men and young women do this, their prayers for purity will continue to be lies upon their lips. Unless young people stop all passionate kissing and embracing, all "petting" and "necking," their protests for purity are so much hollow hypocrisy.

Married Men and Women—Divorced Men and Divorcées

It is always wrong to keep company with a married man or woman or with a divorced man or woman. Our present economic system has done some little good and much more harm by placing women in the offices of businessmen. It is of course true that there are in business offices throughout the country many gallant men and honorable women who are a credit to the human race, but it is not of them that we speak. They have no part in the widespread moral ruin, in the breaking of homes and hearts that have followed upon woman's taking a place in the business world.

But there are men—and their number is not small—who are quite willing to take advantage of the fact that some innocent girl has through economic necessity been forced to work for them. And hanging is too good for such men. Frequently they begin their treacherous attention by offering the "courtesy" of a ride home or of a quiet lunch together. There is a certain specious gallantry in a married man's taking his secretary home from work, but such practice often leads to sin, and it is always dangerous.

Wise and virtuous is the young woman who keeps her relations with her employer strictly businesslike and who limits those relations to the hours of work. She has no time and no inclination to listen to her employer's seductive lies about his "unappreciative wife," who of course never understands him. That story of the misunderstood husband is as old as is the business world itself. The fact of the matter is that such a self-pitying husband is not worthy of his wife; she has more sense and more virtue than he can ever hope to have. And even if there is a grain of truth in the stories, a girl is foolish to allow herself to listen to or to be affected by them.

If she accepts the attentions of a married man, she is committing a serious sin and is working upon herself one of the greatest of injustices. More; she is guilty of wrecking a home. Let us reverse the picture. Suppose she herself were married. What would she think of the young woman who accepted the attentions of her husband? The fact that a man or a woman has been civilly divorced does not make a particle of difference in this situation. In the eyes of God man and wife are united for life; no civil decree can break that permanent union. Therefore **it is seriously wrong to keep company with a divorced man or a divorcée.** Even if no other sin is connected with such keeping of company, there is always the danger of sin or scandal. That scandal arises from the fact that a single person is keeping company with a married person—and remember that all divorced men and divorcées are included in the category of married men and women.

There are too many cases in which the company-keeping between a single and a divorced person has led to civil marriage—which is in such instances just a polite name for the terrible sin of adultery. Don't say: "But there is no danger in my going with this married person, because we are not serious about each other." Thousands of young men and young women have said the same thing before you, and their "innocent" friendships have frequently ended in an adulterous marriage. Even if you have no serious intentions of marriage, even if the person with whom you are going treats you with perfect respect, you may not keep company with him or her, for the simple reason that he or she **is married.** This advice applies especially to girls, not that there is a double standard of morality, but that the innocent girl is the one who is duped.

Let married men and women, even though divorced, recall the solemn pledge they made at the altar of God when they were married; let the young men and young women who would keep company with these married people consider the sacred contract that was made between husband and wife. The very memory of the words of that pledge should show you unmistakably what is wrong with such company-keeping. Here are the words that are spoken in marriage, as binding throughout all life as they are on the happy day on which they are spoken:

> **"I, ..., take thee, ..., for my lawful wife (husband), to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, until death do us part."**

A Real Man

This section is particularly for young men. You know what we mean when we say that a certain boy has "what it takes" to make a football player or a basketball player or any other kind of an athlete. In the language of the football field we say that he has "guts." And by that we mean that a certain boy is game, that he has courage, that he is a real man; we mean that he is not a quitter, he is not "yellow," he is not a coward. Every boy admires the man who has this courage; every boy despises the man who doesn't have it.

But the young man who has courage on the football field may be the biggest quitter in the game when it comes to the fight for purity. It sometimes happens that the greatest hero of the football field is the greatest coward when it comes to a game that requires real manhood. It takes far more courage for a boy to fight with perseverance against impurity than it takes "to hit the line" against a tough football team. The football hero is cheered by thousands of people; the hero in the game of purity may be unknown to the thousands in the stands, but he is cheered by the millions of unseen angels in heaven and is acclaimed a hero by his captain Christ.

Yes, only a real man can be pure; only a young man who is tough in the good sense treats a girl with respect. It doesn't take courage to be impure. The most spineless, cowardly man in the world can be—and usually is—impure. The greatest rake, the most cowardly man who ever lived, can match you sin of impurity for sin of impurity. But there is no credit in that, no decency, no manhood, no courage. On the contrary, impurity stamps a man as a quitter, "yellow," spineless—in a word, a coward.

The toughest boys are the pure boys; and don't think that other boys don't admire them for that purity. In order to be tough in the good sense you don't have to be an athlete, or weigh two hundred pounds, or talk out of the corner of your mouth. But you do have to be a perfect gentleman and every inch a man. You may be sickly, anemic, anything but athletic, but you are nonetheless made of real stuff; you have what it takes to be a real man.

Cadet Byrne

Cadet Byrne of West Point was a thorough athlete, physically and morally. In 1909, in his senior year at West Point, Cadet Byrne was the star tackle on the Army team. Came the day of the big game against Harvard. In the course of the game Cadet Byrne stood out on the line as a wall of strength. Few yards were made through him. Then he went down, injured on a play. But he got up and stayed in the game. The next play came his way. As usual he was in on it. For the second time he went down, injured, but this time never to rise again; his neck was broken. He was carried from the field, and he died shortly after.

Every cadet at the Point was heartsick, for "Easy" Byrne was well loved. He was a Catholic who all his life had been known to live up to his high principles. Whenever and wherever Cadet Byrne appeared there was no dirty talk, no questionable story—and he was admired for this influence that he wielded. He wasn't "soft"; he was tough in the sense of virtue.

His funeral is a hallowed memory at West Point. His body lay in state in the little Catholic chapel, where fellow cadets stood guard throughout the day and the night. The Harvard team came down to pay him homage. He was given a full military funeral, and then his body was sent for burial to his home town, Buffalo, New York. Before the body was taken from the chapel at West Point, the cadets filed past the coffin, and each one laid upon it a white carnation, in token of Cadet Byrne's purity—a public tribute to a boy who was "clean," a Galahad of God.

Ernie Schaaf

Every young man who reads the sports pages is familiar with the name Ernie Schaaf. Schaaf was among the highest ranking heavyweights of a few years ago. His last fight was with Carnera. A blow that he received during that fight produced a blood clot on his brain. While doctors battled to save his life, his manager, Johnny Buckley, tears in his eyes, nervously paced the corridors, summing up the many fights that Ernie had fought in the "ring" of his soul and had won. Buckley, better than anyone else, knew that Ernie was clean, pure.

Johnny Buckley loved Ernie Schaaf as a son—because he was clean. "He was one of the finest, cleanest young fellows I have ever known," Buckley had said. "He was a devout Catholic and decent in every way." Buckley also disclosed the fact that Schaaf, a week before his fight with Carnera, had flown to Brighton, a quiet suburb near Boston, and had attended a retreat for laymen, spending several days in prayer and meditation.

Ernie Schaaf was tough. Ask those who fought with him. But he was tougher in the real fights of life. He lived and died a clean, pure man. It takes a real fighter to do that.

Jack Cahalan

Every school boy knows the story of the Holy Grail, the chalice or cup that Our Lord used at the Last Supper. The knights of King Arthur's Round Table went in quest of the Holy Grail, but it could be seen only by those who were pure. The knight who was "pure and without reproach," who caught a sight of the holy chalice, was Sir Galahad. And Tennyson has him say: "My strength is as the strength of ten because my heart is pure." Sir Galahad was the only one of King Arthur's knights who saw the Holy Grail, but there are boys living today who qualify for that vision.

Jack Cahalan was within a few weeks of receiving his A. B. degree from the University of Detroit. He was a good student and prominent in many college activities. His classmates often wondered how he found time for his many scholastic interests. One evening during the last week of April, 1932 (he was, you see, a young man of your own time), he went out to a college entertainment. His companion was a splendid girl whom he had known since grade-school days. On their way home a blinding rainstorm overtook them. A huge truck ran into their car and instantly killed both of them. They were both buried from the same church at a requiem Mass.

The following letter is quoted at length because it contains some beautiful lessons—not only in purity but in other virtues that characterize a son and a Catholic father. Little did the father think that one day this very personal letter would appear in print. The letter was written in answer to a letter of condolence from a priest, a lifelong friend of the family.

Dear Father: May 25, 1932

I have no news. Everything goes on much the same. It is natural to forget one's troubles, I suppose. There was a time when I thought that to forget was cruel. But now I see that it is God's good way. One cannot live constantly with the dead. Many Masses are being said for Jack in our parish church. My wife and I try to attend them all. If we must remember, we shall try to do so in prayer.

No one of course can judge the purposes of God. But one can try to reason things out, since reason is God's great gift to man. So I look back over Jack's career, and I find a great and wonderful consolation in the fact that he was a good boy. He was careful, very careful of his purity. This I know, for he and I talked things over many times. He had a just pride in his wonderfully made body. He spent much time in developing his young strength, but he kept that body clean. His scholastic activities, his physical exercises were all indulged in strenuously with one purpose: He wanted to be so busy that he would not have time to sin. It was this more than any great worldly ambition that spurred him on; and I, his father, know this to have been so.

Now then here is how I look at it—or at least try to look at it. He was just on the threshold of life. Up to the time of his death he had been uniformly successful in all his activities, spiritual and material. Why then can't I get down on my knees and thank God that He took him when He did? Surely life could not have improved him for God. I know and you know how hard and difficult it is getting to be to live a straight life in this world. I am not pessimistic, but we cannot disregard the signs that are all about us. We are worse than the Romans, for we have a Christian tradition of nineteen hundred years behind us, and yet we are bigger hypocrites than the pagans were. I have five boys and one girl, and I sometimes shudder when I think of the world that they are coming to know.

Jack was lucky always, even in death. Well good-bye, father, and God bless you for your interest in him.

Sincerely yours,
JACK.

The above letter needs no comment. It stands as a testimony of the honor and regard that a decent man has for another man who is clean and pure. Realizing this, how can a girl allow a young man to be anything but pure and clean in her company, pure in thought, in desire, in word, in act—in short a gentleman because a real man?

A Model Courtship

There is the story of Billy, a boy who died in France. He was a brave young man who was serving our country during the World War. He was a good soldier because he was fearless—being pure, he had nothing to fear. The Catholic chaplain of his regiment found him dead in "No Man's Land." The following letter, thumb-worn from much reading, was found in his wallet. The letter was written by his fiancée, in the United States.

Dear Billy:

You will be able to be proud of me because I shall possess the most beautiful robe that a girl can wear, the stainless robe of purity. To you I shall be as beautiful and as pure as a lily. Let us pray for our vocation, for I feel too weak to bear the heavy responsibilities of a Catholic wife. Let us ever be united in the Sacred Heart of Jesus, whom we both love. He will keep us good and help us . . . .

With love,
MARGARET.

Small wonder that Billy loved this girl. She is the kind of girl that a real man loves; there can be no lust in affection for such a girl. She can be your ideal, young women; follow her lead, and your courtship will be one of love, a courtship respected by man and blessed by God.

Theirs was a love like the pure love of Sara and Tobias, so beautifully told in the Book of Tobias, in the Old Testament. Well might every young man and young woman read the account of that marriage, so generously blessed by God. In that sacred story we read that

". . . They who in such manner receive matrimony, as to shut out God from themselves and from their mind and to give themselves to their lust, . . . over them the devil hath power." **(Tob. vi, 17.)**

And later on we read the beautiful account of Tobias's greeting to his bride:

". . . We are children of saints, and we must not be joined together like heathens that know not God.

"So they both arose, and prayed earnestly both together that health might be given them.

"And Tobias said: Lord God of our fathers, may the heavens and the earth, and the sea, and the fountains, and the rivers, and all thy creatures that are in them, bless thee.

"Thou madest Adam of the slime of the earth, and gavest him Eve for a helper.

"And now, Lord, thou knowest that not for fleshly lust do I take my sister [cousin] to wife, but only for the love of posterity, in which thy name may be blessed for ever and ever.

"Sara also said: Have mercy on us, O Lord, have mercy on us, and let us grow old both together in health." **(Tob. viii, 5-10.)**

Clothes Do Not Make the Man—Or the Woman

Clothes do not make the man, nor do silks and satins make the woman. Many young women who are well dressed and who possess the manner of the court are anything but decent; by the same token many girls who are poor and are forced to do the most menial services in order to make a living are queens of good conduct and of virtue. When a girl reduces her courtship to habitual lust, she lowers herself to the level of the most common girl. The socially prominent woman who commits sins of impurity is as base as is the fallen woman who makes her living by such sin. And a girl's claim that she is in love with her partner in sin and that he is the only one with whom she improperly conducts herself does not in the least degree change the nature or lessen the gravity of the sin. If a young woman who is sinning against purity finds consolation in the fact that a prostitute is more promiscuous than she is, that young woman has already lowered herself to the level of fallen women. The sin is in each case the same—impurity. Neither of the two young women is pure; neither one has the least decency or self-respect; both are common; they are sisters in sin; they are poor in virtue. The richest girl, the most perfect young woman is she who is rich in purity though poor in material things.

Secret Sins

There are no secret sins; God is always with us, and He sees our every thought and action. So to speak of a secret sin is to use a misnomer. Anyone, man or woman, even though married, commits a grievous sin against purity when he or she touches himself or herself for the purpose of deriving **sexual self-gratification.** Such sins can and do at times grow to be habits that are very hard to break, and sad is the soul that is caught in such a tangle. A regular confessor, frequent reception of communion, and prayer, joined to unceasing efforts against the temptation are the surest way to victory.

Another great help is the crucifix. Have a rosary or a small crucifix with you at all times. When temptation comes to you, hold your crucifix or the cross on your rosary and say to yourself: "Dear Jesus, you died because you love me. When I sin with myself, I deny you, because you cannot be with me when I indulge in this sinful pleasure." As long as you hold the cross in your hand you will not crucify Christ for the pleasure of impurity. Hold fast to your crucifix, and you will not sin.

Tributes to Purity

Shakespeare wrote:

"What stronger breastplate than a heart unstained!"

"Lilies that fester smell worse than weeds."

Milton sang of purity:

"So dear to heaven is saintly chastity
That when a soul is found sincerely so
A thousand liveried angels lackey her."

Thomas Nelson Page, in his introduction to the life of the chivalrous Robert E. Lee, wrote:

"Truth, simply stated, like chastity in a woman's face, is its own best advocate; its simplest presentation is its strongest proof."

Tennyson was the troubadour of the pure:

"Wearing the white flower of a blameless life."

"Live pure, speak true, right wrong, follow the King—
Else, wherefore born?"

"Eyes of a pure woman, wholesome stars of love."

"My good blade carves the casques of men,
My tough lance thrusteth sure,
My strength is as the strength of ten,
Because my heart is pure."

Their song is but another note in the melody of praise that all decent men and women sing to the pure of heart. And their song is but a faint echo of the praise of the God of purity, who says:

"Oh how beautiful is the chaste generation with glory. For the memory thereof is immortal; because it is known both with God and with men. . . . It triumpheth crowned for ever, winning the reward of undefiled conflicts." **(Wis. iv, 1, 2.)**

"Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, to refrain yourselves from carnal desires which war against the soul." **(I Pet. ii, 11.)**

"Evil thoughts are an abomination to the Lord: and pure words, most beautiful, shall be confirmed by Him."

"He that loveth cleanness of heart, for the grace of his lips shall have the king for his friend." **(Prov. xxii, 11.)**

"Give not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin." **(Eccle. v, 5.)**

"No price is worthy of a continent soul." **(Ecclus. xxvi, 20.)**

"Blessed are the clean of heart; for they shall see God." **(Matt. v, 8.)**

Unreasonable Wives

For a girl to expect the young man whom she marries to provide her with all the conveniences and luxuries which she had in her own home is very unreasonable. The man of her choice is young; in all likelihood he is just beginning his career and is not in that financial position where he can provide his young wife with the same material conveniences that her father provided for her. Moreover the girl probably had a position before she was married, and her brothers and sisters were probably working too. Obviously a young man cannot provide the luxuries that the girl's personal and family income made possible. If the girl is not ready to make many sacrifices in her marriage, she should marry a King Midas, or she shouldn't marry at all.

Working Wives

The place for a wife is in the home, not in one of the offices of the business world. If the young man's income is not sufficient for two people, the young couple should not get married. The girl should not plan to work after she is married—this in fairness to the children who in God's providence may come. After all the primary purpose of marriage is the procreation of children.

To use artificial means to prevent the conception of children is a grievous sin; you can't live that way. And young people who marry with the intention of thus preventing the conception and the birth of children until they can afford them have no business getting married until they can afford them. The young woman who marries with the intention of using artificial birth control in order that she can continue to work is committing a mortal sin. She and her husband are guilty of the crime of Onan, and God's punishment to Onan was death: "And therefore the Lord slew him, because he did a detestable thing."

The practice of rhythm or periodic abstinence—this is something completely different from artificial birth control, which calls for positive preventive means and hence is always sinful. The rhythm theory calls for abstinence from the exercise of the marriage rights during those times of the month when conception is most likely to take place. A good Catholic doctor can advise you about this theory. But married people should not practice the rhythm theory unless they have a good reason. Your confessor is the best judge of the validity of your reason. The primary purpose of marriage is the bearing and the rearing of children. If young people intend to use their marriage rights and sinfully to prevent the birth of children when they could have them, why do they get married?

Let us stop for a minute on this question of being able to afford children. Each of five priests whom I know (I am one of them) comes from a family so large that the total number of children in the five families is fifty-eight. Two of the children in each family have religious vocations. The parents in those families couldn't afford children, but they had them; and with the children came the very generous blessings of God. But remember this: While God and the Catholic Church say nothing about how many children you must or may or should have, God and the Church do most emphatically say that you may not commit sin in order to limit the number of children you have. The law against birth control was not made by the Catholic Church; let no man tell you that it was. This law is just as binding on every Protestant, Jew, and pagan as it is on every Catholic.

Let the young husband and the young wife be proud of the children they bring into the world. And let the blush of shame dye the face of those who question or look scornfully upon those young people who are rearing children, those couples who have a generosity and love of virtue that are unknown to those who criticize. Be proud of the children you have.

Childless Couples

Be very slow to criticize married couples who have no children. Not infrequently their childlessness is their greatest cross. To their sorrow God does not bless them with children, and that through no fault of their own. In the same way it happens that good parents through no fault of their own may have only one child.

Many are the childless couples who have prayed continuously to be blessed with children. God in His providence has seen fit to send them none. It is well for young married people to know that often a very simple surgical operation or medical attention of some kind can make it possible for the woman to bear children. For this reason and for many others select for your family a good Catholic doctor whom you can feel free to consult in this matter and in similar matters. I say a good Catholic doctor, because too frequently non-Catholic doctors advise procedure that is in direct violation of the law of God.

There are many childless couples who, unable to have children of their own, have generously adopted children from foundling homes. Such couples usually adopt infants, and with the years they come to look upon these children as their own. The children, never having known their own parents, accept the love of their foster parents. How dear to God are those good men and women who, though deprived of the realization of their greatest hope, their own children, have gone through married life, childless or with adopted children, resigned to God's will.

Mixed Marriages

Mixed marriages don't work, and that for many reasons. Perhaps the one who is least readily convinced of this is the woman or the man who is the child of a mixed marriage. He or she will tell you that his or her home was definitely an **exception.** Don't try to fool yourself, as many have tried, by saying: "But John is different," or "Ruth is different." The facts prove that in almost every case of mixed marriage he or she is not different and the marriage is a failure. For every one successful mixed marriage there are hundreds that are sad or tragic failures.

The first question that arises is the question of children. Too frequently the non-Catholic wishes to use sinful means to prevent the birth of children; and you can't live that way. And if that question arises, what are you going to do about it? You are married, and forever; your husband or your wife refuses to permit you to live in the only way in which you can be happy—God's way.

Then there is that most intimate thing in your life, that most important thing, your faith, which to the non-Catholic often means little or nothing. If your marriage is blessed with children, there arises the question of Catholic education. Countless non-Catholics in mixed marriage have, in spite of the promises they signed, refused to allow the children to be educated in Catholic schools. "The public school is good enough; it's cheaper anyway," they say. Yes; costs less, if you do not consider your children's possible loss of faith. You may think that this will not happen to your children, but the fact is that the children of mixed marriages much too frequently are lost to the Catholic faith.

Again you must realize that as your children approach the age of reason and the time of their first communion they will ask the non-Catholic parent a thousand questions. And the non-Catholic will be unable to answer those questions because he does not understand the Church. Let us take an example: The child is taking part in the Holy Thursday procession. To you, who have the faith, the sight of your child with the hundreds of other white-robed children is the grandest and happiest moment of your life, and as Christ in the Blessed Sacrament passes along the aisle, you ask Him to bless you and your family; the entire procession has a deep and precious significance for you. To the non-Catholic parent this service is just so much mummery. Again how different is your attitude toward Christmas and the Christ Child in Holy Communion from the attitude of your non-Catholic partner.

Now let us consider the viewpoint of the non-Catholic. Is it fair for the Catholic to want to marry him when she knows that there are many things that he will not understand, many things that he will perhaps come to resent? It is better for the non-Catholic to marry one who shares his religious convictions. It is almost impossible for the Catholic in the intimate matters of home life to meet the non-Catholic even halfway. And if the non-Catholic refuses to live the Catholic way, neither partner in the marriage will be happy. So when the Catholic Church says to her children, "Marry your own," she is opposing mixed marriages for the sake of the non-Catholic and the Catholic alike.

Getting Married

You should have a regular confessor. He will be able to counsel and advise you, to protect you in your courtship, and to instruct you on the obligations of married life when the time comes. Certainly young people, especially young women, should be informed of the obligations they are assuming in marriage and should be told what is right and what is wrong in married life.

They should be made to realize that when they are married they will be living in a state of life—and a very holy one—entirely different from the single state. They should be informed that in marriage they may do many things that were forbidden to them in courtship, actions in themselves good, actions that God blesses only in the marital state. Many crosses, many sacrifices come in married life, and the intimacies of married life are pleasures with which God compensates husband and wife. Not only are these intimacies not wrong in the married state but they are good actions which of themselves lead to the fulfillment of the primary purpose of marriage. And as the teaching of God clearly indicates, that makes all the difference in the world.

During your days of courtship receive the sacraments frequently and avoid the occasions of sin. In this way you will be cooperating with God's will for you. In this way you cannot make a mistake; you will not sin; your courtship will be one of true love; your marriage will be blessed by God.

The Church's Laws on Marriage

In the eyes of the Church and of God marriage is a very holy and sacred union. Marriage between two baptized persons is a sacrament, that is it is a means of grace. Marriage between two unbaptized people, though not a sacrament, is something very sacred. Realizing the sacredness and the importance of marriage, the Church places safeguards around this very holy contract and enacts laws concerning it. Only those Church laws that more particularly concern you are set down here.

Necessary Arrangements for Marriage

Notify the Pastor. See your pastor at least two months before the date that you have set for your marriage. The young man and the young woman should together call on their respective pastors and inform them of their intention of being married. Arrangements for the marriage must be made, and they cannot be made on short notice.

Place of the Marriage. If the bride is a Catholic, the marriage is celebrated in her parish church; if she is not a Catholic, the marriage is usually performed in the rectory of the groom's parish church. The pastor of the church in which the marriage is to take place has jurisdiction over the marriage; no priest will marry a couple unless he has permission and delegation from the pastor who has this jurisdiction. Ordinarily no pastor will perform the marriage ceremony unless he has permission from the pastor of at least one of the parties to the contract.

Time of the Marriage. If you wish to be married at a nuptial Mass, you must arrange your marriage so that it will not occur during Advent or Lent—*i. e.,* from the fourth Sunday before Christmas to Christmas Day or from Ash Wednesday to Easter Sunday. Only for serious reasons will the bishop grant permission for the celebration of a nuptial Mass during these times.

Baptismal Records. You or the pastor must get your baptismal records from the church in which you were baptized. Catholics who have not been confirmed should be confirmed before they are married, unless there is a reason for postponing confirmation. In that case the Catholic should avail himself of the first opportunity to be confirmed. The pastor will arrange the details.

Catholic Attendants. Since they are the official Church witnesses, the bridesmaid and the groomsman must be Catholics. This rule applies only to these two members of the wedding party. (Catholics should not be the "attendants" at a non-Catholic wedding without the consent of the bishop of the diocese.)

Marriage License. The pastor must be sure that the parties have obtained a civil marriage license. The license must be obtained in some county seat in the state in which the marriage is to be celebrated. In some states the man and the woman must pass a physical examination before they can obtain a marriage license.

Proclamation of Banns. Banns are the announcements that are made in church to the effect that two persons (the name of each is mentioned) intend to marry. The banns are read on three successive Sundays. Banns will be further explained in the next general section.

Consent of the Parents. Except for very serious reasons no priest will officiate at a marriage without the consent of the parents of both parties, unless each party is twenty-one years of age or unless, in the case of younger persons, there is a very serious reason for not obtaining this consent. Even if each is twenty-one years of age, the consent of the parents is generally expected, unless there is a reason why it cannot be obtained.

Necessary Instruction and Freedom From Impediments. The pastor must make sure that both parties are free to be married, *i. e.,* that neither party is prohibited by reason of an impediment. He must make certain that neither party is already married—a civil divorce does not break a marriage bond. He must

make certain that neither party is being forced into the marriage through fear of threats made by parents or by anyone else. He must be sure that both parties are sufficiently instructed in their religion, that they know that they are to be married for life, and that for them civil divorce will not for any reason whatsoever permit remarriage. He must instruct them in the primary purpose of marriage—the procreation and education of children. He must be sure that they understand what is forbidden in and what is proper to married life.

MIXED MARRIAGES—Necessary Instructions. The pastor must obtain a dispensation for the Catholic who wishes to marry a non-Catholic. If they can afford it, the parties to a mixed marriage usually make an offering of five or ten dollars to the chancery office when the dispensation is obtained. This offering is not a purchase price; it is merely a reasonable sum of money to help defray the expenses of maintaining the chancery office. In many dioceses the pastor is required to give six instructions to the non-Catholic before a dispensation can be obtained. The pastor explains the nature and the obligations of the married state, the essentials of the Catholic faith, and the demands which this faith makes on both the Catholic and the non-Catholic. This is done not only in fairness to the Catholic but also in fairness to the non-Catholic, who must be made to see before marriage the obligations that he or she is assuming in marrying a Catholic. Moreover the pastor must explain clearly the nature and the obligations of the promises which the non-Catholic must sign before marriage to the Catholic. Every diocese requires that the non-Catholic party in the marriage contract sign two promises: 1—that the Catholic party will be allowed complete freedom in the practice of his or her faith; 2—that all the children of the union will be baptized and educated in the Catholic faith alone (the Catholic party must also make this second promise). In some dioceses it is required that additional promises also be signed. Such additional promises concern matters that are of serious obligation. Even if the diocese does not make these matters subject for signed promises, both parties are bound to be loyal to them, *e. g.*:

The couple may not have another marriage ceremony performed—either before or after the Catholic ceremony—in the presence of a non-Catholic minister or a justice of the peace. (In certain foreign countries where a ceremony before a civil magistrate is demanded for civil effects, the Church allows a ceremony before a civil magistrate in addition to the Catholic ceremony.)

The Catholic party is obliged prudently to encourage the non-Catholic party to embrace the Catholic faith, this to be done by prayer, counsel, and good example.

The couple may not use sinful means toward birth prevention.

The couple must recognize that their marriage is indissoluble (once they have used their marriage rights), that a second marriage for either one of them is impossible while the first partner is still living.

The non-Catholic must promise that in the case of death of the Catholic party the children of the union will be educated in the Catholic faith.

Confession and Holy Communion. If a Catholic marries with mortal sin on his soul, he has committed a sacrilege, even though his marriage is valid (good), and he receives no grace from the sacrament of matrimony until he recovers the state of grace, either through confession or through an act of perfect contrition with the intention of going to confession as soon as possible. But even apart from the question of mortal sin, the good Catholic will want to go to confession and to receive Holy

Communion in order that his or her soul will be in the most perfect state on the occasion of receiving the great and holy sacrament of matrimony. In the case of a mixed marriage the Catholic party or the pastor should prudently assist the non-Catholic to make an act of perfect contrition so that he or she will begin married life in God's grace and friendship. And in order that God's grace may always be present it would be well for the Catholic prudently to encourage the non-Catholic to recite daily the act of perfect contrition.

N. B. Realizing these necessary arrangements that must be made for marriage, you can clearly see why it is important that you *see your pastor early enough before your marriage. You ought to see him at least two months before your marriage and inform him of your intentions.*

The Banns

The banns are the announcement of a promise of marriage between two Catholics. The banns are not announced in the case of a mixed marriage; the pastor obtains a dispensation from the reading of the banns when he obtains the dispensation for the mixed marriage. The banns are generally announced at the same Mass on three successive Sundays—usually at high Mass, if there is a high Mass in the church. The banns are read in the parish church of each party. You have probably heard banns read; they are worded somewhat as follows: "There is a promise of marriage between Mary Smith of this parish and John Brown of Saint Anne's Parish."

These banns must be read. If for some reason they cannot be read, a dispensation must be obtained from the bishop or from his representative. Though young people often regard the reading of the banns as an embarrassment, they are read for the protection of both the young man and the young woman who intend to be married. Should there be any reason why the marriage should not take place, the banns provide an opportunity for the prevention of the marriage. Mere embarrassment should not make you request a dispensation from the reading of the banns; they are part of the Church law that governs the sacrament of matrimony, and the Church wishes the law to be fulfilled. You can easily attend an early Mass, one at which the banns will not be read.

Time of Marriage — Nuptial Mass

The marriage may take place on any day of the year. But unless you obtain the special permission of the bishop, you may not, during the season of Advent—from the first Sunday of Advent until Christmas, inclusive—or during the season of Lent—from Ash Wednesday to Easter Sunday, inclusive—be married at Mass with the nuptial blessing.

The nuptial blessing is a special prayer and blessing for the bride. It is given during the canon of the Mass, immediately after the *Pater Noster*. The blessing is not given outside of Mass. The bride receives this blessing only once; therefore a widow who marries again does not receive this blessing at her second marriage if she has received it at the first. If a girl does not receive the blessing at the time of her marriage, she may receive it at any time after her marriage—but of course during Mass.

A Catholic should want to be married at Mass and to receive the nuptial blessing. The bride and the groom should receive Holy Communion during the nuptial Mass, though this is not necessary. Certainly nothing is more beautiful and more strengthening than is a real Catholic marriage. Incidentally the priest is the Church's witness to the ceremony; the bride and the groom are the real ministers of the sacrament; one administers it to the other. The marriage takes place when both parties give their mutual consent before the Mass is said; everything done after the actual marriage is done to invoke God's graces and blessings on the newly married couple.

The bride and the groom who receive Holy Communion at the nuptial Mass entertain Christ as their first guest; He is the first to congratulate them, the first to bless them. And as long as the couple keep Him first in their home, they will be happy. What finer sight than a young couple frequently together at Holy Communion—every Sunday throughout the years of their married life. Such a marriage is a Catholic marriage. When God sends them children, the man and the woman may not be able to go to Mass and communion together, but each will go. Christ loves the newly married couple. At the request of His mother He anticipated His time of miracles in order that His first miracle—the changing of water into wine—should take place at a marriage feast, the feast of Cana.

Place of Mixed Marriages

Mixed marriages may not be celebrated at Mass. They are usually celebrated in the parish rectory. They may not be celebrated in private homes without the express permission of the bishop; and except for the gravest reasons such permission is not given. Where the bishop permits, mixed marriages may be held in the church, but not at Mass. Your pastor will guide you in this matter. Your pastor knows the custom of the diocese, and you should follow this custom. At a mixed marriage Mass is not said and the nuptial blessing is not given. The Catholic should however go to confession and receive Holy Communion before the marriage. It is not necessary to go to Mass and receive Holy Communion before the marriage, but certainly it is highly commendable to do so.

You Must Be Married Before a Priest

A Catholic, whether he or she marries a Catholic or a non-Catholic, must be married before an authorized priest. A justice of the peace or a non-Catholic minister cannot perform a valid marriage ceremony for a Catholic; in the eyes of the Church and of God such a marriage is purely and simply not a marriage; in the eyes of the civil authorities the parties are married, but in the eyes of God they are living in sin. And the strange thing is that some Catholics—many of them should know better—think that even though they did not fulfill the Church's requirements for marriage they are really married. The fact remains that *in the eyes of God they are not married and hence under pain of sin may not live together.*

It is true that before April 19, 1908, in certain places and under certain conditions Catholics could be validly married without a priest's witnessing the ceremony. But since that time the Catholic Church states that a Catholic must be married before a priest if the marriage is to be valid. An exception to this law would obtain in a place like Russia, from which Catholic priests have been exiled. But where a Catholic priest is available, the Catholic must abide by this Church law.

Incidentally the Church does recognize as valid those marriages that are entered into between two Protestants or between a Protestant and an unbaptized person (the latter case since May 19, 1918) or between two unbaptized persons—whether such marriages are celebrated before a justice of the peace or before a Protestant minister.

But you, a Catholic, whether you marry a Catholic, a Protestant, a Jew, a pagan, or a person of any other creed or cult, must be married before an authorized Catholic priest if your marriage is to be valid. Never forget this.

You Are Not Married if ——

There are certain cases in which a marriage ceremony has been performed before a priest and still there is no marriage. Such marriages are said to be invalid. *An invalid marriage is no marriage.* The following are examples:

A marriage is invalid if one or both of the parties do not know at least this much: that marriage is a *permanent* union of husband and wife and that the primary purpose of marriage is the bringing of children into the world through the exercise of the marriage rights, which the contracting parties in the marriage give to each other.

The fact that a girl does not know the entire extent of the marriage rights does not invalidate the marriage; if she has a general knowledge of the marriage rights, that is sufficient. The girl's mother, father, confessor, or pastor should however make certain that the young woman fully understands the obligations that she is assuming. Before her marriage every girl should most decidedly have a thorough talk with one of the persons mentioned above. Not a few married women have made themselves unhappy because they did not have such a talk before their marriage *Mothers and fathers should talk to their children who are contemplating marriage*—but in the vast majority of cases parents shirk that duty. So the best advice to give young people, especially young women, is: Ask your confessor or your pastor to tell you the general facts about the marriage rights; this delicate matter is all-important for every young person who is planning to be married.

A marriage is invalid if before marriage one or both parties by a positive act of the will exclude each other's right to the proper use of the marriage rights, or exclude the birth of children, or exclude the unity of marriage (one wife and one husband), or exclude the indissolubility of marriage (the marriage tie cannot be broken if the parties are validly married and have lived together as husband and wife, *i. e.,* have at least once used their marriage rights of intercourse). In the eyes of God a civil divorce does not break the marriage bond; therefore divorced people cannot marry anyone else.

A marriage is invalid if the consent of one or both parties was extorted through violence or fear so grave that one or both parties had no choice but to submit to the celebration of the marriage. The fear or violence must be not only grave but unjustly brought about or imposed by a person and must be of such a nature that the party or parties were obliged to submit to the marriage in order to escape the serious evil threatened. Even reverential fear (fear of parents) might in certain circumstances be enough to constitute a grave fear that would make the marriage invalid. In other words both parties to a marriage contract must give free consent to the marriage if the marriage is to be valid. Forced consent invalidates a marriage.

A marriage is invalid if one party decides or both parties agree to use sinful means to avoid having any children, or that they may be divorced, or that one or both may lead a double life—commit adultery. Adultery does not invalidate the marriage; but if before the marriage both parties agree to permit one or both to practice adultery, the marriage contract is invalid.

Impediments to Marriage

A matrimonial impediment is a serious obstacle to marriage. Such impediments are of two kinds: prohibitive and diriment. A *prohibitive impediment* is that under which marriage is forbidden under pain of mortal sin, unless a dispensation from the impediment is obtained. In this case, however, *the marriage is valid,* provided the other necessary conditions have been fulfilled, *e.g.,* marriage before a priest. The second kind of impediment, the *diriment impediment, is that under which a marriage is not only forbidden but is invalid—not a marriage—unless a dispensation has been obtained.*

Prohibitive Impediments

The simple vow of virginity or perpetual chastity; a vow not to marry; a vow to become a priest or a religious. People who are living in the world and who have bound themselves by any of the above-mentioned vows can arrange to have a dispensation from this vow through their confessor or pastor.

Mixed religion is another prohibitive impediment. By mixed religion is meant that one of the parties to the marriage contract is a Catholic and the other party is a baptized member of another faith. This is a prohibitive impediment; however the marriage of two such people is invalid unless it takes place before a Catholic priest. A dispensation from this mixed-religion impediment must be obtained before a priest will witness the marriage of two such people.

Legal adoption is another prohibitive impediment in some states. If in a particular state a man or a woman is forbidden to marry someone that he or she has legally adopted, the Church forbids it too; the Church follows the state in this matter. (*Cf.* page 46.)

Diriment Impediments

A diriment impediment is one that makes a marriage invalid—no marriage—unless a dispensation from the impediment has been obtained. It is clear that there are certain diriment impediments from which a man or a woman can never be dispensed; for example a man can never get a dispensation to marry his own sister.

In the following paragraphs we list some of the diriment impediments. Only those are listed that might ordinarily occur. We have already spoken of cases in which there is no marriage because there is a defect inherent in the marriage contract or because the marriage was not celebrated before a priest (if either one of the parties is Catholic). (*Cf.* pages 41, 42, 43.)

A previous valid marriage is a diriment impediment to another marriage. Two Catholics who have been validly married and who have lived as man and wife—have used their mariage [sic] right of intercourse at least once—can never be dispensed from their marriage. Not even the Pope could issue a dispensation from such a marriage.

> *The Pauline Privilege.* Catholics are sometimes surprised to learn that the Catholic Church has allowed converts to the Church who have been married before their conversion to be remarried after their conversion. Such a person may have been validly married before his conversion, but acting on the words of St. Paul (it is from him that we derive the name Pauline privilege), in certain cases the Holy Father declares that the previous marriage bond is dissolved. Such a case might obtain where both parties to the first marriage were unbaptized in any church or where one party was unbaptized and the other is only doubtfully baptized. We say doubtfully because it may be that the minister did not use the proper matter and form when he administered the baptism. If such an unbaptized or doubtfully baptized person wishes to become a Catholic and the other party to the first marriage is unwilling to live in peace with the person so converted, the Catholic convert may marry again. The pastor will attend to all the necessary details in such a case and will arrange with the proper Church authorities for the obtaining of a decision.

The sacrament of holy orders is a diriment impediment to marriage; priests cannot marry. In the various Oriental rites (*e. g.,* Greek Uniates—not the Greek Orthodox, who are in schism) of the Catholic Church priests who were married before they received holy orders may live as married men after they have been ordained.

Solemn vows taken in religious orders properly so called constitute a diriment impediment to matrimony.

Disparity of worship is another diriment impediment to matrimony. Disparity of worship would prevent marriage between a Catholic and a person who has not been baptized validly in *any* church. To marry such a person, the Catholic must obtain a dispensation. Disparity of worship is not the same as the impediment of mixed religion, which calls into question marriage between a Catholic and a person who has been baptized validly in another faith. In this latter case too dispensation should be obtained before the Catholic and the unbaptized person can marry. In both cases the marriage is invalid unless it is celebrated before a priest.

Abduction of a woman (by a man) and violent detention of a woman (by a man) for the purpose of marriage are both diriment impediments to marriage.

Adultery (one or both parties to the adultery being already married) combined with either the mutual promise of marriage or the attempt at marriage in church or before a justice of the peace is a diriment impediment to marriage. Before two such people on the death of husband or wife can be validly married to the partner with whom the sin has been committed, a dispensation must be obtained from the impediment that they have contracted.

Blood relationship to the third degree inclusive in the collateral line is a diriment impediment to marriage. Brothers and sisters are related in the first degree of collateral line, first cousins in the second degree, second cousins in the third degree, etc. Brother and sister can never get a dispensation to marry each other; cousins may get a dispensation from the impediment of blood relationship.

Affinity, that is, relationship through marriage to the second degree inclusive, is a diriment impediment to marriage. Thus on the death of his wife a man cannot without a dispensation marry his deceased wife's sister, aunt, niece, or first cousin.

If two people were invalidly married, *e. g.,* Catholics married by a justice of the peace, on the death of one party to that marriage contract the other could not without a dispensation marry anyone of the blood relations to the second degree inclusive in the direct line of the deceased. Thus in the case of an invalid marriage and the death of the woman, the man could not without a dispensation marry his wife's mother, grandmother, daughter, or granddaughter.

Spiritual relationship is a diriment impediment to marriage. Such a spiritual relationship exists between a baptized person and the person who has baptized him, between the baptized person and his godparents.

So when a young man is engaged to a girl who is converted to the faith, he should not act as her sponsor in her baptism. If he does so, he creates a spiritual relationship which is a diriment impediment to marriage. In such a situation a dispensation must be obtained before the marriage can be celebrated.

Legal adoption is a diriment impediment to marriage in those countries or states where the civil law forbids a man or a woman to marry someone that he or she has legally adopted. In the case of legal adoption the Church follows the law of the particular state; the Church accepts the impediment of legal adoption as a prohibitive or diriment impediment according as the civil authorities decide in particular cases. The Church also follows the civil law in the extent of the application of this law. (*Cf.* page 44.)

N. B. Catholics sometimes criticize the Church for her granting what they term a divorce with permission to remarry. The Church never grants a divorce. All she does is decide on the evidence advanced that due to the presence of one of the aforesaid diriment impediments from which no dispensation had been or could be obtained there never was a valid marriage in that particular case.

The wealth or poverty of the persons involved hasn't a thing to do with the decisions in such cases. As a matter of fact the records reveal that decisions in such cases have been rendered to more poor people than to rich people. When such a decision is granted to rich people, you read about it in the

newspapers; the news of such decisions being granted poor people never gets to the headlines. Moreover if the testimony advanced in a particular case is false, if people have lied about the matter and have not been found out and a decision of nullity is granted, the decision is of no avail. If the marriage was valid, it is still valid, and the decision of the Church, rendered on what was believed to be true testimony, has not in the eyes of God dissolved the marriage bond, and the second marriage is an adulterous one and is known to be such by the parties to that second marriage.

Straightening Out Tangled Marriages

Catholics who have contracted a marriage that for one reason or another is invalid, *e. g.,* marriage witnessed by a Protestant minister or a justice of the peace, frequently think that they have put themselves hopelessly beyond the pale of the Catholic Church's interest in them. Because of this incorrect idea thousands each year are lost to the Church. Such people have sinned; in the eyes of the Church they are not validly married; but in many cases such marriages can be straightened out. Even in extreme cases, as for example where the non-Catholic party in the marriage is unwilling to appear before a priest, it is possible that the marriage can be straightened out, without his presence or even his knowledge. The Catholic in a case of this kind should have a talk with his pastor or another priest whom he knows. In many cases the marriage can be made valid, and the party or parties can return to the love and friendship of God. As long as such people remain away from the Church, they are in mortal sin and in danger of dying in this state and thus losing their immortal souls. The Church, like Christ, never loses interest in a soul; she is always glad to welcome the return of her prodigal children.

Separation

Married people must live together unless there is a very serious reason why they should not do so. The parties in the marriage contract may not themselves be the judges of the seriousness of the reasons in this matter. Married people should not separate even temporarily without presenting the case to their pastor, who will in turn consult the bishop if the case calls for this procedure.

Divorce

In the eyes of God there is no such thing as divorce in the sense in which it is generally understood today, *i. e.,* divorce from the marriage bond with the right to remarry. (*Cf.* pages 44 and 46.) This is not a law of the Catholic Church alone; it is a law of God that binds every man and woman, be they Catholic, Protestant, Jew, or pagan.

For very serious reasons and in order that the injured party may benefit through recourse to law against the offending party, the Church does allow the offended party of the marriage contract to obtain a civil divorce from the offending party. But this "divorce" does not in the least affect the existence of the marriage bond.

Neither party, not even the innocent party, can marry again, because a valid marriage cannot be broken by any civil authority. In a word the parties are still married, even though separated, and will remain married until the marriage bond is broken by the death of either one of the parties.

Even a civil divorce may not be sought by a Catholic without the permission of the bishop of the diocese or the permission of the one whom the bishop delegates for this purpose. When serious reasons would seem to call for a civil divorce, the pastor should be consulted.

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