



Newsletter – October 2022

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Our Wedding Vows

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(The following is an adaptation of an article on the same subject written by Francis Mane)

The Sacrament of Matrimony is one of the seven sacraments in our Catholic Church. Consider the following extract:

“It is in loving that man becomes truly himself. For God, who is love itself, has created man in his own image – both man and woman (Gen 1:27). When a man and a woman meet and fall in love and wish to spend their lives together, an important time begins for them. This is the time of engagement, a time of preparation. It should be a school of life and chastity, a time of grace, during which they grow together in a deeper understanding of their future commitment in marriage.” (1)

Wedding times are joyous occasions. However, some of these joys are short-lived. Many marriages fail after sometime due to many causes. The present secular world also poses its own distractions and challenges. Added to that when the married couple has children the effects of disunity are magnified.

The Order for Celebrating Matrimony offers four options for Catholic wedding vows. The standard version goes like this:

Priest (or deacon): Since it is your intention to enter the covenant of Holy Matrimony, join your right hands, and declare your consent before God and his Church.

Groom: I, (name), take you, (name), to be my wife. I promise to be true to you in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health. I will love you and honour you all the days of my life.

Bride: I (name), take you, (name), to be my husband. I promise to be faithful to you in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health, to love you and to honour you all the days of my life.

Case 1: A married couple was proud to announce that they have gone through a positive marriage for 56 years. It was possible with the guidance of God and their marriage in church that made the difference. The man of the house also said the spirit of forgiveness and letting go was part of their married life. Their three children are married and they are proud grandparents of 6 grandchildren.

Case 2: An active couple in their late 70's was very friendly, lovable and was very participative parishioners of a neighbourhood group. The father even had advised us personally many years ago to be patient and loving towards our spouse. He even said it is important to give and to let go for the good relationship to continue without anger. However, when he fell sick during Covid-19 suddenly he became aggressive towards his own ageing wife, son and daughter-in-law. It may be because of the long isolation. He became aggressive and none of them could visit him. He also could have felt abandoned by his only son and his wife.

Case 3: Another parishioner and his wife worked hard to support their three children through their education until they completed their university. They too had paid up their housing loans in good time and all five are working professionally. They were very close and a loving family attending mass together as one family. They were also in the Parish Pastoral Council team and their son was with the parish Youth Ministry all this while. As the parents continued to work within Singapore and in the region, a gap appeared between the parents and their children. In October 2021 their father was tested Covid-19 positive. Since then, he was isolated because of his age, diabetes, heart related condition and urinary tract infection. After, sometime because of Covid-19, his diabetes, his mental health, his eyesight and urinary tract infection affected him and caused some complications medically. He became very stressed, depressed and frustrated upon his discharge from hospital. He felt that nobody listens to him. He became aggressive and demanding towards his family members when his family members fail to understand him and his medical condition. With such situation, the family members decided to abandon him alone in his house. Due to his old age, he couldn't control his urine which caused a stench smell in his room. So, his family members made a report to the Ministry of Social and Family Development and the Medical Social Workers of the hospital. The family members had hoped that he can be taken care of by the Government Agencies one day or be placed at a Home. On the second day after their family members had abandoned the elderly man, he had a mild heart attack and was send to the hospital by his neighbour. It is one of the unusual realities in the parish. Logically, the family should stay together and pull through or get a caregiver to help with their domestic matters and should treat the person with care, concern and should uphold his dignity with respect.

Our Reality

a. So, how significant is my marriage vow to me personally?

"I promise to be true to you in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health. I will love you and honour you all the days of my life".

b. Is our marriage vow only a statement at the altar of God?

c. How do we live our marriage vow, declared at the altar of God?

d. What would be the consequences if we ignore our marriage vows?

Our Personal Reflection

a. How do I feel about the above situation?

b. What did I learn and discover from the above situation?

Our Christian Reflection

- a. If Christ is present among us what would be his challenging message for us especially in such a crisis?
- b. What does the teaching of the Bible, the Gospel, The Catechism of the Catholic Church, The Social Teachings of The Church and the Encyclicals tell me personally with regards to the above current situation?

Our Response and Action

- a. How can I/we be more aware of our social responsibilities towards our marriage vows in our journey of marriage?
 - b. How can I/We create awareness to the others in our Parish or the community where we belong to?
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