

Mutual Love in Matrimony

It is neither new nor strange or unexpected that when women and men marry, they quickly discover there are more differences between them than were at first apparent during their courtship and marriage preparation course. Life is dynamic and the human person is constantly changing, developing, and resists being controlled. Our Creator God does not attempt to control us but respects and nurtures the gift of freedom of conscience He gives to each human being. He asks us to adopt the same attitude of respect for others in their conscience.

We can think of life as canoeing on a river. The river flows downstream apparently effortlessly, while it takes considerable effort, energy, and skill to manoeuvre a canoe upstream against the current towards a desired destination. The current is the flow of attitudes surrounding us from society, culture, people who are closer to us at home, at work, among friends, in the neighbourhood, but also people everywhere. Many dominant and powerful trends emphasize individual wants, needs, desires, impulses, and rights, but often pay little attention to duties and responsibilities. We are all affected until we notice them and become more critical of them.

Thankfully, there is a strong breeze blowing upstream to push the canoe and help the paddlers. The breath or wind of the Holy Spirit blows in the direction of our destination, which orients us and helps us navigate to and to reach the house of the heavenly Father. If we are open to the Holy Spirit, He/She enlightens our mind and guides us to search for and to find the truth, which Jesus said is the only thing that can set us free. Worldly attitudes would sweep us to our destruction; while kingdom attitudes would give us abundant life and love.

Let us compare and contrast attitudes which we pick up from the world and absorb so completely that they may even seem natural and so personal that we take them for granted without ever questioning them, on the one hand, and on the other hand, attitudes generated within us by the Holy Spirit and which are proper to children of God and his Kingdom. God shines his divine light into the darkness that surrounds us in the world.

“FOLLOWING THE CROWD”

1. We need sex to live, to be healthy, and to be happy.
2. Masturbation is okay, even between husband and wife.
3. Contraception is okay. So is abortion as a last resort because her body belongs to the woman.
4. “Safe sex” is okay.
5. A man cannot help his sexual impulses and he must give release to them.
6. A woman has a right to control her own body; so it is up to the woman to decide when to have or to refrain from having sexual relations. She gives “cues” when she is ready. Men must please women to get what they want.

FOLLOWING JESUS AND THE GUIDANCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

1. We can be perfectly healthy, happy, and content without sex. God designed it specifically to join husbands and wives and give life.
2. Sexual union of husband and wife alone expresses self-giving. Masturbation ties a person up in bonds of self-centeredness.
3. Natural Family Planning respects God’s design and our dignity. To be fully alive we must respect life and not try to manipulate it. Our body is God’s gift to us, as it is his gift to the child in the womb.
4. Sex outside of God’s design to unite husband & wife is never safe.
5. A most manly characteristic is for a man to be master of his impulses – all of them – not only sexual impulses and appetites. This skill and virtue is the work of a lifetime of character building.
6. The “genius of woman”, coined by Saint Pope John Paul II, is her greater capacity for caring and nurturing – including her complex and abundant emotivity. However, it is firstly because in sexual union she includes her husband within her physically as well as emotionally and spiritually, that she is the “gate keeper” of their sexual intimacy. A wise husband selflessly observes, respects, and cares for her constantly while he is attentive to her “cues”.

Mutual Love in Matrimony

7. A husband has a right to sexual intimacy with his wife; she has no right to refuse him.
8. A man's sex organ is designed to invade the woman to take his pleasure passionately within her. Women enjoy taking in a rough intrusive entry of the male organ as seen in pornographic videos.
9. It is natural for a man to follow his male instincts in sexual intimacy with his wife. Once he has ejaculated, then it is over. He need not be concerned.
10. Life is life, work is work, sex is sex, family is family, friends are friends, hobbies are hobbies; it is wrong for women to connect and mix everything up.
11. Sex should be enjoyed by both husband and wife for its own sake regardless of how well or not their relationship is going.
12. There is nothing wrong with sex toys, sex games, all kinds of sexual positions, pornographic images, or anything else that is out there; as long as they are used by husband and wife to arouse their passion for one another and express their love.
7. Our human sexuality is designed by God to express gift of oneself to the beloved, putting aside any thought of one's own pleasure in order to please the other, each according to their gender mode.
8. A woman's sex mode is inclusive, designed to welcome into her self her husband and appreciate his daily attentions and care for her and their children. She includes him in multiple dimensions but always respecting dignity. A man's sex mode is intrusive, designed to slowly approach as in slow motion to deliver pleasure and life in a caring, personal, gentle manner not only in sex but all day long.
9. Given that woman takes much longer to "warm up" to sexual intimacy and has a more complex and protracted experience; it is logical and necessary for her husband – since the male cycle tends to be far briefer – to delay his satisfaction and learn to know and pleasure his wife while being unconcerned, patient, about his own.
10. God has revealed in his inspired Word in the Bible that everything in life is connected, and we are all connected one to the other as well as to God. Sexual intimacy of husband and wife is as holy and precious as the Holy Mass. Both are a celebration of the love and forgiveness that is lived out all through the day and all week long.
11. Sex is about the meaning, purpose, and value we choose to give to our life and to the life of the one we love. The pleasure of sex is a gift from God to cement husband and wife together, designed to be in sync with their mutual love in serving one another all week.
12. Sexual intimacy between husband and wife in marriage is just as serious and solemn as prayer, sacraments, and the Holy Mass. It is the "Liturgy" proper to the mutual expression of caring love that keeps husband and wife joined to each other in mutual service. Sex toys, sexual practices, and pornographic images and videos convey the manipulation of others for one's selfish pleasure that we associate with prostitution. Anything that disrespects human dignity or makes an object of a person is evil and destructive.

Jesus commanded us to love one another as He loved us, by putting our whole life at the caring service of the other, not worrying about our own needs, but trusting in the Father's love and divine providence. Yes, I must take good care of myself – proper sleep, exercise, nutrition, learning, socializing with family & friends, develop skills, trades, and profession – taking care not to neglect caring for others. Saint Paul instructed women to submit to their husbands, to respect / support them as husbands and fathers, because males suffer insecurity in their role and God intends for women to be their support. God instructed men to care for their wives as for their own body. As a husband cherishes his wife and shows her each day how precious she is by daily efforts to appreciate all that she does, watching her health and energy, protecting and tenderly loving her; she attaches herself to him devotedly. This is the "submission" that Saint Paul is talking about in leadership of mutual love.