

Day Five Meditation: Marriage as Covenant

What a wonderful day when you and your beloved stood in our Father's house, before his altar, where Jesus was waiting so that he might take his love for each of you and mingle it with your love for each other. That is what happened that day when you were given the Sacrament of Matrimony.

For some, making this 40 Day journey using *Loving at a Distance*, you might be in such a difficult place in your marriage that it has become a day you regret because your pain is so intense. Jesus sees and acknowledges your pain, confusion, frustration, hurt, and brokenness because he did not want this for you and your spouse, and he stands ready to come to your aid to restore what the enemy has stolen from you two.

Maybe you are realizing that your love for each other was not as you believed it was. Please do not give up. Your situation is not a surprise to the Lord. He knew when you stood there at the altar with your spouse and him what you are facing, and he wants to bring life into your Sacrament.

Your marriage is not like those in the world who have not been born from above through the waters of Baptism. By the Sacrament of Baptism, your natural life was lifted into Jesus', making you a partaker in his Divine Nature. In Baptism his life was given to you that you might live by his life; so it was also with your spouse. If we truly want to be a Christian, we must surrender to the truth that our life is not our own; because of Baptism, it belongs to Jesus for him to do with it as he wills, and he wills the healing of your heart and the restoration of your marriage.

Before we go any further, do you see your life as not your own but as totally and completely belonging to Jesus, meaning all you are and all you have is his? This is the most basic of Christian truths. That is the truth of who you are. Do you live as if this is the truth, that your life belongs to him and not to you? If not, now is the time to make that decision and give your life to Jesus. Your life has been in your hands to do with it as you will. Jesus wants to give you a life beyond what you could ever design or empower. What does he ask? That you trust him with your life. Pray this simple prayer. I warn you, though, if you give him your life, he will take it and make it his own.

Jesus,
thank you for your love for me in that you would become man,
entering into my life,
sharing in its joys and sorrows.

Jesus,
you have given me all you are and all you have.

It is my will to give you all that I am and have.
Take my life and do with it as you will.

Jesus,
I am yours and yours I wish to be.
I cannot live the life you have called me to live by loving as you love.
Jesus,
I need more of the Holy Spirit.

Spirit of the Living God,
fall afresh on me as on the day of my Baptism.
Conform me to Jesus
so that I look like him, talk like him, walk like him, think like him,
desire what he desires, love like he loves, and forgive like he forgives.

Now that you are his, expect that he will take you up on it. Expect that his grace will take you to a place where you cannot do what he asks of you without him helping you. Maybe up to now, you have been living your marriage by your strength. Now, Jesus can move in your marriage by his power.

When you married, two baptized souls approached his Altar, the Holy Place of Sacrifice. There, you gave not only your lives to each other, but, more importantly, you became for your spouse, the very one, the primary one, through whom Jesus would love them.

There at that altar, Jesus made it possible for you two to enter into a Sacred Covenant with him. It was not a contract, the exchange of goods and services, contingent on the performance of one or both, that you agreed to. At the Altar of God, you entered into a Sacred Covenant, the exchange of persons, enduring the good times and bad, be it in sickness or health, all the days of your life. In reality, Jesus wanted to love your spouse in a specific way, an embodied way, and he chose you to be the one who would express his love for your husband/wife, and they would be the one through whom he would express his love for you.

Your life is not your own; it now belongs to your beloved with whom you made Covenant. Many of us have not been formed in the truth of the faith, and we might easily view marriage through the eyes of the world, which champions the cause of the individual and their rights. With this mindset, marriage is seen as a contract where my needs must be met, and if they are not met, I can move on from the marriage. This is the exchange of goods and services where the focus is on what my spouse is giving me. Our Sacred Covenant is with the Lord by way of the Sacrament of Matrimony, which sets our heart's orientation on our beloved rather than on ourselves. In this way, we love our spouse in the way Jesus loves them. Our concern shifts from what I can get from my spouse to what I can become for my spouse in my giving. This is not to deny one's needs and wants, but it is to put them in their proper perspective. Many times we do not know how to meet our spouse's needs because we do not understand the needs of a man

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as compared to those of a woman, and we don't know our own personality and our spouse's, we are not aware of how we express our love and how they express love, as well as not knowing our strengths and our brokenness. Many marriages fail when much could be done to save them just by understanding ourselves and our spouse.

Whatever you are facing, it is not over. Continue to give your life to your spouse, even if you have to fake it. The grace of the Sacrament will carry you. Trust that Jesus, who is the heart of your marriage, is with you, ready to help you love your spouse in the midst of their rejection.