

Conjugal Love



4

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Gn 2:24

6 MY DESIRE: TRUE LOVE

4

Conjugal Love

“That is why a man leaves his father and mother and clings to his wife, and the two of them become one body.”

Gn 2:24



Wedding bells are ringing!!

If you did a survey asking married couples of different ages, cultures and countries what was one of the most important days of their lives, almost 100% would say their wedding day and the day that each one of their children was born.

Let's remember the words with which spouses give themselves to each other, making their love public.

First, the priest asks them:

- Have you come here freely and without reservation to give yourselves to each other in marriage?
- Will you love and honor each other as man and wife for the rest of your lives ?
- Will you accept children lovingly from God and bring them up according to the law of Christ and his Church?



And they give to one another the words of mutual self-donation and covenant:

I, NN, take you, NN, 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 honor you all the days of my life. In the Name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

I, NN, take you, NN, to be my husband. I promise to be true to you in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health. I will love you and honor you all the days of my life. In the Name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

6 MY DESIRE: TRUE LOVE

4

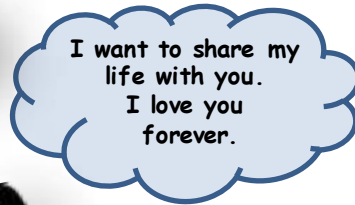
Conjugal Love

1 Do you remember when we talked about the stages of love?:
Attraction, desire, falling in love, and conjugal love.

Each one of them has different characteristics.

We invite you to remember the characteristics of this very special type of love.

Make a list of three characteristics, and then share them with a group in order to expand your list:



Can you imagine if he/she were to say at the wedding...?

- "I love you, but just for right now. I can only commit myself for the next year, but that might be extendable".
- "I love you, but only as long as we don't have financial difficulties and can live comfortably".
- "I love you, as long as you stay 120 lbs. and don't gain any weight".
- "I love you, but I don't want to have children with you, because they're going to eat up a lot of our time".

Don't you think they're holding something back?

They are lacking the fundamental characteristic of marriage:
TOTAL SELF-DONATION

6 MY DESIRE: TRUE LOVE

4

Conjugal Love

When we talk about this type of self-gift, we are talking about DONATION.

Going out of oneself in order to donate oneself to the other in the search for what is good for them.

We invite you to read this story by Rabindranath Tagore:

They were a poor couple. She spun yarn at the door of their hut, thinking about her husband. Everyone who passed by was captivated by the beauty of her hair, long and black as the brilliant thread coming out of her spinning wheel. Each day he went to the market to sell fruit. He would sit down to wait under the shadow of a tree, clenching an empty pipe between his teeth. He didn't even have enough money to buy a pinch of tobacco.

As the day of their wedding anniversary approached, she couldn't cease to ask herself what she could give to her husband. And moreover, with what money?

An idea came to her mind. Just thinking about it gave her the chills, but once she decided her whole body shook with joy: she would sell her hair to buy him tobacco.

She could already imagine her husband in the square, seated next to his fruit, taking long drags from his pipe; the aroma of incense and jasmine would give the owner of that little stand all the solemnity and prestige of a true storekeeper.

She only received a few coins in exchange for her hair, but she carefully chose the finest box of tobacco. The perfume of the wrinkled leaves easily made up for the sacrifice of her hair.

When evening came her husband returned home. He was singing along the way. He was holding in his hand a small package: they were some hair pins for his wife, that he had just bought after selling his pipe.

As each one opened their gift, they looked at each other and began to sob in silence, delighting in the great love that God was showing to them.



6 MY DESIRE: TRUE LOVE

Conjugal Love

4

2 Through their marriage consent, spouses donate themselves to one another on their wedding day...

Below, you will see some images that represent what they hand over in this act.



In a gift of TOTAL SELF-DONATION, you give:



Your _____



Your _____



Your _____



Your _____

6 MY DESIRE: TRUE LOVE

Conjugal Love

4

3 For each one of the images, which represent the TOTAL SELF-DONATION of the spouses, indicate what type of donation it is and think of everyday examples that you have witnessed in your parents, grandparents, teachers, etc. Then you can share with your classmates.



When you give YOUR HEART:

When you give YOUR BODY:



When you give YOUR TIME:

When you give YOUR FERTILITY:



6 MY DESIRE: TRUE LOVE

4

Conjugal Love

When you **GIVE YOUR HEART**:

Spouses love and accept one another as they are.

This regards not only their physical appearance, which is obviously important, especially in the first stages of love, but the whole PERSON.

They donate their affection to one another, which will grow and be strengthened every day.

Each one is special to the other.

God thought of one for the other, so that they might mutually help each other along the path of love.



When you **GIVE YOUR TIME**:



Celebrating their 50th ("Golden") wedding anniversary.

When a couple gets married, as we have already seen, they tell one another: "I promise to be true to you in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health. I will love you and honor you all the days of my **LIFE**". How wonderful!

When they make a promise and give themselves for their whole lives, that donation is **RADICAL**, forever. In spite of difficulties, financial problems, differences, or the death of family members.

In all of this the spouses donate themselves and their time in order to be **TOGETHER** in everything and through everything. This is fidelity to their commitment.

CHILDREN, fruit of the love between spouses, desire for their father and mother to always love one another and be together.

When you give your time, you are giving your complete **TRUST** to the other person; there is no room for betrayal.

Fidelity to their commitment and their love will make it possible for them to overcome their problems; their love will be strengthened, and they will be **HAPPY** as they grow together along the path of love.

6 MY DESIRE: TRUE LOVE

4

Conjugal Love

In the previous paragraph, we highlighted some key words in blue or using CAPITAL LETTERS.

Think about each one of these words (the fruits of conjugal love) and find them in this word search. Good luck!

Se entrega el tiempo

B	N	X	H	Ñ	U	L	H	F	J
Q	P	C	I	L	S	O	U	B	T
M	X	V	Ñ	R	D	S	Z	T	Y
R	S	K	Z	V	U	Q	G	A	C
Ñ	A	E	I	V	O	Ñ	C	R	I
F	F	D	H	T	T	C	F	B	R
G	A	M	I	M	R	W	E	L	C
S	G	Y	J	C	G	M	L	Q	O
Y	E	T	O	T	A	E	I	A	N
C	L	L	S	A	Ñ	L	C	L	F
O	U	V	B	M	U	A	E	P	I
D	G	H	U	S	W	F	S	S	A
X	Ñ	M	G	F	K	Z	M	J	N
D	Z	B	V	I	W	B	I	I	Z
S	O	T	N	U	J	V	E	H	A

CONFIANZA
 FELICES
 HIJOS
 JUNTOS
 RADICAL
 VIDA

Together with your classmates, analyze how these values are lived out in today's society: time, donation, care, trust, children, fidelity, etc.



When you **GIVE YOUR BODY** you also **GIVE YOUR FERTILITY**:



Detail from Rodin's sculpture, "The Kiss".

The **DONATION** is **TOTAL** when the spouses also donate their bodies to one another, forming "one body" (Gn 2:24).

This is the **GESTURE** of love proper to **SPOUSES**, which confers greater unity in intimacy: the conjugal embrace, the conjugal act.

We've already seen that every act has consequences, and if this gesture is ordered toward Love, the consequences will be the unity of the spouses and fruitfulness.

BUILDING UP LOVE

6 MY DESIRE: TRUE LOVE

Conjugal Love

4

4 Below, you will see two scenarios that you could possibly encounter. Answer the questions with your classmates:

SCENARIO 1



Some friends go for a night out, and they ask Jake if they can take his car so they don't have to take a cab. Jake knows how to drive perfectly well, but he still has to take his driver's test. He is scheduled to take it the next day and it's a sure thing that he'll pass because he is really careful. At the beginning Jake is hesitant, but with everyone saying how well he drives and that "you're going to have your license tomorrow anyway," he decides to drive them to the other part of town where his friends are from.

There is a checkpoint on the highway, and they get stopped.

What do you think will happen?

What would you have done?

SCENARIO 2

Some friends made plans to go to an 18 and over club for the night. Andrew, the youngest in the group, turns 18 in a few days and his classmates push him to use a friend's ID, since he'll be of age in just 48 hours.

While they're at the club the fire alarm goes off, and while everyone is evacuating Andrew gets hurt and needs to go to the hospital. The police confirm that he isn't old enough to have gotten into the club, even though he is only a few days short.

6 MY DESIRE: TRUE LOVE

Conjugal Love

4



What do you think will happen to Andrew?

What do you think will happen to the owner of the club?

Life is full of cases where just one act can change everything:

- Passing your written and practical driver's test- Getting your driver's license.
- Finishing your college thesis - Being an engineer.
- Signing a contract - Becoming the owner of a house.
- Having a child - Becoming parents.

In the same way, from the act proper to marriage on, there is a total donation of body and soul.

This act pertains to marriage: it is the gesture that expresses the unity of the spouses.

That's why premarital relations aren't ordered toward love.

6 MY DESIRE: TRUE LOVE

4

Conjugal Love

5 Can you connect each monument to the city where it's located?



NEW YORK - PARIS - LONDON



When we see one of these monuments, we have no doubt that it represents, belongs to, and is a part of a concrete city.

Well, the gesture that represents marriage is the **CONJUGAL ACT**. It doesn't represent an engaged couple who will get married in a month, or a couple who just started going out. The **CONJUGAL ACT** pertains to marriage and forms part of marital life.

6 Maybe some of you weren't exactly sure where Big Ben was located, or what French city the Eiffel Tower is in.

The same thing can happen with the gesture of complete self-donation of body and soul - that we might not know exactly where to place it.

Have a debate with your classmates:

- Two students supporting each option must prepare their arguments:
- In favor of premarital relations.
- Against.

Their personal opinion doesn't have to coincide with the position they're defending, but they should be good speakers.

- They have 3 minutes to give their arguments. You can flip a coin to see who starts, and then they take turns.
- After the 12 minutes are up, they can make counter-arguments against their opponent's statements. These should be shorter than 1 minute, timed by the moderator.



Time starts...NOW!

6 MY DESIRE: TRUE LOVE

4

Conjugal Love

7 Let's not forget the photograph on the cover page of this unit.

What do you see?



Marriage is called to be completely fulfilled in a family.

I am here because of the DONATION of my parents. I am a sign of their love.

The LOVE between spouses doesn't exhaust itself in them; rather, it gives life and prolongs itself in their children.

If children don't arrive, the love between spouses continues to give life to those around them: their friends, family members, society, the Church.

Marriage is always called to be FRUITFUL.



6 MY DESIRE: TRUE LOVE

4

Conjugal Love

The vocation to marriage is one of the two possible concrete responses to the vocation to love to which we are all called as children of God. **Do I feel this call?**



In marriage, the spouses receive the sacrament as a **GIFT**, as a present: as the reflection of a sincere gift, like Christ handed himself over for his Church, loving her to the end. This total self-donation comes about from an act in which a man and a woman decide to give themselves to each other completely. It is a free and voluntary act.

Do I recognize that this act is the proper gesture of spouses that expresses their capacity to love in unity and to transmit life?

Marriage, in the unity of body and soul, expresses the capacity to love for the unity of the spouses and the capacity to generate life for the transmission of life.



In marriage the conditions of a true love that lasts for the whole of life are present: the person donates him/herself without conditions of time or changes. It is a donation of body and soul, without an expiration date. A **GIFT** and a **TASK**.