

RCIA – Symbolon Lesson 15: Matrimony and Holy Orders; *We Believe*: Ch. 12 The Priesthood & Ch. 13 Marriage

Opening Prayer: A Prayer for the Discernment of Vocations

Loving God, my Creator and my Father, life is your gift to me. Through Baptism, you invite me to share the gift of my life in service to others. Be with me as I choose each day to show Your presence in our world.

Give me the courage and generosity to respond to Your love, to Your call. Open my heart and my mind to know what your most holy will for me and my life is and give me the courage and perseverance to do it. Open the minds and hearts of all men and women that we may all share in your work of building the Kingdom – in the Church, our homes, families, workplaces, schools, and society.

Loving God, you have made me in Your image and likeness, and for this I shall praise You forever. Through baptism, You invite me to serve as Your son Jesus served. I offer You this day all that I have and all that I am in union with His saving cross. Through the intercession of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, all the angels and saints, humbly hear our prayers and grant your Church's needs, through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Song: Servant Song

• Catechism References for Further Reflection:

- Marriage in God's Plan: CCC 1602-1605
- Marriage as a Model of Christ's Union with the Church: CCC 1616
- Permanence of Marriage: CCC 1638-1640
- Grace of the Sacrament: CCC 1641-1642
- The Indissolubility of Marriage: CCC 1644
- Openness to Fertility: CCC 1652-1654
- Holy Orders: CCC 1536-1538
- Participation in the Priesthood of Christ: CCC 1546-1548
- Three Degrees of Holy Orders: CCC 1552-1554
- Effects of the Sacrament of Holy Orders: CCC 1581-1585

• Questions for Discussion:

- Why is marriage one of the seven Sacraments, according to the teaching of the Catholic Church?

- What is God's plan for marriage? How does that differ from secular society's view of marriage? What do we mean when we say love is not a feeling, but a choice – an act of the will? Why is that important in marriage?

- What is a vocation? How did you know what vocation God was calling you to? What does “self-giving love” have to do with the vocations of marriage and holy orders?

- What do we mean that Sacramental Marriage needs to be “free,” “total,” “faithful,” and “fruitful”? Can a marriage be “fruitful” if the couple is not able to conceive children? How can someone who takes a vow of celibacy and is married to Christ and His Church be “fruitful”?

- Why does the Church hold up Christ’s relationship to the Church as a model for the marriage relationship?

- What are the three degrees within the Sacrament of Holy Orders? How are Bishops, Priests, and Deacons supposed to bring Christ to the Church?

• **Weekly Gospel Reading: 4th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Mt 5:1-312a)**

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain, and after he had sat down, his disciples came to him.

He began to teach them, saying:

"Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are they who mourn,
for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the meek,
for they will inherit the land.

Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they will be satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful,
for they will be shown mercy.

Blessed are the clean of heart,
for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called children of God.

Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you
and utter every kind of evil against you falsely because of me.

Rejoice and be glad,
for your reward will be great in heaven."

• **Closing Prayer.**