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# **THE FAMILY**

**The Foundation of Society**

**Courtship**

**Marriage a Contract and  
a Sacrament**

**Father, Mother and Children**

Radio addresses by  
The Rev. F. B. Ostdiek  
Holy Trinity Church  
Des Moines, Iowa

Price 10c



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A series of four sermons delivered over  
radio station WHO during the month  
of April, 1935 by Rev. F. B. Ostdiek,  
Holy Trinity Church, Des Moines, Iowa

**Decidifed**

# THE FAMILY

Dear Friends: There is an old adage which says "Confession is good for the soul", and I must confess that I feel a little timid in this, my first address before the microphone. I should very much prefer to see your faces. So, should I stammer or stutter, kindly be merciful and patient with me. I want to thank the Central Broadcasting Company for granting me the singular privilege of addressing you at this same hour each Sunday in the month of April. It is my intention to speak of the family, and each Sunday I shall try to give you a different phase of this very important subject. Next Sunday we shall treat of Courtship, and I shall be pleased to have you gather your marriageable sons and daughters around the radio, for they may get an idea or two that will help them in making their future married life more happy.

When Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ came into the world, He came to reform society. Society had fallen from its primitive righteousness; it lay prostrate in the mire of sin. [Just a glance at the morals of the Roman Empire will convince any one of that fact. But there may be some of my audience that are under the impression that the law of evolution causes society to grow better from day to day. That each day means advancement. History proves the very contrary. Nations have lost their civilization and their culture. The Chinese were at one time the very cultural salt of the earth. The city of Carthage with its people was at one time the international center of education, and look at it today. It is very questionable whether we are as civilized today as our nation was fifty years ago. At all events society was in a mire when Christ came and He came as its reformer.]

He was infinite wisdom, and as such He realized that if society was to be purified, the purification had to begin at its very source. No stream can be pure unless it flows from a pure source. You cannot drink the waters that flow from an alkaline bed—and they carry the impurity with them until they are buried in the ocean. So too, society must flow from a pure source if it is to be pure. The source of society is the family, and hence Christ began by purifying marriage. The very first act of His public life of which we have a record, consisted in a journey to a wedding feast, at which He turned water into wine. It is the common opinion of commentators that He there raised marriage to the dignity of a sacrament, for St. Paul, some years later, called it a great sacrament.

Next to God, the family is not only the physical source of society but it is also the source of authority. God did not command us in so many words to obey our teachers or the state, but He said "Honor thy father and thy mother". The family is then the earthly starting point of authority. But each family could not exist by itself. In order to have paved roads, or fire protection, or a police force, etc., families gather into groups, called tribes, or states. The state is a group of families or individuals gathered together for a common end. What needs to be emphasized is, that the state holds only such authority as is given to it by God, through the family and nature.

The Catholic Church from the very beginning has been the friend of the oppressed. She has carried on a continual battle with governments to prevail upon them to respect the rights of minorities. She has tried to teach that the sovereign state is not the government but the people. Leaders like Hitler and Mussolini maintain that the child is born for the state; the Catholic Church says the state is for the child; the government is for the

people and not the people for the government. The framers of our constitution were well aware of the tyranny a state can hold over minorities, so they embodied a Bill of Rights in our constitution in order to prevent our government from trampling upon individuals and families, by taking away from them their God-given rights. In spite of the heroic efforts of the Church and the Bill of Rights, we still find the government treading on forbidden ground, and usurping the rights of God, the family and the individual.

About twelve or thirteen years ago, in a city of about sixty thousand, here in the middle west, there stood a very beautiful old theatre building. It was the first large building constructed in that city. It had been planned by a foreign architect and architecturally it was very correct. It stood in the centre of a beautiful plaza, surrounded by shrubbery. Vines had climbed its walls and draped the windows. Age and weather had given it a beautiful rustic appearance. The townsfolk, and especially the old settlers, considered it a landmark. It was nothing unusual to see them explaining its age and beauty to visiting relatives and friends. How they used to love to tell how they attended their first show in this old theatre. It appeared like a jewel amid the ungainly looking business buildings around it.

One day the city council announced that the old theatre was unsafe and had to be torn down. A cry of protest went out from old and young. But the city council was right. On investigation they were found to be correct in their decision. Here is what had happened. While these townspeople were admiring the superstructure of this old theatre, they had ignored what was going on within its basement walls. The wiring, plumbing and heating had been changed so many times, the plumbers, steamfitters and electricians had cut so many holes in its basement walls, and had taken out so many brick that the building had little foundation left. Then added to this was the fact that the surrounding buildings, which were much higher and heavier, were pressing these weakened walls in. Verily, the theatre had to be taken down.

Figuratively speaking, what happened to this theatre building is happening to society today. The masses have their eyes on the superstructure. How we boast of our organizations. Visit a friend in the city, and he will point out the hospitals, schools and other institutions as signs of progress and stability. He will show you the welfare organizations, the parks, and amusement places. But who pays any attention to the families? You might visit a city for months and know nothing about the foundation. Like the people and the theatre I described, the superstructure seems to be all that interests us and we are oblivious as to the foundation.

Now who are the forces, the steam fitters, plumbers and electricians tearing away the foundation of society? There is first of all our economic system, which like the buildings around the theatre, is pressing in on the walls and smothering the family. Our economic system has forced thousands of mothers into the commercial world to earn bread for their children. Our system of selling labor to the lowest bidder has forced men to work for a wage on which they cannot keep their families. In consequence many mothers must work. A mother belongs at home. She is the first and most essential teacher of the child; no one can take her place, but our cruel system forces her out and only too frequently her children grow up on the street.

Then there is our system of housing. Families with children are not wanted in rented homes and apartments. Try to rent a house or an apartment, if you have children, and see how the owners give you a cold shoulder. A few weeks ago I met a fine Catholic gentleman who had a family of eight children. He had to move from one city to another and had rented a house. He paid one month's rent in advance, and when he came with his family the owner would not let him in because he had eight children. There is room in the apartment and the rented home for the cat, the dog and the canary, but like Bethlehem of old, the owners refuse admittance to children who are the brothers and sisters of Christ. This is the smothering process that is ruining the foundation of society.

Now who are the plumbers and electricians that are tearing away the basement walls brick by brick. They are our divorce courts. In the year 1933, the divorce courts here in the state of Iowa tore 3353 bricks out of the social foundation by granting that many divorces. But that is not all, for 1437 of these families had children, amounting to one and seven-tenths child to the family, so the vandalous divorce courts rendered 2600 children fatherless or motherless, or perhaps both. This diabolical work is not going on alone in Iowa but the pestilence has invaded every state. In the United States in 1933 there were 183,633 divorces granted. Of these, 61,000 had children. at the rate of 1.7 child to the family, which means that one hundred thousand children were rendered either motherless or fatherless, or perhaps both, by the diabolical divorce courts. One hundred thousand children thrown upon society to be reared for the most part by strangers, if they are reared at all, and their parents exposed to the danger of leading adulterous lives. We are on a par with Russia in granting divorces in this country. Could anything be more disgraceful?

Yes, there could and there is something more disgraceful. Some of the states of this union have been vieing with one another in the past to pass laws making divorce easy and hasty marriages more prevalent. Think of it. A state tearing the very foundation from under itself by grabbing for the red dollars collected in divorce courts and license bureaus. A state enriching itself on lives and morals of innocent children. If there is one sin that cries to Heaven for vengeance it is the sin of divorce in America.

No one seems to be disturbed about this evil. Since the days of Teddy Roosevelt, there has been no statesman who had the moral courage to demand legislation that would stop this evil. Must it be admitted that there are no representatives in Washington with enough red blood in their veins, or with sufficient fortitude, to introduce a bill, and fight it through, that would put a stop to this crying evil?

For months they have been sparring and arguing back and forth about the gold contract clauses in our bonds. Which one of them has a word to say about the broken marriage contracts? We are so much concerned about money contracts, but is there any comparison in gravity between them and the marriage contract? A man goes to an attorney and says, "I want to break a contract with my partner in business". The attorney reads the contract and says, "You signed this?" The client answers, "yes". "Sir, you are tied; you cannot break that contract". But the next man coming to the attorney says, "I want a divorce from my wife". "How, and why?" asks the attorney. "We were married," says the client, "by a minister in a church with relatives and witnesses present. We

have two children. I want a divorce. I am losing love for my wife and do not care to stay with her. Another woman has entered my life". "But is your wife disloyal? Has she ever treated you cruelly?" "Well, last Christmas morning she served me, my brother and his wife, burned biscuits for breakfast", says the client. "Will your brother and his wife substantiate that cruelty in court?", asks the attorney. "Yes", says the client. "Very well, we will charge cruel and inhuman treatment". Eventually the divorce is granted. The contract that implied a few paltry dollars in a business partnership is binding, but the contract made before at least three witnesses with God Himself as a witness is to be broken. Children have nothing to say, they are thrown out into a heartless world without a father to care for them. The wife is exposed to the danger of an adulterous life. But the government says "So be it". Friends, whenever a government assumes authority which belongs to nature or to God alone, she suffers for it, or her people suffer. A year ago the government said, "Plow up the cotton, kill the hogs, limit the fruits of the field", and today even the middle class people cannot afford bacon or steak. The corn and wheat were limited and chickens and cattle are dying of pure starvation today. They forget what St. Paul said "I sowed, and Apollo watered, but God gave the increase". In like manner, the civil governments have entered into the pure domain of God Almighty. The bond of marriage which God has reserved to Himself to break, governments are so foolish as to think they can break. By their mock divorces they have started a boulder down the mountain side that bids to wreck the very foundation of society.

Now, who pays the financial bill for the divorce evil? The taxpayer for the most part. In the city of Pittsburgh an investigation was made and here is part of the results. Seventeen percent of the families of Pittsburgh were found to be broken by divorce or otherwise. These seventeen percent furnished fifty percent of delinquent children in the juvenile courts. Some three years ago, the prisoners of a large eastern penitentiary were interviewed and it was found that seventy-three percent of them came from broken homes. Our own state and private orphanages are crowded with the children of divorced parents. Must I tell you who pays the bill. Ask the juvenile officers, the welfare workers, or anyone who has to deal with society's unfortunates and they will tell you that divorce is the predominant factor in creating criminals.

A few weeks ago while on a vacation, I met with two Chinamen who were making a trip around the world. They spoke English quite well and one of them asked me if I was a Christian. After I informed him that I was, he asked if this was a Christian country. Rather dubiously I said "Yes". Since I have investigated the statistics on divorce in this country, I have begun to wonder if my reply was not a lie. Can we call ourselves Christian when we each year deprive one hundred thousand children of the care of a mother or a father through our divorce courts? If this happened in China, we would be organizing to remedy such an evil among those poor, ignorant people. A Christian is a disciple of Christ, and let us see what Christ has to say about all this. In the Gospel of St. Luke, 16th Chapter, we read: "Everyone that putteth away his wife and marrieth another committeth adultery; and he that marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery". In the first Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians we read these words: "To them that are married, not I but the Lord commandeth, that the wife depart not from her husband; and



if she depart, that she remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband. And let not the husband put away his wife". "What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder". With scripture so clear and emphatic on this question of divorce, there are a number of so-called ministers of the Gospel who will stand and witness marriages between divorced people. They are hirelings and not Shepherds; they have entered the ministry in another way than by the Gate. They, like the state governments, are trying to set aside God's law. They step into the sanctuary of the home and tell a disgruntled husband or wife, "We will break your marriage contract; we will set you free. We will legalize your adultery". Friends, no state, nor king, nor emperor has the power to break the bond of marriage, for what God hath put together no man can put asunder. It may be legal in the eyes of the state and the masses, but in the eyes of God it is adultery. Call it by the right name. In the sight of God a judge has no more right or power to give a man, who is validly married, the permission to go and marry another woman while his wife still lives than I have to give you permission to murder your neighbor, for the same decalogue which says "Thou shalt not kill", likewise says "Thou shalt not committ adultery".

Some may claim that God and the Church are too strict in this matter. Can we not at least put the marriage contract on a par with other contracts, with gold bonds, for example? Have the children no right to consideration in the breaking of the marriage contract? Other nations keep their marriage vows. In 1914 there were but two divorces in Catholic Ireland, and if I mistake me not, Prince Edward Island in Canada had only three divorces in 1933. God does not demand the impossible. If these people could keep their marriage contracts, the people of this country can do it, and if the civil law were not so lax, most of them would do it.

Why not popularize loyalty to the marriage vows and clean living? The young especially will well nigh kill themselves to be in style, and do the thing that is popular. Girls will freeze in winter because silk is the style and smother in summer beneath a fur neckpiece. If it were style to cling to a husband or wife, most of our people would do it. As long as their ideals are drawn from Ben Lindsey's companionate marriage and the front pages and headlines of the daily papers in which the divorced votaries of Hollywood with their multiplicity of divorces are idealized, one might say made heroes and heroines, we can expect just what we are getting, viz., divorce in abundance.

Friends, please realize that no house can stand without a foundation. The old theatre had to be torn down. The foundation of society is the family. Destroy that and the Nation will not long survive. The armies of pagan Rome marched on and on, conquering every known nation in that day, as long as the husbands and wives of Rome were faithful to their marriage vows; but as soon as the wives began to estimate the lapse of time, not in years, but by the number of husbands they had had, Rome fell. Let divorce continue to increase as it has in the past twenty years and America must fall. If you love your country and want to see it prosper; if you wish to make America safe for future generations; if you love God and wish to obey Him, then do all in your power to stop divorce. Be not hypnotized by the superstructure of society, but look to its foundation, which is the family. The family is God's creation; it is the image of the triune God. God hath put it together, let no man rend it asunder.

## COURTSHIP

A witty Irish girl was once asked by her pastor what she considered a good preparation for marriage. The lassie answered, "A little courting, Your Reverence". The girl was right; light hearted but serious courting is the preparation for marriage.

The days of courtship should be among the happiest days in this world. They generally come during the years of promise, right after youth, when we are filled with zeal, and before the hardships of life have frosted our ambition. As a rule those who are happily married, look back to the days of courtship with the fondest recollection.

Courtship should be light hearted. Those contemplating marriage should not act as though they were preparing for a funeral. Choosing a wife is not like buying a farm, or a house, or even securing a position. The man who courts a lady simply because he wants a housekeeper and is tired of batching, or the woman who courts simply because she wants three meals a day, is very sure to meet with shipwreck on the matrimonial sea.

There are two forces which should direct a person in courtship. They are reason and love. Not reason alone, for, if only such marriages took place as are the outcome of pure reasoning, we should have to fear for the survival of the race. Nor should reason be ignored. They are not contradictory as many would have us believe. The same God who gave us an intellect with which to reason, gave us a will with which to love. In fact, reason should govern all our emotions and appetites. No matter how much we may like liquor, or a certain kind of food, if we are rational we will see to it that the intellect and will will keep the appetite under control. So it should be with love. The intellect should tell us whom and how much we may love.

The very first question which reason prompts the wise to ask is whether or not the person to whom they are about to give their affections is free to marry. You may see a "For Rent" sign on a house when you are seeking a house to rent, but when you inquire and find it is already rented, you do not so much as bother looking through it. So should it be with courtship. A person may have the "To Marry" sign out, but when you find that they have already vowed their affections to someone else, whether they are divorced or not, they should be passed by with the same cool reasoning with which a person passes a rented house. Even if a civil divorce has been granted, it must be remembered that marriage is a contract binding in the sight of God and no human power can break that contract. Hence, when one receives the affections of a man or woman who has vowed his or her affections to another, one is receiving stolen goods. And let no one excuse himself by saying "We are only going together for fun, there is no thought of marriage". Such people are playing with dynamite and experience proves that they are in grave danger. The primary purpose of company keeping is marriage; let that not be forgotten.

If the chicken thief or the auto thief is contemptible, what must we think of the man who steals the affections of another man's wife, and perhaps breaks up his home? The safe blower and the bank robber are angelic in comparison with the man who breaks up another man's home by stealing his wife's affections. I sometimes doubt if I would carry water to quench the fire around a girl burning at the stake for breaking up another woman's home. Words fail me in expressing myself about this

damnable sin. Yet how much there is of it. And many of them think it quite cute. Stenographers and secretaries wining and dining with their married employers while their wives sit at home wondering where he is tonight. Friends, these are enemies No. 1 in this country.

The second requirement which good judgment demands is that the person who is to be a mate for life be of the same religious faith. To many this seems of very little importance, but it is most important. Let us see why. Here is a question a great many people seldom, if ever, ask themselves. Why am I in this world? Why was I created? What is the one thing that I must do above all else? With a little thought you will agree with me that you are in this world to earn Heaven; that it is to save your immortal soul. If that is accomplished, all is well; if that is neglected, no matter how successful we may be otherwise, all is wrong. Saving our soul is the one thing necessary. But cannot a man and wife of different faiths save their souls? Yes, they can, but it is very difficult. Here surely they should be working together. It is the experience of the Catholic Church that seventy percent of the children born of parents, one of which is a Catholic and the other a non-Catholic, are lost to the Catholic Faith. But that is not all. Two-thirds of those who are lost to the Catholic Faith have no faith at all. Mixed marriages not only cause Catholic leakage, but empty Protestant Churches as well.

The Catholic Church does not forbid or merely tolerate marriages between Catholics and non-Catholics because she hates non-Catholics. By no means, but she realizes that it is better to have Methodist marry Methodist and have the children brought up Methodists than to have a Methodist marry a Catholic and have their children grow up without any faith at all. The Catholic who marries a non-Catholic does his or her future children a grave injustice. What does the average Catholic prize higher than his Catholic Faith? Most Catholics would give their lives rather than give up their faith. More than five thousand poor Mexicans have been backed up to the wall and shot in the past seven years because they would not give up their faith. Since they prize their faith so highly, is it not a grave injustice to their children to endanger the very faith for them, that the father or mother holds more precious than anything in the world?

To the Catholics in this audience who contemplate marriage with a non-Catholic, let them stop, look and listen. Let them not be deceived by promises. Every mixed marriage that has proved a failure is replete with broken promises. Courtship is the period of promises. In courtship the world looks like a great playhouse, but after marriage, when grim reality is met, things may be very different, and the promises made in the days of promise may be easily broken. Oh, how often have I seen fine Catholic women coming to Mass on Sunday morning, their eyes wet with tears because of the abuse received before leaving home because a non-Catholic husband wanted them to miss Mass so they could get his breakfast when he chose to get out of bed.

I am not saying that all mixed marriage are like that, but too many of them are. At very best, a mixed marriage is not good. Suppose that the non-Catholic party is very liberal; gives absolute liberty to the Catholic party. How about the children? If they grow up Catholics will they not worry about their non-Catholic parent? Will they not fear for his or her salvation? This worry is far more serious than most of us think. Finally, I believe I am safe in stating that the vast ma-

majority of Protestant Ministers—and thank God, I have found them a fine body of men—will agree with me that mixed marriages in any Church are not conducive to religion nor marital happiness. One of them once said to me, “There is enough in the family circle to cause eruptions without a difference of religion”.

Good judgment would certainly call for character in the prospective bride or groom. There is no character without virtue, and all virtue should be practiced to some degree. However, there are virtues that should be outstanding in the groom, and they are three; honor, thrift and sobriety. A man who divides his affections between two or more women has no honor and is surely to be discarded. If he is not loyal before marriage, you can hardly expect him to be so afterwards.

If he does not possess enough thrift to support himself and pay his own debts, you cannot expect him to support a wife. If a girl has to continue to work away from home after marriage, to support herself, you can be quite certain that she will delay establishing a real home, if she ever does establish one.

Must I mention sobriety? What sin has created more poverty, broken more motherly hearts and chilled the love of more children in this land of ours than the sin of drunkenness? On every side we see its trademark of misery. Scarcely one of my hearers but has seen the ravages of drunkenness. Despite this fact, there are still girls, who like foolish virgins, think they can reform a drunkard by marrying him. Girls, try it, and the odds are ten to one that you will fail. If he is a drunkard, a gambler or a debauch, you are loading yourself down with a yoke that perhaps only death will remove. The reformed man is too often like a wild duck domesticated, but on a nice spring day a flock of wild ducks flies over and your duck will soar out of the pen and it is gone. So with a reformed husband. You know not the day nor the hour that he will go back to the sins of his youth or early manhood. Girls, when you marry, you are supposed to be starting a home, not a reformatory. Marriage is an adventure, not a reclamation project. But you may answer me as many have in the past, “Is it not a great act of charity to convert this man from his sinful ways?” Indeed it is, but remember that charity begins at home. You are never permitted to endanger your own soul, and especially the souls of your future children by placing them in such a hazard, even though you convert the world. Holy Scripture clearly states, “What will a man give in exchange for his soul”? And again: “What doth it profit a man to gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul”? Consult the divorce records and see how many divorces are granted because of drunkenness and infidelity, and then I think you will agree with me that reforming a husband is a Herculean task.

Holy Scripture seems to place prudence among the essential virtues in a bride, for it says, “Houses and lands are the gifts of parents, but a prudent wife is properly from the Lord”. Hence prudence in a wife is a God’s blessing. But how many seek it? The good, sensible girl is generally shunned. Oh, how many a fine man with a good position has his life’s ambition frustrated because he sought a graceful form, or a pretty face, instead of good common sense in his prospective wife. Good dressers, good dancers, and even at times, good drinkers seem to be more in demand for marriage than good housekeepers and good thinkers.

With courtship licentious as it is today, with university professors teaching Fraudian sex philosophy to the youth of the land, will I be put off the air for making a plea for purity in the prospective bride? I feel that some in my audience will titter at the very mention of this angelic virtue, and ask if Methuselah or Rip Van Winkle is on the air. Others may think I drive a horse and wagon. I am not offended; the woman who did more to elevate womanhood than all the Freudian professors of the past or the future will ever do, rode a donkey on the hills of Palestine nineteen hundred years ago. She was the mother of the God man and bore in her maternal arms Him, who was the truth, the light and the way, and she was and is the Mother of Purity. You tell me times have changed. Yes, but human nature does not change. Automobiles and aeroplanes may take the place of donkeys and wagons, bon-bons and chocolate sundaes may have taken the place of popcorn and taffy, but licentiousness cannot take the place of purity anymore than a lie can take the place of the truth. Human nature permits no such changes. The scarlet woman of Christ's time was despised and she is despised today. The very scum of the Roman Empire respected the Vestal Virgins because they were pure, and today only the pure woman enjoys real honor and respect from men. I am not preaching a double standard of morality. The Commandment, "Thou shalt not commit adultery" is binding on men and women alike, but the angelic virtue of purity rests in the hands of the women and if they do not preserve it, it will be lost. Women can rule the world if they go about it rightly. They cannot do it by the ballot box, nor the rostrum, nor through physical force; neither can they do it by any sex appeal. They must do it by decency, purity and refinement. When they cast these three aside, they are like a ship at sea in a storm, without compass, propeller or rudder.

Some may reply, "How can I win a husband if I do not allow familiarities before marriage?" Girls, if you cannot win a husband without making yourself a carnal toy in his hands before marriage, then go to Heaven without a husband rather than go to Hell with one. He may tell you he loves you, but after your marriage the chances are that when a misunderstanding comes up, one of the first insults he will fling into your teeth is, "You were not decent when I married you".

Have you no eyes; can you not see for yourself what happens? Does not the unmarried father in the majority of cases deny the paternity of his child, and how often do such fathers leave the community and the mother to bear the blunt of shame? He says he loves you. Does he? Would he not kill the man who would treat his sister as he treats you? Girls, be not deceived. If you wish to be the queen of your future home, if you expect to enjoy the admiration of your husband after you have lost your youthful beauty, go to the altar a virgin. Be pure in courtship; let no man pluck the lily of innocence from your fair brow and plant a blister there.

A few words to the parents and I shall detain you no longer. The old system, in which parents chose the wives and husbands of their sons and daughters, should not be welcomed back; but the indifference in these matters on the part of parents today, is productive of even worse results. Parents should not act as dictators on the one hand, and they should not forfeit all authority on the other.

Is it not strange that a young man, who is going into business for himself will consult with his father, and not only his father but other business men, before he ventures?

He will sound the community where he is to carry on his business; he will leave no stone unturned to consult anyone who might give him useful information. But when he ventures out to select a wife he consults nobody. The poet Pope said only too well:

Horses and asses men may try,  
And sound earthen vessels, ere they buy;  
But a wife, a random choice, untried they take,  
In courtship sleep, in wedlock wake,  
Then, not till then, the veil's removed away,  
And the wife appears in the full of day.

But why blame the young folks? The parents are the ones to blame. They are indifferent. They shrug their shoulders and say, "Well, they have their own lives to live, and if they make a mistake it is they for it". If your daughter comes home with a ragged, hungry baby on each arm in three or four years, it will be you for it, as well as she. A parent's own comfort, if nothing else, should make him solicitous and interested in the company his children keep.

If there is one thing that makes my blood boil, it is to stop in of an evening to call on a family of my parish, be visiting with the family and have a car drive into the driveway. Some young chap sounds a claxon and out goes Susie and hops into the car. A shift of gears and they are off. Then I have often asked, "Who is that fellow Susie went off with?" The father says: "I don't know; some fellow she picked up with". Friends, if that fellow came up to the porch and asked the father to borrow five dollars, he would be refused. The father would say, "No, I do not know you". He would not loan that man a five dollar bill, but he will trust his daughter out in a car with him. Yet, how does a five dollar bill compare with that daughter, in the estimation of that father?

Why cannot your daughters court their gentlemen friends at home in the family circle? Fathers and mothers, it is far better for you and your children to have them dance in the living room than to skim around the floor of a public dance hall, even though your furniture does not look so well the next day. A few dollars spent on ice cream and lemonade for your children during the courting age, may save you hundreds of dollars and gallons of tears which you would otherwise have to spend later on in supporting your grandchildren. If the family circle is not good enough before marriage, it should not be afterward.

Fathers of this radio audience, your duties to your family are not fulfilled when you bring home a pay check that feeds, clothes and houses your wife and children. You are not just a meal ticket. You were appointed by God as the head of that family. Your wife does not know the world as you know it, and hence you should be the one to see whom your children court. If you do not know, find out. The details of your home, the baking of cookies and making of ice cream, you may leave to your wife, but you should be the advisor of your children in courtship. Fathers, take this cue from me; there is no one under high Heaven that a daughter would rather have pleased with her prospective husband, than her father. Many a time I have seen them extend their chests and raise their heads and say to me, "Father, Dad thinks he is all right", and I have found five times out of six that when dad says he is all right, he is all right.

Lastly, but not leastly, we must never forget that the providential hand of God is over us. If He intended us

to marry, He likewise created a partner for us, and if we use our reason, seek sound advice and pray to Him, we shall find the one whom God intended us to have. A prudent wife is properly from the Lord. Then let us ask the Lord for the prudent wife or husband. I close with the witty answer of the Irish lassie, with which I started. Courtship, lighthearted, pure, sane and prayerful, is the best preparation for marriage.

# MARRIAGE A SACRAMENT AND A CONTRACT

"We, who are children of Saints, should not be joined together like pagans that know not God."—Tobias.

One of the most difficult tasks the Catholic Church has had to perform throughout the ages, has been to teach people to take serious things seriously. Statistics show that more than half of the accidents in the United States are due to carelessness, and what is that but taking serious things too lightly? There are certain material things which, if not feared, at least, should be held sacred; such as sanctuaries, churches and homes. There are also moral values, or spiritual things which must not be made commonplace, treated with mediocrity, or trampled into the mire. A lily has no place on an ash pile; neither should the circumstances of maternity be discussed in the market place.

The modern tendency seems to reduce all things to a common plane. Nothing is treated as sacred, therefore, with reverence or respect. Our stage, press and picture screen are the greatest sinners in this respect. They depict episodes that should only be seen in the confines of private life. Sex matters and even revolting sins are displayed before old and young without the least semblance of reserve. The very things St. Paul says should not as much as be mentioned among Christians, are emblazoned on the silver screen and in the headlines.

It was not always so. The Jews treated the name of Jehovah with such respect that they would only pronounce it at certain times; the Ark of the Covenant dared not be touched by profane hands, and those who overstepped this prohibition were struck dead. For centuries a person accused of a crime could flee to the sanctuary, and dared not be removed except by those who had authority in the sanctuary, that he might receive a just trial. Family history was seldom paraded in public; in fact, all refined people felt that there were many things that would be blighted if exposed to the public view.

What spurs the human on to do better things? Is it not ideals? Is it not the things above him that beckon him to climb higher? But when we tear down ideals, what is there left for him to do, but stop trying? Tear down patriotism and make it a subject of ridicule and joke, and who will care to be patriotic? Joke and laugh about lying and who will tell the truth? Picture the grafter and the thief as just a little smarter than the rest of humanity and who will wish to be honest? Represent purity as the prudery of the proverbial old maid and who will try to be pure? Ridicule the miracle of the Resurrection and who will glory in the Resurrection? We often hear complaints that the youth of today have no high ideals. How can they have, when the press, the stage and picture shows are reducing the highest aspirations, to vulgar mediocrity?

What is the effect of this tear down policy? It is disastrous. Take the oath as an example. Our courts of justice operate on fidelity to the oath; yet a judge told me a few months ago that not one trial in ten was enacted in which one or more witnesses did not swear to lies. Three years ago, an attorney remarked, after winning a case, that he was sorry to win it since all the witnesses on the other side told the truth. Why so much perjury? Because our idea of the seriousness of the oath has been lowered until we put it on par with a white lie. Why is it so difficult to persuade the most trustworthy and



capable men to seek government positions? Simply because society today does not consider a man's private life as anything sacred. A snooper may pry into his private life, obtain a real or apparent fault and ruin him in the headlines.

There is one noble ideal, and it is the subject of this discourse, that has been torn down from the realms of the sacred and tramped into the very mire, and that is marriage. Of all the social institutions, there is none that has been so woefully degraded as has marriage. It seems to be the target of the most unwholesome wit, humor and pun. A bride of six months remarked that in her husband could not furnish her a modern home she would find one that could. A prosperous groom remarked, while buying a wedding ring, that there were plenty of women in the world and if the present wife to be, did not suit him, he could always get another. Read the proceedings of the divorce courts or listen to the conversations of the young people of today and you will readily see the deplorable condition to which marriage has sunk in the popular mind.

What covenant in the world should be more sacred than the marriage contract? The vows of matrimony are so sacred that they should be spoken of in a whisper. They are the very steel that holds the foundation of society together. Our Dear Lord realized the seriousness of matrimony, and for that very reason He raised it to the dignity of a Sacrament. The very word "Sacrament" tells us with what reverence it should be treated. Sacrament comes from two Latin words, "Sacra", which means sacred or holy, and "Mens", which means mind. Sacred and holy in the mind is the literal meaning.

If there is one institution that the Catholic Church has tried to keep Holy, it is marriage. Sad to say, She stands rather alone in the battle to preserve its dignity and sacred character. One by one, the other denominations are deserting the Camp of Christ and yielding to human frailty and passion.

Those who really think and have the good of society at heart, view the condition of marriage with alarm. Some have offered quack remedies, such as domestic relations courts, hygienic instructions before marriage, and companionate marriage. I notice from recent reports that the inventor of companionate marriage is losing faith in his own pet theory. In fact, all the "cure alls" that have been put forth so far have met with dismal failure. They are little more than an opiate that relieves the pain in a member here or there, but they are useless as a cure. What we need is not something new, but a revival of the old. Nearly two thousand years ago Jesus Christ put marriage in its proper place, and commissioned the Catholic Church to represent Him in keeping it there, and if Mr. Ben Lindsey, or anyone else, wants to know how to restore marriage, let him study the Canon Law of the Catholic Church, or the famous letter of Pius XI, delivered to the world on Dec. 31, 1930. There, and only there, will he find the solution of this serious problem.

The Catholic Church teaches that whenever a valid marriage has been entered into and consummated, nothing but the reaper of death can break that bond. Some are under the impression that She considers all non-Catholic and Protestant marriages invalid. Here and there we find uninstructed Catholics who are under the same impression. It is nothing unusual to have a Catholic man or woman come to a pastor and want to marry a Protestant that has been married before in a Protestant Church,

thinking that their marriage was no marriage, and to the surprise of the Catholic party, though the day for the marriage has been set, the gowns purchased and the fatted calf prepared, they are refused permission to marry because the Church defends that Protestant's first marriage. The Catholic Church maintains that every Protestant marriage is valid and binding, unless proved otherwise, due to a former marriage or the like.

When a Catholic marries a non-Catholic before a Protestant Minister or a civil magistrate, the Church holds their marriage invalid. She will not grant the Sacrament to a Catholic, unless married before a pastor of a Catholic Parish, or a priest having his permission or delegation.

Friends, many are under the impression that the Pope may grant divorces. The Pope has no more power to grant a divorce than you or I have. One radio listener wrote me after my sermon on divorce and said I should not criticise the judges for granting divorces since the popes granted them if they were well enough paid for it. I think our daily papers have a great deal to do with forming this false impression. They speak of it as divorce which it is not. It is just like a court pronouncing a contract void from the beginning. The Church has the right to lay down the conditions under which she will grant the Sacrament of marriage, and once the sacrament has been conferred the Pope himself cannot break that bond. It does happen however that impediments make the marriage invalid; fear for example. A father says to his daughter, "If you do not marry that man I will disinherit you." Fearing to be disinherited she goes through with the marriage. Twenty years later she leaves the man and wants to marry another. The Church investigates and finds that her contract was not free that she acted through fear. The Church simply says there was no marriage there from the start, because Marriage is a free contract. If the Pope could grant divorces surely Henry the VIII would have been given one. He was the lad who could have paid any price, and besides the faith of the whole of England was at stake; yet the Pope was powerless. Henry's first marriage was valid, and the Pope could give no permission to Henry to marry a second wife while the first still lived, though he could have kept the whole of England in the Church by so doing. Matrimony is too serious a matter to trifle with. Well could Tobias in his day cry out, "We, who are the Children of Saints, should not be joined together like Pagans that know not God". To begin with, the Catholic Church requires at least three Sundays or Feast Days in which the intent to marry is published. This is intended to prevent hasty marriages, and secondly to discover any impediments that might make the marriage invalid. Then there is the Marriage ceremony buried in pomp and majesty. A wedding or nuptial Mass for the occasion, with a special blessing for the bride, and instruction before and after taking the vows, in which their seriousness is dwelt upon at length. She places practically no limit to the finery, flowers, candles, etc., which add dignity and beauty to the ceremony. Sentimental songs are forbidden lest they detract from the seriousness which should accompany this contract. Those of you who have never witnessed a Catholic Church wedding, make use of the first opportunity to see one. They are public—you need not be invited to the Church. You are welcome without an invitation. See a real Catholic wedding and you will not ask afterward, "Is marriage a serious matter in the Catholic Church?"

But what is this contract of marriage? Friends, I am going to let that master mind, St. Paul, tell you, for he

can do it better than I. In his letter to the Ephesians, V. Chapter, he has this to say:

“Let women be subject to their husbands as to the Lord. Because the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the Head of the Church. Therefore, as the Church is subject to Christ, so also let the wives be to their husbands in all things”.

Then to the husbands, he says:

“Husbands, love your wives as Christ also loved the Church and delivered Himself up for it.\*— So also ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife, loveth himself. For no man ever hated his own flesh, but nourished it and cherisheth it as Christ doth the Church”. “For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and shall cleave to his wife, and they shall be two in one flesh. This is a great Sacrament; but I speak in Christ and in the Church”.

Show me any contract that compares with the one St. Paul thus describes. What other contract makes two persons one flesh? In all other agreements we give something exterior to ourselves; our work for so much per week; our money for lands or houses. But in this contract we give our very selves. Is it not easy to see that a contract that implies all must be binding until death?

When a man goes to the altar and accepts the hand and heart of a woman in marriage, he promises to protect her with his very life. The Love of Christ for His Church is his model. Did Christ stop at any sacrifice? Did He say “Thus far and no further?” See Him hanging on Calvary’s cross and see what He did for His Church. No sacrifice was too great; He laid down His life for His Church. He made the Church His Mystic Body so that those who persecuted the Church persecuted Him. Husbands, your wives are your very bodies, for by marriage you become two in one flesh. How then can you tear those bodies by drunkenness or revelry? How can you starve them, abuse them, or treat them as mere carnal toys? They are flesh of your flesh, and bone of your bone, and how can you set them aside for another? When you do, you are traitors to your own flesh.

Wives, you have in the Church’s love and obedience to Christ the exemplar of your fidelity to your husband. Obedience to a Christian husband is not slavery as many will have us believe. The ultra moderns say: “I have as much right to be the head of my family as my husband. I am just as intelligent as he. Why should I be a slave?” Does not every organization require a head? Is obedience to that head slavery? Am I a slave because I obey the governor of this state, or the mayor of the city? Love itself implies obedience. Did not Christ say, “If you love Me, keep My commandments.” Love and obedience go hand in hand. If we really love a person we will anticipate their wishes.

Do those who wish to exempt obedience from the marriage contract ever stop to consider what a Christian wife receives in return for her obedience to a Christian husband? What should be a greater consolation to her than to realize that there is one man who stands between her and a cruel world? One man who will lay down his life for her. If anyone will inflict injury on her, it must be over the dead body of her husband. Is yielding the leadership in their home too high a price to pay for such protection?

I have the greatest regard for womanhood and motherhood, but after twenty years of dealing with all classes of society, I have come to the honest conclusion that if there is one party of the marriage contract that has not been treated fairly it is the husband and father. Too many wives take complete control of the family. They cash the checks, pay the bills, select houses for rent or purchase, direct the children and the poor husband and father has nothing to say. His sole responsibility seems to consist in procuring the daily bread.

The baby gets sick, and the neighborhood sympathy goes to the mother. She is pictured bending over that bed of pain, in tears and with an aching heart. Poor "dad" seems all forgotten. He does not sob nor moan, nor become hysterical. Hence he gets no sympathy. To see his tears you must sneak to the basement or out to the garage. He goes to work apparently indifferent. His body indeed is at work but his mind and heart are hovering around that baby bed. These last five years of depression have taught me what there is in the heart of a Christian husband and father. When you see a man, as I have seen them, earn but two dollars per week, buy groceries with all of it and take them home to the wife and children and then set out and beg cold sandwiches at back doors for himself, you realize that a Christian father is more than a mere breadwinner. Examples of this kind have been so numerous in recent years that I have concluded that sighs and tears are not always the trademarks of the greatest love and sorrow.

To my mind there are two abuses that have helped more than anything else to put society in the chaotic condition in which we find it today. The first is, that during the war and boom days, young people conducted the affairs of the world. The cry rang out, "Give us young blood: let the young men do things, they are more progressive." The second evil consists in the fact that fathers and husbands forfeited their places as heads of families.

What mothers and wives need today is to stay in their own domain. Step by step they have entered the realm of men; they dress like men and feel that the wide world is theirs to use as they please. With every step they are returning to primitive slavery. What they do need is more humility, modesty and refinement. They can rule the world but they cannot do it by taking fidelity and obedience out of the marriage contract. They cannot do it by usurping the rights of men. As long as they take haughtiness, effrontery and sex appeal as their weapons, they are doomed to failure.

Their weapons must be humility, purity and refinement. Mothers and wives, practice the virtues that adorned the heart of the Blessed Mother of Christ. Tear the pictures of the movie actresses with their numerous husbands from the walls of your homes and place the Madonna there. Let the angelic virtues of purity and refinement adorn your hearts and you shall rule the world. Husbands and fathers, God and nature have selected you to be the heads of families. Place a picture of the Christ where you can see it every day, and often remind yourselves that the sacrificing love of Christ for His Church is the pattern of your love for your wedded wife.

Husbands and wives, this is the Feast of the Resurrection. The Feast commemorating how Christ took His poor bleeding, lacerated Body of Good Friday and restored it to perfection and Glory on Easter Sunday. Ask that Risen Savior to help you to take poor bleeding, lacerated mar-

riage and restore it to dignity and perfection. Remember that marriage will never be restored until the sacrificing love of Christ for His Church and the undying loyalty of the Church to Christ are the ideals of the marriage vows.

# FATHER, MOTHER AND CHILDREN

If there is anything the average person enjoys, it is to be associated with great people or places. Somehow they think that the very association elevates them. In traveling along the highway leading into the hamlet of Cascade, Iowa, a large sign greets you, which reads "Red Faber's Home Town." Perhaps not one-half of one percent. of the people of this little town helped to make Red Faber famous, yet they feel that to live in his home town gives them a slight claim to fame. We all know only too well how odious the proverbial New Yorker makes himself when he gets one hundred miles from Broadway, because he is under the impression that culture is bounded by the city limits of Greater New York. The fact that he is a resident of New York makes him think that culturally he is just a little superior to the rest of America. It was probably the damaging effect of this state of mind that prompted the officials of a great eastern University to place this inscription over the University gate, "It is not what your dad is, but what you are". No matter how ridiculous it may seem, the fact still remains that most of us love to be associated with great personages.

Now if it is a great honor to have dined with the Governor. or taken tea with the Prince of Wales; if one should be proud to have been called in counsel by the President or the Pope, how much prouder should one be who is called into council and made a co-worker with God Himself. And that is just what parents are required to do. They are co-laborers with God Himself. They are the very ones whom God chooses to help Him people the world.

When God chose to free America from the tyranny of England, He chose the parents of George Washington to assist Him in this serious undertaking. When God saw (humanly speaking) that the prince of sin was gaining the upperhand in the world and He needed a strong character to head His Church, a character that no worldly power could influence, He chose the parents of Pope Pius XI to be His helpers in producing such a man. and because they cooperated, we have the gloriously reigning Pope Pius XI.

Parents, do you realize your dignity? Do you realize that it requires God, a father, and a mother to produce a human being? Not parents alone, but parents with God are required. No man or group of men can produce a human soul. That can be done only by the creative hand of God.

This doctrine is denied by the neo-Pagans of today. They claim the parents alone are responsible for the procreation of the race. If they are correct, will they kindly explain why it is that thousands of couples today, who crave children to love, cannot have them? If man has power over life, he must also have it over death; yet, why do rich and poor have to die when God calls them to an account. Indeed we can interfere with the designs of God, but when we do it, it is a sin. If we could not interfere we would not have free will.

The complaint has been recorded in a number of periodicals coming from numerous pens, that this country today is lacking in real statesmen. May it not be that God is punishing us for our race suicide of the past years? It may be that thirty or forty years ago a couple practiced contraception in some small hamlet here in our country and in so doing kept the very man out of the world that God had destined to lead the country out of the depression.

I do not wish to be misunderstood. The Catholic Church does not require her married people to have all the children they are capable of bearing, but she does demand that if they indulge in the pleasures and privileges of marriage that they accept the consequent obligations. The Church has no objection to parents limiting the number of their offspring, if they do so by limiting their indulgence.

There are a great many who think there is no sin in preventing conception as long as there is no bloodshed. Let such ask themselves, would they be here today to talk about conception if their parents had prevented conception the day they were conceived. Onan, in the Old Testament, committed that sin and God slew him for it. Let us draw a little unsavory comparison which will show us why contraception is such a great perversion of nature.

The primary purpose of eating is to keep strength in the body, or as we are wont to say, to keep body and soul together. The pleasure we get from eating is secondary. Now what would you think of a person who ate solely for pleasure, and did away with the primary purpose altogether? We read with disgust how the old pagan Romans used to eat at their banquets until their stomachs were filled, leave the dining hall and empty their stomachs, come back and eat again. We call them swine? Why? Because they did away with the primary purpose of eating, and ate just for pleasure. Why not use the same logic in dealing with contraception? The primary purpose of sex indulgence is the procreation of children. The physical pleasure is only secondary as it is in eating. Those who practice contraception frustrate the primary purpose of sex indulgence and indulge only for pleasure. We cannot say that such sinners are brutes because even the brute will not pervert the laws of nature in such a manner.

One might dwell at length on the various phases of this sin of contraception, how it is the solitary sin committed by two persons with mutual consent, but I have said more than I cared to say about the filthy business.

Let us consider an argument or two put forth by the race suiciders to defend their malpractice. They maintain that it is better to rear one, two or three children and give them advantages than it is to rear seven or eight and have them denied advantages, such as college educations and the like. If I know anything about education, character development is the most important branch of education. Show me the University that can compare with four or five sisters and brothers in the development of character. The brain trust gives us the information that selfishness and greed stand in the way of recovery. Who can extract conceit, selfishness and greed out of a child like a number of sisters and brothers? Children have the keenest sense of justice, and they know how to mete it out. Where there are a number of them in the family, they see to it that the candy and ice cream are evenly divided. They develop a sense of dimensions and a memory. They can detect the largest piece of cake clear across the room, and can likewise remember who got the biggest piece yesterday. On the other hand, if you want sacrifice, they are not wanting. The new baby is most welcome and if a brother or sister is sick, it takes little or no persuasion to make them surrender a sweetmeat to the sick member.

The very virtues, the identical traits of character so much needed in the world today are the ones the large family tends to develop.

On the other hand, the very vices rampant in the world today, selfishness, greed and intemperance, are the very ones the one and two child family fosters. The hatcheries

and brooders of selfishness are the ultra modern one and two child families.

I feel certain that the teachers in this radio audience will agree with me when I say that the cross of the school teacher is the one and two child family. The mothers and fathers hiding behind the petticoats of interest and co-operation, park at the schoolhouse door to tell the teacher she does not understand their pampered Percy, for if she did, he would not have sixty in deportment. The reason he got sixty was that the teacher knew him better than Papa and Mamma. Naturally, if the report card is not better next month. Papa and Mamma will not go after Percy but they will go after the school board and next year, teacher may be washing dishes in a restaurant. And all because parents want to produce supermen.

I wish to question that last statement, however. Right down in my heart I do not believe that it is a desire to produce supermen that prompts race suicide, nor do I believe it is the financial hazard of rearing large families, but I do believe it is selfishness pure and simple. The people who commit the most contraception are the rich with whom money is no item. And it is invariably the children of the one and two child family that are left to servants and tutors for care and training.

I regret very much that time will not permit me to dwell on the domestic virtues which embellish the family. I hope that at some future date, with the consent of my Bishop and W. H. O., I will be permitted to speak to you on these virtues. However, our work would not be complete if we did not accompany the family to the gates of eternity. In order to do this, I will try and describe two deathbeds to you. I am changing a few unessential conditions lest some in my audience might recognize one or the other. They are the deathbeds of two wives and mothers. For convenience sake, we will call the first Magdalene and the other Mary. Magdalene died at the age of forty-six. She had been reared in a good Catholic family. Her father was a highly respected professional man. Unfortunately for Magdalene, however, he was one of those criminally kind fathers who leaves the entire direction of the family to the mother. At the age of seventeen, Magdalene began keeping company, and did her courting away from home for the most part. One month, after passing her eighteenth birthday, she eloped to a neighboring city with a non-Catholic man and entered a clandestine marriage. Her parents did not know anything about the marriage for two weeks after it took place. She was married by a priest and hence the marriage was binding in the eyes of the Church.

They lived together three years when a divorce was procured and the husband given custody of their baby boy then eighteen months old. After three or four years of rather loose living, Magdalene married another man. Again a non-Catholic. This time, however, by a Justice of the Peace. Three children were born to her and this so-called second husband. At the age of forty-four she contracted tuberculosis and was an invalid for two years. The few earnings and savings dwindled and the last year of her life, she had to take her family and live in a country town with an older maiden sister. Her sister tried her utmost to have her make her peace with God. When Magdalene saw that her days in this world would be very few, she consented to talk with the priest and he was called. Nothing could be done in reconciling her to the Church unless she repudiated the man with whom she was living. What a battle went on between her flesh and her soul. In



watching her, one was reminded of the battle that St. Augustine describes in his confessions, which took place in his heart before his conversion. Three times the priest visited her, and as many times she refused the change.

Finally, on a Thursday afternoon, God's grace won the battle and of her own accord she called for the priest. After repudiating her so-called husband, the priest proceeded to prepare her for death. At the very mention of the word death, she said, "Father, I do not want to die. How can I face my God after such a life? My children were taught nothing about God, and for years I kept from having children. O Father, I cannot face my God after such a life". The priest pictured Christ's mercy in forgiving the repentant thief on the cross, and the woman taken in adultery, and thus instilled hope into her fearing soul. She received the Sacraments of the dying; her children stood around the bed, and not one of them knew how to pray for her.

As the priest was imparting the final blessing, the door opened and two men came in. Magdalene cast one glance at them, uttered a shriek and collapsed. Her soul went to God. Some one had written her first husband that she was dangerously sick, and thinking she might want to see her son before she died, they both came to her deathbed. The children by her second husband looked on in amazement, wondering what it was all about. Out in the back yard her so-called second husband was nervously walking back and forth thinking of the tragedy he had caused when he married a woman who was already married. Two days later her emaciated remains were carried to the village Church and thence to the churchyard, and many in that little country hamlet still wonder how a Catholic woman could have two living husbands follow her to the grave.

Mary died at the age of forty-four. She too was reared in a good Catholic home out in the country. Her father was a man who believed in "eternal vigilance," and insisted that the children do their courting in the family circle. At the age of twenty she began keeping company with a Catholic boy from a neighboring parish. The courting was done for the most part in Mary's home. After a year of company keeping, the young man asked her to accept an engagement ring. Mary begged for two months' time to think it over. She consulted her parents and her pastor, and even their consent was not sufficient for she asked the advice of an old priest who had baptized her and given her her First Communion. He advised her to go ahead and get married, but she still took time to make a novena of Communions before she accepted the ring.

Her wedding day was set and there was not a blessing the Church has to offer on such occasions that Mary did not procure. I never saw a more beautiful bride march up the aisle in a Church, than was Mary. She saw to it that there should be no carousing on her wedding day, but that her friends and relatives should have a day of real Christian enjoyment.

She and her husband moved on a farm and made a real Catholic home. God blessed them with six children, one of which preceded her into Heaven. Just two weeks after her forty-fourth birthday, in early May, Mary was taken dangerously sick, and I was called about the middle of the afternoon. I went to her bedside to give her all the consolations of the Church which she so dearly loved. When her little eleven year old daughter heard that Communion was to be brought to her mother, she set the May altar which she had in her bedroom, beside her mother's bed.

On it was a crucifix in the center, a statute of the Blessed Mother of Christ on one side and a statue of the Little Flower on the other. The only flowers she could find were apple blossoms, and two vases of apple blossoms were on the altar.

When I entered, the tots were on their knees beside the bed. They left the room that their mother might go to confession, but they might have stayed, for the imperfections she had to confess would not have scandalized the smallest of her children.

After her confession, I opened the door and the husband and children came in and knelt around the sick bed in tears and at prayer. The devotion with which she received Communion and Extreme Unction was inspiring. After the last blessing, I said to her: "Mary, are you afraid to die?" "Oh, no Father," she replied, "I dread to leave the children but God gave them to me, and He is taking me away from them, and He will see that they get along, and besides, they have a good father." She then turned to Billy, a boy of sixteen and said: "Billy, you will think of your morning prayers when I am gone?" Billy nodded. She gasped for breath and asked that her head be raised a little. Her husband knelt by her side, raised her head a little and let it rest on his arm. The children went on with the Litany of the Blessed Virgin that she had taught them to say by heart. "Holy Mary, Pray for her. Holy Mother of God, Pray for her."

I took the crucifix and placed it to her lips. Her eyes opened and she said, "Jesus, I am Thine". With her head resting on the strong arm of a faithful husband, with her nostrils soothed in the sweet odor of apple blossoms, with five loving children sending a holocaust of prayer to high Heaven for their mother, with a baby in Heaven beckoning for her to come, with her lips pressed to the image of the Crucified Savior, she breathed her last and her pure soul went to God.

Fathers and Mothers, which deathbed will be yours? Now is the time to choose it and to prepare for it. May God bless you and give you the grace to choose and have the deathbed of Mary.



