

Fr. Rudy's Reflections  
The Twenty-seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time  
October 6, 2024

### **The Sacrament of Marriage: Symbol of Christ's Love for the Church**

My Brothers and Sisters in the Risen Lord,

In our world today, we often hear stories of marriages that have faced significant challenges yet have persevered through thick and thin. Take, for example, a couple who has been married for over thirty years. Their marriage has seen its share of ups and downs—job losses, health scares, the challenges of raising children, and the inevitable misunderstandings that arise in any relationship. Yet, through it all, they have remained committed to one another, their love deepening with each passing year. Their relationship is not merely about surviving the storms of life but thriving through them, growing stronger and more united in purpose.

This couple's enduring love serves as a modern-day example of the profound truth that marriage, in its essence, is far more than just a partnership. As Catholics, we believe that marriage is a sacrament—a visible sign of God's invisible grace. In the relationship of a loving couple, marriage becomes an icon of the Trinity, mirroring to the world who God is and how much he loves us. Every interaction, every act of love and forgiveness between the couple reflects the divine love that flows within the Trinity and is poured out upon all creation.

St. Paul, in his letter to the Hebrews, writes that marriage has a precise Christian purpose: to symbolize Christ's love for the Church and the Church's love for Christ. Just as Christ's love for the Church is fruitful, giving life through grace, so too is marriage called to be fruitful. But unlike Baptism, where the recipient receives the sacramental sign of water, the sacrament of marriage is not something received passively. Rather, the couple themselves, through their love and commitment, become the sacramental sign of God's loving presence in the Church.

In this sacred union, God asks married couples to partake in a higher level of spiritual commitment to one another—not merely a psychological or physiological relationship but a deep, spiritual connection. It is this spiritual bond that enables couples to not only enjoy the fruits of their association but also to bear the suffering and sorrow that will inevitably come, just as Christ bore sufferings on the Cross.

Marriage, therefore, is more than just a vocation or a commitment; it is a sacrament. Those who are married in a church before God are surrendering themselves to God's divine purposes. They come together not just out of love for each other, but to do God's will here on earth. In this way, marriage is not just a secular relationship but a holy covenant meant to give birth, in love, to all the good things God provides to each of us, grounded in the strength of this sacred union.

*"When a husband and wife are united in marriage, they no longer seem like something earthly, but rather like the image of God himself."*—St. John Chrysostom

Yours in Christ,

Fr. Rudy