

THE SACRAMENTS

MATRIMONY.

1. This Sacrament sanctifies the contract of Christian marriage, giving to those who receive it worthily the special grace to love and be strictly faithful to each other, to assist each other in their daily needs, to bear up with each other's shortcomings and to bring up their children in a Christian manner.

2. God Himself instituted marriage when He created our first parents, and Christ raised it to the dignity of a sacrament.

3. Marriage is indissoluble except by the death of one of the parties. « What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder. » (*Matt. XIX, 6.*)

4. There are two classes of impediments to marriage, viz., *diriment* and *prohibitory*, the one rendering it entirely null and void, the other without having a nullifying effect, making it sinful to contract it.

5. Of the eight *diriment* impediments, five are -

(a) consanguinity (See page 51, para. 8).

(b) Affinity (See page 51, para.8).

(c) Crime. - Persons committing murder or adultery with a view to being married together, render themselves incapable of such marriage.

(d) Difference of religion. - No marriage can take place between a baptised and an unbaptised person.

(e) *Clandestinity*. - Marriage must be contracted in a presence of the parish priest (or another duly authorised on this behalf by him or the bishop) and of at least two witnesses. Marriage before a Registrar or a Protestant minister is hence no Catholic marriage at all and those so united live in a constant state of mortal sin and remain debarred from the Sacraments and from burial by the Church.

6. Of the three *prohibitory* impediments, only that against *mixed marriages* need be dealt with here.

7. A mixed marriage is a marriage between a Catholic and one who, though baptised, is not a Catholic. Either domestic attachment or fear or ridicule sooner or later cools the fervour or weakens the faith of the Catholic party, while the children are easily persuaded to follow the less strict religion of the non-Catholic parent. When for some really grave reason such marriages are permitted by the Church, it must be mutually agreed upon (1) that the Catholic party shall in no way be interfered with in the exercise of his or her religion, (2) that all the children shall be brought up as Catholics, and (3) that the Catholic party shall endeavour to convert the other by every prudent means.

8. To make sure that no impediments to a proposed marriage exist, the Church requires the previous publication of *banns*.

9. Good cause being shown, dispensation from certain impediments may be obtained from the Pope or the bishop. The best way to steer clear of all irregularities is to consult one's parish priest in good time before arranging to marry.

10. In order to receive worthily the Sacrament of Matrimony the parties should be inspired by Christian views and intentions, and should prepare themselves for it by prayer, by a good confession, and as much as possible by a good communion. To be married while in mortal sin is a sacrilege, which often brings down on the parties the curse of God.

11. The chief aim of marriage is the family, i. e., children born in wedlock and brought up in a Christian manner. The first marriage, that of Adam and Eve, was blessed by the Creator Himself in these words: « Increase and multiply. » St. Paul marks his high appreciation of legitimate motherhood by his declaration that woman « shall be saved through child-bearing if she continues in faith and love and sanctification with sobriety ». (*I Tim.* II, 15.)

Explanation of the Plate.

12. *The central picture* depicts the espousals of St. Joseph and the Blessed Virgin before the high priest in the temple at Jerusalem. The flowering lily St. Joseph holds reminds us of the beautiful tradition relating to his being chosen to become the spouse of Our Lady. The several aspirants for her hand, all belonging to the house of David, where

called together by the high Priest and each given a blest leafless twig on which he was to inscribe his name. The twigs were then all placed on the altar and God besought to manifest His choice. When the twigs were examined later, it was found that St. Joseph's alone had put forth leaves and a white flower like a lily. On the right we observe one of the rejected suitors, filled with despair, breaking his twig in two.

13. *In the left-hand top corner* we see the elder Tobias and Sara his wife preparing themselves for the married state by fervent prayer. While the angel Raphael is chasing away the devil who had killed the first seven husbands because of Sara because of their evil-mindedness in regard to marriage. (*Tob. III.*)

14. *The lowest picture* shows a young Catholic man and woman being married before a priest.

15. *In the top right-hand top corner* we see Adam and Eve. God is blessing the pair with the words: « Increase and multiply. » (*Gen. I, 28.*)
