

## Marriage

"God himself is the author of marriage." When God created human persons in his own image, as male and female, he placed in their hearts the desire, and the task, to love – to give themselves totally to another person. Marriage is one of two ways someone can make a total self-gift (the other is virginity, devoting oneself entirely to God). Marriage is not something thought up by human society or by any religion – rather, it springs from who the human person is, as male and female, and society and religion affirm and reinforce it. The truth of marriage is therefore accessible to everyone, regardless of their religious beliefs or lack thereof. Both faith and reason speak to the true meaning of marriage.

Marriage is the lifelong partnership of mutual and exclusive fidelity between a man and a woman ordered by its very nature to the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of children. The bond of marriage is indissoluble – that is, it lasts "until death do us part." At the heart of married love is the total gift of self that husband and wife freely offer to each other. Because of their sexual difference, husband and wife can truly become "one flesh" and can give to each other "the reality of children, who are a living reflection of their love."

Marriage between a baptized man and a baptized woman is a sacrament. This means that the bond between husband and wife is a visible sign of the sacrificial love of Christ for his Church. As a sacrament, marriage gives spouses the grace they need to love each other generously, in imitation of Christ.

The Meaning of Marriage & Sexual Difference – USCCB

## Amoris Laetitia

8. The Bible is full of families, births, love stories and family crises. This is true from its very first page, with the appearance of Adam and Eve's family with all its burden of violence but also its enduring strength to its very last page, where we behold the wedding feast of the Bride and the Lamb (Rev 21:2, 9). Jesus' description of the two houses, one built on rock and the other on sand (cf. Mt 7:24-27), symbolizes any number of family situations shaped by the exercise of their members' freedom, for, as the poet says, "every home is a lampstand".

Let us now enter one of those houses, led by the Psalmist with a song that even today resounds in both Jewish and Christian wedding liturgies:

"Blessed is every one who fears the Lord,  
who walks in his ways!  
You shall eat the fruit of the labor of your hands;  
you shall be happy, and it shall go well with you.  
Your wife will be like a fruitful vine  
within your house;  
your children will be like olive shoots  
round your table.  
Thus shall the man be blessed  
who fears the Lord.  
The Lord bless you from Zion!  
May you see the prosperity of Jerusalem  
all the days of your life!  
May you see your children's children!  
Peace be upon Israel!" (Ps 128:1-6).

of the Holy Father Francis