

LOVE IN MARRIAGE

1 If I speak in human and angelic tongues¹ but do not have love, I am a resounding gong or a clashing cymbal.

2 And if I have the gift of prophecy and comprehend all mysteries and all knowledge, if I have all faith so as to move mountains but do not have love, I am nothing.

3 If I give away everything I own, and if I hand my body over so that I may boast but do not have love, I gain nothing.

4 Love is patient, love is kind. It is not jealous, [love] is not pompous, it is not inflated,

5 it is not rude, it does not seek its own interests, it is not quick-tempered, it does not brood over injury,

6 it does not rejoice over wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth.

7 It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

8 Love never fails. If there are prophecies, they will be brought to nothing; if tongues, they will cease; if knowledge, it will be brought to nothing.

9 For we know partially and we prophesy partially,

10 but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away.

11 When I was a child, I used to talk as a child, think as a child, reason as a child; when I became a man, I put aside childish things.

12 At present we see indistinctly, as in a mirror, but then face to face. At present I know partially; then I shall know fully, as I am fully known.

13 So faith, hope, love remain, these three,² but the greatest of these is love.

1. All that has been said so far would be insufficient to express the Gospel of marriage and the family, were we not also to **speak of love**. For we cannot encourage a path of fidelity and mutual self-giving without encouraging the growth, strengthening and deepening of conjugal and family love. Indeed, the grace of the sacrament of marriage is intended before all else **“to perfect the couple’s love”**. Here too we can say that, “even if I have faith so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give all I have, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing” The word “love”, however, is commonly used and often misused.¹⁰⁵

Our daily love

1. In a lyrical passage of Saint Paul, we see some of the features of true love:

“Love is patient, love is kind; love is not jealous or boastful;

Even though sometimes, I am

Love is not arrogant or rude.

And yet, I can be.

Love does not insist on its own way,

Isn’t it; My way or the highway?

it is not irritable or resentful;

Only happens when someone bothers me.

it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right.

Revenge is best served cold, and I’m the waiter(waitress)

**Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things,
endures all things”**

St. Paul was never married!

Love is Patient:

Does not act on impulse and avoids giving offense. Listens to hear not to respond or defend... Avoids.. "What you should have done is..." Gives advice when it asked...Allows for mistakes..

Being patient does not mean letting ourselves be constantly mistreated or tolerating physical or emotional abuse

"We encounter problems whenever we think that relationships or people ought to be perfect, or when we put ourselves at the centre and expect things to turn out our way. Then everything makes us impatient, everything makes us react aggressively. Unless we cultivate patience, we will always find excuses for responding angrily. We will end up incapable of living together, antisocial, unable to control our impulses, and our families will become battlegrounds"

Love is Kind:

This tells us that love is more than a feeling...love is a verb...an action in which the action of love generates kindness.

"Throughout the text, it is clear that Paul wants to stress that love is more than a mere feeling. Rather, it should be understood along the lines of the Hebrew verb "to love"; it is "to do good". As Saint Ignatius of Loyola said, "Love is shown more by deeds than by words".¹⁰⁶ It thus shows its fruitfulness and allows us to experience the happiness of giving, the nobility and grandeur of spending ourselves unstintingly, without asking to be repaid, purely for the pleasure of giving and serving."

How do you know when you're loved, by what your spouse says or by how you're treated?

Love is not jealous

"love makes us rise above ourselves, envy closes us in on ourselves. True love values the other person's achievements. It does not see him or her as a threat. It frees us from the sour taste of envy. It recognizes that everyone has different gifts and a unique path in life. So it strives to discover its own road to happiness, while allowing others to find theirs."

Love is not boastful

Not false humility but truly finding the joy in discovering and uncovering the gifts and graces God has given to others. There are many gifts...each one has been given for the building up of the kingdom of God...

"It is important for Christians to show their love by the way they treat family members who are less knowledgeable about the faith, weak or less sure in their convictions. At times the opposite occurs: the supposedly mature believers within the family become unbearably arrogant. Love, on the other hand, is marked by humility; if we are to understand, forgive and serve others from the heart, our pride has to be healed and our humility must increase. Jesus told his disciples that in a world where power prevails, each tries to dominate the other, but "it shall not be so among you" The inner logic of Christian love is not about importance and power; rather, "whoever would be first among you must be your slave" (Mt 20:27). In family life, the logic of domination and competition about who is the most intelligent or powerful destroys love."

Love is not rude

Sarcasm...hidden anger...unspoken hurts...speak your truth and listen to the other's

"To love is also to be gentle and thoughtful. Love is not rude or impolite; it is not harsh. Its actions, words and gestures are pleasing and not abrasive or rigid. Love abhors making others suffer. Courtesy "is a school of sensitivity and disinterestedness" which requires a person "to develop his or her mind and feelings, learning how to listen, to speak and, at certain times, to keep quiet".

Love is generous

Giving of self...time...attention...concern...listening...conversation...forgiveness...mercy...

"Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others" (Phil 2:4). The Bible makes it clear that generously serving others is far more noble than loving ourselves. Loving ourselves is only important as a psychological prerequisite for being able to love others: "If a man is mean to himself, to whom will he be generous? No one is meaner than the man who is grudging to himself" (Sir 14:5-6). Saint Thomas Aquinas explains that "it is more proper to charity to desire to love than to desire to be loved" in,deed, "mothers, who are those who love the most, seek to love more than to be loved".¹¹¹ Consequently, love can transcend and overflow the demands of justice, "expecting nothing in return" (Luke 6:35), and the greatest of loves can lead to "laying down one's life" for another.

Love is not irritable or resentful

Circumstances don't cause irritation...Interior attitude does.

"It refers to a violent reaction within, a hidden irritation that sets us on edge where others are concerned, as if they were troublesome or threatening and thus to be avoided. To nurture such interior hostility helps no one. It only causes hurt and alienation. Indignation is only healthy when it makes us react to a grave injustice; when it permeates our attitude towards others it is harmful."

Love forgives

*"Once we allow ill will to take root in our hearts, it leads to deep resentment. The phrase *ou logízetai to kakón* means that love "takes no account of evil"; "it is not resentful". The opposite of resentment is forgiveness, which is rooted in a positive attitude that seeks to understand other people's weaknesses and to excuse them. As Jesus said, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). Yet we keep looking for more and more faults, imagining greater evils, presuming all kinds of bad intentions, and so resentment grows and deepens. Thus, every mistake or lapse on the part of a spouse can harm the bond of love and the stability of the family. Something is wrong when we see every problem as equally serious; in this way, we risk being unduly harsh with the failings of others. The just desire to see our rights respected turns into a thirst for vengeance rather than a reasoned defense of our dignity.*

When we have been offended or let down, forgiveness is possible and desirable, but no one can say that it is easy. The truth is that "family communion can only be preserved and perfected through a great spirit of sacrifice. It requires, in fact, a ready and generous openness of each and all to understanding, to forbearance, to pardon, to reconciliation. There

is no family that does not know how selfishness, discord, tension and conflict violently attack and at times mortally wound its own communion: hence there arise the many and varied forms of division in family life”.

Today we recognize that being able to forgive others implies the liberating experience of understanding and forgiving ourselves. Often our mistakes, or criticism we have received from loved ones, can lead to a loss of self-esteem. We become distant from others, avoiding affection and fearful in our interpersonal relationships. Blaming others becomes falsely reassuring. We need to learn to pray over our past history, to accept ourselves, to learn how to live with our limitations, and even to forgive ourselves, in order to have this same attitude towards others.

All this assumes that we ourselves have had the experience of being forgiven by God, justified by his grace and not by our own merits. We have known a love that is prior to any of our own efforts, a love that constantly opens doors, promotes and encourages. If we accept that God’s love is unconditional, that the Father’s love cannot be bought or sold, then we will become capable of showing boundless love and forgiving others even if they have wronged us. Otherwise, our family life will no longer be a place of understanding, support and encouragement, but rather one of constant tension and mutual criticism.”

Love rejoices with others

It takes a village to raise a child...I am because we are, we are because God is.

It is the toxic attitude of those who rejoice at seeing an injustice done to others. The following phrase expresses its opposite: “it rejoices in the right”. In other words, we rejoice at the good of others when we see their dignity and value their abilities and good works. This is impossible for those who must always be comparing and competing, even with their spouse, so that they secretly rejoice in their failures.”

Love bears all things

Paul’s list ends with four phrases containing the words “all things”. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Here we see clearly the countercultural power of a love that is able to face whatever might threaten it.

“Married couples joined by love speak well of each other; they try to show their spouse’s good side, not their weakness and faults. In any event, they keep silent rather than speak ill of them. This is not merely a way of acting in front of others; it springs from an interior attitude. Far from ingenuously claiming not to see the problems and weaknesses of others, it sees those weaknesses and faults in a wider context. It recognizes that these failings are a part of a bigger picture. We have to realize that all of us are a complex mixture of light and shadows. The other person is much more than the sum of the little things that annoy me. Love does not have to be perfect for us to value it. The other person loves me as best they can, with all their limits, but the fact that love is imperfect does not mean that it is untrue or unreal. It is real, albeit limited and earthly. If I expect too much, the other person will let me know, for he or she can

neither play God nor serve all my needs. Love coexists with imperfection. It “bears all things” and can hold its peace before the limitations of the loved one.”

Love believes all things

Here “belief” is not to be taken in its strict theological meaning, but more in the sense of what we mean by “trust”. This goes beyond simply presuming that the other is not lying or cheating. Such basic trust recognizes God’s light shining beyond the darkness, like an ember glowing beneath the ash.

“This trust enables a relationship to be free. It means we do not have to control the other person, to follow their every step lest they escape our grip. Love trusts, it sets free, it does not try to control, possess and dominate everything. This freedom, which fosters independence, an openness to the world around us and to new experiences, can only enrich and expand relationships.”

Love hopes all things

Daring to face the unknown together...

Love does not despair of the future. Following upon what has just been said, This phrase speaks of the hope of one who knows that others can change, mature and radiate unexpected beauty and untold potential. This does not mean that everything will change in this life. It does involve realizing that, though things may not always turn out as we wish, God may well make crooked lines straight and draw some good from the evil we endure in this world.

Here hope comes most fully into its own, for it embraces the certainty of life after death. Each person, with all his or her failings, is called to the fullness of life in heaven. There, fully transformed by Christ’s resurrection, every weakness, darkness and infirmity will pass away. There the person’s true being will shine forth in all its goodness and beauty. This realization helps us, amid the aggravations of this present life, to see each person from a supernatural perspective, in the light of hope, and await the fullness that he or she will receive in the heavenly kingdom, even if it is not yet visible.

Love endures all things

Children, in laws, illness, poverty, loss...disappointment

“This means that love bears every trial with a positive attitude. It stands firm in hostile surroundings. This “endurance” involves not only the ability to tolerate certain aggravations, but something greater: a constant readiness to confront any challenge. It is a love that never gives up, even in the darkest hour. It shows a certain dogged heroism, a power to resist every negative current, an irrepressible commitment to goodness. Here I think of the words of Martin Luther King, who met every kind of trial and tribulation with fraternal love: “The person who hates you most has some good in him; even the nation that hates you most has some good in it; even the race that hates you most has some good in it. And when you come to the point that you look in the face of every man and see deep down within him what religion calls ‘the image of God’, you begin to love him in spite of [everything]. No matter what he does, you see God’s image there. There is an element of goodness that he can never sluff off... Another way that you love your enemy is this: when the opportunity presents itself for you to defeat your enemy, that is the time which you must not do it... When you rise to the level of love, of its great beauty and power, you seek only to defeat evil systems. Individuals who happen to be caught up in that system, you love, but you seek to defeat the system... Hate for hate only intensifies the

existence of hate and evil in the universe. If I hit you and you hit me and I hit you back and you hit me back and so on, you see, that goes on ad infinitum. It just never ends. Somewhere somebody must have a little sense, and that's the strong person. The strong person is the person who can cut off the chain of hate, the chain of evil... Somebody must have religion enough and morality enough to cut it off and inject within the very structure of the universe that strong and powerful element of love”.

In family life, we need to cultivate that strength of love which can help us fight every evil threatening it. Love does not yield to resentment, scorn for others or the desire to hurt or to gain some advantage. The Christian ideal, especially in families, is a love that never gives up. I am sometimes amazed to see men or women who have had to separate from their spouse for their own protection, yet, because of their enduring conjugal love, still try to help them, even by enlisting others, in their moments of illness, suffering or trial. Here too we see a love that never gives up.”

The Attributes of Marriage

1. Growing in conjugal love:

Our reflection on Saint Paul's hymn to love has prepared us to discuss conjugal love. This is the love between husband and wife, a love sanctified, enriched and illuminated by the grace of the sacrament of marriage. It is an "affective union", spiritual and sacrificial, which combines the warmth of friendship and erotic passion, and endures long after emotions and passion subside.

2. *Lifelong sharing*

After the love that unites us to God, conjugal love is the "greatest form of friendship". It is a union possessing all the traits of a good friendship: concern for the good of the other, reciprocity, intimacy, warmth, stability and the resemblance born of a shared life. Marriage joins to all this an indissoluble exclusivity expressed in the stable commitment to share and shape together the whole of life.

3. *Joy and beauty*

In marriage, the joy of love needs to be cultivated. When the search for pleasure becomes obsessive, it holds us in thrall and keeps us from experiencing other satisfactions. Joy, on the other hand, increases our pleasure and helps us find fulfillment in any number of things, even at those times of life when physical pleasure has ebbed.

4. *Marrying for love*

Love is much more than an outward consent or a contract, yet it is nonetheless true that choosing to give marriage a visible form in society by undertaking certain commitments shows how important it is. *It manifests the seriousness of each person's identification with the other and their firm decision to leave adolescent individualism behind and to belong to one another. Marriage is a means of expressing that we have truly left the security of the home in which we grew up in order to build other strong ties and to take on a new responsibility for another person. This is much more meaningful than a mere spontaneous association for mutual gratification, which would turn marriage into a purely private affair. As a social institution, marriage protects and shapes a shared commitment to deeper growth in love and commitment to one another, for the good of society as a whole. That is why marriage is more than a fleeting fashion; it is of enduring importance. Its essence derives from our human nature and social character. It involves a series of obligations born of love itself, a love so serious and generous that it is ready to face any risk.*

5. *A love that reveals itself and increases*

The love of friendship unifies all aspects of marital life and helps family members to grow constantly. This love must be freely and generously expressed in words and acts. In the family, "three words need to be used.

6. *Dialogue*

Dialogue is essential for experiencing, expressing and fostering love in marriage and family life. Yet it can only be the fruit of a long and demanding apprenticeship. Men and women, young people and adults, communicate differently. They speak different languages and they act in different ways. Our

way of asking and responding to questions, the tone we use, our timing and any number of other factors condition how well we communicate. We need to develop certain attitudes that express love and encourage authentic dialogue.

7. Passionate love

The Second Vatican Council teaches that this conjugal love “embraces the good of the whole person; it can enrich the sentiments of the spirit and their physical expression with a unique dignity and ennoble them as the special features and manifestation of the friendship proper to marriage”.

8. *The world of emotions*

Desires, feelings, emotions, what the ancients called “the passions”, all have an important place in married life. They are awakened whenever “another” becomes present and part of a person’s life. It is characteristic of all living beings to reach out to other things, and this tendency always has basic affective signs: pleasure or pain, joy or sadness, tenderness or fear. They ground the most elementary psychological activity. Human beings live on this earth, and all that they do and seek is fraught with passion.

9. God loves the joy of his children

Yet we believe that God loves the enjoyment felt by human beings: he created us and “richly furnishes us with everything to enjoy”... But within a place of respect, generosity, selflessness, humility, kindness...

10. The erotic dimension of love

All this brings us to the sexual dimension of marriage. God himself created sexuality, which is a marvellous gift to his creatures. If this gift needs to be cultivated and directed “because it is necessary for procreation”

11. Violence and manipulation

On the basis of this positive vision of sexuality, we can approach the entire subject with a healthy realism. It is, after all, a fact that sex often becomes depersonalized and unhealthy; as a result, “it becomes the occasion and instrument for self-assertion and the selfish satisfaction of personal desires and instincts”.

12. *Marriage and virginity*

“Many people who are unmarried are not only devoted to their own family but often render great service in their group of friends, in the Church community and in their professional lives.

13. The transformation of love

Longer life spans now mean that close and exclusive relationships must last for four, five or even six decades; consequently, the initial decision has to be frequently renewed. While one of the spouses may no longer experience an intense sexual desire for the other, he or she may still experience the pleasure of mutual belonging and the knowledge that neither of them is alone but has a “partner” with whom everything in life is shared. He or she is a companion on life’s journey, one with whom to face life’s difficulties and enjoy its pleasures. This satisfaction is part of the affection proper to conjugal love. There is no guarantee that we will feel the same way all through life. Yet if a couple can come up with a shared and lasting life project, they can love one another and live as one until death do them part, enjoying an enriching intimacy. The love they pledge is greater than any emotion, feeling or state of mind, although it may include all of these. It is a deeper love, a lifelong decision of the heart. Even amid unresolved conflicts and confused emotional situations, they daily reaffirm their decision to love, to belong to one another, to share their lives and to continue loving and forgiving. Each progresses along the path of personal growth and development. On this journey, love rejoices at every step and in every new stage.

In the course of every marriage physical appearances change, but this hardly means that love and attraction need fade. We love the other person for who they are, not simply for their body. Although the body ages, it still expresses that personal identity that first won our heart. Even if others can no longer see the beauty of that identity, a spouse continues to see it with the eyes of love and so his or her affection does not diminish. He or she reaffirms the decision to belong to the other and expresses that choice in faithful and loving closeness. The nobility of this decision, by its intensity and depth, gives rise to a new kind of emotion as they fulfill their marital mission. For “emotion, caused by another human being as a person... does not tend toward the conjugal act”. It finds other sensible expressions. Indeed, love “is a single reality, but with different dimensions; at different times, one or other dimension may emerge more clearly”. The marriage bond finds new forms of expression and constantly seeks new ways to grow in strength. These both preserve and strengthen the bond. They call for daily effort. None of this, however, is possible without praying to the Holy Spirit for an outpouring of his grace, his supernatural strength and his spiritual fire, to confirm, direct and transform our love in every new situation.

Conclusion

Real love can never be truly captured by words. Words compromise and limit the fullness of real love. Words fall short and are defeated in their vain attempt to teach us the truth about love.

Real Love is something that cannot be defined, the only thing we can attempt to do is speak of how we react to it; of the quiet patience, and unending forgiveness that it requires of us.

Real Love is not something that happens to you, but instead it is something that you do, something you fight for. Love is the absolute decision to offer one's entire being to another. You give all of yourself but never lose yourself.

Love is not 50/50... This Holy and Sacred love is and will always be 100/100... Giving all of yourself and yet remaining complete.

Marriage needs that kind of commitment. For what you bring to your marriage is far less important than what you **do** with what you bring...what you nurture, what you discover, and what you hold sacred.

Love is not dormant; it is active, bringing richness and fullness, goodness and kindness, lifting the old to a newness it could have never discovered on its own. This is sacred love, this is the eternal gift that only God can instill in us. This extraordinary capacity to give entirely of yourself and yet remain full and yet remain complete, this is truly God's miracle.