

# Earthly marriage anticipates the marriage feast of Heaven

In his Letter to the Ephesians St. Paul writes, "Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ" (Ephesians 5:21). Later he adds, quoting from Genesis 2, "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh" (Ephesians 5:31). St. Paul frames his discussion of married life around the concept of mutual subjectivity, that is, the complete gift of self of a husband to his wife and a wife to her husband. In drawing an analogy between the relationship of a married couple and the covenant love of Christ to His Church, the



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Apostle to the gentiles shows how earthly marriage anticipates the marriage feast of Heaven.

On your wedding day in the presence of your family, friends, and Almighty God, you promised unending love and devotion to each other — regardless of your circumstances — from that day

forward for the rest of your lives until death. You vowed to share all that you are and all that you will become. You promised to nurture and support each other so that you will always grow deeper in your love for God within your marriage covenant. Husbands and wives bear witness to this responsibility by creating a home where genuine affection and mutual respect rooted in tenderness, forgiveness, and fidelity are the rule, and where the virtues of self-denial, prudence and humility are practiced daily.

A husband must continue to accept the responsibility

of being the chief servant of his wife and children. To be a servant is why a man leaves his father and mother and clings to his wife and the two become one flesh (see Genesis 2:24). Every decision you make cannot be your own; you must always place the best interest of your wife and family above everything else. The greatest gift you can give to your children is to love your wife. Open your heart and share the deepest parts of who you are with her; do not be afraid to make yourself vulnerable before her just as Christ made himself vulnerable before his bride, the Church.

When God decided to take love — to take the very essence of his being and implant that love within human persons made in his image and likeness — that love first took root within the woman. A wife shares that love in so many ways, especially in her tireless commitment to her husbands and family.

That love must be focused and centered in the marriage covenant with your husband. You should allow your husband to serve you and, in return, nurture him with patience, gentleness and understanding. A husband should know that his wife's heart is

ever open to his love.

It is not always easy for married couples to maintain an atmosphere of genuine affection and mutual respect — it will take work! Yet we know that from our wedding until death God's grace will help us through the most difficult times and the toughest challenges, for with God's love all things are possible.

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