Tridentine Community News

November 8, 2026 – Resumed Fifth Sunday After Epiphany

Holy Matrimony: A Sacred and Indissoluble Covenant
Part 1 of 2

By James Murphy

"What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder." — Matthew 19:6 (Douay–Rheims)

Holy Matrimony is not merely a civil contract or a human arrangement. **Marriage was instituted by God Himself**, when He created man and woman and commanded them to "increase and multiply" (Genesis 1:28). Our Lord Jesus Christ restored marriage to its original unity and indissolubility and raised marriage between the baptized to the dignity of a **Sacrament of the New Law**.



Saint Paul reveals its sublime meaning: the union of husband and wife signifies the union of **Christ and His Church**: "This is a great sacrament; but I speak in Christ and in the church" (Ephesians 5:32).

What Makes a Marriage Valid?

The essential foundation of marriage is the **free and true consent of one man and one woman**, each capable and free to marry. By this consent they give and accept one another in a permanent marital union. Consent cannot be replaced by any human authority.

For Catholics, the marriage must also be contracted according to the **canonical form required by the Church**, unless a lawful dispensation has been granted, and there must be no impediment that makes the marriage invalid.

The spouses must truly intend **marriage as God established it**: an exclusive and lifelong union, ordered by its nature toward the generation and Christian education of children. A valid marriage between two baptized persons is, by that very fact, a **Sacrament**.

The Three Great Goods of Marriage

Following St. Augustine, Catholic tradition speaks of three great blessings of Matrimony:

Offspring — Fidelity — Sacrament

Children are to be welcomed as gifts of God and raised in the true Faith. Husband and wife owe one another exclusive fidelity. And the marriage bond possesses a sacred permanence: **"They are not two, but one flesh"** (Matthew 19:6).

Pope **Leo XIII**, in *Arcánum Divínæ Sapiéntiæ* (1880), defended marriage as a divine institution characterized from the beginning by **unity and perpetuity**. Pope **Pius XI**, in *Casti Connubíi* (1930), reaffirmed Leo XIII and taught that Christian marriage is governed not by changing human opinion but by the law of God. Pope **Pius XII** likewise reminded Christian spouses that their free and mutual consent establishes a bond representing the perfect union of Christ with His Church.

Thus Catholic marriage is a **vocation to holiness**. Through the sacramental grace bestowed by Christ, husband and wife are strengthened to remain faithful, bear the crosses of family life, raise their children for God, and assist one another on the road to eternal salvation.

The Roman Catechism (also known as the Catechism of the Council of Trent) **summarizes marriage into the following main points:**

- Instituted by God: Marriage originates with God in the creation of man and woman.
- A sacrament: Christ elevated Christian marriage to one of the seven sacraments, giving spouses grace to live their vocation faithfully.
- One man and one woman: Marriage is an exclusive union between a man and a woman; polygamy is contrary to its nature.
- Indissoluble: A valid marriage creates a lifelong bond that cannot simply be dissolved and replaced by another marriage while both spouses live.
- Free consent: Husband and wife must genuinely and freely consent to the marriage.
- Children: A principal purpose of marriage is the procreation and Christian education of children.
- Mutual help: Marriage provides companionship, love, support, and assistance between husband and wife throughout life.
- Fidelity: Spouses owe one another sexual and marital faithfulness.
- Chastity within marriage: Marriage provides the proper context for sexual relations and helps spouses live chastely according to their state in life.

Tridentine Masses This Coming Week

Tue. 11/10 7:00 PM: Low Mass at *St. Benedict/Holy Name of Mary, Windsor* (St. Andrew Avellino, Confessor)

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