

Joyful Mysteries of Marriage

Annunciation

And the angel answering, said to her: The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the most High shall overshadow thee. And therefore also the Holy which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. And Mary said: Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.

Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God.
- Luke 1:35,38, Mark 10:14

"Be it done unto me according to thy word." With these words heaven was married to earth. Mary said, "I do", and conceived a Son by her spouse, the Holy Spirit, and the world has never been the same. Love manifests itself within marriage in the bringing forth of offspring. For those who cannot conceive children physically they are to manifest their love through spiritual offspring. When a couple is married the Church asks them to promise to accept children lovingly from God and raise them according to the teachings of the Church. To which they agree without much thought yet a large majority of professed Catholic married couples employ the use of artificial contraception. Has that promise made on our wedding day turned into a lie and denial of God's will? Every human life brought forth changes the course of human history. If we keep our promise to God and His Church it changes history for the good and furthers the Kingdom of God. If we do not keep our promise we are living a lie and helping bring about the destruction of the Kingdom. Contraception has no place in our marriage. We promise to accept children willingly from God. Be it done unto us according to thy word.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be, Etc.

Additional clause: ...of thy womb, Jesus, who gives life to our marriage.

Visitation

And Mary rising up in those days, went into the hill country with haste into a city of Juda. And she entered into the house of Zachary, and saluted Elizabeth. And it came to pass, that when Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the infant leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost: And she cried out with a loud voice, and said: Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb.

- Luke 1:39-42

We often see evangelization as something we do to our friends and neighbors but not our spouse. To truly love, honor, and obey we must bring Christ, like Mary, to our spouse. We must also, like Elizabeth, see Christ in our spouse. The Visitation gives a perfect example of how we should treat our husband or wife. First, we must always go "with haste" to meet their needs even before we are asked. Jesus came to serve and not to be served and we should adopt this attitude. Secondly, we should recognize Christ in our spouse. We should focus, no matter how difficult, on the fact that they too are created in the image and likeness of God. If we treat them with this type of respect we will help them realize their value and worth as children of God. Lastly, we should rejoice in our spouse and magnify God for the wonderful gift that they are. We can rejoice in them by setting aside time to spend together on the couch, talking, walking or studying scripture. We can magnify the Lord by bringing Christ to them in prayer, example, and spiritual growth. "In like manner also let wives be subject to their husbands: that if any believe not the word, they may be won without the word, by the conversation of the wives... Ye husbands, likewise dwelling with them according to knowledge, giving honour to the female as to the weaker vessel, and as to the co-heirs of the grace of life: that your prayers be not hindered."

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be, Etc.

Additional clause: ...of thy womb, Jesus, who will bring conversion into our marriage.

Nativity

And Joseph rising up from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him, and took unto him his wife.

And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him up in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

- Matt 1:24, Luke 2:7

Mary was due to deliver her child at any time and either had to walk or ride a donkey. Joseph hadn't slept much lately and had been walking for miles only to find there was no room at the inn. Life has many unexpected and unforeseen experiences waiting around each and every corner. Strength and resolve is needed to keep a marriage together during these times of trial. Unexpected expenses, illness, loss of job or possessions, and special-needs children can stress and strain a marriage to the breaking point. When we feel those pressures we must turn wholeheartedly to the example of the Holy Family. Even during the most trying times they followed God's will and were blessed richly for doing so. Joseph could have left Mary and the child that wasn't his but instead he chose to adopt. Mary could have gone back to Elizabeth's to give birth to her Son but she chose to stay by her husband's side. Joseph could have left Mary when he discovered Herod was coming for the child but he stayed and loved and protected them both. The Holy Family shows us that married life is not always easy but it is well worth the effort. What God has joined together let us not put asunder by our selfishness but instead let us adopt the selflessness of Mary and Joseph even in the most difficult situations.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be, Etc.

Additional clause: ...of thy womb, Jesus, who is with us in the trying times of marriage.

Presentation

And after the days of her purification, according to the law of Moses, were accomplished, they carried him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord: As it is written in the law of the Lord: Every male opening the womb shall be called holy to the Lord: And to offer a sacrifice, according as it is written in the law of the Lord, a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons:

And if her hand find not sufficiency, and she is not able to offer a lamb, she shall take two turtles [turtledoves], or two young pigeons, one for a holocaust, and another for sin: and the priest shall pray for her, and so she shall be cleansed.

- Luke 2:22-24, Leviticus 12:8

The Presentation shows us the result of faithfulness to the laws of God by married people. Did the Mother of God and her husband need to fulfill the law? After all it does seem a bit redundant; offering God to God. For a married couple trying to follow the laws of God many things can appear to be pointless or redundant. However, we must see that God has blessings for us and others that can only come through our faithfulness to His commandments. Our daily observance of His commands will bring "light for revelation" to those around us. By following the example of Mary and Joseph and bringing all we have and placing it before God we show the world that our "eyes have seen the salvation" prepared for the world. Our faithfulness to God and each other shows those around us that God's design is for us to become "one flesh." The law of Moses calls for a lamb, a young pigeon, or a turtle dove. It also states that if the woman cannot afford a lamb she may bring two turtle doves or two pigeons. Mary and Joseph fulfilled the law to the greatest of their ability as should we. They not only brought the two birds they also brought the Lamb. Lord, help us to offer to you our marriage. Help us to be faithful to your commands and to each other and in doing so lead others closer to you.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be, Etc.

Additional clause: ...of thy womb, Jesus, who has purified our marriage with His blood.

Finding in the Temple

And seeing him, they wondered. And his mother said to him: Son, why hast thou done so to us? behold thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. And he said to them: How is it that you sought me? did you not know, that I must be about my father's business? And they understood not the word that he spoke unto them. And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them. And his mother kept all these words in her heart.

Blessed are all they that fear the Lord: that walk in his ways. Thy wife as a fruitful vine, on the sides of thy house. Thy children as olive plants, round about thy table.

- Luke 2:48-51, Psalm 127:1,3

The finding in the Temple is a culminating lesson on the need for strong, faithful, loving husbands to make marriage work. Joseph suffered so much physically in protecting and providing for Mary and her Son. Here at the Temple, he suffers emotionally. The boy who he knows is not his own asks a question that pierces Joseph's heart, "Did you not know, that I must be about my Father's business?"

Many of today's men are spiritually weak. Josephs' example says to us married men, "fear not, only believe". Joseph shows how to deal with every situation in marriage from infidelity to children to work. Joseph never says one word but like a perfect follower of Christ his example says more than a few verses could ever say. Joseph endured all things, sacrificed all self-desires, and placed himself at the service of Mary and Jesus. If we husbands will follow his example our wives will take and keep these things in their hearts and our children will become lovingly obedient to us.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be, Etc.

Additional clause: ...of thy womb, Jesus, who strengthens husbands who are faithful.