

MARRIAGE HOMILY

Many moons ago when I was at primary school, it was common practice for the bishop with the parish priest to come to the school and examine the children on their catechism before being admitted to the sacrament of Confirmation. The catechism had a pat answer for every religious question under the sun which the children were supposed to know by heart. On one such occasion one nervous little 10 year old was asked 'what is marriage'? She got her answers completely mixed up and said: 'marriage is a place in the where some poor souls suffer for a time before they are released to go to heaven'. The irate Parish Priest shouted back: 'my child that is purgatory'. The bishop retorted: "leave her alone, she could be right, - what do you or I know about it anyway".

Bearing that in mind I'm not going to start pontificating about the conjugal life either. But the Church has something to say on the matter. It describes marriage as a partnership and life and love which only death can dissolve. Your married love, however, will be tested in life's 'ups and downs'.

Today, you are pledging to love your spouse for better or for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health to the end of your natural lives. That's asking a lot but if Jesus and Mary have a place in your married life, then like the couple at Cana you'll succeed even when your love is tested. For the couple at Cana what was going to spoil the wedding breakfast i.e. running out of wine, was turned completely round by the Lord. He changed the water not just into any old wine but the very best. So, if you want a 'wine filled marriage', full of colour, taste, zest and spirit, then you need to base your married love on Jesus's love for us which involved the laying down of his life. In a true sense spouses lay down their lives for each other.

A watery, dull, tasteless marriage without the Lord is the alternative.

Hal Roach, a well-known Irish comedian, once said 'a man is incomplete until he's married, and then he's completely finished'. Yes, he's completely finished living as a single man and the same applies to his spouse. The bible says: 'it's not good for man or woman to be alone'. However, you could feel alone even in marriage if your 'heart to heart' communication is poor. Your 'head to head' communication may be fine but good marriages are built on far more than that. In marriage the physical intimacy of the spouses is meant to be 'a sign and pledge of spiritual communion'.

Jesus tells us in the gospel: 'love one another as I have loved you'. If you do that, your marriage will be built on a firm foundation and your oneness as a couple will be evident for all to see.

May your love N and N grow from strength to strength and your aspirations on this day come to fulfilment.