

Marriage and the Current Debate
BY THE MOST REVEREND JOHN C. NIENSTEDT

My parents died almost two and a half years ago after 65½ years of married life together. When the family gathered some five years before for their 60th wedding anniversary, my younger sister said that her female colleagues where she worked had asked, “How can anyone stay married to the same person for sixty years?” My mother did not hesitate to provide the answer. She immediately replied, “We didn’t think about it. We just got up every morning and lived our commitment.”

There was something so refreshingly compelling in that statement. When a man and a woman bind their love in a life-long commitment that is mutual, exclusive and open to new life, the die is cast; the adventure has begun. Unlike Lot’s wife, two persons who have become one flesh do not look back by second-guessing themselves or questioning their decision. Rather they accept the call to love that has been given them and they strive, however

imperfectly, to live each day the gift of love that they share with their spouse and their children.

Unfortunately today, the intended reality of marriage as a life-long, committed and procreative union between one man and one woman is being severely challenged:

- 1. Four to five out of every ten marriages end in divorce;¹**
- 2. The rate of cohabitation has accelerated from 450,000 couples in 1965 to well over 5 million couples today²**
- 3. Nearly one of every three Americans over the age of 15 has never been married, the highest level in a decade³**
- 4. The number of children under the age of 18 living with a single parent has risen from 6 million in 1960 to 19 million in the year 2000.⁴**

¹ Tejada-Vera B., Sutton PD. Births, “Marriages, Divorces, and Deaths: Provisional Data for 2008”, *National Vital Statistics Reports*, vol 57, no 19. (Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics), Jul. 29, 2009, http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr57/nvsr57_19.pdf (accessed October 12, 2009).

² *Families and Living Arrangements*, U.S. Census Bureau, Table UC-1: “Unmarried-Couple Households, by Presence of Children: 1960 to Present,” January 2009, <http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/hh-fam.html> (access October 12, 2009).

³ *Id.* at Table MS-1.

⁴ *Id.* at Table CH-1.

Proponents of same-sex partnerships have sharpened their political advocacy to push for the recognition in law of “domestic partnerships” as being legally equivalent with heterosexual marriage, desiring to provide them with all the rights and benefits thereof.⁵ Cleverly, their arguments are cloaked in the language of civil rights, as if the right to redefine the natural order of marriage was equal to the right of persons of different racial backgrounds to share civil liberties.⁶

Much of this thinking reflects the influence of the Age of Enlightenment which celebrates a highly individualistic and subjective notion of “choice.” In denying the possibility of an objective order of truth, such reasoning allows for the natural order of the body to be molded into whatever use one might desire. As Robert Bellah pointed out in his 1988 bestselling book, Habits of the Heart, Americans have lost ways of talking about what gives

⁵ See Pontifical Council for the Family, Family, “Marriage and “De Facto Unions” § 23 (2000); Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, “Considerations Regarding Proposals to Give Legal Recognition to Unions Between Homosexual Persons” § 5 (2003); and U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, “Between Man and Woman: Questions and Answers about Marriage and Same-Sex Unions” (2003).

⁶ The comparison is made the United States Supreme Court case of *Loving v. Virginia*, 388 U.S. 1 (1967), in which the Court struck down a Virginia law that prohibited intermarriage of whites and people of color.

meaning to their life commitments, except by using a subjective kind of “rights-talk.”⁷

Presently, six states legally recognize so-called “same-sex marriage.”⁸ Six others allow for “domestic partnerships” or “civil unions” that in effect grant all the legal rights due to married couples.⁹ Significantly, whenever this matter has been decided upon by a popular vote of the people, rather than left to the

⁷ Robert N. Bellah, et al. *Habits of The Heart* (1988). See also Mary Ann Glendon, *Rights Talk: The Impoverishment of Political Discourse* (1993) (expanding upon this idea and its implications for civil society).

⁸ Four States permit same-sex couples to marry: Massachusetts, see *Goodridge v. Massachusetts Department of Public Health*, 798 N.E.2d 941 (Mass. 2003); Connecticut, see *Kerrigan v. Commissioner of Public Health*, 957 A.2d 407 (Conn. 2008); Iowa, see *Varnum v. Brien*, 763 N.W.2d 862 (Iowa 2009); Vermont, see 15 V.S.A. § 8 (effective September 1, 2009). On January 1, 2010, New Hampshire will join this group. See NH Stat. §457:1-a (effective January 1, 2010). The Maine legislature repealed its prohibition of same-sex marriage. LD 1020, “An Act to End Discrimination in Civil Marriage and Affirm Religious Freedom.” The effectiveness of this Act has been suspended pending a vote by the state’s citizens on the issue. State of Maine, Division of Elections, *Maine Citizen’s Guide to this Referendum Election* at <http://www.maine.gov/sos/cec/elec/2009/intent09.htm> (last accessed October 14, 2009).

New York recognizes “same-sex marriages” that were legally performed in other jurisdictions, see *Lewis v. New York State Department of Civil Service*, 872 N.Y.S.2d 578 (N.Y. 2009).

California recognizes “same-sex marriages” that were performed in California between June 16, 2008 and November 5, 2008 in California, see *In re Marriage Cases*, 183 P.2d 384 (Cal. 2008); and California now recognizes “same-sex marriages” performed in other jurisdictions during those dates when it was legal in California, see “California bill to recognize some same-sex marriages,” CNN.COM, October, 12, 2009, <http://www.cnn.com/2009/US/10/12/california.samesex.marriage/> (last accessed October, 13, 2009).

⁹ Same-sex unions: New Hampshire, See N.H. Rev. Stat. §457-A:1; and New Jersey, see N.J.S.A. 37:1-30.

Domestic partnerships: California, see West’s Ann.Cal.Fam.Code §297; Maine, see 22 M.R.S.A. § 2710; Maryland, see MD Code, Health - General, § 6-101; Oregon, see O.R.S. T. 11, Ch. 106, Refs & Annos; and Washington, see West’s R.C.W.A. 26.60.030.

[On October 1, 2009, after I delivered this speech, Nevada’s law allowing domestic partnerships went into effect; see “Nevada Domestic Partnership Act,” Senate Bill no. 283, available at http://www.leg.state.nv.us/75th2009/Bills/SB/SB283_EN.pdf (last accessed October 13, 2009).]

interpretation of the judiciary, the result has been in favor of the protection of heterosexual marriage.¹⁰

The stakes are high at the present moment. A number of thinkers fear that altering the institution of marriage as it has consistently been understood in our laws up until this present age will have far-reaching and perhaps unintended consequences for the ways in which men and women understand themselves and the society in which they live.

It is perhaps helpful to reference debates that arose in the late 1960's and early 70's proposing changes in this country's divorce laws. Certainly the idea of no-fault divorce was intended, at least in part, to liberate women who were stuck in unhappy marriages. Yet, just the opposite has happened. We now experience the sad reality that between one-fifth and one-third of all divorced women

¹⁰ See National Conference of State Legislatures, *Same Sex Marriage, Civil Unions, and Domestic Partnerships* <http://www.ncsl.org/default.aspx?tabid=16430> (last accessed October 20, 2009) ("Thirty states have defined marriage in their constitutions. Arizona is the only state that has ever defeated a constitutional amendment defining marriage between a man and a woman (2006), but subsequently passed one in 2008.")

have fallen into poverty as a result of their divorce.¹¹ Ironically, it is men, more often than women, who benefit from so-called no-fault divorce. In the early 1970's, few would have predicted the real effects that such a change in the law would eventually bring about. The present proposal to expand the definition of marriage to include persons of the same gender touches upon a reality even more basic to the social order than no-fault divorce. What are the negative, unintended consequences of the changes now being proposed? Since the fundamental human institution of marriage and the family provides the very groundwork of the social order, such consequences would be devastating to both individuals and society alike.

How then do we go about the process of avoiding such a negative situation? We must move the tone of public discourse away from the polarizing concern for individual "rights" and the equally polarizing concern for righteous moralizing and begin to

¹¹ W. Bradford Wilcox, et al., [Why Marriage Matters](#) 19 (2005).

speak of the meaning that underlines the nature and purpose of marriage itself. Both married and unmarried persons have a stake in this debate and its ultimate outcome. Let us turn now to an examination of the biblical, philosophical and sacramental dimensions of marriage and its indispensable role in the rearing of children.

I. Biblical

In the very first chapter of the Book of Genesis, we hear the story of creation through the direct intervention of God. At the culmination of this great work, God made man in his own image, after his own likeness. Male and female did he create them.¹²

Herein lies an essential truth: man and woman *together* were made in God's image and likeness. This implies that somehow that image is not complete without reference to both of them.

¹² Genesis 1:27.

Immediately after their creation, we are told that “God blessed them,” saying, “Be fertile and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it.”¹³ Thus, the first blessing given to the man and woman, made in God’s image, is that of procreation: to be fertile and bear offspring also made in God’s image and likeness.

In the second story of creation in chapter 2, God casts a deep sleep over the man and removes one of his ribs. From that rib, God built a woman and presented her to the man.¹⁴ Notice that God did not take a piece of the man’s head so that the woman would dominate him, nor did God take a bone from the man’s foot so that he should dominate her. Rather, he took a rib from the man’s side, signifying that the man would be an equal to the woman and she to him.¹⁵ This complementarity is an important and essential component of the man and the woman together being made in God’s image.

¹³ *Id.* at 1:28.

¹⁴ *Id.* at 2:22.

¹⁵ John Paul II, *Original Unity of Man and Woman* 65–66 (1981). St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I, q. 92, a. 3.

Jesus confirms the vision of Genesis in the 19th chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel when he is asked about the Mosaic Law which permitted divorce. His words are instructive,

“Have you not read that at the beginning, the Creator made them male and female and declared, ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and cling to his wife, and the two shall become as one?’ Thus they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore, let no man separate what God has joined.”¹⁶

Given the context in which we are attempting to define marriage today, the words of Jesus seem to be a direct command not to separate the natural complementarity of man and woman, made in God's image and likeness. Such a separation would deliberately thwart God's plan for the man and woman to grow in God's image and likeness.

¹⁶ Matthew 19:4-6

II. Philosophical

In an article published in The Meaning of Marriage: Family, State, Market and Morals¹⁷, Professor Robert P. George of Princeton University lays out a strong case for the philosophical dimension of marriage. George opposes what he calls the dominant ‘lifestyle liberal’ views of marriage because he believes they misrepresent the nature of marriage as a purely instrumental good, rather than an intrinsic good in and of itself.¹⁸ “The marital act,” he argues, “is a two-in-one flesh communion of persons, which is only made possible by the biological, emotional, and spiritual complementarity shared between man and woman.”¹⁹ This relationship is naturally ordered to the good of procreation as well as to the good of spousal unity. These two goods (i.e., the procreative and unitive), George contends, are tightly bound to

¹⁷ Robert P. George, “What’s Sex Got to Do with It?” 142–171, in *The Meaning of Marriage: Family, State, Market, and Morals* eds. Robert P. George & Jean Bethke Elshtain (2006).

¹⁸ *Id.* at 166 – 167.

¹⁹ *Id.* at xvi.

form a single reproductive principle. Here, he quotes Professor Germain Grisez who writes:

“Though a male and a female are complete individuals with respect to other functions—for example, nutrition, sensation, and locomotion—with respect to reproduction they are only potential parts of a mated pair, which is the complete organism capable of reproducing sexually. Even if the mated pair is sterile, intercourse, provided it is the reproductive behavior characteristic of the species, makes the copulating male and female one organism.”²⁰

²⁰ Germain Grisez, “The Christian Family as Fulfillment of Sacramental Marriage,” *Studies in Christian Ethics*, Vol. 9, No. 1, 23-33 (Spring 1996).

George then goes on to assert that not all reproductive-type acts are marital.²¹ An adulterous act, for example, may be reproductive in type, but is clearly non-marital. But there can be no marital act that is not reproductive in type.²²

Masturbation, sodomy and other sexual acts that are not reproductive in type cannot unite two persons organically, which is to say, as a single reproductive principle. These acts cannot therefore serve as marital (that is one-flesh bodily) acts. George concludes his remarks by saying:

“The one-flesh unity of marriage is not a merely instrumental good, that is, a reason for acting whose intelligibility as a reason depends on other ends to which it is a means. This unity is an intrinsic good, that is, a reason for acting whose intelligibility as a reason depends

²¹ George at 153.

²² *Id.* at 154–157.

on no ulterior end. The central and justifying point of sex is not pleasure (or even the sharing of pleasure) *per se*, however much sexual pleasure is sought—rightly sought—as an aspect of the perfection of marital union; the point of sex, rather, is marriage itself, considered as an essentially and irreducibly (though not merely) bodily union of persons—a union effectuated and renewed by acts of sexual congress—conjugal acts.”²³

Only a male and a female, therefore, can form a single reproductive principle wherein the unitive and procreative goods are closely bound together in a uniquely marital act. Such an act differs fundamentally in meaning, value and significance from the act of sodomy or any other intrinsically non-marital act. Children born of marital acts are not ends extrinsic to marriage but rather

²³ *Id.* at 153.

gifts whose central and justifying point is precisely the marital unity of spouses.²⁴

III. Sacramental

The word “sacrament” comes from the Latin “sacramentum,” which itself is a translation of the Greek word “mysterion,” a word which signifies one of the seven central liturgical rites of the Church through which participants experience the Paschal Mystery of Christ and grow in the life of grace. The Church herself is the *mysterion*, or sacrament of salvation, as she communicates God’s love which, in turn, draws believers into ever greater levels of holiness.

The Second Vatican Council called for a renewal in the understanding, approach and practice of the celebration of sacraments within the total life of the Church.²⁵ The sacrament of marriage has benefited from this renewal by receiving a greater

²⁴ *Id.* at 155.

²⁵ Paul VI [Vatican II], *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, § 62 (1963).

emphasis on the interpersonal life shared between the husband and wife, on how the spiritual life of the spouses grows from this interpersonal dynamic, and how these two factors both contribute in existential quality to the ongoing development of the marital relationship in a continual process of becoming.²⁶ As the result of a sacramental marriage, a couple is truly married “in the Lord” and his redeeming grace penetrates their love and deepens their union. Two essential qualities of God’s love present in marriage are fidelity, that is, a being with, and forgiveness, that is, a being for.

Fidelity implies that one’s spouse holds an exclusive and preeminent place in the life of the husband and wife. That gives rise to a claim on one’s time, energy and talents. A second claim is given, in turn, to one’s children and then to a wide circle of social contacts. Because God’s love is always expressed in the giving of self, married love is never reserved just to the spouse and the

²⁶ John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio*, § 6 (1981).

home. Certainly, it begins and ends there, but in between it is meant to be shared for the benefit of the common good.²⁷

Forgiveness is an essential component to the vitality and permanence of the marital commitment. Rather than believing “love means never having to say you’re sorry,” a spouse who is cooperating with God’s grace will always find the words to overcome pride in an ability to forgive the hurts inflicted by the other partner, whether intended or unintended.

The spiritual dimension of this sacrament begins with an understanding that the couple are the ordinary ministers of the sacrament. In every other sacrament, an ordained minister presides and celebrates. But with matrimony, the priest or deacon is a witness, not the celebrant. This is an important distinction because it implies that the husband and wife themselves mediate Christ’s love to the other. It is, therefore, the Christ in the husband who loves the Christ in the wife and vice-versa. Each

²⁷ John Paul II, *Gratissimam Sane* (Letter to Families) § 17 (1994).

becomes the cause of the other's growth in holiness. As the Servant of God, Pope John Paul II, has said,

“The Christian is called upon to develop a new attitude of love, manifesting towards his own spouse a charity that is both gentle and strong like that which Christ has for the Church.”²⁸

Years ago, Fr. Patrick Peyton sounded the mantra that “the couple who prays together, stays together”.²⁹ This is true because if husband and wife are addressing God together in heartfelt adoration or petition then the presence of the marital grace that rests in each spouse will be stimulated to new growth. The married couple should attend Sunday Mass and other Holy Days of obligation together to be nourished by the Word of God and the Holy Eucharist for the sake of their own marriage and in order to be leaven in the world.

²⁸ John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio*, § 25 (1981).

²⁹ See Rev. Patrick Peyton, *All For Her: The Autobiography of Father Patrick Peyton, C.S.C.* (1967).

The sacrament of marriage inserts the married relationship into the Paschal Mystery of Christ’s suffering, dying and rising. The ability and strength to live this out on a daily basis becomes clear when it is joined to and helped by participation in the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist. After all, the laity, according to Vatican II, is called to be the Church’s leaven in society, a force for transforming society and the world.³⁰

IV. Unitive, Procreative and Rearing of Children

In the years prior to the Second Vatican Council, the Baltimore Catechism taught very simply that the primary end of marriage is the procreation and education of children, while the secondary end or purpose was the mutual support of husband and wife.³¹ Ranking this order of preference allowed for a clear message that, all things being equal, marriage ought to result in the

³⁰ Paul VI [Vatican II] *Lumen Gentium*, § 31(1964)

³¹ Q. 458 “The chief duties of husband and wife in the married state are to be faithful to each other, and to provide in every way for the welfare of the children God may give them.”

procreation of children. The Fathers of the Second Vatican Council chose not to use this language of “primary” and “secondary” when discussing marriage and some commentators saw this as a change in the Church’s understanding of the relationship between the unitive and procreative ends of marriage.³² In reality, the words of *Gaudium et Spes* show that such a change was never intended:

“The institution of marriage and married love are, of their nature, directed to the begetting and upbringing of children and they find their culmination in this. Thus, it is that a man and woman, who “are no longer two but one flesh” (Mt. 19, 6) in their marital covenant, help and serve each other in their intimate union of persons and activities, and from day-

³² See Bernhard Häring, “Fostering the Nobility of Marriage and Family,” 229–240 in *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II, vol. 5, Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the Modern World*, ed. Herbet Vorgrimler, trans. W.J. O’Hara (1969).

to-day experience and increase their sense of oneness.”³³

The first sentence places emphasis on the begetting and upbringing of children which is the “culmination” of marriage, while the second emphasis is placed on the intimate union of the spouses in everyday life. The bishops were merely describing the inherent link between these two ends, arguing that both are inseparably bound together and both are meant to be realized in union together. Indeed, they are joined together just as the spouses are joined together.

This, then, explains the continuity of the teaching of Pope Paul VI with his predecessors in stating that every act of marital, sexual intercourse must be open to the possibility of new life.³⁴

While it is certainly understood that not every marital act will

³³ Paul VI [Vatican II], *Gaudium et Spes*, § 48 (1965): By their very nature, the institution of matrimony itself and conjugal love are ordained for the procreation and education of children, and find in them their ultimate crown. Thus a man and a woman, who by their compact of conjugal love "are no longer two, but one flesh" (Matt. 19:6), render mutual help and service to each other through an intimate union of their persons and of their actions. Through this union they experience the meaning of their oneness and attain to it with growing perfection day by day. As a mutual gift of two persons, this intimate union and the good of the children impose total fidelity on the spouses and argue for an unbreakable oneness between them.”

³⁴ Paul VI, *Humanae Vitae*, § 11 (1968).

result in the creation of new life, it must necessarily be open to that possibility if it is to reflect the purpose intended by the Creator. If this is the responsibility of parents in conceiving children, what can then be said about the rearing of those children?

Maggie Gallagher, President of the Institute for Marriage and Public Policy has researched the positive benefits that accrue to children who grow up in an intact, married, family unit. She first cites the research of social scientists in measuring how much better children on average do when their parents are married in a stable, non-violent relationship:³⁵

- 1. Marriage increases the likelihood that children enjoy warm, close relationships with parents.**
- 2. Cohabitation is not the functional equivalent of marriage in terms of measurable results in a child's productivity or their stability as adult citizens.**

³⁵ Maggie Gallagher, "(How) Does Marriage Protect Child Well-Being?" 197–212, 199, in *The Meaning of Marriage: Family, State, Market, and Morals* eds. Robert P. George & Jean Bethke Elshtain (2006).

- 3. Children raised outside of intact married homes are more likely to divorce or become unwed parents themselves.**
- 4. Marriage reduces child poverty.**
- 5. Divorce increases the risk of school failure for children, and reduces the likelihood that they will graduate from college and achieve high status jobs.**
- 6. Children in intact married homes are healthier, on average, than children in other family forms.**
- 7. Babies born to married parents have sharply lower rates of infant mortality.**
- 8. Children from intact married homes have lower rates of substance abuse.**
- 9. Divorce increases rates of mental illness and distress in children, including the risk of suicide.**
- 10. Boys and young men from intact married homes are less likely to commit crimes.**
- 11. Married women are less likely to experience domestic violence than cohabiting and serially dating women.**

- 12. Children raised outside of intact marriages are more likely to be victims of both sexual and physical child abuse.**

These social scientists conclude that,

“Marriage is more than a private emotional relationship. It is also a social good. Not every person can or should marry. And not every child raised outside of marriage is damaged as a result. But communities where good-enough marriages are common have better outcomes for children, women, and men than do communities suffering from high rates of divorce, unmarried childbearing, and high-conflict or violent marriages.”³⁶

From such research, it can be demonstrated that the intact family structure works better for children because fathers and

³⁶ *Id.*

mothers parent differently, in ways that complement one another and boost a child's well-being and gender identity. This understanding of the family structure gets to the heart of the "gay marriage" debate. According to Gallagher, the question is how children fare when raised by same-sex couples.³⁷ She acknowledges several favorable studies that have been done on this issue but challenges these findings on four counts:

- 1. None of the studies were based on random, representative samples;**
- 2. Many of the outcomes used were unrelated to standard measures used to evaluate families of two biological parents;**
- 3. Few of the studies follow children of unisex parents into adulthood.**
- 4. Most of the studies compare children with divorced lesbian mother-headed families with children in divorced heterosexual mother-headed families, ignoring the influence**

³⁷ *Id.* at 201.

on a son or daughter by the father in an intact, low conflict marriage of two biological parents.³⁸

Gallagher concludes her challenge to these studies by stating that:

“Marriage provides children not just with any two adults, but with their own parents: the mother and father who made them biologically are expected to maintain that parenting union socially, economically, sexually and psychologically as well. The social science evidence we have establishes fairly powerfully that this family structure is best for children (at least of all the family structures that have been well-studied), but it does not tell us as clearly why or how.”³⁹

³⁸ *Id.* at 202–203.

³⁹ *Id.* at 208–209.

Those who have been baptized and confirmed in the Catholic faith share in the Church's mission of salvation and are called to make the Church present and active as salt and light to the world.⁴⁰ We cannot stand by and allow false ideologies and egalitarianism to re-define marriage.

“As Aristotle explained in his account of moral formation and human flourishing, culture humanizes us by demanding our obedience. Happiness does not come from living according to one's desires. It comes from desiring to live according to demanding and disciplinary social norms that transcend individual desires.”⁴¹

We must be prepared and willing to enter the civic debate confident that society needs to know and embrace the truth that

⁴⁰ Paul VI [Vatican II], *Lumen Gentium*, § 33 (1964). See also John Paul II, *Christifideles Laici* § 3 (1988).

⁴¹ R.R. Reno, “Marriage, Morality, and Culture,” *First Things On the Square*, September 9, 2009 <http://www.firstthings.com/onthesquare/2009/09/marriage-morality-and-culture> (last accessed October 14, 2009).

ultimately comes from God.⁴² The obligation to protect and foster the common good is incumbent upon all of us. The Second Vatican Council reminds us that the well-being of each person and of human and Christian society as a whole is intimately connected with the healthy state of marriage and the family within the community.⁴³

Just this past week, our Holy Father in addressing the new German Ambassador to the Holy See spoke directly to this concern:

“The Church cannot approve legislation initiatives involving a reappraisal of alternative models of married life and family. They contribute to the weakening of the principals of natural law and so the relativization of all legislation and also the

⁴² Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est*, §§ 28 (a), 29 (2005); John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor* § 101 (1993). See also Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Doctrinal Note on Some Questions regarding the Participation of Catholics in Political Life*, § 6 (2002).

⁴³ Paul VI [Vatican II], *Gaudium et Spes*, § 47 (1965).

**confusion about values in society. . . Marriage
is manifested as a lasting union of love
between a man and woman, which is always
oriented toward the transmission of human
life”**

**My friends, we must challenge those who believe that they can
make of marriage whatever they desire. And with the special
sacramental grace of the Holy Spirit, we ourselves must witness to
the noble vocation of marriage, by just getting up each morning
and living out our commitment.**