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The meaning of love and faithfulness in the life of spouses

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Marriage is a task to be fulfilled which is taken up by two adult people. Creation of a mature partnership is possible due to sacrament, which spiritually binds two people forming the rapport of souls. Spouses offer themselves to each other by forming marital bound which has the priority over any other one. Man and woman complete each other in a marriage, give the beginning to a new life. Love is deeply rooted in a marriage, it defines it to some extent, it is the link. It is love that does not allow to treat the other person instrumentally, forbids to use the person. Mutual love of the parents is also required by the child, as for its harmonious and proper development, the atmosphere present in the family, emotional stability, mutual acceptance and understanding of the spouses are also highly important.

According to John Paul II marriage „is the sacrament that lasts in two people, expresses itself in their union, expresses itself in the family. The family forms in the church through this sacrament, and at the same time it forms the church as a live community of God’s people” (Jan Paweł II, 1996: 151). Conjugal love is a gift, as it leads to the reciprocal giving of the spouses, which makes them into one body, due to that, they are able to receive the gift of New life from God and pass it to a New human being. Marital love does not end in both of them but makes them able to the greatest devotion resulting in new reality – a child. Maternity is a God’s present for the family, for the human couple united into one, for the woman, who fulfills Her destiny through that gift. It is a blessing for their gift made of themselves, as it is the reflection of their love, permanent sign of their unity. What a great happiness it is for a woman to be gifted with maternity by God, is the best pictured by the drama of those women who were deprived of it or rejected it themselves (Jan Paweł II, 1981).

We shall recall the words of R. J. Sztyhmiller, who defines marriage „as an alliance formed voluntary by man and woman, who created inseparable

community of life, aiming from its nature at the good of the spouses and to giving birth and upbringing of the children” (Szytmiler, 1999: 223). Crucial features of the marriage are unity and indissolubility that is required due to the good of spouses and children. Both unity and indissolubility of matrimony, result from the law of nature. Unity of marriage possesses the one special feature, that it is the relation between one man and one woman. Whereas insolubility means that consequent bond may only be separated by the death of one of the spouses. We discuss here marriages that were legally formed and completed (Żurowski, 1987; Salij, 1984; Jan Paweł II, 1986; Grześkowiak, 1993; Majdański, 1983; Sztafrowski, 1985; Kułaczkowski, 2003, 2004, 2005; 2006). K. Wolski is right claiming that marriage should mainly serve the existence of human being, then the sexual life of Man and woman and finally, the proper referral of lust. Marriage does not only mean material multiplication of human kind but also education which bases on a family (Wolski, 1999: 230–231).

Matrimony „comes into being by the act of marriage, which is the act of will of both fiances, true inside and properly expressed outside, against priesthood and two common witnesses” (Szytmiler, 1999: 240). As A. Skreczko highlights, the choice of the spouse is one of the most difficult and the most responsible decisions of a person. Marriage is a permanent relationship, therefore, when choosing a partner there is always some anxiety as there is no certainty that the choice is right. The choice of a spouse can depend on many factors such as: physical attractiveness, character, social position, financial conditions. This choice is influenced by the expectations over the partner based on the experience of an individual, in which crucial role is played by the example of parents, the example of the roles fulfilled by them and values represented in the family (Skreczko, 1999: 241). Researches show that spouses choose each other on the basis of correlation between such features as: height, weight, figure proportions, shape of face, some biochemical properties of metabolism. The similarity between social position, mental features, temperament, abilities and empathy is also significant (Sujak, 1971; Fijałkowski, 1988; Ryś 1993; Adamski, 1988). W. Półtawska (2000: 260) points out that the choice of life companion should be an honest declaration – I choose you not for today, not for a trial, but for the whole life. Selection of a person, to whom I want to give myself and my life, should not be declared too soon nor too early, should be preceded by reflection and possibly the deepest understanding of a person.

The sacrament of marriage requires loyalty and insolubility. Loyalty means constancy in keeping the given word. The married couple is capable of life by that loyalty and to testify about it through the sacrament. They testify to this secret towards the world in a special way by maintaining pre-marital purity. Love in the marriage fancies for being permanent, not temporary (Werbiński, 1999: 467; Szafrąński, 1985; Meissner, Szuska, 1988: 5–82, 1991; 1995: 76–80; Szostek,,

1995; Meissner, 1992). That is why, it is so important to educate for purity, freedom and maturity in this matter, which is the condition of authentic maternity and paternity. As J. Jaworska rightly notices, loyalty presumes marital honesty, excluding at the same time betrayal, therefore, it is a call to marital purity, to responsibility for life that is about to begin. It also disqualifies any mistreatment or use of a spouse as a means of reaching own satisfaction. Faithfulness is also a trust given to other person (Jaworska, 1999: 263). Meanwhile, values such as loyalty or constancy are not very popular among contemporary society. Modern world almost promotes unfaithful love, free time relationships or sexual relationships.

It must be highlighted at this point that „institutional and legal aspect of a matrimony is not in contradiction to personal character of love and loyalty. Only mutual bond of the two dimensions enables to open before a marriage the whole life space, joint responsibility and trust, which are the basis of any relationship, especially such significant and delicate as marriage. Reciprocal bond becomes also the guarantee of true social and cultural development” (Królikowski, 2011: 116).

Exclusiveness and loyalty in marital love, its durability to the end of the life is a necessary condition to the safety of children. It creates for them the climate of family warm and love and teaches them their future life roles that have a basic meaning of: wife-mother and husband-father (Śledzianowski, 1988: 192–199). It is best illustrated by the words of P. Kociołek, who believes that „testimony of marital faithfulness and love in its complete spirituals and physical dimension is probably the most important testimony that can be given to a child by a mother and a father. This is the message which distinctness and constancy will decide about stability, about quality and durability of families created in the future by the children. The evidence of disloyalty becomes the rift not only in the marriage, but also in the life of the whole family” (Kociołek, 1988: 124).

To support the above mentioned facts, I will quote the words of A. Jedynak, who claims that „we give ourselves in a marriage and in the faithfulness and constancy in being together to the rest of our lives, we find gratefulness for this gift. The matrimony gives us the experience of reach, real and beautiful love, due to which every ordinary day becomes a holiday, every common moment together is a great adventure” (Jedynak, 2006: 481). Marriage is not a lottery ticket but a gift from God. Love must be learnt through the whole life, it must be cultivated to be possible to be passed to the children. Parents should be aware that the family home is the first school of valuation. The kind of values that will be passed to children by their parents will decide about their whole life.

I will refer to the words of Paul VI, who in the encyclical *Humane vitae* defines that „fully love human is at the same time sensual and spiritual love” (Paweł VI, 1968). Such kind of love leads spouses to make free and honest mutual gift from themselves, embracing “the possibility of body and spirit expression” (II Sobór

Watykański). Matrimony possesses three characteristic features: love, loyalty and fertility. Those features state marriage in the Christian aspect, and the experience of spouses that confirms their substantial importance for the personal happiness and mutual maturity in love which is the bond of perfection and sanctity. Those marital attributes define the foundations of authentic family relations, becoming their carrier and warranty (Królikowski, 2011: 117). Parental love is a norm that gives a shape to the whole educational process (Jan Paweł II, 1981). Love conditions people not only to bear the same surname, but mostly to lead life in the soul and body union, giving themselves to each other and becoming one body (Mt 19,5).

It is believed that love expresses itself in creating mutual unity and openness to the gift of life. Love is free from other person's embezzlement, usage. It expresses itself through trust, openness, readiness to endow with good and respect for each other. The manifestation of love is constant kindness, attitude of devotion, dialogue and forgiveness (Laun, 1993; Philippe, 1997; Pieper 1975; Wojtyła, 1986; Coste, 1992; Nedoncelle, 1993; Lewis, 1993). J. Bajda is claiming rightly that love is not only an emotional state nor ontological fact, it is the active posture expressing itself through the desire of good for other person, the well-wishing and unselfish desire, proved by action, not temporary, accidental but constant, durable, consequent and devotional. Therefore love is the attitude of duty that does not search any profit for itself except the provision of good. Marital love gives the beginning to family life, causes two people to bind themselves with inseparable bond for the whole life (Bajda, 1975: 175–186; 1980: 115–129, 1986: 48–56, 1991: 82–93).

Marital love, „often exceeds purely erotic inclination which aimed egoistically vanishes quite fast and pitifully” (II Sobór Watykański). Marital love is not falling in love but it is the decision concerning given life style and very precise responsibility (Królikowski, 2011: 118). J. Królikowski believes that „through the mutual sacrifice to love free from egoism spouses do not guarantee something to each other but they guarantee each other to themselves. They do not love something that the other person possesses but they love the other person as he or she is and through what he or she is. They do not love the other person because they need him or her and they do not want to marry him or her for their own advantage. They do not put their own happiness on the first place, they do not tend to be superbly happy but they aim at giving happiness to the other person” (Królikowski, 2011: 119).

This is what John Paul II claims in that matter: „there is no bond that would tie two people more closely than a marital and family union. There is no other that could be defined with such coverage as a communion. There is also no other in which mutual duties were so deep and complete and their violation would hurt more the human sensitivity of a woman, man or child, parents” (Jan Paweł II, 1991: 104). Love without loyalty is not love but illusion and forgery. Second

Vatican Council emphasizes that among basic functions of a marriage we can find „insoluble faithfulness for good and bad, and therefore, it is not acquainted with infidelity and divorces” (II Sobór Watykański). Spouses vow before the altar reciprocal loyalty and honesty and their symbol is the act of putting wedding rings, accompanied by words: Take this ring as a sign of my love and fidelity (Obrzędy sakramentu małżeństwa, nr 37).

Family is the community of people linked with marital vow for which the significant point of reference is God itself. Married couple is called to take part in God's act of creation, which includes being coauthors of creation of new human lives. Since they give life to the children, they boast the right to be their first and main mentors. Therefore, parental love should become their life mission that should be implied in the spirit of responsibility for the whole educational act, also in the aspect of child conscience. It should be a norm of those actions and a warranty of providing a child with integral and harmonious development in the atmosphere of emotional stability (Stala 2004: 341–347; Kłys, 1989: 337–340). I will recall the words of J. Kasprzak, who writes that „family is a great good of both church and national society. It should skillfully „oppose to wrong trends, ideologies and lifestyles, show the children healthy look on the world, the people, their role in the society, gaze at the future with a hope” (Kasprzak, 2011: 76).

There is a whole set of powers in the family that attract their members to each other and tie them together. Those can be internal powers resulting from the marital relationship, emotional experiences, from the awareness of genetic relations, or the external powers resulting from the rates of dependence, coexistence, economic union, legal regulations, requirements of tradition and religion (Dyczewski, 1994: 20). Currently, due to the changes in the structure functions and organisation of family life, the importance of genuine relations has gone down, but the rank of bonds based on respect, reciprocal goodwill and friendship has risen up. Mutual love, understanding and positive communication received unique significance and for the durability of marital-family life- satisfaction and happiness. The importance of matrimony as an institution has also diminished, but it rose in terms of an emotional relationship giving the possibility of accomplishment and complete satisfaction. The awareness of mutual link, unity, the feeling of “we” is offered to the members of the family by biological, legal as well as psychological bond (Rembowski, 1986: 15).

As we wrote earlier, the marital love requires inviolability of loyalty. „It results from the reciprocal gift offered to each other by spouses. Love must be durable and it cannot be *temporary*. This inner harmony, as a mutual devotion of two people and also the good of the children, entails full loyalty of the spouses and obliges them to inseparable unity” (Sobór Watykański II). At the same time, marriage „is a durable relationship between man and woman, aiming at giving birth to

offspring by sexual cooperation” (Kodeks Prawa Kościelnego). Unfaithfulness destroys marriage, unfortunately nowadays appears in such a great number of marriages that people literally stop believing in loyal love. Young people observing the lives of adults often arrive at the conclusion that faithfulness is impossible to be accomplished by the ordinary person. It is hardly surprising as contemporary television programmes, cinema, Internet, press promote the idea of disloyal love. Social patterns just promote a kind of fashion for disloyalty and such features as stability, life longevity are not popular.

Meanwhile as W. Póltawska writes „to the accomplishment of faithfulness the blessing of marriage sacrament is desirable – it is exactly what makes people able to persist and to genuine beautiful love which appears impossible to people. Due to the fact that a person does not require it from himself and does not have the chance to observe it at other people” (Póltawska, 2001: 10). Despite it „loyalty involves effort, pattern. Especially young people need such a pattern that would help them to choose proper value. Faithfull love is considered by everyone as beautiful but at the same time it is presented as an unreachable ideal” (Póltawska, 1995: 180). Whereas disloyalty, „is a proof for the crisis of love as this real love is just loyal. Faithfulness is the function of love- the deepest the love is, the greatest is the faithfulness, and when there is the lack of faithfulness, love stops to be love, and on the contrary, faithfulness underpins the love and serves it. Today people call by the term of love any strike of a heart or even senses, and this is not love yet. Only indisputable love has the power to maintain loyalty” (Póltawska, 2001: 10-11).

Normal development of a child, its sense of security, depends on the relationship between its parents, on the marital bond. The child grows up properly when both parents are present in the child’s life and when they know how to show their love to it (Fromm, 1992; Kępiński, 1992; Skynner, Cheese, 1992; Campbell, 1989). When there is no real love, when there is no loyalty in a marriage, one cannot tell about full experience of motherhood and fatherhood. Every case that lacks love, presents damaged fatherhood and motherhood. Also trials to separate motherhood from fatherhood become hurting for the child, as both experiences are shaped by one reality of parenthood.

A child requires „vivid, constant and irreplaceable presence of its parents who endow it with their love and feel responsible for its development. It is not irrelevant if a child grows up in the atmosphere of emotional emptiness and negative attitude towards it, or it is surrounded by acceptance and love” (Kubisa-Skalska, 2006: 8). I. Dudzik is definitely right when stating that „father and mother are the two people closest to each other but also to a child. They are not only life donators to them, but also bearing the effort of upbringing, they take the responsibility for their holistic development and the quality of their future existence. Everyone of us

has the load of experience that results from our own family. In many cases, they can help to solve many problems but also they can become the ballast that can make it difficult, or even make it impossible for the person to function in life. At this point, great responsibility of a mother for the quality of her maternity, as well as of the father for his paternity, is being clearly visible” (Dudzik, 2011: 742).

Znaczenie miłości i wierności w życiu małżonków

Streszczenie

Artykuł zatytułowany: *Znaczenie miłości i wierności w życiu małżonków* ukazuje miłość i wierność małżeńską jako przygotowanie do rodzicielstwa. Autor stara się wskazać źródła tych cech relacji małżeńskiej, odwołując się do *Magisterium Ecclesiae*, które podkreśla, że jest nim zamysł Boży względem człowieka. Godność tego zamysłu znajduje potwierdzenie w fakcie podniesienia tej relacji do wartości Sakramentu, który zapewnia nadprzyrodzoną moc do realizacji wyznaczonych małżonkom zadań. Cenne jest zwrócenie uwagi na prawdę, że relacja małżeńska jest niezbędną podstawą więzi rodzinnych.

Słowa kluczowe: Miłość, wierność, małżeństwo

Summary

Article titled: *The meaning of love and faithfulness in the life of spouses* shows love and conjugal fidelity as preparation for parenthood. Author indicates sources of these features of conjugal rates, referring to *Magisterium Ecclesiae*, which underlines, that before god there is the intention of respecting a person. Dignity of this intention finds confirmation in this fact of elevation of rate for value of sacrament, or that assures supernatural force for realization spouses of tasks indicated. Calling attention is valuable on truth, that conjugal rate is essential base of family attachment.

Keywords: Love, fidelity, marriage

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