



# Saint Josemaria Escriva

Founder of Opus Dei

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## Marriage

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When I think of christian homes, I like to imagine them as being full of the light and joy that were in the home of the holy family. The message of Christmas is heard in all its forcefulness: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will." "And may the peace of Christ triumph in your hearts," writes the Apostle. It is a peace that comes from knowing that our Father God loves us, and that we are made one with Christ. It results from being under the protection of the Virgin, our Lady, and assisted by St Joseph. This is the great light that illuminates our lives. In the midst of difficulties and of our own personal failings, it encourages us to keep up our effort. Every christian home should be a place of peace and serenity. In spite of the small frustrations of daily life, an atmosphere of profound and sincere affection should reign there together with a deep-rooted calm, which is the result of authentic faith that is put into practice.

*Christ is Passing By, 22*

The purpose of marriage is to help married people sanctify themselves and others. For this reason they receive a special grace in the sacrament which Jesus Christ instituted. Those who are called to the married state will, with the grace of God, find within their state everything they need to be holy, to identify themselves each day more with Jesus Christ, and to lead those with whom they live to God.

*Conversations, 91*

### **A Great Sacrament**

Their pure and noble love is a sacred thing. As a priest, I bless it with all my heart. Christian tradition has often seen in Christ's presence at the wedding feast at Cana a proof of the value God places on marriage. "Our Saviour went to the wedding feast," writes St Cyril of Alexandria, "to make holy the origins of human life."

*Christ is Passing By, 24*

### **Fusion of souls and bodies**

Marriage is a sacrament that makes one flesh of two bodies. Theology expresses

this fact in a striking way when it teaches us that the matter of the sacrament is the bodies of husband and wife. Our Lord sanctifies and blesses the mutual love of husband and wife. He foresees, not only a union of souls, but a union of bodies as well. No Christian, whether or not he is called to the married state, has a right to underestimate the value of marriage.

*Christ is Passing By, 24*

### **Forming a home**

Christian couples should be aware that they are called to sanctify themselves and to sanctify others, that they are called to be apostles and that their first apostolate is in the home. They should understand that founding a family, educating their children, and exercising a Christian influence in society, are supernatural tasks. The effectiveness and the success of their life — their happiness — depends to a great extent on their awareness of their specific mission.

*Conversations, 91*

### **Cooperating with God**

It is important for married people to acquire a clear sense of the dignity of their vocation. They must know that they have been called by God not only to human love but also to a divine love, through their human love. It is important for them to realize that they have been chosen from all eternity to cooperate with the creative power of God by having and then bringing up children. Our Lord asks them to make their home and their entire family life a testimony of all the Christian virtues.

*Conversations, 93*

### **The task of faithfulness**

A trial marriage? How little anyone who uses the term knows about love! Love is a much surer, more real, more human reality. It cannot be treated as a commercial product that is tested and then accepted or rejected on the basis of whim, comfort and interest.

This lack of moral standards is so pitiful that it does not even seem necessary to condemn people who think or act in this way. They condemn themselves to the barrenness, the sadness, the desolate loneliness they will suffer within a very few years. I never stop praying for them, loving them with all my heart and trying to make them understand that the way back to Christ is always open. They can be saints, upright Christians, if they make an effort. They will lack neither the necessary grace nor our Lord's pardon. Only then will they really understand love — divine Love and also noble human love. And only then will they experience peace, happiness and fruitfulness.

*Conversations, 105*

### **Renewing love day after day**

I think it is in fact an important question and therefore the possible solutions are also important even though they may seem very obvious. If a marriage is to preserve its initial charm and beauty, both husband and wife should try to renew their love day after day, and that is done through sacrifice, with smiles and also with ingenuity.

*Conversations, 107*

### **Success in marriage takes time and effort**

That is why I am not afraid to say that women are responsible for eighty per cent of the infidelities of their husbands because they do not know how to win them each day and take loving and considerate care of them. A married woman's attention should be centered on her husband and children as a married man's attention should be centered on his wife and children. Much time and effort is required to succeed in this, and anything which militates against it is bad and should not be tolerated.

*Conversations, 107*

### **Virtues in married life**

Couples have the grace of the married state — the grace they receive in the Sacrament of Marriage — which enables them to live all the human and Christian virtues in their married life: understanding, good humor, patience, forgiveness, refinement and consideration in their mutual relations. The important thing is not to give up the effort, not to give in to nerves, pride or personal fads or obsessions. In order to achieve this, husbands and wives must grow in interior life and learn from the Holy Family to live with refinement, for supernatural and at the same time human reasons, the virtues of a Christian home. I repeat again that the grace of God will not be lacking.

*Conversations, 108*

### **Pride, the greatest enemy**

Avoid pride. It is the greatest enemy of your married life. In your little quarrels, neither of you is right. Whoever is the calmer should say a word or two to ward off bad temper for a while. Then, later on, when you are alone with each other, go ahead and argue it out — soon afterwards you will make peace anyway.

*Christ is Passing By, 26*

### **Mutual self-giving**

To love is to cherish one thought, to live for the person loved, not to belong to oneself, happily and freely with one's heart and soul to be subjected to another will

... and at the same time to one's own.

*Furrow, 797*

### **The heart's secrets**

When someone has a very small heart, it seems as if he keeps his desires in a narrow, neglected drawer.

*Furrow, 802*

Someone has compared the heart to a windmill, moved by the wind of love and passion.

Indeed, that windmill can grind wheat, barley or dried dung. It is up to us.

*Furrow, 811*