Reflections

Father Nicolas Schwizer # 93 – October 15, 2010

The Spirit of the Marriage Covenant

What is the Spirit of the marriage covenant? Giving of oneself and belonging.

Giving of oneself

The marriage covenant is a surrender of oneself, a gift of oneself. First of all, it is not an asking but a giving of oneself. This is the primary meaning of the marriage covenant: I give myself – as a husband, as a wife – and as a response I receive the gift of my spouse. In relation to the Virgin Mary it is childlike surrender, in married life it is a nuptial surrender.

This nuptial surrender is a radical overcoming of egotism. To love is to live centered on “YOU” and not on “ME (I)”. If one says: “I love you,” it may mean two different things. If there is true love, it means: “I love you and I want to make you happy.” The contrary means: “I love you so that you can make me happy.”

Authentic love is not renouncing one’s own happiness, but discovering that my greatest happiness is living to make the “other one” happy. It is God's happiness: God is happy because He is always giving Himself to the other Persons of the Trinity and to us.

Man is called to find happiness similar to God’s happiness and that is the happiness of giving oneself, surrendering to others. To love is to always be there for “YOU” and only for “YOU”.

Belonging to another (consecrating oneself)

In the marriage covenant, we are asked for a total surrender, not a partial surrender. It is the surrendering of the whole person now and forever. This spirit should encourage our marriage: a total and permanent surrender, and this creates in us an awareness of belonging and of consecration.

Our life is consecrated to someone and from that moment on there can be no loneliness. That awareness of consecration- that I do not belong to myself, but that I belong to another person - that is what our marriage covenant asks of us: I belong to my spouse now and forever.

Questions for reflection

1. Do I seek to make the “other one” happy?
2. Am I aware that I am consecrated to my spouse?
3. Do I always wear my wedding ring?

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