

Father Goffine's instructions for the 2nd Sunday after Epiphany. From the Explanation of the Epistles and Gospels by Father Leonard Goffine. Imprimatur: Rt. Rev. Joseph F. Mooney, V.G. September 28, 1918. (Copyright 1880):

In the Introit of this day's Mass the Church calls upon all creatures to thank God for the Incarnation of His only-begotten Son.

INTROIT. Let all the earth adore Thee, O God and sing to Thee: let it sing a psalm to Thy name (Ps. 65:4). Shout with joy to God all the earth, sing ye a psalm to His name: give glory to His praise (Ps. 65:1-2). Glory be to the Father.

COLLECT. Almighty and eternal God, Who disposest all things in heaven and on earth: mercifully hear the supplications of Thy people, and give Thy peace to our times. Through our Lord.

EPISTLE. (Rom.12:6-16). Brethren: We have different gifts, according to the grace that is given us: either prophecy, to be used according to the rule of faith, or ministry in ministering, or he that teacheth in doctrine, he that exhorteth in exhorting, he that giveth with simplicity, he that ruleth with carefulness, he that sheweth mercy with cheerfulness. Let love be without dissimulation. Hating that which is evil, cleaving to that which is good: loving one another with the charity of brotherhood: with honor preventing one another: in carefulness not slothful: in spirit fervent: serving the Lord: rejoicing in hope: patient in tribulation: instant in prayer: communicating to the necessities of the saints: pursuing hospitality: bless them that persecute you: bless and curse not. Rejoice with them that rejoice, weep with them that weep: being of one mind, one towards another: not minding high things, but consenting to the humble. Be not wise in your own conceits.

EXPLANATION. St. Paul in this epistle exhorts every Christian to make good use of the gifts of God; if one receives an office, he must see well to it, so that he can give an account to God of the faithful performance of his duties. He exhorts especially to brotherly love which we should practice by charitable works; such as, receiving strangers hospitably, giving alms to those who are in need, and to those who by misfortune or injustice have lost their property; he commands us, at the same time, to rejoice in the welfare of our neighbor, as we rejoice at our own good fortune, and to grieve at his misfortunes as we would over those which befall us.

How is brotherly love best preserved?

By the virtue of humility which makes us esteem our neighbor above ourselves, consider his good qualities only, bear patiently his defects, and always meet him in a friendly, respectful, and indulgent manner. Humility causes us to live always in peace with our fellowmen, while among the proud, where each wishes to be the first, there is continual strife and dissatisfaction (Prov. 13:10).

## INSTRUCTION FOR SUPERIORS

Those have to expect a severe sentence from God, who merely for temporal gain, seek profitable offices, and thrust themselves therein whether capable or not, and if capable care very little whether they fulfill the duties required, or perhaps make the fulfillment of them depend upon bribes. Of such God makes terrible complaint: Thy princes (judges) are faithless, companions of thieves: they all love bribes, they run after rewards. They judge not for the fatherless; and the widow's cause comes not into them (Is. 1:23). A most severe judgment shall be for them that bear rule (Wisd. 6:6).

**ASPIRATION.** Grant us, O Lord, Thy grace, that according to Thy will, we may follow the instructions of St. Paul in regard to humility and love, have compassion upon all suffering and needy, think little of ourselves, and descend to the lowest, that we may, one day, be elevated with them in heaven.

**GOSPEL.** (Jn. 2:1-11). At that time there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee: and the mother of Jesus was there. And Jesus also was invited, and his disciples, to the marriage. And the wine failing, the mother of Jesus saith to him: They have no wine. And Jesus with to her: Woman, what is it to me and to thee? My hour is not yet come. His mother saith to the waiters: Whatsoever he shall say to you, do ye. Now there were set there six water-pots of stone, according to the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three measures apiece. Jesus saith to them: Fill the water-pots with water. And they filled them up to the brim. And Jesus saith to them: Draw out now, and carry to the chief steward of the feast. And they carried it. And when the chief steward had tasted the water made wine, and knew not whence it was, but the waiters knew who had drawn the water; the chief steward calleth the bridegroom, and saith to him: Every man at first setteth forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now. This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee: and manifested his glory, and his disciples believed in him.

Why was Christ and His mother present at this marriage?

In order to honor this humble and God-fearing couple who, with faithful hearts, had invited Him and His mother to their wedding; to give us an example of humility; to assist them in their poverty, and save their good name by changing water into wine; to reveal His dignity as the Messiah to His disciples by this miracle; and to sanctify by His presence the marriages that are contracted in the spirit of the Church.

Alas! how few marriages of our time could Jesus honor with His presence, because He is invited neither by fervent prayer, nor by the chaste life of the couple: He is excluded rather, by the frequent immorality of the married couple and their guests.

Why was Mary interested in this married couple?

Because she is merciful, and the Mother of Mercy, and willingly assists all the poor and afflicted who fear God. From this incident, St. Bonaventure judges of the many graces

which we can hope for through Mary, now that she reigns in heaven; “For,” says he, “if Mary while yet on earth was so compassionate, how much more so is she now, reigning in heaven!” He gives the reason by adding: “Mary now that she sees the face of God, knows our necessities far better than when she was on earth, and in proportion to the increase of her compassion, her power to aid us has been augmented.” Ah! why do we not take refuge in all our necessities to this merciful mother, who although unasked assists the needy?

Why did Christ say to Mary: Woman, what is it to me and to thee?

This seemingly harsh reply of Christ was no reproach, for Mary had made her request only through love and mercy, and Christ calls those blessed who are merciful, but he wished to show that in the performance of divine work, the will of His heavenly Father alone should be consulted. He meant to remind her that He had not received the gift of miracles from her as the son of woman, but from His eternal Father, in accordance with whose will He would do that which she asked when the hour designed by God would come. Though the hour had not come, yet He granted the wish of His mother, who knew that her divine Son refused none of her requests, and so she said to the servants: “Whatsoever He shall say to you, do ye.” Behold the great power of Mary's intercession! Neglect not, therefore, to take refuge in this most powerful mother!

What are we taught by the words: My hour is not yet come?

These words teach us that we should in all things await God's appointed time, and in things belonging to God and His honor, act only by divine direction, without any human motives.

What does the scarcity of wine signify?

In a spiritual sense the want of wine may be understood to signify the lack of love between married people, which is principally the case with those who enter this state through worldly motives, for the sake of riches, beauty of person, or who have before marriage kept up sinful intercourse. These should ask God for the forgiveness of their sins, bear the hardships of married life in the spirit of penance, and change the wrong motives they had before marriage; by doing so God will supply the scarcity of wine, that is the lack of true love, and change the waters of misery into the wine of patient affection.

Why did Christ command them to take the wine to the steward?

That the steward, whose office required him to be attentive to the conduct of the guests, and to know the quality of the wine, should give his judgment in regard to the excellence of this, and be able to testify to the miracle before all the guests.

**ASPIRATION.** O my most merciful Jesus! I would rather drink in this world the sour wine of misery than the sweet wine of pleasure, that in heaven I may taste the perfect wine of eternal joy.

## INSTRUCTION ON THE HOLY SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY

### What is Matrimony?

Matrimony is the perfect, indissoluble union of two free persons of different sex, for the purpose of propagating the human race, mutually to bear the burdens of life and to prevent sin (I Cor. 7:2).

### Who instituted Matrimony?

God Himself, the Creator of all things (Gen. 1:27-28). He brought to man the helpmate, whom He formed from one of the ribs of Adam, that she who came from his heart, might never depart therefrom, but cling to him in the indissoluble bond of love (Gen. 2:18, 24). To this original, divine institution Christ refers (Mt. 19:4-6), and the Church declares the bond of marriage perpetual and indissoluble.

### Is Matrimony a Sacrament?

Yes; according to the testimony of the Fathers, the Church has held it such from the times of the apostles, which she could not do, had Christ not raised it to the dignity of a Sacrament. St. Paul even calls it a great Sacrament, because it is symbolical of the perpetual union of Christ with His Church; and the Council of Trent declares: "If any one says that Matrimony is not really and truly one of the seven Sacraments of the Church instituted by Christ, but an invention of men that imparts no grace, let him be anathema" (Conc. Trid., Sess. XXIV, can. 1).

### What graces does this Sacrament impart?

The grace of preserving matrimonial fidelity inviolate: the grace of educating children as Christians; of patiently enduring the unavoidable difficulties of married life, and of living peaceably with each other. Married people are indeed greatly in need of these graces, in order to fulfill their mutual obligations.

### What is the external sign in the Sacrament of Matrimony?

The union of two single persons in Matrimony, which according to the regulations of the Council of Trent (Conc. Trid., Sess. XXIV, can. 1), must be formed publicly in the presence of the pastor, or with his permission before another priest, and two witnesses.

### What preparations are to be made to receive the grace of this Sacrament?

1. The first and best preparation is a pure and pious life. 2. The light of the Holy Ghost should be invoked to know whether one is called to this state of life. 3. The parents and the father-confessor should be asked for advice. 4. The choice should be made in regard to a Christian heart, and a gentle disposition rather than to beauty and wealth. 5. The immediate preparation is, to purify the conscience, if it has not already been done, by a good general confession, and by the reception of the most holy Sacrament of the Altar. Before their marriage the young couple should ask their parents' blessing, should hear the nuptial Mass with devotion, with the intention of obtaining God's grace to begin their new

state of life well, and finally they should commend themselves with confidence to the protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary and her spouse St. Joseph.

Why are there so many unhappy marriages?

Because so many people prepare the way by sins and vices, and continue to sin without interruption, and without true amendment until marriage, therefore always make sacrilegious confessions, even perhaps immediately before marriage. Besides this many enter the married life on account of carnal intentions, or other earthly motives; in many cases they do not even ask God for His grace; without any proper preparation for such an important, sacred act, on their marriage day they go to church with levity and afterwards celebrate their wedding with but little modesty. Is it any wonder that such married people receive no blessing, no grace, when they render themselves so unworthy?

Why did God institute married life?

That children might be brought up honestly and as Christians, and that they should be instructed especially in matters of faith; that married people should sustain each other in the difficulties of life, and mutually exhort one another to a pious life; and lastly, that the sin of impurity might be avoided. For they who in such manner receive matrimony as to shut out God from themselves, and from their mind, and to give themselves to their lust, as the horse and mule which have not understanding, over them the devil hath power (Tobias 6:17).

With what intentions should the married state be entered?

With such intentions as the young Tobias and his bride had, who before the marriage ceremony, ardently prayed God for His grace, and took their wedding breakfast in the fear of the Lord (Too. 14:15). Hence God's blessing was with them until death. If all young people would enter the married state thus, it would certainly be holy, God-pleasing and blessed, and the words of St. Paul, spoken to wives, would come true unto them: Yet she shall be saved by bearing children, if she continue in faith, and love, and sanctification with sobriety (I Tim. 2:15).

Why are the bans of marriage published three times in Church?

That all impediments which would render the marriage unlawful may be made known. Such impediments are: consanguinity, clandestine marriages, etc. Therefore, any one who is aware of such impediments, is bound to make them known to the pastor.

Why is the marriage performed in the presence of the parish priest?

Because the Catholic Church expressly declares that those marriages which are not performed in presence of the pastor, or with his permission before another priest, and two witnesses, are null and void (Conc. Trid., Sess. XXIV can. 1)\*; and because the blessing of the priest, which he imparts in the name of the Church, gives the couple, if they are in a

state of grace, strength, fortitude and grace to be faithful to each other, to endure all trials patiently, and to be safe from all the influences of the evil enemy.”

Why do they join hands before the priest, and two witnesses?

By this they bind themselves before God and His Church to remain true to each other, and to be ready to assist each other in all adversities. The bridegroom puts a ring on the bride's finger which should remind her of her duty of inviolable fidelity; to this end the priest signs and seals this holy union with the unbloody Sacrifice of the New Law.

Can the bond of marriage be dissolved in the Catholic Church?

A valid marriage, contracted with the free consent of each of the parties, can according to the plain doctrine of the Scriptures, the constant teaching and practice of the Church, be dissolved only by the death of one of the parties. If the pope or a bishop, for important reasons, gives a divorce, this is only partial, and neither can marry again while the other lives. Such a marriage would not be valid. How pure and holy are the doctrine and practice of the Catholic Church in this the most important and sacred of all human relations, preserving its inviolability and sanctity; while, on the contrary, by means of the wanton doctrine of the heretics, which for trivial reasons entirely dissolves the marriage contract, this sacred union is made the deepest ignominy of mankind, and the play-ball of human passions and caprice!

What is thought of mixed marriages, or marriages between Catholics and Protestants?

The Catholic Church has always condemned such marriages, because of the great dangers to which the Catholic party is unavoidably exposed as well as the offspring. Such marriages promote indifference in matters of religion, by which the spiritual life of the soul is destroyed; they are a hindrance to domestic peace, cause mutual aversion, quarrels, and confusion; they give scandal to servants; they interfere with the Christian education of the children, even render it impossible, and they frequently lead to apostasy and despair.

But the Catholic Church condemns especially those mixed marriages, in which either all or a number of the children are brought up in heresy, and she can never bless and look upon those as her children who do not fear to withdraw themselves and their own children from the only saving faith, and expose them to the danger of eternal ruin. Therefore, those Catholics who enter the matrimonial union with Protestants, although the marriage if lawfully contracted is valid, commit a mortal sin if they permit their children to be brought up in heresy, and should it not be their full intention to bring up their children in the Catholic faith at the time of their marriage, they would commit a sacrilege.

What should the newly married couple do immediately after the ceremony is performed?

They should kneel and thank God for the graces received in this holy Sacrament, in such or similar words: “Ratify, we beseech Thee, O Lord, that which by Thy grace Thou hast wrought in us, that we may keep that which in Thy presence we have promised unto the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.” That they may keep their promise made at the altar, they

should always remember the duties laid down to them by the priest at the time of their marriage, and the exhortations which are taken from the epistle of St. Paul to the Ephesians (Eph. 5:29, 31), wherein he instructs married people how they should comport themselves towards each other, and recalls to them as an example the union of Christ with His Church, and His love for her. To the husbands he says, they should love their wives as Christ loved His Church, for which He even gave Himself up to death; from this is seen, that men should assist their wives even unto death, in all need, and not treat them as servants. To the wives St. Paul says, that they as the weaker should be in all reasonable things obedient to their husbands, as the Church is obedient to Christ; for as Christ is the head of the Church, so is the husband the head of the wife. Experience proves there is no better way for women to win the hearts of their husbands than by amiable obedience and ready love, while, on the contrary, a querulous, imperative deportment robs them of their husbands' affections, and even causes them to be regarded with aversion. St. Paul says further; that husbands should love their wives (and consequently wives their husbands) as their own bodies, because married people are, as it were, one. They shall be two in one flesh; no man ever hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, as also Christ doth the Church (Eph. 5:29, 31). How unjustly and barbarously do those act, who, instead of loving one another, rather hate and outrage each other, and cause the loss of their property, and by detraction steal their honor! These do not consider that he who hates and disgraces his partner in life, hates and disgraces himself; while according to the words of St. Paul he who loves her, loves himself. If married people would remain in constant love and unity, it is most necessary that they should patiently bear with each other's infirmities, wrongs, and defects, exhort one another with mildness and affection, keep their adversities, trials, and sufferings as much as possible to themselves, and complain in prayer only to God, who alone can aid them. By impatience, quarrels, and complaints the cross becomes only heavier and the evil worse. Finally, not only on their wedding day, but often through life, they should earnestly consider that they have not entered the married state that they may inordinately serve the pleasures of the body, but to have children who will one day inhabit heaven according to the will of God; as the angel said to Tobias: "For they who in such manner receive matrimony, as to shut out God from themselves and from their mind, and to give themselves to their lust as the horse and mule, which have not understanding, over them the devil hath power" (Tob. 6:17).

**PRAYER.** Most merciful Jesus! who didst work Thy first miracle at the wedding in Cana by changing water into wine, thereby revealing Thy divine power and majesty, and honoring matrimony: grant we beseech Thee, that Thy faithful may ever keep sacred and inviolate the holy sacrament of Matrimony, and that they may so live in it truthfully, in the fear of the Lord, that they may not put an obstacle in the way of obtaining heaven for themselves, and their children.

\*In all such dioceses of the United States, where the Council of Trent has not been published, civil marriages are considered valid. The Catholic, however, who becomes

married by civil authority commits a mortal sin, except in case of extreme necessity. To be married by a sectarian preacher is looked upon as a denial of faith, and incurs excommunication.

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