

# Session 5



## MATRIMONY AND HOLY ORDERS

THE SACRAMENTS  
OF SERVICE & COMMUNION



**SYMBOLON**  
THE CATHOLIC FAITH EXPLAINED

*Nil obstat:* Ben Akers, S.T.L.

*Imprimatur:* Most Reverend Samuel J. Aquila, S.T.L., Archbishop of Denver

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Writers: Woodeene Koenig-Bricker, Lucas Pollice, Edward Sri, Sean Dalton

Media/Print Production: Brenda Kraft, Justin Leddick, Kevin Mallory, John Schmidt

Graphic Design: Stacy Innerst, Jane Myers

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### **Augustine Institute**

6160 South Syracuse Way, Suite 310

Greenwood Village, CO 80111

Information: 303-937-4420

Formed.org



# MATRIMONY AND HOLY ORDERS

## The Sacraments of Service & Communion

### INTRODUCTION

**All marriages begin with hopes and dreams**, but according to Professor Scott Stanley at the University of Denver, a young couple marrying for the first time today has a lifetime divorce risk of forty percent. And of those married couples who do stay together, how many truly reflect the loving union of man and woman that God intended marriage to be?

Perhaps part of the reason so many marriages struggle is that we forget marriage is a sacrament. The wedding ceremony is a wonderful event, but the Sacrament of Matrimony doesn't end with the vows on the wedding day; it just begins then. Through the sacrament, God gives married couples the grace they need to live their call to service, sacrifice, mutual sanctification, openness to new life, and lifelong faithfulness to each other.

A strong marriage is formed day by day, over a lifetime, as a husband and wife grow in love, trust, and mutual self-giving.

None of these things are easy. But through the graces of the sacrament, those who are called to the married state are given strength to love as Christ loved—and to make their marriage a witness to God's own love for the world.

### THIS SESSION WILL COVER:

- **Why marriage is a sacrament**
- **The concrete ways the sacrament helps couples every day**
- **How Christ's love for his Church is the model for marriage**
- **The importance of the lifelong commitment of marriage**
- **What an annulment is...and isn't**
- **The second sacrament of service—Holy Orders—and how this sacrament comes in an unbroken line from the Apostles**



## OPENING PRAYER

God our Father, we give you thanks  
for the gift of marriage: the bond of life and love,  
and the font of the family.

The love of husband and wife enriches your Church with children,  
fills the world with a multitude of spiritual fruitfulness and service,  
and is the sign of the love of your Son, Jesus Christ, for his Church.

May your Holy Spirit enlighten our society  
to treasure the heroic love of husband and wife,  
and guide our leaders to sustain and protect  
the singular place of mothers and fathers  
in the lives of their children.

We ask all these things through Christ our Lord,  
Amen.

—Prayer for the Defense of Marriage from the U.S. Catholic Bishops

*“If two pieces of wood are carefully glued together, their union will be so close that it is easier to break them in some fresh place than where they were joined; and God so united man and wife, that it is easier to sever soul and body than those two.”*  
—St. Francis de Sales



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are the four aspects of Catholic marriage as reflected in the Sacrament of Matrimony, and what does each entail?
2. After his second divorce, a popular American entertainer had this to say about marriage in an interview on television: “Well if you have to work at it then maybe it’s not worth having... I have to work at everything else in my life. I have to work at my work. I just think a marriage should be easy, not hard.” How would you respond to that comment?
3. A priest said: “While it is true that no one will ever call me ‘daddy,’ thousands call me ‘Father.’” Why do we call priests “Father”?

## CALL TO CONVERSION

*After spending a few moments in prayer, write down your thoughts and reflections on the following questions:*



**#1** If you are married, how does your union signify the union of Christ and the Church? In what areas do you fall short? Where can you improve? Are you asking God for the daily grace of the Sacrament?

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**#2** If you aren't married, how can you use your single state to reflect Christ's sacrificial love and service to others more?

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**#3** Reflect on the following quote from Pope St. John Paul II:

*“Marriage is an act of will that signifies and involves a mutual gift, which unites the spouses and binds them to their eventual souls, with whom they make up a sole family—a domestic church.”*

How is the marriage relationship not just a feeling but an “act of the will”? How does this differ from what the world thinks about marriage?

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## CLOSING PRAYER

O God, Father of all mercies,  
Provider of a bountiful harvest,  
send your graces upon those  
you have called to gather the  
fruits of your labor;  
preserve and strengthen them  
in their lifelong service of you.

Open the hearts of your children  
that they may discern your holy will;  
inspire in them a love and desire to  
surrender themselves to serving others  
in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ.



Teach all your faithful to follow their respective paths in life  
guided by your divine Word and truth.

Through the intercession of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary,  
all the angels, and saints, humbly hear our prayers  
and grant your Church's needs, through Christ, our Lord.  
Amen.

—U.S. Catholic Bishops' Prayer for the Discernment of Vocations

## SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THE WEEK

**Here is a verse from the Bible that you can memorize and reflect  
on this week to help you apply today's session to your daily life:**



*Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife,  
and they become one flesh.*

—Genesis 2:24

## DO YOU WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT MARRIAGE AND HOLY ORDERS?

### TO ENRICH YOUR CATHOLIC FAITH, VISIT [formed.org](http://formed.org)

Where you'll find helpful videos, audio presentations, ebooks, and feature films from the most trustworthy presenters in the Catholic world.

### For Further Reading:

For more in-depth reading about Matrimony and Holy Orders, see the following *Catechism* passages:

- *Marriage in God's Plan: CCC 1602–1605*
- *Marriage in the Lord: CCC 1612*
- *Marriage as a Model of Christ's Union with the Church: CCC 1616*
- *The Rites of Marriage: CCC 1621–1624*
- *Matrimonial Consent: CCC 1625–1629*
- *Mixed Marriage and Disparity of Cult: CCC 1633–1636*
- *Permanence of Marriage: CCC 1638–1640*
- *Grace of the Sacrament: CCC 1641–1642*
- *The Indissolubility of Marriage: CCC 1644*
- *Fidelity of Conjugal Love: CCC 1646*
- *Openness to Fertility: CCC 1652–1654*
- *Holy Orders: CCC 1536–1538*

### Other Resources:

- *The United States Catechism for Adults, Chapters 20–21*
- *Life-Giving Love: Embracing God's Beautiful Design for Marriage* by Scott Hahn and Kimberly Hahn
- *Men, Women and the Mystery of Love: Practical Insights from John Paul II's Love and Responsibility* by Edward Sri
- *Three to Get Married* by Venerable Fulton J. Sheen
- *Marriage: The Mystery of Faithful Love* by Dietrich Von Hildebrand
- *Marriage: Love and Life in the Divine Plan* from USCCB United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
- *Apostolic Exhortation Familiaris Consortio* by Pope St. John Paul II