

The Christian Meaning of Human Sexuality

by Fr. Paul Quay, S.J.

Chapter 5

The Church: Bride of Christ and Mother of the Living

1. On the natural level, bodily union between husband and wife symbolize “an entire life together”. Yet God has made natural marriage to symbolize something that lies entirely beyond the sexual. Explain.

Christ’s Unmerited Love for His Church

2. Complete the sentences:
Christ’s love was not given to the Church _____.
Christ loves her because _____.
He had to win her for Himself by _____.
He espoused her there when _____.
His heart was opened and water flowed forth, the sign of _____.
Only His death made her to be a bride without _____.
Her beauty was _____.
3. What does the author mean when he writes of the Church, “Without His grace she can do nothing?”
4. How is Christ’s pleasure in His Bride expressed?
5. What is Christ’s chief gift to His Church? How ought this gift to be received and manifested? How is this related to intimacy between husband and wife?
6. What did many in the Old Testament, and also the Church Father’s know about how God revealed Himself beyond the limits of Israel?
7. Why is the Church so concerned to bring ever more people to the knowledge of Christ?
8. How was this idea expressed by the Fathers of the Church?

Christ’s Fidelity to His Church

9. Explain how the Lord’s “marriage” with Israel and His “marriage” with the Church are NOT an example of divorce-and-remarriage.
10. How are Israel and the Church related to one another?
11. What will come about when the Jews by carnal generation finally recognize their Lord and come to Him?
12. How can it be claimed that the Church is indefectible while still recognizing the sinfulness within the Church?

Our Sexuality in the Light of Christ’s Mysteries

13. Explain as fully as you can the “ultimate reason that husbands and wives are called to sacrifice themselves...for one another”.
14. How does a husband’s initiative in lovemaking, and his wife’s response, shed light on the Catholic doctrine of grace?
15. What does it mean to say that the symbolism of marriage reaches even as far as the beatific vision? How does this bring us to an understanding of basic Christian sexual morality?