

MARRIAGE HOMILY

(N.N.)

Years ago, when I was going to primary school, it was common practice for the Bishop with the Parish Priest to come to the school and examine the children on their catechism before being admitted to Confirmation. The catechism had a pat answer to every religious question under the sun which the children were supposed to know by heart. The bishop asked one nervous little boy 'what is marriage'. He got his answers completely mixed up and said: 'marriage is a place where some souls suffer for a time before they're released to go to heaven'. The Parish priest yelled back: That's 'purgatory', my child. The bishop retorted: 'leave the child be, he could be right, what do you or I know about it anyway.'

So today I'm not going to pretend that I know more about the subject than I actually do. The church describes marriage as a partnership of life and love which only death can dissolve. Your nuptial love, however, will no doubt be tested in the 'topsy turvey' of life.

But that's the time to show that you've taken your marriage vows seriously. Today you are pledging to love and be faithful to your spouse for better or for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish for the rest of your lives. That's asking a lot, but if you invite Jesus and Mary into your married life, like the couple did at Cana, then you'll succeed. Interesting to note that Jesus performed his very first miracle at a wedding feast. On that occasion, what was going to ruin the wedding reception (running out of wine) was quickly rescued by the Lord. He changed a huge amount of water, not just into any old wine but the very best vintage. So if you want a wine-filled marriage, full of colour, taste, and zest then walk with Jesus through your married life. A watery, dull, tasteless marriage without the Lord is the alternative.

Some stand-up **comedian** once quipped that 'a man is incomplete until he's married, and 'then he's completely finished'. Well, he or she is meant to be finished with living like a single person. They're often referred to as 'married singles'. The Bible says: It's not good for man to be alone. You could be alone even in marriage if your communication leaves a lot to be desired. Life is much more enriching if physical union is coupled with sharing what's in your deepest self. The church teaches that in marriage the physical intimacy of the spouses becomes a sign and pledge of spiritual communion.

Jesus tells us in the Gospel of John: 'Love one another as I have loved you.' If you do that, your marriage will be built on a firm foundation and your oneness as a couple will deepen and develop_and **be there** for all to see.

May **your love** N.N. will grow from strength to strength and your dreams and aspirations on this day come to fulfilment? Let's reflect for a few moments in silence.