

## Some Thoughts about Love and Marriage

- No decision is ever merely explained by immediate dispositions or circumstances. They are rooted in a fundamental orientation and attitudes to life. “By their fruits you will know them”.
- How we decide in a crisis will reveal what we stand for in life.
- Decisions about marriage cannot be resolved by mere discussion or abstract reasoning for marriage involves persons that cannot be reduced to abstract formulas. How we deal with a person of flesh and blood will show what is really important to us.
- In marriage the question is always whether or not I am committed to the other person in love.
- What does it mean to love? When I love, I affirm the differentness of the beloved; when I don't, I do not love at all, but want the other for my own gratification and happiness. When I love, I am passionately and compassionately involved with the life and being of what I am loving – whether another person or thing or God himself.
- When I love, I am sympathetically committed to the well-being of the beloved. It means living for the advantage of the other.
- It is more important to do the right thing than to be successful, famous, or wealthy.
- If we don't learn from the failure and grow in wisdom, we have to go through the same situation again.
- Friendship is the knitting together of one soul to another so that both become stronger by virtue of that relationship. Life partners ought to be best friends.
- What happened to trust? In the natural, there is no justified basis for trust without trust in God.
- No one can bypass his or her co-responsibility for the state of their marriage. The question is how we deal with it. This always prompts other questions, like ‘when and why did things change’, what response did I make’, etc.?
- Marital breakdown is like death. It is suffering in the extreme. It is an attack on human life and society. It is an unwillingness to change sustained by ambition. It is a hardness of heart from which arises the oppressive demand that the other bow to my desires. It is the unwillingness to up with the ‘inconvenience’ of another person in my life. In that case, the other is turned into an object of rejection. Sympathy and love for that person must be ‘killed’ in the heart. This is, in the final analysis, the refusal to love God with all one's heart and the (closest) neighbor as oneself.
- Marriage must never be belittled or treated as an object to be manipulated at will. Its breakdown cannot be accepted with ‘stiff upper lip’ as if it was something ordinary. Marriage is worth fighting for.

