

NUPTIAL MYSTERY

We are bought at a great price



The fundamental shape of salvation history is nuptial. Nuptial pertains to marriage. The deeper history behind the history of Scripture is the love story between God and mankind. God's ultimate plan is to wed himself to mankind in this everlasting nuptial covenant.

Christ unites himself to all of mankind in a nuptial covenant. Mary shows for us in her giving to God and being united to God completely in a virginal way shows that all humans are called to this spiritual, virginal union with God. God tells us something about our vocation with the BVM. This union with Him is not sexual. We sexualize what is virginal. The union is complete but is virginal.

The Cross as nuptial. See *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC) 808. It is through the Cross in which the Church is purified and fructified. She is made fruitful so she becomes our mother. She becomes our mother at baptism. It is not sexual. She is a virginal bride and a fruitful mother.

Why does Scripture never talk about a personal relationship with Christ? The idea of a personal relationship with Christ is traditional, not scriptural. Christ wants more. Christ wants nuptial intimacy, not simply a personal relationship. A marriage implies intimacy, sacrifice and covenant and this is what Christ wants.

The nuptial union of Christ and holiness. Holiness is the response of the bridegroom to the bride. Christ gives himself entirely to the Church. Mary goes before us all in the holiness that is the Church's mystery as the bride without spot or blemish. Mary is an archetype of the Church.

Baptism is a nuptial bath which precedes the wedding feast. The end of our Christian life is nuptial. We are preparing to be clothed with nuptial garments as spouses of the Bride, the Church. Our personal history is nuptial.

There exists a mutual connection between the dogmas of the faith and the coherence between them. Any insight into the mysteries of the faith should shed light on other facets of the Christian faith.

The Incarnation

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Our focus on the nuptial mystery has the effect of emphasizing the notion of union. Christ desired to be united to all mankind.

The Cross

The nuptial mystery sheds light on the Cross. The Cross purifies his Bride, the Church and makes her spiritually fruitful at the Cross.

Christ as Savior

The conquering bridegroom is seen in the nuptial mystery of Christ as Savior. In Revelation the

Bridegroom comes to rescue the Bride. The Bride is rescued from the devil and the beast and the Bride is married to the Groom.

The Redemption

St. Paul depicts the mystery of redemption in the terms of the bride-price. Christ pays the bride-price to acquire the bride. We were all bought with a great price.

The Church

Personal relationship is seen in the context of nuptial language.

The Individual

Christ loves his Church which is his Body, but he also loves each individual person. Christ makes a gift of himself and this is the ultimate expression of love. Self-gift is to have love incarnate. All human beings together in the Church are called to be through the Church to be the Bride of Christ. The feminine element becomes a symbol of all that is human. We are all one in the Mystical Body.

The Sacraments

The sacraments can be seen through the nuptial mystery of the Church and Christ.

Baptism – the entire Christian life bears the mark of the spousal love of Christ and the Church. Baptism is a nuptial mystery. It is the nuptial bath which precedes the Eucharist.

The Eucharist – The Paschal Mystery completely reveals the spousal love of God. If you want to understand properly what God's spousal and nuptial you look first at the Cross. This keeps us from seeing God's nuptial love not as something inappropriate but sacramental. The Eucharist the sacrament of the Bridegroom and the Bride. Christ makes a gift of himself.

Holy Orders – In Holy Orders you have matter and form, as with all the sacraments. The man is the matter in this sacrament. The priest becomes the sign of the Bridegroom. Christ links the Eucharist to the priestly service of the Apostles. The priest represents Christ, the Bridegroom, while the congregation is the Bride coming to receive the gift of the Groom.

Holy Matrimony – Matrimony signifies in a sacramental way the love that God has for man. In the joys of married life there is a foretaste of the wedding feast of the Lamb.

Christian Life

Death – Death completes and fulfills the new birth begun at baptism. At the end we will be clothed with nuptial garments.

Holiness – All are called to respond with the gift of their lives. Holiness is the response of the bride to the gift of the bridegroom. In ancient Jewish tradition, the betrothal is called *kiddushin* which means consecration/to make holy. A marriage is when a woman is made holy for her husband. She is set apart from all other women. Marriage becomes a personal consecration in which the sacrifice is the person. If holiness is also illuminated by marriage then holiness becomes the way we respond to the gift of the Bridegroom, the Christ.

Jesus thirsts for us. John 4 describes the Samaritan woman at the well. The wonder of prayer is revealed beside the well where we seek water. There Christ comes to meet every human being. Christ initiates. He awaits us. Prayer is the encounter with God's thirst with ours. God thirsts that we may thirst for him.

- Fr. Butler