

World Marriage Day (Feb.14)

The principal agency by which the laity do their part in the propagation of the Faith and the increase and multiplication of the regenerate children of God is through marriage, and when a Catholic man and woman unite and join themselves together and become one flesh at the altar rail, they ought to understand that the chief purpose of their coming together is that they might jointly fulfill the divine command to increase and multiply the seed of the Atonement, the children of God, the heirs of the kingdom of Heaven. Even as God sent the children of Israel into the promised land that they might increase and multiply to fill it with the seed of Abraham, so will he fulfill the covenant he made with the faithful that he would multiply their seed until they would become in numbers as the stars in Heaven or the sands of the seashore. And the spiritual "Israel," the redeemed and elect of Christ, should recognize it as their duty to contribute their share towards hastening the day when the proclamation of the Angel will be fulfilled and declared before the throne of God, "The Kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of Christ, the Lord's anointed." (Apoc.11:15]

One of the arguments for small, restricted families, which prevails even among Catholics in our day, is that the cost of feeding, clothing and educating children is so great, that they are justified in restricting the number to two or three at the most. But Catholic parents, if they have the spirit of Christ and his desire to lay down his life that the redeemed may live, will willingly make the sacrifice which the production of a large family must impose upon them.

But, whereas marriage is the principal agency through which the layfolk fulfill the divine command to increase and multiply the seed of the Atonement until the regenerate fill the land, they have not discharged their full duty by begetting sons and daughters unto God and having large families. They still must have some share in the evangelization of the world in carrying out Christ's command: "Go into all the world, preach the Gospel to every creature, and make disciples of all nations." [Mk.16:15]

It is the special office of the priests and the religious men and women to become missionaries in all lands, but, when some of our American young men enroll themselves in a missionary society like that of Maryknoll, and the young women enroll in the Maryknoll Sisterhood, there is still the problem how they are going to be supported. When they go to China, Japan or Korea they will need money to build houses, churches, and hospitals, and they look back to the faithful at home and the faithful have their opportunity to share in the work of propagating the Faith by making a sacrifice of the money which they have earned.

That is the divinely ordained economic way by which those that stay at home can still do their part in obedience to the divine command, "Go into all the world, preach the Gospel to every creature." (Fr. Paul Sermon in Our Lady of the Angels Chapel, Graymoor, Oct. 24, 1937)