

# Kingdom Come

## The First Love

The predominant image of the Kingdom throughout the Scriptures is that of a marriage. It is important to note that it is not the image of a “perfect marriage”. But one in which the bride is unfaithful while the groom is steadfastly faithful in his love. Even when the bride forgets her first love, the groom always remembers his love for her. When Christ, the groom, chooses his bride, he entrusts his heart (his most treasured possession) to her. Jesus has entrusted the Kingdom (and the mission of the Kingdom) to his bride. The bride is called to entrust her most treasured possession to him in return.

## Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever been "entrusted " with something important? A secret? A responsibility or task? Have you ever had to care for someone?
2. Did you like that responsibility? Why or why not? Was it overwhelming or stressful? Was it an honor to be truly “entrusted” with something of great value?
3. What is one example of a gift (a “talent” as it were) that God has given to you? Do you find joy in being able to exercise this gift? Is this gift a burden? Do you thank God for the gift or resent Him for the responsibility?
4. When Proverbs describes an ideal bride, it seriously downplays physical appearance and focuses on more significant traits. Is this hard to accept in our culture? Why, do you think?
5. What do you think of the two questions to ask of the person you are dating (or might date in the future): “Is this person good for me?” and “Is this someone that I can suffer with?” Do those questions make sense? If they do, why do you think we aren’t asking them more often?
6. Jesus has entrusted the mission of his life, the establishing of the Kingdom, to His Bride (the Church...you). What practical way can you exercise this mission?
7. We are called to entrust ourselves back to the Lord. What is one way you can entrust yourself to Christ?

## God in Real Life

- I. Many of us have “forgotten our first love” of God. When that happens (when we fail, sin, neglect to use His gifts, fail to trust in His love, etc...) we often drift. This drift might not be intentional or dramatic; it might simply look like “leaving Church at Church”. But we are called to be “24/7 Catholics”. A sure-fire recipe for lukewarmness and

lackluster love is spending a good portion of our lives as if God's love and mission was irrelevant. How can you find tangible ways to allow God's love into your life and live His mission on a daily basis?

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## Be Transformed

The Bible and the Catechism speak about Kingdom, the heart, and the mission of the Bride:

- A. The Book of the Prophet Hosea talks about how the Bride (Israel) was unfaithful, but how God would win her back: "Therefore, I will allure her now; I will lead her into the wilderness and speak persuasively to her. Then I will give her the vineyards she had, and the valley of Achor as a door of hope. There she will respond as in the days of her youth, as on the day when she came up from the land of Egypt. On that day—oracle of the LORD—You shall call me "My husband," and you shall never again call me "My lord."
  - B. "The unity of Christ and the Church, head and members of one Body, also implies the distinction of the two within a personal relationship. This aspect is often expressed by the image of bridegroom and bride. The theme of Christ as Bridegroom of the Church was prepared for by the prophets and announced by John the Baptist. The Lord referred to himself as the "bridegroom." The Apostle speaks of the whole Church and of each of the faithful, members of his Body, as a bride "betrothed" to Christ the Lord so as to become but one spirit with him. The Church is the spotless bride of the spotless Lamb. "Christ loved the Church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her." He has joined her with himself in an everlasting covenant and never stops caring for her as for his own body." (CCC 796)
  - C. "This is the whole Christ, head and body, one formed from many . . . whether the head or members speak, it is Christ who speaks. He speaks in his role as the head (ex persona capitis) and in his role as body (ex persona corporis). What does this mean? "The two will become one flesh. This is a great mystery, and I am applying it to Christ and the Church." And the Lord himself says in the Gospel: "So they are no longer two, but one flesh." They are, in fact, two different persons, yet they are one in the conjugal union, . . . as head, he calls himself the bridegroom, as body, he calls himself "bride." (~St. Augustine)
  - D. "Far from having been hostile to the Temple, where he gave the essential part of his teaching, Jesus was willing to pay the Temple-tax, associating with him Peter, whom he had just made the foundation of his future Church. He even identified himself with the Temple by presenting himself as God's definitive dwelling-place among men. Therefore his being put to bodily death presaged the destruction of the Temple, which would manifest the dawning of a new age in the history of salvation: "The hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father." (CCC 586)
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## To the Heart

“Be subordinate to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Wives should be subordinate to their husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is head of his wife just as Christ is head of the church, he himself the savior of the body. As the church is subordinate to Christ, so wives should be subordinate to their husbands in everything.

Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the church and handed himself over for her to sanctify her, cleansing her by the bath of water with the word, that he might present to himself the church in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.

So [also] husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one hates his own flesh but rather nourishes and cherishes it, even as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body.” (Ephesians 5:21-30)

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“And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.” (Revelation 21:2)

“Then came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues and spoke to me, saying, “Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb.” (Revelation 21:9)

“For as a young man marries a young woman, so shall your sons marry you, and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you.” (Isaiah 62:5)