

## Ordinary 23 C - 2022

### **Counting the Cost in Marriage**

In order to live life fully and happily, we must be people who are able to count the cost in almost every area of living.

Marriage is one of those institutions which demands a high personal cost. Each person makes a covenant to love, comfort, honor and take care of the other in sickness and in health. That can be a difficult commitment to keep if a spouse becomes critically ill or severely disabled. The husband and wife agree to stay with each other "for better, for worse, for richer for poorer ... till death do us part." A man and woman must count the cost of what they are getting into in marriage.

So it is also with having children. Did you see a recent letter to Ann Landers in the paper? It struck a chord with this expectant father heading toward his 40th birthday. The writer was talking about the mixed blessings of raising children in your 40s and 50s. It is true, I think, that an older father is more patient, and in a way, more appreciative of children.

However, as this letter-writer rightly suggests, raising children at a later age is also more difficult in many ways. Men or women in their 40s and 50s generally have a lower energy level, so taking the kids to Little League, attending PTA meetings and so forth tires parents much more.

Indeed, there are tremendous physical, emotional, and financial costs to raising children. Before having them, a couple should count the cost. There are just too many lonely and neglected and deprived children out there with parents who have not done so.

(by Donald William Dotterer from *Living the Easter Faith*, CSS Publishing Company)

A peasant went to a holy man for advice. He knew he ate too much sugar and wanted advice on how to stop his overuse of sugar. The holy man told the peasant to come back in a week. The peasant returned in a week and the holy man said he did not have the answer yet. Come back in another week. The man came back in another week and the holy man said he still did not have the answer. The peasant inquired as to why the holy man could not find an

answer. The holy man said, " I did not know how difficult for me it would be to give up sugar!"

**"The beauty remains; the pain passes."**

French artists Henri Matisse and Auguste Renoir were close friends and frequent companions despite the fact that Renoir was twenty-eight years the senior of Matisse. During the last several years of his life, Renoir was virtually crippled by arthritis; nevertheless, he painted every day, and when his fingers were no longer supple enough to hold the brush correctly, he had his wife, Alice, attach the paintbrush to his hand in order that he might continue his work. Matisse visited him daily. One day, as he watched his older friend wincing in excruciating pain with each colorful stroke, he asked, "Auguste, why do you continue to paint when you are in such agony?" Renoir's response was immediate, **"The beauty remains; the pain passes."**— Passion for his art empowered Renoir to paint until the day he died; those who continue to admire the enduring beauty of his smiling portraits, his landscapes, his still life studies of flowers and fruit will find no trace therein of the pain required to create them. Most will agree that the *cost* was worth it. (Patricia Datchuck Sánchez).

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**"We saw your smoke signal."**

The only survivor of a shipwreck was washed up on a small, uninhabited island. He prayed earnestly to rescue him, and every day he scanned the horizon for help, but no one seemed forthcoming. Exhausted, he eventually managed to build a little hut out of driftwood to protect him from the elements and in which to store his few possessions. One day, after scavenging for food, he arrived home to find his little hut in flames, the smoke rolling up to the sky. The worst had happened; everything was lost. He was stunned with grief and anger. "God, how could you do this to me!" he cried.

Early the next day, however, he was awakened by the sound of a ship that was approaching the island. It had come to rescue him. The weary man asked his rescuers: "How did you know I was here?" They replied: "We saw your smoke signal." — **God is at work in our lives, even in the midst of pain and suffering.** But we fail to see the invisible hand of God. (Fr. Bobby Jose).

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