



Jesus The Lord Our Saviour

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(Not For Sale)



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(Galatians 3:27)

BELOVED IN CHRIST...



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**“ As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.”
(Galatians 3:27)**

The times of celebrations like Birthdays, Wedding days and the like, call for a string of amusements, with new clothes topping the list. It is true that wearing new clothes enlivens our spirits and refreshes us too!

Pointing out to the experiences in our social life, St. Paul awakens the feelings of our spiritual life. St. Paul teaches us that we the faithful who belong to Christ should shun worldly behaviour and thoughts and get into Christ's frame of mind and feelings. And that is what he means by saying, 'Put on Christ', or 'clothe yourselves with Christ.'

In today's modern world, many who call themselves people of God, and as those dedicated to God, live with a 'worldly garb' adorning themselves as 'mannequins' in a show room. They run here, there and everywhere toiling hard in order to attract attention and to earn name and fame. But those who have 'put on Christ' keep away from the ways and thoughts of the world.

"I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ." (Philippians 3:8)

I wish that you too gain the experience of St. Paul and be joyful. I wish you joy.

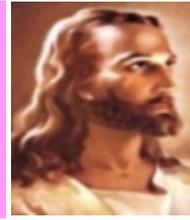
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Blessings of God be yours...



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" O LORD, my heart is not lifted up, my eyes are not raised too high; I do not occupy myself with things too great and too marvelous for me. But I have calmed and quieted my soul, like a weaned child with its mother; my soul is like the weaned child that is with me." (Psalm 131:1,2)

O Lord God, Yaweh ! You who live in my heart, I praise You. Yaweh God the all-powerful One ! I think of You alone, who are present everywhere ! I adore You. Yaweh God who knows everything that was and is ! You understand and know all, for You dwell in the deep recesses of my heart , and so I praise You! Lord.You look on me with so much love, who 'am just like a wriggling worm and a mere dust.

I am nothing without You! I cast aside all my arrogant thoughts, proud glances and fall prostrate at Your Feet.

My Lord God, I do not seek for things and actions way beyond my capacity. Yaweh, You have swept my entire heart and so I remain calm and recollected in Your thoughts. I trust in You alone at all times. Lord You led Your children onward with love ! It is Your face I look on as I lay docile and silent in Your loving embrace. Thank You my God ! Thank You !

Fr. V. Ignatius. S. J.



MARRIAGE IS DIVINE !



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Plants grow alone. But when they grow in a cluster, we group them together to form a garden or we allow them to grow into wild forests. We see varieties of fish swim in great shoals in lakes and in the oceans. There are birds and animals that dwell in the forests and on the mountains, living in crowds, grouping themselves according to their species.

But man alone lives in a family , with several families together as a larger unit, as a society. When this society grows, it becomes a nation. Only mankind functions with a Political set-up. We have organized ourselves with a society, politics, education, culture, Religious rules, the services and celebrations in the places of worship, spirituality, human rights, duties, and such practical just disciplines, laws and so on to enhance the wellbeing of humanity at large. And this divine structure of marriage is the very basic state of human culture! And marriage has to be understood with the eye of faith , as a divine set-up , as a sacrament and then meditate upon the depth of meanings that it holds. Let us comprehend the indelible truths inherent in our Holy Scripture as we see in the Old Testament and the New Testament Books. Meditating upon these truths, we should extricate the ways and methods laid down to lead the faithful of God, and thus build up the Church through the structure of the families.

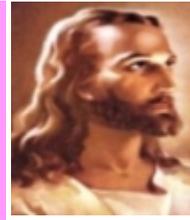
THE TEACHINGS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

The Holy Scripture of the Christians, the Holy Bible is made up of two major divisions. We call them The Old Testament and the New Testament. The Holy Scripture followed by the Jews before the coming of Jesus Christ, is what we call the Old Testament.

The teachings of Jesus Christ, the witnesses borne by the apostles, and the experiences of the early Christians written for us, is what is contained in the New Testament. We Christians accept the basic principles of the Jews and read it as our Holy Scripture. Primarily Jesus accepted the teachings regarding marriage given in the Old Testament and preached it. Hence the Christian faithful accept it as God's Word and follows it.



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IT IS NOT GOOD TO BE ALONE

Although the Old Testament Books give us the truths about marriage, as read and understood by the Jews and followed by them, yet it is the 'Thora' or the 'Pentateuch' , the first five Books of the Old Testament that contain the in depth meaning of it all with clarity.

The First Book of the Bible, Genesis says, 'Then the LORD GOD said, " It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner." (Genesis 2:18).

The animals that go in huge flocks cannot be man's equal or his helper. It was also the concern of God that man should not remain alone. He did not wish that man live like an animal, hence He deigned that man lives as a family, with a helpful partner, with a woman who is his equal. The Holy Bible teaches us this in a highly imaginative yet simple style, that all peoples may understand this great truth.

"So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then he took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man." (Genesis 2:21, 22)

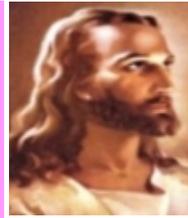
We thus realize that God destined that a woman lives as man's equal just as a man's rib , that she may contribute, be equal and thus remain shoulder to shoulder with man. Not only that , God 'brought' the woman who was equal to the man and placed her in front of him. There is no hint of any compulsion there. And man did not compel or ill treat the woman who was 'brought 'to him. Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh;" and he thus accepted her lovingly. (Genesis 2:23)

Woman is therefore one of man's ribs and a portion of his flesh!

Although this thought had its origins in the beginning of mankind ,yet during the time of the New Testament, Our God Almighty created the entire church, complete and whole, out of the redeemed humanity , as the Immaculate bride through His Son Jesus Christ.

'One of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once blood and water came out from Jesus who was hanging on the cross.' (John 19:34)

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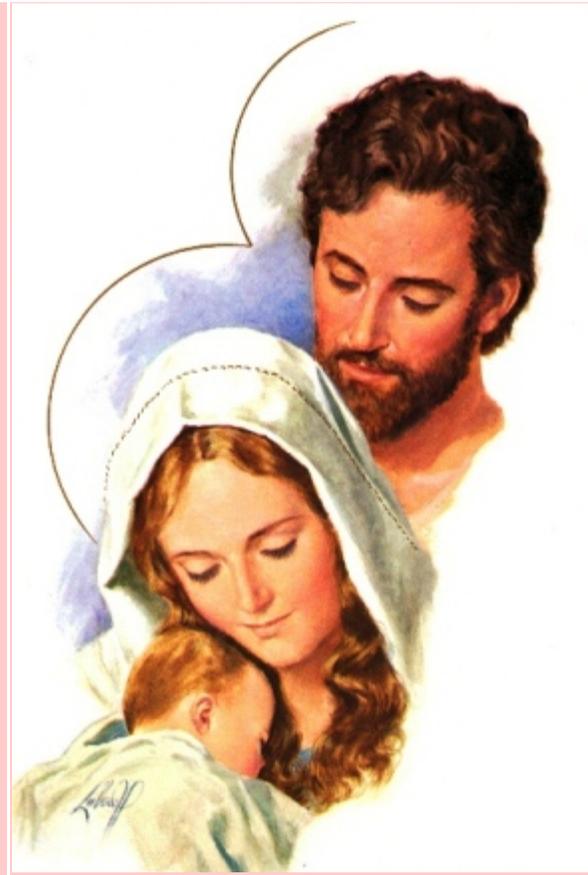
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The mankind that was born anew was created from the rib bone of Jesus. This is the "New bride", the "mankind", the man and woman cleansed by the Holy Blood of Jesus and standing shoulder to shoulder, as His "Bride, the wife of the Lamb." (Revelation 21:9)

We see that woman was created as the flesh of man's flesh. Their relationship was very sweet. They were created as equals, as helpers and as affectionate beings one for the other. And thus Holy men, the Prophets and Doctors of the Church have written that in the New Testament, Jesus has taken the redeemed faithful as His equal, helper and affectionate mate, flesh of His flesh and as bone of His bone (St. Augustine). Hence Jesus said this to His apostles who were filled with faith in Him. *"Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life and I will raise them up on the last day;"* (John 6:54)

This holy relationship between man and woman is marriage.

"Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh." (Genesis 2:24) (Equality, Mutuality and Intimacy are the three characteristics of their relationship.)



MARRIAGE IS PURE

God made the relationship between man and woman pure. When the Book of Genesis describes the creation of the world, the creation of human kind occupies a special place. God saw that everything that He created was good and admired it. Then He wanted to create human beings special and different from any other of His creations. *"Then God said, " Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness;"* (Genesis 1:26) A human being should be capable of having dominion over the entire creation. Although everything bows down to him, he should not bow down to and be contained within the attractions of the world. He should be "God's child" bearing the image of God, "Holy", "pure", and should be "different" from the world. He should always belong to God, and God's own. He should rule everything. *"So God created humankind (Adam) in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them."* (Genesis 1:27)

Man who bears the "figure and image" of God ! As man and woman, they reflect God in their body and in their heart, like a mirror. God revealed through Moses about the holiness bestowed upon human kind from the beginning of creation.

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"You shall be holy, for I the LORD Your God am holy." (Leviticus 19:2)

What is the structure or the figure of the Almighty God? What is His image? Even the Seraphs, the angels were shying away from looking at the image of God, they were in attendance above him; each had six wings: with two they covered their faces, and with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew. And one called to another and said, " Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory."

Who has ever looked on such a holy God? The Evangelist John tells us in brief, that the Only one who had seen the Father was Jesus, the Divine Word that took the form of flesh. " No one has ever seen God . It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known." (John 1:18)

As God's Only Son, Jesus alone came to the world, bearing the "image and the likeness of God." Only He possessed " the glory as of a father's only son." (John 1:1)

As Jesus bore the "image" of the Almighty God, and possessed "the glory of God", when Philip asked Him with all love to show him the Father, Jesus said,

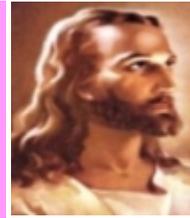
"Whoever has seen me has seen the Father!... Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me?" (John 14:8-10)

Hence human beings who were created as man and woman, were formed to reflect God's "holiness", as God's own children, were created to reflect God alone in their lives. And that is why the devils and their leader Lucifer are burning with hatred and jealousy and have avowed to attack humanity, preventing them from entering the Kingdom of Heaven, by bombarding them with several temptations and difficulties.

Therefore we see that the relationship between man and woman described in the Book of Genesis is a holy, pure institution established by God to reflect His own image and likeness.

Mankind got entwined in the lures and attractions of the world, without bearing The Word in their heart and hence lost their holiness. As mankind increased in number , atrocities also grew with them.

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"The LORD saw that the wickedness of humankind was great in the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of their hearts was only evil continually." (Genesis 6:5)

"And the LORD was sorry that he had made humankind on the earth and it grieved him to his heart." (Genesis 6:6)

When we lose the holiness of God, we cannot be a mirror which reflects the image of God. We cannot be His witnesses. Although the holiness of several families was tarnished in societal living, yet God's Word and His precepts have stood the test of time and are indestructible. Now and then, people chosen by God have lived and functioned bearing the Word of God in their lives. Although people increased and multiplied in their clans and traditions, God's establishment of marriage was considered divine and holy.

The marriage of Abraham's son Isaac was a fulfillment of the Divine plan of God. The wedding of Isaac and Rebecca took place according to God's plan. It is mentioned, "**The thing comes from the LORD;**" (Genesis 24:50).

In all tribulations, and in all difficult moments Abraham lived with God as his priority and purpose. He carried out Isaac's marriage, solely bearing God's wish, laden with God's Word in his heart. We therefore see that the celebrations and ceremony of human marriage is not like joining two animals together.

The arrangement of marriage is done in order to carry out and to wholeheartedly be of assistance, to the plan of God, who created man in His own image. We realize that Jesus preached this great Truth even more in depth, stressing on the great importance of marriage, in the New Testament.

Fr. V. Ignatius. S. J

