

In the Name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

Holy Scripture teaches that marriage is a model of the relationship between the Lord Christ and His Blood-bought Church, She showing perfect submission, He Selfless love. Submission and selflessness, however, are not virtues that the fallen world extols. Pride, individualism and self-confidence are the peaks that secular humanism seeks to scale.

So we find that in marriage, as we find in all things, the wisdom of men is at odds with the Word of God. The world extols pride, but pride is sin, as the Scriptures clearly attest. And our worth and confidence are not in ourselves; for in us there is nothing good, as the Scriptures so clearly teach. Our worth and confidence are in God, and saving faith puts aside self for the Lord and for neighbor.

So while submission may not be popular among those who are perishing, the Word of God, the Holy Scriptures, clearly say “Wives, submit to your husbands...” That is God-pleasing. That is what God commands. And so it is appropriate to assert that God says “Jessica, submit to Greg.”

God the Holy Spirit, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, the only true God, speaking through St. Paul, does not stop with the delineation of the faithful attitude of the Christian wife to her husband, for of herself she is not complete. Scripture continues: “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her...” So as much as it is appropriate to say “Jessica, submit to Greg”, so also is it right to say “Greg, love Jessica with a perfectly faithful, boundless love that is always forgiving and sacrifices even your own life for her wellbeing.” It is love that completes the union of man and wife, for against love there is no Law.

The Scripture does not speak of bridegroom and bride in terms of their individual needs or wants or feelings or preferences. Scripture does not discuss staying together as long as it is mutually edifying, as long as it keeps your attention, until you change your mind, until one of you gets a job in another city, until one of your feelings are hurt, or until you outgrow the other person. These sinful, selfish and hedonistic attitudes, although widely accepted and practiced by the fallen world, are not of God. And those who practice them, those who succumb to the temptations of the flesh, those who sin – all those who sin, those who will not hear the clear Word of God and follow instead fallen human reason, by their stony hearts separate themselves from God, and make themselves fodder for the devil.

For you see the Bride is subject to the Bridegroom in all things. And the Bridegroom loves and cherishes the Bride as His own Body. I speak concerning Christ and the Church. For the True Bridegroom, God Himself, Jesus Christ, took on flesh. He became Man to be one flesh with men, even men that hate Him. Your sin did not stop him. Your pride and arrogance and selfishness could not prevent His great love. He desired that you be His. So He gave Himself for you. He who is above all things submitted. He submitted to torture and death at the hands of hateful, lying, sinful men. In love, He

suffered His Flesh to be torn, His brow to be pierced, His precious Blood to be shed by those He came to save. And all this He did for you.

He died in your place. By the sin in which you were born, and by the sin which you have daily added to it, you have earned for yourself the death sentence. Of yourself you can do no other. But in His great love for you, God took on your flesh and died. God died. God died for you. He died for all men. He paid the price for your sins. Believing in Him, forgiveness is made yours. Simply by believing in Him, the life He took up again is made your life. Not by works, not by right living, not by pious acts, but by faith in Him alone, forgiveness, life and salvation are yours. They are given to you freely and yet at great Price, out of God's inestimable grace and love.

In love and in mercy the Bridegroom takes to Himself a Bride. He pulls you out of death and into life by drowning you in the gracious flood of the Baptismal font. There Blood-tinged Promise-filled waters remove your sin from you. There He gives you faith, faith that clings to the Bridegroom, even Jesus Christ our Lord.

There He sanctifies and cleanses you with the washing of water by the Word. And there you rise from the font, with the sure Promise that as Christ rose from the dead, so too will you rise on the last day, when He will present you to Himself, the pure, chaste and sinless Bride, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, holy and without blemish, united for eternity to her Groom.

The Bridegroom provides graciously for His Bride. Christ gives you His Word, that by that Word faith is created and sustained. The Bridegroom nourishes and cherishes His Bride. He gives you His Body and His Blood, that you banquet upon Him. You taste of the Wedding Feast of the Lamb in His Kingdom, which has no end. You eat and drink Christ, for the forgiveness of your sins, and the strengthening of your faith.

Greg and Jessica, you are already one. For you are one Communion with Christ and His Church in the Sacrament of the Altar. But now God has joined you to one another in a way that you are joined to no other man or woman – God has made you two one.

In submission and love, you will quickly find the world intolerant of your relationship and of your faith. But your marriage began here, and so must continue to be centered in Christ. You have sought His blessing this day, and He has graciously given it to you. He is the source of true love. It is His love that you receive and extend to one another. It is in Him alone that you have forgiveness, that you may forgive one another.

When you give up your flesh this marriage is no longer. But you will still be one – one in Christ, one with all the faithful gathered here this day, One Holy Communion with angels and archangels and all the company of heaven, one with the Bridegroom because He has graciously made you His Bride. It is in Him alone that you two become one flesh this day. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one put asunder. Greg and Jessica, God bless your marriage.