

Welcome!

Session Thirteen:

An introduction to the
sacramental life of the church:

Relationships: Marriage, commitment, and religious communities.



Human Relationships

Images of God

Recall the session on the TRINITY - we are created
to reflect the image of God. **NEXT - VIDEO**



Living in Community...

is hard (Paul writing to the Corinthians)

different life-styles/cultures/commitments

married - single - celibate - different kinds of communities

NEXT - COVENANT

Israel - Covenant

Images of God

OLD TESTAMENT relationships -

The marriage covenant reflected the covenant God had with his chosen people

**The Christian
Marriage Covenant**

Sometimes reflects the understanding of the OT covenant... **NEXT - VIDEO** - this can lead to some firm views! **NEXT: VIDEO - 'Dr Laura'**



Sacramental Life

Civil marriage is a legal ceremony.

Christian Marriage is a legal ceremony but in the context of the sacramental life of the Church. It is a relationship blessed by God - traditional teaching of the church is that it is between a man and a woman, for life, for the betterment of society and for the procreation of children. Since 2015, The Episcopal Church has removed gender. The Church has responded to changes in society...birth control... divorce & re-marriage...

Is Marriage a sacrament?

Reformed tradition...NO. Even Thomas Aquinas once questioned this.

Who giveth? Obey. Feudalism. Arranged marriages. Dowry.

The Church has responded to changes in society...birth control... divorce & re-marriage... Henry VIII

Marriage is part of human society therefore human society can end it.

Divorce...marriages die...so the sacramental nature of marriage is different to Baptism & Eucharist.

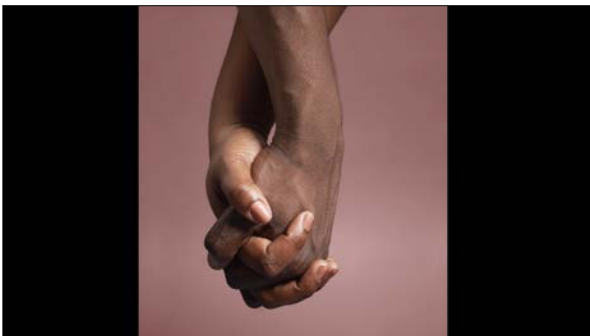
Outward and visible sign

Catholic understanding...

holding hands - *I take you...* (mention "I will" rather than the big screen's usual "I do.")
(exchanging (a) ring(s))



Not the rings...but...



Inward and
Spiritual Grace

Two become one; **baptismal covenant** at the heart of the marriage covenant (in Christian marriage at least one party must be baptized).

God is part of the relationship....in the West, **the couple** marry each other and the priest presides over the exchange of vows and blesses the union.

The Christian Marriage Covenant

The Preface from the Marriage Service

Look at the PREFACE



Dearly beloved: We have come together in the presence of God to witness and bless the joining together of N. and N. in Holy Matrimony. The joining of two people in a life of mutual

fidelity signifies to us the mystery of the union between Christ and his Church, and so it is worthy of being honored among all people.

The union of two people in heart, body, and mind is intended by God for their mutual joy; for the help and comfort given one another in prosperity and adversity; and, when it is God's will, for the gift of children and their nurture in the knowledge and love of the Lord.

Therefore marriage is not to be entered into unadvisedly or lightly, but reverently, deliberately, and in accordance with the purposes for which it was instituted by God.



Dearly beloved: We have come together in the presence of God to witness and bless the joining together of N. and N. in Holy Matrimony. The joining of two people in a life of mutual fidelity signifies to us the mystery of the union between Christ and his Church, and so it is worthy of being honored among all people. The union of two people in heart, body, and mind is intended by God for their mutual joy; for the help and comfort given one another in prosperity and adversity; and, when it is God's will, for the gift of children and their nurture in the knowledge and love of the Lord. Therefore marriage is not to be entered into unadvisedly or lightly, but reverently, deliberately, and in accordance with the purposes for which it was instituted by God.



Dearly beloved: We have come together in the presence of God to witness and bless the joining together of N. and N. in Holy Matrimony. The joining of two people in a life of mutual fidelity signifies to us the mystery of the union between Christ and his Church, and so it is worthy of being honored among all people. The union of two people in heart, body, and mind is intended by God for their mutual joy; for the help and comfort given one another in prosperity and adversity; and, when it is God's will, for the gift of children and their nurture in the knowledge and love of the Lord. Therefore marriage is not to be entered into unadvisedly or lightly, but reverently, deliberately, and in accordance with the purposes for which it was instituted by God.

Therefore marriage is not to be entered into unadvisedly or lightly, but reverently, deliberately, and in accordance with the purposes for which it was instituted by God.



Dearly beloved: We have come together in the presence of God to witness and bless the joining together of N. and N. in Holy Matrimony. The joining of two people in a life of mutual fidelity signifies to us the mystery of the union between Christ and his Church, and so it is worthy of being honored among all people.

The union of two people in heart, body, and mind is intended by God for their mutual joy; for the help and comfort given one another in prosperity and adversity; and, when it is God's will, for the gift of children and their nurture in the knowledge and love of the Lord. Therefore marriage is not to be entered into unadvisedly or lightly, but reverently, deliberately, and in accordance with the purposes for which it was instituted by God.



Dearly beloved: We have come together in the presence of God to witness and bless the joining together of N. and N. in Holy Matrimony. The joining of two people in a life of mutual fidelity signifies to us the mystery of the union between Christ and his Church, and so it is worthy of being honored among all people.

The union of two people in heart, body, and mind is intended by God for their mutual joy; for the help and comfort given one another in prosperity and adversity; and, when it is God's will, for the gift of children and their nurture in the knowledge and love of the Lord.

Therefore marriage is not to be entered into unadvisedly or lightly, but reverently, deliberately, and in accordance with the purposes for which it was instituted by God.



Dearly beloved: We have come together in the presence of God to witness and bless the joining together of N. and N. in Holy Matrimony. The joining of two people in a life of mutual fidelity signifies to us the mystery of the union between Christ and his Church, and so it is worthy of being honored among all people.

The union of two people in heart, body, and mind is intended by God for their mutual joy; for the help and comfort given one another in prosperity and adversity; and, when it is God's will, for the gift of children and their nurture in the knowledge and love of the Lord. Therefore marriage is not to be entered into unadvisedly or lightly, but reverently, deliberately, and in accordance with the purposes for which it was instituted by God.



Dearly beloved: We have come together in the presence of God to witness and bless the joining together of N. and N. in Holy Matrimony. The joining of two people in a life of mutual fidelity signifies to us the mystery of the union between Christ and his Church, and so it is worthy of being honored among all people.

The union of two people in heart, body, and mind is intended by God for their mutual joy; for the help and comfort given one another in prosperity and adversity; and, when it is God's will, for the gift of children and their nurture in the knowledge and love of the Lord.

Therefore marriage is not to be entered into unadvisedly or lightly, but reverently, deliberately, and in accordance with the purposes for which it was instituted by God.



Dearly beloved: We have come together in the presence of God to witness and bless the joining together of N. and N. in Holy Matrimony. The joining of two people in a life of mutual fidelity signifies to us the mystery of the union between Christ and his Church, and so it is worthy of being honored among all people.

The union of two people in heart, body, and mind is intended by God for their mutual joy; for the help and comfort given one another in prosperity and adversity; and, when it is God's will, for the gift of children and their nurture in the knowledge and love of the Lord. Therefore marriage is not to be entered into unadvisedly or lightly, but reverently, deliberately, and in accordance with the purposes for which it was instituted by God.

mutual joy

The Preface from the Marriage Service

help and comfort

The Preface from the Marriage Service

children

The Preface from the Marriage Service

The Church's expectations

- Life-long.
- Faithful.
- Life-changing.

Hence... *earlier stance on Divorce...mention C of E preface...*

The Church's expectations

- *Life-long.*
- *Faithful.*
- *Life-changing.*

- Life-long.
- Faithful.
- Life-changing.

Hence... *earlier stance on Divorce...mention C of E preface...*

**You shall be a
blessing**

- Life-long.
- Faithful.
- Life-changing.

Hence... *earlier stance on Divorce...mention C of E preface...mention 'love overflowing and affecting*

community

The Preface from the Marriage Service

they begin a new life in the community...

reflects earlier biblical analogy...

BUILDS UP community...remember BAPTISM...therefore builds up the Church.

Divorce...single...married...re-married...

St Paul...married people living as celibate

...single people living in community but celibate

people living together with families but not married...

and then...same sex relationships...UK/Europe/USA...

**Expectations and
Assumptions**

We all come from families...we learn from them...we also have many stereotypes...

Key and Peele - on stereotyping



**Expectations and
Assumptions**

We all come from families...

**Sometimes we speak
a different language!**

'Men are from Mars and Women are from Venus'
NEXT: Video: The Manslater



Intimacy

Intimacy is not just about physical closeness, but creating SPACE



Hands interlocked...stalemate – no further movement without pain – only separation.
Henri Nouwen: **“When we relate to each other as the interlocking fingers of two hands we enter into a suffocating closeness that does not leave any free space.”**



Hands coming together parallel in a gesture of prayer – looking outward – space in-between yet able to touch.

Space...to remain as individuals and yet to be one
Space...to allow love to grow and to allow for change
Space...to allow God to be part of your relationship

Nouwen: **“This relationship no longer is a fearful clinging to each other but a free dance, allowing space in which we can move forward and backward, form constantly new patterns, and see each other as always new.”**

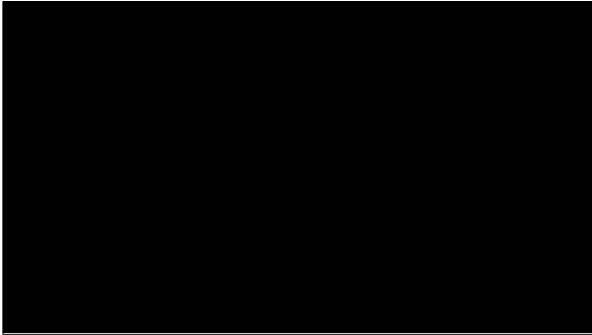
Change

“To live is to change and to be perfect is to have changed often” Cardinal Newman

Learning to listen

Just as intimacy is as much about space as physical closeness, marriage encourages listening...this can help the Church. **ALL THESE THINGS MATTER IN COMMUNITY. 1 Peter 2:1-2: Rid yourselves, therefore, of all malice, and all guile, insincerity, envy, and all slander. Like newborn infants, long for the pure, spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow into salvation— if indeed you have tasted that the Lord**

is good. NEXT...VIDEO: 'The Nail'



NEXT- Servicing a car



Servicing a car!
not just marriages but communities too

**and changing
relationships...**

**The Episcopal Church
response to
same-sex unions**

Baptismal covenant.

The Body of Christ.

Protestants should actually find same-sex marriage easier to justify as long as they accept that homosexuality is acceptable in the Christian Community.



Baptismal covenant.

The Body of Christ.

Protestants should actually find same-sex marriage easier to justify as long as they accept that homosexuality is acceptable in the Christian Community.

Vocation

Vocation: God calls people into various kinds of relationship, whether as single people, in monastic communities, or as intimate couples. These vocational callings can empower our witness to the gospel. The decision to enter into a covenantal union is a vocation marked by these characteristics: "fidelity, monogamy, mutual affection and respect, careful, honest communication, and the holy love which enables those in such relationships to see in each other the image of God."

Households

Households: Covenantal relationships are often lived in households in which we practice daily the giving of ourselves for the good of another. While households take many different forms, they create a space of mutual trust and accountability. The joy, intimacy, and shared vulnerability of households can thus help us learn the spiritual disciplines of compassion, forgiveness, and reconciliation in lives of committed monogamy and fidelity.

Fruitfulness

Fruitfulness: The divine grace that sustains a covenantal relationship bears fruit in countless ways, not only for the couple but for the wider community as well. Covenanted couples manifest this grace in their shared gifts for ministry and in lives of service, generosity, and hospitality.

Mutual Blessing

Mutual Blessing: A blessed relationship is set apart for a divine purpose: to bear witness to the creating, redeeming, and sanctifying love of God in the world. As the Spirit empowers the couple for this witness, the Church is likewise blessed and strengthened for its mission and ministry. **NEXT - religious community**



Religious Communities - Another form of commitment, centered on vows, and starting a new life in the community. Significant that many religious, especially sisters, are given a wedding ring at the time of their profession.



Living in Community



St. Thérèse of Lisieux: The Story of a Soul: "The mystery of my vocation, of my entire life, and above all, of the special graces Jesus has given me, stood revealed. He does not call those who are worthy,

but those he chooses to call.”

He does not call those
who are worthy, but those
he chooses to call.”

St. Thérèse of Lisieux

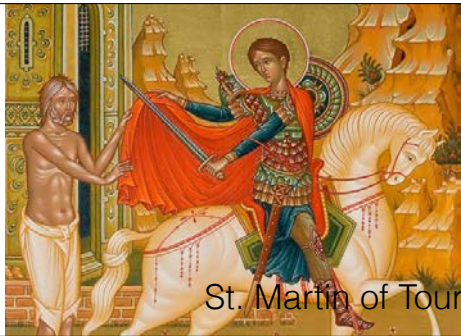
What do we mean by
the Religious Life?

Religious Life - very brief look at living in community.

Monks and nuns make vows - traditionally poverty, chastity, and obedience - often seen as the three knots on the rope around their waist. Many wear distinctive habits. Many take a 'name in religion' and commit themselves to the community in which they live. We often call monks and nuns by the collective name '**religious**'

Origins of the
Religious Life

From the earliest days of the Church, the followers of Jesus gathered together to pray. Acts 2:44-47 *All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.*



St. Martin of Tours

Early 4th Century - Martin, a former soldier in the Imperial Guard for the Roman Emperor. Famously gave away half his rest cloak to a beggar - that evening he had a dream of Jesus wearing half a red cloak. Became a hermit monk in Gaull (now France) at Tours. Became a Bishop - many visited him, including St. Patrick, and a monastery grew up around him.



St. Benedict

5th Century - Benedict of Nursia founded a monastic community at Subiaco in Lazio, Italy. His written *Rule* became the most influential rule in the development of the monastic life as we now have it.

Rule of Life

All Christians have a rule of life in that the Baptismal Covenant is central to how they live their life as a Christian in the world. Religious have a life that characterizes the kind of community life that they are committed to: this can be contemplative or active. Some retreat from the world - others are immersed in it; ALL have lives punctuated by prayer. The Daily Office is called the *Liturgy of the Hours* - and time is sanctified because of it. Communities gather not only to eat, and to work, but to pray.

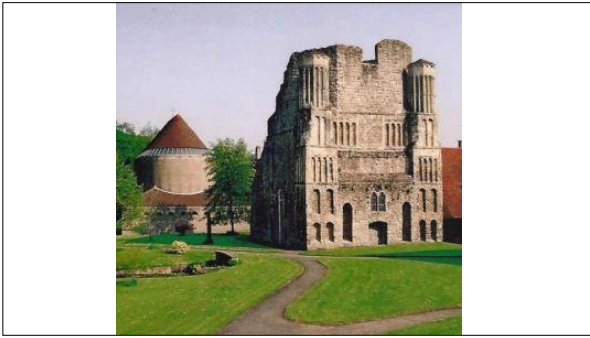


Anglican Benedictines at West Malling

CONTEMPLATIVE

traditional vows: poverty/chastity/obedience.

Benedictines take a vow of *Stability*



West Malling - part of the ruined medieval monastery and the restored monastery



Benedictines at West Malling

CONTEMPLATIVE

trad vows: poverty/chastity/obedience. Vows...

Stability



Benedictines at West Malling

CONTEMPLATIVE

trad vows: poverty/chastity/obedience. Vows...

Stability



Carmelites are contemplative and traditionally take a

'dedication' as well as a name in religion: Sr. Mary

Magdalene *of the Resurrection* Sr. Elfreda *of the*

Cross



Franciscans (Anglican Franciscans were resounded in East London in 1894)

Although they can have houses and even monasteries, they are traditionally itinerant monks - preaching, teaching, and serving the poor.



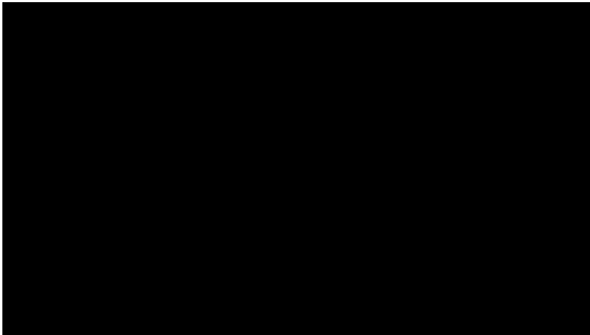
Archbishop of Canterbury is encouraging a renewal of the Religious Life... This is The Community of Saint Anselm - an Anglican religious order of young people, who give up a year or so of their lives to experience the Religious Life, devoted to prayer, study and service to the poor. It is based at Lambeth Palace in London, home of the Archbishop of Canterbury.



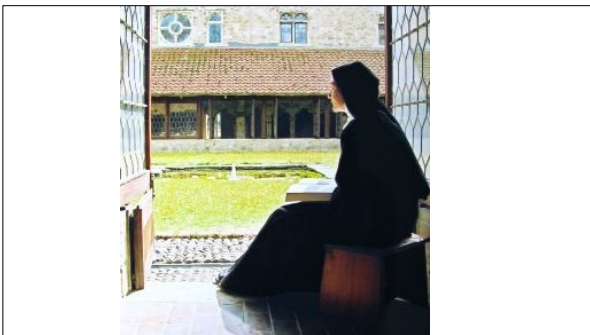
Next...video: RC



What's your vocation? RC video



In July, I will be going on retreat to the Sisters of the Love of God at Fairacres' Convent in Oxford... Anglican Order whose rule of life is based on the Carmelite tradition.





“When a sister dies, the Candle that she received at her clothing, that was lit again at her Profession, is lit again and allowed to burn out. The candle symbolizes the light of Christ and our baptismal promises as well as our monastic vows, and is a powerful symbol of our consecration to God as religious. Each of us has a candle stored in a cupboard, carefully labelled with our name and dates of clothing and profession. Unwrapping a sister’s candle after her death is always a powerful moment. There, in an unknown hand, is the record of her journey through Community. Our Rule says that, after Profession, our offering of ourselves continues until it is consummated in death. The dates of clothing, profession and death give a bare outline of a life lived in Community, but those of us who have lived with a sister are aware that between those dates a whole life given to God has been lived.”

**God does not call those who are
worthy of the calling,
but those whom it pleases
him to call.**

St Thérèse of Lisieux



Sr Monica Clare -



Living in Community (nun who can't sing!)



So marriage teaches us, through our baptismal covenant, that there are many lifestyles and that each of us, regardless of our marital status, can have a vocation to build up the body of Christ.

For those we Love

*Almighty God, we entrust all who are dear to us
to thy never-failing care and love,
for this life and the life to come,
knowing that thou art doing for them better things
than we can desire or pray for;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

Let us pray.

Next Week

Next session:
Hope: Death, Eternal Life,
Mary and the Communion of Saints