

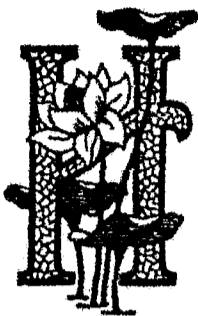
University of Notre Dame

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How to Prepare for Marriage.

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HOW should Catholics prepare for marriage?" asked the professor of catechism. "By the Sacrament of Extreme Unction," answered the wise little girl. That is the proximate preparation. Few of you need proximate preparation while in school, but every student who expects to marry needs to be concerned about the remote preparation. The following suggestions under this head are intended to be helpful:

1. **If possible, keep your head.** Insanity and blindness are natural concomitants of love; but, if possible, keep your head.
2. **Lead a clean life.** That is always possible. The great aids to it are:
 - (a) Clean ideals, the Blessed Virgin for womanhood, St. Joseph for manhood;
 - (b) Clean companionship, dictated by decent self-respect;
 - (c) The private vow of chastity, made with your confessor's permission;
 - (d) Ardent attachment to the Sacraments and prayer.
3. **Learn frugality.** The girl who has to be won by expensive presents is not worth winning. Let her love you for yourself. If you spoil her now you will have to pay the bills later on. Early marriage is nearly always to be preferred (this does not mean the freshman year), as it brings accommodation of character during the pliable years; and frugality is usually essential to early marriage.
4. **Seek counsel.** Your parents may be pretty dumb in your eyes, but they know heaps more than you do about marriage. And the priest knows plenty about what wrecks marriage. Those who don't consult him before marriage are most likely to do so after it is too late.
5. **Never confuse either infatuation or lust with love.** Love implies reverence. A girl who does not command your respect is not worthy of you. Your own self-respect demands that you shun such company; and if you are lacking in self-respect, you are doomed to learn by bitter experience that lust is a usurer who sucks blood even to the grave.
6. **Try out her cooking.** What is the favorite topic of conversation at school? *Food*, without a doubt. It outdistances athletics, religion, philosophy, girls, everything. It is the great interest that engineers have in common with the rest of mankind. She may never have to soil her hands with dishwater; but if she doesn't, you will. There'll come a time! Don't wait until after marriage to domesticate her. If she doesn't know how to run a home you won't have a home.

"Catholics Marry Catholics."

An alumnus whose son was a member of a recent graduating class, gave the following advice in the Alumni Survey:

"Advise Catholic boys to marry Catholic girls. I am a convert. I married a Baptist who gave me all the rights over my children. She never interfered in my religion, and always reminded me of my Communion Sunday. She became a wonderful Catholic and is a wonderful woman. But with all my good luck along this line I say, 'Catholics marry Catholics.' In the past twenty years I have seen too many cases where good Catholics married good Protestants and now neither has any religion."

In general, the testimony of the alumni who have contracted mixed marriages is that difference in religion makes for unhappiness in marriage. On page 134 of the Alumni Survey, for instance, you will find that only two of the graduates who had married non-Catholic wives were giving full Catholic education to their children (out of 28 cases reported), while 244 (out of 281) of the families with Catholic mothers were enjoying this privilege. Read also, on pages 135 ff., the advice on marriage given by the married alumni: the weight of the testimony of those who have married non-Catholics is against mixed marriage.

Bear in mind also that the majority of failures in mixed marriages may be charged to the laxity of the Catholic party to the marriage. God only knows how many non-Catholic partners to a mixed marriage have been deterred from entering the Church by the laxity, the inconsistency, of a Catholic mate; how many non-Catholics have failed to keep their promise to rear the children as Catholics because they saw no fruits of religion in the Catholic spouse! And the man who rejects the advice of the Church in this matter is usually lax in his religion.