

University of Notre Dame Religious Bulletin

March 10, 1932

"Seek Counsel."



It is far better, especially for a Catholic (for whom marriage is a *life* contract), to seek counsel before marriage than to retain counsel after marriage. And remember that you may have to *seek* it; those best able to give it are so well experienced with the insanity of infatuation that they regard the *volunteering* of advice as the suicide of friendship. Those best able to give it are those who know marriage, those who know you, and those who know the girl. Line them up in this fashion:

1. **Your father.** You may feel that he doesn't know you and that he isn't up with the times. It is well for you to have the counsel of someone who is not up with the times, whose philosophy of life was generated in more God-fearing times. Your father knows a lot about marriage; he knows enough to have made you the success you believe yourself to be. For once in your life take him into your confidence, even if he is self-conscious about it. He knew enough to pick a good mother for you.
2. **Your mother.** After a sermon on marriage an old lady said to the young missionary: "Father, I wish I knew as little about marriage as you do." If your father knows a lot about marriage your mother knows ten times more because while he finds distraction in business she stays at home and makes the home. And it takes a woman to size up a woman. Introduce the girl to your mother, and if she says, "Thumbs down," let it be so. Maybe you will live to learn by what intuition she picked the flaw; but for the time being take it on faith. And go over your expense account with your mother. She knows how much it ought to cost to win a good wife, and how much to make a home. Seventy-five per cent of the students at Notre Dame are here because their mothers knew how to manage the household budget to make it cover the cost of their education.
3. **Your confessor.** All kidding aside, he knows more about marriage than a man who has had five wives. Such a man knows five things that can wreck marriage; and the priest knows a hundred or a thousand. Sooner or later the problems come to the priest; it is wise to make it sooner.
4. **Your pal.** His eyes are your eyes, but when your heart is swayed with emotion his heart remains free. Lots of friendships are broken up when a pal tries to ward off a mistake. Make him give you his judgment, and believe him, even if it costs you the girl. There are many girls, but few pals.
5. **Her kid brother.** Win his confidence; you can learn more about her disposition from five minutes with him than you can in five years of courtship.

Books are companions, the same as people are. Not all the wise men in the world move in your small circle. Much has been written about marriage, some true, some false. There is sound counsel in the *Introduction to a Devout Life*, by St. Francis de Sales, in *You and Yours* and *Marriage*, by Fr. Scott, and in *The Home World*, by Fr. Doyle. *Marriage and Parenthood*, by Fr. Gerard, should also be read by every Catholic approaching matrimony. Tie up to sound principles; they see you through safe to the end.

At twenty, a boy is disinclined to take advice from his father; at thirty, he is willing to listen to it; at forty, he seeks it eagerly, and at fifty he keenly regrets that his father is no longer alive to advise him.—Catholic Citizen, Milwaukee.