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About Getting Married

It's more complicated than you think, even after you've decided on the ring, and the date, and the chapel, and the number of bridesmaids, as well as the color of their dresses. There are other factors not to be overlooked -- especially those clinkers that cause the fire of love to burn low, even go out.

How big and how many are the clinkers is something you will want to know about before you make a decision regarding a way of life from which there is no turning back. The choice of a married partner is about the most important decision you'll ever be called upon to make. An old Irish lady put it very succinctly, one time, when she observed: "Make a mistake in this choice, and you'll be sorry only once -- but that will be the rest of your life!"

The permanency of the bond makes marriage very important in the eyes of every Catholic. Outside the Church a certain latitude may permit it to degenerate into a temporary experiment in compatibility. Divorce is the magic loophole that terminates the experiment. Then the process is repeated. And not infrequently a little of this secular, contemporary attitude rubs off on Catholic neighbors. Quite naturally the Church has become alarmed at the spectacle of the marriage bonds being sundered freely on all sides. She thinks something ought to be done for those who make decisions under such emotional handicaps.

And so, our Marriage Institute here on campus is an attempt to educate our Seniors not only in the Sacrament of marriage, but likewise in the problems that stem from married life -- ethical, physical, emotional, economical, and social.

But aren't all Catholic marriages perfect? Hardly. As a matter of fact none is. There has never been a perfect marriage for the very good reason that we've never had two perfect people to get married. That's why Matrimony is deserving of study -- why we scrutinize the facets that comprise married life: the dreams, ideals and aspirations; the limitations, misunderstandings and sacrifices; the deprivations and petty selfishness, no less than the nobility, generosity and grace that must be blended into a harmonious and patient adjustment that will make for success and sanctity in this way of life.

Sanctity, you say? Yes, that is the intended and ultimate fruit of every marriage. For marriage is a vocation; it's the path you choose to lead you to heaven. That's why we say that marriage is not only holy itself -- it must also make you holy.

Do all priests know everything about marriage? Well, they know more than you would suspect. Still, there is the story of another old Irish lady coming out of church after hearing a very idealistic treatment of the subject by a very idealistic young priest, and sighing: "I wish to the Lord I knew as little about marriage as he does!"

To obviate any such accidents and conclusions at the Marriage Institute, you'll be treated to a select group of experts who will treat of specified phases, thus maintaining clarity and order in all discussions. There's a great temptation for people in love to think with their hearts, rather than their heads. The Marriage Institute can save you from this pitfall.

To implement the material covered by the speakers, we have a well-stocked pamphlet rack in Dillon hall. Drop in, and note the topics that are available, and sourced in competent authors. If you're depending upon Marriage to get you into Heaven -- and that's the terminal -- it's worth a little research on your part during these next six weeks. Sharing the pamphlets with the girl friend is wise, too. You know -- fewer arguments!