

REFLECTIONS ON DIVORCE

The divorce rate in this century has been a painful sign to all mankind of the struggle to find meaning in a time when all meaning givers from the past are collapsing about us. In seriously considering this issue, we have discovered that much emphasis seems to be placed on the significance of the covenant of marriage itself without looking at the deeper issues that actually lay the foundation for the marriage covenant. In the marriage covenant, before God and the established Church as community, a couple takes vows of faithfulness to one another and to their common task of caring for one another physically and spiritually. The marriage covenant assumes that deep lasting decisions have already been made by the couple relative to their common vocational task. Yet this assumption does not appear to be true as a general rule. It is crucial to look further at the issue of common vocation as it relates to preparation for marriage, or the culmination of marriage in divorce. Our intent in this rumination is to look at the relationship of vocational decision to the culmination of marriage in divorce.

Vocation is not, in this instance, a job or series of meaningful activities in which an individual engages. It is rather what one has decided, self-consciously or not, to make his whole life thrust. It is first, his relationship to the trinitarian God. Vocation is one's understanding of life, the whole relationship out of which he decides to encounter the world, and the thrust which his life becomes out of this understanding and relationship. In the case of families in the Order, vocation is symbolized by the covenant to the Order: Ecumenica, a covenant to be the people of God serving the globe as mission.

Vocation is always individual or personal, as each man stands before the final reality of his death and decides to live before that reality. It is this individual vocation that each partner brings

neither is wrong. The issue is not one of right and wrong, but of the very thrust of the lives of two human beings. If the decision is made out of any other context, it is reduced to the point of being open to very serious question. The context for viable divorce is never the marriage itself, but the common vocational thrust. Thus, when one party decides that he can better act out his vocational thrust as the P.O.G. with another partner, the Church is in a position, and indeed has the ultimate responsibility of seriously questioning the actual dissolution of the marriage. Where the Church must stand is in the vocational thrust of the Church, not in the personal gratification, pain, anxiety, or aridity of the human relationship.

Divorce on the basis of vocational incompatibility is perhaps a more deeply troubling decision than any other decision for divorcement. If a couple has taken their covenant seriously, an initial break will be a deeply wrenching event usually symbolized by one party moving away from the other. This will be followed by a period of deep self-examination and intensive struggle together to discover a viable compromise, out of which the family may continue to exist as a common thrust. There comes, however, a point at which it is clear to both parties that no viable marriage can continue between them that would allow the realization of the vocational thrusts of each individual. This is again, not choosing to be the Order, or a teacher, but finally a life/death decision about the total thrust of each life.

There are, perhaps, at least two signs that a state of vocational incompatibility actually exists. To check the depth of the vocational crisis faced, one might ask if one party will be required to become a "zombie", to deny his understanding of life and the call upon him, in order to continue the marriage covenant. The sociological sign of this is that one party or both

THOUGHTS

once again... devotion
to what you've devoted
to.

we're creating new morality
you don't or don't do it
God's voice... structure... substance

In shifting integrity... anachronistic content & style
to take the chance... to participate in that

Camera: The Rebel... M.F. is conservative + rebel
the one at one time +

In flash of second
marriage & divorce forms are anachronistic

Shape of hell... do us part - diff in diff societies: best
London really participate in best

Agony & pain of living... fortune of living w/ uniquely
or perpet broadcast

without broad & deep content you can't deal w/ a particular
under no circumstances would I ever see for divorce

It's gratifying it in many
The principle is one to be broken, not the other
way around

It's just diff. The other party would have to include it
It has to do w/ integrity

to be open used have to be open to seek our deepest pain

under I'm not going to include divorce

under these circumstances if you include it I'll not protect

see how... include... into...
to break our neck

It's my... Tears in my eyes. I know Henry has betrayed
himself