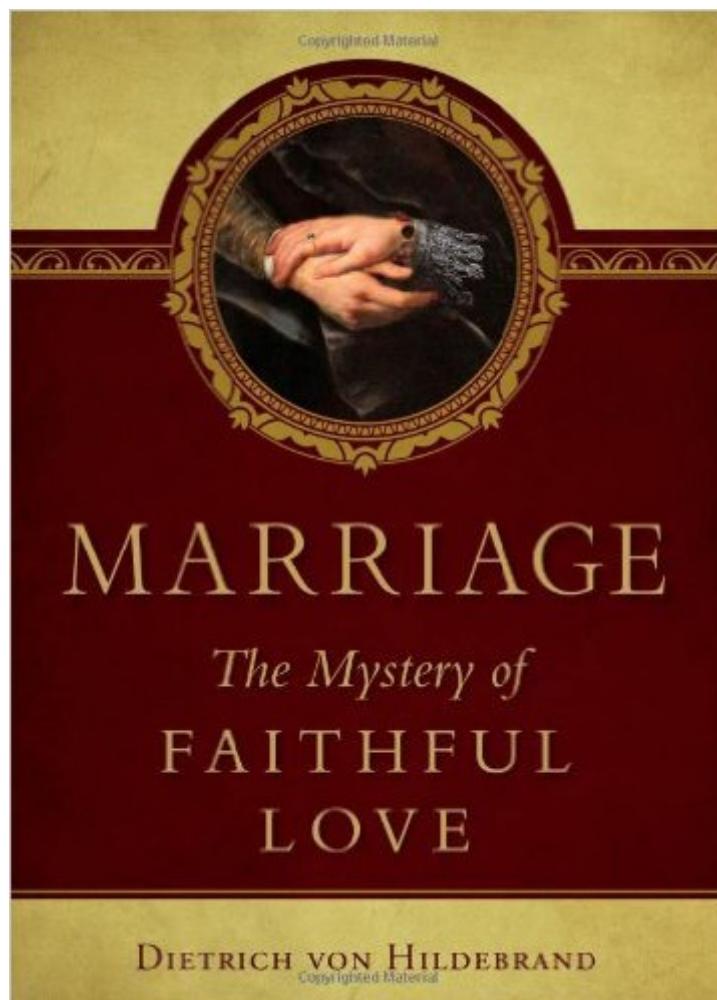


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Marriage: The Mystery Of Faithful Love



Synopsis

These pages will give you what you need to make your marriage a source of profound happiness and lasting peace: Knowledge: You'll come to understand the nature of marriage and its superiority to living together and other temporary unions. Love: You'll learn to distinguish love from lust, infatuation, and other common counterfeits; and you'll discover the healing role it can play in the best and bleakest of marriages. Faith: You'll come to see how the sacramental marriage of Christians is the fulfillment and perfection of marriage, giving husband and wife what every spouse secretly longs for. Especially today, this beautiful book which reveals the sublime vocation of Christian marriage is a must for anyone who is eager to live worthily this great mystery of love. Marriage will show you: The one right motive for marrying and the many wrong ones (some often accepted by Christians) The difference between the meaning of marriage and its purpose (and the dangers of confusing the two) The five ways in which married love differs from other loves Six counterfeit loves: what sometimes passes for love isn't The key role of will in sustaining love Your unhappy marriage: it may be a clear call from God How difficulties and suffering can deepen your marriage and make you and your spouse better persons How marriage reveals God's love and presence How Christianity intensifies married love The meaning of marriage as a sacrament: its promises, its demands, and how it is a source of strength and grace.

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Customer Reviews

One hundred and twenty-nine of Pope John Paul II's general audiences (9/5/79 to 11/28/84) have become known to us as his Theology of the Body. In spreading the good news about the late Holy

Father's teachings, Christopher West explains: "The Holy Father presents a vision of Marriage and sexuality never before articulated." Clarification may be in order. It takes nothing away from the Theology of the Body to look at some of its influences. In 1929, German philosopher Dietrich Von Hildebrand published "Marriage," which was excitedly received by his country's papal nuncio (who later became Pope Pius XII). On its web site, EWTN explains that Marriage constituted the "earliest orthodox presentation of the personalistic approach to matrimony which would find its way into Vatican II's *Guaduum et Spes*, Pope Paul VI's encyclical *Humanae Vitae* and...the writings of Pope John Paul II....Pope Pius XII called von Hildebrand 'the 20th century Doctor of the Church.'"

Published just one year before Pope Pius XI's *Casti Connubii*, "Marriage" is a wonderful little book, which reads as fluidly and beautifully as a Christopher West presentation of the Theology of the Body (My quotes are from Sophia Institute's 1997 paperback edition.):"there is no greater mystery in the natural order of things than the fact that this closest of all unions procreates a human being with an immortal soul (although the soul, in each case, is a direct creation of God), and that this act brings a new being into existence destined to love God and to adore Him, a new being made after His image" (p. 26). "How terrible to think of man wanting to destroy this unity which God has established so mysteriously, deeming those united in the highest earthly union of love worthy to take part in His creative power" (p. 28).

This book, along with JPII's Theology of the Body, really opened my eyes to the intrinsic meaning of marriage. Here von Hildebrand illuminates the reality of marriage as an objective bond resulting from the spouses' solemn decision to bind themselves to each other in Christ. Because of the objectivity of this bond, von Hildebrand clearly shows that once the solemn vows have been made marriage is outside of a person's arbitrary inclinations, and thus is irrevocable. Furthermore, he points to marriage as a fulfillment of the loving "I-Thou" communion of the spouses, the sacramental vessel through which they raise each other towards God in their love and create, in cooperation with Him, new human beings intended for heaven. In this way von Hildebrand particularly expresses the unique mystery of marriage as a natural good elevated and sanctified by Christ to even such an extent as to symbolize the union between Christ and His Church. In addition to making the important distinction between the meaning of marriage as conjugal love and the end as procreation, von Hildebrand also serves as a beacon of light on the true nature of love and freedom in a secular world which horribly twists both of these concepts. He quickly points out the absurdity of thinking that love is merely infatuation or attraction and argues forcefully that true love must have an intention of permanent, exclusive self-giving to the beloved, a self-giving which can only become

entirely actualized in marriage. Von Hildebrand distinguishes between love of neighbor and conjugal love to show that conjugal love is not simply love of neighbor with superadded sensuality, but rather an entirely unique love oriented towards the beloved in a special way.

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