

FATHER CAFFAREL, A COMPANION ON OUR PATH TOWARDS GOD “BUT LOVE IS MY ESSENCE !”

DAY 5

When Death comes and tests Couples “Love is stronger than Death”

Companions for Eternity

[Pius XII's] teaching is clear: after the death of one of the spouses, the carnal bond no longer exists, nor does the legal bond, nor does the sacrament of marriage - which, like all sacraments, belongs to the Church on earth. These realities disappear, just as scaffolding falls away when a building is completed. But the couple itself remains. Yes, nonetheless, conjugal love remains, the soul of the couple, which between "two spiritual and free beings" transcends the momentum and the union of bodies; and, on the condition of course that this love is indeed a reciprocal gift, forever current and actual, because there isn't a more frozen gift than a frozen flame. The spouses may even experience a mutual "presence," "more intimate, deeper and stronger" already in the state of widowhood.

On the day of their eternal reunion, they will love each other with a perfection of love unsuspected on earth, because they will know each other, completely transparent before this God whom they each see face to face. Then, the couple, having reached their perfect fulfilment, will fully realise their vocation: they will finally be the perfect praise to the Creator God who made the union of man and woman in his image, and to Christ the Saviour who not only restored it after original sin, but made it still more admirable, the image and sacrament of its union with the Church.

Vatican II did not explicitly address the question at hand; however, it provided an indirect response by deciding that henceforth the Church would celebrate in a single solemnity, on July 26, Saint Anne and Saint Joachim, "the parents of the Mother of God," who up until then had been celebrated on two separate dates. This initiative has delighted Christian couples. This is indeed the model of the "companions of eternity."

Contemplating the eternal destiny of conjugal love cannot fail to foster an invincible hope between the spouses. It supports them day after day in the midst of the joys and sorrows of their earthly existence.

Believing in the permanence of the couple, made up of two spouses irrevocably faithful to each other is therefore not a sentimental reverie, but a conviction of faith solidly founded on divine revelation and the traditional teaching of the Church.

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