



# Christ & the Church: A School of Love for Marriage

Fr. Joseph Kentenich, OME #3, 214-15, October 1<sup>st</sup>, 1956.

What does the Savior's love for the Church look like? Now... we will climb really high. First, I'll offer you two very simple answers. First, I say that the Savior's love for the Church is a lasting, faithful love. Yes, he loved his Church, not only when he lived here (on earth) but also to the end of time. He, himself, said that not even the gates of hell would be able to overcome the Church.<sup>1</sup> And, I am with you to the end of the world.<sup>2</sup>

Do you know what that means for me as husband? You see, how am I to love my wife? Not only when she is young and beautiful, but also when she begins to have wrinkles, when she begins to have her moods, when she is undisciplined, or, later, when she goes into her menopause. That means, *I always* have to love her even if her weaknesses get on my nerves. So, first of all, it has to be a permanent love. I may not expect this of my wife. No, I have to give it to my wife as well.

Then second, a constantly caring love. You need to think about how the Savior cared for his Church. He gathered so many graces for his Church that, until the end of time, the Church has enough of these graces. You see, that's how I have to care for my wife and my family. *I* have to take

care, not just demand that others care for *me*. There's a beautiful Latin proverb: *Praeesse est prodesse!* It's difficult to translate. It means: Being first, being a leader, also means to want to serve the most.

If you dig a little deeper now, ask again: What does the Savior's love for his Church look like?

It is best to ask the Savior, himself. Then he gives us answers partly with words, partly through images. For example, he says, "No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends."<sup>3</sup> And he gave his life for the Church; he gave the last drop of his blood. You see, if Paul now says that the husband should love his wife like Christ loves his Church, what does he then demand of me? Always the same, isn't it? Paul said, *Dilexit me et tradidit semet ipsum pro me.*<sup>4</sup> The husband must be able to say the same. He loves his wife and gives all for his wife and children.

Question for discussion:

- ❖ Find the Scriptural passages on the footnotes and discuss our Lord's words in view of Father Kentenich's comments about love between husband and wife.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Mt 16:18.

<sup>2</sup> Mt 28:20.

<sup>3</sup> Jn 15:13.

<sup>4</sup> (I live in the faith in the Son of God) who has loved me and surrendered himself for me. (Gal 2:20)