



Please, Thank you, and I'm Sorry – Three Keywords for Married Couples

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“Please,” “Thank you,” “I’m sorry.” [Pope Francis](#) teaches that although these words are easier to say than to mean, they are absolutely necessary. They are part of good manners, meaning respect and the desire for the good of the other, not hypocrisy or pretence.

“If a [marriage](#) is to preserve its initial charm and beauty, both husband and wife should try to renew their love day after day, and that is done through sacrifice, with smiles and also with ingenuity,” said St Josemaria, and he recommended spouses to try and overcome themselves a little every day to ensure that their marriage always stays as young and joyful as it was on the first day.

Please

The word “please” reminds us that we should be polite, respectful and patient towards everyone, including those closest to us. Like Jesus, our attitude should be one of standing at the door and knocking, as [Pope Francis](#) recalled in his general audience of May 13, 2015.

Engagement should be time for growing in affection and for getting to know each other better. As in every school of love, it should be inspired, not by a desire to receive, but by a spirit of giving, of understanding, of respect and gentle consideration. *Conversations*, no. 105

With regard to chastity in married life, I can assure all married couples that they need not be afraid of showing affection for each other. On the contrary, this inclination is at the root of their family life. What our Lord expects from them is that they should respect each other and that they should be loyal to each other; that they should act with refinement, naturalness and modesty. *Christ is Passing By*, no. 25

Couples have the grace of the married state – the grace they receive in the

Sacrament of Marriage – which enables them to live all the human and Christian virtues in their married life: understanding, good humour, patience, forgiveness, refinement and consideration in their mutual relations. The important thing is not to give up the effort, not to give in to nerves, pride or personal fads or obsessions. In order to achieve this, husbands and wives must grow in interior life and learn from the Holy Family to live with refinement, for supernatural and at the same time – human reasons, the virtues of a Christian home. I repeat again that the grace of God will not be lacking. *Conversations*, no. 108

Every Christian home should be a place of peace and serenity. In spite of the small frustrations of daily life, an atmosphere of profound and sincere affection should reign there together with a deep-rooted calm, which is the result of authentic faith that is put into practice. *Christ is Passing By*, no. 22

They will achieve this aim by exercising the virtues of faith and hope, facing serenely all the great and small problems which confront any family, and persevering in the love and enthusiasm with which they fulfil their duties. In this way they practice the virtue of charity in all things. They learn to smile and forget about themselves in order to pay attention to others. Husband and wife will listen to each other and to their children, showing them that they are really loved and understood. They will forget about the unimportant little frictions that selfishness could magnify out of proportion. They will do lovingly all the small acts of service that make up their daily life together. *Christ is Passing By*, no. 23

To love is... to cherish but one thought, to live for the person loved, not to belong to oneself, to be happily and freely, with one's heart and soul, subjected to another's will... and at the same time to one's own. *Furrow*, no. 797

The secret of married happiness lies in everyday things, not in daydreams. It lies in finding the hidden joy of coming home in the evening, in affectionate relations with their children, in the everyday work in which the whole family cooperates; in good humour in the face of difficulties that should be met with a sporting spirit; in making the best use of all the advantages that civilisation offers to help us rear children, to make the house pleasant and life more simple. *Conversations*, no. 91

Care for your children affectionately, helping them with the good example of your unity, love, and understanding, so that they never remember seeing or hearing their parents quarrelling. And they will always sing your praises. You'll be blessed a thousand times. That is the best way to raise children: when husband and wife love one another truly, in everything: in good times and in bad. (St Josemaria, notes from a family gathering, Peru, July 25, 1974)

Thank you!

Secondly, “thank you!” The dignity of the human person, and social justice, mean that we need to be educated in gratitude. For Christians, gratitude is a virtue that grows up from the very heart of the faith, Pope Francis reminded us in the same general audience.

Human love is a gift that God gives you. Aren't you grateful for that love? Thank him for it! Wives, thank him for your husbands' love. And they give thanks for your sensitivity and your responsiveness. (St Josemaria, notes from a family gathering, Argentina, June 21, 1974)

If a marriage is to preserve its initial charm and beauty, both husband and wife should try to renew their love day after day, and that is done through sacrifice, with smiles and also with ingenuity. *Conversations*, no. 107

Love your wife very much. She is the most beautiful woman in the world. God chose her for you from all eternity. (St Josemaria, notes from a family gathering, Argentina, June 21, 1974)

Be grateful to your parents for bringing you into this world, thus enabling you to become a child of God. And be all the more grateful if it was they who placed in your soul the first seeds of faith and piety, of your Christian way, or of your vocation. *The Forge*, no. 19

I'm sorry

The third keyword is “I'm sorry”. It's the best way to prevent our shared life from disintegrating. Husband and wife, if ever you quarrel, don't let the day end without saying sorry and making your peace with each other, recommended Pope Francis in the same general audience.

At times we take ourselves too seriously. Each of us gets angry now and again. Sometimes because it is necessary; at other times because we lack a spirit of mortification. The important thing is to show, with a smile that restores family warmth, that these outbursts of anger do not destroy affection. In a word, the life of husband and wife should consist of loving one another and loving their children, because by doing this they are loving God. *Conversations*, no. 108

Anyone who says he cannot put up with this or that, or finds it impossible to hold his peace, is exaggerating in order to justify himself. We should ask God for the strength to overcome our whims and to practise self-control. When we lose our

temper we lose control of the situation. Words can become harsh and bitter and we end up by offending, wounding and hurting, even though we didn't mean to. *Conversations*, no. 108

We should all learn to keep quiet, to wait and say things in a positive, optimistic way. When her husband loses his temper, the moment has arrived for the wife to be especially patient until he calms down, and vice versa. If there is true love and a real desire to deepen it, it will very rarely happen that the two give in to bad temper at the same time. *Conversations*, no. 108

Avoid pride. It is the greatest enemy of your married life. In your little quarrels, neither of you is right. Whoever is the calmer should say a word or two to ward off bad temper for a while. Then, later on, when you are alone with each other, go ahead and argue it out – soon afterwards you will make peace anyway. *Christ is Passing By*, no. 86

Forgiveness. To forgive with one's whole heart and with no trace of a grudge will always be a wonderfully fruitful disposition to have! That was Christ's attitude on being nailed to the Cross: "Father, forgive them, they know not what they are doing." From this came your salvation and mine. *Furrow*, no. 805

Let's be frank – the normal thing is for the family to be united. There may be friction and differences, but that's quite normal. In a certain sense it even adds flavour to our daily life. These problems are insignificant, time always takes care of them. What remains firm is love, a true and sincere love which comes from being generous and which brings with it a concern for one another, and which enables the members of the family to sense each other's difficulties and offer tactful solutions. *Conversations*, no. 101

You complain that he shows you no understanding. I am certain he does as much as he can to try to understand you. But what about you? When will you make a bit of an effort to understand *him*? *Furrow*, no. 759

Tongues have been wagging and you have suffered rebuffs that hurt you all the more because you were not expecting them. Your supernatural reaction should be to pardon, – and even to ask pardon. *The Way*, no. 689

That friend of ours, with no false humility, used to say: "I haven't needed to learn how to forgive, because the Lord has taught me how to love." *Furrow*, no. 804

Not to return evil for evil, to refrain from vengeance and to forgive ungrudgingly

(...). Christ (...) wanted to teach his disciples – you and me – to have a great and sincere charity, one which is more noble and more precious: that of loving one another in the same way as Christ loves each one of us. *Friends of God*, no. 225

At certain times it seems as though everything goes as we had planned. But this generally lasts for only a short time. Life is a matter of facing up to difficulties and of experiencing in our hearts both joy and sorrow. It is in this forge that man can acquire fortitude, patience, magnanimity and composure. *Friends of God*, no. 77

We can keep calm because there is always forgiveness and because there is a solution for everything, except death; and for the children of God, death is life. We must try to keep our peace, even if only so as to act intelligently, since the man who remains calm is able to think, to study the pros and cons, to examine judiciously the outcome of the actions he is about to undertake. He then plays his part calmly and decisively. *Friends of God*, no. 79