

Questions to Discuss Before Betrothal

Faith

1. Are you both Catholic – i.e., can you both affirm agreement with the Tridentine Creed:

I, N, with a firm faith believe and profess each and everything which is contained in the Creed which the Holy Roman Church maketh use of. To wit:

I believe in one God, The Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the Only-begotten Son of God. Born of the Father before all ages. God of God, Light of Light, true God of true God. Begotten, not made, of one substance with the Father. By whom all things were made. Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven. And became incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary: and was made man. He was also crucified for us, suffered under Pontius Pilate, and was buried. And on the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and His kingdom will have no end. And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of life, Who proceeds from the Father and the Son. Who together with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, and who spoke through the prophets. And one holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. I confess one baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I await the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

The Apostolic and Ecclesiastical traditions and all other observances and constitutions of that same Church I firmly admit to and embrace.

I also accept the Holy Scripture according to that sense which holy mother the Church hath held, and doth hold, and to whom it belongeth to judge the true sense and interpretations of the Scriptures. Neither will I ever take and interpret them otherwise than according to the unanimous consent of the Fathers.

I also profess that there are truly and properly Seven Sacraments of the New Law, instituted by Jesus Christ our Lord, and necessary for the salvation of mankind, though not all are necessary for everyone; to wit, Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Penance, Extreme Unction, Holy Orders, and Matrimony; and that they confer grace; and that of these, Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Orders cannot be repeated without sacrilege. I also receive and admit the accepted and approved ceremonies of the Catholic Church in the solemn administration of the aforesaid sacraments.

I embrace and accept each and everything which has been defined and declared in the holy Council of Trent concerning original sin and justification.

I profess, likewise, that in the Mass there is offered to God a true, proper, and propitiatory sacrifice for the living and the dead; and that in the most holy sacrament of the Eucharist there is truly, really, and substantially, the Body and Blood, together with the soul and divinity, of our Lord Jesus Christ; and that a conversion takes place of the whole substance of the bread into the Body, and of the whole substance of the wine into the Blood, which conversion the Catholic Church calls Transubstantiation. I also confess that under either species alone Christ is received whole and entire, and a true sacrament.

I steadfastly hold that there is a Purgatory, and that the souls therein detained are helped by the suffrages of the faithful. Likewise, that the saints, reigning together with Christ, are to be honored and invoked, and that they offer prayers to God for us, and that their relics are to be venerated. I most firmly assert that the images of Christ, of the Mother of God, ever virgin, and also of other Saints, ought to be kept and retained, and that due honor and veneration is to be given them.

I also affirm that the power of indulgences was left by Christ in the Church, and that the use of them is most wholesome to Christian people.

I acknowledge the Holy Catholic Apostolic Roman Church as the mother and teacher of all churches; and I promise true obedience to the Bishop of Rome, successor to St. Peter, Prince of the Apostles, and Vicar of Jesus Christ.

I likewise undoubtedly receive and profess all other things delivered, defined, and declared by the sacred Canons, and general Councils, and particularly by the holy Council of Trent, and by the ecumenical Council of the Vatican, particularly concerning the primacy of the Roman Pontiff and his infallible teaching. I condemn, reject, and anathematize all things contrary thereto, and all heresies which the Church hath condemned, rejected, and anathematized.

This true Catholic faith, outside of which no one can be saved, which I now freely profess and to which I truly adhere, I do so profess and swear to maintain inviolate and with firm constancy with the help of God until the last breath of life. And I shall strive, as far as possible, that this same faith shall be held, taught, and professed by all those over whom I have charge. I N. do so pledge, promise, and swear, so help me God and these Holy Gospels of God.

2. Do you affirm you will raise your children in the Catholic Faith?
3. In what ways do you want the Catholic Faith to shape your family life?

4. Where and when will you attend Mass?
5. What devotions and practices would you like to adopt as a family (e.g., daily or weekly Rosaries, choosing a new patron Saint each year on the Epiphany, lectio divina, etc.)?
6. How will you help each other get to Heaven?

Marriage Itself

1. Do you affirm that a sacramental marriage is an unbreakable covenant that has, as its primary purpose, the bearing and raising of children?
2. Do you affirm that you won't use the threat of divorce as a weapon in disagreements?
3. What will the headship of the husband look like in your home? What does the husband's headship mean to you? How do you see it playing out? What does the husband's headship *not* mean to you? What sorts of behaviors and signs point to a wrong understanding of headship – a view that could possibly lead to abuse?
4. How do you envision wifely submission in your home? How do you not envision it? What sorts of behaviors and signs point to a wrong understanding of submission – a view possibly born of emotional masochism, lack of self-respect, etc.?
5. What, if anything, frightens you about marriage?
6. You have a disagreement or some other conflict: how will you resolve it?
7. Are there any addictions or struggles your potential spouse should know about (porn, alcohol, drugs, gambling, shopping, video games, etc.)?
8. If it's available in your state, have you considered covenant marriage?
9. What do you think of prenuptial agreements?
10. What does the phrase "in love" mean to you both? How is it different from love? Do feelings of being "in love" wane and wax over time? If so, how important is that and how should marriages survive such changing feelings?
11. What have you learned about marriage from your parents, grandparents, and other couples you know? What mistakes have others made that you do not want to make?

12. If you come from a broken home, have you totally dealt with its effects on you? Have you forgiven and intellectually and emotionally dealt with any mistakes your parents, grandparents, guardians, etc. may have made?

Children

1. How many children do you hope God blesses you with?
2. How do you plan on educating your children?
3. How do you plan on disciplining your children? What are your thoughts on corporal punishment? How will you maintain unity with regard to discipline and avoid making one parent the “fun parent” and the other the “mean disciplinarian”?
4. How do you plan on handling disagreements on matters pertaining to your children?
5. How will you name your children?
6. What are your thoughts on adoption?
7. What circumstances, if any, do you imagine that would make the use of Natural Family Planning or sexual continence prudent? (talk to your priest about this if it ever comes up)
8. What sorts of rules do you envision having for your children? How do you plan on enforcing those rules?
9. How will your children use and not use technology?
10. What chores do you plan on giving to your children? Would pay for chores, or an allowance, be something you’d consider good?
11. Is there any history of genetic or congenital disorders in your family that your potential spouse should know about?
12. How do you envision yourselves as grandparents?
13. If something were to happen to both of you, how will your children be provided for, raised, educated, and loved?

14. If you're unable to have children naturally, are you open to adoption? If so, at what point would you want to adopt?
15. If either of you already has children going into this marriage, how do you plan on shaping a new family? What role, if any, does any ex-spouse play in your children's lives? How do you plan on preserving the relationships your children have with their grandparents? If either of you has lost a spouse to death, and have children by that spouse, how do you and your new spouse plan on keeping alive for your children the memory of their dead parent?
16. A child has very seriously disappointed you (e.g., has left the Church, is abusing drugs, etc.). How would you and your spouse cope with such a thing?
17. You two, as a couple, come first – even before your children. You and your spouse are of one flesh; your children are not, and a wife should put her husband first just as a husband should put his wife first. After eighteen years or so, your kids will likely be gone from your house, but you two will be together until death. How will you ensure that the needs of your children, and the stresses of raising them, never come between you as a married couple?

Sex

1. As far as you know, are you both sexually functional? Is there or has there ever been any sort of paraphilia, sexual fetish, sexual identity pathology (e.g., gender dysphoria, transvestism, autogynephilia, erotic target location error, etc.), or other sexual pathology or abnormality – physical or mental – that should be made known to your potential spouse before betrothal? What about any sexually transmissible diseases or conditions?
2. Is there any addiction to pornography that needs to be completely broken before betrothal?
3. How do you understand the “marital debt” and how do you see negotiating it?
4. What circumstances, if any, make the use of sexual abstinence prudent?
5. How will you “porn-proof” your home?
6. What do you both think about dealing with any sexual pasts the other might have? Do you have a “the past is the past; I don't want to know as long as it's over” approach, an “I want to know everything” approach, or --?

Money and Work

1. How do you plan on negotiating how money is made and spent in your home?
2. If one of you takes on homemaking full time, how will that person be financially cared for? (e.g., will the money-earner's income be halved so that half is under the homemaker's control? Will monthly bills also be halved in that case? Or will everything be handled jointly?) How would the homemaker be cared for if the money-earner were to lose work or die?
3. Will you have a joint bank account, two separate accounts, or both a joint account and two separate accounts, or some other arrangement?
4. Who will do the actual paying of the bills (e.g., the writing of the checks, the managing of online accounts, etc.)?
5. Does any of the above change if/when children enter the picture?
6. Do you have any debt that your potential betrothed should know about?
7. How will you work out a household budget? What items would be included? What about savings? Would any savings be put into a joint account or into separate accounts or both? How willing and able are both of you to stick to a budget?
8. What will you do about medical insurance? Health insurance? Life insurance? Other forms of insurance (homeowners, car, etc.)?
9. If both of you work outside of the home, will either of your jobs take precedence over the other – for ex., in case one person's job requires a move?
10. When will you write your wills and how will they read?
11. Do you have similar attitudes about money, savings, and spending? Similar spending habits? Similar or compatible financial goals?

Extended Family, and Friends

1. Do you like and fit into each other's families? Do your parents approve of your marriage?
2. How does your potential spouse treat his or her parents? How does s/he treat people in service positions (waiters, clerks, etc.)? How does s/he treat people in subordinate positions

(employees, etc.)? How does s/he treat the weak, ill, young, pregnant, animals, etc.?

3. How and where do you want to spend birthdays, Christmas, Easter, Thanksgiving, and other holidays? How will you negotiate spending time over the holidays with the families you grew up in?
4. What holiday family traditions do you have that you want to make part of your own family's way of doing things?
5. What other, non-holiday family traditions do you want to make part of your own family's way of doing things?
6. How do each of you feel about visits from your potential spouse's family – both at your place and his/her family's places? How do you feel about your own family visiting you or your going to their home for visits? What sort of boundaries do you want there to be between your newly formed family and the families you grew up in?
7. How will you deal with the needs of your aging parents? Would you allow them to live with you if necessary?
8. What do you feel and think about your potential spouse's friends? What do you think and feel about his or her spending time with those friends both with and without you?
9. How do each of you feel about your potential spouse having friends over? Is there a level of visitation that is too much for your comfort? Would you feel differently if you weren't also expected to socialize with them but could be off by yourself?
10. How do you feel and what do you think about your spouse having friends of the opposite sex? What is off-limits in that regard? What sort of rules, if any, would you two have in place for such friendships?

Daily Life

1. Is your potential spouse a person of virtue? Does s/he demonstrate prudence, fortitude (patience, munificence, magnanimity, perseverance), temperance (abstinence, chastity, modesty, humility, meekness, clemency), and justice (religion, piety, gratitude, liberality, affability)? What about you? How will you help your spouse strengthen his/her moral virtues? How will you strengthen your own?

2. Are you and your potential spouse conscientious about the things you set out to accomplish? Do you finish what you start and do your work well?
3. Generally speaking, are you and your potential spouse in control of your emotions?
4. Do either of you tend to engage in scapegoating, displacement, or projection?
5. How would you and your potential spouse each answer these questions: Generally speaking, where is your “locus of control” – i.e., how much power or control do you exert over your life? Is it you or others who have more control over the conditions in which you find yourself?
6. Do either of you suffer from a personality disorder, especially any of the “Cluster B” personality disorders (borderline personality disorder, narcissistic personality disorder, histrionic personality disorder, or antisocial personality disorder)? If so, should you enter into marriage before you’ve contended with this problem? How does your potential spouse understand (or misunderstand) your problem?
7. Are you able to relax and be yourself around your potential spouse? Is he or she able to do these things around you?
8. Does your potential spouse have a good sense of humor and an ability to have fun? What about you?
9. Where in the world do you want to live? How adamant are you in wanting to live in a given place?
10. Would you negotiate moving in response to economic needs? If so, how?
11. Are you two politically compatible?
12. Do you have differing levels of a need for excitement, novelty, new experiences, meeting new people, going out, or socializing? If so, how will you negotiate that?
13. Do either of you have any food allergies or food regimen you follow (vegetarianism, gluten-free, no carbohydrates, etc.)? How would that impact your potential spouse? Are you able to be around someone daily who doesn’t follow your diet? At what times of the day do you like to eat?
14. If one of you will be a full time homemaker, how do you both see that role? What are a homemaker’s duties? What things *aren’t* a homemaker’s duties? How does the personal responsibility of each family member dovetail with the homemaker’s duties (e.g., cleaning up after themselves, not making unnecessary work for the homemaker, doing their own laundry,

making their own breakfasts, etc.)? How will the family avoid treating the homemaker like a maid?

15. Which chores are hers and which are his? Which will be the children's when they're of age? Consider: grass mowing; taking out the trash; cooking breakfast; cooking lunch; cooking dinner; cleaning up after breakfast; cleaning up after lunch; cleaning up after dinner; dusting; sweeping; mopping; laundry; window washing; wall washing; cleaning the bathroom; cleaning the refrigerator; cleaning the oven; raking leaves; clearing sidewalks and cars of snow; dealing with spiders and vermin; diaper changing; bathing children; cooking for parties; cleaning up after parties; buying Christmas, wedding, birthday, and other presents; sending Christmas, birthday, and other cards; planting and maintaining a garden; feeding any pets; taking any pets to the vet; taking children to where they need to be, etc.)
16. What do you want your home to look and "feel" like? Who would have primary control over the look, feel, and décor of your home?
17. What are your thoughts on pets? Are there any that are off-limits to you? How do you feel about their being inside the house? On furniture? In your bed, specifically?
18. Are you, as individuals, messy or tidy? If there's a mismatch, how will you negotiate that?
19. How would each of you answer this: are you a lark or owl with regard to when you're most awake and energetic? If there's a mismatch between the two of you, how will you negotiate that? Are different bedtimes and rising times a problem?
20. How much time alone do each of you need? If there's a mismatch between introversion and extroversion, how will you negotiate your varying needs for solitude and a social life? How much can the extraverted spouse do on his or her own to fulfill his or her social needs? How much alone time can the introverted person have without leading to his or her spouse feeling neglected?
21. Have you seen your potential spouse in times of stress? Fear? Loss? Embarrassment? Anger? Does s/he respond in a virtuous, healthy way to these emotional situations?
22. When feeling angry at or betrayed by someone, how does your potential spouse react? Is s/he inordinately vengeful? Does s/he hold or nurse grudges? Is s/he able to forgive when the wrongdoer is sorry and repents?
23. What are your rules for your spouse dealing with the opposite sex in general (e.g., former Vice-President Pence and his wife have a rule that neither dines alone with a member of the opposite sex)? How will you cheat-proof your marriage? What is going too far in trying to "cheat-proof" marriage so that it lapses into abusive, controlling behavior? Is there such a thing as innocent

flirting, in your opinion?

24. How jealous is each of you? What are your thoughts about jealousy?
25. Trust is breached. How do you re-build it? (it comes with consistently trustworthy behavior in the future, over a period of time, and with the offending spouse being very transparent and patient)
26. What are your thoughts and feelings about “romance” and romantic gestures? If this sort of thing is important to you, what sorts of gestures and ways of spending time please you the most?
27. What sorts of behaviors do you deeply dislike and would not like to see in a spouse (include here not just obvious things, like infidelity, but pet peeves – e.g., talking through a movie, making smacking sounds while eating, etc.)?
28. How do each of you envision a typical day of married life? A typical weekend?
29. How will you spend time together for fun? Do you have or will you take up mutual hobbies and interests? How tolerant are you of your spouse doing things alone or with friends?
30. How important is travel to either of you? If there’s a mismatch in your desires to travel, how will you negotiate that?
31. How will you remain communicative with each other about the state of your marriage and your needs and desires? (e.g., date nights, weekly chats, a monthly meeting just to talk about your marriage are all possibilities)
32. What are your thoughts about your privacy as a couple with regard to what you share with the world? How will you use or not use social media to talk about your marriage and private lives? What do you think about publishing stories about/pictures of your children on social media? What do you think of a spouse talking to family or friends about his or her marriage? Where are the lines between a person’s need or desire to seek help and advice, on the one hand, and betraying his or her spouses’s privacy, on the other?
33. What are your thoughts about privacy with regard to each other? Is there anything that you think should remain private in marriage? How open should spouses be with each other in terms of bathroom stuff, passwords, mail, email, access to each others smartphones, others’ secrets, etc.?
34. How would each of you complete the following: “The best ways to make me feel appreciated and loved are _____.” (Some people

speak of “the five love languages”: affirmation, quality time, receiving gifts, acts of service, and physical touch. Which is most important for you? Which comes second? How would your first and second most important “love languages” “look” in a marriage – i.e., if you choose physical touch and affirmation, what sort of physical touch? And when? In what ways would you want your spouse to affirm you?)

35. How have you two handled disagreements in the past? Did things go well? If not, why not? What needs to change? If not, are you ready to marry?
36. Some people get angry and need some time to simmer down before talking; others like to hash things out in the moment. If you have disparate styles in this regard, how will you negotiate that?
37. How much of a say-so does one spouse have over the other in terms of the other’s appearance (hair style, clothing choices, etc.)? What do you think of tattoos?
38. People age. They get older, often heavier, gray, and wrinkled. Men lose muscle mass and strength; women’s bodies can change a lot after childbirth and after menopause (men should read about the experiences and effects of menstruation, pregnancy, and menopause; these can be powerful, challenging experiences). Can you envision yourselves as old people, together and happy in spite of the physical changes that come with growing old, having children, etc.? What sort of old person do you think your spouse will be? What sort of old person does s/he think s/he’ll be? What sort of old person do you each *want* to be?
39. In what ways would each of you complete this sentence: “As for us and our family, we _____.”
40. How materialistic are you? Is one of you a “collector” type, a “hoarder” who likes to accumulate things? Is one of you sentimental about objects while the other isn’t? How will you negotiate the world of things?
41. Is there anything about your past that your potential spouse should know about (e.g., past relationships, arrests, abuse, etc.)?
42. What do you think about your spouse keeping mementos of past relationships (e.g., pictures, old letters, etc.)?
43. Are you prepared for the end of “the honeymoon period” when the intensity of romantic feelings and sexual excitement often wane? (such feelings wax and wane during marriage)
44. How do you plan on keeping your marriage feeling “fresh” (e.g., “date nights” are one idea)?

45. Are you both able to express your needs and desires to the other? What about any anger or frustration?
46. Do either of you hold grudges? Are you able to forgive? Does one do all the apologizing?
47. Are either of you too defensive when it comes to hearing criticisms or problems? If so, what do you plan on doing about that?
48. What do you each think and feel about public displays of affection? What is your comfort zone like with regard to showing affection in public?
49. Are you going in to marriage with the idea of changing something about your potential spouse? If so, what is it you want changed? How important is it that the thing you want changed *is* changed? Can you be happy without that change? Is it smart to go in to a marriage *expecting* such a change?
50. How would you each complete the following?: The worst things you could possibly do to me are _____.
51. For women: men, as a group, are protective of women, and husbands are that much more protective of their wives. What things can you do, and what things can you avoid doing, to make easier your husband's efforts to protect you and keep you safe? How will you help keep *him* safe by avoiding dangerous situations in which he'd feel duty-bound to protect you?
52. For men: women, as a group, have a deep need to feel emotionally affirmed – to feel heard and understood. They often like to relate their problems not in order to find a solution to them, but in order to get emotional validation, some affirmation that they've been heard, understood, and cared for. They often want to be held and petted, not given ways to "fix" things. How do you plan on emotionally validating your wife?
53. For women: women, as a group, are emotional creatures, and men aren't emotional in the same way women are. How will you refrain from expecting your husband to totally "get" you emotionally, to want to hear and react to your emotional problems in the same way most women would, to act as an "emotional shock absorber" for you? Do you have female friends or family members you can talk to about emotional issues?
54. Women generally want to look up to their men, and men want to feel respected and in charge. Men, how will you inspire your woman look up to you? What should she do to help you feel secure in your place as head of the household? Women, how will you make your man feel respected and as the head of the household? What can he do to inspire you to see him and treat him as the head of the household? What things shouldn't he do? What actions or attitudes would you see as abusive in handling that role?

55. How do you want your funerals to be? Where do you want to be buried?

Fill out the following two pages and keep somewhere mutually accessible when married.

This will help you buy each other presents:

Bride

Favorite colors:		
Favorite flowers:		
Favorite presents received:		
Dress size:		
Bra size:		
Top size:		
Pants/skirt size:		
Leg inseam:		
Shoe size:		
Glove size:		
Hat size:		
Ring sizes:	Left hand:	Right hand:
	Index	Index
	Middle	Middle
	Ring	Ring
	Pinky	Pinky
Favorite birthday cake:		
Favorite styles:		
Favorite jewels:		
Birthstone(s):		
Silver or gold or...?		

Groom

Favorite colors:		
Favorite flowers:		
Favorite presents received:		
Shirt size:		
Neck size:		
Chest size:		
Arm inseam:		
Pants size:		
Leg inseam:		
Shoe size:		
Glove size:		
Hat size:		
Ring sizes:	Left hand:	Right hand:
	Index	Index
	Middle	Middle
	Ring	Ring
	Pinky	Pinky
Favorite birthday cake:		
Favorite styles:		
Favorite jewels:		
Birthstone(s):		
Silver or gold or...?		