

Dear Padre,

What is a “covenant,” and how are marriage and covenant related?

“Covenant” is the word the Church employs to define and describe the sacrament of matrimony. It is clearly based on the idea of “covenant” contained in Scripture. In contrast, society uses the related word “contract,” as in the “marriage contract.” However, these two words do not mean the same thing.

The meaning of “contract” is too limited to contain the full commitment of Christian marriage. When you sign a contract, you are legally bound only to its terms. You need not do more or less than what is stipulated in its wording. Warmth and concern for the well-being of one party for the other are not stipulated in a contract.

A covenant, on the other hand, is different. Although it may contain some aspects of contract, it establishes a personal relationship of closeness, affection, and warmth, and it locks the couple into a mutual commitment to each other’s well-being.

As God freely chose Israel from all the nations possible, so do two people choose each other from all other people. As God declared, “I will take you as my people, and I will be your God” (Exodus 6:7). In the same way, a husband and wife pledge total commitment to each other.

Christian marriage bears the same characteristics of covenant commitment—the personal relationship of caring, loyalty, intimacy, exclusivity, permanency, and, above all, love; hence the use of “covenant” to define Christian marriage. ●



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The Redemptorists / DearPadre.org

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
April 15	April 16	April 17	April 18	April 19	April 20	April 21
<i>Easter Weekday</i>	<i>Easter Weekday</i>	<i>Easter Weekday</i>	<i>Easter Weekday</i>	<i>Easter Weekday</i>	<i>Easter Weekday</i>	<i>Fourth Sunday of Easter</i>
Acts 6:8–15	Acts 7:51–8:1a	Acts 8:1b–8	Acts 8:26–40	Acts 9:1–20	Acts 9:31–42	Acts 4:8–12
Jn 6:22–29	Jn 6:30–35	Jn 6:35–40	Jn 6:44–51	Jn 6:52–59	Jn 6:60–69	1 Jn 3:1–2
						Jn 10:11–18



A WORD FROM POPE FRANCIS

Eating, when we do so together, among family or friends, also becomes an expression of love, an expression of communion, of celebration. How often the Gospels present us with Jesus experiencing this convivial dimension! Even as the Risen One, with his disciples. To the point that the Eucharistic Banquet has become the emblematic sign of the Christian community.

REGINA CAELI, ROME, APRIL 18, 2021

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