Reason, Faith and Marriage. The Meaning of the Identity Between Marital Bond and its Sacramental Dimension in the Marriage of two Baptized Persons (can. 1055 § 2)

Summary

The article discusses the meaning of the canonical and theological principle of the identity between marriage bond and sacrament in the case of two baptized persons. First the author presents a historical and contemporary tendency to draw an artificial border line between human nature along with its requirements and positive law, for which the requirements should be one of the sources. Next he shows in what way the dissociative tendency helps separate the domain of reason from the domain of faith, which converge at the point where nature demands obedience from reason. Then the author demonstrates the impact of the dissociation on the understanding of the relation between a natural and a sacramental aspect of marriage. In this context the author discusses the specific nature of the sacrament of matrimony as compared with six other sacraments and the character of the matrimonial consent in the perspective of its object, that is sacramental marriage. Specifically, he focuses on the idea of indirectness in the “cause-effect” relation between the matrimonial consent and sacramental dimension of marriage. In the concluding part of the article the author enters into polemics with the criticism aimed at such an understanding of indirectness – called an “anti-personalist sacramental automatism” – which apparently belittles the significance of the influence of faith on the efficacy of the matrimonial consent. The polemics incorporates the theses formulated by John Paul II in his theology of the body and strives at showing a close relationship between a “sacramental” dimension of the natural marriage and the sacramental dimension of Christian marriage. This, in turn, serves the author to show the relationship between reason and faith and to formulate a brief pastoral conclusion.

Keywords: marriage, marriage bond, sacrament, can. 1055 § 2, Church