

Extracted from St John Vianney December 23, 2012 Bulletin

### Married Finances By Carl Beyer and Friends

If you have been reading my writings you should know by now that I am always right. And to prove it, just asks my wife, and she will tell you that I believe I am always right. So, we will start this financial discussion based upon this first premise. There are four more to come.

The second premise in my financial discussion is that in marriage both man and woman should be equal. This does not mean equal in talents or gifts, but equal in marriage. Each brings different gifts, and the gifts of each partner complement those of the other, but all these gifts are granted to us by our Maker. Seriously folks, take a good look at your spouse and I bet there are a number of things your spouse does better than you do, and vice-versa.

The third premise is that marriage is not a thing we do for a while. I know that I stood in front of God and said, "Till death do we part." You know what that boils down to? It means we *work* at the marriage, constantly finding common ground, since one of us is going to bury the other one, and hopefully without the other having to go to jail. And what is one of the top reasons for divorce? You guessed it, **money**.

The fourth premise is that life is not static. Life is a rollercoaster, and no matter how much we plan, we never know what is around the corner. Included in this premise is the certainty that in our many years of marriage, one or the other may be earning more in any given year.

The fifth premise is that each spouse will have different but equal roles during the marriage. Traditionally the husband has been the breadwinner while the wife has been the homemaker, but these days, for most of us, both spouses have to work to make ends meet. Mix up the roles anyway you want and in the end they are equal. We all hope that when children are involved a parent is able to stay home while the other spouse works. I remember Colonel Winn's advice to me when I got married: Marriage is not each giving fifty percent but is each always giving one hundred percent to the union.

So, based on these premises, money in the marriage should be equally divided, no matter who earns what or brings which gifts to the marriage. Even civilly, the state of New Mexico is considered a community property state, meaning all in marriage is equal. But, logistically, how do we accomplish this task? Well, here are my two cents on how it should be done.

First: Three accounts. In the first account all money that is earned by either spouse or any other source is deposited. This is a joint account with equal access by each spouse. This account pays the bills to support the family. Any money withdrawn is agreed upon by both spouses, within reason. Most marriages will have one spouse who steps forwards to do the finances, but each has a say as to how the money is spent.

Now, what do you think the other two accounts are? They are personal accounts, one in each spouse's name. These two accounts are places where each partner gets equal personal spending money. Why, you ask? While we are joined in marriage, most of us, if we are financially

responsible, like the freedom to be able to spend money without needing the spouse's approval for each and every expenditure. Seriously, how many of us have the exact taste or interests as do our spouses, at all times? Personally, I like to be able to stop and buy a Pepsi without getting my wife's OK.

Certainly, these personal accounts will vary, based on the financial wellbeing of the marriage. I think during my dreadful unemployment we were each down to \$10 a week. Hard to save up for your spouse's and kids' birthday gifts when your total personal spending money is \$10 per week. But we survived, and by God's grace I am working, and each of our personal "allowances" has been increased.

Why divorce over disagreements about money when three accounts should solve most problems? This method aligns you with your spouse in marriage while giving you the freedom to spend money on personal items. This is regardless of whether your role in the marriage is that of bringing in the cold hard cash or of being the primary nurturer or homemaker. Each is equal.

Let us all pray that in our Church community no divorces are being fed by marital discord over money. Let us all realize that no matter how talented each of us is in certain aspects, we fail in others. Let us all take a second look at our spouses and see not only their flaws but their strengths. And in this review, let us agree that money WILL NOT be distributed based upon certain talents or earnings but upon each of us all being equal in God's creation.

Go forth and share equally in God's Treasures and the gift of the Sacrament of Marriage. God Bless You All.