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# MANUAL FOR MARRIAGE

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Dan and Danielle Bean

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Part One Introductory Essay © 2020 Dan and Danielle Bean

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*To our children, proof of God's abundant blessings  
in marriage: Kateri, Eamon, Ambrose, Juliette,  
Stephen, Gabrielle, Raphael, and Daniel*

*The most extraordinary thing in the world is an ordinary man and an ordinary woman and their ordinary children.*

**G. K. CHESTERTON**

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## PUBLISHER'S NOTE

 It is our hope that this Manual for Marriage may be a great blessing to many couples, newlyweds as well as those married for decades. We would particularly like to extend our thanks to New Priory Press, the publishing arm of the Dominican Friars, Province of Saint Albert the Great, for the magnificent work they have done in bringing the wonderful anthology of the writing of Bede Jarrett, OP, back into print in a handsome new edition. Father Jarrett's reflections on matrimony are beautiful, realistic, and timeless, and the New Priory Press has done a great service to the Church and to English letters in making his reflections available to a new generation. The Anthology and the other books they publish may be seen at their website [www.newpriorypress.com](http://www.newpriorypress.com).



PART ONE

Made in Heaven:  
The Extraordinary  
Vocation to Marriage



## INTRODUCTION



manual for marriage? Well, we certainly can't write this book.

We have been married for twenty-five years. After we recently agreed to write this book, though, we put off planning the outline because the timing didn't feel right. We were still not quite getting along after that thing that happened the other day. You know, that thing where one of us used a tone the other one didn't like, or one of us said a dumb thing that upset the other person, or one of us forgot to say thank you or asked a question in an annoying way. We can't remember exactly what it was all about, but it felt like important stuff at the time.

But maybe that kind of messiness is exactly why we can write this book. And should. There are enough books out there to tell you what a glorious, beautiful thing Christian marriage is. And it is. There are plenty of books that will describe an ideal Christian marriage to you, but perhaps not enough that acknowledge the kind of tough, heroic work that happens in the everyday living out of a vocation to love another person for better, for worse, for

richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, until death do you part.

The intimate daily living between two human beings is indeed a glorious thing, but it's a perilous thing too. It's important to acknowledge that. Whether you are preparing to be married, are newly married, or have been married for ten, twenty-five, fifty years, or more, it's important to recognize that our goal is heaven and our spouse is God's plan for getting us there. Because we are human beings struggling our way through God's divine plan, though, there are going to be some missteps along the way. In fact, the flaws and the missteps are exactly why God gave us the gift of marriage—the indissoluble gift of together forever—in the first place.

In our research for writing this book, the writings of Father Bede Jarrett, OP, especially inspired and encouraged us. In *Bede Jarrett Anthology*, Father Jarrett writes about the vocation of marriage in a delightfully honest and insightful way that still has deep meaning for us as married Christians today. In the coming pages, we will share some of Father Jarrett's principles, reflect on the ways we strive to follow them in our marriage, and encourage you to consider how these apply to your own call to the vocation of marriage.

Where might God be inviting you to stretch and grow, as a man, as a woman, and as couple? What might God's plan be to use you, your spouse,

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and your marriage for his greater glory? How is he calling you home to heaven through the beautiful, imperfect person he gave you to love and cherish, till death do you part?

We will look at the ideas of vocation, sacrament, sacrificial love, complementarity, unbreakable bonds, and home and family life. In each of these sections, we will share individually from a wife's perspective and from a husband's perspective, and together we will share practical points you can put into practice starting right now. Because it's important to start right now.

You might be just beginning to consider the call to marriage. You might be quite content in your marriage right now, enjoying some of the "ups" of the ups and downs of normal married life. Or you might be suffering some of the "downs," struggling through hard times or reeling from the wounds of a broken, or breaking, relationship.

Wherever this book finds you, it's important to recognize that the call to marriage is ongoing. Marriage is a call we must hear and respond to again and again, over and over, getting it right, and then messing it up, and then getting it right again. Marriage can be a mess, and it can be beautifully perfect. It's simple, and it's complex. It's easy, and it's hard. It's all of these things for all of us generally, but it's all of these things uniquely in your own marriage too.

St. Francis de Sales reminds us, “You learn to speak by speaking, to study by studying, to run by running, to work by working; and just so, you learn to love by loving. All those who think to learn in any other way deceive themselves.”<sup>1</sup>

Let’s talk about some of the things all marriages have in common so that we can apply them in our own unique married relationships. Together, let’s learn what it means to love.

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1 Louis DelFra, *5 Minutes with the Saints: More Spiritual Nourishment for Busy Teachers* (Ave Maria Press, 2014).