



There is an old Viking tradition that after a couple is married they are immediately sent away together with a month's supply of mead, an alcoholic drink made with honey. The legend was that if the couple drank mead for a straight month, they would conceive a male child. Though the mead is often replaced with champagne, this tradition continues today in what we know as the "honeymoon": "honey" for its indispensable role in the making of mead, and "moon" to represent a full lunar cycle, approximately one month.

There is wisdom in this Viking tradition, not so much in the copious drinking of mead, but in setting apart one month to be with your new spouse and only your new spouse.

When Anthony and I went on our honeymoon, it marked the first time that we had spent more than 18 consecutive hours in the presence of the other. For 10 days, we spent nearly every waking (and sleeping) hour together. It was also the first time in a long time we didn't have a wedding to-do list to check or an errand to run.

With this newfound, and almost jarring, uninterrupted time together I began to see my husband in ways that I never had before. I got to see him frustrated on the New Jersey Turnpike. I got to notice him absentmindedly plucking at his ukulele strings one evening when we had nothing in particular to do but hang out with each other. Once we got home, I got to watch him get ready in the morning and notice the meticulous way he organizes the things he needs for work.

No one of these moments is particularly monumental or enlightening, but strung together I began to have a clearer picture of the man I married. This kind of knowledge can only come from uninterrupted time together. Time to simply contemplate. In fact, I think contemplation is a surprisingly necessary piece of a marriage.

As with any state in life or vocation, it is alarmingly easy to become consumed with the day-to-day tasks that need to be done. And (most of) these tasks need doing. Laundry must be folded, food must be prepared, work must be done. But for the

married couple, a profound mystery is hidden in the folds of these everyday tasks.

Consider this: the person that stood across from you on your wedding day and promised that for the rest of their life they would put your needs above their own is a soul with infinite dignity and worth, an immortal soul who is completely known and loved by God. Then consider that God gave this precious treasure of His to you.

Consider that every act done with your spouse within your marriage - whether it is making love or making breakfast - confers sacramental grace. Jesus Christ Himself is sacramentally present to you and your spouse in every mundane moment of every ordinary day by virtue of your marriage vows.

As St. Paul said, “this is a great mystery” (Ephesians 5:32) and one that demands a great deal of consideration. And no one is in a better position to consider - contemplate - such a mystery than a husband and a wife.