



The fear of failure weighs a lot; the fear to love is the evil of our time. Others do not want to repeat the patterns of their parents; or do not believe in love; or slither into a relationship without thinking or deciding. Many are driven by a stubborn propaganda that deifies individualism, stating that being alone is the best way to have more money and not having to share it. All this leads our youth to retire from life in the age of full bloom, reducing everything to sex without love and not expecting nor planning life with someone else. Some couples claim economic reasons but this, in essence, is not so crucial. Unfortunately none of these situations has made anyone happier, rather the opposite, perhaps.

There are two ways to cope with love and life in general: to slide in life or to decide what is it that you want.

1. The sliding or slip mode

Sliding is to take sex as an end or just a relationship in which I am taking advantage of being with someone while it gives me something, while I feel "at ease." At the beginning it works, more or less. Love, at the beginning, is always a bed of roses. Each one lives in his/her house. Then they "slide" to live together, perhaps because it is cheaper. They become increasingly affectionate to each other, and go forward towards a mutual giving. But this is not the result of an explicit and deliberate decision, it is just what "it is turning out to be." The two lives are intertwined and if children come, the bond becomes stronger, and breaking up would bring more headaches than solutions. They did not pick each other, they did not choose. A person that "slides" is one day with an individual that perhaps it would have been better not to be with, but it is just too late. What seemed like a free choice, had very little to do with freedom. The couple left the decision to be taken by time, desire and hormones. The relationship becomes enslaving. There may appear someone else to slip away in a different direction. And in most cases, the slide is to break up.

In this love "for a while" and "until further notice," do they think about the children? And if they had them, they do not take them with responsibility, but it is

irresponsible to have children in those circumstances. The first responsibility to their children would be to marry, failure to do so reflects mutual insecurity, an inadequate love. The vicious circle that arises makes life harder for the children. It is useless to call a marriage what is not and to live a marriage where there is no such thing. How can we get out of this reality if we stay in front of the TV and of screens all day long?

2. Deciding or choosing each other

The other approach is to choose each other consciously, to decide reciprocally. Do we need to reinvent the wheel? Sometimes we forget the obvious: love is the exact opposite of use. Love is feeling, falling in love, bubbling, but above all, it is a choice: to seek the good of the other; it is friendship and mutual donation. Love comes in layers, and many of us stop in the shell.

Marriage is still the safest place for earthly love. In a marriage life is organized between two people: this requires dialogue, decision-making and preparation, the exact contrary of “slipping.” On the other hand, two human beings reach the highest union through the procreation of a child. They will always be his/her parents regardless of how things go. The natural thing is that love lead to marriage, and that marriage reach its peak with the procreation and education of children. This is called a family and families build societies, because in the family we turn towards the other.

In all this, the wedding is essential: it is a moment that ascertains mutual love. It is a goal in life, but above all, a starting point for a common project: to make the other the mission of my life, my endeavor and the garden that I am called to cultivate. The wedding is a promise and that promise is the seed of a lifetime between two people. The wedding lasts a little while but reveals a lifetime. It gives marriage the public and religious character that it needs: we are not alone, someone goes with us in this journey!

Do we always marry the wrong person? In marriage there are doubts and certainties, crises and illusions, discussions, economic problems and great satisfactions ... challenges to overcome with a mutual goal. The ideal person is not at the beginning but at the end of a life together.

We must seriously question—each one of us—if the individualistic and hedonistic disposable model that society offers really makes us happy. Humans are those rare animals made to receive, but especially to give, that is, to love. Love is mostly self-giving. Individualism and the use and discard mindset always leads to fear of being used as paper napkins. The obsession with pleasure produces only sadness and emptiness as hangovers do. In truth, it produces a more domineering, arrogant and insecure society.

We are all made to love. But marriage is not for everyone, nor is any union a marriage. Slip inertia is always more comfortable, but the direct highway to unhappiness. We have to convince our children and teenagers that love is possible, but that it requires order and preparation, better more, giving of oneself. And for anyone who has slipped there is always hope, we can always love!

These are ultimately the major issues and concerns of the Synod of Bishops held in Rome in these days. The Church cannot be apart from its families. Because the Church is not the Pope or the priests or who knows who, the Church is made by each family, in daily life with the everyday challenges and hopes, being herself a great family of families.