**WINGS OF MARRIAGE**READINGS: Tobit 8:5-7 /Col. 3:12-17/ Mark 10:6-9
WEDDING HOMILY

By Very Rev. Fr. John Louis ([http://frlouis.com](http://frlouis.com/))

{*Note: This a homily for a marriage celebrated on 2nd January, 2016*}

Ben and Bridget, your names begin with the letter ‘B’. This gives me a clue for the name of the animal I should chose to illustrate the message of marriage. I have, therefore, chosen a BIRD to illustrate the message of marriage. Marriage, like a bird, has two wings. For the Christian, **the two wings of marriage are love and prayer.**

Love is one of the wings that is why the second reading says that love is the virtue that binds the several other virtues together (Col. 3:12-14). And prayer is the second wing of marriage that is why in the first reading, Tobias and Sarah prayed together on their very first night as husband and wife (Tobit 8:5-7).

Now, as a bird can fly over mountains and across valleys so with love and prayer a couple can fly over the ups (highs) and downs (lows) of marital life.  Ben and Bridget, with the sweet combination of love and prayer you can soar over the difficulties and challenges of marriage.

WING OF LOVE: A wing is made up of several pieces of bones. Similarly, the wing of marital love is made up of several virtues (bones). These are ***friendship***, ***sacrifice***, ***sincerity*** and ***forgiveness*** *(limiting myself to only four of the bones of marital love).* As a boneless wing cannot lift up a bird so without these virtues love becomes boneless – meaningless in marriage.

***Friendship.***  Bridget and Ben, your journey to the altar began with friendship which you still enjoy.  Your wedding does not mean the end of your friendship; rather it means a greater bond of friendship. So, whatever you have been doing as friends enhance it as wife and husband.  [Some marriages have broken down for lack of friendship.]

***Sacrifice*** strengthens love. It is a demonstration of greater love that is why Jesus says: ‘greater love has no one than to lay down his life for others’ (Jon 15:13).  Therefore, Ben and Bridget be prepared to sacrifice for each other, so as to energize your love.

***Sincerity*** or ***transparency*** is the third piece of bone of the wing of love. Thus, Jesus told his disciples: ‘I call you friends because I have made known to you all that I have heard from the Father’ (John 15:15).  Ben and Bridget, as long as you remain transparent to each other [with no hidden agenda] your wing of love will be strengthened, and it will develop **beautiful feathers of trust.**

***Forgiveness***. Bridget and Ben, forgiveness is the big piece of bone which holds together all the other pieces of bones of love. Without it, all the other pieces of bones fall apart. That is, without forgiveness, marital love disintegrates. Soon the marriage itself falls apart. It is because of the importance of forgiveness that the Pope has declared a Year of Mercy. So, Ben and Bridget, please, please, please, forgive each other as soon as there is an offence. By this way you can keep your wing of love.

WING OF PRAYER:  As a bird cannot fly on only one wing, so love alone is not sufficient to sustain a marriage.  This is obvious from the fact that some actors and actresses have each married several times and each time they claimed to have loved their spouse. Yet these marriages were not sustained because the wing of prayer was absent.

That there is a link between the wing of love and the wing of prayer could be seen from the fact that the first thing Tobias and Sarah did on the night of their wedding was to pray (first reading).

Like the wing of love, the wing of prayer has several pieces of bones.  As in the case of the wing of love, I wish to limit myself to only four pieces of bones of prayer. They are faith, humility, contrition [genuine sorrow for and confession of sins] and good deeds. Therefore, Ben and Bridget strengthen your wing of prayer with ***faith***, ***humility, contrition*** and ***good deeds***.

CONCLUSION:

Ben and Bridget, many couples easily forget the homily on their wedding, but the first letter (B) of your name should help remember a bird and its two wings and hence the message of love and prayer. Moreover, from the name of Bridget, we can spell a B-I-R-D! So you should very easily remember this message.

Finally. Ben and Bridget, I pray:

* that your marriage will be, not just like an ordinary bird, but like an ***eagle with majestic wings of love and prayer*** to fly over the highest mountains (ups) and across the widest and deepest valley (downs); and
* that if you have to go down the valley, you will do so with the swiftness of an eagle! Amen!

Enjoy a prosperous, fruitful and happy marriage! Amen!