

Quotes in Companions in Shipwreck: The High Adventure of Marriage



1. “*The Lord of the Rings is of course a fundamentally religious and Catholic work; unconsciously so at first, but consciously in the revision.*” **Tolkien**

2. “Myth and fairy-story must, as all art, reflect and contain *in solution* elements of moral and religious truth (or error), but not explicit, not in the known form of the primary ‘real’ world.” **Tolkien**

3. “*An adventure is an inconvenience rightly considered! And an inconvenience is an adventure wrongly considered.*” **GK Chesterton**

Original Sin and Disharmony in Marriage:

4. “This experience (of the consequence of the Fall) makes itself felt in marital relationships. Their union has always been threatened by discord, a spirit of domination, infidelity, jealousy, and conflicts that can escalate into hatred and separation” – it can vary in intensity, but the CCC says “it does seem to have a universal character. Without God’s help man and woman cannot achieve the union of their lives for which God created them “in the beginning.” CCC **1607-08**

5. “The Ring is sin itself: tempting and seemingly harmless to begin with; increasingly hard to give up and corrupting in the long run. Its destruction, therefore, is a figure of the great reversal of sin achieved at the Annunciation when Mary welcomed the Word of God into our world. Her fiat, “Let it be to me according to your word”, overturns the refusal of God’s will that we call original sin.” **Stratford Caldecott, The Power of the Ring, 58**

The Law of Undulation:

6. “Humans are amphibians—half spirit and half animal. This means that while their spirit can be directed to an eternal object, their bodies, passions, and imaginations are in continual change, *for to be in time means to change*. Their nearest approach to constancy, therefore, is **undulation**—the repeated return to a level from which they repeatedly fall back, a series of troughs and peaks. If you had watched your patient carefully you would have seen this undulation in every department of his life—his interest in his work, his affection for his friends, his physical appetites, all go up and down. As long as he lives on earth periods of emotional and bodily richness and liveliness will alternate with periods of numbness and poverty. The dryness and dullness through which your patient is now going are not, as you fondly suppose, your workmanship; *they are merely a natural phenomenon which will do us no good unless you make a good use of it.*” **C.S. Lewis, Screwtape Letters, 37-38**

7. “*No man, however truly he loved his betrothed and bride as a young man, has lived faithful to her as a wife in mind and body without deliberate conscious exercise of the will, without self-denial. Too few have been told that – even those brought up in the Church. Those outside seem seldom to have heard of it.*

“When the glamour wears off, or merely works a bit thin, they think they have made a mistake, and that the real soul-mate is still to find. The real soul-mate too often proves to be the next sexually attractive person that comes along.”

“...they think they have made a mistake – and they have. But the real soul-mate is the one you are actually married to. You really do very little choosing.... In this fallen world we have as our guides prudence, wisdom (rare in youth and too late in old age), a clean heart, and fidelity of *will*.” **Tolkien, Letter 43**



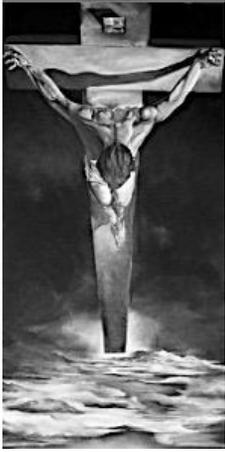
8. “Youthful love must be crucified so that it can be resurrected to true and lasting Love.” **C.S. Lewis**

9. “Love is indeed “ecstasy” [*to stand outside oneself*], not in the sense of a moment of intoxication, **but rather as a journey**, an ongoing exodus out of the closed inward looking self towards its liberation through self-giving, and thus towards authentic self-discovery and indeed the discovery of God.” **Pope Benedict XVI, Deus Caritas Est, 6**

Love wants to take us to the Altar:

10. “Marriage is an adventure- like going to war.” **G. K. Chesterton**

11. “By coming to restore the original order of creation disturbed by sin, Jesus himself gives the strength and grace to live marriage in the new dimension of the Reign of God. It is by following Christ, renouncing themselves, and taking up their crosses that spouses will be able to “receive” the original meaning of marriage and live it with the help of Christ. **This grace of Christian marriage is a fruit of Christ’s cross, the source of all Christian life.**” CCC **1615**



12. “The essence of a fallen world is that the best cannot be attained by free enjoyment, or by what is called self-realization (usually a nice name for self-indulgence, wholly inimical to the realization of *other* selves), but by denial, by suffering. Faithfulness in Christian marriage entails that; great mortification. For a Christian man, there is no escape. Marriage may help to sanctify & direct to its proper object his sexual desires; *its grace may help him in the struggle; but the struggle remains.*” Tolkien, Letter 43

Beren and Luthien:

13. “Some believe it is only the GREAT POWER that can hold evil in check. But that is not what I have found. I have found that it is the small every-day deeds of ordinary folk that keep the darkness at bay. Small acts of kindness and love.” Gandalf

14. “Here (*the tale of Beren and Luthien*) we meet, among other things, the first example of the motive (to become dominant in *The Hobbit*) that the great policies of world history, ‘the wheels of the world’, are often turned not by the Lords and Governors, even gods. **But by the seemingly**

unknown and weak – owing to the secret life in creation, and the part unknowable to all wisdom but One, that resides in the intrusions of the Children of God into the Drama.” Letter 131

Married Love is Essential to the LOTR:

15. “**Marriage for Tolkien was not a contract but a means of the work of redemption.** Once that work is begun in the marriage vow, it cannot be stopped, no matter what formula is pronounced or ceremony enacted. Divorce is not an option. **The ‘work’ of marriage is that of mutual sanctification, which can only be achieved by some form of utter surrender – marriage being one of them.**” Stratford Caldecott, *The Power of the Ring*, 63

16. “Here I am only concerned with Death as part of nature, physical and spiritual, of Man, and with Hope without guarantees. **That is why I regard the tale of Arwen and Aragorn as the most important of the Appendices; it is part of the essential story, and** is only placed so, because it could not be worked into the main narrative without destroying its structure: which is planned to be hobbit-centric’. That is primarily about the study of the ennoblement (or sanctification) of the humble.” Tolkien, Letter 181

17. “I think the rustic love of Sam and Rosie (nowhere elaborated) is *absolutely essential* (emphasis in the original) to the study of his (the chief hero’s) character, and to *the theme of the relation of ordinary life (breathing, eating, working, begetting) and quests, sacrifice, causes, and the ‘longing for Elves’, and sheer beauty.*” Tolkien Letter 131

Adventure and Sacrifice, Marriage and Eucharist:

18. “The lembas has a virtue without which they would long ago have lain down to die. ... And yet this waybread of the Elves had a potency that increased as travelers relied on it alone and did not mingle it with other foods. It fed the will, and it gave strength to endure, and to master sinew and limb beyond the measure of mortal kind.” LOTR 936

19. “Out of the darkness of my life, so much frustrated, I put before you the one great thing to love on earth: the Blessed Sacrament.... There you will find romance, glory, honor, fidelity, and the true way of all your loves upon earth, and more than that: Death: by the divine paradox, that which ends life, and demands the surrender of all, and yet, by the taste (or foretaste) of which alone can what you seek in your earthly relationships (love, faithfulness, joy) be maintained, or take on that complexion of reality, of eternal endurance, which every man’s heart desires.” Tolkien, Letter 43



20. “*Love now becomes concern and care for the other. No longer is it self-seeking, a sinking into the intoxication of happiness; instead it seeks the good of the beloved: it becomes renunciation and it is ready, and even willing, for sacrifice... Love embraces the whole of existence in each of its dimensions, including the dimension of time. It could hardly be otherwise, since its promise looks towards its definitive goal: love looks to the eternal.*” Pope Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est*, 6

Life as a Quest and The Virtues:

21. “For Aristotle everything, including man, has an inherent nature or purpose. A man lives a good life when he acts in accord with that nature. So the relationship of ‘man’ to living well’ is analogous to that of ‘harpist’ to ‘playing the harp well’. As the harpist disciplines herself through practices to play the harp she becomes FREE to play beautiful music, so also man cultivates the virtues – courage, justice mercy, humility and so on, achieves the freedom to become more truly human,” Bishop Charles Chaput, *Strangers in a Strange Land*, 129

22. **“Human life is unintelligible when it is not seen as a whole, or a unity, whose character provides the virtues with an adequate telos, or purpose.”** “Life is a quest within which the virtues help us overcome the crises and challenges so as to reach the goal, and vices hold us back. Modernity partitions each human life into a variety of segments, ... seen only as a sequence of individual actions and episodes with no impact on ‘the inviolable self’. What we do doesn’t impact who we are. Life comes to appear as **nothing but a series of unconnected episodes – a liquidation of the self.**” **Alasdair MacIntyre, After Virtue, 204**

23. “Yes, man is part of creation, of the natural world, but also one endowed with special dignity. Every man is a free moral agent, responsible for his personal choices and actions. But no man exists in isolation. Every man is also an actor in a much larger divine story, and he is shaped by his social relationships and duties to others: **“We are born onto a stage and in a role we did not make.”** **MacIntyre, 213**



The Freedom to Bind Oneself: The Only Way to Real Adventure:

24. “For the purpose even of the wildest romance, results must be real; results must be irrevocable. Christian Marriage, like religious vows, is the great example of a real and irrevocable result; and that is why it is the chief subject and centre of all our romantic writing.” **Chesterton**

25. “To be everlastingly passing through dangers which we know cannot scare us, to be taking oaths which we know cannot bind us, to defying enemies who we know cannot conquer us – **this is the great tyranny of decadence which is called freedom [today].**” **Chesterton, In Defense of Rash Vows**

26. “They appear to imagine that the ideal of constancy was a yoke mysteriously imposed on mankind by the devil, **instead of being, as it is, a yoke consistently imposed by all lovers on themselves. It is the nature of love to bind itself,** and the institution of marriage merely paid the average man the compliment of taking him at his word. Modern sages offer the lover, with an ill-favoured grin – the largest of liberties and the fullest irresponsibility; but they do not respect him as the old Church respected him; they do not write his oath upon the heavens, as the record of his highest moment. They give him every liberty except the liberty to sell his liberty, which is the only one he wants.” **Chesterton – In Defense of Rash Vows.**

27. “*God has created me to do Him some definite service. He has committed some work to me which He has not committed to another. I have my mission. I may never know it in this life, but I shall be told it in the next. I am a link in a chain, a bond of connection between persons.*” **Bl. John Henry Newman**

28. “*Our duty as Christians lies in this, in making ventures for eternal life without the absolute certainty of success... in “the high adventure of Christian discipleship which requires sacrifice and self-denial”.*” **Bl. John Henry Newman**

29. “The goal is NOT “to undo the work of creation or to rectify the Fall. *The duty of the Christian is not to leave the world a better place. His duty is to leave this world a better man.*” **Monsignor Alfred Newman Gilby**

30. “An overwhelming longing to rest and remain at peace by Bilbo’s side in Rivendell filled all his heart. At last with an effort he spoke and **wondered to hear his own words, as if some other will was using his small voice.** ‘I will take the Ring’, he said, ‘though I do not know the way’” **LOTR 270**

We Are In the Same Tale Still!:

31. Frodo says: “I don’t like anything here at all, step or stone, breath or bone. Earth, air water all seem cursed. **But so our path is laid.**” “Yes that’s so, said Sam, And we shouldn’t be here at all, if we’d known more about it before we started. But I suppose its often that way. The brave things in the old tales and songs, Mr. Frodo: adventures, as I used to call them. I used to think that they were things the wonderful folk of stories went out and looked for, because they wanted them, because they were exciting and life was a bit dull, a kind of sport, as you might say. But that’s not the way of it with the tales that really mattered, or the ones that stay in the mind. Folk seem to have been just landed in them, usually – their paths were laid that way, as you put it. But I expect they had lots of chances, like us, of turning back, only they didn’t. And if they had, we shouldn’t know, because they’d have been forgotten. We hear about those as just went on – and not all to a good end, mind you; at least not what the folk inside a story and not outside it call a good end. .. I wonder what sort of tale we have fallen into?”

“Beren now, he never thought he was going to get that Silmaril from the Iron Crown in Thangorodrim, and yet he did, and that was a worse place and blacker danger than ours. ... Why come to think of it, we’re in the same tale still! It’s going on. Don’t the great tales never end?”

“No, they never end as tales, said Frodo. But the people in them come and go when their part’s ended. Our part will end later – or sooner.

LOTR 711

32. “That’s the truth of our lives, too – we are all part of the great tale of salvation history – from Creation to all of the tales of Adam and Eve, Abraham, Moses, David, Jesus and the Apostles and the age of the Church and the saints . God’s plan of salvation as it gradually unfolds through the centuries in the history of the world. We have been born into that, with a specific mission. Our task is to carry on that same tale – Like Sam and Frodo’s task within Tolkien’s great epic - its a beautiful perspective on our lives and the importance of our lives within the overall perspective of God’s plan for the world.” **Fr. Timothy Gallagher – Discerning Hearts LOTR Retreat**

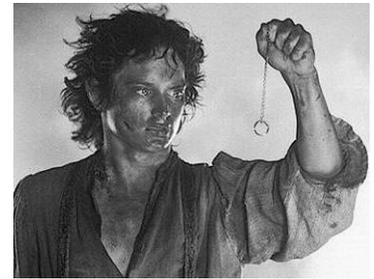
Lead Us Not Into Temptation:

33. “Each had felt that he was offered a choice between a shadow full of fear that lay ahead, and something that he greatly desired: and to get it he had only to turn aside from the road and leave the Quest and the war against Sauron to others.” **LOTR 358**

34. “*I have come,*’ he said. *‘But I do not choose now to do what I came to do. I will not do this deed. The Ring is mine!’ And suddenly, as he set it on his finger, ... far away The Dark Lord was suddenly aware of him, and the whole mind and purpose of the Power that wielded them was now bent with overwhelming force upon the Mountain.”* **LOTR 946**

35. “Regarding the failure of Frodo: surely it is a more significant and real event than a mere fairy story ending in which the hero is indomitable? In this case the cause (not the hero) was triumphant, because by the exercise of pity, mercy, and forgiveness of injury, a situation was produced in which all was redressed and disaster averted....

But we are assured that we must be ourselves extravagantly generous, if we are to hope for the extravagant generosity [of God’s forgiveness]. Frodo deserved all honor because he spent every drop of his power of will and body, and that was sufficient to bring him to the destined point and no further.... **The Other Power then took over: the Writer of the Story (by which I do not mean myself). Letters, 192**



Your Part In The Story Will Go On:

36. “You will have to be one and whole for many years. You have so much to enjoy, and to be and to do. ... Your part in the story will go on.” **LOTR 1029**

Bibliography and Additional Resources

Craig Bernthal, *Tolkien’s Sacramental Vision: Discerning the Holy in The Lord of the Rings*

Bradley Birzer, *J.R.R. Tolkien’s Sanctifying Myth: Understanding Middle Earth*

Stratford Caldecott, *The Power of the Ring: The Spiritual Vision Behind The Lord of the Rings*

Humphrey Carpenter, *The Letters of JRR Tolkien*

Catholic Courses: *The Hidden Meaning of The Lord of the Rings DVD series* featuring Joseph Pearce

Bishop Charles Chaput, *Strangers in a Strange Land*

G.K. Chesterton, *In Defense of Rash Vows*

Peter Kreeft: *The Philosophy of Tolkien: The Worldview Behind The Lord of the Rings*

C.S. Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters*

Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue*

Joseph Pearce, *Tolkien Man and Myth: A Literary Life*

Richard Purtill, *J.R.R. Tolkien: Myth, Morality & Religion*

Fleming Rutledge, *The Battle for Middle Earth: Tolkien’s Divine Design in The LOTR*

Tom Shippey, *J.R.R. Tolkien: Author of the Century*

J.R.R.Tolkien, *Lord of the Rings 50th Anniversary One Volume*

Ralph C. Wood, *The Gospel According to Tolkien: Visions of the Kingdom in Middle Earth*

A LOTR Spiritual Retreat with Fr. Timothy Gallagher at <http://www.discerninghearts.com/catholic-podcasts/lord-rings-spiritual-retreat-fr-timothy-gallagher/>



The Struggle is Real; But So Is the Grace