

How appropriate today's saint coincides with today's readings. Scripture focuses on covenant, vows and the Sacrament of Matrimony. St. Jane Frances de Chantal was a privileged but graceful child.

She married a wealthy baron, has six children, restored daily Mass in her home and was involved in many charitable works.

Her husband died after seven years of marriage. Taking a vow of chastity, she dutifully remained with her vain, fierce and extravagant father-in-law and his arrogant maid.

For seven years, her virtue survived over these two vile and ill-tempered souls. She prayed that God would send her a guide, which He showed her in a vision.

While visiting her father, she met St. Francis de Sales, who was preaching there and who matched the man in her vision. He became her spiritual director.

The two corresponded until his death. Except the ones she destroyed, many of their letters survive today.

Together and with God's call, they founded the Congregation of the Visitation. Its mission, "I do always the things that please Him."

Their undertaking prospered: by St. Francis' death, there were 13 houses; by St. Jane's death, 86; by her canonization, 164. Today, there are still 150 across the globe, including 10 in the United States.

She is known for her life of strong spirituality and resilience. She suffered spiritual dryness and agony of the soul. Her trials were born courageously. Her reputation for sanctity was widespread, though she would reject such accolades.

When I think about marriage, I am reminded of the Proverbs 31 Woman. Please take time to read verses 10 through 31. The last verse speaks volumes, "Acclaim her for the work of her hands, and let her deeds praise her at the city gates."

The marriage between a man and a woman reflects the marriage feast of the lamb, between the Bridegroom (the Son of God) and His bride, the Church (that's us).

We, the Church, as the bride, would do well to mimic the Proverbs 31 Woman, as did St. Jane Frances de Chantal.

First, we do what we can to honor our Lord; we serve and are productive, especially looking out for those less fortunate, always fearing God.

Second, we trust in the Lord, who looks after us, protects us. He loves us beyond all understanding and we have faith in His promise to us; to never leave us. It's a covenantal bond that cannot be broken.

Just as the Sacrament of Matrimony is a covenantal bond that no man can separate, God's love for us is never ending and always faithful.

We would do well to follow the example of St. Jane Frances de Chantal, of her love and service, even in the face of adversity.