

## THE VOCATION TO MARRIAGE IN THE WORKS OF GABRIEL MARCEL

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Dissertation Abstract

This dissertation is a study of the vocation to marriage and family in the philosophical and dramatic works of the twentieth century French Catholic philosopher Gabriel Marcel (1889 – 1973). The author presents Marcel's unique philosophical method and dramatic style as these developed through the influence of personal and historical events in Marcel's childhood and adulthood. Major themes of Marcel's philosophy are discussed including hope and intersubjective relations, which prepare the reader for an in depth understanding of Marcel's concept of vocation. Vocation is presented in detail as a complex and mysterious interpersonal dynamic, from receiving the call through the experience of admiration to responding to love through consecration. Marriage as a particular response to the call of love is then examined by way of its hallmark attributes of exclusivity, indissolubility and openness to new life. Marcel's notion of creative fidelity and mutual belonging imbues the embodied gift of self between spouses with a renewed sense of the sacred. The reader will be enriched by the presentation of Marcel's reflections on fatherhood and the family bond, which concretizes and encompasses Marcel's thought on marriage and family as a vocation.