

MARRIAGE IN THE LORD

Community in Marriage:

- Marriage is a primordial sacrament having its roots in the very nature of man and woman created by God before marriage was raised to the dignity of a sacrament by Christ in the New Testament. Therefore, persons have a natural right to marry.
- In creation, man and woman are bound to God, their Creator.
- There is a mutuality of symbolism between the sacramental union of marriage and the Trinity. Community is integral to the nature of all reality.
- Father, Son and Holy Spirit are three distinct persons, absolutely different. These three persons have perfect love for each other and their mutual love binds them together as one God. The Trinity is a Community of Persons.
- Husband and wife are two distinct persons and different people. They become one both in body and spirit. In their sacramental marriage, they are united in their bond of love together with Christ. Marriage is a community (trinity) of persons.
- The love shared by Father, Son and Holy Spirit is unconditional, committed, irrevocable, and exclusive or faithful. Likewise for human marriage.
- The love that unites the three persons of the Trinity as one God is sacramental because it is a sign that points to a reality outside itself, i.e., the sacrament of marriage. Therefore, the unity and love of the married couple is a sacramental sign that mirrors the three persons in one God. Marriage resists individualism.
- Marriage is a community of life and love. By nature marriage is communal rather than individual.

Covenant of Marriage:

- Covenant is an agreement or treaty between two parties initiated by the greater one (God) who pledges faithfulness to the other (us).
- Throughout the Old Testament, there are many references to the covenant as a marriage between God and his people. God espouses his people. (Psalm 106)
- God gives his word that he will always remain faithful to his people even if his people betray God through their unfaithfulness. Reference the prophet Hosea.
- When the people of the Old Testament were unfaithful to the one, true God in favor of following false gods, Scripture refers to their idolatrous behavior as adultery because they had broken their covenant bond of marriage with God.
- In the New Testament, Jesus makes references to himself as bridegroom at a wedding feast. He also says that divorce was not in the original plan of marriage.
- In the letter to the Ephesians, the author refers to marriage of husband and wife as a mystery of Christ the bridegroom and the Church, his bride. (Eph 5: 27-39). In his letter to the Corinthians, he exhorts marriage be “in the Lord.” (1 Cor 7:39).
- Essential Elements of the Sacrament of Marriage as a Covenant is ordered to: An indissoluble (unbreakable) bond, lifelong faithfulness (fidelity) to one’s spouse, and open to life (procreation) between a husband and wife.

Mission of Marriage:

- The mission of the sacrament of marriage begins at their wedding when the couple ministers the sacrament by giving their word to each other in vows.

- Just as the love of the Trinity overflows to all of creation, so the love of husband and wife leads them to a mission beyond themselves.
- God shares the power of his creative love with married couples because they become co-creators with him in their expanding mission. Love generates love.
- Marital love is very sexual in its practice as husband and wife are open to God's plan to embrace the mission to love each other, to have and to rear their children.
- Husband and wife are not only equal partners who minister to each other, but they also have a joint mission to pastor the children in their home, the domestic church.
- The mission of being a community of life and love that begins with a couple at their wedding grows ever larger to include their children, the Church and society.
- Parents and family are called to invest in the Church through stewardship of *time* by growing in their relationship to God, *talent* by ministering with their gifts of service, and *treasure* by supporting the mission of our parish with their resources.
- Parents and children are initiated into the Body of Christ to respond to the mission of Christ by participating out of love in the Paschal Mystery each Sunday at Mass.

Marriage and the Church

- The willingness of marriage partners to be reconciled to each other daily is the ongoing work of marriage needed in order to put divorce behind as a way of solving their problems. The Church calls us: be reconciled to God, to others, and to oneself.
- Once married, individuals may wish to leave their marriage behind through divorce, but they cannot leave their personal problems behind. The bond of marriage is not the problem, but rather the personal problems of individuals in the marriage can be.
- Of first marriages, 50% fail, and of second marriages, 60% fail. Marriage partners and children are not “throw-a-ways” or “trade-ins.” The Church views each person as having human dignity, and not to be the discarded commodities of our society.
- Marriage is for the greater good of society since the family is the basic unit of society and divorce is not healthy for society or for children. The Church stands up for the institution and the bond of marriage since society needs healthy marriages.
- In contemporary society marriage is often viewed as a private event between two individuals with little accountability to society, Church, or the partners of marriage. The Church views it as a public event before God, Church, society and each other.
- When a couple is married according to the norms of the Catholic Church as the Church defines marriage, their marriage is presumed to be valid and therefore exists as a sacrament, and the Catholic Church is the defender of this bond of marriage.
- The Catholic Church provides pastoral care to support marriages in the parish community through marriage preparation, catechesis, and celebration of marriages as a sacrament in the church, and programs for married couples and their families.
- Online resources from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) include a link to “For Your Marriage” and “Smart Marriage.com” provides another resource, both of which foster healthy marriage education throughout the lifespan.
- Marriage is a vocation of holiness in the Church through the faithful, fruitful and abiding love of God reflected in the lives of married couples as God blesses their married love and family life to renew them through the good times and hard times.