

Celebrating the

JOY OF MARRIAGE

Diocese of Portland ~ May 2017



OPENING PRAYER

God of joy and love,
You bless the Church with the union of married couples
 who reflect the union of Christ with his Church.
May the grace of the sacrament help them recognize
 that God is always present in their lives.
May we always be mindful of the wondrous commitment of love
 you made to us through the Cross of Jesus,
 so we may mirror that self-giving love in our marriage and family.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

READINGS

Genesis 1:26-28, 31

Then God said: 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air and the cattle, and over all the wild animals and all the creatures that crawl on the ground.' God created man in his image; in the divine image he created him; male and female he created them. God blessed them, saying: 'Be fertile and multiple; fill the earth and subdue it.' ... God looked at everything he had made, and he found it very good.

AMORIS LAETITIA

"The Church looks to married couples as the heart of the entire family, which, in turn looks to Jesus." (n. 73)

The sacrament of marriage is not a social convention, an empty ritual or merely the outward sign of a commitment. The sacrament is a gift of a commitment. The sacrament is a gift given for the sanctification and salvation of the spouses, since 'their mutual belonging is a real representation, through the sacramental sign, of the same relationship between Christ and the Church. The married couple are therefore a permanent reminder for the Church of what took place on the cross; they are for one another and for their children witnesses of the salvation in which they share through the sacrament.' Marriage is a vocation, inasmuch as it is a response to a specific call to experience conjugal love as an imperfect sign of the love between Christ and the Church. Consequently, the decision to marry and to have a family ought to be the fruit of a process of vocational discernment. (n. 72)

CONTEMPLATE

- Think of a couple who has been an example to you in your life. How have they been a witness of love?
- How can we encourage and support married couples?
- What are some of the joyful things about being married? What are the challenges? Can something be both joyful and challenging?

INTERCESSIONS

Fourth Sunday of Easter - For all the baptized: may they prayerfully discern their vocation, whether to marriage, ordained ministry, consecrated life, or lay ministry, we pray to the Lord...

Fifth Sunday of Easter - For all married couples: may their life together be open to the action of God, who desires to build them into a spiritual house, we pray to the Lord...

Sixth Sunday of Easter - For all who live the vocation of marriage: may the Holy Spirit help them to follow God's commandments and to fulfill their commitment, we pray to the Lord...

Seventh Sunday of Easter - For all married couples: may they recognize the goal of their vocation as being in union with Christ, both on earth and in heaven, we pray to the Lord...

CLOSING PRAYER

Prayer for Marriage (USCCB)

God our Father, we give you thanks
for the gift of marriage: the bond of life and love,
and the font of the family.

The love of husband and wife enriches your Church with children,
fills the world with a multitude of spiritual fruitfulness and service,
and is the sign of the love of your Son, Jesus Christ, for his Church.

The grace of Jesus flowed forth at Cana at the request of the Blessed Mother.
May your Son, through the intercession of Mary, pour out upon us
a new measure of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit
as we join with all people of good will
to promote and protect the unique beauty of marriage.

May your Holy Spirit enlighten our society
to treasure the heroic love of husband and wife,
and guide our leaders to sustain and protect
the singular place of mothers and fathers in the lives of their children.

Father, we ask that our prayers be joined to those of the Virgin Mary,
that your Word may transform our service
so as to safeguard the incomparable splendor of marriage.
We ask all these things through Christ our Lord, Amen.

Saints Joachim and Anne, pray for us.

JOY IN ACTION

Weekly suggestions for the faithful to consider

May 7: Establish a date night each month, during which you will spend time together as a couple.

May 14: On May 13th, we celebrate the 100th anniversary of the apparitions at Fatima. Celebrate by honoring Mary in your home in some way. Pray the rosary or a decade of the rosary together. Perhaps, surround a statue or prayer card of the Blessed Mother with flowers. Read again about the Blessed Mother's message at Fatima, and if you have children, share it with them.

May 21: Tell your spouse one reason (or more) why you love him or her.

May 28: As we celebrate Memorial Day, take some time to share some family memories with your spouse, children, siblings, or friends. Learn about your ethnic heritage.

REFLECTION

Title: Joy of Marriage

By: Mike and Diane Tyne



Mike: Thirteen years of marriage have gone by really fast. Fortunately, four growing kids keep me up to date on the passage of time. Since the wedding, I've gradually been turning into the person I'm supposed to be. Normally, I would expect the process of turning this selfish coot into a decent man to feel long and arduous, but that hasn't been the case.

My own good parents, my perfect wife, and my super kids have made this vocation of marriage a joyful rather than tedious process for me. But the biggest reason for the joy is that this marriage is a *vocation* – it comes from God and not from me. Living the life that God has called me to means participating in his plan, and God's plan for us is joy and hope. It's always a fulfilling adventure to take part in the salvation of the world, even in our small and imperfect way.

If the vocation of marriage means two opposites accepting the other and giving themselves to each other, and if these two bigger people can sacrifice their self-interest for the sake of the smaller people, then we can be an example of what this world is supposed to be like. The joy of spending all my days with this wonderful woman and great kids is icing on the cake.

Diane: People told me I would be a nun, which I explored just to be sure I wasn't missing something. I wasn't seeing it. When it came more and more clear that my vocation was marriage, Mr. Right still didn't come despite my anxiously awaiting him and trying to find him.

Then a real change happened in me as I tired of the disappointment of the dating world. The more time I spent in seeking God, the more I stopped wanting or feeling I needed to find him. I was ready to never date again and ready to devote my life to serving Christ as a single person. Then I met Mike Tyne. That's the short version. I met Mike when I was content in Christ and had completely surrendered my will to him. Mike was practically delivered to my doorstep. When we met, I knew I was home.

Now coming up on 13 years of marriage, in his arms is still my favorite place in the world. We are not perfect, we don't always understand what our opposite is saying, but God has entrusted us to each other to love and serve. That entrusted love has brought the blessing of four beautiful children. Can you imagine the Creator of the universe giving Mike and I to each other as a gift and then, in his generous confidence, entrusting us with four precious souls. It is a self-sacrificing vocation that calls us to die to ourselves and often put our wants aside for the sake of others, but I am happy, and content, and have no greater joy. Thank you Father.