

MARRIAGE: GOD'S GIFT OF LOVE SUSTAINS YOU

Husbands and wives need each other. God made them female and male out of love, for love. The love between a husband and wife comes from God.

OVERVIEW

For the Catholic Church, Marriage is more than a social contract made by two people. It is more than the benefits afforded married couples by society. The sanctity of Marriage unites the entire being of spouses in love and is a sign of God's love for humanity.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- For you, what are the main points of the video, "Marriage: God's Gift of Love Sustains You"?
- What does the Church teach about Marriage?
- Share your understanding of Marriage in the Church.
- Does your Marriage reflect what the Church teaches on Marriage?
- How does Scripture describe Marriage?
- How does Marriage affect society?
- How does Marriage build the Family?
- How does the Church describe Marriage?
- Did the video, "Marriage: God's Gift of Love Sustains You", affirm your thoughts on Marriage?
- Was there anything presented that surprised you about how the Church sees Marriage? How you see Marriage?
- Why is the Sacrament of Marriage between a man and woman important?

Questions for Couples

- As a married couple, re-watch this section and consider: how has early life shaped our understanding of the roles of men and women?
- Where do we need to grow in mutuality?
- Does loving God help us to love our spouse better?
- How can the Sacrament of Marriage sustain our relationship in difficult times?
- What are some of the joyful things about being married? What are our challenges?

Questions for Groups

- How could a Catholic Christian respond when a friend or family member is experiencing difficulties in their marriages?
- How could we respond as a community?, as a ministry?, as a Church?

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FROM BISHOP NOONAN

Marriage is not the Creation of any Government, June 2013

Some Pharisees approached him, and tested him, saying, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any cause whatever?" He said in reply, "have you not read that from the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female' and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, no human being must separate." Matthew 19:3-6

My Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

Recently there has been much talk about the Supreme Court decision regarding the Defense of Marriage Amendment (DOMA) and California's Proposition 8. Neither of these rulings directly affects the Constitution or laws in Florida, though it is naïve to expect they will not be challenged in the future. The Church will continue to vigorously protect our age-old belief in marriage in our state, should it be challenged.

While the decisions of the Supreme Court may bring about the opportunity for a couple who have civilly made a commitment to each other to access goods and services from or through the government, such as health care or military benefits and taxation, it does not change the way Scripture defines marriage, the context of which was born long before the birth of Catholicism. Sacred Scripture begins with the creation of man and woman in the image and likeness of God and concludes with a vision of "the wedding-feast of the Lamb." Scripture speaks throughout of marriage and its "mystery," its institution and the meaning God has given it, its origin and its end, its various realizations throughout the history of salvation, the difficulties arising from sin and its renewal "in the Lord" in the New Covenant of Christ and the Church.

In Genesis, we read God makes female and male out of love, for love. The love between a husband and wife is placed in their hearts by God to fulfill his design for each person. We respect all people with compassion and sensitivity. For the Catholic Church, marriage is more than a social contract made by two people. It is more than the benefits afforded married couples by society. The sanctity of marriage unites the entire being of spouses in love and is a sign of God's love for humanity. It is the joining of a man and woman to be co-creators with God to bring children into the world.

The love of the spouses requires, of its very nature, the unity and indissolubility of the spouses' community of persons, which embraces their entire life: "so they are no longer two, but one flesh." They are called to grow continually in their communion through day-to-day fidelity to their marriage promise of total mutual self-giving. This human communion is confirmed, purified, and completed by communion in Jesus Christ, given through the Sacrament of Marriage. It is deepened by lives of the common faith and by the Eucharist received together.

What does the Supreme Court decision regarding DOMA have to do with the Catholic Church's belief about the Sacrament of Marriage? Nothing. Marriage is not the creation of any government. What the decisions do is highlight the countercultural nature of Jesus Christ and, as Pope Francis has spoken, our own yielding to separation from God. It challenges us to be fervent in building a culture of marriage as Sacrament. It requires us to be heralds of the Gospel and stand steadfastly together in promoting and defending marriage as a Sacrament, the joining together of a man and woman to be co-creators with God to bring children into the world. It begs us, as people of faith, to be courageous against this tide of disbelief and lead others as the first apostles also did to Christ. It calls us to prayer; to ask forgiveness for our neglect, and for those who review the Court's decisions and their implications. It demands our evaluation of the common good and the future of our society under God.

I hope you will join me in enkindling a deeper faith in the hearts of our people as we come to understand and experience the sacredness of the Sacrament of Marriage as it is born through, with and in Christ.

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MARRIAGE IN SCRIPTURE AND CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Scripture

God created man in the image of Himself, in the image of God He created him, male and female He created them. (Genesis 1:27)

And the Lord God said, it is not right for that the man should be alone, I will make him a helper. (Genesis 2:18)

Yahweh God fashioned the rib he had taken from the man into a woman and brought her to the man. And the man said, "This one at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh! She is to be called Woman because she was taken from Man. This is why a man leaves his father and mother and becomes attached to his wife and they become one flesh. (Genesis 2: 22-24)

He who finds a wife finds happiness, receiving a mark of favour from Yahweh. (Proverbs 18:22)

The Pharisees also came to Him, testing Him, and saying to Him, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for just any reason?" And He answered and said to them, "Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning 'made them male and female, 'and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh' "So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate." (Matthew 19: 3-6)

Husbands should love their wives as they do their own bodies. He who lives his wife loves himself. For no one ever hates his own body, but he nourishes and tenderly cares for it, just as Christ does for the church, because we are members of His body. (Ephesians 5: 28-30)

You see, the unbelieving husband is sanctified through his wife and the unbelieving wife is sanctified through the brother. If this were not so, your children would be unclean, whereas in fact they are holy. (1 Corinthians 7:14)

Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled... (Hebrews 13:4)

In the same way, husbands must always treat their wives with consideration in their life together, respecting a woman as one who, though she may be the weaker partner, is equally an heir to the generous gift of life. (1 Peter 3:7)

Catechism of the Catholic Church

Faith is a personal act – the free response of the human person to the initiative of God who reveals himself. But faith is not an isolated act. (166)

The vocation to marriage is written in the very nature of man and woman as they came from the Creator. (1603)

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SUNDAY MASS HOMILY POINTS - CYCLE C

The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph

Second Reading, Col 3:12-21: "Wives, be subordinate to your husbands...Husbands, love your wives."

- The covenant of marriage is most perfectly manifested when two become subordinate to each other i.e. placing the needs of the other above one's own personal needs. For Christ made himself subordinate to humanity so that sacrificial love could reach its perfection in Him and that we might have eternal life.

Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

John 2:1-11: "There was a wedding at Cana in Galilee and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples were also invited to the wedding."

- Jesus sanctified the covenant of marriage with his presence at Cana choosing a wedding feast to work his first sign—a sign of transformation. The Church calls men and women who are to marry to invite Jesus into their union that the two may become one. The love between a man and woman joined together as one represents the marriage of Christ and His Church.

Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

1 Cor 13:4-13: "So faith, hope, love remain, these three; but the greatest of these is love."

- Often chosen as a reading for the wedding liturgy, this section of St. Paul's first letter to the Corinthians encapsulates the three greatest virtues; the greatest of which is love. Married couples face many trials. Striving for and preserving the attributes of love helps the journey of faithfulness to remain true.

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SAINTS AND PRAYERS

Saint Adelaide of Burgundy (patron saint of second marriages)

Feast day: December 16

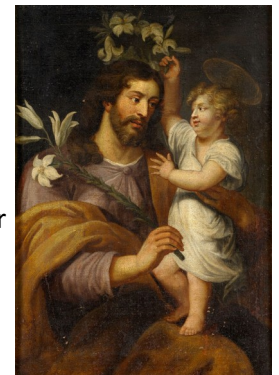
Adelaide married Otto in Pavia, Italy in 951. He was crowned Emperor in Rome, Italy in 952, and Adelaide reigned with him for 20 years. Widowed in 973, she was ill-treated by her step-son, Emperor Otto II and his wife Theophano, but eventually reconciled with her royal in-laws.

When Otto II died in 983, he was succeeded by his infant son, Otto III. Theophano acted as regent, and since she still did not like Adelaide, used her power to exile her from the royal court. Theophano died in 991, and Adelaide returned once again to the court to act as regent for the child emperor. She used her position and power to help the poor, to evangelize, especially among the Slavs, and to build and restore monasteries and churches. When Otto III was old enough, Adelaide retired to the convent of Selta near Cologne, a house she had built. Though she never became a nun, she spent the rest of her days there in prayer.



Saint Joseph (patron saint of married people) Feast day: March 19

St. Joseph was a descendant of the house of David, a builder by trade; traditionally a carpenter, but may have been a stone worker. He was the earthly spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary and foster and adoptive father of Jesus Christ. He was a visionary who was visited by angels. He is known for his willingness to immediately get up and do what God told him to do.



Saint Monica (patron saint of married women) Feast day: August 27

Faithful mother to Saint Augustine of Hippo, Saint Monica is the patron saint of married women and mothers. Despite an ill-tempered husband, a critical mother-in-law, and a stubbornly sinful son, she persisted in an intimate prayer life with God, interceding often on the behalf of others. As a result of her fervent prayer, her husband, mother-in-law, and son Augustine converted to Christianity. Saint Monica's example of prayer should be a guiding light to all married people, both women and men.



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SAINTS AND PRAYERS

Saint Priscilla (patron saint of good marriages) Feast day: July 8

Saint Priscilla is often mentioned with her husband Saint Aquila. St. Priscilla and St. Aquila were friends with St. Paul and important early Christian martyrs. They supported early Christians by supplying their home as a place for Christians to meet and worship. They are mentioned seven times in the New Testament in the book of Acts and in St. Paul's letters.

Saint Rita of Cascia (patron saint of difficult marriages) Feast day: May 22

In St. Rita's youth she wanted to enter a convent and become a nun, but her parents arranged for her marriage anyway. She lived out her vocation to marriage and motherhood despite her violent husband. After many difficult years of marriage and many prayers, Rita's husband repented, but was soon killed by an enemy of his. Later she fulfilled her dream of becoming a nun, joining an Augustinian convent.



Saint Thomas More (patron saint of difficult marriages) Feast day: June 22

Saint Thomas More is a famous Catholic saint who stood up to Henry VIII in defense of the Catholic Church's teachings on marriage. King Henry VIII of England wished to divorce his wife and marry another woman, but he was unable to obtain the Pope's blessing. St. Thomas More was tried and unjustly convicted of treason for not acknowledging the king as the head of the Church of England. He would later be martyred for his faith and loyalty to the Church. Despite the fact that he is the patron saint of difficult marriages, he enjoyed two happy marriages, one to his beloved wife Jane Colt who died at a young age, and later to a widow named Alice Middleton. It was the difficult marriage of Henry VIII that earned more the patronage of difficult marriages, not his own life as a husband.



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SAINTS AND PRAYERS

Prayer for the Intercession of St. Monica

Dear St. Monica, troubled wife and mother, many sorrows pierced your heart during your lifetime. Yet, you never despaired or lost faith. With confidence, persistence, and profound faith, you prayed daily for the conversion of your beloved husband, Patricius, and your beloved son, Augustine; your prayers were answered. Grant me that same fortitude, patience, and trust in the Lord. Intercede for me, dear St. Monica, that God may favorably hear my plea for (mention request here...)and grant me the grace to accept His Will in all things, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

Prayer in Defense of Marriage

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.

Prayer for Married Couples

Almighty and eternal God, You blessed the union of married couples so that they might reflect the union of Christ with his Church: look with kindness on them. Renew their marriage covenant, increase your love in them, and strengthen their bond of peace so that, with their children, they may always rejoice in the gift of your blessings. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

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MEDIA RESOURCES FROM THE BISHOP GRADY MEMORIAL LIBRARY

To reserve resources from the Bishop Grady Memorial Library, contact BGML@orlandodiocese.org, call 407-246-4895, or visit the website at: www.orlandodiocese.org/ministries-offices/bishop-grady-memorial-library

- DVD-0664A & B Marriage: Unique for a Reason series
- DVD-0797 Blessed Is Marriage: A Guide to the Beatitudes for Catholic Couples
- DVD-018 Sacrament of Matrimony, Past and Present
- DVD-0452 The Second Half of Marriage
- DVD-0607 Six Dates for Catholic Couples
- DVD-0671 The 5 Love Languages
- DVD-078 The Vocation to Marriage
- DVD-0307 Introduction to Natural Family Planning
- CD-0155 Los cinco idiomas del amor

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DOCUMENTS AND WEBSITES

USCCB Search for this title at www.usccb.org.

- Marriage, Love and Life in the Divine Plan (also available in Spanish)

Marriage: Unique for a Reason search for these resources at www.marriageuniqueforareason.org

- Made for Each Other: Sexual Difference is Essential to Marriage (also available in Spanish)
- Made for Life: Marriage Welcomes the Supreme Gift of the Child (also available in Spanish)

Other Resources

- www.foryourmarriage.org
- www.portumatrimonio.org
- Seven Keys to Marriage: A Married Couple Looks at the Bishops' New Pastoral, Marriage: Love and Life in the Divine Plan www.americancatholic.org

Vatican Documents Search for these titles at www.vatican.va

- Gaudium et Spes, paragraph 48 (Vatican II document)
"Marriage signifies the love of Christ by which He formed the Church as His spouse; "just as of old God encountered His people in a covenant of love and fidelity, so our Savior, the spouse of the Church, now encounters Christian spouses through the sacrament of marriage."
- On the Role of the Family in the Modern World, Pope Saint John Paul II (also available in Spanish)

Diocesan Resources

- Marriage Encounter - www.wwme.org, Max & Liz Maxwell, 407-359-1710
- Retrouvaille - www.retrouvaille.org, Frank & Phyllis Milmore, 407-366-8941
- Renovacion Conyugal (Spanish) www.renovacionconyugal.org, 407-690-0700
- Couples for Christ - Oscar & Helen Baliwag, 321-263-9369

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MARRIAGE: GOD'S GIFT OF LOVE SUSTAINS YOU: SCRIPT

"Have you not read that from the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female' and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, no human being must separate." Matthew 19:4-6

Husbands and wives need each other. God made them female and male out of love, for love. The love between a husband and wife comes from God. It is placed in our hearts by God to fulfill his loving design for each person.

"Without me you can do nothing." John 15:5

For the Catholic Church, marriage is more than a social contract made by two people. It is more than the benefits afforded married couples by society. The sanctity of marriage unites the entire being of spouses in love and is a sign of God's love for humanity.

The love of the spouses requires, of its very nature, unity and permanence, which embraces their entire life: "so they are no longer two, but one flesh." They are called to grow continually in their communion through day-to-day fidelity to their marriage promise of total mutual self-giving. This human communion is confirmed, purified, and completed by communion in Jesus Christ, given through the Sacrament of Marriage. It is deepened by lives of faith and by the Eucharist received together. The Holy Eucharist, in fact, is considered "the source and summit of the Christian life" (Lumen Gentium, no.11). It can be said also that Eucharist is the source and summit of Christian marriage as well.

"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the church and handed himself over for her." Ephesians 5:25

In a profound way, marriage represents and reflects the love Jesus Christ has for his Church. Marriage is a gift from God and a vocation. A vocation is God's plan for our lives and by following this plan we journey towards holiness and grow closer to God. Those who are called to the vocation of marriage are called to place God in the center of their marriage, realizing that God instituted marriage as a Sacrament.

Marriage is the joining together of a man and a woman to be co-creators with God to bring children into the world. While not all marriages are blessed with children, God calls us to be open to life because of our great love for our spouse and our great love for God. This is why the Church recommends methods of natural birth planning where couples abstain during times of fertility. This affirms the dignity between husband and wife and promotes mutual respect and total acceptance.

Marriage between a man and a woman unites children with their father and mother in a loving bond. Family is a microcosm of the world and it is how we are introduced to our faith and our understanding of self-less love. When we love and trust God and follow his will for our lives, we cherish families, marriages and the children entrusted to us. We also respect the gift of life from conception to natural death.

"The root of the crisis of marriage and family lies in a false notion of freedom." Blessed Pope John Paul II

Through the power of Christ's redemptive death, which is realized in the Eucharist and represented by the marriage covenant, the husband and wife as domestic Church are partners in the creation of "a new heaven and a new earth."

"Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth." – Revelation 21:1