



The Blessing of the Sacrament of Matrimony

During this week Feb 7 – 14, we celebrate and call attention to the blessing of the sacrament of marriage. The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) calls out that Marriage is a *“covenant, by which a man and a woman establish between themselves a partnership of the whole of life, is by its nature ordered toward the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of offspring”*. (CCC 1601)

“Since marriage establishes the couple in a public state of life in the Church, it is fitting that its celebration be public, in the framework of a liturgical celebration, before the priest (or a witness authorized by the Church), the witnesses, and the assembly of the faithful.” (CCC 1663) Thus today we celebrate with our whole nation, National Marriage Week. We affirm the blessing of a sacramental marriage, instituted by Jesus Christ to give grace.

In the following, please find additional resources to strengthen your marriage, to bring healing to your marriage, even to repair troubled marriages.
Fr Mark



At-Home Marriage Retreat – National Marriage Week 2021

This year’s theme for National Marriage Week is To Have, To Hold, and To Honor, a reminder of the promises made on your wedding day. The stories and reflection questions provided at the web address below are intended to help you renew your commitment “to have, to hold, to honor” your spouse. Celebrate and enrich your marriage this week by taking some time each day to listen to the Word of God, meditate, reflect, and pray together. Each day is an opportunity to read and meditate on a passage from Scripture followed by a re-imagined story from a different perspective. Reflect on the questions that follow and close with the prayer for couples. This exercise of praying with the Scriptures is called *Lectio Divina*. It consists of four steps: *lectio* (the reading of Scriptures), *meditatio* (meditation), *oratio* (prayer), and *contemplatio* (contemplation).

Web address for the Seven-day-at-home retreat focused on marriage

- English: tinyurl.com/tp3hr4zm < web page address to a print copy of the retreat.
- Lengua española: tinyurl.com/gq9hyx1d < dirección de la página web a una copia impresa del retiro.

Focus on healing and overcoming adversity

For Your Marriage website at <https://www.foryourmarriage.org/married-life/overcoming-adversity/>

Every married couple will hit road bumps in their life together. Some are fairly easy to overcome with skills and habits of listening and respect; others take much time, effort, prayer, and professional help. Don’t lose hope! God is with you and help is available, no matter what you are facing. Take courage, and trust that through the challenges you face, the Lord will be there. Below the articles you’ll find a list of common adversities that married couples and families face; each section has advice, encouragement, and real-life witness stories of facing these challenges.

The Retrouvaille Program

The Retrouvaille Program is for Married Couples Facing Difficult Challenges in their Relationship

Retrouvaille website at <https://www.helpourmarriage.org/>

- A Marriage program that helps couples restore their marriage and rebuild a loving relationship.
- A Christian marriage program, Catholic in origin, where couples of all faiths or no faith background are encouraged to attend.
- Primarily a practical program to improve communication, build stronger marriages, and help couples reconnect.
- Presenters are not trained marriage counselors, but rather couples sharing their personal stories of marital struggles and the tools they used to rediscover their love.

Other reflections on Marriage

- *Marriage and family concerns everyone:* Each of us comes from a family. Each of us is a son or a daughter. In God's plan every child is meant to be the fruit of his or her mother's and father's love for each other in the sacred bond of marriage. Therefore, conversations about marriage and the family in the public square concern all of us, and therefore the Church's teaching on marriage and family is important for all of us.
- *Acknowledging the experience and pain of broken marriages and families:* Sadly, many of us have experienced or know family or friends who have experienced the pain of a broken marriage and family. Each experience is unique, and the Lord's mercy is great. Regardless of our individual circumstances, we all have a role to play in God's vision of the family. Ultimately, through baptism, all of us are part of the perfect family – God's family – as beloved sons and daughters of God the Father.
- *To Have, To Hold, To Honor:* The theme for this year's celebration of National Marriage Week recalls the vows spouses made to each other on their wedding day. This exchange of consent "*is the indispensable element that 'makes the marriage'*" (CCC 1626). Couples are invited to meditate on how they live out their vows in their daily lives. National Marriage Week is an opportunity for married couples to reflect on how they have grown together since their wedding day and to ponder how they can continue to grow in loving and honoring their spouse.

2021 National Marriage Week Website

<https://www.foryourmarriage.org/celebrate-national-marriage-week/>

Catholic Church teaching -The Sacrament of Matrimony

https://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/p2s2c3a7.htm

Recibir, prometer, respetar

Para más información y recursos, visite portumatrimonio.org.