

51. When Love Requires Courage

Jos 1:5–9; Mt 14:27

Theme: “When Love Requires Courage: Walking Together Without Fear”

Marriage is not only a promise of affection; it is a decision to keep walking together even when life becomes uncertain. In today’s readings, God tells Joshua, “Be strong and courageous,” while Jesus says to the frightened disciples, “Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid.” Christian marriage is built on that same courage: trusting that God walks with the couple through calm waters and storms alike.

INTRODUCTION

In 1930, during the construction of a bridge in New York, a worker slipped and nearly fell into the river below. Another worker instinctively grabbed him, risking his own life to save him. When reporters later asked why he did it, the man simply replied, “Because no one should face the fall alone.”

That is one of the deepest meanings of marriage. Today, N. and N. stand before God and before all of us to say: “You will never face life alone again.” Not alone in joy, not alone in sickness, not alone in uncertainty, not alone in old age. Marriage is the courage to become a safe place for another human being.

But love requires courage because every human heart is imperfect. At times we fail one another through impatience, selfishness, fear, or silence. And so, before celebrating this sacred covenant, let us acknowledge our sins and ask the Lord for mercy and strength.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, You tell us in moments of fear, “Do not be afraid”:

Lord, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, You call husbands and wives to walk together in faithful love: **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, You remain beside us in every storm and every season of life: **Lord, have mercy.**

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God have mercy on us,
forgive us our sins, strengthen us in love and courage,
heal every fear that keeps us from loving fully,
and bring us to everlasting life.

Amen.

COLLECT

God of faithful love,
in Your wisdom You created man and woman
to walk together in trust and tenderness.
Grant that N. and N.,
strengthened by Your presence,
may face every joy and challenge with courage,
holding fast to one another in faith, hope, and enduring love.
Teach them never to be afraid,
for You are always beside them.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son,
who lives and reigns with You in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

HOMILY

In 1982, a small plane crashed into the icy Potomac River in Washington, D.C. Rescue helicopters rushed to the scene. One man in the freezing water was repeatedly handed the rescue line, but every time he passed it to someone else first — to a terrified passenger, to an exhausted woman, to another survivor struggling to stay afloat. By the time rescuers came back for him, he had disappeared beneath the water.

People later called it “the courage of love.”
Because real love is not merely a feeling. Real love says: *“Your life matters to me as much as my own.”*

Today’s readings speak exactly about that kind of courage.

Joshua stands before an impossible task. Moses is dead. The people are afraid. The future is uncertain. And God says to him: “Be strong and courageous... for I am with you wherever you go.”

In the Gospel, the disciples are trapped in a storm. The waves are violent. Fear takes over. Then Jesus comes walking on the water and says:

“Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid.”

That sentence may become one of the most important promises in this marriage:

“Do not be afraid.”

Because every marriage eventually encounters storms.

There will be days of laughter and days of silence. Days when love feels effortless and days when it feels like work. There may be financial pressures, misunderstandings, disappointments, sickness, exhaustion, or grief. Marriage is not the absence of storms; it is deciding whose hand you will hold in the storm.

A young wife once asked her grandmother, married for over sixty years, “What is the secret of a long marriage?”
The grandmother smiled and said, “We belonged to a generation that repaired things instead of throwing them away.”

That wisdom is deeply Christian.
Modern culture often says: “If things become difficult, leave.”
But the Gospel says: “Stay, forgive, rebuild, begin again.”

Courage in marriage is often quiet.
It is the courage to apologize first.
The courage to listen when tired.
The courage to remain faithful when life becomes ordinary.
The courage to say, “We will get through this together.”

There is a beautiful Jewish story about a rabbi who asked an elderly couple, “How did you remain together for so many years?”
The husband answered, “Every morning I asked myself: ‘How can I make her life easier today?’”
And the wife said, “So did I.”

That is love transformed into daily sacrifice.

N. and N., today you are not promising perfection. You are promising presence. You are saying to one another:

“When fear comes, I will not run away.

When weakness comes, I will not abandon you.
When storms come, I will hold on.”

And even more importantly, Christ says to both of you:
“I will not abandon you.”

That is why Christian marriage is sacred.
Not because two perfect people found each other, but because God enters the covenant and walks with them.

There is an old story of a sailor caught in a violent storm at sea. The waves were enormous, and the passengers panicked. Yet one little girl remained calm. After they reached shore, someone asked her, “Weren’t you afraid?”
She answered, “No. My father was the captain.”

That is the heart of Christian marriage.
The sea may sometimes become rough, but you know who guides the ship.

So, N. and N., be strong and courageous.
Not because life will always be easy,
but because God walks with you wherever you go.
And when love requires courage, grace will always be greater than fear.

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

Gathered in faith and joy, let us pray to God our loving Father, who strengthens every covenant of love and walks with His people through every storm.

1. For the Church throughout the world, that she may continue to be a sign of faithful love, courage, and hope in a fearful world, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

2. For N. and N., united today in holy matrimony, that their marriage may be rooted in trust, strengthened in trials, and filled with enduring tenderness, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

3. For married couples everywhere, especially those carrying heavy burdens or struggling through difficult times, that they may rediscover the courage to forgive, rebuild, and persevere in love, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

4. For families, children, and all who long for love and security, that homes may become places of peace, encouragement, and compassion, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

5. For our departed loved ones and all who helped shape the lives of this couple, that they may rejoice forever in the fullness of God’s kingdom, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Father of mercy and strength,
You never abandon those who place their trust in You.
Hear the prayers we bring before You today,
and keep us courageous in love and steadfast in faith.
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Pray, brothers and sisters, that this sacrifice,
offered in thanksgiving for the covenant of love begun today,
and for the courage to remain faithful through every season of life,
may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

PREFACE

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation,
always and everywhere to give You thanks,
Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God.

For in Your wisdom and love
You created man and woman
to walk together as companions in life,
helping one another through every joy and trial.
In the covenant of marriage
You reveal Your faithful presence,
teaching us that true love is patient in difficulty,
courageous in sacrifice,
and steadfast in hope.

Today You unite N. and N. in a sacred bond,
calling them to trust in You
when life becomes uncertain
and to hear again the words of Christ: "Do not be afraid."

And so, with Angels and Archangels,
with Thrones and Dominions,
and with all the hosts and powers of heaven,
we sing the hymn of Your glory, as without end we acclaim:

INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER

At the Savior's command and formed by divine teaching,
let us pray to the Father who walks beside His children
and gives courage to every loving heart:

NUPTIAL BLESSING

Dear brothers and sisters,
let us humbly pray to the Lord for N. and N.,
who come today to begin their married life at God's altar.

Holy Father,
Creator of love and source of every blessing,
pour out Your grace upon N. and N.
United today in the covenant of marriage,
may they remain strong and courageous in every season of life.

When joy fills their home,
may they give You thanks.
When trials come upon them,
may they never lose heart.
Teach them to walk together in patience,
to speak with kindness,
to forgive quickly,
and to carry one another's burdens in love.

May their home be a place of peace and welcome.
Bless them with health, wisdom, and faithful friends.
Grant that they may be blessed with children,
and may they guide them with tenderness and faith.

And after a lifetime of steadfast love,
bring them with all who love them
to the eternal wedding feast of heaven.

Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord Jesus Christ,
You said to Your Apostles:
Peace I leave you, my peace I give you.
Look not on our sins, but on the faith of Your Church,
and graciously grant her peace and unity
in accordance with Your will.
Strengthen especially all married couples,
that amid the storms of life they may never lose courage,
trust, or tenderness toward one another.
Who live and reign for ever and ever.
Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Behold the Lamb of God,
behold Him who takes away the sins of the world.
In Him we find the courage to love faithfully and to live without fear.
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

Love becomes beautiful not because life is easy,
but because two people continue choosing one another
even when life is difficult.
Christ has now nourished us with His own life and love.
May N. and N. always remember
that the Lord who joined them today
will remain beside them tomorrow,
in every storm and every sunrise.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Having shared at this heavenly table,
we ask You, Lord,
to strengthen N. and N. in the covenant they have begun today.
May this sacrament deepen their love,
give them courage in times of trial,
and remind them always
that You remain with them wherever they go.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord bless you and keep you strong in love.
May He give you courage in difficult moments, patience in times of
strain, and joy in every blessing.

May your home be filled with peace, laughter, forgiveness, and faith.
And may Almighty God bless all of you,
the Father, and the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by the courage of your love.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

“Marriage is not the promise of a storm-free life,
but the promise that no storm will ever be faced alone.”

52. Marriage and Emotional Maturity

Prov 15:1–4; Lk 6:41–42

Theme: “Love That Learns to Speak Gently and See Clearly”
Marriage flourishes not through perfection, but through emotional maturity: the humility to examine oneself before judging the other, and the wisdom to speak words that heal rather than wound.

INTRODUCTION

A man once visited an old carpenter known for restoring broken furniture. In the workshop stood a beautiful table split deeply through the middle. The visitor asked, “Can this still be repaired?” The carpenter smiled and replied, “Wood breaks suddenly. But it cracks slowly.” Then he added quietly, “Most things break slowly before they break visibly.”

The same is true in marriage. Homes are rarely destroyed by one dramatic moment. More often, relationships weaken through harsh words, unspoken hurts, constant criticism, wounded pride, and the inability to listen with tenderness. Today, the Word of God invites us to a deeper kind of love — a mature love that knows how to speak gently, forgive humbly, and look honestly at oneself before pointing at another.

As we gather to celebrate this marriage, we also recognize our own need for healing. We have all spoken carelessly, judged unfairly, or failed to love patiently. Therefore, with humble hearts, let us enter now into the Penitential Act.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, you teach us that gentle words bring healing and life:
Lord, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, you call us to remove the plank from our own eyes before judging others: **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, you strengthen husbands and wives to grow in patience, understanding, and emotional wisdom: **Lord, have mercy.**

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God have mercy on us,
forgive us the wounds we have caused by pride,
impatience, and careless words,
heal what is broken within us, and bring us to everlasting life. **Amen.**

COLLECT

O God,
who teach us that wisdom is revealed
through gentle speech, humble hearts, and merciful understanding,
look kindly upon N. and N.,
who today enter the covenant of marriage.
Grant that their love may grow in patience during trials,
in tenderness during misunderstandings,
and in maturity through every season of life.
Teach them to speak words that heal,
to listen with compassion,
and to reflect your faithful love in their home.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

HOMILY

A woman once carried two cups to her grandmother's table — one made of thick steel, the other of delicate porcelain. As she placed them down carelessly, the grandmother stopped her and said, "Be gentle with porcelain." The young woman laughed and replied, "It's only a cup." The grandmother answered, "One day you will discover that hearts break more easily than porcelain."

That is the quiet wisdom hidden inside today's readings.

The Book of Proverbs tells us: "*A gentle tongue is a tree of life, but perverseness in it breaks the spirit.*" Words do not disappear after they are spoken. They remain inside people. Some words become shelter; others become scars.

In marriage, emotional maturity is not measured by intelligence, success, or charm. It is measured by how two people speak to each other when tired, disappointed, hurt, or misunderstood. Anyone can be kind during romance. Mature love reveals itself during conflict.

A priest once counseled an elderly couple celebrating fifty years of marriage. He asked them, "What kept your marriage alive?" The husband smiled and said, "Whenever we were angry, we never tried to win the argument. We tried to protect the relationship." That is emotional maturity.

Jesus today speaks with startling honesty: "*Why do you notice the splinter in your brother's eye but do not perceive the wooden beam in your own?*" Marriage becomes dangerous when criticism becomes easier than self-examination. Immature love says: "You are the problem." Mature love asks: "How have I contributed to this pain?"

Many marriages collapse not because love disappeared, but because pride became stronger than tenderness.

There is a story of a couple who argued bitterly one evening. The husband stormed out of the house and drove away in anger. Hours later he returned. His wife was asleep on the couch, still holding the phone in her hand. Beside her was a simple note: "I was angry, but I was more afraid of losing you than winning this fight." He later said that note saved their marriage.

That is the Gospel in ordinary life.

Today, N. and N., you are not promising never to hurt each other. Human beings inevitably fail one another. What you are promising is something deeper: that when hurt comes, you will not stop choosing each other. You are promising to grow — emotionally, spiritually, and humanly.

A mature marriage learns three sacred sentences:

- "I was wrong."
- "Please forgive me."
- "Thank you for staying."

The world often admires dramatic love stories. But heaven admires faithful love stories — the kind built quietly through patience, restraint, forgiveness, and daily tenderness.

There will be days when one of you feels weak, anxious, frustrated, or misunderstood. In those moments, remember this: the tone of your voice can either become a sanctuary or a battlefield.

A counselor once said, “Children do not learn love from perfect parents. They learn love by watching imperfect people treat each other with mercy.” One day, if God blesses you with children, they will learn what marriage means not from your wedding photographs, but from the way you speak to one another at the dinner table.

And finally, let me end with this.

After many years of marriage, an old man was asked, “What is the secret of staying together so long?” He answered softly, “Every morning I asked myself one question: ‘Will my words today make this house heavier or lighter?’”

That is the question before every marriage.

May your home never become heavy with contempt, silence, or bitterness. May your words become a tree of life. And may your love grow not only in passion, but in emotional maturity, until the day when your marriage itself becomes a sermon — quietly teaching others how God loves the world. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

Mindful that God heals wounded hearts and strengthens those who seek wisdom and tenderness in love, let us bring before him our prayers for this couple and for the whole Church.

1. For the Church:

that she may always speak words of truth with compassion, correcting without condemning and guiding with mercy, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

2. For N. and N.:

that their marriage may be rooted in patience, emotional wisdom, honest communication, and deep forgiveness, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

3. For married couples everywhere:

that in moments of conflict they may seek understanding before judgment and reconciliation before pride, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

4. For families and children:

that homes may become places where gentle words heal wounds and where love is expressed with tenderness and respect, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

5. For all who carry emotional pain, loneliness, or broken relationships:

that God may heal their hearts and lead them toward peace and hope, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Heavenly Father,
you know the hidden needs of every human heart.
Receive these prayers and teach us all
to love with humility, patience, and mercy.
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Pray, brothers and sisters, that this sacrifice,
offered for a love strengthened by patience, forgiveness,
and gentle understanding,
may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

PREFACE

It is truly right and just,
our duty and our salvation,
always and everywhere to give you thanks,
Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God.

For in your wisdom
you created man and woman in love,
teaching them that true unity is formed
not only in joy but also in patience, humility, and forgiveness.
In Christ your Son,
you reveal a love that does not wound or humiliate,
but heals, restores, and lifts up the human heart.

Today you bless N. and N.
as they begin their married life together.
May their words bring peace in moments of tension,
their tenderness bring healing in moments of hurt,
and their faithfulness reveal your presence within their home.

And so, with Angels and Archangels,
and with all the saints,
we proclaim your glory,
as without end we acclaim:

INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER

At the Savior's command and formed by divine teaching,
let us pray with confidence to the Father who teaches us mercy,
patience, and the grace to forgive one another.

NUPTIAL BLESSING

Dear brothers and sisters,
let us humbly pray to the Lord
for these newly married spouses,
that he may graciously pour out his blessing upon them.

Holy Father, creator of love and source of all communion,
look with kindness upon N. and N.,
who today entrust their lives to one another.

Grant that they may learn the wisdom
of gentle speech and patient listening.
When misunderstandings arise,
give them humility to seek truth without hurting one another.
When emotions grow strong,
teach them to protect their love more than their pride.

May their home be filled with kindness, laughter,
honesty, and peace.
May they comfort one another in suffering,
encourage one another in weakness,
and rejoice together in every blessing.

Bless them with children,
that they may lovingly nurture them in faith,
wisdom, and compassion,
and become for them an example of mercy and fidelity.

May their marriage reflect the faithful love of Christ for his Church,
until they come at last to the eternal wedding feast of heaven.
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord Jesus Christ,
who said to your Apostles:
Peace I leave you, my peace I give you,
look not on our sins, but on the faith of your Church,
and graciously grant her peace and unity in accordance with your will.

Teach us also to speak peace within our homes,
so that our words may heal wounds rather than deepen them.
Who live and reign for ever and ever.

Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

This is Jesus Christ,
the Lamb of God who heals the wounded heart,
teaches us mercy,
and strengthens us to love with patience and humility.
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

Love grows beautiful not when two people never fail,
but when they continue choosing tenderness after failure.
Today Christ has entered this marriage through the Eucharist.
May his presence teach this couple to speak gently,
forgive quickly, and carry one another with compassion
through all the seasons of life.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Having shared at this heavenly table, we pray, O Lord,
that N. and N. may be strengthened by the grace of this sacrament.
Teach them to build their marriage through patience in difficulty,
wisdom in speech, and mercy in moments of weakness.
May their home always reflect
the peace and tenderness of Christ.
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord bless you and keep you.
May he teach you to speak with kindness,
to listen with compassion, and to forgive with humility.
May he strengthen your marriage in times of trial,
fill your home with peace and laughter,
and make your love a refuge for one another and for all who enter
your home.
And may almighty God bless you,
the Father, and the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by the patience you show,
the mercy you give, and the love you speak into one another's lives.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

“A strong marriage is not built by two perfect people,
but by two humble people
who keep choosing gentle words over wounded pride.”

53. The Blessing of Simplicity in Family Life

Phil 4:11–13; Mt 6:19–21

Theme: “Where Your Treasure Is: Building a Home Rich in Love, Not Possessions”

INTRODUCTION

A traveller once visited a tiny village after a terrible flood. Many families had lost nearly everything they owned. Yet one small family was sitting outside their damaged hut, sharing a simple meal, laughing together. The traveller could not understand it. “How can you still smile after losing so much?” he asked. The old grandmother answered quietly, “The flood took our furniture, not our family. It carried away our roof, not our love.”

Today’s readings speak about that kind of treasure. Saint Paul tells us that he learned the secret of being content in every circumstance. Jesus reminds us that earthly riches fade, rust, and disappear, but the treasures of the heart remain forever. Marriage becomes beautiful not because a couple owns everything, but because they learn that love, faith, forgiveness, simplicity, and trust in God are the true riches of a home.

Yet many times we have measured life by success, possessions, comparison, or pride. We have allowed anxiety, selfishness, and material concerns to distract us from what truly matters. Therefore, as we prepare to celebrate these sacred mysteries, let us acknowledge our sins and ask the Lord for mercy and simplicity of heart.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, You teach us that the greatest treasure is a loving and faithful heart: **Lord, have mercy.**

Christ Jesus, You call families to trust in Your providence more than in earthly security: **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, You remain the lasting treasure that neither time nor loss can destroy: **Lord, have mercy.**

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God have mercy on us,
forgive us the times we placed earthly things above love,
failed to trust in His providence,
and neglected the treasures of kindness, simplicity, and faith;
and bring us to everlasting life.

Amen.

COLLECT

O God, who teach us through Your Son
that the true treasure of life is found in love that is faithful,
humble, and enduring,
look with kindness upon N. and N.
as they begin their married life together.
Grant that their home may be rich in charity,
steadfast in trust, simple in joy,
and strong in every trial.
May they always seek first Your kingdom
and discover in one another the lasting gift of Your presence.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son,
who lives and reigns with You in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

HOMILY

There is an old story about a wealthy businessman who owned several houses, expensive cars, and every luxury imaginable. One evening, while driving through a poor neighbourhood, his car broke down. A humble mechanic invited him into his small home while repairs were being done. The businessman noticed the family gathered around a worn-out table, eating soup and bread. They had very little, yet the room was full of warmth, laughter, and peace.

As he left, the businessman said quietly, "Tonight I realized something painful: I have spent my whole life buying things for my house, but I never built a home."

That is exactly what Jesus is speaking about today: "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." The question is not whether we have possessions. The question is whether possessions have us.

Marriage today is often measured by appearances: the perfect wedding, the perfect house, the perfect lifestyle. Couples sometimes begin married life burdened by comparison, pressure, and fear of not having enough. But Saint Paul speaks from experience when he says, "I have learned the secret of being content." Notice that word: *learned*. Simplicity is not automatic. Contentment is spiritual maturity.

A young couple once began married life in a tiny one-room apartment. During winter, rainwater leaked through the roof onto their bed. One night, instead of complaining, they placed pots under the leaks and laughed as they moved around the room avoiding the drops. Fifty years later, when asked about the happiest years of their marriage, they spoke about that tiny apartment. Why? Because struggle shared with love becomes sacred memory.

The deepest poverty in marriage is not lack of money. It is lack of tenderness. Some homes are beautifully decorated but emotionally empty. Others are materially simple yet spiritually rich because forgiveness lives there, prayer lives there, patience lives there, and God lives there.

Jesus warns us today that earthly treasures rust and disappear. Health changes. Beauty fades. Success fluctuates. But the treasures built through sacrifice and fidelity become eternal. Every quiet act of love matters: making tea for a tired spouse, listening after a difficult day, forgiving after an argument, staying faithful during hardship. Heaven is often built in ordinary moments.

There is a touching story of an elderly husband who visited his wife in a nursing home every single morning. Someone asked him, "Does your wife still recognize you?" He smiled sadly and replied, "No. She no longer knows who I am. But I still know who she is." That is treasure. That is covenant. That is love purified of selfishness.

N. and N., your marriage will not become holy because life will always be easy. It will become holy when you choose each other again and again, especially in ordinary days. Build a home where prayer matters more than pride, where presence matters more than presents, where gratitude matters more than luxury.

One day, many years from now, people may not remember what you owned, what car you drove, or how large your house was. But they will remember whether your home radiated peace. They will remember whether tired people found comfort there, whether children learned kindness there, whether God was welcomed there.

And when all earthly treasures finally fade away, one treasure alone will remain before God: the love you gave away.

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

Trusting not in earthly riches but in the loving providence of God, let us place before Him our prayers for this couple and for the whole Church.

1. For the Church:

that she may continue to teach the world that love, compassion, and holiness are treasures greater than material wealth, we pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

2. For N. and N.:

that their home may always be filled with simplicity, gratitude, prayer, and mutual care, we pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

3. For married couples:

that they may remain faithful during times of struggle and discover joy in ordinary moments of family life, we pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

4. For families burdened by financial worries or hardship:

that they may find support, dignity, and hope through loving communities and trust in God's providence, we pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

5. For all gathered here:

that we may seek treasures that endure forever — faith, kindness, mercy, and love — we pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Heavenly Father,

You know the deepest needs of every human heart.

Teach us to value what is eternal
and to place our trust in You alone.

Grant these prayers through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Pray, brothers and sisters, that this sacrifice, offered in gratitude for the gift of faithful love and for the blessing of a home built on lasting treasures, may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

PREFACE

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give You thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God.

For You created man and woman in love
and called them to become for one another
a sign of Your faithful presence in the world.
In the covenant of marriage
You teach us that the richest homes
are not those filled with possessions,
but those filled with mercy, patience, generosity, and peace.

Through Christ Your Son,
You remind us that earthly treasures pass away,
but every act of love offered in faith endures forever.
And so, with Angels and Archangels, with Thrones and Dominions,
and with all the hosts and Powers of heaven,
we sing the hymn of Your glory, as without end we acclaim:

INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER

At the Savior's command
and formed by divine teaching,
we dare to say the prayer
that unites every family in trust, simplicity, and love:

NUPTIAL BLESSING

Dear brothers and sisters,
let us humbly pray to the Lord for N. and N.,
who come today before God's altar,
that He may graciously bless their marriage
and fill their home with lasting peace.

Holy Father,
maker of all creation,
You have made love the foundation of family life
and taught us through Your Son
that the greatest treasures are found in faithful hearts.

Look with kindness upon N. and N.
Unite them ever more deeply in mutual affection,
patience, generosity, and joy.
May they be rich not merely in earthly things,
but in compassion, forgiveness, and trust in You.

Bless their home with peace.
May they comfort one another in times of sorrow,
strengthen one another in moments of weakness,
and rejoice together in all the blessings of life.

Grant that they may be blessed with children,
raise them in wisdom and faith,
and create a family where Your name is honoured and loved.

And after a long and fruitful life together,
may they come with all who love them
to the eternal banquet of heaven.

Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord Jesus Christ,
who said to Your Apostles:
Peace I leave you, my peace I give you,
look not on our sins, but on the faith of Your Church,
and graciously grant her peace and unity
in accordance with Your will.

Teach us to seek peace not in possessions or success,
but in hearts rooted in love and trust.
Who live and reign for ever and ever.

Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Behold the Lamb of God,
behold Him who alone is our lasting treasure and enduring peace.
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

Love grows quietly.
Not through grand achievements alone,
but through daily kindness, hidden sacrifices,
patient listening, and faithful presence.
The Eucharist we have shared today reminds us
that God Himself comes humbly, simply, and lovingly into our lives.
May this couple always remember:
a family cantered on Christ will never be poor in what truly matters.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Having shared at this heavenly table,
we humbly ask You, Lord,
to strengthen N. and N.
in the grace of this sacrament.
May their marriage reflect the simplicity, fidelity,
and generosity of Christ,
and may their home become a place of welcome,
peace, and enduring love.
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord bless you and keep you.
May He teach you to treasure one another above all earthly things.
May your home be filled with gratitude in abundance,
peace in difficulty,
and love that grows stronger through the years.
And may almighty God bless you,
the Father, and the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by building a home rich in faith,
simplicity, and love.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

“A blessed marriage is not measured by how much a couple owns,
but by how much love remains when everything else fades.”

54. Reconciliation Before Sunset

Eph 4:26–27; Mt 5:23–24

Theme: “Never Let the Sun Set on Your Love”

Marriage is not the union of two perfect people, but the daily decision to reconcile before distance hardens into division. Love survives not because couples never hurt each other, but because they refuse to let wounds remain overnight.

INTRODUCTION

A sailor once said that storms at sea are dangerous, but silence after the storm is even more frightening. During one voyage, two brothers working on the same ship argued bitterly and stopped speaking to each other. Days passed in cold silence. Then one night, a violent storm struck. As the ship tilted, one brother slipped into the raging water. Without hesitation, the other brother jumped after him and saved his life. Later, trembling and exhausted, he whispered: “I almost let my pride bury my brother before the sea could.”

That is the danger Jesus speaks about today. Relationships rarely collapse because of one great betrayal; they weaken through small unreconciled hurts, unspoken disappointments, and delayed forgiveness. Saint Paul warns: “Do not let the sun go down on your anger.” Love cannot breathe where pride locks the doors of the heart.

Today, as N. and N. come before God to begin their married life, they do not promise never to hurt one another. They promise something deeper: never to stop returning to each other. And so, before we celebrate this sacred covenant, let us acknowledge the moments when anger lasted too long, when pride spoke louder than love, and ask the Lord for mercy and reconciliation.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, You reconcile sinners and restore broken hearts:

Lord, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, You taught us to seek our brother before approaching the altar: **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, You never let our failures separate us from Your love:

Lord, have mercy.

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May Almighty God, who heals wounded hearts, softens hardened pride, and teaches us the grace of forgiveness, have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life. **Amen.**

COLLECT

Merciful and faithful God,
You revealed through Your Son
that reconciliation is greater than pride
and forgiveness stronger than anger.
Grant that N. and N.,
joined today in the covenant of marriage,
may never allow resentment to divide them,
but always seek one another with humble hearts and patient love.
Teach all of us gathered here
to become instruments of peace within our families and homes.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son,
who lives and reigns with You in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, forever and ever.

Amen.

HOMILY

A woman once kept two cups on her kitchen shelf for over forty years of marriage. One cup was beautiful porcelain; the other was cracked and chipped. When her granddaughter asked why she never threw the broken cup away, she smiled and said: "That cup reminds me of marriage. The cracks stayed, but so did the love."

That is one of the deepest truths about marriage: every couple will eventually discover each other's cracks.

The world often sells the illusion that love is sustained by chemistry, attraction, or compatibility. But Jesus speaks today about something far more difficult and far more lasting: reconciliation. "First go and be reconciled to your brother." Saint Paul goes even further: "Do not let the sun go down on your anger."

Notice carefully: Paul does not say, "Never become angry." Even holy people become wounded, disappointed, frustrated. Marriage is not the union of two angels. It is the union of two human beings carrying histories, moods, fears, and imperfections. The danger is not anger itself; the danger is allowing anger to stay long enough to become poison.

There is an old story about an elderly couple married for sixty years. Every night before sleeping, they held hands and prayed together. One evening, after a serious argument, the husband stubbornly turned his back and refused to pray. Minutes passed in silence. Finally, the wife quietly reached across the bed, touched his shoulder, and said: "I do not want the devil to sleep between us tonight."

That sentence contains extraordinary wisdom.

The devil rarely destroys marriages through dramatic catastrophes at the beginning. More often, he works slowly: one cold silence, one unspoken resentment, one sarcastic word, one wounded ego left unattended. Distance grows inch by inch before it becomes miles.

N. and N., there will be days when one of you speaks carelessly. Days when exhaustion steals tenderness. Days when misunderstandings feel heavier than love itself. On those days, remember this: the strength of your marriage will not be measured by how rarely you fall, but by how quickly you return to each other.

A priest once visited a couple celebrating their golden jubilee. He asked the husband, "What is the secret of fifty years of marriage?" The old man replied: "Every morning I made one decision: I would rather lose an argument than lose her."

That is not weakness. That is mature love.

Jesus says something startling in the Gospel: before bringing your gift to the altar, first reconcile. In other words, God is telling us that relationships matter deeply to Him. Worship without reconciliation becomes incomplete. Heaven is never pleased when pride is more important than peace.

And reconciliation is not merely saying "sorry." Sometimes "sorry" is easy. Humility is harder. Reconciliation means listening again. Trusting again. Sitting beside each other after disappointment instead of walking away. It means refusing to weaponize old wounds.

There is another story of a Japanese art called *kintsugi*. When a bowl breaks, artists repair it with gold lacquer instead of hiding the cracks. The repaired bowl becomes more valuable because of what it survived.

That is also Christian marriage. Some of the strongest marriages are not those without scars, but those where grace entered through the cracks.

N. and N., your marriage will shine most brightly not during perfect moments, but during forgiven moments. The world already has enough division, enough coldness, enough people walking away from each other. Your vocation is to become a living witness that love can return, heal, and begin again.

And one day, many years from now, when the beauty of youth has faded and life has left its marks upon you, may people look at your marriage and say: "There lived two people who never allowed the sun to set on their love."

A father once wrote in his diary after fifty-two years of marriage: "We argued many times. But every night, before sleep, one of us always crossed the room first."

That crossing of the room — that small journey of humility — is where holy marriages are born.

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

Celebrating God's mercy and reconciliation, let us now pray for this couple, for the Church, and for all families seeking peace and healing.

1. For the Church, that she may continue to be a sign of reconciliation in a divided world, teaching forgiveness with compassion and truth, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

2. For N. and N., that they may never allow pride or anger to separate them, but always return to one another with humility and tenderness, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

3. For married couples who are struggling with hurt, silence, or disappointment, that God may heal wounded hearts and restore peace within their homes, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

4. For parents and children, friends and relatives, that reconciliation may replace division and understanding overcome resentment, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

5. For all the faithful departed, especially family members who taught us the meaning of faithful love and forgiveness, that they may rejoice forever in God's kingdom, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

God of peace and mercy,
You reconcile the world to Yourself through Christ.
Hear the prayers we place before You today,
and make our homes reflections of Your forgiving love.
Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Pray, brothers and sisters, that this sacrifice,
offered in gratitude for the gift of reconciliation and faithful love,
may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

PREFACE

It is truly right and just,
our duty and our salvation,
always and everywhere to give You thanks,
Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God.

For in Your wisdom You created man and woman
to walk together in love,
teaching them that lasting communion
is built not upon perfection
but upon mercy, patience, and forgiveness.

In Christ Your Son,
You revealed that hearts divided by anger
can be restored through reconciliation,
and that love grows stronger
when pride gives way to grace.

Today You bless N. and N.,
who begin their married life before Your altar,
promising to remain faithful in joy and hardship,
in weakness and strength,
never allowing darkness to overcome their love.

And so, with Angels and Archangels,
with Thrones and Dominions,
and with all the hosts and Powers of heaven,
we sing the hymn of Your glory,
as without end we acclaim:

INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER

At the Savior's command and formed by divine teaching,
we dare to pray for the grace to forgive as we have been forgiven:

NUPTIAL BLESSING

Dear brothers and sisters,
let us humbly pray to the Lord for N. and N.,
who come today to begin their married life,
that He may unite them in lasting love and peace.

Holy Father, creator of all goodness,
pour out Your blessing upon these newlyweds.
Grant that they may never allow anger
to harden their hearts nor pride to separate them,
but help them always to seek reconciliation quickly,
to speak gently in moments of hurt,
and to find healing in one another's embrace.
May their home become a place of peace,
where forgiveness is freely given,
where faith is deeply rooted,
and where love grows stronger through every trial.

Bless them with patience in suffering, gratitude in joy,
and fidelity throughout all the days of their life.
May they be blessed with children,
and become loving parents and wise guides,
forming a family that reflects Your compassion and mercy.

And after a long and fruitful life together,
may they come with all the saints
to the eternal wedding feast of heaven.
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord Jesus Christ,
who said to Your Apostles:
Peace I leave you, my peace I give you;
look not on our sins, but on the faith of Your Church,
and graciously grant her peace and unity
in accordance with Your will.
Teach us also to seek peace quickly within our homes and
relationships, so that no resentment may remain
where love is meant to dwell.
Who live and reign forever and ever.

Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Behold the Lamb of God,
behold Him who heals wounded hearts
and reconciles us to the Father.
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

Love lasts longest where forgiveness lives deepest.
The Eucharist we have received today
is not only the sacrament of Christ's presence;
it is the sacrament of reconciliation.
The Lord who enters our hearts now asks N. and N. — and all of us
— never to let silence become separation or pride become distance.
Every lasting marriage is built by countless quiet moments
when someone chooses to cross the room first.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Having shared at Your table, O Lord,
we pray that this holy sacrament
may strengthen N. and N.
to remain steadfast in love,
ready to forgive, eager to reconcile,
and faithful through every season of life.
May all who have gathered for this celebration
learn from Christ the path of mercy and peace.
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord bless you and keep you in His peace.
May He teach you to forgive quickly, love faithfully,
and walk humbly with one another.

May your home be filled with prayer, laughter, patience,
and reconciliation.

And when trials come,
may grace always lead you back to each other.

And may Almighty God bless you all,
the Father, ✠ and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by lives marked with mercy,
reconciliation, and faithful love.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

“Strong marriages are not built by never hurting each other,
but by never refusing to return to each other.”

55. Love that Protects Human Dignity

Gen 1:26–27; Mt 25:31–40

Theme: “Love that Protects the God-Given Dignity of Every Person”

INTRODUCTION

A nurse once spoke about an elderly man who came every morning to the hospital to feed his wife. She no longer recognized him because of advanced dementia. One day the nurse asked him, “Why do you still come every day when she does not even know who you are?” The old man smiled gently and replied, “She may not know who I am, but I know who she is.”

That is dignity: to be loved not for usefulness, beauty, success, or memory, but because a person is precious.

Today’s readings remind us that every human being carries the image of God. Marriage is not simply two people living together; it is two people becoming guardians of each other’s dignity. In a world where people are often used, ignored, or discarded, Christian marriage becomes a sacred promise: “I will never treat you as an object, but always as a child of God.”

Yet there are moments when we fail to honour the dignity of others through impatience, harsh words, selfishness, indifference, or neglect. Therefore, as we begin this sacred celebration, let us acknowledge our sins and ask the Lord for mercy and healing.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, You created every person in the image and likeness of God and taught us to honour one another with reverence and love.

Lord, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, You identified Yourself with the hungry, the forgotten, and the wounded, teaching us that whatever we do to others, we do to You. **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, You call married couples to protect each other's dignity through tenderness, forgiveness, and faithful love.

Lord, have mercy.

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God, who created us in His image and called us to reflect His love through lives of compassion and fidelity, forgive us our sins, heal every wound caused by selfishness and indifference, and bring us to everlasting life.

Amen.

COLLECT

O God, who created man and woman in Your own image and called them to become a living sign of Your faithful love, grant that Your servants, joined today in the covenant of marriage, may honour and protect one another with tenderness, patience, and mercy, so that their home may become a refuge of dignity, compassion, and peace for all whom they meet. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son, who lives and reigns with You in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

HOMILY

A teacher once noticed a little boy eating alone every day at school. His clothes were worn out, and the other children avoided him because he smelled unpleasant. One afternoon she quietly sat beside him during lunch. The boy looked shocked and asked, "Why are you sitting with me?" The teacher answered, "Because you matter."

Years later, after becoming a doctor, that same boy wrote to her: "You did not just sit beside me that day. You saved my life."

Sometimes dignity is protected not by grand gestures, but by simple acts that tell another person: *You matter.*

Today, in the Book of Genesis, we hear one of the most beautiful truths ever spoken about humanity: "God created man in His image." Every person bears the fingerprint of God. Not only the successful. Not only the beautiful. Not only the strong. Every person.

And in the Gospel, Jesus takes this truth even further: "Whatever you did to the least of my brothers and sisters, you did to me." The way we treat people becomes the way we treat Christ Himself.

Dear bride and groom, today your marriage becomes a sacred mission to protect each other's dignity. Love is not merely romance. Romance can fade with tiredness, sickness, misunderstandings, and age. But dignity-centred love says:

"I will never humiliate you."

"I will never reduce you to your failures."

"I will speak to you with respect even when I am angry."

"I will protect your heart, your dreams, your fears, and your vulnerabilities."

A husband once admitted after forty years of marriage: “The most important thing I learned was not how to win arguments, but how not to wound the person I love.” That is mature love.

There will be days when one of you is weak while the other is strong. One may carry disappointment, stress, or hidden pain. On those days, marriage becomes holy when the stronger one does not take advantage of weakness but becomes its protector.

A woman caring for her husband during his final illness was once asked, “How do you do this every day?” She answered, “When we married, we promised to love each other in dignity. Illness did not cancel that promise; it revealed it.”

This is what the Gospel means. Jesus is found not only in churches, but also in kitchens where spouses forgive each other, beside hospital beds where love remains faithful, in tired evenings when one listens patiently, and in quiet sacrifices no one else sees.

The greatest danger in marriage is not lack of money or success. It is the slow loss of reverence for one another. When couples stop listening, stop thanking, stop noticing, stop respecting — love begins to suffocate.

But when dignity is protected, love deepens with time. Wrinkles become sacred memories. Weakness becomes an opportunity for tenderness. Ordinary life becomes holy ground.

An old couple celebrating sixty years of marriage was once asked the secret of their lasting love. The husband replied softly, “We belonged to a generation that repaired things instead of throwing them away.”

That is the Gospel today. People are not disposable. Marriage is not disposable. Love protects, restores, heals, and honours.

And one day, when you stand before Christ, perhaps He will not ask how perfect your life was. He may simply ask:

“Did you protect the dignity of the person I entrusted to you?”

May your answer be a lifelong “yes.”

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

Gathered as God’s beloved children, created in His image and called to honour one another with love and compassion, let us bring our prayers before Him.

1. For the Church, that she may always defend the dignity of every human person — the unborn, the poor, the elderly, the forgotten, and the vulnerable — let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

2. For these newly married spouses, that their love may always be marked by respect, tenderness, patience, and faithful care for one another, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

3. For families wounded by harsh words, neglect, division, or violence, that God may restore healing, forgiveness, and dignity within their homes, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

4. For all who feel unseen, rejected, lonely, or unworthy, that through the kindness of others they may rediscover their value as children of God, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

5. For all gathered here, that we may recognize Christ in every person we encounter and treat one another with compassion and reverence, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Father of mercy and love, You created us in Your image and entrusted us to one another’s care. Hear these prayers and strengthen us to become living signs of Your compassion. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Pray, brothers and sisters, that this sacrifice, offered in gratitude for the dignity and love God has bestowed upon His children, and for the faithful union of this bride and groom, may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

PREFACE

It is truly right and just,
our duty and our salvation,
always and everywhere to give You thanks,
Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God.

For You created man and woman in Your own image
and called them to reflect Your faithful and compassionate love.
In the covenant of marriage,
You unite two lives and teach them
to honour one another with patience, mercy, and reverence.

Through the love they share,
You reveal Your presence in moments of sacrifice, forgiveness,
and tenderness,
and You make their home a sign of Your kingdom,
where every person is welcomed and cherished.

And so, with Angels and Archangels,
and with all the saints,
we proclaim Your glory,
as with one voice we acclaim:

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts...

INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER

At the Savior's command and formed by divine teaching,
let us pray as God's beloved children,
asking for hearts that protect the dignity of one another
with mercy, patience, and faithful love.

NUPTIAL BLESSING

Dear brothers and sisters,
let us humbly pray to the Lord for this bride and groom,
who come today before God to begin their life together in the
covenant of marriage.

Holy Father, creator of all things,
You made man and woman in Your image
and blessed their union with the gift of love.

Pour out the grace of Your Holy Spirit upon these Your servants.
Grant that they may honour one another in tenderness and respect,
protect each other's dignity in moments of joy and struggle,
and remain faithful in love throughout all the days of their life.

May their words bring healing, their home bring peace,
and their hearts remain open to compassion and forgiveness.

Bless them with the gift of children,
that they may lovingly welcome new life
and raise their family in faith, wisdom, and generosity.

May they support one another in every burden,
grow old together in trust and serenity,
and become witnesses to the enduring beauty of faithful love.
Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord Jesus Christ, who said to Your Apostles:
Peace I leave you, my peace I give you,
look not on our sins, but on the faith of Your Church,
and graciously grant her peace and unity
in accordance with Your will.

Teach us especially to protect one another's dignity
through words of kindness, patience in suffering,
and mercy in moments of weakness.

Who live and reign for ever and ever. **Amen.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Behold the Lamb of God,
behold Him who teaches us to recognize His presence
in the least and the vulnerable.

Happy are those who honour the dignity of others
with compassionate love.

Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

Love becomes holy when it protects dignity.
Not only in grand moments, but in daily gestures:
a patient listening, a restrained word,
a forgiving heart, a hand that remains faithful in weakness.

Today Christ has nourished us with His own life.

May this couple learn to see Him in one another —
in joy and exhaustion, in success and failure,
in youth and old age —

and may their marriage become a living reminder
that every person is precious in the eyes of God.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Having shared at the table of Your love,
we pray, O Lord,
that this newly married couple
may be strengthened by the grace of this sacrament
to honour one another with faithful and compassionate hearts,
and that all of us may grow in reverence for the dignity
You have bestowed upon every human person.
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord bless you and keep you.

May He teach you to recognize His image in one another each day.

May He strengthen you to protect one another's dignity with
tenderness and fidelity.

May your home become a refuge of peace, compassion, and joyful
love.

And may almighty God bless you,

the Father, and the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by honouring His presence in one
another and in every person you meet.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

“The deepest form of love is not to possess another person,
but to protect their God-given dignity every single day.”

56. Marriage and the Call to Serve Society

Is 58:6–11; Mt 25:35–40

Theme: “A Marriage That Becomes Bread for the World”

Christian marriage is not meant to close two people inside themselves, but to open their hearts outward. The love between husband and wife becomes holy when it becomes a shelter for the weak, a table for the hungry, a light for the lonely, and a sign of God’s compassion in society.

INTRODUCTION

In 1994, during the genocide in Rwanda, a small parish became a refuge for hundreds of terrified people. Food ran out quickly. One evening, a frightened child asked an elderly woman, “Will we die tonight?” The woman broke the last loaf of bread she had into tiny pieces and shared it among strangers. Someone asked her why she gave away the little she had left. She answered quietly, “If we must die, let us die as human beings who loved.” Years later, survivors remembered not the terror of that night, but the dignity that woman restored with a single act of selfless love.

Today’s readings reveal that true love is never private. Isaiah tells us that authentic worship is seen in feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, and caring for the oppressed. Jesus goes even further in the Gospel: “Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.” Marriage, therefore, is not only about building a home together; it is about becoming a blessing for others together.

As we celebrate this wedding, we must also ask ourselves: Have we sometimes reduced love to comfort, forgetting compassion? Have we passed by people who needed kindness, attention, or mercy? Let us acknowledge our sins and ask the Lord to form in us hearts that serve with generosity and joy.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, you came among us as one who serves and taught us to recognize you in the poor and forgotten.

Lord, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, you call husbands and wives to become signs of compassion and hope in the world.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you judge the world not by power or success, but by love given to the least of your brothers and sisters.

Lord, have mercy.

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us for the times we failed to love generously, for the moments we ignored the suffering of others, and for the ways we closed our hearts to those in need; may he make this couple a living sign of his compassion in the world, and bring us to everlasting life. **Amen.**

COLLECT

O God, who teach us that love reaches its fullness when it is shared generously with others, look with kindness upon your servants who begin today the covenant of marriage. Make their home a place of welcome, their hearts attentive to the suffering of others, and their union a witness to the compassion of Christ. Grant that, strengthened by your grace, they may walk together in faith, hope, and selfless love. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

HOMILY

A journalist once visited a village devastated by famine. In the middle of unbearable poverty, he noticed something strange: every evening, one family placed an empty pot outside their hut over a small fire.

The children from neighbouring huts would gather around it and slowly stop crying. The journalist later asked the mother why she did this when there was no food inside. She replied, “The children fall asleep believing someone is still trying.”

That empty pot became a sign of hope.

Dear friends, marriage is meant to become exactly that kind of sign in the world — a sign that someone is still trying to love, still trying to heal, still trying to care.

Today many people think marriage is simply about personal happiness. But the Word of God reveals something much deeper. Isaiah speaks of loosening the chains of injustice, feeding the hungry, and sheltering the homeless. Jesus says that when we serve the least, we serve him. In other words, love that does not move outward eventually grows inward and weak.

The world does not need perfect couples. It needs couples whose love becomes useful to others.

There is a beautiful story about a married couple during the Great Depression in America. Every Sunday, they invited one stranger for dinner. Sometimes it was a widow, sometimes an unemployed labourer, sometimes a traveller. Their own children later said, “We were never rich, but our table never felt poor.” That is holiness. Holiness is not measured by how much we own, but by how much room we make for others.

Dear bride and groom, your marriage will become strongest not merely when you look lovingly into each other’s eyes, but when together you look outward in the same direction.

One day there will be sickness. There will be disappointments. There will be ordinary days when romance feels distant. In those moments, service will save your marriage. Couples who only ask, “How happy am I?” eventually become fragile. Couples who ask, “Whom can we bless together?” become deeply rooted.

Mother Teresa once said that the hunger for love is far more difficult to remove than the hunger for bread. Every day people carry invisible loneliness: the elderly parent nobody visits, the struggling neighbour nobody notices, the child who longs for attention, the wounded person hiding behind a smile. Your marriage is called to become a lamp in that darkness.

And remember this: Jesus identifies himself with the needy. He does not merely say, “Help them.” He says, “I was hungry... I was thirsty... I was lonely.” The poor are not interruptions to Christian life; they are places where Christ waits.

A priest once told the story of a couple celebrating fifty years of marriage. Someone asked them the secret of their lasting love. The husband smiled and said, “Every time we suffered, we found someone else to help.” That changed everything. Service prevented their pain from turning into bitterness.

Dear couple, your wedding day is beautiful. But the true beauty of marriage will appear years from now: when your home becomes a refuge, when your children learn kindness from watching you, when people feel lighter after leaving your presence, when the poor are

treated with dignity at your table, and when Christ himself is welcomed through the lives you touch.

And perhaps one day, at the end of your lives, the Lord will say not only, "You stayed together," but something far greater:

"I was hungry, and through your marriage I was fed.
I was lonely, and through your marriage I was welcomed.
I was losing hope, and through your marriage I discovered that love was still alive."

That will be the true success of this marriage.

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

Celebrating the love of this bride and groom, and trusting in the Lord who calls every Christian family to become a blessing for the world, let us present our prayers with confidence.

1. For the Church:

that she may always be a refuge for the poor, the forgotten, and the wounded, revealing the compassionate face of Christ to the world.

Lord, hear our prayer.

2. For this newly married couple:

that their home may always be filled with prayer, generosity, hospitality, and joyful service to others. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

3. For families everywhere:

that they may teach children the values of compassion, justice, mercy, and respect for human dignity. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

4. For those who are hungry, lonely, unemployed, sick, or abandoned:

that they may encounter people who reflect God's tenderness and care. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

5. For all of us gathered here:

that we may recognize Christ in the suffering and needy, and never grow tired of doing good. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Father of mercy,
you reveal your presence through acts of love and compassion.
Hear the prayers we offer today,
and make us faithful witnesses of your goodness in the world.
Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Pray, brothers and sisters,
that this sacrifice, and the love this couple offers to God today through their lives of service and fidelity, may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

PREFACE

It is truly right and just,
our duty and our salvation,
always and everywhere to give you thanks,
Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God.

For in your wisdom
you have made the covenant of marriage
a sign of your faithful love for humanity.
You call husband and wife
not only to rejoice in one another,
but also to become instruments of your compassion in the world.

In this union you teach us
that love grows stronger when shared,
that homes become holy when they welcome others,
and that in serving the poor and forgotten
we encounter your Son himself.

Today you bless this bride and groom,
that their life together may shine as a light of hope,
their family become a shelter of mercy,
and their love reveal the generosity of Christ.

And so, with Angels and Saints,
we praise you, as without end we acclaim:

INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER

At the Savior's command
and formed by divine teaching,
let us pray to the Father whose children we are
called to recognize and serve in one another:

NUPTIAL BLESSING

Dear brothers and sisters,
let us humbly pray to the Lord
for this bride and groom,
who come today to begin their married life at the altar of God.

Holy Father,
creator of love and source of every blessing,
pour out your grace upon these newlyweds.

Grant that they may remain united in fidelity,
strong in trials, humble in prosperity,
and constant in tenderness toward one another.

Make their home a place of peace and welcome,
where the lonely are comforted,
the poor are treated with dignity,
and the suffering find compassion.

Teach them to recognize Christ
in those who hunger, thirst, or carry heavy burdens,
so that their marriage may become a living Gospel of mercy.

Bless them with the gift of children,
that they may raise them in wisdom, faith, and love,
teaching them to serve others with generous hearts.

May their love continue to deepen with the passing years,
until, together with all the saints,
they rejoice forever in your kingdom.

Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord Jesus Christ,
who said to your Apostles:
Peace I leave you, my peace I give you,
look not on our sins, but on the faith of your Church,
and graciously grant her peace and unity
in accordance with your will.

May this couple become instruments of reconciliation and
compassion in the world, bringing comfort
where there is loneliness and hope where there is despair.
Who live and reign for ever and ever.

Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Behold the Lamb of God,
behold him who comes to us in the poor, the hungry,
and the forgotten;
behold him who strengthens this couple
to love with generous hearts.
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

Love becomes holy when it becomes bread broken for others.
Today this couple has received not only a blessing,
but also a mission.
The Eucharist they have shared is the sacrament of self-giving love
— Christ giving himself completely for the life of the world.

May their marriage reflect this mystery:
a love that notices the forgotten,
welcomes the lonely,
heals wounds gently,
and leaves behind traces of hope wherever they go.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Having shared at the table of your love,
we ask you, Lord,
to strengthen this newly married couple
with the grace of the Holy Eucharist.
May their union always reflect the compassion of Christ,
their family become a blessing to those in need,
and their lives bear witness to the joy of generous love.
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord bless you and keep you.
May he make your home a place of faith, kindness, and peace.
May he strengthen you to carry one another's burdens with patience
and joy.
May your marriage become a light for those who struggle,
a refuge for those who suffer,
and a sign of God's compassion in the world.

And may almighty God bless you,
the Father, ✠ and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your lives of love and service.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

“The greatness of a marriage is not measured by
how much love the couple keeps for themselves,
but by how much love they pour into the lives of others.”

57. The Role of the Holy Spirit in Marriage

Gal 5:22–25; Jn 14:15–17

Theme: “A Marriage Guided by the Holy Spirit Bears the Fruit of Heaven on Earth.”

INTRODUCTION

In 1994, firefighters battling a terrible blaze in a small village in Chile found one house still standing untouched in the middle of ashes. The owner later explained something surprising: before the fire season began, he had dug a deep trench around the house and kept the ground moist. The fire came close, but it could not consume what had been protected from within. Many marriages look strong from the outside but burn from anger, pride, selfishness, or silence because they are not guarded from within. Today’s readings remind us that the Holy Spirit is not decoration for marriage; He is its fireproofing from the inside.

Saint Paul speaks of the fruits of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Jesus promises not to leave His disciples alone but to send the Spirit who remains with them forever. Today, dear friends, this couple is not merely entering a legal partnership or social arrangement. They are inviting the Holy Spirit to live in the centre of their marriage, so that their home may become a place where heaven quietly touches earth.

But all of us know that we have not always listened to the Spirit. At times we have followed anger instead of peace, impatience instead of kindness, selfishness instead of love. Therefore, before we celebrate these sacred mysteries, let us acknowledge our sins and ask the Lord to renew His Spirit within us.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, You sent the Holy Spirit to teach us how to love with patience and tenderness: **Lord, have mercy.**

Christ Jesus, You remain with Your people through the Spirit of truth who heals wounded hearts: **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, You call husbands and wives to bear the fruits of peace, faithfulness, and self-control: **Lord, have mercy.**

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May Almighty God, who pours the grace of the Holy Spirit into human hearts,
forgive us for every moment we resisted His love,
heal what is wounded within us,
strengthen us in patience and charity,
and bring us to everlasting life. **Amen.**

COLLECT

O God, who in Your goodness send the Holy Spirit to dwell in the hearts of Your faithful people,
grant that these your servants,
joined today in the covenant of Matrimony,
may grow always in the fruits of love,
peace, patience, and faithfulness.
May their home become a living sign of Your presence,
and may all gathered here be renewed
by the Spirit of truth and unity.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

HOMILY

A journalist once asked an old married couple who had completed sixty-five years together, “What kept your marriage alive for so long?” The husband smiled and said, “We belonged to a generation where, when something broke, we repaired it instead of throwing it away.”

That is the tragedy of many modern relationships. People throw away what the Holy Spirit wants to heal. They abandon what heaven still wants to restore. The Spirit of God is not only present in miracles and churches; He is present every time a husband chooses patience over anger, every time a wife chooses understanding over revenge, every time forgiveness wins over pride.

Saint Paul today does not speak first about talents, success, beauty, or wealth. He speaks about fruits. Fruits take time. No tree bears fruit overnight. In the same way, a holy marriage is not built in one wedding ceremony; it is built daily — through hidden sacrifices, difficult conversations, silent acts of kindness, and repeated forgiveness.

There is a story about a violin maker in Italy. He spent months carving a single violin. Someone asked him, “Why spend so much time when nobody notices the inside?” The craftsman replied, “The music notices.”

Dear couple, people may never see the hidden sacrifices you make for each other, but the music of your marriage will reveal them. Children notice. Friends notice. God notices. The Holy Spirit notices.

Jesus says in today’s Gospel: “I will not leave you orphaned.” Those words are powerful because many marriages feel orphaned after the excitement of the wedding fades. There will be days when emotions weaken, misunderstandings rise, finances become difficult, health

declines, or disappointments arrive unexpectedly. But Christian marriage survives not because feelings remain constant, but because the Holy Spirit remains faithful.

A priest once visited an elderly woman whose husband suffered from Alzheimer’s disease. Every day she fed him, cleaned him, and sat beside him though he no longer recognized her. Someone asked, “Why do you continue when he does not even know who you are?” She answered quietly, “He may not know me, but I still know who I promised to be.”

That is the fruit of the Spirit called faithfulness.

The Holy Spirit does not remove every storm from marriage. Rather, He gives the strength to survive the storm together. The Spirit teaches couples how to argue without destroying, how to disagree without humiliating, how to suffer without losing hope.

And perhaps the most forgotten fruit today is self-control. Love without self-control becomes selfishness. Freedom without self-control becomes chaos. Words spoken without self-control leave wounds that remain for years. A Spirit-filled marriage is not one without conflict; it is one where the Spirit controls what anger wants to destroy.

A man once planted two trees on his property. One stood exposed to every wind; the other was planted beside a steady underground stream. Years later, the storm uprooted the first tree, but the second remained standing because its roots had gone deep into hidden water. Dear couple, emotions alone are shallow roots. Beauty fades. Circumstances change. But the Holy Spirit is the hidden stream beneath your marriage. If your roots remain in Him, storms may bend you, but they will not destroy you.

Today, before this altar, you are not simply promising to love each other while life is easy. You are promising to allow the Holy Spirit to shape your love until it becomes holy, faithful, patient, and life-giving.

And remember this: the greatest sign that the Holy Spirit lives in a marriage is not perfection — it is peace after the storm, forgiveness after failure, and hope after tears.

A few years ago, after a devastating earthquake in Japan, rescuers found a small child alive beneath collapsed rubble. Covering the child was the body of the mother who had shielded her until her last breath. On her phone was one unfinished message addressed to her son: “If you survive, remember that I loved you.”

That is what the Holy Spirit teaches every Christian marriage — a love willing to protect, remain, sacrifice, and endure.

At the end of life, people rarely remember the size of the house, the luxury of vacations, or the amount of money earned. They remember who stayed, who forgave, who loved, and who remained faithful. And that is the quiet miracle the Holy Spirit desires to create in this marriage beginning today.

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

Filled with confidence in the Holy Spirit who guides and strengthens every Christian family, let us now present our prayers to God our loving Father.

1. For the Church: that she may continue to proclaim the presence of the Holy Spirit in family life and help married couples grow in holiness and faithfulness, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

2. For this newly married couple: that the fruits of the Holy Spirit — love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, and self-control — may flourish abundantly in their home, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

3. For married couples experiencing difficulties: that the Holy Spirit may heal wounds, soften hearts, and restore unity where there is pain or division, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

4. For families and children throughout the world: that homes may become places of forgiveness, prayer, and mutual respect, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

5. For all of us gathered here: that we may become people led by the Spirit and bear fruits that reveal Christ to the world, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Father of love and peace,

hear the prayers we place before You today.

Send Your Holy Spirit upon this couple and upon all Your people, that our lives may bear lasting fruit through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Pray, brothers and sisters,

that this sacrifice,

offered with joyful hearts for this newly married couple

and for the strengthening of all Christian families in the Holy Spirit, may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

PREFACE

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation,
always and everywhere to give You thanks,
Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God.

For in Your wisdom and love
You call man and woman into the covenant of marriage,
so that through the grace of the Holy Spirit
their love may become patient in trials, faithful in suffering,
joyful in hope, and generous in service.

You do not leave Your children abandoned,
but pour Your Spirit into human hearts,
teaching husbands and wives to forgive,
to persevere in unity,
and to reveal in their lives the love of Christ for His Church.

Through this sacred union
You make family homes places of peace and tenderness,
where children may learn faith, compassion, and truth,
and where Your presence may dwell from generation to generation.

And so, with Angels and Archangels,
with Thrones and Dominions,
and with all the hosts and Powers of heaven,
we sing the hymn of Your glory,
as without end we acclaim:

INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER

At the Savior's command and formed by the divine teaching,
let us pray with confidence to the Father
who gives His Holy Spirit to all who ask Him:

NUPTIAL BLESSING

Dear brothers and sisters,
let us humbly pray to the Lord for this bride and groom,
who come today before God's altar,
that He may lovingly pour out upon them
the grace of His Holy Spirit.

Holy Father, creator of all things,
You made man and woman in Your image
and blessed their union with the gift of life and love.
Look with kindness upon these newly married servants.

Send upon them the Holy Spirit,
that their marriage may be filled
with love that is patient, peace that endures trials,
faithfulness that remains steadfast,
and gentleness that heals every wound.

May they learn to speak with kindness,
to forgive quickly, to support one another in weakness,
and to rejoice together in every blessing.
When difficulties arise,
may Your Spirit preserve them in unity and hope.

Bless them with children,
that they may lovingly welcome new life,
raise their children in faith and wisdom,
and make their home a place of prayer, joy, and compassion.

Grant that surrounded by family and friends,
they may grow old together in happiness and peace,
and one day come to the eternal wedding feast of heaven.
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord Jesus Christ,
who said to your Apostles:
Peace I leave you, my peace I give you,
look not on our sins, but on the faith of your Church,
and graciously grant her peace and unity
in accordance with your will.
May Your Holy Spirit make our homes places of reconciliation,
patience, and enduring love even amid life's storms.
Who live and reign for ever and ever.
Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Behold the Lamb of God,
behold him who takes away the sins of the world.
Through the Holy Spirit,
Christ strengthens us to love with faithfulness and peace.
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

The Holy Spirit often works quietly.
Not in noise, but in patience.
Not in grand speeches, but in daily fidelity.
The Eucharist we have received today
is the strength of Christ Himself dwelling within us.
May this couple learn that holiness in marriage
is found not only in extraordinary moments,
but in ordinary acts of love repeated faithfully through the years.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Having shared at Your table, O Lord,
we pray that through the power of this sacrament
You may deepen the love of this newly married couple
and strengthen all of us in the fruits of the Holy Spirit.
May our homes become places of peace, forgiveness, and joy,
until we come to the eternal banquet of heaven.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

FINAL BLESSING

May the Father of mercies
keep your hearts united in lasting love. **Amen.**

May the Son of God
walk beside you in every joy and every trial. **Amen.**

May the Holy Spirit
fill your home with peace, patience, faithfulness, and joy. **Amen.**

And may almighty God bless all of you,
the Father, and the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by lives filled with the fruits of the Holy Spirit.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

A successful marriage is not sustained by feelings alone,
but by two hearts continually guided by the Holy Spirit toward love,
forgiveness, and faithfulness.

58. Discovering God Through One Another

1 John 4:11–16; John 17:20–26

Theme: *“In Loving One Another, We Become a Living Revelation of God.”*

The readings today reveal a profound truth: God often becomes visible not through miracles or thunder from heaven, but through human love that reflects divine love. In marriage, husband and wife are called to become a sacrament of God’s presence, where others glimpse mercy, fidelity, tenderness, forgiveness, and communion. As Jesus prays “that they may be one,” Christian marriage becomes a living answer to that prayer.

INTRODUCTION

Years ago, after a devastating earthquake, rescuers searched through collapsed homes for survivors. In one ruined house they found an elderly couple trapped beneath broken concrete. The husband had stretched his body over his wife through the entire night to protect her from falling debris. When rescuers asked him later why he had done it, he answered quietly: “For fifty years she helped me see God. I could not let darkness fall on her alone.”

That is the mystery of Christian love. Real love is never merely romance or companionship. Love becomes holy when one person helps another discover God more deeply, more clearly, more courageously. Saint John tells us today: “No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us.” Marriage therefore is not simply about building a home together; it is about becoming a dwelling place for God.

As we gather to celebrate this sacred covenant, we also recognize how often fear, selfishness, impatience, or woundedness prevent love from revealing God as it should. Therefore, with humble hearts, let us ask the Lord for mercy and healing as we begin these sacred mysteries.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus,
You revealed the Father’s love through compassion and self-giving:

Lord, have mercy.

Christ Jesus,
You pray that your people may live in unity and love:

Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus,
You call married couples to become living signs of your presence in the world: **Lord, have mercy.**

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God,
who calls us to reveal His love
through lives of communion and mercy, forgive us our sins,
heal what divides our hearts, strengthen us in faithful love,
and bring us to everlasting life.

Amen.

COLLECT

O God,
who reveal Your presence wherever love is sincere and faithful,
look kindly upon Your servants gathered on this joyful day.
Fill this couple with the grace of unity, patience, and self-giving,
so that through their married life
they may help one another discover You more deeply
and become a living witness of Your love in the world.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son,
who lives and reigns with You in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

HOMILY

A small boy once asked his grandmother, “What does God look like?” The grandmother smiled and said, “When your grandfather cared for me during my illness, I began to understand.”

That answer contains the heart of today’s Gospel.

People spend their lives searching for God — in churches, books, pilgrimages, arguments, philosophies, and miracles. Yet Saint John says something astonishing today: “No one has ever seen God. But if we love one another, God lives in us.”

In other words, God becomes visible through love.

Not sentimental love.

Not possessive love.

Not convenient love.

But love that remains when emotions grow tired, when burdens become heavy, when misunderstandings wound, when sacrifice costs something.

That is why Christian marriage is sacred. It is not merely a legal contract or emotional arrangement. Marriage becomes a living revelation of God.

Many years ago, a violin maker in Italy crafted instruments of extraordinary beauty. Someone once asked him the secret of his masterpieces. He replied: “I do not force the wood. I listen to what it was created to become.”

That is also the secret of marriage. Love is not controlling another person. Love is helping another person become who God created them to be.

And that is exactly what Jesus prays for in today’s Gospel: “That they may be one.”

Notice carefully — Jesus does not pray that life will become easy for them. He prays that they remain united. Because unity is the greatest testimony to God’s presence.

The world already knows division: broken families, wounded relationships, disposable commitments, loneliness hidden behind smiling photographs. But when two people remain faithful, forgive repeatedly, carry one another gently, and continue choosing each other day after day — the world sees something divine.

A teacher once asked her students to describe heaven. One child wrote: “Heaven is where nobody feels alone.”

Perhaps that is why marriage matters so deeply. In a faithful marriage, two people promise before God: “You will not walk through life alone.”

But unity does not happen automatically.

Even the strongest marriages will encounter storms. There will be moments when communication fails, when exhaustion replaces tenderness, when silence enters the home. In those moments, love must become a decision before it becomes a feeling again.

An old monk once said: “Every lasting marriage contains thousands of forgiven moments.”

That is profoundly true.

Love survives not because two people are perfect, but because they refuse to stop beginning again.

And this is where God enters the marriage most powerfully — not only in romance, but in reconciliation; not only in celebration, but in endurance; not only in laughter, but in fidelity through suffering.

Today this couple stands before the altar not simply to receive a blessing, but to become a blessing. Their marriage is meant to become a window through which others may glimpse God.

One day, perhaps years from now, someone may ask their children or grandchildren: “What helped you believe in God?”

And maybe the answer will be:

“I saw the way they loved each other.”

That may become the greatest sermon they will ever preach.

Let me end with this.

After decades of marriage, an elderly woman was asked the secret of her long and happy union. She answered:

“Every morning I looked at my husband and asked God: ‘Help me see what You love in him today.’ And every year, I discovered something new.”

That is holy love.

To keep discovering God in one another.

And perhaps that is heaven already beginning on earth.

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

United in Christ, who prayed that His people may be one, let us now bring our prayers before God our loving Father.

1. For the Church:

that she may reveal God’s presence through unity, compassion, and faithful love, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

2. For this newly married couple:

that their love may continually deepen and become a living sign of God’s tenderness and fidelity, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

3. For married couples everywhere:

that in times of joy and difficulty they may remain steadfast in forgiveness, patience, and unity, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

4. For families wounded by division or loneliness:

that God may heal hearts, restore peace, and renew hope, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

5. For all gathered here:

that through our relationships and daily lives others may discover the presence of God, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Father of love and communion,

hear the prayers we place before You today.

May our lives reveal Your presence to the world through charity and unity.

Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Pray, brothers and sisters, that this sacrifice, offered in thanksgiving for the gift of faithful love and for the unity God desires among His people, may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

PREFACE

It is truly right and just,
our duty and our salvation,
always and everywhere to give You thanks,
Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God.

For in Your wisdom and love
You created man and woman in Your image
and called them to live in communion of heart and spirit.
In the covenant of marriage
You reveal the mystery of Your own faithful love,
so that husband and wife, united in mutual self-giving,
may become living signs of Your presence in the world.

In Christ Your Son,
You taught us that true love is patient, merciful, and enduring,
and through the Holy Spirit
You strengthen married couples
to remain one in joy and hardship alike.

And so, with the Angels and Saints,
we praise You, as without end we acclaim:

INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER

At the Savior's command and formed by divine teaching,
we dare to pray to the Father who calls us into unity
and teaches us to discover His love through one another:

NUPTIAL BLESSING

Dear brothers and sisters,
let us humbly pray to the Lord for this bride and groom,
who come today before the altar of God,
that He may graciously bless their marriage
and fill them with His peace.

Holy Father,
who created man and woman in love
and made their union a sign of Your divine presence,
pour out the grace of Your Holy Spirit upon these newlyweds.

Grant that in loving one another
they may continually discover You dwelling in their hearts.
May their home become a place of faith,
tenderness, forgiveness, and joy.
Strengthen them in times of trial,
deepen their unity in moments of weakness,
and help them always to begin again in love.

Bless them with openness of heart and generosity of spirit.
Grant that they may be blessed with children,
and become wise and loving parents
who lead their family in the ways of faith and peace.

May all who encounter them
recognize in their marriage a reflection of Christ's faithful love
for His Church.

Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord Jesus Christ,
who said to Your Apostles: Peace I leave you, my peace I give you,
look not on our sins, but on the faith of Your Church,
and graciously grant her peace and unity
in accordance with Your will.

May the peace shared in this marriage become a light for all
who long for reconciliation, belonging, and love.

Who live and reign for ever and ever.

Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Behold the Lamb of God,
behold Him who reveals the Father's love through perfect self-giving.
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

Love becomes holy when it makes God visible.

Today this couple has not merely exchanged vows;
they have opened their lives
to become a dwelling place for divine love.

In every act of patience, every quiet sacrifice,
every forgiven wound, every shared joy,
Christ will continue to live among them.

The Eucharist they have received today
is now entrusted to their daily lives.

For the deepest communion with Christ is fulfilled
when His love is reflected in the way we love one another.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Having shared at the table of Your love,
we pray, O Lord,
that this holy sacrament may strengthen this married couple
in unity and peace.

May their lives reveal Your presence,
their home radiate charity and forgiveness,
and their faithful love become a sign of Christ among His people.
Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord bless you and keep you.

May He deepen your love through every season of life.

May He help you discover His presence more profoundly in one
another each day.

May your home become a refuge of peace, faith, tenderness,
and joy for all who enter it.

And may almighty God bless you,
the Father, ✠ and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by loving faithfully, forgiving
generously, and revealing God through your lives together.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

The greatest gift in marriage is not merely finding someone to love,
but finding someone through whom you learn to see God more
clearly.

59. Marriage in Times of Economic Pressure

Phil 4:12–19; Mt 6:25–34

Theme: “Rich in Trust, Rich in Love”

Marriage is not secured by abundance of possessions, but by abundance of trust in God and fidelity to one another. In times of economic uncertainty, Christ calls couples not to live in fear, but in confidence that God, who clothes the lilies and feeds the birds, will also sustain a home built on love, sacrifice, and faith.

INTRODUCTION

A young couple once began married life in a tiny rented room with almost nothing to their name. One evening, after paying bills, they discovered they had only enough money left for one simple meal. The husband quietly pushed the plate toward his wife. She pushed it back toward him. Finally, they split it and laughed while eating. Years later, when they had a comfortable home and financial stability, they were asked, “When were you happiest?” They answered without hesitation: “When we had little, but trusted deeply — in God and in each other.”

Today’s readings speak directly to every marriage that will one day face pressure, uncertainty, or anxiety. Saint Paul says, “I have learned the secret of being well-fed and going hungry.” Jesus tells us, “Do not worry about tomorrow.” The Lord is not promising a life without struggles; He is promising that fear must never become the master of love.

As we begin this sacred celebration, we acknowledge the moments when anxiety has weakened our trust, when money or material concerns have overshadowed gratitude, and when we have forgotten that God remains faithful in every season of life. And so, with humble hearts, let us ask the Lord for mercy and peace.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus,
You teach us to trust in the Father who never abandons His children:

Lord, have mercy.

Christ Jesus,
You bless the homes that are built on love rather than possessions:

Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus,
You are our peace in times of anxiety and uncertainty:

Lord, have mercy.

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, free us from the fears that weaken trust and love, strengthen our hearts in faith and generosity, and bring us to everlasting life. **Amen.**

COLLECT

Heavenly Father,
in your providence you care for the birds of the air
and clothe the lilies of the field with beauty.
Look kindly upon your servants gathered for this holy marriage.
Teach them to place their trust not in wealth that fades,
but in the enduring riches of love, faithfulness, and mutual sacrifice.
Grant that in every season of abundance or struggle,
they may remain united in peace, steadfast in hope,
and joyful in your care.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

HOMILY

A fisherman once lost his boat in a violent storm. Overnight, the sea took away his livelihood. The next morning he sat in silence outside his small house, staring at the wreckage of his life. His wife came out carrying two cups of tea. Seeing his despair, she said quietly, “The boat is gone. But thank God the sea did not take you.”

Years later he would say, “That day I learned the difference between making a living and having a life.”

Dear friends, today’s Gospel speaks to one of the deepest fears every married couple eventually faces: “Will we have enough?” Enough money. Enough security. Enough certainty about tomorrow.

Jesus understands this fear. That is why He says with tenderness, “Do not worry about your life.” He points not to kings or wealthy merchants, but to birds and flowers. Birds do not own barns. Flowers do not own estates. Yet God watches over them with astonishing care.

Christ is not encouraging irresponsibility. He is teaching freedom from slavery to anxiety. There is a difference between planning wisely and living fearfully. Worry begins to destroy marriage when money becomes more important than mercy, when financial pressure silences tenderness, when couples begin to see each other not as companions but as burdens.

Saint Paul speaks with remarkable authority in today’s reading because he has experienced both abundance and deprivation. “I know what it is to have plenty, and I know what it is to be in need.” Paul discovered a secret that many wealthy people never learn: peace does not come from possessions; it comes from trusting that Christ remains enough.

There is a story of a couple during the Great Depression. Every evening they placed a small empty bowl in the center of the table during dinner. Their children once asked, “Why do we keep an empty bowl?” The father answered, “So we never forget the families who have less than we do.”

That family was poor — but never spiritually poor. Hardship had not made them bitter; it had made them compassionate.

Economic pressure can either harden a marriage or deepen it. Some couples become accountants of each other’s failures. Others become guardians of each other’s dignity.

One elderly husband was once asked the secret of sixty years of marriage. He smiled and said, “Whenever we were poor, we held hands more often.” There is profound wisdom in that answer. In difficult times, couples discover whether their marriage is built merely on comfort or on covenant.

Dear couple, there may be days when plans fail, savings shrink, or uncertainty enters your home. But never allow fear to evict tenderness from your marriage. Never let financial stress become greater than your reverence for one another.

Remember this: a house becomes a home not because it is filled with expensive things, but because it is filled with patience, prayer, forgiveness, laughter, and trust in God.

And finally, let me leave you with this story.

After many years of marriage, a woman was asked, “Did you ever think of leaving your husband during the difficult years?” She answered, “Leaving? No. There were days I thought we might lose the house, the business, even our savings. But we never lost the

conviction that God had joined us together. And as long as we had that, we were never poor.”

That is the Gospel today.

Those who trust in God and remain faithful in love may not always possess much — but they will never be empty.

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

Trusting in the providence of our heavenly Father, who knows our needs even before we ask, let us place before Him our prayers for this couple and for the world.

1. For the Church, that she may continue to be a sign of hope and compassion for families struggling under financial burdens and uncertainty, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

2. For this newly married couple, that in times of prosperity they may remain grateful, and in times of hardship they may remain united in trust, patience, and love, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

3. For families burdened by unemployment, debt, poverty, or anxiety about the future, that God may open doors of hope and surround them with generous hearts, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

4. For all gathered here, that we may seek first the Kingdom of God and learn to value people more than possessions, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

5. For our departed loved ones, especially those who taught us generosity, sacrifice, and trust in difficult times, that they may rejoice forever in the riches of God’s kingdom, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Father of providence and mercy,
hear the prayers we place before you with confidence and trust.
Teach us to rely not on passing wealth but on your unfailing love.
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Pray, brothers and sisters, that this sacrifice,
offered in gratitude to the God
who sustains us in every season of life,
and who strengthens love beyond every earthly uncertainty,
may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

PREFACE

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation,
always and everywhere to give you thanks,
Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God.

For in your wisdom you created man and woman in love
and called them to walk together in trust and fidelity.
In times of abundance you teach them gratitude,
and in times of hardship you reveal the deeper riches of patience,
sacrifice, and enduring love.

Through your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ,
you remind us not to be anxious about tomorrow,
for you never cease to care for your children.
You strengthen the hearts of married couples
so that their homes may become places of peace,
generosity, and hope.

And so, with Angels and Archangels, with Thrones and Dominions,
and with all the hosts and Powers of heaven,
we sing the hymn of your glory, as without end we acclaim:

INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER

At the Savior's command and formed by divine teaching, let us pray with confidence to the Father who knows our needs, provides for His children, and fills trusting hearts with peace.

NUPTIAL BLESSING

Dear brothers and sisters,
let us humbly pray to the Lord for this bride and groom,
who come today before God's altar,
that He may graciously bless them and unite them in enduring love.

Holy Father, creator of all things and faithful guardian of your people,
pour out the grace of your blessing upon these newlyweds.

Grant that they may walk together through every season of life with
courageous trust in you.

When their resources are plentiful, keep them humble and generous;
when difficulties arise, keep them patient and united.

May they never allow anxiety or hardship
to diminish their tenderness toward one another.

Bless their home with peace, laughter, honesty, and prayer.
Teach them to recognize the true riches that come from fidelity,
compassion, and self-giving love.

May they be blessed with children,
and become wise and loving parents
who guide their family in faith and hope.

And after a long and blessed life together,
may they come with all the saints into the eternal banquet of heaven.

Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord Jesus Christ,
who said to your Apostles:
Peace I leave you, my peace I give you,
look not on our sins, but on the faith of your Church,
and graciously grant her peace and unity
in accordance with your will.

May your peace also strengthen every marriage facing uncertainty
and teach every home to trust more deeply
in your loving providence.

Who live and reign for ever and ever.

Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Behold the Lamb of God,
behold Him who takes away the sins of the world
and fills trusting hearts with lasting peace.
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

Love becomes strongest not when life is easiest,
but when hearts remain faithful through uncertainty.
The Eucharist we have received today is God's assurance
that He never abandons those who trust in Him.
May this couple always remember:
even when material things fade, love sustained by Christ will endure.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Lord our God,
having shared at your table the Bread of Life,
we thank you for nourishing us with the presence of your Son.
Strengthen this married couple in unity and peace,
so that trusting always in your providence,
they may face every joy and challenge with steadfast hearts and
generous love.
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord bless you and keep you in His care.
May He strengthen your home in times of uncertainty
and fill your hearts with enduring peace.
May He teach you to seek the riches that never fade:
faith, compassion, fidelity, and love.
And may almighty God bless you,
the Father, ✠ and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by trusting in His providence and
loving one another faithfully through every season of life.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

“Couples who trust God together discover
that the deepest riches of marriage
are not found in what they possess,
but in the love they refuse to lose.”

60. The Gift of Presence in Relationships

Romans 12:9–15; Luke 10:38–42

Theme: “The Greatest Gift in Love Is Presence.”

True love is not measured first by achievements, possessions, or even words, but by the willingness to truly be present to one another — attentively, faithfully, compassionately, and prayerfully. In a distracted world, Christian marriage becomes a sacred space where two people choose, every day, to remain present to God and to each other.

INTRODUCTION

A journalist once asked an elderly woman, married for over sixty years, what had kept their marriage alive for so long. She answered quietly: “In our generation, when something broke, we repaired it. Today, people replace things. But love grows only where people stay.”

Her husband had suffered a stroke late in life and no longer remembered many things — but every morning she still sat beside him, held his hand, and spoke gently to him. Someone asked, “Why do you keep talking when he doesn’t even know who you are?” She smiled and said, “Because I still know who he is.” That is the gift of presence.

In today’s readings, Saint Paul urges us to love sincerely, to rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep.

In the Gospel, Martha is busy with many things, while Mary discovers the deeper treasure: being fully present before the Lord. Marriage needs both service and silence, both work and attention — but without presence, even love can slowly become empty activity.

As we gather to celebrate this covenant of love, we also recognize the moments when we have been absent from God, distracted from

those we love, or too busy to listen deeply. Let us therefore ask the Lord for mercy and healing as we begin this sacred celebration.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, You call us to love with sincerity and compassion:

Lord, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, You remain present to us in every joy and sorrow:

Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, You invite us to sit at Your feet and listen with open hearts: **Lord, have mercy.**

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God have mercy on us,
forgive us for the times we failed to be truly present to You
and to one another, heal our distracted hearts,
strengthen us in faithful love, and bring us to everlasting life. **Amen.**

COLLECT

O God, who teach us that love becomes holy
when hearts remain attentive to You and to one another,
grant that these your servants,
joined today in the covenant of marriage,
may always find joy in faithful presence,
strength in mutual compassion,
and peace in listening hearts.
Teach all of us gathered here
to recognize Your presence
in the ordinary moments of life and love.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

HOMILY

A nurse in a hospital once noticed an elderly man arriving every morning at exactly eight o'clock. He came to feed breakfast to his wife, who no longer recognized him because of advanced Alzheimer's disease. One morning the nurse asked him, "Why do you keep coming every day when she doesn't know who you are?" The old man smiled gently and replied, "She may not know who I am — but I know who she is."

That is love.

And even more deeply: that is presence.

We live in a world full of communication but starving for attention. People send messages all day yet rarely truly listen. Families sit at the same table while everyone stares at a screen. Many relationships do not die from hatred; they die slowly from absence.

And that is why today's readings are so important for marriage.

Saint Paul says: "Let love be genuine." Genuine love is not theatrical. It is not measured by expensive gifts or dramatic promises. Genuine love is revealed in presence: rejoicing together, suffering together, staying together.

The Gospel gives us Martha and Mary. Martha is busy serving; Mary simply sits before Jesus and listens. Jesus does not condemn Martha's work — service matters. Homes do not run on romance alone. Bills must be paid. Meals must be cooked. Responsibilities matter. But Jesus reminds Martha — and every married couple — that activity without attentiveness becomes emptiness.

A marriage can become very efficient and still become emotionally lonely.

There is a story of a little boy who asked his father, “Dad, how much do you earn in one hour?” The father, irritated after work, answered sharply. Later the boy returned with some coins and said, “Can I buy one hour of your time tomorrow?”

The father broke down in tears.

Sometimes the deepest hunger in human life is not for success, but for presence.

Dear couple, today you are not merely promising to live in the same house. You are promising to remain emotionally, spiritually, and lovingly present to one another. There will be seasons of laughter and seasons of silence. There may be days when words fail. But love often speaks most powerfully simply by staying.

Presence says:

“I am here when you succeed.”

“I am here when you fail.”

“I am here when you are strong.”

“I am here when life becomes heavy.”

And Christian marriage goes even deeper. You are not alone trying to sustain love by your own strength. Christ Himself becomes present within your marriage. The Lord who sat in the home of Martha and Mary now enters your home. The same Jesus who listened, healed, forgave, and stayed close to people will walk with you through every chapter of your life.

One writer said, “The greatest gift you can give another person is your undivided presence.” That is true in friendship, true in family, and especially true in marriage.

But there is still one more truth.

At the end of life, people rarely regret not having worked more hours. They regret not spending more time with the people they loved. They remember conversations, shared meals, tears, prayers, and quiet moments together.

Years from now, your marriage will not be remembered mainly for photographs, celebrations, or possessions. It will be remembered for thousands of ordinary moments when you chose to remain present to each other.

And perhaps one day, when age weakens memory, beauty fades, and strength diminishes, the deepest vow of marriage will remain:

“I still know who you are.

And I am still here.”

That is love.

That is covenant.

That is the presence of God among us.

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

Gathered in the presence of God, who calls us to faithful and attentive love, let us now offer our prayers for this couple, for the Church, and for the whole world.

1. For the Church, that she may always be a compassionate presence in a wounded and distracted world, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

2. For this newly married couple, that they may remain present to one another in patience, tenderness, forgiveness, and prayer throughout all the seasons of life, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

3. For married couples everywhere, especially those carrying burdens, loneliness, or misunderstandings, that Christ may renew their love and deepen their unity, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

4. For families who are divided by distance, work, conflict, or suffering, that they may rediscover the healing power of listening hearts and faithful presence, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

5. For our departed loved ones, who once shared their love and presence with us, that they may now dwell forever in the fullness of God's eternal embrace, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Father of love and faithfulness, hear the prayers we place before You today. Teach us to recognize Your presence in one another and to walk always in the way of sincere love. Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Pray, brothers and sisters, that this sacrifice, offered in gratitude for the gift of faithful presence and covenant love, may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

PREFACE

It is truly right and just,
our duty and our salvation,
always and everywhere to give You thanks,
Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God.

For in Your wisdom and love
You created us not to walk alone,

but to discover Your presence
through relationships of faithful love and compassion.

In the covenant of marriage
You teach us that love grows strong
through patience, listening, forgiveness, and fidelity.
You call husband and wife
to reflect the tenderness of Christ,
who remains forever present to His people.

Today You rejoice with these your servants,
who begin their married life before Your altar,
promising to remain beside one another
in joy and sorrow, in strength and weakness,
through all the changing seasons of life.

And so, with Angels and Archangels,
with Thrones and Dominions,
and with all the hosts and Powers of heaven,
we sing the hymn of Your glory,
as without end we acclaim:

INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER

At the Savior's command and formed by divine teaching,
let us pray to the Father who is always present to His children
and who calls us to live in unity and love:

NUPTIAL BLESSING

Dear brothers and sisters,
let us humbly pray to the Lord
for these newly married servants of God,
that He who has brought them together today
may strengthen their covenant with His blessing.

Holy Father, creator of love and giver of every good gift,
pour out Your blessing upon this husband and wife,
who today entrust their lives to one another.

Grant that they may always remain present to each other
with attentive hearts, gentle words, and faithful love.

May they rejoice together in times of happiness,
support one another in moments of struggle,
and never allow distance, pride, or distraction
to weaken the bond they share.

Bless their home with peace and prayer.
May Christ dwell at the centre of their marriage,
so that their love may become a sign of Your presence in the world.

Grant them the blessing of children,
that they may welcome new life with gratitude
and raise their family in faith, wisdom, and compassion.

May they grow old together in joy,
surrounded by the love of family and friends,
and after a long and blessed life,
may they come at last to the eternal wedding feast of heaven.

Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord Jesus Christ,
who said to your Apostles:
Peace I leave you, my peace I give you,
look not on our sins, but on the faith of your Church,
and graciously grant her peace and unity
in accordance with your will.

Teach us to become instruments of Your peace
through attentive listening, compassionate presence,
and faithful love toward one another.

Who live and reign for ever and ever.

Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Behold the Lamb of God,
behold Him who remains always present among His people
and nourishes us with the bread of life.

Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

Love is often revealed not in extraordinary moments,
but in ordinary faithfulness.

The Eucharist we have received

is the lasting presence of Christ among us.

As this couple begins their married life,

may they learn that holiness is found in daily attentiveness —
in listening, forgiving, praying together,
and simply remaining beside one another.

For where faithful love remains,

God Himself is present.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Having shared at the table of Your Son,
we thank You, Lord,
for nourishing us with the sacrament of love and unity.
Grant that this newly married couple
may always remain close to You and to one another,
finding strength in Your presence
through every joy and trial of life.
May all of us who have shared this Eucharist
learn to love with sincere hearts and attentive compassion.
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord bless you and keep you.
May He make your hearts attentive to one another
and steadfast in love.
May He grant you the grace to remain
faithful in joy and patient in trial.
May your home be filled with peace,
prayer, laughter, and compassion.
And may almighty God bless you,
the Father, ✠ and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your faithful presence to God and
to one another.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

“The deepest promise in marriage is not ‘I will never change,’
but ‘Whatever changes come, I will remain present to you.’”

61. Love Rooted in Truth

Eph 4:15–16; Jn 8:31–32

Theme: “Love That Stands in the Truth”

True love is not built on illusion, convenience, or fleeting emotion, but on the liberating truth of God. In Christ, truth is not cold judgment but faithful love that allows two people to grow, heal, forgive, and become one.

INTRODUCTION

A sculptor was once asked how he created such beautiful statues from rough blocks of marble. He replied, “I simply remove everything that does not belong.” Love works the same way. Real love is not pretending to be perfect; it is allowing another person to see who we truly are — our fears, wounds, weaknesses, and hopes — and still choosing to remain. The deepest intimacy begins where masks end.

In today’s readings, Saint Paul urges us to “speak the truth in love,” while Jesus says, “The truth will set you free.” Marriage becomes holy not because two perfect people stand before the altar, but because two truthful people dare to walk together in the light of Christ. A marriage rooted in truth becomes strong, because nothing false needs to be defended and nothing hidden needs to be feared.

Yet all of us know that we sometimes hide behind pride, silence, impatience, or selfishness. Therefore, as we begin this sacred celebration, let us ask the Lord to free our hearts from all that prevents us from loving truthfully and faithfully.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, You are the Truth who sets us free from fear and falsehood: **Lord, have mercy.**

Christ Jesus, You teach us to speak the truth in love and tenderness: **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, You call us to build our lives and marriages upon Your faithful word: **Lord, have mercy.**

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God, who calls us to walk in truth and love, forgive us our sins, heal every falsehood within us, strengthen us in faithfulness, and bring us to everlasting life.

Amen.

COLLECT

O God,
who revealed in Your Son
the truth that sets hearts free
and the love that binds lives together,
look with kindness upon N. and N.,
who today enter the covenant of Marriage.
Teach them to speak truth with gentleness,
to remain faithful in times of joy and trial,
and to grow together into the fullness of Christ.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son,
who lives and reigns with You in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

HOMILY

A husband once complained to an elderly priest after thirty years of marriage. He said, “Father, my wife knows everything about me — every weakness, every failure, every bad habit.”

The priest smiled gently and asked, “And after knowing all that, did she stay?”

“Yes,” the man answered quietly.

The priest replied, “Then you are loved.”

That is the miracle of marriage. Not being admired from a distance, but being known deeply and still embraced faithfully.

Jesus says today: “The truth will set you free.” Many people think truth is harsh, painful, or divisive. But Christ speaks of a truth that liberates. The truth of marriage is not merely factual honesty — it is the courage to live without masks. It is the freedom to say: “This is who I am,” and to hear the other say, “And I will walk with you.”

Saint Paul tells us to “speak the truth in love.” Notice he does not say merely to speak truth, because truth without love can wound. Nor does he say only to love, because love without truth becomes shallow and fragile. Marriage needs both: truth that is tender, and love that is honest.

There is a story of a bridge in a small village that collapsed during a violent storm. The villagers later discovered that termites had eaten away the wood from the inside for years. Outwardly the bridge looked strong, but inwardly it had become hollow. Some marriages collapse not because of one great tragedy, but because silence, pretence, hidden resentment, and unspoken pain slowly eat away at trust.

Truth protects love.

Truth says:

“I am hurt.”

“I need forgiveness.”

“I was wrong.”

“I need you.”

“I am afraid.”

“I still choose you.”

Those are holy words in a marriage.

Another elderly couple were once asked the secret of their sixty years together. The wife answered, “We never stopped telling each other the truth — especially when it was difficult.” Then she smiled and added, “But we learned to tell the truth softly.”

That is wisdom. Truth should never become a weapon. In Christian marriage, truth is spoken not to defeat the other person, but to deepen communion.

N. and N., today you promise more than companionship. You promise to become a safe place for one another — a place where neither of you needs to pretend. The world often teaches people to present polished versions of themselves. But the sacrament of marriage invites something deeper: to be fully known and fully loved.

And this truth is not sustained by human strength alone. Christ must remain at the centre. For only when two people kneel before God can they stand honestly before each other.

There will be days when the truth is difficult. Days when misunderstandings arise, when disappointments wound, when weakness appears. In those moments, remember this: truth without mercy becomes cruelty, and mercy without truth becomes emptiness. Christ offers both together.

A little boy once asked his grandfather, “How do you know if two people truly love each other?”

The old man answered, “When they stop trying to impress each other and start helping each other become better.”

That is Christian marriage.

Today this church rejoices because your love is not built merely on emotion, attraction, or convenience, but on something stronger: the truth of Christ. And when truth and love walk together, a marriage does not merely survive — it becomes a witness to the world.

And perhaps one day, many years from now, after wrinkles, tears, sacrifices, forgiveness, laughter, and countless ordinary days, someone may ask you, “What held your marriage together?”

May your answer simply be:

“We never stopped walking in the truth — and Christ never stopped walking with us.”

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

Brothers and sisters, trusting in Christ who is the Truth that sets us free and the Love that unites hearts, let us bring our prayers before the Father.

1. For the Church throughout the world, that she may always proclaim the truth with compassion and lead people into the freedom of Christ, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

2. For N. and N., that their marriage may always be rooted in honesty, forgiveness, tenderness, and unwavering faithfulness, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

3. For married couples experiencing misunderstanding, silence, or wounded trust, that God may heal their hearts and restore unity within their homes, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

4. For families and friends gathered here, that we may support this couple with wisdom, prayer, and faithful example, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

5. For all who feel trapped by fear, loneliness, or hidden burdens, that the truth and mercy of Christ may bring them freedom and peace, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Heavenly Father,
You know the deepest truth of every human heart.
Receive these prayers we place before You,
and strengthen us to live always in the light of Your love.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Pray, brothers and sisters, that this sacrifice,
offered for a love rooted in truth
and sustained by Christ's faithful presence,
may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

PREFACE

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation,
always and everywhere to give You thanks,
Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God.

For in Your wisdom You created man and woman
to live no longer for themselves alone,
but to become one heart and one life in the covenant of love.

In Christ Your Son,
You revealed the truth that frees us from fear
and teaches us to love with sincerity and faithfulness.

Today You bless N. and N.,
that their marriage may reflect the union of Christ and His Church:
a love honest in speech, steadfast in trial,
merciful in weakness, and joyful in hope.
Through the grace of this sacrament,
may they grow daily in trust and holiness,
be blessed with children,
and become witnesses of Your truth in the world.

And so, with Angels and Archangels,
with Thrones and Dominions,
and with all the hosts and Powers of heaven,
we sing the hymn of Your glory,
as without end we acclaim:

INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER

At the Savior's command and formed by divine teaching,
let us pray with confidence to the Father
who calls us to live in truth, forgiveness, and faithful love.

NUPTIAL BLESSING

Dear brothers and sisters,
let us humbly pray to the Lord
for these newly married spouses,
that He who has brought them together today
may sustain them with His grace throughout their lives.

Holy Father,
creator of all things,
You made man and woman in Your image
and blessed their union with love and fidelity.
Look kindly upon N. and N.,
who today entrust their lives to one another
in the sacrament of Marriage.

Pour upon them the grace of the Holy Spirit,
that they may always speak the truth with tenderness,
forgive one another generously,
and remain faithful in every season of life.
When trials come, strengthen them;
when joys abound, keep them grateful;
and in all things let Christ remain the centre of their home.

Bless them with the gift of children,
that their family may become a sign of Your love in the world.
Grant that they may be wise and loving parents,
gentle in word and steadfast in faith.

May their home be filled with peace,
their hearts with patience,
their table with gratitude,
and their lives with holiness.
And after a long and blessed life together,
may they come with all the saints
to the eternal wedding feast of heaven.

Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord Jesus Christ,
You said to Your Apostles:
Peace I leave you, my peace I give you;
look not on our sins, but on the faith of Your Church,
and graciously grant her peace and unity
in accordance with Your will.
Teach us also to speak truth with charity
and to build relationships founded on trust and forgiveness.
Who live and reign for ever and ever.
Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Behold the Lamb of God,
behold Him who takes away the sins of the world
and teaches us to walk in truth and love.
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

Love grows beautiful not when two people become perfect,
but when they become truthful.
Christ has nourished us today with His own life,
reminding us that faithful love is sustained
not merely by human effort but by divine grace.
May this couple always find in the Eucharist
the strength to speak honestly, forgive quickly, and love deeply.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Having shared at this heavenly table, we pray, O Lord, that N. and N., strengthened by the Body and Blood of Christ, may remain united in truth, steadfast in love, and faithful in the covenant they have begun today. May their home become a place of peace, mercy, and joy, where Your presence is always welcomed and honoured. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord bless you and keep you faithful in truth and steadfast in love. **Amen.**

May He grant that your words bring healing, your hearts remain open to one another, and your home be filled with peace and joy. **Amen.**

May Almighty God bless all of you gathered here, and make you witnesses of faithful and truthful love in the world. **Amen.**

And may the blessing of almighty God, the Father, and the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit, come down on you and remain with you for ever. **Amen.**

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by living in truth, fidelity, and love.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

“Marriage flourishes when two people stop hiding from each other and begin walking together in the truth of Christ.”

62. Christian Marriage in a Secular World

Romans 12:1–2; Matthew 5:13–16

Theme: “A Marriage That Shines Against the Current”

Christian marriage is not merely about fitting into society but about transforming it. In a world that often measures relationships by convenience, success, or personal gain, Christian spouses are called to become “salt of the earth” and “light of the world” through faithful love, sacrifice, truth, and holiness.

INTRODUCTION

In 1965, during a massive power outage in New York City, whole neighbourhoods disappeared into darkness. Streets became uncertain, homes fearful, and people anxious. Yet witnesses later recalled how even a single candle in a window suddenly became important. One small light could guide people, calm fears, and remind others that darkness never has the final word. Light becomes most visible not at noon, but at midnight.

Today, as N. and N. come before God, they enter marriage in a world where many no longer believe in permanence, sacrifice, forgiveness, or lifelong fidelity. Society often says, “Protect yourself first,” while Christ says, “Give yourself in love.” Their marriage, therefore, is not simply a private arrangement; it is meant to become a light in the darkness — a witness that faithful love is still possible because God is still present.

Yet all of us know that we have not always lived as light. There are moments when selfishness dims love, fear weakens commitment, and sin hides the face of Christ within us. Therefore, with humble hearts, let us acknowledge our sins and ask the Lord for mercy and healing.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, You call married couples to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world: **Lord, have mercy.**

Christ Jesus, You renew hearts that have grown tired, fearful, or divided: **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, You remain faithful even when human love struggles and fails: **Lord, have mercy.**

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God,
who calls us out of darkness into His wonderful light,
forgive our selfishness,
heal our wounded hearts,
strengthen us in faithful love,
and bring us to everlasting life. **Amen.**

COLLECT

Heavenly Father,
in Your wisdom You have called Your children
not to conform themselves to the passing ways of this world,
but to be transformed by the power of Your love.
Bless N. and N.,
that their marriage may shine with fidelity,
patience, forgiveness, and joy,
becoming a living witness of Christ in the midst of the world.
Grant that all gathered here may walk as children of light
and courageously bear witness to the Gospel in daily life.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son,
who lives and reigns with You in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

HOMILY

A teacher once asked her students to write down what they believed was the strongest force in the world. Some wrote “money.” Others wrote “power,” “technology,” or “war.” One quiet child simply wrote: “A person who keeps loving when everyone else stops.”

That child understood the Gospel better than many adults.

Jesus says today: *“You are the salt of the earth... You are the light of the world.”* Salt preserves what would otherwise decay. Light helps people find their way. Christ is telling N. and N. today: *Your marriage is not only for yourselves. Your love is meant to protect goodness from decay and help others believe again in God.*

And this is urgently needed in our world.

We live in a secular culture that often reduces marriage to a contract, romance to emotion, and commitment to convenience. Many people now enter relationships asking, “What can I get?” instead of “What can I give?” The world says happiness comes from avoiding sacrifice. But Christianity says joy comes through self-giving love.

St. Paul therefore says: *“Do not conform yourselves to this age, but be transformed.”* Christian marriage is not about copying the world’s patterns; it is about revealing God’s pattern.

There is a story from the early Christian centuries about a pagan official who wanted to understand why Christians were growing so rapidly despite persecution. He secretly observed Christian families. Later he wrote with astonishment: “See how they love one another.” Not how wealthy they were. Not how powerful they were. But how they loved.

That is still the greatest evangelization.

N. and N., years from now people may forget your wedding decorations, your menu, even your music. But they will remember if your home became a place of peace. They will remember if your children learned kindness from watching you forgive each other. They will remember whether your marriage gave light or added darkness.

A lighthouse stands on dangerous shores. Storms hit it first. Winds attack it constantly. Yet the lighthouse was never built to admire itself; it exists to guide others safely home. Christian marriage is like that. Storms will come: misunderstandings, financial pressures, disappointments, sickness, exhaustion, moments of silence, moments when love feels more like duty than emotion. But the purpose of your marriage is not merely to survive storms — it is to keep shining through them.

And that light comes from Christ.

Without prayer, even strong love becomes fragile. Without forgiveness, resentment quietly poisons intimacy. Without God, couples eventually begin asking each other to provide what only God can give.

A husband once confessed after fifty years of marriage: “We did not stay together because we never struggled. We stayed together because every time we wanted to give up, we knelt down before God before speaking to each other.” That is wisdom.

Dear friends, the world does not need perfect couples. It needs holy couples. Couples who still choose each other after arguments. Couples who pray when life becomes uncertain. Couples who remain faithful when fidelity is unpopular. Couples whose love makes others curious about God.

And perhaps that is the deepest meaning of today’s Gospel: light does not speak about itself — it simply shines.

Let me end with another story.

During World War II, a village church in Germany was destroyed by bombing. The statue of Christ in the church survived, except for the hands, which had been blown away. After the war, the villagers debated whether to replace the statue. Finally, they placed the damaged statue back into the church with a new inscription underneath:

“Christ has no hands now on earth but yours.”

N. and N., from this day forward, your marriage is meant to become the hands of Christ in the world — comforting, forgiving, protecting, serving, and loving. In a secular world that often doubts whether faithful love still exists, may your marriage become proof that God still shines in human hearts. And may your light never be hidden.

Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

Trusting in God, who calls His people to shine as light in the world, let us bring before Him our prayers for the Church, for this couple, and for all humanity.

1. For the Church: that Christians everywhere may courageously witness to truth, fidelity, and compassion in a world searching for meaning, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

2. For N. and N.: that their marriage may remain rooted in prayer, strengthened through sacrifice, and radiant with enduring love, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

3. For married couples experiencing difficulties: that God may renew their hope, heal divisions, and help them rediscover the grace of faithful love, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

4. For children and young people: that they may grow up believing in the beauty of commitment, holiness, and lifelong love, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

5. For all gathered here: that our homes and families may become places where the light of Christ is visible through kindness, forgiveness, and peace, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Father of light and love, hear the prayers we place before You today. Strengthen us to live not according to the passing ways of the world, but according to the Gospel of Christ, who lives and reigns for ever and ever. **Amen.**

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Pray, brothers and sisters, that this sacrifice, offered for a marriage called to shine with Christ's light in the world, may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

PREFACE

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give You thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God.

For in Your wisdom You created man and woman in love and called them to become one heart and one life.
In Christ Your Son
You revealed that faithful love is stronger than selfishness,

forgiving love stronger than sin,
and enduring love stronger than the darkness of this world.

Today You bless N. and N.,
calling them to become salt of the earth and light of the world,
that through their fidelity, patience, and mutual sacrifice
others may come to know Your presence.

And so, with Angels and Archangels,
with Thrones and Dominions,
and with all the hosts and Powers of heaven,
we sing the hymn of Your glory,
as without end we acclaim:

INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER

At the Savior's command and formed by divine teaching,
let us pray as God's children,
asking that this new family may always walk in the light of Christ
and remain faithful in love.

NUPTIAL BLESSING

Dear brothers and sisters,
let us humbly pray to the Lord for N. and N.,
who today begin their married life in Christ,
that He may bless them with unity of heart and perseverance in love.

Holy Father, creator of the human family
and source of every true love,
pour out the grace of Your Holy Spirit upon N. and N.

Grant that their marriage may be a light in the world,
steadfast in times of trial, joyful in moments of blessing,
and faithful in all circumstances.

May they encourage one another in holiness,
comfort one another in suffering,
and strengthen one another in hope.

Bless their home with peace and prayer.
May their words be truthful,
their hearts forgiving,
and their love generous and pure.

Grant also that they may be blessed with children,
and become loving parents who guide their family in faith and
wisdom.

May all who enter their home
find kindness, welcome, and the presence of Christ.
And after a long and blessed life together,
may they come with all the saints
to the eternal wedding feast of heaven.

Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord Jesus Christ,
who said to Your Apostles:
Peace I leave you, my peace I give you,
look not on our sins, but on the faith of Your Church,
and graciously grant her peace and unity
in accordance with Your will.
May the peace shared by N. and N. become a light for others
living in fear, division, and loneliness.
Who live and reign for ever and ever.

Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Behold the Lamb of God,
behold Him who takes away the sins of the world.
In this Eucharist,
Christ strengthens us to become light in the darkness
and faithful in love.
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

Light does not become less by being shared.
A candle can ignite another candle without losing its own flame.
Today Christ has placed His light within this marriage.
If N. and N. remain close to Him, their love will not only sustain them
— it will quietly illuminate the lives of many others.
For the world is changed not only by great speeches
or powerful people,
but also by homes where Christ is truly loved.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Lord our God,
having shared at the table of Your Son,
we ask You to strengthen N. and N. in the grace of this sacrament.
May their marriage reflect the light of Christ in a world often
overshadowed by confusion and fear.
Teach them to persevere in fidelity, grow in compassion,
and remain steadfast in hope.
And may all of us who have shared this Eucharist
be renewed in our calling to live as children of light.
Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord bless you and keep you.

May He make your home a place of prayer, peace, and faithful love.

May He strengthen you to stand firm against whatever weakens truth, unity, and holiness.

And may your marriage shine with such goodness that others may see in you the light of Christ.

And may almighty God bless you,
the Father, ✠ and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your lives and by the faithful love you share with one another.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

“The world changes when even one home chooses to keep the light of Christ burning.”

63. Building a Marriage on Prayer and Scripture

Ps 119:105; Lk 11:1–13

Theme: “A Marriage Guided by the Light of God’s Word and Sustained by Prayer.”

INTRODUCTION

In 1943, during the darkness of World War II, a small group of prisoners in a concentration camp secretly gathered every evening around a tiny candle stub. One prisoner had hidden a torn page of the Bible in his shoe. Each night they read just a few lines. Years later, one survivor said: “That little page gave us more light than the candle.” The Word of God does not merely inform people; it guides them through darkness. Today, dear friends, this couple comes before God believing that their marriage will not survive on romance alone, but on a light stronger than changing emotions — the light of God’s Word.

The Psalmist says: “*Your word is a lamp for my feet and a light to my path.*” In the Gospel, the disciples ask Jesus: “*Lord, teach us to pray.*” Every marriage eventually meets moments when the road is unclear: misunderstandings, exhaustion, financial pressure, disappointments, fears about the future. In those moments, prayer becomes the breathing of love, and Scripture becomes the compass that keeps two hearts from losing direction.

As we begin this sacred celebration, let us acknowledge the times we tried to walk without God’s light, the times we spoke without praying, decided without listening, or loved without patience. Let us ask the Lord for mercy and for hearts willing to be guided by His Word.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, You are the eternal Word who lights the path of every family: **Lord, have mercy.**

Christ Jesus, You teach us to pray with trusting and persevering hearts: **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, You remain with those who build their lives upon Your promises: **Lord, have mercy.**

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God have mercy on us,
forgive us our sins,
heal the darkness within our hearts,
strengthen us to walk in the light of His Word
and in the faithfulness of prayer,
and bring us to everlasting life.

Amen.

COLLECT

O God,
who reveal Your love through Your living Word
and strengthen Your people through persevering prayer,
look with kindness upon N. and N.,
who today entrust their marriage to Your guidance.
May Your Word be the lamp that directs their home,
and may prayer unite their hearts
through every joy and trial of life.
Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son,
who lives and reigns with You in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

HOMILY

A ship without a compass may look beautiful in the harbor, but once the storm arrives, beauty alone cannot save it.

Many marriages begin with excitement, celebration, dreams, photographs, music, and promises. But what keeps a marriage alive twenty or thirty years later is not merely the memory of the wedding day. It is whether the couple has learned where to turn when darkness comes.

A man once visited an old monk and asked him, “What destroyed my marriage?” The monk handed him a lantern and said, “Walk through the forest tonight.” The man replied, “I cannot. The lantern only shows a few steps ahead.” The monk answered, “That is how God guides marriages too — not with floodlights for twenty years, but enough light for the next faithful step.”

That is exactly what today’s Psalm tells us:

“Your word is a lamp for my feet and a light to my path.”

Notice: not a stadium light. A lamp. God usually gives enough grace for today, enough wisdom for this conversation, enough patience for this difficult season.

In the Gospel, the disciples ask Jesus something remarkable. They do not ask Him, “Teach us to preach,” or “Teach us to perform miracles.” They ask: *“Lord, teach us to pray.”* Because they realized that behind the power of Jesus was His relationship with the Father.

Prayer is not decoration in marriage. Prayer is oxygen.

A husband and wife may stop talking deeply to one another long before they stop living in the same house. Silence can slowly become distance. But couples who pray together place God between

their weaknesses. Prayer softens pride. Prayer interrupts anger. Prayer reminds two people that they are not enemies fighting each other, but companions fighting for each other.

There is a story about an elderly couple married for over sixty years. Someone asked them, "How did you stay together so long?" The wife smiled and said, "Every night before sleeping, we prayed together. Some nights we were still upset with each other, but it is difficult to kneel before God while carrying hatred in your heart."

That is wisdom.

Dear N. and N., one day you will have decisions to make that no wedding preparation class can fully answer. There may be tears you cannot explain, burdens you cannot share with everyone, fears about children, health, work, or the future. On those days, open the Scriptures before opening social media. Speak to God before speaking in anger. Hold hands and pray before trying to win arguments.

St. Jerome once said: "Ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ." If Christ disappears from the center of marriage, love slowly becomes negotiation, sacrifice becomes calculation, and commitment becomes fragile.

But where Scripture is read, Christ speaks. Where prayer is sincere, grace enters. Where grace enters, wounded hearts heal.

Another story is told of a little child who woke up frightened during a thunderstorm. She ran into her parents' room and asked, "Can I sleep with you?" Her mother replied, "Jesus is with you in your room." The child answered, "I know Jesus is with me, but right now I need someone with skin on."

That is marriage.

God often loves people through the visible tenderness of a spouse: through listening, forgiving, waiting, encouraging, remaining faithful. You will become, for each other, "God with skin on."

So today is not simply the celebration of love. It is the beginning of a lifelong decision to let God speak into your marriage every day.

And remember this:

A Bible covered in dust usually belongs to a heart running on empty. But a marriage that kneels together before God will always find the strength to stand together before the world.

Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

Brothers and sisters, trusting in God whose Word guides our path and whose love listens to every prayer, let us place before Him the needs of the Church and of this newly married couple.

1. For the Church, that she may continue to proclaim God's Word as a light for families and a source of hope for the world, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
2. For N. and N., that prayer may always unite their hearts and that Scripture may guide every important decision in their marriage, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
3. For married couples facing difficulties, loneliness, or misunderstandings, that they may rediscover healing through prayer, forgiveness, and trust in God, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

4. For children and future generations, that they may grow up in homes where God's Word is loved and faithfully lived, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

5. For all gathered here, that we may become people who not only hear God's Word but live it with courage and compassion, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Heavenly Father,
You know the needs hidden within every heart.
Guide us always by Your truth
and strengthen us through prayer.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Pray, brothers and sisters, that this sacrifice,
offered with grateful hearts for the gift of God's Word
and the blessing of this marriage,
may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

PREFACE

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation,
always and everywhere to give You thanks,
Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God.

For in Your wisdom
You guide Your people by the light of Your Word
and strengthen them through the gift of prayer.
In Your loving plan You have called N. and N.
to build their home upon Christ,

so that in moments of joy they may give You thanks,
and in times of trial they may seek Your help with trusting hearts.

You teach us that love becomes enduring
when it listens to Your voice, and that families grow in peace
when they place their hope in You.

And so, with Angels and Archangels, with Thrones and Dominions,
and with all the hosts and Powers of heaven,
we sing the hymn of Your glory, as without end we acclaim:

INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER

At the Savior's command and formed by divine teaching,
let us pray with confidence to the Father
whose Word guides us and whose love never fails:

NUPTIAL BLESSING

Dear brothers and sisters,
let us humbly pray to the Lord for N. and N.,
who today begin their married life at God's altar.

Holy Father,
creator of love and source of every blessing,
pour out Your grace upon N. and N.

May Your Word always be the light of their home
and prayer the strength of their union.
Teach them to seek You in moments of joy
and to trust You in every trial.

Grant that they may be patient in suffering,
faithful in commitment, generous in forgiveness,
and joyful in hope.

Bless them with the gift of children,
that they may raise them in wisdom, faith, and love,
and together become a family rooted in Your presence.

May their home be a place of peace for the weary,
comfort for the sorrowful,
and gratitude for all Your blessings.

And after a long and fruitful life together,
may they come with all the saints
to the eternal wedding feast of heaven.
Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord Jesus Christ,
who said to Your Apostles:
Peace I leave you, my peace I give you,
look not on our sins, but on the faith of Your Church,
and graciously grant her peace and unity
in accordance with Your will.

May the homes of all married couples be strengthened by prayer,
guided by Your Word, and filled with reconciliation whenever
wounded by weakness.

Who live and reign for ever and ever.

Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Behold the Lamb of God,
behold Him who guides us by His Word
and nourishes us with His life.

Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

Love grows weak when it feeds only on feelings,
but it becomes enduring when nourished by God.

Today Christ has entered this marriage not as a guest,
but as its foundation.

The same Lord who speaks through Scripture
now gives Himself in the Eucharist.

If this couple continues to seek Him in prayer,
they will discover that grace can do

what human strength alone cannot:

heal wounds, renew hope,

and keep love faithful through the passing years.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Having shared at the table of Your Son,
we pray, O Lord,

that N. and N. may remain united in faith and love.

May the grace of this Eucharist

strengthen them to build their home upon Your Word
and sustain them through constant prayer.

Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord bless you and keep you.
May His Word always guide your path
and His presence strengthen your love.

May He grant you patience in trials,
gratitude in blessings,
and fidelity throughout your life together.

May your home be filled with prayer, peace, and joy,
and may almighty God bless all of you,
the Father, and the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by building your lives upon His Word
and sustaining your love through prayer.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

“Couples who pray together do not avoid storms — they learn how to
walk through them with God’s light.”

64. The Beauty of Mutual Sacrifice

Phil 2:1–11; Jn 15:13

Theme: “*Love Becomes Beautiful When It Learns to Sacrifice.*”

Philippians 2 reveals Christ who emptied himself in love, while John 15:13 proclaims the greatest love: to lay down one’s life for another. Christian marriage becomes beautiful not through perfection, power, or romance alone, but through daily self-giving modelled on Christ himself.

INTRODUCTION

There is an old story of a man who visited a cathedral in Europe after World War II. Almost everything inside had been destroyed by bombs except one large crucifix. But when the workers tried to restore it, they discovered that both hands of Christ had been blown away. Some wanted to sculpt new hands, but finally they placed beneath the crucifix a simple inscription: “**Christ has no hands now on earth but yours.**” From then on, every person entering the church understood that love becomes visible only when someone is willing to give themselves away for another.

Today, dear friends, we gather not merely to witness a wedding, but to witness two people saying to one another: “I will become Christ’s hands for you. I will serve you, forgive you, lift you up, and remain beside you in joy and suffering.” The beauty of marriage is not found in avoiding sacrifice, but in transforming sacrifice into love.

Yet we know how often we resist self-giving. Pride, impatience, selfishness, and wounded words can weaken relationships and harden hearts. Therefore, as we prepare to celebrate these sacred mysteries, let us acknowledge our sins and ask the Lord for the grace to love as Christ loved.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, you humbled yourself and became obedient even unto death for our salvation: **Lord, have mercy.**

Christ Jesus, you taught us that the greatest love is to lay down one's life for one another: **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, you call husbands and wives to mirror your faithful and sacrificial love: **Lord, have mercy.**

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God,
who teaches us that true love is found in humble sacrifice
and faithful self-giving,
forgive us our sins, heal the wounds of selfishness within us,
strengthen us in charity, and bring us to everlasting life.

Amen.

COLLECT

O God,
who revealed the fullness of love
through the self-emptying sacrifice of your Son,
grant that these your servants,
united today in the covenant of marriage,
may learn to place one another before themselves,
to carry each other's burdens with joy,
and to become living signs
of Christ's faithful love for his Church.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

HOMILY

A nurse once cared for an elderly man suffering from advanced memory loss. Every morning, without fail, another old man arrived at the nursing home at exactly eight o'clock to feed breakfast to his wife. One day the nurse asked him gently, "Does your wife know who you are?" The man smiled sadly and replied, "No. She hasn't recognized me for five years." The nurse, surprised, asked, "Then why do you still come every day?" The old man quietly answered, **"Because I still know who she is."**

That is love.

Not convenience.

Not emotion alone.

Not a contract of mutual comfort.

Love is the decision to remain faithful even when sacrifice becomes costly.

Today's readings lead us directly into the heart of Christian marriage. Saint Paul gives us one of the earliest hymns about Christ: though he was divine, he emptied himself, taking the form of a servant. The Son of God showed that greatness is not in domination but in self-giving. And Jesus says in the Gospel: "No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends."

Marriage becomes holy precisely there.

The world often defines love by what one receives: happiness, fulfillment, security, attraction. But the Gospel defines love by what one is willing to give away. Every lasting marriage eventually discovers this truth: love matures not during candlelight dinners, but during sleepless nights, financial stress, misunderstandings,

illnesses, disappointments, and countless hidden sacrifices nobody applauds.

A young husband once carried his disabled wife up four flights of stairs every day because their apartment building had no elevator. A visitor said to him, "That must be a heavy burden." The husband answered immediately, "**She is not a burden. She is my wife.**" That single sentence contains the entire theology of Christian marriage.

When sacrifice is rooted in love, it stops being humiliation and becomes holiness.

Dear bride and groom, today you stand before the altar radiant with joy. But years from now, your marriage will not be sustained merely by photographs from today. It will endure through thousands of hidden acts: saying sorry first, listening when tired, remaining faithful when hurt, choosing tenderness instead of revenge, praying together when words fail, carrying one another through weakness.

And this is important: sacrifice in marriage is not losing yourself; it is finding yourself through love. Christ did not become less by giving himself on the Cross. He revealed the fullness of divine love. So too in marriage, every sincere sacrifice enlarges the heart.

There is another story of a woman whose husband became paralyzed after an accident. For years she fed him, bathed him, and cared for him. Someone once asked her, "How do you endure all this?" She replied, "**On our wedding day I promised to love him in good times and bad times. I did not know what those words would cost me. But I also did not know how beautiful they would become.**"

That is the beauty of mutual sacrifice.

The Cross is not the destruction of love. The Cross is the proof of love.

Dear couple, your vocation is not to build a perfect marriage, but a faithful one. Some days one of you will be strong while the other is weak. Some days one will carry more than the other. But if each continually asks, "How can I serve you?" rather than "What am I getting?" your marriage will become a living Gospel.

And one day, many years from now, when age has changed your faces and life has tested your promises, may people look at your marriage and say: "Now we understand a little better how Christ loves his Church."

A father once told his son on his wedding day: "**Real love begins the moment keeping your promise becomes difficult.**"

Today your promises begin.

And by God's grace, may your sacrifices become your greatest beauty.

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

My dear brothers and sisters, trusting in the God who revealed perfect love through the sacrifice of Christ, let us place before him our prayers for this couple, for the Church, and for the world.

1. For the Church: that she may continue to proclaim the beauty of faithful, sacrificial love in a world wounded by selfishness and division, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
2. For this bride and groom: that their marriage may reflect the humility, tenderness, and enduring love of Christ, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

3. For married couples everywhere: that in moments of trial, illness, or misunderstanding, they may discover deeper love through mutual sacrifice and forgiveness, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

4. For families burdened by poverty, conflict, or loneliness: that they may receive strength, support, and hope from the Christian community, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

5. For all who have loved sacrificially throughout their lives, especially deceased parents, spouses, and family members: that God may reward them with eternal joy, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father,
you revealed your love through your Son
who gave himself for us upon the Cross.
Hear the prayers we place before you today
and teach us to love generously and faithfully.
Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Pray, brothers and sisters, that this sacrifice,
through which Christ revealed the beauty of self-giving love,
may help this newly married couple
to offer their lives generously for one another,
and that our sacrifice may be acceptable to God,
the almighty Father.

PREFACE

It is truly right and just,
our duty and our salvation,
always and everywhere to give you thanks,
Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God.

For in your wisdom
you created man and woman in love
and called them to become one heart and one life.
In Christ your Son
you revealed that the deepest beauty of love
is found in humble sacrifice and faithful service.

Through his Cross he showed the world
that love does not seek its own advantage
but pours itself out for the beloved.
And today you bless this husband and wife,
calling them to mirror in their marriage
the faithful love of Christ for his Church.

Therefore, with Angels and Archangels,
with Thrones and Dominions,
and with all the hosts and Powers of heaven,
we sing the hymn of your glory,
as without end we acclaim:

INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER

United in Christ, who taught us
that the greatest love is to give oneself completely for another,
and trusting in the Father
whose love sustains every sacrifice made in faithfulness,
let us pray with confidence in the words Jesus himself gave us:

NUPTIAL BLESSING

Dear brothers and sisters,
let us humbly pray to the Lord for this bride and groom,
who today begin their married life at the altar of Christ.

Holy Father,
creator of love and source of every blessing,
pour out your grace upon these newlyweds.

Grant that they may imitate Christ
who loved with humility, patience, and sacrifice.
Teach them to place one another before themselves,
to forgive quickly,
to carry each other's burdens generously,
and to remain faithful in every season of life.

May their home be filled with prayer, peace, laughter, and
compassion.

In times of joy, may they be grateful;
in times of suffering, may they remain united;
and in all things may they grow closer to you.

Bless them with the gift of children,
that their family may become a living witness
to the beauty of love and the holiness of life.

And after a long and blessed life together,
may they come with all the saints
to the eternal wedding feast of heaven.

Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord Jesus Christ,
you taught us that the greatest love is to give oneself for another.
Look not on our sins, but on the faith of your Church,
and graciously grant her peace and unity
in accordance with your will.

Teach all married couples to overcome anger with tenderness,
fear with trust, and selfishness with sacrificial love.

Who live and reign for ever and ever. **Amen.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Behold the Lamb of God,
behold him who revealed the fullness of love
through the sacrifice of the Cross.

Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

Love becomes beautiful when it is willing to suffer,
forgive, wait, and remain faithful.

In this Eucharist, Christ gives not merely words but himself.

Every marriage draws strength from this altar,
where sacrifice becomes communion and self-giving becomes life.

May this couple always return to this table,
for here they will learn again and again how to love.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Having shared at the table of your love, we pray, O Lord, that this sacrament may deepen within us the spirit of humble service and faithful sacrifice. Grant that these newlyweds, nourished by the Body and Blood of Christ, may remain steadfast in love, patient in trials, and joyful in their gift of self to one another. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord Jesus, who loved us unto the Cross, strengthen you to love faithfully and sacrificially all the days of your life. **Amen.**

May he fill your home with peace, patience, forgiveness, and joy. **Amen.**

May almighty God bless all of you gathered here, the Father, and the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by lives of faithful and self-giving love.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

“The beauty of marriage is not found in how much two people receive from each other, but in how much they are willing to give for each other.”

65. Marriage and the Virtue of Hope

Rom 15:13; Jn 14:1–6

Theme: “Hope That Builds a Home Beyond Fear”

Christian marriage does not promise an easy life, but a shared journey toward Christ even through uncertainty. The hope in today’s readings is not based on circumstances, but on the Lord who says, “Do not let your hearts be troubled.” Christian marriage becomes a witness that love endures because Christ walks with the couple and prepares a place for them.

INTRODUCTION

Many years ago, after a devastating earthquake, rescuers found a woman buried beneath broken concrete. In her arms was her little child, still alive. Before she died, she had wrapped her body around the child to protect him. On her phone was a final message: “*If you survive, remember that your mother loved you.*” Even in darkness, love created hope. Even under ruins, someone believed there was still a future worth protecting.

Today, dear friends, we gather because Christian marriage is built on that same mystery. Love does not deny that storms will come; it simply refuses to surrender to them. Saint Paul prays that God may fill us with joy and peace in believing, so that we may abound in hope. And Jesus speaks tenderly to troubled hearts: “*Do not let your hearts be troubled.*” Marriage is the daily choice to believe those words together.

Yet we also know that fear, impatience, selfishness, and doubt can weaken hope within us. Therefore, before we celebrate these sacred mysteries and witness this covenant of love, let us acknowledge our sins and ask the Lord to renew in us hearts that trust in His promises.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, You calm troubled hearts and lead us on the path of peace: **Lord, have mercy.**

Christ Jesus, You are the Way, the Truth, and the Life for all who place their hope in You: **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, You fill Your people with joy and peace through the power of the Holy Spirit: **Lord, have mercy.**

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God,
who never abandons His children in times of fear and uncertainty,
strengthen our weak hearts,
renew our trust in His promises,
forgive us our sins,
and bring us to everlasting life.

Amen.

COLLECT

O God, source of every lasting hope and faithful love,
You have called N. and N.
to the covenant of Christian marriage.
Fill their hearts with the peace of Your presence,
that amid the uncertainties of life
they may always walk together in trust, patience, and joy.
May their home become a sign of hope for all who know them,
and may they follow Christ faithfully,
who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.
Who lives and reigns with You in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

HOMILY

A sailor once said, *“The anchor does not stop the storm; it simply keeps the ship from drifting away.”*

That is what hope does.

Today, many people confuse hope with wishful thinking. They think hope means pretending that life will always go smoothly. But Christian hope is far deeper. Christian hope looks directly at uncertainty and still says: *“God will not abandon us.”*

Jesus speaks those unforgettable words in today’s Gospel:

“Do not let your hearts be troubled.”

Notice: He did not say, “You will never have troubles.” He said, *“Do not let your hearts be troubled.”* There is a difference. Storms may surround us, but they do not have to rule us.

N. and N., today you are not standing before this altar because you have solved every future problem. You are standing here because you believe that Christ will walk with you through every unknown tomorrow.

There is an old story about a couple married for over sixty years. Someone asked them the secret of their marriage. The elderly wife smiled and said, *“Every morning we made the same decision: not whether we still loved each other, but whether we would continue choosing each other.”*

That is hope.

Hope is love that keeps choosing.

Saint Paul prays today that God may fill believers with *“all joy and peace in believing.”* Notice the order: joy and peace come *through believing*. Many people wait for life to become easy before they trust

God. Christians trust God first — and then discover peace growing within them.

Marriage needs that kind of faith because there will be moments when emotions alone are not enough. There will be financial worries, misunderstandings, disappointments, sickness, exhaustion, and silent tears known only to the two of you and to God.

A young father once lost his job unexpectedly. Ashamed and afraid, he sat outside his house for nearly an hour before entering. When he finally walked in, his wife simply placed dinner before him and said, *“We will face this together.”* Years later he said, *“That was the day I understood what marriage meant.”*

Not perfection.

Presence.

Not certainty.

Faithfulness.

Jesus says today: *“I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.”*

He did not merely give directions; He offered Himself. And this is the heart of Christian marriage: Christ does not stand outside your relationship. He becomes the road beneath your feet.

When hope disappears from a marriage, couples begin keeping score — who sacrificed more, who failed more, who apologized last. But when Christ remains at the center, marriage becomes less about winning arguments and more about protecting communion.

There is a beautiful image in ancient cathedrals: builders often placed stones deep in the foundation that no one would ever see. Yet those hidden stones carried the weight of the entire church. In the same way, the hidden acts of marriage — the forgiveness nobody

notices, the sacrifices nobody applauds, the prayers whispered at night — these become the foundation stones of a holy home.

And one day, many years from now, wrinkles will replace youth, strength may fade, memories may weaken — but if hope has remained alive, your love will become even more beautiful, because it will carry the fingerprints of grace.

A nurse who cared for dying patients once said that many people near death spoke about success, wealth, or regrets. But the most peaceful were those who could say: *“I was loved, and I loved faithfully.”*

That is the destination of Christian marriage.

Not merely surviving together.

Not merely building a house together.

But helping each other reach the Father’s house that Christ has prepared.

And so today, N. and N., hold tightly to this promise:

The anchor of your marriage will not be your strength alone.

It will be Christ.

Storms may come, but anchored hearts do not drift.

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

Trusting in God, who fills His people with joy, peace, and hope, let us place before Him our prayers for the Church, for this newly married couple, and for the whole world.

1. For the Church: that she may continue to proclaim hope to troubled hearts and guide families toward Christ, the Way, the Truth, and the Life, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

2. For N. and N.: that their marriage may remain anchored in Christ through every joy and every trial, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

3. For married couples experiencing difficulties: that God may renew in them patience, forgiveness, and the courage never to lose hope, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

4. For families burdened by fear, illness, loneliness, or financial hardship: that they may find strength in God's faithful providence, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

5. For all gathered here: that our lives may become signs of hope and encouragement to others, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Father of mercy and God of hope,
hear the prayers we offer with confidence
and keep us always faithful to Your promises.
Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Pray, brothers and sisters, that this sacrifice,
offered in hope and thanksgiving for the love of N. and N.,
may strengthen all families in faithfulness and trust,
and may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

PREFACE

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation,
always and everywhere to give You thanks,
Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God.

For in Your wisdom and love
You created man and woman
to walk together in fidelity and hope,
so that in their union
they might reflect the steadfast love
with which Christ loves His Church.

In moments of joy You are their gladness;
in times of uncertainty You are their peace;
and amid the trials of life
You remain the unfailing anchor of their hearts.

Today You bless N. and N.,
who place their future into Your hands,
trusting that Your Son goes before them
to prepare a dwelling that will never fade.

And so, with Angels and Archangels,
and with all the saints,
we sing the hymn of Your glory,
as without end we acclaim:

INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER

At the Savior's command and formed by divine teaching,
let us pray with confidence to the Father
who guides His children through every uncertainty
and leads us toward the eternal home prepared for us.

NUPTIAL BLESSING

Dear brothers and sisters,
let us humbly pray to the Lord for N. and N.,
who today begin their life together in Christ,
that He may bless them with lasting unity and hope.

Holy Father, creator of all things,
You made man and woman in Your image
and blessed their union with love and fidelity.
Look kindly upon N. and N.,
who today entrust their marriage to Your grace.

Grant that they may remain steadfast in hope, patient in trials,
faithful in love, and joyful in Your presence.

When fear troubles their hearts,
may they remember that Christ walks beside them.
When burdens grow heavy,
may they carry them together in trust and tenderness.

Bless their home with peace and laughter,
with mutual understanding and generous hearts.
May they be strengthened by prayer,
comfort one another in suffering,
and rejoice together in all the blessings of life.

Grant also, Lord, that they may be blessed with children,
and become loving parents who guide their family in faith and hope.

And after a long and fruitful life together,
may they come with all whom they love
to the eternal home You have prepared for them.
Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord Jesus Christ,
who said to Your Apostles:
Peace I leave you, my peace I give you,
look not on our sins, but on the faith of Your Church,
and graciously grant her peace and unity
in accordance with Your will.

Strengthen especially all married couples,
that amid the uncertainties of life
they may never lose hope in Your abiding presence.
Who live and reign for ever and ever.

Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Behold the Lamb of God,
behold Him who strengthens weary hearts
and leads us into eternal life.
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

Hope is born whenever two people refuse to give up on love.
Today Christ has entered not only this church,
but also the future of N. and N.
The Lord who says, "*Do not let your hearts be troubled,*"
now walks with them into every unknown tomorrow.
May this Eucharist become the hidden strength of their marriage —
the bread that sustains them
when life becomes difficult
and the light that guides them home.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Having shared at Your table, O Lord,
we pray that N. and N.
may always be nourished by the grace of this sacrament.
When trials arise, strengthen them in hope;
when joys abound, keep them grateful in love;
and may their marriage become a living witness
to the peace that comes from trusting in Christ.
Who lives and reigns for ever and ever. **Amen.**

FINAL BLESSING

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing.
Amen.

May Christ, who prepares an eternal home for His people, walk
beside you every day of your married life. **Amen.**

May the Holy Spirit strengthen your love, deepen your faithfulness,
and keep your hearts anchored in hope. **Amen.**

And may almighty God bless all of you,
the Father, and the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by lives of faithful love, steadfast
hope, and joyful service.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

“A strong marriage is not built by people who never face storms, but
by two hearts that remain anchored in Christ through every storm.”

66. Loving Through Illness and Weakness

2 Cor 12:7–10; Mt 8:14–17

Theme: “Love Strong Enough to Carry Weakness”

*Christian marriage is not the union of two perfect people, but the covenant
of two fragile hearts discovering that God’s grace shines brightest when
human strength fails.*

INTRODUCTION

A nurse once spoke about an elderly husband who came every
morning to feed breakfast to his wife suffering from advanced
Alzheimer’s disease. One day she asked him, “Does your wife still
know who you are?” The old man smiled gently and replied, “She
may not know who I am... but I still know who she is.” That is love at
its holiest: not loving only when life is easy, beautiful, and healthy, but
remaining faithful when weakness enters the room.

Today’s readings reveal a God who does not run away from human
frailty. Saint Paul speaks of his weakness and hears the Lord say:
“*My grace is sufficient for you.*” In the Gospel, Jesus bends over the
sick, touches the suffering, and restores dignity to the broken.
Marriage, too, becomes sacred not because couples avoid suffering,
but because they choose to carry one another through it.

Yet we all know there are moments when we have failed to love
patiently, failed to stay present in another’s pain, or tried to appear
strong without trusting God’s grace. And so, before we celebrate this
sacred covenant, let us acknowledge our sins and ask the Lord for
mercy and healing.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, You draw near to the weak and the suffering:

Lord, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, You teach us that love is strongest when it serves and carries another: **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, Your grace is sufficient for every burden and every wound: **Lord, have mercy.**

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God, who heals the wounded heart,
strengthens us in weakness,
and teaches us to love faithfully in every season of life,
have mercy on us, forgive us our sins,
and bring us to everlasting life.

Amen.

COLLECT

O God, who reveal Your power most perfectly
through compassion, healing, and faithful love,
look kindly upon these your servants
who come before Your altar today.
Teach them to trust in Your grace
when life becomes difficult,
to carry one another's burdens with tenderness,
and to discover Your presence
even in moments of weakness and suffering.
Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son,
who lives and reigns with You in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

HOMILY

A young woman once asked her grandmother, "How did you stay married for sixty years?" The grandmother looked at her worn wedding ring and answered, "Because we came from a generation that repaired things instead of throwing them away."

That sentence cuts deeply into modern life. Today, when something becomes difficult, slow, fragile, or inconvenient, people often replace it. But Christian marriage is not built on convenience. It is built on covenant. And covenants are tested precisely when weakness arrives.

Saint Paul speaks today with brutal honesty: "*I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses.*" Most people hide weakness. We hide sickness, fear, exhaustion, anxiety, disappointment. We want to appear strong. Yet Paul discovered something shocking: the place he hated most became the place where God entered most powerfully. "*My grace is sufficient for you.*"

Marriage will eventually bring moments where those words become real. One day one of you may become ill. One may grow tired while the other remains strong. One may carry emotional burdens the other cannot fully understand. One may sit beside a hospital bed praying through tears. On that day, love will no longer be poetry spoken at an altar; it will become sacrifice lived in silence.

There is a story of a husband whose wife suffered a stroke and lost the ability to speak. Every evening he sat beside her and read aloud from the novels they once enjoyed together. Friends asked, "Why do you keep reading? She cannot respond." He answered quietly, "Because love is not only about being heard. Love is about remaining."

That is exactly what Christ does for us.

In today's Gospel, Jesus enters Peter's house and finds suffering there. Notice this carefully: even in the home of a disciple, sickness exists. Faith does not prevent all pain. Marriage does not guarantee an easy life. But Jesus enters the house. He touches the suffering person. He remains present.

And that changes everything.

The most beautiful marriages are not those untouched by hardship. The holiest marriages are often those that have walked through weakness together and emerged more tender, more patient, more compassionate. Scars can become sacred.

A doctor once wrote about an elderly couple married for over fifty years. The husband had dementia and no longer remembered his wife's name. Yet every time she entered the room, his face lit up with peace. Memory had failed, but love remained deeper than memory.

That is a reflection of divine love itself.

Dear couple, today you promise to love each other *"in sickness and in health."* Those words are not decoration. They are prophecy. One day they will cost something. But they will also reveal something beautiful: that love becomes most Christ-like when it stays beside weakness instead of fleeing from it.

And perhaps that is why the Cross stands at the centre of Christianity. The Cross is God refusing to abandon humanity in its brokenness.

So when weakness comes—and it will—do not ask first, "Why is this happening?" Ask instead, "How can grace love through this moment?"

Because the deepest words in today's readings are not about suffering. They are about presence:

"My grace is sufficient for you."

A man visiting his dying wife in hospice was asked by a priest, "What have you learned from loving her all these years?" Through tears he answered, "I learned that real love is not finding the perfect person. Real love is refusing to leave when life becomes imperfect."

That is the love God has for us.

And that is the love to which Christian marriage is called.

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

Brothers and sisters, trusting in the Lord whose grace is sufficient for every human weakness, let us bring before Him our prayers for the Church, the world, and this newly married couple.

1. For the Church, that she may continue to bring healing, compassion, and hope to those burdened by sickness, loneliness, and suffering, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
2. For all married couples, that they may remain faithful in times of illness, struggle, and weakness, discovering in every trial the strength of God's grace, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
3. For those who care for the sick, especially spouses, parents, nurses, and caregivers, that their hidden sacrifices may be blessed and sustained by God, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
4. For this bride and groom, that their home may always be a place of tenderness, patience, healing, and unwavering presence for one another, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

5. For all who are suffering physically, emotionally, or spiritually, and for those who feel abandoned in their weakness, that Christ may touch them with His healing love, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Father of mercy,
You never abandon Your children in their weakness.
Hear the prayers we place before You today
and strengthen us always with Your faithful love.
Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Pray, brothers and sisters, that these gifts,
offered with grateful hearts by those who trust in God's grace
through every joy and burden of life,
may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

PREFACE

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation,
always and everywhere to give You thanks,
Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God.

For in Your wisdom You created man and woman in love
and taught them to become for one another
a sign of Your faithful presence.

In moments of joy You bless them with gratitude,
and in times of weakness You sustain them with grace.

Through Christ Your Son,
You revealed that true love does not flee from suffering
but enters it with compassion and healing.

For Your power is made perfect in weakness,
and Your mercy shines most brightly
where hearts remain faithful through trial.

And so, with Angels and Saints,
we praise You, as without end we acclaim:

INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER

At the Savior's command and formed by divine teaching,
let us pray with confidence to the Father
whose grace sustains us in every weakness:

NUPTIAL BLESSING

Dear brothers and sisters,
let us humbly pray to the Lord for this bride and groom,
who today begin their life together in Christ.

Holy Father,
creator of love and source of all healing,
pour out Your blessing upon these newly married spouses.
Grant that they may remain faithful to one another
in moments of joy and in seasons of weakness.

When sickness enters their home,
give them patience and tenderness.
When burdens grow heavy,
teach them to carry one another with compassion.
When fear or exhaustion darkens their hearts,
remind them that Your grace is sufficient for them.

May they never turn away from one another in difficult times,
but become living signs of Christ's steadfast love.
Bless them with peace in their home,

with generosity of heart,
and with the joy that comes from serving one another.

In Your goodness,
grant that they may be blessed with children,
and become wise and loving parents
who lead their family in faith and charity.

And after a long and fruitful life together,
may they come with all the saints
to the eternal wedding feast of heaven.
Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord Jesus Christ,
who said to Your Apostles:
Peace I leave you, my peace I give you,
look not on our sins, but on the faith of Your Church,
and graciously grant her peace and unity
in accordance with Your will.
Strengthen all married couples who carry hidden burdens,
and teach them to become instruments of healing
and tenderness for one another.
Who live and reign for ever and ever.

Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Behold the Lamb of God,
behold Him who carries our weaknesses and heals our wounds.
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

Love becomes holy not when life is perfect,
but when hearts remain faithful through imperfection.
Christ whom we have received in this Eucharist
now asks this couple to become bread broken for one another—
gentle in weakness, patient in suffering, and steadfast in love.
For where love remains, God remains.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Having shared at this heavenly table, we pray, O Lord,
that these sacred mysteries
may strengthen this newly married couple
to love one another faithfully
through every joy and trial of life.

May the grace they have received today
teach them to recognize Your presence
in moments of weakness,
to serve one another with compassion,
and to walk always in the light of Your healing love.
Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord bless you and keep you.
May He strengthen you when life is difficult,
comfort you in times of sorrow,
and deepen your love through every trial.

May Christ, who touched the sick and carried the suffering,
teach you to remain beside one another
with patience, tenderness, and fidelity.

And may almighty God bless you,
the Father, and the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by loving one another faithfully
in strength and in weakness.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

“Real love is not proven when life is easy;
it is revealed when one heart chooses to stay beside another
through weakness, suffering, and imperfection.”

67. Celebrating Differences Without Division

1 Cor 12:4–13; Jn 17:20–23

Theme: “One Love, Many Differences: Unity Without Losing Ourselves”

INTRODUCTION

A violin alone can be beautiful. A cello alone can stir the heart. A trumpet alone can command attention. But when an orchestra begins to play, the miracle is not that every instrument sounds the same; the miracle is that they do not. Different tones, different rhythms, different strengths—yet one symphony emerges. The beauty of harmony is not the absence of difference, but the transformation of difference into music.

Today, as N. and N. stand before God, they do not come as identical people. They bring different stories, personalities, wounds, dreams, temperaments, habits, and ways of seeing the world. And yet, the Word of God today reminds us that love does not erase uniqueness. Saint Paul says, “There are different gifts, but the same Spirit.” Jesus prays, “May they all be one.” Christian marriage is therefore not the destruction of individuality, but the sacred art of communion.

But all of us know how often differences become divisions. Pride replaces listening. Hurt replaces understanding. Silence replaces tenderness. Therefore, before we celebrate this sacrament of unity, let us acknowledge our sins and ask the Lord to heal whatever keeps us from loving one another as He loves us.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, You call different hearts into one communion of love:

Lord, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, You teach us to listen before judging and to forgive before condemning: **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, You gather your people into one body despite our weaknesses and divisions: **Lord, have mercy.**

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May Almighty God have mercy on us,
heal the divisions within our hearts,
teach us to cherish one another's differences with humility and love,
forgive us our sins,
and bring us to everlasting life.

Amen.

COLLECT

O God,
who created every human heart unique
and yet call us into the unity of love,
look with kindness upon N. and N.,
who today begin their married life in your presence.
Teach them to welcome one another's differences as gifts,
to grow in patience and understanding,
and to become one in mind and heart without losing the beauty of
who they are.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, forever and ever.

Amen.

HOMILY

A grandfather once gave his grandson an old patchwork quilt. The boy looked at it and said, "It doesn't match." Some pieces were dark, some bright, some smooth, some rough. The grandfather smiled and replied, "Exactly. If every piece were the same, it would not be a quilt. It would only be cloth." Then he added quietly, "What keeps it together is the stitching."

Marriage is very much like that quilt.

N. and N., today you are not promising to become copies of each other. You are promising to let God stitch your differences together into something warm enough to shelter a lifetime.

Saint Paul tells us in the First Reading: "There are different gifts, but the same Spirit." God never creates duplicates. One person speaks quickly; another reflects deeply. One dreams boldly; another plans carefully. One heals with words; another heals with silence and presence. Difference is not the problem. The real danger comes when difference becomes competition instead of complementarity.

A married couple once celebrated fifty years together. Someone asked the wife, "What was the secret?" She answered, "Early in marriage, we decided that whenever we fought, only one person could yell at a time." Everyone laughed. Then she added, "And for fifty years, it was mostly me listening."

Humour hides wisdom. The strongest marriages are not those without conflict, but those where love becomes greater than ego.

In the Gospel, Jesus prays one of the most moving prayers in all Scripture: "May they all be one." Notice carefully: Jesus does not pray that they all become the same. Unity is not uniformity. Even the

Trinity is communion in distinction—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, perfectly one yet distinct.

That is the Christian vision of marriage.

The world often says: “Find someone exactly like you.” But love grows not because two people are identical, but because two people learn reverence for what is different.

A pianist once married a painter. He loved structure; she loved spontaneity. He planned everything; she changed plans constantly. During the first years, they nearly exhausted each other. One day, while watching her paint, he noticed something. She mixed colours that should have clashed—but somehow produced beauty. Later she heard him play jazz and realized he could turn unexpected notes into harmony. They both discovered the same truth: beauty is born when differences learn rhythm.

N. and N., there will be days when you will not understand each other. There will be moments when one of you feels unheard, unseen, or frustrated. In those moments, remember this: the goal of marriage is not victory over one another; it is communion with one another.

The Body of Christ itself is built this way. Eyes are not hands. Feet are not ears. Yet together they become one living body. If one part suffers, all suffer. If one rejoices, all rejoice. Marriage becomes holy when two people stop asking, “How can I change you?” and begin asking, “How can I love you better?”

And this unity becomes most powerful not in grand moments, but in ordinary ones:
when one waits patiently after a hard day,
when one apologizes first,

when one listens instead of defending,
when one chooses tenderness instead of pride.

A monk was once asked, “What is the hardest thing about community life?” He answered, “Living with people who are different from me.” Then he was asked, “And what is the holiest thing?” He smiled and gave the same answer.

That is marriage too.

N. and N., today God is not merely joining two personalities. He is creating a living sign to the world that love is stronger than difference, stronger than misunderstanding, stronger even than weakness.

And one day, many years from now, when your hair is grey and your steps slower, may people look at your marriage and say: “Those two were never identical—but they became beautifully one.”

A Japanese art called *kintsugi* repairs broken pottery with gold. The cracks are not hidden; they become part of the beauty. So it will be with your marriage. Your differences, your struggles, your reconciliations—even your wounds surrendered to God—can become the gold through which grace shines.

And that is the deepest mystery of Christian marriage: not two perfect people avoiding conflict, but two imperfect people allowing God to turn difference into communion, and communion into love that reflects heaven itself.

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

United in Christ, who calls many hearts into one communion of love, let us bring our prayers before God our Father.

1. For the Church, that she may be a living sign of unity amid diversity, teaching the world that differences can become a source of grace and strength, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

2. For N. and N., that their marriage may reflect the prayer of Christ, “that they may be one,” and that they may always welcome each other’s uniqueness with patience and joy, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

3. For married couples who struggle with misunderstanding or division, that God may heal wounded hearts and restore tenderness, listening, and forgiveness, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

4. For families throughout the world, that homes may become places where differences are respected and love is stronger than pride, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

5. For all gathered here, that we may become instruments of peace and unity in a divided world, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Father of all, you created each of us unique and call us into the harmony of love.

Hear the prayers we offer through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Pray, brothers and sisters, that this sacrifice, in which different lives are gathered into one love in Christ, may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

PREFACE

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God.

For in your wisdom you created humanity in wonderful diversity, yet you call your people into the unity of love.

In the covenant of marriage, you teach us that communion is deeper than similarity and that love grows when hearts learn patience, humility, and self-giving.

Today you unite N. and N. in a sacred bond, that through their different gifts and personalities they may reveal the beauty of your grace.

Their union becomes a sign of Christ’s love for His Church: faithful in trials, joyful in hope, and steadfast in mercy.

And so, with the Angels and Saints, we proclaim your glory, as with one voice we acclaim:

INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER

At the Savior’s command and formed by divine teaching, let us pray together as God’s family, united as one despite our differences:

NUPTIAL BLESSING

Dear brothers and sisters, let us humbly pray to the Lord for N. and N., who today begin their married life at this altar, that God may bless them with unity of heart and lasting peace.

Holy Father, creator of all love and source of all communion,
pour out your blessing upon N. and N.

Grant that they may honour one another's uniqueness,
carry each other's burdens with tenderness,
and rejoice in the gifts they discover in one another each day.

When differences arise, teach them patience.
When misunderstandings come, teach them listening.
When wounds appear, teach them forgiveness.

May their home be filled with laughter and prayer,
hospitality and compassion,
and may their love become a refuge for all who enter it.

Bless them with the gift of children,
that they may lovingly welcome new life
and raise their family in faith, wisdom, and charity.

And after a lifetime of faithful love,
may they come with all the saints
to the eternal wedding feast of heaven.
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord Jesus Christ, who said to your Apostles:
Peace I leave you, my peace I give you,
look not on our sins, but on the faith of your Church,
and graciously grant her peace and unity
in accordance with your will.
Teach us to transform our differences
into opportunities for deeper love and understanding.
Who live and reign forever and ever. **Amen.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

In this Eucharist, Christ gathers many hearts into one body
and teaches us the communion of self-giving love.
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

Love becomes holy not when two people agree on everything,
but when they refuse to stop loving through everything.
Today Christ has nourished N. and N. with the Bread of Unity.
May this sacrament teach them, day after day,
how to become one heart without losing the beauty of who they are.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Having shared at this holy table, we ask you, Lord,
to strengthen N. and N. in the bond of sacramental love.
May this Eucharist teach them unity in diversity,
patience in trials, and joy in mutual self-giving,
so that their marriage may become
a living witness to Christ's love in the world.
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord bless you and keep you united in love.
May He teach you to cherish one another's differences as gifts
and to walk together in peace.

May He fill your home with joy, patience, forgiveness,
and faithfulness.

And may Almighty God bless you,
the Father, and the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by building unity through love, patience, and understanding.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

“Marriage is not the union of two identical souls, but the daily decision to turn differences into communion through love.”

68. Marriage and the Culture of Encounter

Rom 12:9–18; Le 10:25–37

Theme: “Marriage as a Daily Encounter of Mercy”

A Christian marriage becomes holy not merely by living under the same roof, but by continually choosing to “draw near” to one another with compassion, tenderness, forgiveness, and self-giving love — just as the Good Samaritan drew near to the wounded man on the road.

INTRODUCTION

There is a story told of an elderly husband who visited his wife every single day in a nursing home, even after she no longer remembered his name. One nurse finally asked him, “Why do you still come every morning if she doesn’t even know who you are?” The old man smiled gently and replied, “Because I still know who she is.”

That is the culture of encounter. Love is not measured by convenience, emotion, or reward. Love is revealed in the decision to keep drawing near — especially when life becomes difficult, exhausting, or painful.

In today’s Gospel, Jesus tells the story of the Good Samaritan: a man who refused to walk past another’s suffering. While others avoided the wounded stranger, the Samaritan crossed the road, knelt beside him, touched his wounds, and stayed. St. Paul echoes the same spirit in Romans: “Let love be genuine... persevere in prayer... seek what is noble... live in peace with all.” Marriage flourishes when husband and wife never become strangers living side by side, but companions who continually encounter one another with mercy.

Yet there are moments when we have all walked past another’s pain — moments when pride, impatience, selfishness, or indifference wounded relationships entrusted to us. And so, before we celebrate this sacred covenant of love, let us ask God for mercy and healing.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, You draw near to us in our weakness and heal our wounds: **Lord, have mercy.**

Christ Jesus, You teach us to love not only with words but with compassionate action: **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, You call husbands and wives to become living signs of Your faithful mercy: **Lord, have mercy.**

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May Almighty God have mercy on us,
forgive us for the times we failed to love generously,
for the moments we passed by another's pain,
and for the wounds we caused through selfishness or neglect;
may He heal our hearts with His compassion
and bring us to everlasting life.

Amen.

COLLECT

O God,
who reveal Your love through mercy,
compassion, and faithful presence,
look kindly upon N. and N.,
who come before Your altar to begin their married life.
Teach them to encounter one another each day
with patience, tenderness, and sacrificial love,
so that their home may become a place of healing,
peace, and welcome for all.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son,
who lives and reigns with You in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

HOMILY

A priest once told the story of a woman who came to him after forty years of marriage. She said, "Father, people think our marriage survived because we never fought. That is not true. We survived because every time one of us was wounded, the other decided not to walk away."

That is the difference between a contract and a covenant. A contract asks, "What do I get?" A covenant asks, "How can I remain?"

In the Gospel today, the priest and the Levite both saw the wounded man. That is important: they saw him. The tragedy was not blindness. The tragedy was distance. They saw suffering but refused encounter. The Samaritan, however, crossed the road. Love always crosses roads. Love interrupts schedules. Love kneels beside wounds.

And that is exactly what marriage will ask of you, N. and N. There will be days when one of you is joyful and strong. There will also be days when one of you feels wounded by fear, disappointment, exhaustion, failure, or silence. In those moments, the temptation will be to become strangers — two people sharing space but no longer sharing hearts. The real danger in marriage is not loud arguments; it is quiet indifference.

There is another story about a husband who noticed that every evening his wife sat quietly by the window after dinner. One day he finally asked, "What are you thinking about every night?" She answered, "I'm waiting." He asked, "Waiting for what?" And she replied, "Waiting for you to notice that I have been lonely." Many marriages do not collapse because love disappears. They collapse because encounter disappears.

St. Paul today gives a roadmap for married life: “Let love be genuine.” Genuine love is not theatrical. It is practical. It remembers. It listens. It forgives. It notices exhaustion in the other person’s eyes. It says “thank you.” It says “I’m sorry.” It chooses kindness even when emotions are tired.

Pope Francis often speaks about creating a “culture of encounter.” The opposite is the culture of passing by. Our world teaches people to scroll past pain, avoid inconvenience, replace people easily, and move on quickly. But Christian marriage says: “I will not pass by your humanity. I will stay.”

There is a Jewish story of a rabbi who asked his students, “When does night end and day begin?” One answered, “When you can distinguish a sheep from a dog.” Another said, “When you can see the trees clearly.” The rabbi replied, “No. Day begins when you look into another person’s face and recognize them as your brother or sister. Until then, it is still night.”

Marriage is the daily choice to keep bringing light into each other’s lives by truly seeing one another.

N. and N., years from now, your marriage will not be remembered mainly for vacations, achievements, or photographs. It will be remembered for the countless moments when one of you crossed the road for the other — when you stayed during sickness, listened during grief, forgave after hurt, encouraged during failure, prayed during darkness, and remained faithful during uncertainty.

And one day, perhaps when age has weakened your bodies and memories begin to fade, the deepest words of love may simply become: “I still know who you are.”

That is the kind of love that reflects the heart of Christ.

That is the culture of encounter. And that is the road to holiness.

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

Gathered as one family in Christ, let us pray to God the Father, who calls us to love one another with genuine and compassionate hearts.

1. For the Church:

that she may continue to be a living sign of mercy, healing, and encounter in a divided world, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

2. For N. and N.:

that their marriage may always be marked by tenderness, patience, forgiveness, and faithful presence in times of joy and struggle, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

3. For married couples:

that they may never grow indifferent to one another, but daily rediscover the grace of listening, understanding, and compassionate love, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

4. For those who feel wounded, abandoned, or lonely:

that they may encounter people who will walk beside them with kindness and hope, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

5. For our deceased loved ones and all who helped shape the lives of this couple:

that God may reward them with eternal peace and joy, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Father of mercy,

You never pass by the wounds of Your people.

Hear the prayers we place before You today,

and teach us to love with the compassionate heart of Christ,

who lives and reigns for ever and ever. **Amen.**

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Pray, brothers and sisters, that this sacrifice,
offered for a love that seeks to remain faithful
and compassionate through every season of life,
may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

PREFACE

It is truly right and just,
our duty and our salvation,
always and everywhere to give You thanks,
Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God.

For in Your wisdom You created man and woman
to walk together in love,
so that no one might journey through life alone.
In Christ Your Son,
You revealed a love that draws near to the wounded,
heals the broken-hearted,
and remains faithful even unto the Cross.

Today You bless N. and N.,
calling them to become a living sign of that same mercy and
compassion.

Through their covenant of love,
may they reveal to the world
that true greatness is found not in power or success,
but in faithful presence, forgiveness, and self-giving care.

And so, with Angels and Archangels,
and with all the saints,
we proclaim Your glory,
as with one voice we acclaim:

INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER

With confidence in the Father
whose mercy always draws near to His children,
and praying that this newly married couple
may remain faithful to one another in compassion,
forgiveness, and love,
let us now pray in the words Jesus Himself taught us:

NUPTIAL BLESSING

Dear brothers and sisters,
let us humbly pray to the Lord for N. and N.,
who today begin their life together in the sacrament of Marriage.

Holy Father, creator of all love and source of every blessing,
pour out Your grace upon N. and N.
May they always encounter one another
with hearts ready to listen, forgive, and remain faithful.

When one is wounded, may the other draw near with compassion.
When burdens grow heavy, may they carry them together.
When joy fills their home, may they rejoice with grateful hearts.
May their marriage become a refuge of peace,
a shelter for the weary,
and a witness of Christ's enduring love.

Bless them with children,
that they may lovingly welcome new life
and raise their family in faith, hope, and charity.

Grant that, after a lifetime of mutual love and service,
they may come at last to the eternal wedding feast of heaven.
Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord Jesus Christ,
who said to Your Apostles:
Peace I leave you, my peace I give you,
look not on our sins, but on the faith of Your Church,
and graciously grant her peace and unity
in accordance with Your will.
Teach us never to pass by the suffering of another,
but to become instruments of reconciliation,
compassion, and faithful love.
Who live and reign for ever and ever.
Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Behold the Lamb of God,
behold Him who never passes by our wounds
but draws near to heal and restore us.
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

Love grows holy not in extraordinary moments alone,
but in daily encounters of mercy.
A marriage becomes radiant when husband and wife
continually choose to remain present to one another —
in weakness, in joy, in silence, and in hope.
Christ, whom we have received today,
now calls this couple to become His living presence in the world.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Having shared at this heavenly table,
we ask You, Lord,
to strengthen N. and N.
with the grace of enduring love.
May the Body and Blood of Christ
teach them to encounter one another each day
with compassion, patience, and faithful devotion,
so that their marriage may reflect the mercy of Christ to the world.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord bless you and keep you.
May He teach you to recognize His presence in one another each
day.
May He strengthen you to remain faithful in times of trial,
gentle in moments of weakness,
and joyful in seasons of blessing.

And may Almighty God bless you,
the Father, ✠ and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by the compassion you show,
the forgiveness you offer, and the faithful love you live each day.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

“Marriage becomes holy
when two people refuse to pass by each other’s wounds.”

69. Learning the Art of Apology

James 5:16; Lk 15:17–24

Theme: “Love Grows Where ‘I Am Sorry’ Is Spoken with Truth and Mercy.”

INTRODUCTION

A famous violin maker once displayed two violins in his workshop. One was flawless in appearance but had never been played. The other had scratches, repaired cracks, and worn wood. A young apprentice chose the polished one, but the old craftsman smiled and said, “The beautiful one has never learned music. The wounded one has learned to sing again after every break.” Marriage is not built by people who never fail one another; it is built by people who know how to return, repair, forgive, and begin again.

In today’s readings, Saint James tells us, “Confess your sins to one another.” The Gospel shows the prodigal son discovering that the road home begins with the courage to say, “Father, I have sinned.” Love dies where pride rules, but love deepens where apology and forgiveness meet. The strongest marriages are not those without hurt, but those where mercy is stronger than hurt.

As we gather for this wedding celebration, we also recognize how often we fail to love humbly, speak gently, forgive quickly, and apologize sincerely. Therefore, trusting in the mercy of God who never tires of welcoming us home, let us acknowledge our sins and prepare ourselves to celebrate these sacred mysteries.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, You teach us that greatness begins with humility and the courage to say, “I was wrong”: **Lord, have mercy.**

Christ Jesus, You welcomed the prodigal son with compassion before he could finish his apology: **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, You heal wounded hearts and restore broken relationships through forgiveness and grace: **Lord, have mercy.**

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God,
who never closes the door to the repentant heart,
forgive us our pride, heal our wounds,
restore our relationships through mercy and reconciliation,
and bring us to everlasting life. **Amen.**

COLLECT

Merciful and loving Father, You revealed through Your Son that true love is strengthened by humility, healed by forgiveness, and renewed through reconciliation.

As N. and N. begin their married life,
teach them the sacred art of apology,
the grace to forgive without counting the cost,
and the wisdom to return to one another with honest hearts after every failure.

May their home become a place
where mercy speaks louder than pride
and love grows deeper through every new beginning.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son, who lives and reigns with
You in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

HOMILY

A man once carved these words into his wedding ring:

“Return quickly.”

When friends asked why he did not engrave something romantic, he answered, “Because every marriage has storms. The secret is not avoiding distance, but returning before distance becomes permanent.”

That is the Gospel today.

The prodigal son rehearses his apology while walking home: “Father, I have sinned.” Those words are small, but they open heaven. Pride had taken him away; humility brought him back. And before the son could finish speaking, the father was already embracing him.

Every marriage will eventually need those same words:

“I was wrong.”

“I hurt you.”

“Forgive me.”

And sometimes even harder words:

“I still choose you.”

Many couples think love is sustained by romance alone. But romance may begin a marriage; mercy sustains it.

A psychologist once asked elderly couples the secret of fifty years together. One old woman laughed and said, “We came from a generation that repaired things instead of replacing them.” That is wisdom. Today many people replace relationships when they become difficult. But Christian marriage believes that wounded love can become deeper love.

Saint James tells us, “Confess your sins to one another.” Notice: not accuse one another — confess. Marriage becomes holy when two people stop competing to be right and begin striving to remain united.

There is an old story about Abraham Lincoln. After a painful argument with his wife, he quietly walked out, picked up an axe, and spent an hour chopping wood behind the house. When he returned, calmer and humbled, he simply said, “I think my anger was louder than my love.” That sentence healed more than the argument itself. In marriage, humility saves more relationships than brilliance ever will.

N. and N., there will be days when words come easily and days when silence becomes heavy. There will be misunderstandings, disappointments, tired evenings, and moments when ego whispers, “Wait for the other person to apologize first.” But love that waits for the other to bend first often freezes into distance.

The prodigal son teaches another way:

Get up. Return. Speak honestly. Trust mercy.

A priest once visited an elderly husband in hospital. The man had been married sixty-three years. Weak and barely able to speak, he asked for paper and wrote only two words to his wife sitting beside him:

“Still sorry.”

She smiled through tears and replied,

“Still forgiven.”

That is marriage at its holiest.

The world celebrates perfect weddings. God celebrates reconciled hearts.

And perhaps heaven's most beautiful love story is not when two people never wound each other, but when they never stop returning to each other.

So, N. and N., whenever pride becomes louder than tenderness, remember this:

the shortest prayer in marriage may sometimes be,
"I am sorry,"
and the holiest reply may be,
"I forgive you."

And one day, after many years together, after victories and failures, tears and laughter, may your love stand like that repaired violin — marked by life, strengthened by grace, and able to sing a deeper music because it learned how to heal after every crack.

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

Trusting in God whose mercy restores wounded hearts and strengthens faithful love, let us bring our prayers before Him.

1. For the Church, that she may continue to proclaim reconciliation, mercy, and healing in a divided world, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

2. For N. and N., that they may always have the humility to apologize, the generosity to forgive, and the courage to begin again after every difficulty, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

3. For married couples who carry hidden wounds, painful memories, or broken communication, that God may restore tenderness and

peace within their homes, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

4. For families divided by pride, resentment, or long silence, that the grace of reconciliation may open new doors of healing, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

5. For all of us gathered here, that we may learn to love with humility, speak with kindness, and forgive as Christ forgives us, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Father of mercy,

You never tire of welcoming Your children home.

Hear these prayers we place before You,
and teach us to build relationships rooted in truth,
humility, and forgiveness.

Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Pray, brothers and sisters, that this sacrifice, offered with grateful hearts for the love of N. and N., and for the grace to forgive and begin anew each day, may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

PREFACE

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give You thanks,
Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God.

For in Your wisdom You created man and woman in love, and You revealed that marriage is strengthened not only by joy and affection, but also by patience, humility, and mercy.

Through Your Son, You showed us the Father
who runs to embrace the repentant child,
teaching us that forgiveness restores what pride destroys.

Today You unite N. and N. in the covenant of marriage,
calling them to reflect Your faithful love
through tenderness in times of happiness
and reconciliation in moments of weakness.
In their union, You remind the world
that mercy is stronger than failure
and love stronger than woundedness.

And so, with Angels and Archangels,
with Thrones and Dominions,
and with all the hosts and Powers of heaven,
we sing the hymn of Your glory, as without end we acclaim:

INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER

At the Savior's command and formed by divine teaching,
let us pray with confidence to the Father
who always welcomes His children home
and teaches us to forgive one another from the heart:

NUPTIAL BLESSING

Dear brothers and sisters,
let us humbly pray to the Lord for N. and N.,
who today begin their life together in the sacrament of Matrimony.

Holy Father,
Creator of love and source of mercy,
pour out Your blessing upon N. and N.

Grant that they may always speak truthfully to one another,
listen patiently, forgive generously,
and never allow pride to harden their hearts.
When misunderstandings arise,
give them the humility to seek reconciliation quickly
and the wisdom to choose love over resentment.

May their home be filled with kindness and peace,
their table with gratitude and welcome,
and their hearts with enduring tenderness.

Bless them with children
who will bring joy to their family and hope to the world,
and help them become loving examples of faith,
compassion, and unity.

As You never abandon Your people,
may they never abandon one another,
but walk together through every season of life
with steadfast faith and joyful trust.
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord Jesus Christ, who said to Your Apostles:
Peace I leave you, my peace I give you,
look not on our sins, but on the faith of Your Church,
and graciously grant her peace and unity
in accordance with Your will.

Teach us also to seek peace within our homes through humility,
honest apology, and generous forgiveness, so that wounded hearts
may be healed before bitterness takes root.
Who live and reign for ever and ever. **Amen.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Behold the Lamb of God,
behold Him who takes away the sins of the world
and restores us through mercy.
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

Love survives not because two people are perfect,
but because grace teaches them to begin again.

Today Christ has entered the hearts of N. and N. through this
Eucharist. The One who forgives endlessly now walks with them into
married life. Every shared meal, every difficult conversation, every
reconciliation, every quiet act of tenderness can become holy when
offered in love.

A marriage shaped by mercy becomes a living Gospel —
a home where people encounter not perfection, but compassion.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Having shared at the table of Your mercy,
we pray, O Lord,
that N. and N., strengthened by the Body and Blood of Christ,
may remain faithful in love,
patient in trials,
quick to forgive,
and humble enough always to seek reconciliation.
May this sacrament deepen their unity
and make their marriage a lasting sign of Your compassionate love.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord bless you and keep you.
May He give you humble hearts that know how to apologize,
merciful hearts that know how to forgive,
and faithful hearts that never tire of beginning again.

May your home be filled with peace, laughter, honesty, and
tenderness.
May God bless you with children and grandchildren who will rejoice
in the witness of your love.

And may almighty God bless all of you,
the Father, and the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by lives marked with mercy,
reconciliation, and faithful love.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

“A strong marriage is not made of two people
who never hurt each other,
but of two people who never stop returning,
apologizing, forgiving, and loving again.”

70. Protecting Marriage from Busyness

Ps 46:10; Mk 6:31

Theme: “Love Needs Sacred Time: Protecting Marriage from the Tyranny of Busyness”

INTRODUCTION

A man once said after forty years of marriage: “We never fell out of love. We simply became too busy to notice each other.” They had built a successful life, raised children, paid bills, attended meetings, answered calls, and fulfilled responsibilities. But somewhere between schedules and deadlines, silence disappeared from their home. One evening, while searching through old boxes, they found letters they had written to each other during their engagement. They sat together and wept—not because love had died, but because noise had buried it alive.

Today’s readings remind us that love cannot survive only on efficiency. In the Psalm, God says, “*Be still and know that I am God.*” And in the Gospel, Jesus tells His exhausted disciples, “*Come away by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while.*” Love needs pauses. Marriage needs moments where two people stop performing life and begin truly seeing each other again.

As we gather to celebrate this marriage, we must also admit how easily modern life steals what is most sacred. Too often we are present everywhere except to the people we love most. Therefore, before we celebrate these sacred mysteries, let us acknowledge our sins and ask the Lord to restore stillness, attentiveness, and tenderness to our hearts.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, You call us away from noise to dwell in the quietness of Your love: **Lord, have mercy.**

Christ Jesus, You teach us that relationships are more important than achievements: **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, You remain patient when busyness makes us neglect one another: **Lord, have mercy.**

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God have mercy on us,
forgive us for the times we allowed distractions,
haste, and selfish pursuits
to weaken our love for Him and for one another,
heal what is wounded within us,
restore peace to our homes and attentiveness to our hearts,
and bring us to everlasting life. **Amen.**

COLLECT

O God,
who in Your wisdom created human love
to reflect the tenderness and faithfulness of Your own heart,
teach us to cherish the sacred gift of time shared with one another.
Grant that these Your servants, united today in holy matrimony,
may never allow the pressures and busyness of life
to overshadow their love,
but may always find rest, joy, and renewal in each other and in You.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

HOMILY

There is a haunting sentence many couples say too late:
“We lived in the same house, but slowly stopped living in each other’s hearts.”

Not through betrayal.
Not through hatred.
But through busyness.

A marriage rarely collapses in one dramatic moment. More often, it erodes quietly—one postponed conversation, one distracted dinner, one unanswered tenderness at a time. Love dies less from violence and more from neglect.

That is why today’s Gospel is astonishingly beautiful. Jesus sees His disciples exhausted, overwhelmed, consumed by demands, and He says: “*Come away by yourselves and rest a while.*” Notice: Jesus does not first give them another mission. He gives them rest. Because God knows that exhausted souls struggle to love deeply.

The world today glorifies exhaustion. People proudly say, “I’m busy,” as though busyness were holiness. But being busy is not the same as being alive. A marriage can have a full calendar and an empty heart.

A famous story tells of a professor who stood before his class holding a glass jar. He filled it first with large stones and asked, “Is it full?” The students said yes. Then he poured in pebbles. Then sand. Finally, water. The professor smiled and said, “If I had not put the big stones in first, they would never have fit.” The big stones are what matter most—faith, family, love, presence. Everything else is sand.

Dear couple, protect your “big stones.”

Protect simple meals together.

Protect prayer together.

Protect conversations without phones.

Protect laughter.

Protect silence.

Protect Sunday.

Protect moments where you are not merely managing life but sharing life.

Psalm 46 says, “*Be still and know that I am God.*” Stillness is not laziness. It is sacred attention. Only still hearts can truly listen. Only still hearts can truly love.

There is another story of an elderly woman whose husband had Alzheimer’s disease. Every morning she visited him in the nursing home and fed him breakfast. Someone asked, “Does he still recognize you?” She replied, “No, he no longer knows who I am. But I still know who he is.” That is love beyond efficiency. Love that stays. Love that chooses presence even when nothing is gained in return.

Marriage is not merely finding time when convenient. Marriage is deciding that another person is worth slowing down for.

And slowing down is deeply spiritual.

Jesus Himself often withdrew from crowds. He walked instead of rushed. He stopped for the blind, the forgotten, the grieving. Love always moves at the speed of attention.

Dear friends, years from now, this couple will not remember every expense, every project, every achievement. But they will remember whether they felt cherished. Whether they felt heard. Whether they felt alone.

One day, near the end of life, nobody says:

“I wish I had answered more emails.”

People say:

“I wish I had spent more time with the people I love.”

So today, this wedding becomes more than a ceremony. It becomes a promise to resist a culture that is always rushing. A promise that their home will not become merely a charging station for tired bodies, but a sanctuary where two souls encounter each other and God.

And perhaps the deepest truth is this:

Love is spelled not only with words, but with time.

A father once tucked his little daughter into bed after another exhausting day at work. The child wrapped her arms around him and whispered, “Daddy, I think you are richer than everyone else.” He smiled and asked why. She answered, “Because even when you are tired, you still give me your time.”

That is the wealth that truly lasts.

And that is the kind of love God blesses today.

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

Trusting in the God who calls us to stillness, love, and faithful presence, let us bring before Him our prayers for this couple and for the whole world.

For the Church, that she may help families discover the sacredness of prayer, rest, and attentive love, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

2. For N. and N., that amid the demands of life they may always protect time for one another, growing in tenderness, patience, and joy, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

3. For married couples burdened by stress, overwork, or emotional distance, that God may restore communication, healing, and peace in their homes, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

4. For families throughout the world, that homes may become places of listening, prayer, forgiveness, and genuine presence, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

5. For all gathered here, that we may learn to slow down and recognize the people God has entrusted to our love, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Father of love and peace,

hear the prayers we offer with confidence and hope.

Teach us to live not in haste but in love,

and grant that our relationships

may always reflect Your faithful presence.

Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Pray, brothers and sisters, that this sacrifice, offered with grateful hearts for the gift of love, fidelity, and the sacred time shared between husband and wife, may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

PREFACE

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give You thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God.

For You created man and woman in love and taught them that faithful companionship

is one of Your greatest gifts to humanity.
In a restless and hurried world, You call husbands and wives
to become signs of Your patient and enduring presence.

Through the covenant of marriage,
You teach us that love grows strong
not merely through great achievements,
but through daily acts of attention, sacrifice, tenderness, and peace.
And in Christ Your Son,
You reveal that true love always makes time for the other.

And so, with Angels and Archangels, with Thrones and Dominions,
and with all the hosts and Powers of heaven,
we sing the hymn of Your glory, as without end we acclaim:

INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER

At the Savior's command and formed by divine teaching,
let us pray to the Father
who desires every home to become a place of peace, rest,
forgiveness, and faithful love.

NUPTIAL BLESSING

Dear brothers and sisters,
let us humbly pray to the Lord for this bride and groom,
who come today to begin their life together,
that God may bless them with unity of heart and lasting peace.

Holy Father,
creator of all love and source of every blessing,
pour out Your grace upon N. and N.
Keep them faithful in joy and steadfast in trials.
When life becomes hurried and demanding,

teach them to return to one another with patience and tenderness.
May their home always be a refuge of peace,
where prayer is cherished, forgiveness is freely given,
and love is renewed each day.

Grant that they may never allow distractions or burdens
to harden their hearts or distance their souls,
but may they continually discover Your presence
in quiet conversations, shared meals, mutual sacrifices, and faithful
companionship.

Bless them with the gift of children,
that they may lovingly welcome new life
and raise their family in wisdom, compassion, and faith.

May they grow old together in serenity and gratitude,
surrounded by the love of family and friends,
until they come at last to the eternal wedding feast of heaven.
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord Jesus Christ,
who said to Your Apostles:
Peace I leave you, my peace I give you,
look not on our sins, but on the faith of Your Church,
and graciously grant her peace and unity in accordance with Your
will.

Teach us especially to protect our homes from the unrest of constant
distraction and hurried living, so that our families may become places
of attentive love and quiet joy.
Who live and reign for ever and ever. **Amen.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Behold the Lamb of God,
behold Him who teaches us to love with patience,
presence, and peace.
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

Love grows where people truly see one another.
Today Christ has nourished us with His presence,
reminding us that the deepest relationships are not built in haste,
but in faithful moments of attention and sacrifice.
May this couple always remember:
the greatest gift they can offer each other
is not perfection, but presence.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Having shared at the table of Your heavenly banquet,
we pray, O Lord,
that these sacred mysteries may strengthen N. and N.
in lasting fidelity and peaceful love.
Amid the busyness of life,
keep their hearts attentive to one another and to You,
so that their marriage may become a living sign
of Your enduring compassion and peace.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord bless you and keep you in faithful love.
Amen.

May He teach you to treasure one another above all distractions and
burdens.
Amen.

May your home be filled with prayer, laughter, peace, and unhurried
love.
Amen.

And may almighty God bless you,
the Father, and the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by living not in haste, but in love.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

“The greatest threat to love is not always conflict —
often it is distraction.
Love survives where people still make time for each other.”

71. Marriage as Pilgrimage

Heb 11:13–16; Lk 24:13–35

Theme: “Walking Together Toward the Homeland of God”

Marriage is not merely a moment at the altar but a lifelong pilgrimage in which husband and wife journey together through joy and uncertainty, discovering Christ walking beside them, as He walked with the disciples on the road to Emmaus.

INTRODUCTION

A traveller once wrote in his journal after crossing a dangerous mountain pass: “I do not remember every stone on the road, but I remember the hand that held mine when the path disappeared.” Human life is like that. We rarely remember every success, every meal, every ordinary day. But we never forget who walked beside us when the road became dark. Today, N. and N. stand before God not simply to celebrate a wedding day, but to choose each other as companions for the long road of life.

The Letter to the Hebrews reminds us that believers are pilgrims searching for a better homeland. And in the Gospel, two discouraged disciples walk away from Jerusalem until they discover that Christ Himself has been walking with them all along. Marriage is exactly this mystery: two people journeying together, sometimes certain, sometimes confused, but learning that Christ walks in the middle of their love.

Yet there are moments when we fail to recognize the Lord beside us. We become impatient travellers, selfish companions, or forgetful disciples. Therefore, before we celebrate these sacred mysteries, let us acknowledge our sins and ask the Lord for mercy and strength for the journey ahead.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, You walk beside us even when we lose our way:

Lord, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, You open our eyes to recognize Your presence in love and sacrifice: **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, You lead Your people toward the eternal homeland prepared by the Father: **Lord, have mercy.**

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God,
who never abandons His children on the road of life,
forgive us our sins,
heal our wandering hearts,
strengthen us for the pilgrimage of love,
and bring us to everlasting life. **Amen.**

COLLECT

O God,
who accompany Your people through every season of life
and reveal Your Son as companion on the journey,
look with love upon N. and N.,
who today begin the pilgrimage of marriage.
Grant that, walking together in faith,
they may recognize Christ in moments of joy and trial,
remain steadfast in love,
and one day reach the eternal home You have prepared for them.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

HOMILY

Years ago, an elderly man was asked the secret of his fifty-eight years of marriage. He smiled and said, “We never promised each other a life without storms. We only promised that if one of us lost sight of the shore, the other would keep rowing.” That is the heart of Christian marriage. Not perfection. Not uninterrupted happiness. But two people choosing, again and again, not to abandon the journey.

Today’s readings speak of life as a pilgrimage. Hebrews tells us that the saints considered themselves “strangers and pilgrims on the earth,” always searching for a homeland prepared by God. And the Gospel presents perhaps the most human journey in Scripture: two disciples walking away from disappointment. They had hoped. They had dreamed. But now they walk with broken expectations. And yet, without realizing it, Jesus Himself walks beside them. That is marriage.

There will be days when N. and N. walk with excitement and clarity. But there may also be days when they walk like the disciples to Emmaus—tired, disappointed, confused, carrying silent wounds. The miracle of Christian marriage is not that suffering never comes. The miracle is that Christ refuses to leave the road.

A young couple once got lost while hiking in heavy fog. Panic began to rise because they could no longer see the trail markers. Then the husband noticed something simple: footprints ahead of them. Someone had already walked the path. They followed the footprints and safely reached the cabin before nightfall. Later they learned the footprints belonged to a park ranger who had gone ahead that morning. Faith is exactly this. We do not walk alone. Christ has already walked every human road—joy, fatigue, betrayal, tears, even death itself.

And notice what Jesus does on the road to Emmaus. He listens before He speaks. He walks at their pace. He explains the Scriptures. Finally, He breaks bread, and their eyes are opened. Every strong marriage must learn these four movements: listen patiently, walk together gently, speak truth lovingly, and return often to the table of the Eucharist where Christ becomes the center of the home.

There is an old African proverb: “If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.” Marriage is not a sprint fueled by emotion. It is a pilgrimage sustained by fidelity. Love matures not in grand romantic moments alone, but in ordinary faithfulness: waiting for each other, forgiving quickly, carrying burdens silently, staying when it is easier to leave.

One day, many years from now, people may forget the flowers of this wedding or the music that was sung today. But heaven will remember whether the two of you became companions who helped each other reach God.

And that is the deepest meaning of marriage: not simply helping one another build a house, but helping one another reach the Father’s house.

A nurse in a hospice once described an old husband sitting beside his dying wife. He could no longer hear clearly, and she could no longer speak clearly. Yet every evening he leaned close and whispered the same words: “We are almost home.” That is the destiny of Christian marriage. Through every season, every joy, every cross, husband and wife walk together toward the eternal homeland where every pilgrimage ends in the embrace of God.

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

As pilgrims journeying toward the Kingdom of God, let us bring our prayers before the Father, trusting that Christ walks beside His people.

1. For the Church throughout the world, that she may continue to guide humanity toward Christ, the true companion on every journey, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

2. For N. and N., that their marriage may be filled with patience, courage, forgiveness, and enduring faithfulness, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

3. For married couples experiencing difficulties, that they may rediscover Christ walking beside them in their struggles, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

4. For families who are burdened by sickness, loneliness, migration, or uncertainty, that they may find strength and hope in God's presence, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

5. For our departed loved ones, that having completed their earthly pilgrimage, they may rejoice forever in the heavenly homeland, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Father of mercy,
You never cease to guide Your children on the road of life.
Hear the prayers we place before You today
and keep us faithful until we reach our eternal home.
Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Pray, brothers and sisters, that this sacrifice, offered for N. and N. as they begin their journey of married life, and for all of us who seek the homeland of heaven, may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

PREFACE

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give You thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God.

For in Your wisdom You created man and woman to walk together in love and to strengthen one another through the changing seasons of life.

In Christ Your Son, You revealed Yourself as companion to Your pilgrim people, guiding hearts that are weary, bringing hope to those who wander, and making Yourself known in the breaking of the bread.

Today You unite N. and N. in the covenant of marriage, that their home may become a place of faith, their love a sign of Your presence, and their shared life a journey toward the eternal Kingdom.

And so, with Angels and Archangels, with Thrones and Dominions, and with all the hosts and Powers of heaven, we sing the hymn of Your glory, as without end we acclaim:

INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER

At every stage of life's journey, God remains our loving Father.
And so, trusting in His providence and united as one family in Christ,
we dare to pray:

NUPTIAL BLESSING

Dear brothers and sisters,
let us humbly pray to the Lord for N. and N.,
who today begin their pilgrimage of married life,
that God may bless them with unity of heart, steadfast love,
and lasting peace.

Holy Father,
creator of all things,
You made man and woman
to walk together in love
and to become a sign of Your faithful covenant.

Pour out now the grace of Your blessing upon N. and N.
Keep them united in mind and heart,
patient in suffering,
grateful in joy,
and faithful throughout all the days of their lives.

May Christ Your Son walk beside them
in moments of uncertainty and trial,
as He walked with the disciples on the road to Emmaus.
May their home be filled with prayer, hospitality, and peace.
May they recognize Your presence in the breaking of bread,
in daily sacrifice,
and in the ordinary holiness of family life.

Bless them with the gift of children,
that they may lovingly welcome new life,
raise their children in faith and virtue,
and together become a family that journeys toward Your Kingdom.

Grant that, after a long and fruitful life,
surrounded by those they love,
they may come at last to the eternal homeland of heaven.

Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord Jesus Christ,
You said to Your Apostles:
Peace I leave you, my peace I give you;
look not on our sins, but on the faith of your Church,
and graciously grant her peace and unity
in accordance with your will.

As You walked beside the disciples on the road to Emmaus,
walk also beside us through the uncertainties of life,
and keep our hearts steadfast in hope and love.
Who live and reign for ever and ever.

Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Behold the Lamb of God,
behold Him who walks beside His people
and leads them to the eternal banquet.
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

Lord Jesus,
in the breaking of the bread
the disciples recognized You on the road to Emmaus.
Remain also with us.
When the road is long, be our strength.
When the heart is weary, be our hope.
And may the love shared by N. and N.
always reveal Your presence in their home
and in their journey together.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Having shared at Your table, O Lord,
we pray that N. and N.,
strengthened by the Body and Blood of Christ,
may walk together in lasting fidelity and peace.
May this sacrament sustain them through every joy and trial
until they reach the eternal banquet of heaven.
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord Jesus,
who walked with the disciples on the road to Emmaus,
walk always beside you.

May He strengthen your love in times of trial,
deepen your joy in times of blessing,
and guide your steps toward the Father's house.

And may almighty God bless all of you,
the Father, and the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your lives, and may your homes
become places where Christ is recognized in love, in sacrifice, and in
the breaking of bread.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

A successful marriage is not two people avoiding storms,
but two pilgrims learning to recognize Christ
walking beside them on every road.

72. The Meaning of Wedding Vows Today

Ecclesiastes 5:4–5; Mt 5:33–37

Theme: “When Words Become Covenant: The Sacred Weight of Wedding Vows”

INTRODUCTION

In 1963, after an earthquake devastated parts of Skopje, rescuers found an old couple sitting quietly beside the ruins of their home. They had lost almost everything. A journalist asked the husband, “How do you survive this?” The old man pointed to his wife and replied, “Fifty years ago, in a church much smaller than this pile of stones, I promised before God that I would stay beside her in good days and bad. Today is simply one of the bad days.” The journalist later wrote: “In a world of collapsed buildings, the strongest thing standing there was a promise.”

Today, many words are spoken cheaply. Contracts are broken. Commitments are delayed. People often say “forever” while secretly preparing an exit door. But the readings today remind us that before God, words matter. Ecclesiastes warns us not to make promises lightly, and Jesus teaches: “Let your ‘Yes’ mean ‘Yes.’” Marriage is not built on feelings alone; it is built on a spoken covenant that carries the weight of truth, fidelity, sacrifice, and grace.

As we gather around this altar, we must also admit that we have not always honoured our words before God and one another. Sometimes we have spoken carelessly, loved half-heartedly, or failed to remain faithful in small daily promises. Therefore, let us acknowledge our sins, and so prepare ourselves to celebrate these sacred mysteries.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, You are the eternal Word of the Father, faithful in every promise You make: **Lord, have mercy.**

Christ Jesus, You call husbands and wives to reflect Your faithful covenant with the Church: **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, You strengthen human weakness so that love may endure through every season of life: **Lord, have mercy.**

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God, who is ever faithful to His promises, forgive us for the times we have failed in love, truth, and fidelity, strengthen our hearts in covenant faithfulness, and bring us to everlasting life.

Amen.

COLLECT

O God,
whose own divine faithfulness
is revealed in every covenant You make with Your people,
look with kindness upon Your servants
who today entrust their lives to one another in marriage.
Teach them that true love is sustained
not merely by emotion,
but by promises lived faithfully each day.
May their words before this altar
become a lifelong witness to steadfast love, mercy, and truth.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

HOMILY

A few years ago, a nurse in a hospice centre told the story of an elderly man who came every single day to feed his wife who no longer recognized him because of Alzheimer's disease. One day the nurse asked him gently, "Why do you keep coming? She doesn't even know who you are anymore." The old man smiled and replied: "But I still know who she is."

That is the meaning of a vow.

A vow is not merely a sentence spoken on a wedding day. A vow is a decision about who you will become when life becomes difficult. Anyone can say "I love you" when the music is playing, the flowers are fresh, and the photographs are beautiful. But marriage asks a deeper question: "Will you still remain when life becomes unrecognizable?"

That is why the readings today are so powerful.

Ecclesiastes says: "When you make a vow to God, do not delay fulfilling it." The Bible understands something modern culture often forgets: words create worlds. God Himself creates through words: "Let there be light." Parents shape children through words. Nations rise and collapse because of words. And marriages survive or die because of words kept—or broken.

Jesus goes even further in the Gospel: "Let your 'Yes' mean 'Yes.'" Christ is teaching that integrity is holiness. In a culture where promises are negotiable, Christian marriage becomes prophetic. Today, this couple stands before us and says publicly: "My love will not depend on convenience."

There is an old Japanese art called *kintsugi*. When a precious bowl breaks, the cracks are repaired with gold. The object becomes more beautiful not despite its fractures, but because of them. Strong marriages are not marriages without wounds. Strong marriages are marriages where grace enters the cracks.

There will be days when romance feels effortless. And there will be days when fidelity feels costly. Days of abundance and days of anxiety. Days of laughter and days of silence. But the sacrament of marriage means this: God does not merely witness your vows; He enters them.

A young husband once complained to his grandfather after only two years of marriage: "Maybe we made a mistake. We argue so much." The grandfather quietly replied, "In my generation, when something broke, we repaired it. Today, people throw things away." Then he added, "Love lasts not because two people never fail, but because they refuse to quit repairing."

That is sacred love.

Dear couple, today your vows will not simply describe your feelings. They will define your mission. Your "I do" is really saying:

"I will stay."

"I will forgive."

"I will grow."

"I will begin again."

"I will choose you even on difficult days."

And this matters greatly for the world. Because faithful marriages become signs of hope in an exhausted society. Children learn trust from watching promises kept. Friends rediscover hope by seeing

enduring love. The Church becomes visible whenever husband and wife continue loving beyond convenience.

But none of this is possible by human strength alone. The deepest secret of Christian marriage is not that two people hold tightly to each other. The deepest secret is that God holds both of them together.

There is a story told of a sailor caught in a violent storm at sea. Terrified, he tied himself to the mast of the ship so he would not be swept away by the waves. Years later he said: "The storm was stronger than me, but the mast was stronger than the storm."

Marriage will encounter storms. But today, this couple ties their lives not merely to each other, but to Christ. And Christ is stronger than every storm.

So when the years pass, when beauty changes, when burdens come, when tears appear, may they one day be able to say with joy: "We did not merely say vows once. We lived them."

And that is when words become holy.

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

Brothers and sisters, trusting in the God whose promises never fail, let us place before Him our prayers for this couple, for the Church, and for the world.

1. For the Church, that she may always be a faithful witness to God's enduring covenant of love in a world wounded by broken promises, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

2. For N. and N., that the vows they speak today may deepen each day through patience, forgiveness, tenderness, and steadfast fidelity, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

3. For married couples experiencing trials, misunderstandings, or suffering, that Christ may strengthen them to repair rather than abandon what is wounded, let us pray to the Lord.
Lord, hear our prayer.

4. For children and young people, that they may grow up believing once again in truth, commitment, and lifelong love, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

5. For our departed loved ones and for all who remained faithful to God throughout their lives, that they may rejoice forever in the eternal wedding feast of heaven, let us pray to the Lord.
Lord, hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father,
You are forever faithful in love and mercy.
Receive these prayers we place before You today,
and strengthen this couple
to become a living sign of Your enduring covenant in the world.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Pray, brothers and sisters, that these gifts,
and the offering of this couple's faithful vows before God,
may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

PREFACE

It is truly right and just,
our duty and our salvation,
always and everywhere to give You thanks,
Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God.

For in Your wisdom and love
You created man and woman
to walk together in covenant fidelity,
so that through mutual love and sacrifice
they might reflect the steadfast love
with which Christ loves His Church.

In a world where many promises are forgotten,
You continue to call husbands and wives
to become witnesses of enduring faithfulness,
teaching us that true love is strengthened
through perseverance, mercy, and grace.

Today You bless N. and N.,
who entrust themselves to one another before Your altar.
May their spoken vows become daily acts of love,
their home a place of reconciliation and peace,
and their lives a sign that Your covenant never fails.

And so, with Angels and Archangels,
with Thrones and Dominions,
and with all the hosts and Powers of heaven,
we sing the hymn of Your glory,
as without end we acclaim:

INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER

At the Savior's command and formed by divine teaching,
let us pray as the children of the faithful God,
whose promises endure forever:

NUPTIAL BLESSING

Dear brothers and sisters, let us humbly pray to the Lord
for this bride and groom, who come today to begin their married life
at God's altar, that He may graciously bless them with His love.

O God, who from the beginning
have revealed Your love through covenant and fidelity,
pour out the grace of Your Holy Spirit upon N. and N.

Grant that the vows they have spoken today
may remain firm in times of joy and in times of trial.
Teach them to speak truth with kindness,
to forgive generously, to persevere patiently,
and to remain faithful in every season of life.

May their home become a refuge of peace,
a place where wounds are healed, where hope is renewed,
and where Your presence is always welcomed.

Bless them with the gift of children,
that they may lovingly raise them in faith, wisdom, and compassion,
and together become a family rooted in Your covenant love.

May they continue throughout life
to strengthen one another in holiness,
and after the journey of this earthly life,
may they rejoice forever in the wedding feast of heaven.
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord Jesus Christ,
You said to Your Apostles:
Peace I leave you, my peace I give you;
look not on our sins, but on the faith of your Church,
and graciously grant her peace and unity
in accordance with your will.
May this couple always protect the peace of their home
through truthful words, patient listening,
and faithful love that refuses to surrender in times of trial.
Who live and reign for ever and ever.

Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Behold the Lamb of God,
behold Him who remains forever faithful to His covenant of love.
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

Love does not become sacred because it is perfect.
Love becomes sacred because it remains faithful.

Today this couple has spoken vows before God,
but tomorrow those vows will continue in ordinary moments:
in tired evenings, quiet sacrifices,
forgiveness after misunderstandings,
and hope during difficult days.
The Eucharist they have received today is the strength for that
journey. For Christ Himself remains with those who choose to remain
with one another.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Having shared at Your table, O Lord,
we pray that this holy sacrament
may strengthen N. and N.
to live faithfully the covenant they have begun today.
May the Body and Blood of Christ
teach them perseverance in love,
truth in speech,
and generosity in sacrifice,
so that their marriage may become
a living witness to Your enduring presence.
Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord bless you and keep you faithful in love.
Amen.

May He strengthen you in moments of trial,
deepen your joy in moments of blessing,
and make your home a place of peace and mercy.
Amen.

May your words always remain truthful,
your promises steadfast,
and your hearts anchored in Christ,
who is stronger than every storm.
Amen.

And may almighty God bless all of you,
the Father, and the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by the faithfulness of your lives, and may your love become a living witness that promises kept can still change the world.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

“Wedding vows are not merely words spoken once before an altar; they are promises slowly made visible through a lifetime of faithful love.”

73. Faith, Family, and Future Generations

Joel 1:2–3; Mt 19:13–15

Theme: “A Love That Becomes a Blessing for Generations”

Marriage is never only about two people. A faithful marriage becomes a living Gospel handed from one generation to another. Through love, prayer, tenderness, forgiveness, and faith, a family becomes the place where children first learn the face of God and where the future receives hope.

INTRODUCTION

In a small village after a devastating flood, one house alone remained standing. People gathered around it in amazement and asked the old grandfather who lived there, “How did your house survive when everything else collapsed?” The old man quietly replied, “Because every night for fifty years, before we slept, our family knelt together to pray. The flood was strong, but the foundations had already been built long before the storm came.” Today, dear friends, we gather not simply to celebrate a wedding, but to witness the building of a foundation that will speak not only to this couple, but to generations yet unborn.

The prophet Joel says: “*Tell your children of it, and let your children tell their children.*” Faith is never meant to stop with one generation. In the Gospel, Jesus welcomes little children and reminds us that the Kingdom of God belongs to hearts that trust, receive, and love. Today, this couple begins a sacred vocation: not merely to build a home, but to create a future where faith, love, mercy, and hope can be passed on like a living flame.

Yet we also know that families are not built by perfection, but by grace. There are moments when love grows tired, patience runs thin,

and faith becomes weak. Therefore, as we begin these sacred mysteries, let us acknowledge our sins and ask the Lord to strengthen us to become faithful witnesses of His love for generations to come.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, You welcomed children and revealed the tenderness of the Father: **Lord, have mercy.**

Christ Jesus, You call families to become schools of faith, forgiveness, and love: **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, You remain faithful through every season of life and every generation: **Lord, have mercy.**

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, strengthen our families in faith and love, heal what is broken within us, and bring us to everlasting life.

Amen.

COLLECT

O God, who in your wisdom created marriage to become a sign of your faithful love and a blessing for generations, look with kindness upon your servants gathered here today. Strengthen them in unity, deepen their faith, and make their home a place where love is lived generously, where children are welcomed with joy, and where your presence is never forgotten. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

HOMILY

A teacher once asked her students to bring something precious from home that had been handed down through generations. One child brought an old watch, another a necklace, another a Bible with worn pages. But one little girl brought nothing. Embarrassed, she said quietly, “We have nothing old in our family. Everything gets broken.” There was silence in the classroom. Then the teacher gently replied, “Perhaps one day, you will become the beginning of something that lasts.”

That is what marriage is.

It is the courage to begin something that lasts.

The world often measures success by careers, possessions, achievements, and visibility. But heaven measures differently. Heaven asks: *Did love endure? Did faith survive? Did your home become a place where God was remembered?*

Joel tells us today: “*Tell your children of it, and let your children tell their children.*” Faith is meant to travel through generations like a river flowing steadily through time. Many of us are believers today because somewhere a grandmother prayed faithfully, a grandfather sacrificed silently, a mother forgave repeatedly, or a father remained steadfast despite hardships.

A man once found an old photograph of his grandparents kneeling beside their bed in prayer. He said, “I don’t remember a single sermon my grandfather preached, but I remember the sound of his knees touching the floor every night.” That became the inheritance of faith.

Dear couple, your greatest legacy may never be your house, your bank account, or your accomplishments. Your greatest legacy may

be the atmosphere you create at home — whether your future children learn kindness from watching you, forgiveness from hearing your apologies, faith from seeing you pray together, and hope from witnessing how you carry your crosses.

In today's Gospel, people brought children to Jesus, and the disciples tried to send them away. But Jesus said, "*Let the little children come to me.*" The Kingdom belongs to hearts that are open, trusting, and humble.

Children do not learn faith first from catechism books. They learn faith from watching. They watch whether parents speak kindly or cruelly. They watch whether forgiveness is practiced or postponed. They watch whether Sunday Mass matters or convenience matters more. Long before children understand theology, they understand atmosphere.

There is a story of a little boy awakened by thunder during a stormy night. Frightened, he ran to his parents' room. His mother said, "Go back to bed. Jesus is with you." The boy answered, "I know Jesus is with me... but right now I need someone with skin on."

That is family.

Family makes God visible.

Marriage is not only romance. Romance begins a marriage, but sacrifice sustains it. There will be seasons when love feels effortless and seasons when it feels like work. There will be days of laughter and days of misunderstanding. Yet every act of patience, every apology, every silent sacrifice becomes part of the spiritual inheritance passed to future generations.

An elderly couple celebrating sixty years of marriage was once asked the secret of their lasting union. The husband smiled and said,

"We belonged to a generation that repaired things instead of replacing them."

That is holy wisdom.

Today's wedding is not simply about happiness today. It is about shaping tomorrow. The vows spoken here will echo into years not yet seen. Perhaps one day a child will learn how to pray because of this couple. Perhaps a future generation will rediscover faith because love remained faithful in this home.

And that is why Christian marriage matters so deeply. A faithful marriage becomes a prophecy against a culture of disposable relationships. It tells the world that covenant is still possible, fidelity is still beautiful, and love rooted in God can still endure.

Let me end with this.

In the ancient world, people sometimes planted olive trees knowing they themselves would never live long enough to enjoy the full harvest. The tree was planted for children and grandchildren yet unborn.

Marriage is like planting an olive tree.

Today, dear couple, you are planting something whose full fruits you may never completely see. But if Christ remains at the center of your home, generations after you may one day sit in the shade of the love you began here today.

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

Celebrating God's gift of faithful love and trusting in His care for every generation, let us now present our prayers before Him.

1. For the Church, that she may continue to strengthen families in faith, hope, and love, and become a light for future generations, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
2. For this newly married couple, that their home may always be filled with prayer, tenderness, forgiveness, and joyful faithfulness, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
3. For all parents and grandparents, that through their witness many children may come to know Christ and trust in His love, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
4. For children throughout the world, especially those who suffer from neglect, violence, or broken homes, that they may be protected and loved, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
5. For all gathered here, that our lives may leave behind not only memories of success, but a legacy of faith and goodness for generations to come, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Father of every generation, receive these prayers we place before You today. Bless this couple and all our families, that our homes may always reflect the love of Christ. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Pray, brothers and sisters, that this sacrifice, offered for the strengthening of love, faith, and future generations, may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

PREFACE

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God.

For in your wisdom you created man and woman in love, and you blessed marriage so that families might become living signs of your presence in the world. In faithful homes, children learn hope, hearts discover mercy, and faith is handed on from one generation to another.

In Christ your Son, you revealed the dignity of human love, blessing the union of husband and wife and welcoming little children into your embrace. Through the grace of this sacrament, you strengthen couples to persevere in fidelity, to carry one another through every season of life, and to become witnesses of your enduring covenant.

And so, with Angels and Archangels, with Thrones and Dominions, and with all the hosts and Powers of heaven, we sing the hymn of your glory, as without end we acclaim:

INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER

At the Savior's command and formed by divine teaching, let us pray with confidence to the Father who desires every family to become a home of faith, peace, and enduring love.

NUPTIAL BLESSING

Dear brothers and sisters,
let us humbly pray to the Lord for this bride and groom,
who come today before God's altar,
that He may lovingly pour out His grace upon them.

Holy Father, creator of all things,
you made man and woman in your image
and blessed their union with the gift of love.
Look kindly upon these your servants
who are joined today in the covenant of marriage.

Pour upon them the grace of the Holy Spirit,
that they may remain faithful in joy and in trial,
patient in suffering, grateful in prosperity,
and steadfast in prayer.

May their home become a place of welcome and peace,
where faith is lived sincerely,
where forgiveness is freely given,
and where Christ is always honoured.

Bless them with children,
that they may lovingly nurture them in wisdom and grace,
and may future generations rise from this family
to know, love, and serve you faithfully.

Grant that all who enter their home
may experience kindness, hope, and compassion,
and that after a long and blessed life together,
they may come with all the saints
to the eternal wedding feast of heaven.
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord Jesus Christ,
who said to your Apostles:
Peace I leave you, my peace I give you,
look not on our sins, but on the faith of your Church,
and graciously grant her peace and unity
in accordance with your will.
May your peace dwell in every family, strengthen every marriage,
and guide future generations to walk in the ways of love and truth.
Who live and reign for ever and ever.
Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

This is Jesus, the Lamb of God, who welcomes the little children,
strengthens faithful love, and nourishes every family with His mercy.
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

A family does not become holy in one extraordinary moment.
Holiness is built quietly —
in daily patience,
in shared prayers,
in forgiven mistakes,
in burdens carried together,
and in love that chooses to remain faithful.
Today Christ has entered this marriage through the Eucharist.
If He remains at the centre of this home,
then this love will become more than companionship —
it will become a blessing that reaches generations yet unseen.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Having shared at the table of your heavenly banquet,
we humbly ask you, Lord,
to strengthen this newly married couple
through the grace of this sacrament.
May their love grow deeper with the passing years,
their home remain firm in faith,
and their lives become a blessing for generations to come.
Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord bless you and keep you.
May He strengthen your love in times of joy and difficulty.
May He make your home a place of prayer, peace, and welcome.
May He bless you with children and future generations who walk in
faith and truth.
And may almighty God bless you,
the Father, and the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your lives, and by the love and
faith you hand on to generations yet to come.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

“The greatest inheritance parents can leave their children
is not wealth, but the memory of a love
that remained faithful
and a home where God was real.”

74. Discernment and God’s Plan for Couples

Romans 12:2; John 10:3–4

THEME: “Listening for the Shepherd’s Voice: Discerning God’s
Dream for Marriage”

INTRODUCTION

A mountain guide once led a group through thick fog. The path had
disappeared. Panic slowly spread among the hikers because they
could no longer see where to place their feet. But the guide calmly
said, “You do not need to see the whole mountain. You only need to
trust the one who knows the way.” One by one, they followed his
voice through the mist until they safely reached the summit. Later,
one hiker said, “The voice became more important than the visibility.”

Marriage is very much like that journey. No couple can see every
tomorrow clearly. There will be moments of uncertainty, crossroads,
disappointments, and unexpected blessings. Yet Christian marriage
is not built upon having every answer; it is built upon learning to
recognize and trust the voice of the Good Shepherd who says, “My
sheep hear my voice... and they follow me.” Today, N. and N. stand
before God not merely to celebrate love, but to discern together the
path God dreams for them.

But many times, we have followed the loud voices of pride,
impatience, selfishness, fear, or worldly expectations rather than the
gentle voice of Christ. Therefore, as we begin these sacred
mysteries, let us ask the Lord for mercy and for hearts able to
discern His will.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, You are the Good Shepherd who calls us each by name and leads us in truth: **Lord, have mercy.**

Christ Jesus, You teach us not to conform to the ways of the world but to be transformed by Your love: **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, You never cease guiding those who seek Your will with sincere hearts: **Lord, have mercy.**

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May Almighty God,
who patiently guides His children through every uncertainty of life,
forgive us for the times we resisted His voice,
restore in us hearts open to His wisdom and love,
and bring us to everlasting life.

Amen.

COLLECT

O God,
who reveal Your loving plan
to those who listen with trusting hearts,
look with kindness upon N. and N.,
who today place their future into Your hands.
Grant that, guided always by the voice of Christ the Good Shepherd,
they may discern Your will in joy and trial alike,
grow in unity and holiness,
and become for one another a living sign of Your faithful love.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

HOMILY

A violin maker once crafted an instrument of extraordinary beauty. Years later, during a war, the violin was damaged, cracked, and forgotten in an attic. One day, a young musician found it covered in dust. People laughed when he carried it to the stage. But after carefully tuning it, he began to play. The hall fell silent. The violin had not lost its purpose; it only needed the right hands and the right tuning.

Marriage is like that violin. Love alone is not enough. It must constantly be tuned to the voice of God. Otherwise, even beautiful relationships can slowly lose harmony. St. Paul tells us today: “Do not conform yourselves to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind.” In other words: do not let the world tune your marriage. Let God do it.

The world often says: “Follow your feelings.” Christ says: “Follow My voice.”

The world says: “Think first of yourself.” Christ says: “Lay down your life in love.”

The world says: “Leave when it becomes difficult.” Christ says: “Remain faithful.”

Discernment is not simply choosing between good and bad. Very often, it is choosing between what is easy and what is holy.

There is a story of a couple married for fifty-five years. A journalist once asked the wife, “What is the secret of your long marriage?” She smiled and replied, “We belonged to a generation that repaired things instead of replacing them.” Those words contain wisdom. Discernment in marriage means asking every day: “What helps us grow closer to God and closer to each other?”

In the Gospel, Jesus says His sheep recognize His voice. Notice this carefully: sheep recognize the shepherd's voice because they stay near him. Couples also recognize God's direction only when they remain close to Him — through prayer, forgiveness, silence, Scripture, Eucharist, and honest conversation.

A husband once confessed, "The hardest part of marriage was not learning to speak. It was learning to listen." That is true spiritually too. Many marriages suffer not because God is silent, but because noise has become louder than prayer. Busyness, ego, phones, careers, comparisons, and hidden resentments can drown out the Shepherd's voice.

Discernment also means trusting God even when the road is unclear. Remember the Holy Family. Mary and Joseph did not understand every step ahead of them. Yet they trusted. Sometimes God reveals only the next step, not the entire map. Christian marriage is not walking with certainty about the future; it is walking with certainty about Who walks with you.

A farmer once planted bamboo seeds. For years, nothing seemed to happen. He watered the ground daily while neighbors mocked him. Then suddenly, after years of hidden growth underground, the bamboo shot upward astonishingly fast. Marriage is often like that. Many sacrifices seem unseen. Many prayers seem unanswered. But God is building roots before He reveals fruits.

N. and N., today you are not simply choosing each other. You are choosing a shared vocation: to listen together for the voice of God in every season of life. In moments of joy, ask: "Lord, where are You leading us?" In moments of conflict, ask: "Lord, what are You teaching us?" In moments of fear, ask: "Lord, help us trust Your plan."

And remember this: the happiest marriages are not those without storms, but those where both spouses keep turning toward the same Shepherd.

A sailor survived a terrible storm at sea. When he finally reached shore, someone asked him, "How did you avoid sinking?" He answered, "I stopped staring at the waves and fixed my eyes on the lighthouse." That is the secret of Christian marriage. Storms will come. But if your eyes remain fixed on Christ, you will never lose your way.

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

My dear brothers and sisters, trusting in the Good Shepherd who lovingly guides His people, let us bring before Him our prayers for this couple and for the whole Church.

1. For N. and N., that they may always discern God's will together, listening attentively to the voice of Christ in every joy and challenge of life, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
2. For married couples everywhere, that they may not conform to the pressures of the world but remain faithful in love, forgiveness, and sacrifice, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
3. For families, that homes may become places of prayer, listening, wisdom, and peace where God's voice is heard and followed, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
4. For those who are struggling in relationships, facing uncertainty, loneliness, or conflict, that the Lord may guide them toward healing and hope, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

5. For all gathered here, that we may continually seek God's direction in our lives and courageously follow wherever He leads us, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Heavenly Father,
You never cease guiding those who seek You with sincere hearts.
Hear the prayers we place before You today
and lead us always in the path of Your love.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Pray, brothers and sisters, that this sacrifice,
offered with grateful hearts
as N. and N. entrust their future
to the guidance of the Good Shepherd,
may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

PREFACE

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation,
always and everywhere to give You thanks,
Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God.

For in Your wisdom and love
You guide Your children through the changing paths of life,
and in the Sacrament of Marriage
You unite man and woman in a covenant of faithful love.

You teach them to discern Your will together,
to listen for the voice of Christ amid the noise of the world,
and to become signs of Your steadfast presence
through mutual sacrifice, forgiveness, and trust.

In joy and sorrow alike,
You remain their Shepherd and their strength,
leading them ever closer to You
and helping them build a home founded upon faith and grace.

And so, with Angels and Archangels,
with Thrones and Dominions,
and with all the hosts and Powers of heaven,
we sing the hymn of Your glory, as without end we acclaim:

INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER

At the Savior's command and formed by divine teaching,
let us pray with confidence to the Father
who lovingly guides His children
and teaches us to trust His plan:

NUPTIAL BLESSING

Dear brothers and sisters,
let us humbly pray to the Lord for this bride and groom,
who today begin their journey together in Christ,
that He may bless them with unity of heart, wisdom in discernment,
and enduring love.

Holy Father, creator of all things,
You made man and woman in Your image
and blessed their union from the beginning.

Look kindly upon N. and N.,
who today entrust their lives to one another before Your altar.

Grant that they may always listen for the voice of Christ,
the Good Shepherd who leads His people in truth and love.
When life becomes uncertain, give them trust.

When difficulties arise, give them patience.
When they fail one another, give them humility and forgiveness.
When joy fills their home, make them grateful.

May their marriage become a place
where Your presence is sought daily,
where prayer is cherished,
where peace is protected,
and where love is renewed again and again.

Bless them with the gift of children,
that they may lovingly welcome new life
and raise their family in faith, wisdom, and compassion.

May they walk together through all the seasons of life,
faithful in covenant, steadfast in hope,
and joyful in Your service.
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord Jesus Christ,
who said to your Apostles:
Peace I leave you, my peace I give you,
look not on our sins, but on the faith of your Church,
and graciously grant her peace and unity
in accordance with your will.
Teach us also to listen for Your gentle voice amid the noise
and confusion of the world,
so that our homes and relationships may reflect Your lasting peace.
Who live and reign for ever and ever. **Amen.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Behold the Lamb of God,
behold him who takes away the sins of the world.
He is the Good Shepherd who calls us by name
and leads us into the fullness of life.
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

Love survives not because two people are strong enough,
but because God remains faithful enough.

Today Christ has entered once more into human hearts
through this Eucharist.
The same Shepherd who guides the Church
now walks with this couple.
The road ahead will not always be easy,
but no road is frightening when the Shepherd walks beside His flock.

Marriage becomes holy not in grand moments alone,
but in daily discernment —
in listening, forgiving, choosing kindness, praying together,
and trusting God when answers are unclear.
Every day, Christ will continue whispering: “Follow Me.”
The beauty of marriage is learning to answer together:
“Lord, we trust You.”

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Having shared at the table of Your Son,
we ask You, Lord, to strengthen N. and N.
with the grace to discern Your will faithfully throughout their lives.
May this holy Eucharist deepen their unity,
guide them in times of uncertainty,
and help them remain always attentive
to the voice of Christ their Shepherd.
Who lives and reigns for ever and ever. **Amen.**

FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord bless you and keep you.
May He guide your hearts whenever life's path becomes uncertain.
May He teach you always to recognize His voice above every
distraction and fear.

May He strengthen your love in times of trial,
fill your home with peace and prayer,
and make your marriage a light for others.

And may almighty God bless all of you,
the Father, and the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by listening to His voice, trusting His
plan, and witnessing His faithful love in the world.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

“The success of marriage depends less on seeing the whole road
ahead and more on trusting the Shepherd who walks beside you.”

75. The Sacredness of Human Life in Marriage

Deut 30:19–20; Jn 10:10

Theme: “Choose Life, Protect Life, Give Life”

*Marriage is God's sacred partnership in choosing, nurturing, defending,
and sharing life in all its forms — physical, spiritual, emotional, and eternal.*

INTRODUCTION

In 1941, during the darkness of World War II, a Polish prisoner
escaped from Auschwitz. In retaliation, the guards selected ten men
to die of starvation. One of them cried out, “My wife! My children!” At
that moment, another prisoner stepped forward — Fr. Maximilian
Kolbe — and offered his own life in place of the married man. Years
later, the man who survived would say, “I was a husband and father
because another man chose life for me.” Love became sacred
because someone decided that another person's life mattered more
than his own.

Today's readings place before us the same holy decision. In
Deuteronomy, God says: “I have set before you life and death...
choose life.” And Jesus declares in the Gospel: “I came that they
may have life, and have it abundantly.” Marriage is not merely a
contract between two people; it is a sanctuary where life is
welcomed, protected, healed, and allowed to flourish.

Yet there are moments when we fail to choose life — through harsh
words, selfishness, indifference, pride, or the refusal to forgive.
Sometimes we wound the very people entrusted to us. Therefore,
before we celebrate this sacred covenant, let us ask God for mercy,
that our hearts may become places where love gives life rather than
takes it away.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, You came that we might have life in abundance:

Lord, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, You call husbands and wives to protect the dignity and sacredness of every human life: **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, You teach us that true love sacrifices itself so that others may live: **Lord, have mercy.**

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God have mercy on us,
forgive us our sins,
heal every wound that diminishes life and love within us,
strengthen us to choose what gives life to others,
and bring us to everlasting life.

Amen.

COLLECT

O God,
You are the source and giver of all life,
and in marriage You call man and woman
to become guardians of love, hope, and human dignity.
Pour out Your grace upon these Your servants,
that their union may reflect the abundance of life
brought by Christ Your Son,
and that their home may become a sanctuary
where faith is deepened, forgiveness is practiced,
and life is cherished as sacred gift.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son,
who lives and reigns with You in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

HOMILY

A firefighter once entered a burning house after everyone else had run out. Smoke filled the rooms. Flames were swallowing the walls. Suddenly, he heard the cry of a little child upstairs. Without thinking about himself, he rushed into the fire and carried the child out alive. Later, reporters asked him, “What made you go back in?” He answered simply: “Because someone’s life was inside.”

That is the heart of today’s Gospel. Jesus says: “I came that they may have life.” Not survival. Not mere existence. But abundant life. And today, dear couple, your marriage begins with that same mission: to become guardians of life for one another.

The world often measures marriage by happiness, success, appearance, or convenience. But God measures marriage differently. God asks: “Do you help each other live more fully? Does your love protect life or diminish it? Do people become stronger, safer, holier, and more hopeful because you love each other?”

In the first reading, Moses speaks with urgency: “Choose life.” Notice — life is a choice. Every day in marriage, you will stand at that crossroads.

You choose life when you speak gently instead of wounding.
You choose life when you listen instead of ignoring.
You choose life when you forgive instead of keeping score.
You choose life when you remain faithful even when emotions fluctuate.
You choose life when you welcome children not as interruptions, but as blessings.

A doctor once told an elderly couple that the wife’s memory was fading rapidly because of Alzheimer’s disease. Every morning the

husband still dressed carefully and went to feed her breakfast at the nursing home. Someone asked him, “Why do you still go every day when she no longer remembers who you are?” The old man smiled and replied, “Because I still remember who she is.”

That is abundant life. Love that protects dignity even when convenience disappears.

Marriage becomes sacred not simply because vows are exchanged at an altar, but because two people promise to become life-givers to one another. A husband can either breathe courage into his wife or slowly crush her spirit. A wife can either strengthen her husband’s soul or weaken his heart. Words matter. Presence matters. Patience matters.

There is another kind of life God entrusts to marriage: the gift of children. Children are not products to possess; they are souls to receive. Every child silently asks the parents: “Will your love make room for me?” The greatest inheritance parents give is not wealth, but the experience of being loved securely.

A teacher once asked her students to draw what they believed heaven looked like. One little boy drew his family sitting around a dinner table laughing together. When asked why that was heaven, he answered, “Because everybody is there and nobody is hurting.”

That is what Christian marriage is meant to become: a place where nobody is abandoned, where wounds can heal, where life is defended, where Christ Himself is welcomed.

But no marriage can do this without sacrifice. Real love always costs something. Jesus did not give life cheaply; He gave it through the Cross. Every lasting marriage has hidden crucifixions — silent

sacrifices no one applauds, tears no one sees, forgiveness offered when pride wants revenge.

And yet those sacrifices become resurrection.

One day, many years from now, people may forget the beauty of this church, the flowers, the photographs, and even the details of this celebration. But they will remember something far greater: whether your marriage gave life. Whether people felt safer because of your love. Whether your children learned tenderness from watching you. Whether your home reflected the heart of Christ.

So today, standing before God, hear again His voice: “Choose life.”

Choose it in your words. Choose it in your fidelity.

Choose it in your patience. Choose it in your openness to children.

Choose it in your mercy. Choose it when it is easy.

Choose it when it is hard.

Because every morning of marriage asks one sacred question: “Will love live here today?” And the answer begins with you.

A nurse who worked in palliative care once said that many dying patients spoke about regrets — money, work, missed opportunities. But she noticed something striking: almost nobody regretted loving too much. Their deepest sorrow was always the love they failed to give.

Dear couple, may that never be your regret.

May your marriage become a living Gospel where life is protected, love is multiplied, and Christ is visible.

And when your journey is complete, may people say of your home: “Life grew there.” Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

Brothers and sisters, God calls us to choose life and to become instruments of His life-giving love. Trusting in His goodness, let us now bring our prayers before Him.

1. For the Church, that she may always defend the sacredness of human life from conception to natural death and proclaim the Gospel of love with courage and compassion, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

2. For this newly married couple, that their home may become a place of abundant life, forgiveness, tenderness, and faithfulness, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

3. For married couples who struggle with pain, misunderstanding, infertility, sickness, or loneliness, that Christ may renew their hope and strengthen their love, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

4. For children everywhere, especially the unborn, the abandoned, and the vulnerable, that they may always be welcomed, protected, and cherished as sacred gifts of God, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

5. For all of us gathered here, that our words and actions may bring life rather than harm, healing rather than division, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Heavenly Father,

You are the Lord of life and the source of all love.

Receive these prayers we place before You,

and teach us always to choose what leads to life eternal.

Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Pray, brothers and sisters, that this sacrifice, offered in thanksgiving for the gift of love and for the sacredness of human life entrusted to this couple, may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

PREFACE

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give You thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God.

For You are the author of life and the source of every blessing. In Your wisdom You created man and woman in love and united them in the covenant of marriage, so that together they might share in Your creative work, protect the dignity of human life, and reveal to the world the faithful love of Christ.

In Your Son Jesus,

You have shown us that true love gives life abundantly, heals what is wounded, forgives what is broken, and remains faithful even through sacrifice.

Today You bless these Your servants, that their home may become a place of welcome, peace, and joy, where children may be received as gifts, the weak strengthened, and Your presence encountered daily.

And so, with Angels and Archangels,

with Thrones and Dominions,

and with all the hosts and Powers of heaven,

we sing the hymn of Your glory, as without end we acclaim:

INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER

At the Savior's command and formed by divine teaching,
let us pray to the Father who is the giver of all life,
trusting that He will sustain this couple in faithful love
and make their home a place
where His children are always welcomed and cherished.

NUPTIAL BLESSING

Dear brothers and sisters,
let us humbly pray to the Lord
for these newly married spouses,
that He who has brought them together in this sacred covenant
may deepen their love and preserve them in unity.

Holy Father, maker of the whole world,
who created man and woman in Your own image
and willed that their union be crowned with Your blessing,
look with kindness upon these Your servants.

Pour out the grace of the Holy Spirit upon them,
so that they may always choose what gives life,
protect one another in times of trial,
and rejoice together in times of peace.

May their words bring encouragement,
their forgiveness bring healing,
and their fidelity bear witness
to the enduring love of Christ for His Church.

Bless them with the gift of children,
that they may welcome new life with generous hearts,
raise their family in faith and compassion,

and teach by their example
the sacred dignity of every human person.

Grant that their home may be a refuge for the weary,
a school of mercy for the young,
and a place where Your presence is daily encountered.

And after a long and blessed life together,
may they come with all whom they love
into the eternal banquet of heaven.

Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord Jesus Christ,
who said to Your Apostles:
Peace I leave you, my peace I give you,
look not on our sins, but on the faith of Your Church,
and graciously grant her peace and unity in accordance with Your
will.

Teach us to protect the life and dignity of one another through
patience, mercy, and self-giving love.
Who live and reign for ever and ever.

Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Behold the Lamb of God,
behold Him who came that we might have life in abundance.
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

Love becomes holy when it gives life.

Today Christ has entered this marriage

not as a guest, but as its foundation.

The One who gave His Body for the life of the world

now nourishes this couple with the Bread of Life.

May they remember that every act of patience,

every hidden sacrifice,

every word of tenderness,

and every child welcomed in love

becomes a participation in the life of God Himself.

A beautiful marriage is not built in grand moments alone,

but in daily choices that quietly say:

“Your life matters to me.”

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Having shared at the table of heavenly grace,

we pray, O Lord,

that these Your servants, united in holy marriage,

may always draw strength from this sacrament

to choose what gives life,

to remain faithful in love,

and to reflect the abundant life of Christ

in their home and family.

Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord, the giver of all life, bless you and keep you.

Amen.

May He strengthen your love, deepen your fidelity, and fill your home

with peace and joy.

Amen.

May He bless you with children, guide you in wisdom, and make your

family a witness to the Gospel of life.

Amen.

And may almighty God bless you all,

the Father, ✠ and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by choosing life,

protecting love, and giving hope

through the witness of your marriage.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

A holy marriage is not measured by

how much two people receive from each other,

but by how much life they help each other become.